The Insecurity of 'The Commons':

An ethnographic study of a youth club in the North of England

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Louise Kathleen Laverty

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Abstract

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It is argued that children and young people are facing a period of disinvestment from society as they bear the brunt of welfare and social cuts that restricts their ability to participate meaningfully in their lives. This study explores what really matters to young people living in an area hard hit by Government cuts. In order to do so, I adopted an interpretivist qualitative approach that would allow young people to direct the topic of the research. What follows is an ethnographic account of a fourteen-month period of ethnographic fieldwork, using flexible participatory methods including photo-elicitation and focus groups, at a youth club in a disadvantaged neighbourhood of a mid-size town in the North of England. The findings reflect the diverse, and situated, interests and concerns of young people. Firstly, the role of place was important as young people negotiated conflicting views of the neighbourhood as both safe and unsafe. Importantly, it shows that young people, who already experience disadvantage, are subject to greater insecurity through austerity measures. Second, young black men in the neighbourhood are subject to increased surveillance that excludes them from public space. Therefore, young people use the youth centre as a way to manage this exclusion, and participate in activities that allow them can gain value where otherwise they are granted none. Thirdly, food practices at the youth centre emerge as a care economy amongst young people that help them to manage the conditions of food poverty. Lastly, strategies of inclusion and exclusion around gender norms demonstrate the limitations of belonging. Throughout each chapter, I show how inclusion and exclusion practices emerge, and how these processes relate to age, gender, race, and class. In conclusion, this thesis considers the conditions that enable or constrain young people's ability to participate in their neighbourhood, and the practices that young people use to establish and maintain worth and inclusion. I show that belonging is conditional and hierarchical, and as much about exclusion as inclusion. Together these findings show the importance of paying attention to young people's everyday lives and experiences that are fundamental to an understanding of health and inequalities.

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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work. The material contained in the thesis has not been presented, nor is currently being presented, either wholly or in part for any other degree or qualification

Table of Contents

Abstract **1**
Acknowledgements **2**
Declaration **3**
Interlude 1 .... **9**
Chapter 1 - Introduction **10**
1.1 Chapter aims 11
1.2 CPH perspectives on the political and policy aims of public health 12
My experience of the field 12
CPH perspectives on public health approaches 13
1.3 CPH research on childhood and youth 16
Childhood as a protected state 17
Children and young people as 'becoming' 18
'Risky' young people 18
Children and young people as future citizens 20
1.4 Qualitative accounts of children and young people's perspectives on health 21
Health as embedded within relationships 22
Portraying behaviour as risk-adverse 24
Health as embedded in place 24
Alternative accounts of health 25
Taking stock and moving on 27
1.5 Rationale for moving beyond health and aims for the current study 28
1.6 Thesis Outline 29
1.7 Conclusion 31
Interlude 2 .... **33**
Chapter 2 - Literature Review **35**
2.1 Chapter aims 35
2.1 The social construction of childhood and youth in society 36
The construction of children and childhood as a distinct social group 38
The construction of adolescence and youth 41
Age as social and relational 42
2.2 Children and young people as 'suspect' 45
Moral panics, or always suspect 45
Youth-at-risk 47
2.3 'Socially excluded' youth 51
Young people's exclusion through structural violence 56
The current UK approach to childhood and youth 57
2.4 Summary and conclusion 59
Interlude 3 .... **62**
Chapter 3 - Methodology and locating 'The Common' **64**
3.1 Chapter aims 64
3.2 Methodological approaches and assumptions of the study 65

Rationale for a qualitative interpretivist perspective 65
Ethnographic methodology 68
Finding the fieldsite, narrowing the focus 69
The Common as the research setting 70
The attendees of the Common 72
3.3 Methods 73
Overview of the data collected 73
Issues of consent, anonymity and confidentiality 74
Participant Observation 75
The use of visual methods and photo-elicitation 78
Casual conversations and focus groups 81
3.4 Reflexive account of the research methods 84
The reflexive turn in ethnography 84
Relationships at the Common - being 'suspect' 86
Conditional acceptance 88
Researcher role at the Common – conforming and challenging expectations 90
Embodied experience of 'being there' 92
Blind spots in the research 93
Issues of representation 94
3.5 Summary and conclusion 96
Interlude 4 98
Chapter 4 - The Common and Sandyhill 99
4.1 The Youth Workers 102
4.2 The boys 103
4.3 The girls 107
Interlude 5 109
Chapter 5 - Insecurity, exclusion and the significance of place 110
5.1 Framing the chapter 111
Aims of the chapter 111
Literature and approaches drawn on 112
5.2 Precarious conditions leading to insecurity and displacement 113
The impact of welfare cuts on insecurity and displacement 113
The impact of loss and bereavement on insecurity and displacement 118
The disruption of informal kinship care 121
5.3 The conflict of belonging – displacement from place of safety 124
Sandyhill as a 'good' space 125
Sandyhill as a 'bad' space 127
Sandyhill as simultaneously good and bad 130
5.4 Insecurity and precarity attached to certain bodies and spaces 133

Stigma and surveillance of 'suspect' young black men....134
Hierarchies of belonging – racism and value in the Common....139
5.5 Discussion....142
Situating the findings – expanding on previous research....144
5.6 Conclusion....146
Interlude 6....149
Chapter 6 - Affective strategies of exclusion....150
6.1 Framing the chapter....150
Research aims....150
Literature and approaches drawn on....152
6.2 Spatial exclusion within the Common....153
Girls interrupted....153
Gendering of space....154
6.3 The socialisation of gender norms at the Common....156
Learning acceptable forms of femininity at the Common....156
Learning acceptable forms of masculinities at the Common....159
6.4 The use of emotion as a strategy of exclusion....162
Jade as the abject figure....163
Hailey's loss of respectability....166
6.5 Discussion....170
6.6 Summary and conclusion....172
Interlude 7....173
Chapter 7 - Finding value in the Common: the role of pool....174
7.1 Framing the chapter....174
Aims of the chapter....174
Literature and approaches drawn on....175
7.2 Pool as established strategy for creating order at the Common....176
Setting up the pool table....176
Being socialised into the informal rules....176
The rules as a way of ordering time....178
7.3 Pool as a way of gaining value at the Common....179
Using pool to establish value....179
Becoming an expert and gaining value....182
Pool as the site of male youth work....183
7.4 Pool as a meaningful activity....184
Pool as rational for boys, and irrational for girls....184
Why pool was meaningful....187
7.5 Summary and conclusion....188
Interlude 8....190
Chapter 8 - Consuming Care: Food as an economy of care at the Common....191
8.1 Framing the chapter....192

Chapter Aims 192
Literature and approaches drawn on 192
8.2 The role of takeaways 194
Public displays of consumption 194
Takeaways as a care economy at the Common 197
Young people as critical consumers 201
The girls self-exclusion from the practices of the takeaway 202
8.3 The role of cooking at the Common 204
The girls cooking as providers 204
The boys cooking as consumers 206
The obligation of care 207
8.4 The Common as an informal food bank 208
8.5 Discussion 210
8.6 Summary and conclusion 212
Interlude 9 213
Chapter 9 - Discussion and Conclusion 214
9.1 Overview of the key findings in each chapter 216
9.2 Bringing the findings together 220
Using intersectionality to understand the conditionality and hierarchies of belonging 220
Revisiting the findings under an intersectionality framework 222
What we talk about when we don't talk about health 227
9.3 Strengths and limitations 229
9.4 Conclusion 231
References 233
Appendix I – Poster and information sheet about the research study 258
Appendix II – Photo-elicitation Poster 259
Appendix III – Food Focus Group Poster 260
Appendix IV – Photo-elicitation information sheet 261
Appendix V – Food Focus Group Information Sheet 262
Appendix VI – Photo-elicitation Consent form 263
Appendix VII – Focus Group Consent Form 264
Appendix VIII – Photograph copyright form 265

Figure 1 Drawing of young woman at the Common made during art session .9
Figure 2 Drawing of young man at the Common made during art session......9
Figure 3 Regional alcohol campaign displayed around my fieldsite 19
Figure 4. Food order for the boys' food focus group.....................................83
Figure 5 Layout of the Common.. 101
Figure 6 Organisational structure 103
Figure 7 Boys' friendship network 106
Figure 8 Girls' friendship network 108
Figure 9 Trip to Radio 1xtra Live to see Plan B.....................................109
Figure 10 Shannon's robot-baby 'Colm', taken by Carolyn 114
Figure 11 Troy's medal collection 129
Figure 12 'Abandoned Streets' taken by Jake, age 13...................................131
Figure 13 'Speeding Car' taken by Jake, 13 132
Figure 14 'Ghetto Houses' by AJ, age 13.. 132
Figure 15 Summer activities 173
Figure 16 Transport to the Common.. 173
Figure 17 'Freddo Milkshake from Joe's Parlour' taken by Troy, 13 196

Interlude 1

Figure 1. Drawing of young woman at the Common made during art session

Figure 2. Drawing of young man at the Common made during art session

Chapter 1

Introduction

Children and young people in the UK are reporting less frequent smoking, drinking, and drug use than previous generations (Fuller 2012, 2013, Fuller and Hawkins 2014). Nevertheless, targeting the individual health behaviours of this age group remains a priority in public health and wider policy (Department of Health 2004, Department of Health 2010). Indeed, from the focus on childhood obesity in health strategies to teenage pregnancy in child poverty strategies, addressing the lifestyle behaviours of children and young people is a wide reaching approach to target what politicians like to call the 'moral collapse of society' (Cabinet Office 2011). The concern with this political approach is that by fixating on lifestyle behaviours the wider social and structural influences on health and inequalities are minimised. Furthermore, the focus on childhood and youth often uncritically assumes that health behaviours form an important part of young people's lives.

My initial aim was to explore the meanings that young people attach to health within the current public health context that prioritises individual responsibility for health and operates within a distinct moral framework. In order to explore these issues outside of traditional behavioural silos I aimed to use a critical public health perspective, which pays attention to wider political and social factors. However, after reviewing the literature and carrying out some initial fieldwork, for reasons that I will discuss later, it became apparent that this goal was insufficient. Instead, the key message that emerged for me was that in order to understand young people's health, it is first important to understand their lives. This prompted a shift in my research aims. In turn, it was felt that ethnographic methods that allow members' interests and priorities to emerge and direct the research might be preferable.

In this thesis, then, I explore the experiences and issues that are of concern to young people. More specifically, I investigate how young people attending a youth centre in an area of deprivation manage and negotiate living in constrained conditions. I

consider how young people are both subject to various forms of social exclusion and create their own exclusions. In doing so, I show how strategies of getting by and belonging are produced in everyday practices. As a result, the findings reflect the experiences and salient categories of the young people that offer a more nuanced account of their lives. The findings are important, in the context of growing inequalities in the UK, which tends to draw on a deficit framework.

1.1 Chapter aims

To rationalise the shift in research aims from health to youth, this chapter will give an overview of the original orientation and the reasons for a refocus on youth as the primary topic rather than health. It is important to spend some time on this, rather than simply dismissing it, as it allows me to introduce wider issues that I will revisit in subsequent chapters. Here, then, I explore how children and young people are represented in public discourse and policy through a risk and deficit framework that justifies increased surveillance and intervention; and neoliberal approaches that prioritise the role of the individual over the state and thus obligate young people to take responsibility for making the 'correct' choice. This chapter uses public health to evidence and illustrate these points.

The chapter is organised into four sections. First, I will discuss my own background in public health and the challenges I encountered that subsequently became a rationale for my primary research question. Second, I will give an overview of how critical public health (hereafter CPH) researchers have engaged and responded to dominant public health discourses before looking at their contribution to the study of childhood and youth. In doing so, I review some of the key emerging themes that reveal the problems and gaps in existing research. Third, I will consider research conducted with children and young people that explore their perspectives on health. This body of research reflects part of wider movement in the social sciences over the past several decades that has sought to understand children's worlds, often described as the 'new social studies of childhood' (see James and Prout 1997, James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, James 2013, Jenks 2004, Prout 2005, Qvortrup 1994). What is important to consider here is that by foregrounding the accounts of children and young people, the dominant ideas about health are called into question and provide the basis for refining the original research questions. Lastly, I will describe the current study with

its renewed research aims, the approach I took, and outline the structure for the remainder of this thesis.

1.2 CPH perspectives on the political and policy aims of public health

My experience of the field

I previously spent a number of years working in the field of public health, both in the public sector and briefly in academia. It was in the public sector that I first became aware of the difficulties of focussing on lifestyle behaviours in silo. This approach was, at the time, reflected in the very structure of public health departments. Public health teams were divided by topic and were engaged in a constant battle with each other to convince funders, politicians, and the public that their issue was the most important and thus deserving of attention. For example, the Tobacco Control Team, who were keen to ensure that their funding did not drop after the Smokefree Legislation, competed to show that smoking had a greater impact on inequalities than alcohol in order to avoid funds being reallocated. That there might be common, crosscutting, issues across health topics was rarely discussed, and partnership working, over my tenure at least, was minimal.

More relevantly, I found that children as a social group were frequently used as a device to garner support. It was recognised that politicians and the public were reluctant to publically dismiss a proposal if it was for the sake of children. This was evident in campaign and funding documents that used disclaimers such as 'to protect children' or 'for our children's future'. Used in this way, campaigns represented children as passive, innocent, and in need of protection. Simultaneously, representations of young people as 'risky' and in need of intervention (Kelly 2000, Kelly 2003, Valentine 1996) were also employed. I will return to these representations of children and young people in more detail in subsequent sections.

Moving into an academic setting, it was also clear that public health researchers were under similar pressures to look at health behaviours individually. Funding streams reinforce lifestyle behaviours as research priorities, such as through the Public Health Research Excellence Centres, which are tailored towards diet, exercise and addictive behaviours: particularly in childhood (Public Health England 2014). Ioannou (2003,

2005), amongst others, has criticised the field for frequently imposing what she terms a 'health logic' onto everyday activities. This 'logic' reifies behaviours as either health-enabling or health-constraining and in doing so abstracts behaviour from its social context. Both of these previous experiences motivated me to use a CPH stance, which I will subsequently describe, to understand how young people give meaning to health outside of behavioural silos.

CPH perspectives on public health approaches

CPH researchers note that the discourses of public health are historically dependent, place specific, and highly at the influence of political contexts and demands (Ayo 2011, Graham 2010). In the UK and other Western countries, for example, it has been extensively argued that public health currently operates within a neoliberal model (Ayo 2011, Baum 2011, Fitzpatrick and Tinning 2013, Lupton 1995, 1999a, Nettleton and Bunton 1995, Petersen 1997, Tinning and Glasby 2002). Here, neoliberalism refers to a "system of thoughts and beliefs" (Ayo 2011, p.101) about the role of the state that includes "shrinking state mandate, deregulation and privatisation, a faith in markets to govern social life, and an increased emphasis on personal choice and freedom" (Trnka and Trundle 2014, p.137). Using this definition to think about health, neoliberal approaches emphasise the role and responsibility of individuals to make 'healthy' choices, and subsequently to accept the blame for their failure, in order to attain the goal of becoming a 'good' citizen (Crawford 1984, 1994). As Foucault (1984, p.277) proposes, this approach to health becomes "at once the duty of each and the objective of all".

Neoliberal approaches to health in the UK can be readily found in policy and governmental statements that urge the public "to take more personal responsibility for their own health" (Hunt 2015). Indeed, while the most recent UK public health White Paper (Department of Health 2010) claims that that "responsibility needs to be shared" (p.24) it nevertheless emphasises that a new approach is needed to "empower individuals to make healthy choices" (p.2). The philosophy of neoliberalism is further echoed in other policy documents, such as the UK's Alcohol Strategy (Secretary of State for the Home Office 2012), which highlights that the government cannot and should not do it all (Fitzpatrick and Tinning 2013), whilst further appealing to

individuals to be responsible, rational and moderate citizens (O'Malley and Valverde 2004).

It would be a mistake, however, to consider neoliberalism as the only influence on current public health rhetoric. Instead, neoliberalism is entangled with ideas about individualism, risk, and healthism that together form an assemblage through which the imperatives of the 'new public health' emerge (Nettleton 1997, Lupton 1995, Petersen and Lupton 1996). Turning to the former, McQueen (1989) notes that the ideology of contemporary public health coincided and mirrored the growth of individualism, which Kirk and Colquhoun (1989) additionally claim reflects a movement that underplays the role of wider social agencies in the production of health. This links back to ideas about neoliberalism that requires the individual to navigate decisions about health despite the fact that 'right' choices have already been determined.

It is as not as simple as structural influences being rejected in public policy in favour of individual ones however. A number of high profile authors have demonstrated that health inequities result from wider social inequalities (Marmot 2010, Wilkinson and Pickett 2009), but these arguments are rarely translated into action. This has been described as the 'lifestyle drift' by which "policy starts off recognising the need for action on upstream social determinants of health inequalities only to drift downstream to focus largely on individual lifestyle factors" (Popay, Whitehead, and Hunter 2010, p.148). The drift, according to Graham (2010), is undoubtedly influenced by the structure of public health that is constrained by political electoral cycles. This demand results in health strategies that are decidedly short-termed through the need to demonstrate measurable change within a few years (Popay, Whitehead, and Hunter 2010). This means that it is likely that lifestyle change policies focusing on the individual will continue to be the focus of political intervention.

For Beck (1992), individualism is directly related, and part of, what he has influentially termed the 'risk society'[1] (McCuaig and Tinning 2010). In the risk

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[1] I acknowledge the limitations to Beck, such as the unempirical nature of the theory (Mythen & Walklate 2006) and the focus on individual rather than social approaches to risk (Lash 2000), however given its influence it is worth acknowledging some of the relevant elements.

society, life is increasingly destabilised and uncertain leading to increased anxiety which has to be actively managed and navigated by individuals (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). In addition, according to the risk society premise, the role of the expert is both essential in order to provide knowledge that guides individual decision-making but is also under suspicion for claiming certainty when there is none (Gard and Wright 2001, Beck 1992). This conflict is evident in the deployment of risk discourses in public health that render health problems as calculable and thus avoidable, yet requires individuals to be flexible in adapting to the latest, often conflicting, knowledge (Williams 1998, Tinning and Glasby 2002). As Gard and Wright (2001) further explain, the field of public health (which includes health promotion and health education) assumes that risk can be identified and named, and therefore uncertainty can be reduced and managed. This first assumes that risks are objective and measurable, and secondly recasts responsibility at feet of individuals to avoid these 'knowable' risks (Moore and Valverde 2000).

Public health's approach to risk as objective contrasts with sociocultural perspectives that understand risk as socially constructed within cultures (Douglas 1966, Douglas 1992, Douglas and Wildavsky 1982, Lash 2000, Lupton 1999a). Anthropologist Mary Douglas points to the political nature of risk suggesting that there is inevitably a bias "highlighting certain risks and downplaying others" (1982, p.14). For example, the focus on young people's drinking in the context of excessive drinking amongst the middle aged (Health and Social Care Information Centre 2014). Furthermore, as both Douglas (1982, 1985) and Lash (2000) explain, risk always relates to danger and thus has a negative valence. Objects, behaviours and groups described as 'risky' therefore find themselves associated with badness, danger, and as morally flawed. This is especially evident when groups of people described as 'risky' are subsequently subject to blame and moral judgment (Cieslik and Pollock 2002). Therefore, when risk discourses become attached to particular groups, Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) cautions that we should be critical of who is being judged, who is being blamed, and who is labelling them as dangerous.

Cultural theorist Robert Crawford (1984, 1994, 2006), who coined the term healthism, recognises the moral dimension of health which is mutually reinforced by

neoliberalism, individualisation and risk discourses (Ayo 2011). Crawford regards health as a "metaphor for self-control, self-discipline, self-denial and will power" (1994, p.1353) that encourages individuals to "transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality" (Foucault 1988, p.18). In other words, health is a metaphor for, and a means of achieving, neoliberal ideals (Kirk and Colquhoun 1989). Public health discourses encourage people to "define themselves in part by how well they succeed or fail in adopting healthy practices" (Crawford 2006). Again, we see how public health works to encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own actions by becoming risk-adverse, and to recognise that failure in their 'duty to be well' (Greco 1993) may lead to moral reproach (Ayo 2011)

In summary, public health in the UK is situated within a neoliberal framework that emphasises individual choice and responsibility to be well. Political and policy demands in this context ensure that the focus remains on influencing lifestyle behaviour rather than addressing wider social conditions that impact on health and wellbeing. Furthermore, despite the fact that public health discourses are "cloaked in the language of science rather than morality" (Bell, Salmon, and McNaughton 2011, p.3) they nevertheless associate health and lifestyle behaviours with what it means to be a good and moral person. Thus, health is a moral demand and duty. In addition, by utilising risk as taken-for-granted and removed from social contexts individuals are considered deviant (Becker and McCall 1993) and responsible for their personal failure. As will be described in the following section and the remainder of this thesis, these wider contexts have important implications for how children and young people are represented in public discourse and managed in, and through, policy. The next section will further explore CPH research that reveal how these public health contexts influence how young people experience health.

1.3 CPH research on childhood and youth

The contexts in which public health operate also play a role in how children and young people come to be constructed. As I will be discussing representations of young people in more detail in the following chapter, here I will be focusing briefly on three areas in relation to health. First, understandings of young people in developmental and socialisation paradigms as incomplete adults thus in need of expert intervention

around health. Second, the primacy of risk discourses that simultaneously position young people as 'at risk' and as performing risk. Third, public health discourses that view young people primarily as future citizens in the making. I will be discussing research that to date has focused on schools and homes as the key sites of health governance. Before this, however, perhaps it is sensible to explore why the health of children and young people in particular continue to be of such importance.

Childhood as a protected state

A number of commentators in the field of childhood studies report that childhood is regarded as a special and 'cherished state' (Jackson and Scott 1999, James and Prout 1997, Mayall 2002), offering one explanation to its priority in health. This status maintains a boundary around childhood as innocent and in need of protection. Jackson and Scott (1999) report that the boundary between children and adults is the cause of considerable anxiety as it not fixed. This brings us back to risk which, as Douglas (1966) comments, becomes particularly attached to transitional states. In other words, childhood is at risk from, and risk to, adulthood.

Focusing on health more closely, Lupton (2014) proposes that children's health is conferred this special status because it blurs the boundary between public and private concern. It is of public concern because children's bodies reflect the future goals of the population (Armstrong 1993), which I will come on to shortly, and a private concern for parents, families, and communities to ensure this achievement. Foucault expands this concern by highlighting how the privileged status of the child demands that the family provide an "environment which envelops, maintains, and develops the child's body" (1984, p.290). The 2004 UK Public Health White Paper provides evidence for these public and private concerns, emphasising both the child's duty for health maintenance and the recruiting of expert guidance in producing children's bodies, with an emphasis on the future thrown in:

> As they grow up, each child will take on responsibility for developing their own health goals with help from their parents or carers, school staff and health professionals, including health visitors and school nurses. These plans will be the foundation for personal health guides for life (Department of Health 2004, p.8)

Children and young people as 'becoming'

The special status of children, more so than young people, relates to its representation as along a process of 'becoming' adult. Here, children are regarded as on a trajectory towards adulthood, and often, utilising developmental theories, as not-adult and incomplete (Mayall 2001, Mayall 2006). Going back to the contexts of public health, this representation renders children as unable to fulfil neoliberal ideas about citizenship. As incomplete adults, then, children cannot be rational, responsible, individuals capable of making decisions about their own health (Burrows and Wright 2007). This is despite an increasingly large amount of work, over several decades, which shows that even very young children are agentic, responsible and participate in moral work in the family (see James and Prout 1997, James, Jenks, and Prout 1998, Mayall 1994, 2001). Instead, as Colls and Evans (2008) point out, children and their bodies are considered unruly, disordered and in need of training and intervention in order to achieve the ideals of healthism. Thus, children's bodies are in need of expert, adult, intervention in order to socialise them into these ideas.

Considerable CPH research has explored the role of the school and teachers as expert authorities in socialising children through health promotion and education. A number of authors claim, in support of the previous section, that health education in schools is linked to ideas about good citizenship (Brown et al. 2013, Lupton 1999b) and the duty to be well (Rawlins 2009, Johnson, Gray, and Horrell 2012, Tinning and Glasby 2002). Therefore, in teaching children about health they are also teaching them ideas about responsibility, moderation and being risk-averse. Lupton (1999b) uses Foucault's (1997) work on governmentality to explore school curriculums in Australia to propose that the purpose of school health promotion is not necessarily coercive, but rather to encourage students to voluntarily participate in health surveillance and dedicate themselves to self-improvement. Fitzpatrick and Tinning (2013) lend support to Lupton's (1999b) claim, labelling students as 'proto-citizens' due to the demands for them to become committed to health as a self-governance project.

'Risky' young people

It is clear, then, that there is a conflict between seeing children as unable to make health decisions, and simultaneously as responsible for taking up health demands.

Here we see the next depiction of children, and young people in particular, as ‘at risk’ and as unwilling to participate in ideals around health. It is not about young people as vulnerable, as was described in the preceding paragraph, but as at risk of “jeopardising, through present behaviours and dispositions, desired futures” (Kelly 2000, p.468). Youth researcher Peter Kelly (2000, 2003, 2006) has written extensively about the figure of the ‘youth at risk’ and regards this label as a continuation of previous moral panics about young people that previously described them as deviant, delinquent and deficient. This is evident in regional and political campaigns that conflate young people’s behaviours as inherently deviant, as is evident in Figure 3 below. The use of the ‘at-risk’ label also implies that intervention is required. Further criticism of the label, such as from Foster and Spence (2011), suggests that ‘at risk’ provides a way of othering young people, and Taylor (2002) who proposes that it implies a “flawed moral biography and as such constitute a form of marginalization” (p.512). Through risk discourses, children and young people are further excluded from full citizenship.

Figure 3. Regional alcohol campaign displayed around my fieldsite

While in schools, as discussed above, children and young people are encouraged to willingly participate in health governance, this relies on enabling students to recognise themselves as ‘at risk’ (Leahy and Harrison 2004). What Austen (2009), Thing and Ottesen (2013), and others draw attention to is that health risk is adult-defined and thus may not have resonance for young people. In particular, Tinning and Glasby (2002) show that teachers and schools often present information about health as ‘truths’ uncritically and abstracted that do not allow children and young people to come to their own conclusions about health. Tinning and Glasby

(2002) continue, demonstrating that teachers present health risks as undisputed knowledge. Using physical education as an example, they point to the dominant assumption that slim bodies are fit bodies that equal healthy bodies. These bodily assumptions disregard alternative experiences and bodies (Colls and Evans 2008, Evans, Evans, and Rich 2003, Evans 2006). Thing and Ottesen (2013) raises these assumptions as a particular concern demonstrating that while health knowledge did not change the health behaviour of young people, it made them feel guilty and anxious.

Children and young people as future citizens

The dominant concern in public health policy and rhetoric is that children who are unable or unwilling to fulfil the 'new public health' imperative will continue to make the 'wrong' decisions as adults. The focus on children and young people, as Colls and Evans (2008, p.621) state, is a "means to protect the future adult population". This colonisation of the future has been criticised for ignoring concerns in the present (Kelley, Mayall, and Hood 1997). The pursuit of healthism also demands that investment is made now as it relies on individuals taking up the mantle to becoming good, healthy, citizens. The consequence, however, is that alternative experiences in the present, such as pleasure from engaging in 'risky' health behaviours, are recast as dangers and risks to the future.

In criticising the future-orientation of young people, Kelly (2000, 2003) highlights that the focus implies that there is a right, preferred, future that young people need to work to achieve. This again ties back to individualism by proposing that these 'desired futures' and health ideals can be unproblematically achieved though "the sheer effort of will and determination of individuals" (Kirk and Colquhoun 1989, p.419). Wider social factors, such as class, that may prevent the achievement of these futures are disregarded, instead young people are deemed "responsible for their own fate" (Brown et al. 2013, p.338). Additionally as Nettleton and Bunton (1995, p.43), amongst others, affirm "ideas about healthy living are promulgated by those who are white, middle class, and often work within sexist, racist, and homophobic value systems". Therefore, healthism may represent an unachievable, and perhaps undesirable, set of ideals for children and young people to aspire to in their future.

From this brief overview, it is clear that while children and young people are often the focus of public health, their experiences are often silenced and they are rarely recognised as active citizens. The passive view of children as unable to make decisions about their health positions them as dependent on other, responsible, actors, but also simultaneously as (ir)responsible for their own health (McDowell 2007). The ascribed vulnerability of children additionally provides a basis for the framing of health policies in terms of protection and exclusion from adults' worlds (Engelbert 1994). Additionally, children and young people are represented as perpetually at risk that further justifies intervention and management (Kelly 2003). I also described how children unlike other social groups, have dual status, as people now, and as people for the future.

Public health discourses portray young people primarily as future citizens in the making, and as such, they are regarded as in need of help to make the 'right' decisions for their future, determined by experts and responsible actors. The research I have discussed so far has focussed on health promotion and the role of the school, but of course, health is constructed and influenced by wider sources and contexts. Therefore the next section will address this gap by describing research conducted children and young people that has explored their perspectives and attempted to move beyond behavioural silos.

1.4 Qualitative accounts of children and young people's perspectives on health

This section will review previous research that has explored young people's experiences of health. In order to avoid the trap of focusing on lifestyle behaviours, the studies I draw on explore young people's experiences of health more broadly. What this research shows is that young people reject discussions of lifestyle behaviours in isolation, instead drawing on broader social issues and the importance of feeling well. Without exception, all of the studies I described in the previous section and those that follow demonstrate that young people are literate and knowledgeable about dominant health messages. These studies challenge public health approaches that treat young people as deficient in regards to knowledge, instead showing that even young children are able to conceptualise complex understandings of health and inequalities.

The majority of studies that have attempted to look at health directly caution that health is an abstract term that produces limited responses (Backett and Alexander 1991, Backett-Milburn, Cunningham-Burley, and Davis 2003). In interviews, asking hypothetical or direct questions about health, for example, lead young people to reproduce dominant public health messages (Johnson, Gray, and Horrell 2012, Evans, Evans, and Rich 2003). Lee and MacDonald (2010) support this claim in their longitudinal interviews with young women and suggest that the cause is the dominance of healthism. They suggest that healthism ideals direct young people to reproduce sanctioned, official, messages about health while ignoring other activities that may have an impact on health, such as cycling. In other words, what children and young people understood as important for health are often limited to health promotion messages rather than drawing on their own, or alternative, experiences and discourses.

Given the difficulties with asking about health, more recent studies have utilised multiple methods and approaches to ask about the meanings of 'feeling well' (Aggleton et al. 1998, Spencer 2013b) or about young people's lives more generally (Ioannou 2003, Percy-Smith 2007, Woodgate and Leach 2010). This approach, Ioannou claims, helps address the issue that health can act as a "totalising discourse colonising all phases of research" (2003, p.359). This critique is particularly directed at research that assumes that the behaviours young people describe are inherently related to, or impact on, their health. In this section, therefore, I am predominantly drawing on multi-method qualitative research that has attempted to prioritise children and young people's concerns.

Health as embedded within relationships

Looking more closely at the findings of this group of more inclusive qualitative accounts, there are a number of key themes to draw out. The first of these, a recurrent finding, is that children and young people regard health in relation to, and situated in, social relationships (see Backett and Alexander 1991, Backett-Milburn, Cunningham-Burley, and Davis 2003, Leahy and Harrison 2004). In support of this social view, Backett-Milburn and colleagues (2003) in household interviews with children found that discussions around inequalities in health centred around familial and peer relationships. More favourable peer relationships for example, allowed

young people to mitigate feelings of being unhappy or dealing with grief. This social view sits in contrast to the individualistic way that health is represented in public health. It suggests then, that individual approaches may not have resonance with how young people conceptualise health.

A number of other studies lend further support to the important role of relationships (Mayall 1993, Johnson, Gray, and Horrell 2012). More specifically, they suggest that health has a social cost that affects young people's ability to participate. Ioannou (2003) in her study of young Greek-Cypriots described how consumption practices were an important part of health in enabling young people to socialise. In addition to feelings of inclusion, young people also described experiences of social exclusion, for example through not looking the right way (Johnson, Gray, and Horrell 2012), or not having the financial capital to join in. An early study by Backett and Alexander (1991) on children's experiences of health extends this argument in their accounts of children describing feelings of shame through their exclusion from activities for being unhealthy. This suggests that future studies of health should be extended beyond the individual and be aware of the importance of social relationships.

The accounts, so far, focus on the significance of feeling well and belonging rather than individual lifestyle behaviours, but there are a number of interesting contradictions. Perhaps unsurprisingly there was a difference between public and private accounts of health (Backett and Alexander 1991, Woodgate and Leach 2010). In an ethnographic multi-method study of youth and community centres in Canada, Woodgate and Leach (2010) found that while abstract discussions of health centred on lifestyle behaviours (public accounts), young people focused on social determinants to explain their own choices (private accounts). By focusing on wider determinants of health, young people are able to negotiate and avoid blame from engaging in behaviour defined by some as 'risky'. Most respondents in Sutton's (2009) study of 8-13 year olds, for example, were reluctant to blame others for poor health when discussing people they knew. Young people's own concerns about health were complex (Aggleton et al. 1998), and their 'unhealthy' choices were positioned as rational given the context of their lives (Ioannou 2003).

Portraying behaviour as risk-adverse

The next theme, and a contradiction from public health discourses, is how children and young people portray their own behaviour as conforming to healthism and public health ideals. Here, it appears that young people are aware of their 'at-risk' status, and reject this in their accounts of health. As an illustration, Spencer's (2013b) school ethnography showed that students described themselves as moderate and risk avoidant. Echoing this finding, in Austen's (2009) school case study, young people achieved their own status as the ideal risk-adverse neoliberal citizen through distancing themselves from 'risky others'. Being risk-adverse was treated as a desirable social identity, perhaps related to the current context in which public health is found. Young people demonstrating their knowledge of risks and giving examples of how they were responsible and moderate ties into neoliberal ideals.

Those considered 'risky', as I have already discussed, are subject to blame as they are constructed as a threat to both the self and the social order (Douglas 1966, Crawford 1994, Lupton 2013, Spencer 2013b). Therefore, for young people to avoid being the subject of blame they have to distance themselves from 'at risk' others. It is interesting that Neary (2012) found that young people used the same negative stereotypes about childhood and youth to portray others as risky. If all young people engage in this othering, whilst maintaining that they are risk-adverse, we may ask who is actually 'at-risk'. On the other hand, it has been proposed that 'collective imaginaries' or the 'imagined other' are strategies used to distance the self from risk and to resist shame (Peacock, Bissell, and Owen 2014). Together these contradictions show how dominant discourses are mobilised by young people themselves in order to distance themselves from undesirable social identities.

Health as embedded in place

The importance of place was also a recurring theme. Morrow (2000) in her study of 12-15 year olds in schools found that young people were excluded from social space because of their age, whilst some also experienced racism and harassment in their neighbourhood. Similarly, spatial marginalisation was reported amongst 12-16 year olds in a deprived urban neighbourhood in Glasgow (Neary 2012). Across accounts, neighbourhoods were described as dirty (Morrow 2000), polluted and dangerous (Green, Mitchell, and Bunton 2000), but also as safe places which promoted

wellbeing (Backett-Milburn, Cunningham-Burley, and Davis 2003, Sutton 2009). Looking at spatial inequalities, Sutton's (2009) study of 8-13 year olds found that children attempted to position themselves in relations to local areas, distancing themselves from other, bad neighbourhoods. Sutton (2009) reported that negative stereotypes of neighbourhoods and the children who lived there were unfairly attached to less well-off areas. These stereotypes were also linked to perceived lifestyle behaviours, with those from disadvantaged areas expected to be more active in activities such as smoking and drinking (Sutton, 2009), reproducing class-based assumptions about health.

Alternative accounts of health

It is evident that young people reject dominant discourses of health in reference to their own behaviour. One further way young people distance themselves from the negative risk laden discourses of health is through focusing on the positive aspects of health. Spencer (2013b, 2013a), perhaps unsurprisingly given that the interviews focussed on feeling well and feeling good, found that young people predominantly talked about the positive and pleasurable aspects of health. Narratives around health and pleasure are excluded from prevention discourses that focus on negatively framed risk (McCuaig and Tinning 2010), but are fundamental in the accounts of young people. In describing the broad notion of health, young people equate health with being happy and sociable (Percy-Smith 2007, Ioannou 2003, Woodgate and Leach 2010, Wills et al. 2008).

Research involving alcohol has most clearly articulated the link between the pleasures of intoxication and belonging (de Visser et al. 2013). Young people's account of alcohol show its role in increasing confidence and therefore enjoyment of social occasions, and is an opportunity to share experiences and become part of social narratives (Griffin 2009). Newman (2007) further suggests that young people are happier and thus healthier when they experience a sense of belonging, and as such, unhealthy behaviour may be seen as positive. Through focusing predominantly on the negative aspects of health, public health provides a means for young people to disconnect themselves from messages that do not relate to their own experiences. In addition, Lupton (1993) has argued that by solely focusing on health-as-risk, health promotion efforts can be coercive. In other words, that there is only one, correct way,

to experience health. It not only serves to silence the value of young people's experiences, but also to lead to feelings of guilt and anxiety that accompany their behaviour (Thing and Ottesen 2013).

Lastly, I want to draw on the emotional aspects of health that were a recurring theme discussed in all of the research above but were rarely seriously addressed. For young people in Austen's (2009) study, there were emotional consequences of engaging with risky behaviour such as blame, guilt and regret, in addition to feelings of exclusion associated with fear and anxiety (Aggleton et al. 1998, Morrow 2000, Neary et al. 2012). In addition, Backett-Milburn and colleagues (1998, 2003) reported that emotional health was a key concern. The discussions amongst participants were about being upset, depressed, stressed, scared and broken hearted. Again, these are not issues of concern in public health, but rather reflect young people's everyday experiences that offer an alternative understanding of health. Furthermore, in Percy-Smith's (2007) participatory action research project with 14-19 year olds, stress and emotional wellbeing were a priority, and importantly lifestyle behaviours such as smoking and drinking were seen "as symptoms of stress rather than problems just in their own right" (p.883). It seems clear, therefore, that feelings of inclusion and exclusion are equally as important to young people's experiences and feelings of health.

Taken together, the research described above demonstrates nuanced understandings about health that challenge public health and policy approaches. The reproduction of health discourses in young people's accounts highlight that children and young people are not 'cultural dopes'[2] in regards to their health, but rather that particular approaches which are adult-defined in regards to health may reproduce dominant messages. In these accounts, which prioritise lay perspectives, it is clear that while children and young people are aware of dominant health messages centred around individualistic lifestyle behaviours they recognise the importance wider social determinants and inequalities. Young people are able to negotiate these understandings in order to maintain desired identities as risk-averse or as risk-aware,

[2] 'Cultural dopes' is a term borrowed from Garfinkel (1967, 127) which refers to individuals who are assumed to uncritically follow cultural scripts and roles

often through the processes of othering. As Aggleton (1998) and others have proposed, young people place high importance on social relations and their ability to participate in social activities. In addition to health being produced in social interactions, and in social spaces, it is clear that emotion plays a key role not only in experiences of health but also in processes of exclusion as a result of social and material inequalities.

Taking stock and moving on

In summary, public health research often draws on developmental and socialisation approaches to children and young people that have been critiqued for a preoccupation with risk (Petersen and Lupton 1996, France and Utting 2005). Children and young people are represented as less knowledgeable and less competent than adults (Valentine 1996) justifying disciplinary measures (Valentine 2009) and intervention around health. Within neoliberal contexts that encourage citizens to take responsibility for their own health, children and young people are simultaneously unable and unwilling to fulfil these demands. In addition, young people's engagement with 'risky' health behaviours are seen as inherently deviant (Johnson 2010), and risk-taking comes to be regarded as normal behaviour during adolescence (France 2000).

Sociological research looking at the experiences of young people has challenged public health risk based approaches. Qualitative research with children and young people highlights that health is relational and given meaning in social situations, rather than through calculated risk decisions. They have noted that young people do not talk about health spontaneously and struggle to engage with health as an abstract concept (Backett and Alexander 1991, Backett-Milburn, Cunningham-Burley, and Davis 2003). In addition, focussing on lifestyle behaviours in silo can mistakenly magnify the importance of these behaviours in young people's lives and minimise the importance of emotions in processes of inclusion and exclusion that emerge in discussions of health (Ioannou 2003, 2005, Backett-Milburn, Cunningham-Burley, and Davis 2003, Backett-Milburn and Jackson 2010). I have focussed on these issues in depth as regardless of whether or not health is the predominant frame for research, place, relationships and belonging constitute important aspects of young people's lives.

1.5 Rationale for moving beyond health and aims for the current study

After reviewing the broad and wide reaching research conducted by CPH researchers, granted with some brevity, there are some key messages that made me question my original research question. There is now ample evidence that children and young people are aware of dominant health messages and that these tend to be reproduced in their accounts. It is also apparent that research that uses health as their primary topic can fail to pay attention to children and young people's views, by assuming that health is necessarily an important part of their lives. Research that has prioritised young people's accounts have produced more varied accounts that show how little public health messages resonate with the contexts and conditions children and young people are living in. I found that although many of the research papers framed their interests around health inequality, the result was predominantly a focus on inequality in general.

Taking into account the previous work in this area, I decided that my research should prioritise the interests and concerns of young people even if this meant that I did not hear about health directly. The revised research aims, therefore, were to explore the pertinent concerns and experiences of children and young people living in a neighbourhood in the North of England. In order to allow young people to direct the research, and avoid imposing my own interests, as far as possible, I decided that an ethnographic approach would be the most appropriate. Firstly, using ethnography I could explore concerns that emerged over time through a longitudinal method. Secondly, as ethnography encompasses a range and variety of research methods, I could be flexible and adaptive in my approach in negotiation with my participants. Whilst ethnography could be interpreted as focusing on the micro, I would argue that it allows me both to look at the everyday social interactions and the wider conditions that impact, in an either enabling or constraining capacity, on young people's lives.

My fieldsite, the selection of which will be justified in my methodology chapter, was a youth club in the neighbourhood of a town in the North of England. I chose a youth club, over the home or school, as it is a space that is voluntarily inhabited by young people, as well as being part of their everyday life. This allowed me to minimise the power issues that have been described other youth researchers who have found

themselves having to avoid the adult roles of the teacher or parent (see Christensen 1993, Spencer 2013a). Although power relationships still exist between adult youth workers and young people, and which I will discuss in more depth in later chapters, I argue that young people at the youth centre have more control and choice about what and with whom they engage. As the youth centre is part of young people's local neighbourhood it also allows me to explore the wider structural conditions under which young people live.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The thesis is organised into nine chapters. The following chapter will review the literature around the new research aims to explore in more detail how representations of youth have emerged and are undergoing change. In doing this, I describe how discourses of risk, exclusion, and 'being suspect' attach to youth and how, in turn, these discourses construct young people as normal or deviant. Chapter Three will document the methodological approach to the study, describing the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of interactionism and ethnography before outlining the process of data collection, fieldnotes, and analyses. I will introduce issues of ethics, power, and reflexivity here, but I will revisit these issues throughout the thesis. Chapter Four is a brief guide to the fieldsite, describing the location and my respondents.

Chapter Five is the first findings chapter, which focuses on the broader conditions of the neighbourhood. It shows that young people and their families, living in disadvantage, develop strategies for getting by that are now disrupted by welfare cuts and austerity measures. This results in insecurity and precariousness. The role of place in relation to such austerity measures is also important as it can provide both a safe and unsafe environment for young people who are subject to social exclusion. I also discuss how exclusions are not experiences equally; rather they become attached to certain bodies and spaces.

Chapter Six, focusses on strategies of inclusion and exclusion that draw on moral and emotional discourses. This relates to the youth centre as a space where acceptable forms of (heterosexual) femininities and masculinities are learnt. Here, I examine how girls and marginalised boys, through spatial practices at the youth centre, are

confined to the periphery and subject to increased surveillance. In particular, I look at how affective forms of exclusion (such as shame and disgust) are used to control and monitor the boundaries of acceptable gender behaviour.

Chapters Seven and Eight look into the activities and practices that allow young people to belong at the Common. Chapter Seven looks further at the impact of exclusion on who attends the youth club. In particular, I show how the boys, marginalised in public space, find ways to gain value on their own terms through activities at the youth club. Looking at the micro practices within the youth club, I show how activities such as pool become a means of creating order, organising time and hierarchies for young people. I demonstrate how space is organised and managed by young people through their activities that leads to exclusion of certain groups of attendees.

Chapter Eight examines another activity, eating, at the youth centre that relates to gaining value, inclusion, and feelings of belonging. Two connected but distinct practices around food will be explored; participating in takeaways and cooking at the youth centre. Both practices connect to an informal economy of care through which food represents a social and public display of inclusion. In other words, young people gain value through providing care, or being the consumer of care. I will further demonstrate how these practices are gendered, and relate to class and ethnicity.

Lastly, Chapter Nine concludes the thesis by bringing together the findings to synthesize and situate them within the wider field. In turn; three recurring themes will be discussed further. First, the findings suggest that the young people at the youth centre are active in trying to manage and negotiate their social exclusions. They find ways of creating order out of disorder through finding ways to gain value on their own terms. In addition, I describe how disorder is created by the wider social conditions that constrain young people living in disadvantage. Second, I show how certain young people at the youth centre are marginalised and excluded in public space, whilst others are under greater scrutiny in private space. It is not just about exclusions suffered from the outside, but that in this case young people also create their own hierarchies that exclude others. Third, these hierarchies influence who can

participate at the youth club and who can feel as if they belong. Belonging in this context is conditional.

The use of ethnography and a range of qualitative methods mean that throughout my fourteen month period of fieldwork I accumulated a wide range of fieldnotes that do not neatly tie into the themes identified above, but do give a sense of what it was like to be at the youth centre and the attendees. Therefore, I have decided to include a number of 'interludes' at the beginning of each chapter to offer a more focused glimpse on the everyday. These interludes also aim to illuminate a theme in the chapter that it precedes, by offering a contradiction, a narrative, or an enigma. To do this, I am using fieldnotes, interviews, music of significance and photographs from my fieldwork. I hope that these interludes offer the reader a look at the young people at the youth centre, and highlight the heterogeneous group that they encompass.

1.7 Conclusion

This thesis, then, aims to explore the nuanced and complex nature of young people's lives and in my particular case of the youth club those who are living in an area of disadvantage and who experience multiple forms of exclusion. In support of other research in the field of childhood and youth studies, I show that young people lives' cannot, and should not, be reduced to dichotomies frequently used in public rhetoric that labels them as either good or deviant. In addition, the findings I will describe contribute to the literature on youth and exclusion by both examining the practices that young people use to establish and maintain worth and inclusion, while also examining the wider conditions which enable or constrain these practices. I maintain that I would not have been able to identify these issues through interviews or surveys alone, instead it is only by looking at the everyday, over an extended period, that the complexities of young people's lives were revealed.

Lastly, although I position myself as a sociologist, in this thesis I draw on relevant literature not only from sociology, but anthropology, geography, and from other related fields. As Best (2007, p.5) has noted, any research into youth is "necessarily interdisciplinary since the study of children and youth has never had one disciplinary home but many". In addition, I am engaging with the literature on both childhood (which typically ranges from 0-16) and youth (16+) as the majority of my respondents

at the youth club do not neatly fall into either field of research. Neither would they identify with these categories. In addition, while I particularly focus on childhood and youth studies, I am aware that these disciplines have different theoretical and methodological lineages that I will address in the following chapter.

Interlude 2

Fieldnotes- Visit 2

Youth workers JP, Marcus and Scott are late arriving for work after going for food. They explain that they were pulled over by the police and that 20 year old Ben, who was with them, was arrested. They go over at the main table to eat their food. A short while later JP goes out and comes back with Ben. They head to the table and sit while a crowd gathers to hear what has happened.

Marcus explains that he was driving the car and admits that he was speeding along the main road. They were pulled over by the police and Marcus got out of the car to go and speak to the police. A female officer came over to the car and asked the passengers for their names. Ben objects to her questions, and tells her that as he wasn't the driver he hadn't committed an offence. The female officer calls for backup and asks him again. Ben insists that he calmly repeated that unless he was being arrested he was under no obligation to give his name.

Ben says that when backup arrived with a van he was told to get out of the car. When he asks the officer why, she reaches over him to unplug the seatbelt and takes his phone. The officers tell him if he doesn't give his name they will arrest him. Ben protests that unless they are arresting him for something he doesn't need to give his name, asking them '*isn't that right*?' He says he repeated this question a number of times with no response. One of the officers recognises him and tells the others his name. The police then search the car, Marcus assumes for drugs, and ask Ben if he has any drugs on him. He offers to be searched but they decline. They don't find anything in the car.

Ben is arrested and taken to the station in the van. Marcus, JP and Scott leave without charge. Ben shows us his charge sheet, a public display offence (defined as shouting, swearing or being offensive) and for not wearing a seatbelt. Ben is particularly agitated by the seatbelt charge, he insists that not only was he wearing one (which they had to remove) but since it was night and the police were driving behind them how could they even prove the charge.

Marcus points out that they were probably pulled over for being black, because if the

reason for stopping the car was speeding then why wasn't he, as the driver, charged or warned about speeding. There was no need for Ben to be involved. Ben nods in agreement showing us his wrists that are bruised and swollen from the handcuffs, with purple whelps circling his arms. He tells us he doesn't trust the police after being arrested when he was under 16. He had to plead guilty because of his age, and because he felt he couldn't do anything else, he tells JP, '*I was the one beaten up and then I got charged*'. A few of the older boys perched on the side of the sofa pipe up to offer Ben their stories of the local police.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter seeks to broadly explore the shifting discursive representations of young people that come to determine how we understand the categories of childhood and youth. In particular, I will discuss how the old dichotomies of children and young people as angels and devils (Valentine 1996) previously described are increasingly being replaced with a more general suspicion towards youth (Giroux 2009). The authors I draw on relate these shifting understandings to current socioeconomic conditions and constraints through which young people are seen as the new precariat (Standing 2011). It is important to examine these changes as representations are not simply discursive but can be, and are, used to justify intervention and increased surveillance. In addition, the ways in which youth are now understood can affect policy, which make young people vulnerable to forms of symbolic and structural violence, especially youth who are already marginalised through economic disadvantage.

2.1 Chapter aims

The theme of this chapter is youth and exclusion. In the previous chapter I discussed my renewed focus on youth and the issues that were of concern to the young people at my fieldsite. Rather than describe the literature on the pertinent issues that surfaced during fieldwork in this chapter, which would essentially duplicate my findings, I am, instead, focusing on the overarching theme of the study that emerged as a characteristic of the neighbourhood in which the fieldwork took place, and which I will describe in the following chapters. In order to focus on this overarching theme here, I will integrate and cite the relevant literature for my findings within the appropriate chapters. It will be my job in later sections of the thesis to assimilate the literature introduced here with the findings.

In this chapter, therefore, I will start by looking at how the category of youth has been understood and constructed in various ways, providing more depth to those representations I briefly introduced in the preceding chapter. I will, however, also aim to move beyond these. The rationale for this is in response to critique, from a number of childhood and youth scholars, that the field is being limited by the regurgitation of dominant themes around children and young people as active, capable, and independent agents (Pugh 2014, Prout 2005). Pugh (2014), in particular, notes that these themes have been repeated for more than three decades without seemingly having an influence on the wider field. I chose to include these themes in the introduction, as I would argue that they are still relevant and utilised within public health policies and discourses (as evident by their inclusion in policy documents and media reports). However, as I move towards the field of youth, I shall explore how representations of children and young people have changed in the contexts of increased precarity. In particular, drawing on Giroux (2009) I will describe how young people are no longer seen as a social investment for the future, but rather are increasingly are being cast as a burden.

In looking at the new ways in which young people as a category are understood, I will look at what is already known, exploring the research on young people's subjective experience of being cast as 'at-risk', 'socially-excluded', as well as being newly 'suspect'. In doing so, I will pick up, in more detail, some of the threads I introduced previously, such as neoliberalism, individualism and risk ideologies that impact on the structural conditions of young people's lives. Following this, I will draw on some of the writing around structural violence and social suffering in order to better understand how young people's lives are being increasingly made precarious and insecure. Lastly, I will look at the current political context in which the study was situated, looking at research that has highlighted the changing rhetoric around poverty, and child poverty, in addition to the range of cuts to youth services.

2.1 The social construction of childhood and youth in society

> Childhood, the invention of adults, reflects adult needs and adult fears quite as much as it signifies the absence of childhood. In the course of history children have been glorified, patronised, ignored, or held in contempt, depending upon the cultural assumptions of adults (Walther 1979, p.64)

Representations of young people and the assumptions which underpin them have been extensively discussed across disciplines (see sociological approaches by Allen (1968b), Jones (1988), Wyn (1996, 2006); geographical approaches by Valentine (1996, 2009), Holloway (2000), Aitken (2001); anthropological approaches by James and Prout (1997), James, Jenks, & Prout (1998), Lancy (2014); and educational approaches by Lesko (1996a, b)). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to describe all their analyses nor, following Pugh's critique, would I want to labour over well-versed territory. Nevertheless, here I want to cover a few key points relevant to the current study. Namely, drawing on the extensive literature on childhoods and youth to explore how these age categories are given meaning. Whilst, in the previous chapter I treated childhood and youth uncritically, as if they were stable, agreed upon age-categories, here, adopting the dominant approach used in childhood and youth studies, I regard childhood and youth as, to a large degree, social constructions that are 'made' within particular contexts. This is important as the meanings attached to these categories lead to a series of assumptions, such as about dependency and capability, which in turn are used to justify the services, policies, and rhetoric directed towards young people.

In order to achieve this, I will examine the impact of social constructionism on the field of childhood and youth. I will treat these fields independently at first, given that the sociologies of childhood and youth draw on different traditions and perspectives. In particular, similar to how the literature points to dichotomies in how we view children and young people, such as Valentine's (1996) conception of angels/devils and Jenks' (2005) Apollonian/Dionysian, in turn, the sociology of childhood and the sociology of youth have become associated with exploring these respective representations (Best 2007). At the same time, I recognise that this is a generalisation. Nonetheless, I will first look at how childhood has emerged as a category, and the development of childhood studies that has critiqued bio-psychological perspectives. I will then outline the different aspects of the social construction of youth, examining how it is a more fluid 'blurry' category (encompassing adolescence, teenager, tween[3], as well as youth) than childhood, and how the ideology of risk persists in association. Third, I will explore alternative ways

[3] Tween or tweenager usually refers to the ages of 10-12

of thinking about childhood and youth, drawing more closely on the notion of age as social, of which there are two aspects: age as given meaning in relation to other categories, and age as performative.

The construction of children and childhood as a distinct social group

The historical analysis by Aries (1973), on how children came to be seen as a distinct social group, is often cited as the first to suggest that childhood was socially and historically constructed. Despite the criticism of his methods (see Gittens 2004), it is still considered an important perspective that demonstrated that childhood was a relatively new, Western, concept that could not be reduced to physiological differences or regarded as 'natural'. Whereas, Aries (1973) argues, children were previously regarded as 'little-adults' that were quickly absorbed into the world of work and adulthood, social and economic changes extended, and isolated, childhood. More specifically, the introduction of compulsory schooling, the withdrawal of child labour, and the privatisation of the family, have been offered as explanations to the extension of the biographical duration of childhood (Zelizer 1985, Cahill 1990). This has led to, as Zelizer claims, more contemporary representations of children as "economically useless but emotionally priceless" (1985, p.209). The essence of the social construction argument is that childhood is a category that is recognised in different ways, at different times; and it is defined by, and in relation to, adulthood.

Examining this new historical positioning of childhood has been a focus of the discipline of childhood studies which emerged from anthropology (spearheaded by key texts by James and Prout 1990, James, Jenks and Prout 1998), sociology (such as Corsaro 2011, Qvortrup 1994, Mayall 1994), and geography (Holloway and Valentine 2000a, Valentine 1996, Aitken 2001). The general aims of this body of work have been to give greater attention and voice to children who are regarded as a marginalised, and often silenced, social group (see Mayall 1994, James and Prout 1997, Qvortrup 1994). As noted above, the changing social conditions moved children from public space and into the privatised realm of the family and thus excluded them from many adult rights. As a consequence of these changes, children's agency was reimagined as passive and incomplete, aided by the emerging developmental

psychology literature on childhood (Walkerdine 2004). Therefore, one of the original aims of childhood scholars was to challenge this view and instead demonstrate that children are social actors with agency. In doing so, as Qvortrup (1994) proposes, the field was interested in children's 'being' rather than their 'becoming'. Thus, childhood studies became defined through positioning the child as an active participant in their social world, rather than as "passive representatives of the future generation" (James and Prout 1997, p.13).

The 'child as agentic social actor' trope that emerged from childhood studies has been widely adopted over several decades. Its popularity, however, has resulted in, as a number of authors have commentated, the field being limited by the tendency to repeat it as if "these were still novel insights that have not already won wide agreement" (Prout 2005, p.2). In addition, the critique also extends, beyond a call to move forward thinking around childhood (such as Pugh 2014), to suggest that children's agency has also been overemphasised (James 2013, Valentine 2011). Valentine (2011, p.256), notes that agency should be regarded as "inevitably inflected with the social" rather than as isolated individual action. This point is further raised as a concern by researchers in non-Western contexts in particular, who argue against accepting the concept of agency uncritically (Ansell 2014, Williams 2004, Campbell et al. 2015). Campbell, in reviewing the critiques, suggests, "a dogged insistence on children's agency potentially masks constraints on the outcomes of choices available to children in conditions of poverty, violence and abuse" (2015, p.55). Their argument is that agency may be heavily constrained by social contexts and may result in choices, that could be mistakenly interpreted as agentic, that are in fact only made through necessity (Williams 2004, Campbell 2015, Valentine 2011). Given that, as I will describe in my methodology chapter, my fieldsite is situated in a disadvantaged neighbourhood, these points are particular pertinent.

A further change in the field that deserves acknowledgement here is the increasing recognition that childhood should be seen as both 'nature-culture' (Prout 2005). By which, it is argued that the focus in childhood studies to challenge bio-psychological (nature orientated) discourses in favour of social approaches (culture orientated) has resulted in dichotomies which assume that nature and culture are mutually exclusive. First however, it is important to review the key criticisms levelled at bio-psychological

perspectives on childhood. These are that bio-psychological discourses focus on physiological immaturity that positions that child as incomplete and incompetent (Allen 1968a). Therefore, emotional and cognitive maturity is, subsequently, associated with chronological age (Such and Walker 2004), and assumes a linear and cumulative progression leading to 'complete' and 'mature' adulthood (Mayall 2001, 2002, Jones 1988). In particular, these perspectives have been criticised for suggesting that childhood is a set of universal stages. The challenge from childhood scholars, then, has demonstrated that there are multiple and varied ways of accomplishing childhood in different cultures, in support of a more constructionist approach. However, as Lee (2001) has pointed out, there are differences that are not imagined, and similarly to the discussion above, this approach can overemphasise ability and agency. Instead, as Prout (2005) argues, we should be aware of both approaches to childhood, whilst recognising that individual childhoods will be differently experienced through gender, class, ethnicity, disability, and sexuality.

Together, the new social studies of childhood have had an impact on our understanding of the creation of childhood as a distinct social category, which has led to move away from prioritising children's future status as adults. It is also clear, taking into account the debates above, that there is still considerable work to be done. Indeed, as I mentioned at the outset, Pugh (2014) and others (Prout 2005) warn that the field risks becoming stagnated through repeating certain tropes and approaches to childhood that have now been long acknowledged. Nevertheless, recognising these challenges, childhood studies continues to make important contributions, such as understanding the influence of modernity on changing ideas about children. In particular, what Aries (1973) documented, in reference to the 17th Century, was the increasing distance between childhood and adulthood, however more recently it has been suggested that this distance is shrinking. This change in distance is seen to be the result of the blurring between the categories of childhood, youth, and adulthood (Lee 2001, Prout 2005). What I am referring to is not the moral panics about the disappearance of the idealised notion of childhood as happy and free of responsibilities (Valentine 1996), but instead that as the traditional markers of adulthood (getting married, having a family, having a job) become unstable the markers of childhood also shift. I will discuss this in subsequent sections, following an exploration on how youth has separately emerged as a social category.

The construction of adolescence and youth

Youth is a social category that encompasses, and overlaps with, a number of other age-related concepts, such as adolescence, teenager, and young adult. These terms are often used interchangeably in the literature, although they are each, and collectively, subject positions laden with social meanings (Griffin 1993, Lesko 1996a, b, Raby 2007). More commonly, though, especially within the social sciences, it is the term youth that has been adopted. However, Jones (2009) argues that before this shift to youth, it was adolescence that was the dominant focus. Adolescence, in contrast to youth as a category, has been historically associated with biological changes linked to chronological age. Thus, adolescence was connected with the start of puberty (Griffin 1993), and assumed to be characterised and determined by hormonal changes (France 2000, Jones 2009, Griffin 1993). The movement to youth, then, can be regarded as a move away from this biological determinism and chronological age linked with adolescence. However, as it was the concept of adolescence that preceded youth it is important to consider the literature around the advent of this social category.

Whilst Aries (1973) is often discussed in relation to the 'discovery' of childhood, it is the work of psychologist G. Stanley Hall (1905) that is commonly referred to when examining to the emergence of adolescence as a separate social group (see Griffin 1993, Lesko 1996, Jones 2009). His two-volume work was published at the turn of the 20th century, and synthesised emerging 'facts' about adolescence; with chapters as diverse as 'parts and organs during adolescence' and 'juvenile faults, immoralities and crimes' (1905). According to Lesko (2012), for Hall adolescence became a "social space in which progress or degeneration was visualised, embodied, measured and affirmed" (p.56). In other words, the future of society depended on the socialisation and cooperation of adolescents. Unlike the critiques of Aries (1973) which focussed on his methods, rather than the content, Stanley Hall (1905) has been dismissed for his ideological approach that represented young, white, middle-class males as the key to the civilisation of society (Griffin 1993, Lesko 2012, Jones 2009). It is interesting then, as I will go on to discuss, that the concept of youth is still often associated with gender, ethnicity, and social class (Griffin 1993, Jones 2009).

Aries (1973) described the expansion of adolescence, which "encroached upon childhood in one direction, maturity in the other" (p.28), but recognised that it was often the middle classes who came to occupy this space. This inequality, where some are afforded an extended transition to adulthood free of responsibility whilst others are not, is still a contemporary issue. According to Bynner (2005) the gap is getting wider, noting that extended participation in education and training is "concentrated in the most advantaged sections of society" (p.375). Nevertheless, this middle class extended transition is increasingly regarded as normal which means that alternative pathways come to be regarded as deviant (Jones 2009). Furthermore, there is a recognition that as transition to adulthood, a topic of the next section, becomes increasingly insecure, young people have to rely on families to provide security and resources whilst they move between work, training, and education (Bynner, Chisholm, and Furlong 1997, Bynner 2005, Jones 2009, Furlong and Cartmel 2006). Again, this will be readily available to some and not others.

There are recurring themes that run across discussions of representations in both childhood and youth studies; namely dependency, agency, and future orientation. First, although childhood was previously discussed in relation to its dependence (Aries 1973), youth is regarded as a "social position that shifts frequently between areas of dependence and independence" (Raby 2007, p.47). This can cause tension as young people, who are seen to independent, as agentic decision makers, face "the cost of being morally responsible for their actions" (Allen 2013, p.42). As Lee (2001), notes, most people move back and forward between dependence and independence, but it an issue of concern when young people do so. Finally, youth, like childhood can be interpreted as a preparatory stage, with Lesko (2012, p.132) vividly describing how in adolescence "the present is emptied of meaningful events; the past may have significance, but really only the future matters". There are therefore clear, but distinct links between the two representations, but as I will go to discuss, they both draw meaning from their relation to adulthood.

Age as social and relational

Jones (1988) challenges the value of considering age stages that imply a distinct beginning and end, instead proposing that youth should be considered of a broader continuum from birth to death. This neglects, however, to consider that concepts of

childhood and youth draw meaning from their relation to other age groups. A number of authors propose that childhood and youth are given meaning in relation to adulthood and vice versa (Pugh 2014, Lee 2001, Wyn and White 1996). For example, Lee (2001) has suggested that childhood was given meaning through being a journey towards a known destination: adulthood. As the ways of achieving adulthood become more precarious it "can no longer be relied upon to make sense of childhood" (Lee 2001, p.8).

Furthermore, although the markers of achieving adulthood are no longer stable, they are still held up as target for young people. Smyth (2015) warns that young people are being misled into a fallacy that proper adulthood can be achieved if they work hard and conform to neoliberal norms. Cote and Bynner (2008) further claim that the consequence of this fallacy is that if young people fail to achieve this goals they are taught that it is their fault, any regrets are their own doing, and that their subsequent alienation is normal (Smyth 2015). Lesko (2012) has proposed that, despite these widespread changes, young people have always been subject to the duty to achieve adulthood which she terms 'panoptical time'. She suggests that young people are obliged to be responsible in the present in order to guarantee their future adulthood.

A second, related, approach to age that avoids falling into chronological groupings, is a focus on social age (Laz 1998, 2003). Laz (1998) proposes that age is more social than chronological, and describes it as a performance that gains meaning in, and through, interaction. It particular, she suggests that age is performative in "the sense of something requiring activity, and labour" (1998, p.86), that it is accomplished in the ways we present ourselves. Furthermore, she suggests social age is normative, there are assumptions tied in with 'doing age' right. For youth, as France (2000) points out, there are certain expectations about being young that are performed in different ways in the home, in the school, and with the peer group. Laz (2003) also notes, understandings of age are almost always described in relation to the body, as such can argue that age is relational, imagined, and embodied. Alexander (2014) also regards age as social, drawing on the idea of 'age-imaginaries' which describe the "complex ways in which we make sense of ourselves and our relationships with others in relation to imagined and imaginatively constructed ideas of age-related identity" (2014, p.139). In particular, this approach allow us to take the perspective that age

can be imagined and performed in multiple ways simultaneously, rather than as mutually exclusive categories.

In examining age as relational and social, we can also relate to how age intersects with other important dimensions of identity. What I want to draw attention to here is that youth is experienced differently in different contexts. Firstly, Ferguson (2001) in her ethnography of a school in the United States, suggests that what it means to be a child or young person varies by virtue of one's class, race, and gender. Of particular note, she recalls that when the students in her school were reprimanded, some young people were absolved of responsibility, whilst others were 'adultified'. In other words, they were deemed responsible and subsequently subject to punishment. In her case, young black men were 'adultified', and some criminalised. Another example is from Harris (2004) in reference to expectations around girls who she separates into 'can-do' and 'at-risk' girls. When the 'can-do' girls, who were (often) white and middle-class, suffered setbacks, they were offered help to get back on track. In contrast, the 'at risk' girls who tended to be vulnerable and marginalised girls were punished and regarded as responsible (and thus adult). Previous work by Rubin (1976), who carried extensive longitudinal interviews with families, and ethnographic work by Burton (Burton 1997, Burton 2007) note that for young people living in disadvantage accelerates their journey towards adulthood. They are 'adultified' by having to take on adult responsibility and caring duties where they swiftly move from being a child to an adult.

So far I have reviewed how representations of childhood and youth have linked but distinct, lineages that lead to assumptions about how age categories are understood. The 'new social studies of childhood' has been influential in its approach that understands young people as active in the construction of their social worlds (James and Prout 1997). This perspective has not been without critique, particularly in prioritising agency over structure the constraints facing children and young people have often been minimised. In turn, youth can be seen as a "historical construct which gives certain aspects of the social experience of growing up their meanings" (Wyn and Woodman 2006, p.3). As I have discussed, young people continue to be understood with a framework of 'normal adolescence' (Allen 2012) that prioritises

their present experience only in relation to the future. In both childhood and youth studies there is recognition that while young people's ability to exercise this agency is constrained by their lower moral status granted by society. I have also discussed social theories of age that treat age as social, and relational. I find this approach compelling as it allows for a more critical examination of the various ways in which youth is experienced. It also recognises that age is normative and, as I will explore next, this means that youth becomes understood in association with certain traits and expectations.

2.2 Children and young people as 'suspect'

Moral panics, or always suspect

Writing about youth in the United States, Giroux (2009) and Males (1996) have highlighted the increasing distrust and suspicion of young people by society. They argue that a politics of fear is being used to justify the increased rates of criminalisation of young people and the dismantling of youth policies. Furthermore, this disinvestment in youth is said to be detrimental to rising feelings of exclusion and marginalisation amongst young people. As I will discuss in the following section, under the most recent UK Governments, there has been similar rhetoric around youth that emerged in the aftermath of the 2011 summer riots, and subsequent plans to withdraw youth welfare provision in addition to education funding cuts. In order to explore whether young people are increasingly being treated as suspects, however, we must turn back to explore whether this is represents a different understanding of youth.

In the previous chapter and section, I briefly outlined how representations of youth have historically positioned them as 'devils' (Valentine 1996) or 'risky' (Kelly 2000, 2003). In this sense therefore, young people, in particular, have long been suspect. Geographers, in particular, have frequently noted the role of space in the production of 'suspect youth'. According to this perspective, young people are regarded as suspect when they are seen to be in spaces where they do not belong (Valentine 1996, Aitken 2001), such as adult space. Valentine (1996) notes that both messages that young people are at threat to, and from, adult space, produces public space as adult space. Therefore, young people are subject to increased visibility and surveillance as their access to public space is reduced. Furthermore, this labelling of young people

becomes focused on certain young people. For example, McAra and McVie (2005) carried out a longitudinal cohort study with police and young people in Scotland over the introduction of Antisocial Behaviour laws (ASBs). They found that the introduction of ASBs meant that the police were more likely to treat young people as suspect, but that this was influenced by demographic information that led to a 'cycle of labelling' around young poor men specifically.

It is not that Giroux (2009) and Males (1996) fail to recognise these previous understandings of youth, however. Rather, they would argue that it is the scope of what young people are suspected of that is changing. Young people are no longer just suspect in terms of a threat to social order and public space, but as suspect of failing to fulfil neoliberal expectations, suspect of failing to create their own biographies, and suspect of failing to meet to the demands of previous generations (Lesko 2012). Young people, then, are not trusted to manage their own transitions to adulthood. This is summarised by Giroux when he states that "when not portrayed as a social threat to the social order, youth are often rendered as mindless, self-absorbed, and as incapable of long-standing commitments" (2009, p.15). Therefore, as young people become more suspect of these failings, they are no longer considered a good social investment for the future. Of course, under this neoliberal perspective that fails to account for wider structural forces, some young people will continue to be 'investable' whilst others, Giroux (2009) warns, will become seen as expendable.

A number of youth studies researchers have identified this different form of suspicion. Sharkey and Shields (2008), for example, describe this suspicion as a form of 'abject citizenship' where young people are relegated to the position of 'other' when they "fail to finish school, get a job, get married, have a family, buy a house, pay their taxes" (p.243). In other words, in failing to perform 'good citizenship' young people are denied access to full adult status and rights (Griffin 1993). In being considered 'abject', young people are represented as threatening that justified the desire to either intervene or expel from citizenship. Aitken (2001) lends support to this argument when he suggests that there is increased frustration and anger towards young people "who cannot or will not fulfil their expected roles" (Aitken 2001, p. 147). This was echoed in an interview conducted by Parkes and Connoly (2011) with a

police officer who suggested that young people, within a specific deprived area, were amoral, evil and a lost generation.

The perspective of youth as suspect does reflects ongoing attention to youth that Cohen (1972) describes as a moral panic. Cohen (1972), in his seminal book, suggested that youth culture was a recurring moral panic that he dated to the post-war period. He defined moral panics as the focus on perceived threats that lead to disproportionate hostility that erupt unexpectedly. According to Cohen (1972), youth culture frequently represents this moral threat to society. In later editions of his work, though, Cohen (2002) noted that to a degree the social space of the moral panic has been replaced with the idea of risk. Certainly, evidence of this can be readily found in the youth-at-risk paradigm (Kelly 2000, 2003, 2006). For example, youth culture is seen to rely on the discourse of risk to categorise young people as either normal or deviant (Tait 1995, Kelly 2000, 2003, 2006). It is important, therefore to consider risk paradigms alongside the youth-as-suspect perspective, as they similarly draw on individualistic, neoliberal approaches.

Youth-at-risk

Youth and risk are often seen as synonymous (France 2000, 2008) with young people portrayed as at risk from external threats and as a "risk to society either now or in the future" (Turnbull and Spence 2011, p.941). Thus it is important to examine theories of risk to explore how they become attached to and organised around the category of youth, given that the concept of risks combines with youth in multiple and complex ways. Three key approaches to risk will be discussed; anthropological perspective exemplified by Douglas (1966, 1992), sociological approaches driven by Beck (1992) and Giddens (1999); and Foucauldian perspectives used by Lupton (1993, 1995, 1999a). All three challenge risk as a neutral and abstract economic calculation that can be objectively measured. Instead, they recognised that risk is a social construct that reinforces cultural norms (Johnson 2010). In this section, therefore I will discuss the theoretical perspectives and previous research around risk and youth, paying attention to how risk influences who is seen as responsible or to blame.

Anthropologist Mary Douglas's (1966, 1992) sociocultural perspective on risk challenges the taken for granted objective and universal nature of risk through

claiming that its meaning cannot be distinguished from its context. This, she argues, can be used to explain why some dangers may be risky to some and not to others. In the case here, theories of risk need to explain why youth more so than adulthood is deemed risky. For Douglas, risk is political as it "runs across the gamut of social life to moralize and politicize dangers" (1990, p.4). This supports Males (1996) argument that the current 'war on youth' is a political endeavour. In addition, the naming of risk is considered problematic as certain groups become seen as dangerous and 'other' which "justifies bringing them under control" (Douglas 1985, p.57). Thus, the positioning of youth as risky or suspect portrays them as in need of intervention

There are a number of other ways in which Douglas's theory of risk has been used in reference to youth. Youth, as I described in the previous chapter, sits in an uneasy, and moveable, state between childhood and adulthood. Therefore, they become seen as particularly risky (Allatt 1997). Secondly, the concept of risk is future-orientated in a similar way to which young people are represented as future citizens. Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) warn that this future orientation is flawed given that you can only anticipate dangers that you know about. Adults who portray risk as a way to manage the future cannot account for the unknown dangers, events, and conditions that young people may face. Those who fail to prepare for these unknowns are accordingly blamed for their failure. This supports Douglas's (1992) argument that risk discourses always portray risk-takers as 'fools'. In summary, Douglas's theories on risk are useful in calling attention to the political nature of risk through which young people are seen as dangerous, whilst recognising that these judgements are constructed through specific cultural frameworks.

Sociological theorists Beck (1992) and Giddens (1999) have been particularly influential in the field of risk, and in youth studies. Each in different ways highlights the role of social conditions in how risk is understood. Beck (1992) in his concept of 'risk society' calls attention to the ways in which life in late modernity is increasingly insecure and precariousness that leads to anxiety. He suggests that in order to manage this anxiety, individuals have to manage 'risk' biographies that can adapt to constant change and lack of traditional support networks, instead of relying on previous forms of biographies (Beck 1992, Woodman 2009). According to this perspective, young people are required to become reflexive, independent, and flexible

agents. Although the risk society idea focuses on the individual outside of social structures, Beck nonetheless recognises that "risks strengthen, not abolish the class society" (1992, p.35). Giddens (1999, 6), in contrast to Beck (1992) has focused more on how risk has become more global and encompassing in regards to managing concerns about the future. He proposes that in modernity in the context of increasing doubt caused when we "have to make a decision in the context of conflicting, changeable scientific and technological information" (1999, p.6). Therefore, young people have to navigate a future in which no knowledge is certain, and in which risks cannot be managed, as they cannot be known. In combination, Beck and Giddens highlight the difficulties facing young people as pathways to adulthood become increasingly unstable and precarious.

The third approach to risk comes from Deborah Lupton (1995, 1999) has argued that the one of the key drawbacks to the theories outlined above is the focus of externally imposed, rather than internally imposed, risk. Instead, she uses Foucauldian ideas on power and discipline to help overcome this deficit, which she argues recognises that to be labelled 'at risk' has disciplinary effects (Brown 1995, Jutel 2011, Lupton 1995). Firstly, that it is those with power who impose the categorisation of risk onto those who are relatively powerless. For young people, it is more often adults who decide and label what is or isn't risky. Secondly, as Hunt (2007, p.76) has suggested that the categorisation of risk is productive, so for example to be labelled as high risk means being targeted for "expert advice, surveillance and control". France and Utting (2005) have suggested that this is reflected in the rise of preventative approaches targeted at young people (France and Utting 2005), even in the absence of an evident problem (Turnbull and Spence 2011). Lastly, turning back to neoliberal ideals, risk is something to be managed through "self-control, self-knowledge, and self-improvement" (Lupton 1999a, p.93). This self-management ensures that responsibility falls at the feet of individuals. Furlong and Cartmel (2006), discussing youth, propose that this individualisation of responsibility is internalised by young people, which they describe as an 'epistemological fallacy'. This is particularly problematic when, as has been discussed above, risk is unequally distributed and requires resources to negotiate them (Beck 1992, te Riele 2006).

Youth researchers have further drawn attention to the negative consequences of labelling youth through risk discourses. Being labelled as 'at-risk', Kelly (2000), warns, can blame the young person through implying that they have a 'flawed moral biography'. Furthermore, the 'at risk' status is often used to suggest that young people are jeopardizing an idealised or expected future (Kelly 2000). Again, this ties into seeing young people as 'adults in the making' (Foster 2011). In doing so, as Bessant (2001) cautions, risk discourses can delegitimise young people's current experiences, as well as their ability to frame problems in alternative ways.

As Douglas (1966, 1982) argues, risks can only be interpreted subjectively. Research with young people frequently notes that adult-defined risks are experienced in different ways. Blackman (1997), who carried out in-depth work with young homeless people, suggests that risk discourses can often fail to see the challenges young people have to face, and that from an alternative perspective "the majority of behaviours patterns were understandable and far from irrational" (p.127). This highlights the discrepancy between expert and lay knowledge, and it is this "disjunction that often exists between the ways in which risk is characterised within prevention science debates and the ways it is negotiated within youth cultures" (Duff 2003, p.290). Thompson (2014) in work with young people defined as 'risky' through their status as NEET (Not in Education Employment of Training) reports that it is important to recognise that this not be the priority amongst the multiple challenges they are currently facing.

Recognising risk within the context of young people's lives and the unequal distribution of risk has been the focus of a number of studies with disadvantaged young people and neighbourhoods. Crivello and Boyden (2014), in a study of young Peruvians, propose that theories of risk can often fail to capture the pervasiveness of risk in poor communities. They suggest that risk is an endemic part of ordinary, not extraordinary, lives. Similar to the discuss about the constraint of children and young people's agency, Crivello and Boyden (2014) highlight that risk has to be managed under constrained conditions, with few available choices. Douglas and Wildavsky (1982), I would argue, would define these as 'involuntary risks'. Involuntary risks are regarded as risks that are accepted through necessity and lack of alternative, but that they would not accept otherwise. For example, an involuntary risk would be taking a

dangerous job because it is preferable to being unemployed, but it is a risk that would not be accepted voluntarily if there were viable options, or if they were rich. Most of the discussions in this section, therefore, could be described as 'involuntary risk' that is "imposed by the society in which the individual lives" (Douglas and Wildavsky 1982, p.19).

As Turnbull and Spence (2011), amongst others, have noted, risk has proliferated across the youth field, becoming "a social, political and moral entity in itself" (p.939). Moreover, Kelly (2000) notes this is conceptually no different in describing and understanding the lives of young people than the previous focus on delinquency and 'problem youth'. Like these previous representations, the risk discourses are determined by those in power and lead to increased intervention, surveillance, and management in young people's lives. As Tait (1995) notes, the proliferation of risk discourses provide the rationale for youth regulation that is potentially endless. In summary these theories of risk, in different ways, highlight how risk is political, social, unequally distributed, and associated with increased precarity. Risk discourses, then, can be understood as entangled with issues of responsibility and blame. Given the moral implications of risk discourses, it is therefore important to differentiate between those risks that are accepted or taken willingly, and those that are involuntary and coercive.

2.3 'Socially excluded' youth

In addition to the youth-at-risk field, social exclusion has been a dominant framework in understanding young people's lives over the past few decades. It is relevant to explore here as, within UK policy, social exclusion has been used to manage 'risky' young people (Turnbull and Spence 2011, Parkes and Connolly 2011). In turn, those labelled as socially excluded are also likely to be regarded as suspect. The term 'social exclusion' originates from French and European community politics (Levitas 1998); however in the UK it has become synonymous with the work of the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) set up by the New Labour Government (Macdonald 1997, Levitas 1998, Jones 2009). The approach of the SEU was characterised by the idea of an underclass that were not excluded through social conditions, but rather had chosen to disengage with society. The SEU therefore, utilised a rhetoric which downplayed the role of poverty and disadvantage, and subsequently planned to

address exclusion through tackling 'inappropriate behaviours' (Fahmy 2006) such as homelessness, teenage pregnant, truancy, NEET, and neighbourhood renewal (Levitas 1998). These range of policies, according to Jones (2009), led to the renaming of certain groups as socially excluded who previously had been defined as the 'underclass'.

Youth were, perhaps unsurprisingly, a focus in the new category of the socially excluded, especially those who were identified as risky through their disengagement with school and employment, or their engagement in certain behaviours (such as the focus on truancy and teen pregnancy) (Levitas 1998). The inherent assumption is that if young people behave according to prescribed standards they will move from being excluded to included. Furthermore, it reinforces that the only value young people have is their future economic potential (Levitas 1998, MacDonald 1997). This fits into the neoliberal fallacy that all that disadvantage "can be overcome by inner strength and hard work" (Waterston and Vesperi 2009, p.73). Again, it focuses on the responsibility of the individual to rise above their circumstances, and ignores the fact that, as Coles outlines:

> Social exclusion occurs in a variety of very different ways, and is often determined by the decisions of policy makers about the kinds of social welfare provisions to be afforded to children and young people (Coles 1997, p.69).

The approach of the SEU has been criticised for utilising a moralistic discourse that, it has been argued, leads to further blame and exclusion of young people who are unable to conform. Sibley (1995) suggests that experiences of social and spatial exclusion are often determined by negative stereotypes, which position them as 'other'. MacDonald and Marsh (2005) agree with this perspective when they suggest that the term 'social exclusion' itself has been mobilised as shorthand to "describe the problems of particular places and the people who live in them" (p.14). The labelling of young people as excluded, then, can be an 'essentializing discourse' (Thompson 2014, p.64) in which young people are represented by adults as outside of society and in need of control. Furthermore, these negative stereotypes can be seen to reinforce the suffering and humiliation described in the lived realities of exclusion (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010).

Within the extensive literature on youth and social exclusion there are three important themes that I will briefly describe, the role of economic marginality, spatial exclusion, and the role of familial and local networks in feelings of inclusion. This literature challenges the approach and assumptions used by the SEU that uses a deficit model to focus on what young people are lacking, rather than a deficit in what is being offered to them by society. As politics and policies have moved on beyond the SEU it is still worth noting that these assumptions continue to be utilised to label young people. As the majority of this work does not draw on the SEU definitions, it is worth noting that here social exclusion refers to the ways "through which individuals are socially marginalised, limited in participation, and or denied opportunities to develop" (Mythen 2013, p.156).

One of the predominant findings reported in research with socially excluded youth is their experience of economic marginality. A sustained programme of research has explored 'socially excluded' young people's experience of school to work transitions in Teesside (see MacDonald and Marsh 2005, MacDonald et al. 2005, MacDonald and Shildrick 2007, 2013, Shildrick and MacDonald 2007). This body of work highlights the social and economic conditions that have led to the rise of insecure 'poor work' that becomes one of few options available to young people. MacDonald (2008) reports, from interviews with 186 young people, that it was not that they were economically excluded, but rather that they were 'churning' between multiple unstable options that offered them few opportunities for progression. This supports previous work, such as Webster and colleagues (2004) who carried out longitudinal research on young people's transitions and found that their participants were trapped in low-level work that sustained their marginality. Furthermore, they found that, in contrast to the underclass proposal, that young people placed high value on work and distanced themselves from workless 'others' (Shildrick and MacDonald 2013). Instead, as Thompson (2014) illustrates, young people had low expectations rather than low aspirations. Therefore, research suggests that young people in disadvantaged areas want to work, but are faced with navigating precarious options of insecure work whilst also being subject to the stigma of unemployment (MacDonald 2008).

Social exclusion has also been linked to the importance of place, with MacDonald and Marsh (2005) suggesting that young people become stuck and enclosed within disadvantaged neighbourhoods where their opportunities are limited, solidifying their economic marginalisation. Place is also important, according to Sibley (1995) who claims that social exclusion is largely experienced through spatialized exclusion. As such, young people can experience stigma through their associated with neighbourhoods that are labelled as "deviant and threatening" (Sibley 1995, p.55). Wacquant (2008) describes this problem as place stigma where neighbourhoods are associated with "crime, lawlessness and moral degeneracy where only the rejects of society could bear to dwell" (p.29). It is clear also, that residents in these areas are all too aware of the negative stereotypes (Sibley 1995) as they attempt to distance themselves from 'bad places' in their accounts. They attempted to manage the stigma through blaming 'others' and portraying their own moral worth (Airey 2003, Wacquant 2008). However, place stigma also manifests in disinvestment in the area that influences the labour market as well the services available (Wacquant 2008, 2009). In other words, spatial exclusion can affect the opportunities available to young people within their neighbourhoods (Bauder 2001).

Although young people recognise that their neighbourhood might be negatively perceived, nonetheless many report that they want to stay in the area (MacDonald and Marsh 2005). These stigmatised neighbourhoods were described as places in which young people felt included (MacDonald and Marsh 2005, MacDonald et al. 2005, MacDonald and Shildrick 2007). These places were considered by young people to be safe, and known, where they were protected from other forms of stigma such as racism (Morrow 2000, Parkes and Connolly 2011). More so, it was the supportive relationships within the neighbourhoods that protected them from imposed exclusion (Holloway and Valentine 2000b, Morrow 2000). Familial and peer networks within the community were considered important in offering employment and training opportunities that might be denied to them otherwise (MacDonald and Shildrick 2007). Thus, the relationships in the neighbourhood provided young people with a positive sense of identity and place (Airey 2003). There is a conflict, however, according to Shildrick and MacDonald (2008) when young people have strong attachment to places that may constrain and be detrimental to their future opportunities

Considering these findings, it is clear that young people that are labelled as social excluded experience processes of economic marginality and place stigma that reinforce their marginal position. In turn, these may lead young people into becoming stuck in insecure jobs in places that are subject to a lack of investment and opportunity. As Wacquant (2008) notes, it doesn't matter whether or not these negative stereotypes of people and place are true, rather, that when they are agreed to be, there are subsequent consequences. Thus, social exclusion can lead to increased surveillance by police, decreased use of public space, and less access to services and support (Parkes and Connolly 2011, Wacquant 2008). In addition, exclusion and stigma is felt, and is associated with feelings of low self-worth, anxiety, or fear, that can lead young people to accept social exclusion as individual blame (Furlong and Cartmel 2008). Although 'social exclusion' has been a fruitful area of research, as described above, there are a number of concerns that have been raised around the use of the term that need to be discussed.

MacDonald and Marsh (2005) have broadly criticised the term 'social exclusion' for being a catch-all phrase that lacks clarity and focus that makes it difficult to differentiate from poverty (Levitas 1998). For example, how are 'socially excluded' youth different from young people living in constrained conditions? However, one of the more conceptual problems with the term is, as Levitas (1998) argues, that it creates a division between the "included majority and excluded minority" (1998, p.7) that ignores inequality amongst the 'included'. In addition, it does not account for the relationship between the groups. As Jones (2009) suggests, it is important to understand "whether those who are included serve their own interest by collaborating in the exclusion of others" (p.138). Lastly, social exclusion suffers from its association with the SEU that makes it a morally loaded term (Smith et al. 2005).

Despite the criticisms of the concept of social exclusion, there are a number of reasons why it continues to be used. Firstly, according to MacDonald and Marsh (2005) it can help draw attention to how "becoming socially excluded is dynamic and happens to individuals over time" (p.17). Thus, it is helpful in examining the process through which young people come to experience exclusion (Coles 1997, Allatt 1997). In addition, its use in sociological literature ensures that the focus remains on an approach to social exclusion that highlights the role of poverty in the face of rising

inequalities. On balance, I have it found it more useful to think about exclusion in a way that focuses the everyday and, following Levitas (1998), to think about how it emerges in social interaction such as “whether the individual has someone to listen to, comfort, help in a crisis, relax with, or who appreciates them” (p.135). In focusing on exclusion more broadly, though, I have found it helpful to draw on the anthropological literature on social suffering and structural violence.

Young people’s exclusion through structural violence

So far, then, I have examined how young people are labelled as suspect, risky, and socially excluded through processes in which the conditions of their lives and class positions are marginalised in policy in favour of promoting their responsibility to overcome their constraints. Research with young people, however, has shown that they are exposed to involuntary risk, economic marginality, and stigma that position them as ‘suspect’. What sticks out, though amongst these different issues is that they are imposed by policies and rhetoric onto young people that blame them for the subsequent consequences. In other words, this research calls attention to role of political, economic and institutional power in structuring young people’s lives. Therefore, I suggest, there is considerable overlap between these discussions and anthropological work on structural violence and suffering. In particular, I draw on the work of medical anthropologists such as Paul Farmer, Arthur Kleinman, and Nancy Scheper-Hughes who have explored how everyday forms of structural violence constrain people’s agency and render them vulnerable to suffering in their everyday relationships and lives.

Paul Farmer (1996, 2004, 2005) is a medic and medical anthropologist who has conducted most of his fieldwork in Haiti. He has utilised Galtung’s (1969) concept of structural violence to examine how social forces become embodied as an individual experience. He suggests structural violence can used to describe a “host of offenses against human dignity: extreme and relative poverty, social inequalities ranging from racism to gender inequality, and the most spectacular forms of violence” (2005, p.8). Looking back to the previous discussions, there are clear links that can be made. Young people, whose worth is devalued through neoliberal values, risk discourses, and social exclusion can be said to be suffering structural violence. The concept, according to Farmer (1996, 2004, 2005), allows us to explore not only social and

economic inequalities, but also how they manifest differently for people through their social positions. For example, how life choices are structured by race, gender, ethnicity as well as poverty. He illustrates this point in his work in Haiti, when he describes how gender can explain why a Haitian woman dies of AIDS, whilst a man of torture, at the same time as recognising that they were both made vulnerable through economic and political violence.

The impact of structural violence is suffering. Arthur Kleinman (Kleinman and Kleinman 1991, 1996, Kleinman 2006, Kleinman, Das, and Lock 1997) and others have used the term 'social suffering' to describe the consequence of structural power on people's lives. Scheper-Hughes (2004) suggests that suffering is experienced along a violence continuum that can range from the extreme forms of physical and political forms of violence in the contexts or war or extreme hardship, to the everyday forms of violence experienced by vulnerable groups. She proposes that we should be aware of structural violence and suffering through paying attention to different forms of warning signs. These signs included a growing consensus towards devaluing certain lives, the refusal of social support and care towards vulnerable groups, the militarisation of everyday life through prisons and security, and reverse feelings of victimisation of dominant groups (Scheper-Hughes 2002, pp.373-374). There are parallels, then, that can be drawn out in Giroux's (2009) argument about suspect youth. He, too, proposes that young people are being regarded as worthless, lazy or risky that justify decreased investment and increased criminalisation by 'victimised' adults. Therefore, we can understand young people, and different groups of young people, as experiencing structural violence along a continuum that makes them vulnerable to suffering. Farmer (2005) states that in order to explain suffering "one must embed individual biography in the larger matrix of culture, history, and political economy" (p.272). Therefore, it what follows, I look at the evidence that there is a movement towards representing young people as suspect through discussing the current situation in the UK.

The current UK approach to childhood and youth

> Child poverty is being privatised as children's needs are repositioned back into the family; a family setting that is under siege, bearing the heaviest burden in relation to welfare cuts and financial insecurity and

> systematically undermined through political rhetoric and media hyperbole. (Ridge 2013, p.414)

In order to explore if, and how, young people are being regarded as suspect, I will outline the political and economic climate in the UK to explore whether disinvestment in youth policies is evident. Youth researchers have noted, however, that young people have been both the subject of period of investment and disinvestment over the past several decades. During the 1980s, which was characterised by a recession young people were subject to increased economic marginalisation (France 1998, France and Utting 2005) and subject to reforms in income support which left them disqualified from support (Furlong and Cartmel 2006). The impact of this change was to withdraw the ability of young people, especially working class youth, to transition into independence. The change in policy was a move towards encouraging families to take more fiscal responsibility for their children (Furlong and Cartmel 2006). In the late 1990s, under New Labour, there was a period of investment in children and young people through their child poverty targets and the SEU (Levitas 1998, Jones 2009).

It has been suggested that current UK Governments are again moving back towards a 1980s model in their range of proposed, and actual, cuts to youth related policies and services. Other authors have already comprehensively outlined those affecting children and young people (Ridge 2013). Nevertheless, there are a few worth reiterating here. Firstly, young people are facing cuts to access to education, such as the cutting of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) which was found to be particularly successful in getting young people from the poorest families to stay on in education (Chowdry and Emmerson 2010), as well the increase in university tuition fees. As Ridge (2013) notes, although in theory the EMA was replaced by the Pupil Premium, it was not ring-fenced. Secondly, the Welfare Reform Act (2012) has attracted the most attention that includes, amongst other punitive measures, the under-occupancy housing penalty also known as the bedroom tax. Under the bedroom tax housing claimants have to pay for every spare room, regardless of the lack of alternative available housing. These sanctions have become associated with greater food poverty and rising child poverty levels (Garthwaite, Collins, and Bambra 2015).

The Coalition government's Child Poverty Strategy (2011, p.4) has described the cause of poverty as a "lack of opportunity, aspiration and stability" that can be tackled through reducing offending, teen pregnancy and risky behaviour (Ridge 2013), echoing the aims of New Labour's SEU. There have also been concerns raised about the changing measurement of the child poverty measure, which critics warn will mask the increase levels of child poverty (Wintour 2015). These proposed changes are part of an austerity programme in response to a recession that has been accompanied by stigmatising public discourses about the recipients of welfare and those living in poverty (Slater 2014, Tyler 2013). Poverty has become a moral failure of the individual rather than because of structural conditions (Valentine and Harris 2014). Standing (2011, p.66) looking more broadly at insecurity, refers to young people as the core of the new precariat and claims "not only are more youth in precarious jobs, where wages are lower anyhow, but their bargaining position is weakened in accessing all jobs, while the absence of enterprise and state benefits intensified their vulnerability to poverty". This highlights that in addition to experiencing cuts, the future for young people is increasingly precarious.

2.4 Summary and conclusion

> Modern life is hard, and in many respects increasingly so, on youth
> (Hall, 1905, p.xvi)

In this chapter, I have given a broad overview of the literature around the main topic of this thesis, youth and exclusion. I started by considering how representations of children and youth lead to different understandings of their value and position in society. These are important to consider as, Stainton Rogers (2004, p.126) argues, these "lead to different kinds of social policy towards them, and different ways for professionals to approach their care and welfare". These adult-imposed representations can serve to exclude young people from citizenship. In particular, the negative, and deficit led, way in which young people are portrayed through risk discourses has led to what has been described as the 'institutionalized mistrust of youth' (Kelly 2003). As Males (1996) describes when talking about the anti-youth sentiment implemented by the Clinton administration in the US, "politicians and agencies have dedicated themselves to demonstrating that today's kids…are so beyond help, so unlike us, that *they deserve punishment*" (p.6, emphasis in original).

Risk, dangerous, and 'othering' discourses about youth can evoke "contradictory emotions of fear, aversion, pity and anger" (Scheper-Hughes 2004, p.21) that lead to suspicion by adults, and disaffection by young people (Willis 1977). These understandings of youth are not new, as Cohen (1972) noted, young people have historically been the focus of moral panics in which they are seen as suspect. In addition, young people are aware of how they are represented, as one young person in Hava Gordon's (2009) ethnography recognised when he said that "adults have their role in society, their so-called role in society, and youth have their so-called role in society, which is to shut up and listen, and you don't know nothing" (Gordon 2009, p.133). Research with young people has shown that the essentializing discourses of risk and neoliberalism are internalised, whereby they come to accept that individuals alone are responsible for their future (Furlong & Cartmel 2006).

Similar to the 'lifestyle' drift in public health, youth policy often recognises that young people suffer through inequalities yet the interventions focus on individual behaviour change. This is clearly exemplified in the aims of the SEU, and the most recent Child Poverty Strategy. These approaches minimise the role of, and the state's duty to tackle, poverty and inequalities. As youth researchers have noted, young people are subject to increasing inequality due to changing social and economic environments in which the transitions towards adulthood have become increasingly precarious. Roberts (1997) has described how the spread of uncertainty benefits some and disadvantages others. Some young people have the resources to make slow transitions to adulthood as they remain for increasing amounts of time in dependency, whilst others are forced into fast transitions into independent, but insecure, adulthood. This subsequently affects the degree to which young people are able to participate, and find value, in society (MacDonald and Marsh 2005).

In my own work, then, I draw on a number of the key themes I have discussed in this chapter. Firstly, I regard youth as a social age that is relational and given meaning in interaction. Secondly, I recognise that young people's lives are increasingly precarious which makes them vulnerable to symbolic and structural violence that is justified through risk and 'suspect' rhetoric and policies. Furthermore, in their everyday lives, young people are unlikely to understand their experiences through these risk and exclusionary frameworks. Lastly, as youth become seen as suspect,

they are also likely to become highly visible in terms of being out-of-place, and invisible in terms of the allocation of resources and support (Giroux 2009, Puwar 2004). Thus, in exploring processes of inclusion and exclusion, I need to explore the role of place and relationships as well the social forces that may shape them. In the next chapter, then, I will explore the methodological decisions that led to this focus on exclusion, and how the assumptions outlined here influenced the direction I took in the methods I adopted for the study.

Interlude 3

Fieldnotes Visit 1.

I arrive in the middle of a team meeting and stand at the back. The manager, Don, notes that there are two new members of the team, and introduces me and another woman stood at the front. He tells the youth workers that I am a volunteer who will be doing some research over the next year. He then introduces Dr Catherine, a project worker, who will be running an empowerment programme for the girls over the next twelve weeks. Tonight, Dr Catherine will give a presentation on the project in the girls' room. It is the job of female youth worker Suzy to encourage the girls to sign up to the programme, and I am encouraged to shadow her.

A few girls have entered the youth club and Suzy goes to chat with them, asking them to sit in on Catherine's presentation. They look dubious. Catherine calls me into the room for help as she can't get the projector to work to show her presentation. The girls come and sit down, and without any solution she decides not to use the PowerPoint. I sit down next to Suzy and I can tell the girls aren't sure who I am. Catherine introduces herself as '*Dr Catherine, although you can call me Catherine'*, and begins her presentation. She talks for around 20 minutes about her life and the aims of the project – to build confidence and self-esteem in young black women. She talks without a break and I can see the girls becoming increasingly agitated. One girl puts her phone to her ear and walks out the room. I see Catherine begin to lose focus. The other girls start to look at the youth worker Suzy who shrugs and looks back sympathetically. The first girl returns to the room but promptly leaves again. She returns again, looks at Suzy, and then tells Catherine '*I thought you just wanted a* ***quick*** *word*' and then leaves.

Catherine stops talking and starts asking the girls about whether they want to take part, giving out consent forms. They look at the information and say '*we get all this at school'*, Catherine asks '*do you?*' looking sceptical, '*yes*' they assert. Catherine takes a different tack and starts talking about her own background, '*this is for women of colour - we know how things can be difficult*'. Catherine explains that this programme is different as it will equip them to know themselves and know their strengths. '*I know me strengths'* says one, and Catherine asks what are they, '*erm*' replies the girl giggling.

‘*This will help you with the future*’ says Catherine and again the girl explains she knows what she wants to do, ‘*I’m gonna be a police officer’*. When asked why, she shrugs and then replies ‘*it is a good job and you do good*’. ‘*But how will you get there*?’ asks Catherine. The girls have lost their patience; ‘*I don’t want to think about being older*’ the girl concludes looking at the others and they walk out.

Suzy leaves the room to talk briefly to the girls outside, and comes back in with two other girls, Asia and Jess. Catherine jokes about shortening her speech but she does exactly the same. After her twenty minute speech, she again starts asking questions and is met with shrugs. When she asks what they want to do, Jess is silent. Asia says modelling, and after some prompting from Suzy she gets out her photos demonstrating that she has already had some modelling experience. After a brief discussion of the project, the girls say no and walk out. Suzy comes out and says that Catherine is leaving. Catherine comes up to me and asks if I am going to stay working with “*these kids*”.

Chapter 3

Methodology and locating 'The Common'

The preceding interlude comes from my first evening of ethnographic fieldwork, and can be interpreted as what ethnographers refer to as the 'entrance story'. As Geertz (1988) has described, these first impressions are often used to position the fieldsite as an exotic, 'other', place, to both the reader and the naïve ethnographer. For me, however, my first evening provided me with the opportunity to observe another stranger's, Dr Catherine's, first and last experience at the fieldsite. More importantly, this first evening told me a lot about how my own fieldwork and research would play out. It provided me with the opportunity to observe the way in which Dr Catherine introduced herself (as a professional first), her recruitment approach (through a formal presentation), the topic of her project (a predefined adult, neoliberal, project), how young people responded to her (with a swift rejection), and how she responded to the rejection (by leaving). It provided me with a template of what not to do in my own approach. It is to this topic, my approach to the study and the process of fieldwork, that this chapter turns.

3.1 Chapter aims

In this chapter, I will outline and situate my methodology and the subsequent ethnographic fieldwork undertaken to address the thesis aims. As I have already discussed, my original research proposal developed and shifted over time, nevertheless both the old and new aims influenced how I set up the study and the decisions I made. In both cases, my purpose in conducting the research was to explore and focus on the issues and concerns that were important to young people themselves. To do so, I drew upon the critical studies of childhood and youth that I outlined in the previous chapter. Therefore, I followed the now well-established perspective that children and young people are not 'cultural dopes', but rather are active in constructing, constituting and representing their social worlds. In doing so, I have avoided using so called 'child-friendly' research methods, which depreciate young people's capacity to understand their own reality (see Corsaro 2011, Best 2007, Raby 2007, James and Prout 1997, James, Jenks, and Prout 1998). Instead, I have adopted an ethnographic approach which has a tradition of giving voice to often

silenced, minority social groups (Hammersley 2007, Atkinson and Housley 2003, Coffey 1999, Skeggs 2002) As I will go on to discuss, ethnographic methods allow members' interests and priorities to emerge and direct the research, and "emphasises working with people rather than treating them as objects" (Wolcott 1999, p.66).

The chapter is split into three sections. The first section will describe the methodological approach, how this developed, and the assumptions that drew me towards ethnography as an appropriate method for the study. Following this, I will describe how I selected my fieldsite and how this focussed my research questions. As Wolcott (1999) notes, the location of the fieldsite, and its members, plays an important role in determining the topic of the ethnography that cannot be determined beforehand. The second section will focus on the practical aspect of *what* I did in my research; the methods I used, who I talked to, and what was collected. The third section, will give a more reflexive account of *how* I conducted my research. This account will focus on how I engaged with my participants, the relationships I established that led to the information I collected, and my own role in the fieldsite. Lastly, I will discuss the blind spots in my research and the ethical dilemmas I encountered in deciding how to represent the young people in writing. In describing the research process of this study, I aim to position myself amongst the authors, paradigms, and ethics that I drew upon not only in the setup of the study, but as principles for conducting, and dealing with the challenges, of ethnographic fieldwork.

3.2 Methodological approaches and assumptions of the study

Rationale for a qualitative interpretivist perspective

My thesis aims, as I have described, played a large part in determining the methodological approach I adopted. First, as my research question was broad and exploratory, rather than relying on predetermined categories or concepts, quantitative methods were excluded. Instead, as I am interested in exploring young people's subjective experiences and meanings, qualitative methods should be considered the most suitable (see Silverman 2013, Denzin 1999, Denzin 2001, della Porta and Keating 2008). Furthermore, I decided to use an interpretivist qualitative approach that "seeks to understand how people enact and construct meanings in their daily lives" (Denzin 1999, p.510). This approach dovetails with the research I reviewed in the previous chapters in two ways. One, in discussing the concepts of

childhood and youth, I agreed with the positioning of age as embodied, relational and as a social construct rather than as an objective fact. This is important, Raby (2007) argues, as how we understand the categories of childhood and youth influence how we approach research with young people. Two, previous work has highlighted that concepts such as exclusion and inequality are difficult for people to discuss, but rather emerge in specific contexts and given meaning in relation to others. Thus, this study utilises a qualitative interpretivist approach that matches my approach to youth and exclusion. In doing so, my methodology "needs an ontology that asserts that there is a social world independent of our knowledge of it and an epistemology that argues that it is knowable" (Davies 1999, p.17).

Methodology relies on an ontology and epistemology that outlines the conditions of what can be known and by whom (Silverman 2013). In my case, interpretivist approaches position the social world as knowable but inseparable from subjectivity (della Porta and Keating 2008). This ontological approach, in part, derives from postmodern approaches and feminist researchers who contributed to the challenging of truth claims and authoritative assumptions of objectivity. Smith (1974), who took aim at sociology, in particular, challenged the ethics of objectivity that assumes that researchers are inherently distant, detached, and rational; traits which have historically excluded women, and those with a minority social status (Alcoff and Potter 1993, Longino 1993) whose located position is not accepted as objective. This is particularly relevant here given that young people occupy a minority social position (Qvortrup 1994). Furthermore, for feminist researchers, this objective, rational, approach is not only impossible but undesirable (Cancian 1992, Stanley and Wise 1993). It is undesirable because it "defines non-experts as incapable of understanding and controlling their own lives" (Cancian 1992, p.625). As I have already discussed, this is a position often used in regards to young people, and that I seek to avoid. By using an interpretivist approach, I assume an ontology that is knowable as far as it is subjectively experienced and interpreted by young people themselves (Wolcott 1999).

Young people's worlds, in an interpretivist perspective, are subjectively experienced, but in terms of epistemology, I follow the perspective that they can only be known as partial, contextual, and situated (Haraway 1988, Rose 1997). In particular, I draw on the concept of situated knowledges (Haraway 1988, Rose 1997) that rejects claims

that the world can be objectively measured. Haraway (1988, p.589) defines situated knowledges as "epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims". Furthermore, this recognises that knowledge is grounded in action, and it is always historically, socially, and culturally located and therefore always "incomplete, partial and provisional" (Atkinson and Housley 2003, p.142). Therefore, my research participants will only ever have access to a partial view of their world, and I, as a researcher, will only ever have a partial view of their partial view.

In order to examine my thesis aims, therefore, I have sought a methodological approach that allows me to explore young peoples' subjective experiences, acknowledging that these are made in interaction with one another (Longino 1993), but also recognises that this knowledge is inherently partial. In deciding on a qualitative approach that adopted these principles, I turned to anthropology, given that this is where interpretivist approaches developed (della Porta and Keating 2008). The lineage of interpretivist approaches can be linked to both symbolic interactionism[4], which explores how "through actions people create distinct social worlds" (Blumer 1969, p.11), and ethnomethodology[5], which examines "how social activities are done within interaction and how social order is made observable and reportable in such interactions relative to their practical purposes" (Garfinkel 1967, p.1). These methods, however, have quite narrow and specific perspectives. Therefore, I am using what Atkinson (2003) describes as sociological interactionism, which is a more inclusive approach that draws of the roots of interpretivist approaches without being as prescriptive. He defines the approach of sociological interactionism as interested in:

> Social interaction and social encounters, investigations of micro-social phenomena, social construction of selves and identities, the structures of everyday knowledge, and the ordinary routines of mundane activity in social groups and institutions
>
> (Atkinson 2003, p. 37)

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[4] Spearheaded by G.H Mead, Blumer, and Becker amongst others at the Chicago School

[5] Linked to the work of Garfinkel, Sacks and Schegloff

Whilst interpretivist approaches do not automatically rely on ethnographic methods, they often go hand in hand. Indeed, as a number of authors have noted, interpretivist approaches assume that the way of knowing the world is through emersion and engagement with it (Blumer 1969, Goffman 1989, Smith 1974, Smith 2005). As I will describe subsequently, for me, given that ethnography is also about treating participants as experts and paying attention to issues and processes as they emerge over time, it was the most appropriate method to address my research interests.

Ethnographic methodology

Ethnography is a well-established methodology that has come to characterise naturalistic approaches to research by focusing on understanding the perspectives and everyday activities of participants through observation in local settings, rather than relying on accounts or experimental methods (Wolcott 1999, Denzin 1997). Whilst data collection can be extremely varied, more often than not ethnography involves long periods of fieldwork, in which the researcher becomes immersed in the setting. As such, ethnographic approaches are 'highly situated' and reflect "this ethnographer, in this time, in this place, with these informants, and these experiences" (Geertz 1988, p.5). In addition, and particularly relevant to my own interests, ethnography is predominantly exploratory in allowing new research interests and questions to develop throughout the research process (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). Therefore, although ethnography represents a more extensive and time-consuming form of research, its flexibility and situatedness suit my methodological approach.

Further to my methodological discussion above, it is worth noting that ethnography has distinct epistemological claims. Ethnography emphasises the experiential experience of 'being there' (Geertz 1988), and thus knowledge is contextual and interpersonal (Abu-Lughod 1990). This has not always been the case, however, and traditional anthropological work has been criticised for attempting to portray ethnographers as neutral and detached observers in comparison to the 'exotic' other (Wolcott 1999). In contrast, I attempt to follow what has been described as the '6th movement' (Denzin 1999) in ethnography. This movement has been influenced by postmodern, feminist, postcolonial and critical perspectives that reject previous, ethnocentric, approaches. What this '6th movement' encourages is more reflexive

accounts of fieldwork, recognising that ethnographers "create their objects of study, they do not discover them" (Davies 1999, p.14). Following this, therefore, in the later sections of this chapter I will turn to a reflexive account of my fieldwork. However, first, it is important to consider the specific of how, and why, I selected my ethnographic fieldsite, and how this led to a narrowing of my research interests.

Finding the fieldsite, narrowing the focus

As a number of prominent authors have identified, anthropologists often choose *where*, and then *what* afterwards (Geertz 1988, Wolcott 1999). Whilst I knew that I wanted to conduct research with young people in an everyday community setting, I wanted to avoid a school setting. A number of school-based researchers have raised concerns about the challenges of conducting research in this environment (Leonard 2007, Harwood 2010). Firstly, as Bourgois (2003) and others (Johnston 2000) have noted, only certain young people will engage with or attend the formal space of a school. Secondly, children and adults in schools have expectations of adult roles that make it more difficult for ethnographers to engage with young people in a non-hierarchical manner (Leonard 2007). These hierarchies have been reported as resulting in a form of 'institutional coercion' (Denscombe and Aubrook 1992) which results from power differences and means it is difficult to gain a completely voluntary form of participation. Thirdly, within school spaces the organisation of time and space means that it can be difficult to find private space to engage with young people (Leonard 2007).

This led me to seek a setting that was voluntarily inhabited and attended by young people outside of formal, institutional, spaces. In doing so, I hoped to look at how young people choose to participate in spaces, and to uncover the ties to they have to their neighbourhoods. Whilst some researchers have used the street to engage with young people (such as Leyshon 2008), this can be particularly problematic in terms of ethics and access, and thus seemed impractical given the restrains of a PhD. As it so happened, I noticed a flyer for a regional youth event at a community venue locally. I contacted the organiser to ask if it would be possible to attend, and was invited to come along. My primary intention in attending was to explore whether there were any recurring themes that emerged in discussions. On the evening, in which around 200 young people attended, mostly through organised groups,

discussions centred around the cuts and restructuring of youth services that were planned in the region (in 2011). Through luck, or what Wolcott (1999) has described as serendipity, I was sat next to a woman, Carrie, who introduced herself as the regional youth manager. As I explained my research interests she offered some advice. Firstly, she suggested approaching a youth club as a stable setting in which young people regularly, and voluntarily, participated. Secondly, she offered to email her contacts if I sent her an email outlining my research plan and ethics.

I sent an outline of my research plan to Carrie the following day with the area I lived in at the time, and the distance I was willing to travel. She reported that there were three clubs in my immediate area that were worth pursuing; two of which opened sporadically (2 or 3 hours every other day for different age groups) and were currently undergoing restructuring, and one that was open every evening, six days a week. In addition, Carrie happened to be based in the latter youth club, called 'The Common', one evening a week, and invited me to meet the manager to discuss the research. The manager, Don, and Carrie, went through my research plan and with the condition that I gave them a copy of my CRB check, approved my participation at the youth centre, although a number of practical decisions were left to a later date. Perhaps more relevantly, they also detailed the background of the neighbourhood and the youth centre. Don described the centre, and the community, as working class, underfunded, and marginalised. The attendees were described to me as the 'cream-of-the-crop', by which they meant that their young people were the most troubled and excluded. The youth centre was described as one of the only places where these young people from the community could attend. It was through this selection of setting, therefore, that my research interests became focussed on exclusion.

The Common as the research setting

The scale of ethnographies can vary from whole communities and villages (such as 'classic' anthropological work by Geertz 1988) to more small-scale institutions and spaces such as playgrounds (see Thorne 1993) and bedrooms (see Lincoln 2012). The scale of the ethnography has often been determined by disciplinary, and geographical, differences, with anthropologists historically encouraged to travel to a place that "was dramatically different from one's own" (Wolcott 1999, p.21) and to study whole communities. Sociologists, in contrast, have always been more likely to

do ethnography 'at home', a tradition exemplified by the Chicago School (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983), and focused on micro-geographies. In my case, I stayed at 'home' and lived in the same area as my fieldsite, although as I will discuss later, I was not 'from' the community. In addition, whilst I spent time with young people in and around the area, the majority of my fieldwork occurred within the enclosed space of the youth centre, The Common[6].

The Common is a youth and community centre situated in the neighbourhood of Sandyhill on the outskirts of a mid-size town in the North of England. The neighbourhood of Sandyhill was described to me by the youth workers as working-class[7], although I recognise that self-reported data on class is problematic. The area was, however, listed as amongst the highest 10% of wards in the index of multiple deprivations, which I used as a proxy to support the self-identification of the area as working-class. Furthermore, local statistics showed that the area reported lower than average life expectancies (compared to national and regional figures), worse rates of unemployment, and lower educational attainment than the UK average. Significantly for this study, there were high levels of children living in poverty.

Within Sandyhill, experiences of disadvantage are not just linked to class, but also to ethnicity. Whilst the town in which it is situated is predominantly white, Sandyhill houses the majority of its African, Caribbean, South Asian, and other minority populations. This reflects, as Phillips and Harrison (2010) identify, patterns of segregation across the UK. In particular, they claim that a:

> Disproportionate number of BME households face socio-economic disadvantage, occupy poor, overcrowded housing and …live in districts with multiple problems of environmental quality, socio-economic deprivation and over-burden or under-resourced services (Phillips and Harrison 20100, p.223)

As I will go on to discuss in later chapters, Sandyhill was described as 'multicultural' by its young residents, most of whom identified as British.

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[6] All names of places and people are pseudonyms

[7] The young people described Sandyhill as 'ghetto' which I will return to in Chapter 5.

Lastly, the heritage of the Common itself should be noted. The centre was opened over four decades ago, in part as a response to a moral panic about young people on the streets, according to a community member, and was originally established as a boys club for the area. The commemorative sign from its opening as a boys club is still displayed at the entrance to the building, and despite a few extensions over the years the main hub of the centre is the original design. Over the decades the building, however, due to lack of funding, has fallen into a state of disrepair despite the best efforts of the centre's manager who does the maintenance in his spare time. Whilst the centre is independent of the council youth services that have been subject to intense cuts over the past two years, they are dependent on national charitable donations which become increasingly difficult to secure.

The attendees of the Common

The Common is open six days a week for typically 52 weeks a year, and is open for younger children (5-10 years, the 'juniors') during the afternoons and for teenagers (11-25 years, the 'seniors') later in the evenings. One of the first decisions that I had to make was which age group to work with. The manager reported that it would be easier to carry out research with the juniors, as they were more accustomed to doing projects led by adults, but that the centre was inundated with requests from potential volunteers to work with the younger group. In addition, the juniors had been set-up to resemble after-school day care. The senior group, in contrast, was under-staffed, and were reported as reluctant to do anything they didn't want to. There was no structure to the evening senior sessions, and young people were free to drop-in and participate as they wished. As I wanted to avoid hierarchical relationships as much as possible, I decided to carry out research with the seniors.

The senior session ran six evenings a week from 6.30-9.30, and until 11pm during school holidays. 80% of the attendees were male. The boys tended to arrive at the start of session and stay until the end, whilst the girls would drop in sporadically over the course of the evening. It is free for the young people to attend, and the majority of attendees live in the local area, often within a few minutes' walk, although some young people travel in from neighbouring areas. Those who travel to the centre often do so because they have friends who attend or because they previously lived in the area and continue to come to the centre. On a typical night during the senior session

the centre can expect anywhere in the region of 30-80 young people, depending on the night of the week, school terms, and the weather. This will be described in further detail in the following chapter. In addition to the young people who attended the Common, there were also thirteen members of staff and three, permanent, volunteers. On any evening there would be four youth workers in addition to the manager and three nights a week one of the volunteers would be assisting. Many of the youth workers were former attendees of the Common.

3.3 Methods

Overview of the data collected

Data collection in ethnography can be extremely varied depending on what is available to illuminate the topic or elicit descriptions and responses, although it typically involves the researcher actively participating in the local setting for an extended period of time (O'Reilly 2004). My primary method of data collection was participant-observation and I spent fourteen months at the Common as a researcher-volunteer, a role I will describe in subsequent sections. For the first six months, I attended the Common on at least three evenings a week. After this, I attended on at least two evenings a week. In addition, I also used visual narratives, maps, informal interviews and focus groups. These other forms of data collection emerged out of discussions with young people that were revisited periodically. As I will go on to explain, young people at the Common said they were not interested in 'school-like' research methods, which they described as 'boring'. Instead, I offered a range of different ways for young people to take part in the research, acknowledging that no one method would be suitable for all young people involved. Indeed, whilst some young people chose to participate in these organised research methods, others chose not to. In the majority of cases, though, data collection was ad-hoc and informal. However, for the photo-elicitation project and focus groups, I advertised the dates with a sign-up sheet on the youth centre's notice board.

Table 1. Data collected during fieldwork

Observation in youth club (approx. hours)	432
Observation outside the youth club (approx. hours)	60
Photo elicitation interviews (number completed)	10
Map drawing interviews (number completed)	6
Two focus groups (number participating)	20
Staff focus groups (number participating)	7
Document analysis (youth club and neighbourhood annual reports)	4

Issues of consent, anonymity and confidentiality

In ethnographic studies it has been acknowledged that it is not always feasible to get written consent from every person in a setting and community. In particular, Barrett & Parker (2003) suggest that obtaining written consent, as advocated in most research ethics guidelines, does not reflect the nature of ethnographic engagement. As Hadley (2007) further explains, consent is "not achieved on one day and then forgotten" (p.165). Therefore I approached consent as on-going process rather than a fixed 'contractual agreement' (Murphy and Dingwall 2007). The first process was community consent which was necessary given the large and changeable number of young people attending the youth centre. During my first week I put up a poster with information about the study (see Appendix I) which I also printed and handed out as a leaflet to young people as I was introduced to them. In addition, the youth workers and managers were briefed about the study so that they were able to discuss the project informally with attendees, especially if I was not in attendance. As part of this community consent, there was also information about opting-out of the study, in particular reference to my observations and taking fieldnotes. Secondly, the community consent was regularly revisited to ensure young people were aware of their right to withdraw. More often than not, young people asked me to omit pieces of information that they did want included, rather than exclude themselves from the study as a whole.

For young people participating in the pre-organised research, namely the photo-elicitation project or focus groups, I employed more traditional informed consent methods. I advertised the photography project and focus groups on the notice board for at least a week prior to them taking part (see Appendix II and III). Although I was available to answer any questions about these activities, I did not approaching young people directly about taking part in order to avoid creating any obligation. Instead, young people who expressed an interest in taking part, in other words those who signed up on the notice board, were given information sheets (see Appendix IV and V) and consent forms to sign (see Appendix VI and VII). Youth workers were also available to answer any questions before or after taking part in these research activities, and young people were invited to talk to their guardians. However, I left the final consent to young people, rather than their guardians.

Throughout the study I used the British Sociological Association (2004) and American Anthropological Association (2009) principles of ethics and professional conduct which highlights the responsibility of the researcher to honour the dignity and privacy of their research participants. Therefore, pseudoynms were assigned during my first contact with a young person or member of staff, and this was used in the writing of my fieldnotes. The limits of confidentiality were discussed with young people when there was risk of harm to themselves or others. Fortunately project work at the Common followed the same ethical procedures and gave almost the identical language and caveats so this was not unfamiliar to the young people at the Common. Finally, in agreement with the youth centre a safety protocol was put in place through which I could raise any concerns about the safety of a young person with a named qualified youth worker. The youth worker would discuss any concerns with both the young person and the line manager, and if necessary contact the local authority or police.

Participant Observation

Participant-observation is often synonymous with ethnography (Denzin 1999) and is considered a rite of passage (Stocking 1984) for an anthropologist. As such, the term itself is often associated with old practices of a distant, detached observer (Wolcott 1999). More recently, however, it is recognised there are a variety of ways in which participant-observation can be conducted, dependent on the fieldsite and topic. Most

ethnographers describe a sliding scale from complete observer to compete participation. This is not fixed however, and Wolcott (1999) warns we have to be aware of the “difference being present as a passive observer of what is going on and taking an active role in asking about what is going on” (p.49) in each setting. Although I started my own fieldworker in a more passive, observer, role, I gradually became more of a participant as the fieldwork developed. I will reflect on the significance of this role in later sections.

My role as an observer and participant were fluid and constantly changing. The youth centre setting meant that I had to be adaptable to who had turned up and what was going on that day. Attendance at the centre was often sporadic, and was often cyclical with groups of young people attending daily before stopping completely, only to reappear a few months later. Young people were also barred for bad behaviour (usually for a week or two), or stopped coming for no reason. Consequently, my fieldnotes reflect these disrupted narratives, with young people dropping in and out of my accounts.

Ethnographers have previously discussed the challenges of recording fieldwork during periods of participant-observation. Some ethnographers, (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983) have described taking breaks, such as going to the bathroom or other private space, to record fieldnotes in notebooks. This often means removing oneself from the site of the action. The centrality of mobile phones in young people’s interaction was not a surprise and it provided me with a means of recording fieldnote jottings. My phone was not seen as out of the ordinary and unlike perhaps a notepad, did not disrupt the interaction. Using a notes application on my phone I used key words, or transcribed verbatim key phrases that I then wrote up at the end of the night. I used what Emerson and colleague (2011) describe as jottings, which are short condensed notes and phrases that can be used as a memory point shortly after exiting the fieldsite. Often these jottings were completely unintelligible to anyone other than me, for example the following fieldnote jottings from an evening in February 2013 before they were written up:

- Mind before body and the body will follow – ‘I should be a philosopher’
- Pool table, music, radiator
- Girls brought into discussion about Valentine’s day

- Boys asked would you rather have a smart girl or pretty girl.
- Nandos, cost
- Colin – Roses are red, violets are blue, now go to the dishes or I'm dumping you
- Ravi joining girls at table to make cards, has to leave when older boys arrive

I used the jottings to form fuller fieldnotes that incorporated not only descriptions of the evening but preliminary analytic notes and ideas. I began by recording everything in my fieldnotes, gradually funnelling and becoming more specific as recurring themes emerged.

Data analysis was not a distinctive phase of the research. I follow Silverman (1993, p. 46) who advocates that "data collection, hypothesis-construction and theory building are not three separate things but are interwoven with one another". From the outset of fieldwork, analytic notes and memos were written into fieldnotes (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 2011). Initial observations were broad in a sense-making effort (Lofland 1984) that meant that I recorded and noted a wide-range of ideas that gradually became more focused and specific. The analytic notes and memos in my fieldnotes (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 2011) were used as sensitizing concepts (Blumer 1969) upon re-entering the field and in addition helped to get clarification from young people. As Emerson and colleagues note, "in-process memos are not intended to produce a final, systematic analysis but rather, to provide insight, direction and guidance for the ongoing fieldwork" (2011, p.123).

At the end of fieldwork I collated my fieldnotes and analytic memos and began to more systematically analyse the data. As Katz (1997) notes, the process of ethnographic analysis can often be poorly articulated. Whilst there is ample literature of analysing qualitative data, it often concerns dealing with transcripts. Ethnographic analysis requires not just examining member accounts of what they do, but looking at a complex mix of accounts, actions and events. Firstly I collated all of my collected data into the software NVivo in order to store and sort through the various form of information collected. I also carried out open coding through the software, looking at all ideas and themes. Given the large scale of data collected I found NVivo restrictive and in it did not allow me to adequately map events and relationships temporally. Instead, I chose to print out the broad themes from the open coding and then carry

out focused coding by hand. This coding was carried out inductively and thematically (Silverman 1993, Emerson 2011).This was conducted alongside my book of fieldnotes[8] in order to be able to place the codes into the broader account. This allowed me refine my coding whilst keeping attention to events, relationships and groups as well as individual accounts and observed behaviour.

Whilst refining my coding and concepts of fieldnotes, I used a number of strategies advocated to avoid the analysis being grounded in description, but to move to a more explanatory account. I found Walcott's (1990, p.32) guiding questions a helpful starting point:

- What is going on here?
- What do people in this setting have to know (individually and collectively) in order to do what they are doing?
- How are the skills and attitudes transmitted and acquired, particularly in the absence of intentional efforts at instruction?

In addition I used Hammersley and Atkinson's (1993) and Katz's (2001, 2002) strategies to look for enigmas, mysteries, paradoxes, and poignant moments that help illuminate what is happening and how conduct is socially situated. This allowed me to start looking for examples of actions and events that were similar or contradictory in order to further clarify concepts. Finally I tied to ensure that my analysis was always reflecting the significance of relationships, events, and experiences to young people (Emerson, Fritz and Shaw 2011).

The use of visual methods and photo-elicitation

Within the field of visual methods, usually consigned to visual sociology or visual anthropology, one of the most popular methods has been the practice of giving research participants cameras (typically disposable or 'low-cost' analogue/digital cameras) to document (an aspect of) their everyday lives and experiences (Pink 2009, Luttrell 2010). Various forms of this method have been described as 'photo-novella' or 'photovoice' (Wang and Burris 1997), 'reflexive photography' or 'participant photography' (Allen 2012), 'photo-elicitation' (Harper 1986) or visual ethnography

[8] I printed my fieldnotes and enclosed them in a notebook cover for ease of access.

(Pink 2009). Given that most of my interactions with young people were within the confines of the centre, in using photography I hoped to get more of an insight into young people's lives outside of the Common. In addition, given that the stated goal of visual research, regardless of the actual method, is to reduce the power imbalances between researchers and researched by establishing participants as co-collaborators in the construction of knowledge (Anderson 2012) and emphasising participation among marginal groups (Packard 2008), it was deemed appropriate. For the current study I have adopted what could be most closely associated with photo-elicitation, which has its roots in the work of John Collier (1957) in the 1950s that I will discuss before reflecting on the most popular variant, photovoice, where most of the critical literature has emerged.

Early forms of photo-elicitation emerged from anthropology, and although at first they relied on photographs created by the researcher (Collier 1957) they later drew on photographs shared by or produced by participants (Rose 2012). It is claimed that interviews using photographs offer the opportunity for participants to show aspects of their lives and identity that may have remained hidden, and can act not only as a memory aid keeping the interview focussed, but prompt an emotive response (Collier 1957). This approach also has less of a focus on the 'quality' of the photography (compared to photovoice which provides photography training) and claims that the success of the interview is often revealed from photographs that from a researchers' point of view may appear at first boring or uninteresting (Harper 1986). Importantly, Collier in these first examples of photo-elicitation, reflected that the use of photographs alone do not necessarily precipitate a successful interview, and that they may be "vitally useful at one point of an interview, and impeding at another" (Collier 1957, p.858).

Photovoice, as coined by Wang & Burris (Wang and Burris 1997, Wang and Redwood-Jones 2001), has theoretical foundations in the work of Friere (1970) who advocated participatory methods in teaching adult literacy. It also has links to feminist theories and documentary photography (Baker and Wang 2006). Photovoice relies on a more structured programme of activity with a group, involving teaching camera skills, specific photography tasks (around an agreed topic), and emphasising the exhibition of photographs within communities and to policy makers (Wang & Burris 1997). It is

this last stage where the main difference to photo-elicitation lies, with its focus on action research, on ‘empowering’ a community to make changes by critical reflection on the issues arising from the photography project. It has been criticised, however, for presuming that increasing visibility is a positive outcome, which for some people may be uncomfortable and potentially dangerous (Packard 2008). For example, for people living in disadvantage, photography may be understood as another form of surveillance (Prins 2010). In the primary application of the method it was utilised in health promotion settings, but since then has been applied to range of fields and purposes (such as disability, youth, homelessness). It has been this drive to examine its application in different settings perhaps, rather than the method, which has resulted in its main criticisms; namely the lack of theory around analysis, and a lack of critical reflection into wider issues of power and representation (Packard 2008).

For the current study I adopted what could be most closely associated with photo-elicitation, which has its roots in the work of John Collier in the 1950s. Young people were asked to keep a photo-diary of their lives for a week, and then a short interview was conducted going over the photographs. I put up posters for the project (see Appendix II) with a sign-up sheet. I gave those who had signed up an information sheet (see Appendix IV) and I brought in the cameras the following week, to give young people the chance to discuss the project with family and youth workers before signing the consent form. I decided to give minimal instructions about camera use, as has been noted by others, young people are not apprentices (Luttrell 2010) and an “unequal power dynamic is immediately and irrevocably established the moment the researcher must instruct a participant on how to operate a piece of equipment” (Packard 2008, pp.64-65). Additionally, I did not want to place an emphasis on producing ‘good’ photographs. A guide sheet was provided, stating them to keep a photo-diary of their everyday life, stressed that the photographs belonged to them, and to be aware of taking photographs of other people (to gain consent if necessary). Young people handed the cameras back for developing over the space of a month, and after this time I did not receive any further cameras no matter how many prompts or reminders. As a ‘thank you’ to the participants, I had a prize draw with tickets to a music event in the region (as proposed by the young people).

At the start of the interview young people were given a further consent form for the audio recording and were given the opportunity to look through their photographs privately and remove any they did not want to share. The only case where a photograph was removed was a 'mug shot' of another boy at the centre they felt might be embarrassing. At the end of the interview a copyright sheet was discussed (appendix VIII), and they were asked if they would be willing to allow any of the photographs to be published and used for academic purposes. A youth worker was available to discuss this with the young person if required. The young people were given their photographs and the negatives to keep. Photographs I was given permission to reproduce were taken out of a second copy of photographs and the remaining photographs destroyed. The interviews themselves all occurred within the youth centre, even though the option of picking another venue (school, home, milkshake shop around the corner) was offered. The young people also had the option of doing the interview individually or with a friend if they would prefer.

Casual conversations and focus groups

Although I originally intended to carry out organised interviews, it quickly became apparent that this wouldn't be the best approach to take at the Common. Firstly, during the photo-elicitation interviews it was clear that the presence of an audio-recorder was a source of tension. Indeed, the young people who took part in the photo-elicitation visibly relaxed once the recorder was turned off. In almost all cases, discussions about the photographs carried on informally for a substantial amount of time after the recording had finished. This challenge has been recognised by other ethnographers, such as Ferguson (2001) who reflected that the process of interviews was not productive with the young people she worked with. She reports, "the kids responded to my questions, but carefully" (p.12). Instead, she reported that the informal everyday discussions she had were more insightful and less exploitative. In addition, Best (2007) notes that questioning from researchers can "feel like another form of adult surveillance and supervision" (p.212).

Secondly, it has been argued that, as Skeggs (2002) has noted, interviews can act as a form of social control thorough the ways in which 'telling the self' produces class difference. She further explains, "the ability to be reflexive via the experience of others is a privilege, a position of mobility and power, a mobilisation of cultural

resources" (2002, p.129). Interviews, therefore, can exacerbate difference and power relationships. As one of the youth workers explained to me, most of the young people's experiences of interviews at the Common were with authority figures: the police or social workers. Therefore, instead of organised, formal, interviews, I adopted more informal casual conversations with young people, and like Ferguson (2001), I took the opportunities when they arose. For example, during an art session one of the young people drew a map of Sandyhill. I asked them to describe the map for me, and we entered into a long discussion about the neighbourhood. Subsequently, some of the other young people drew their own maps and invited me to discuss it with them.

Towards the end of fieldwork I started giving some feedback to the youth workers and young people about some of the themes I had identified. As part of this process, and to clarify a couple of questions I had, I decided to set up a focus group to examine, in more detail, one of my themes about the role of food at the Common. Focus groups have previously been found to be useful for allowing issues to emerge in social interaction, and they have been successfully used amongst disempowered populations to explore sensitive topics (Barbour 2008, Gibson 2007, Hyde et al. 2005, Kitzinger 1995). One evening, as I started drawing a poster to put up on the notice board a number of boys came over to look what I was doing. I was told by the boys that if I wanted to find out about food we had to *eat* food. They first proposed that we conduct the focus group at a nearby restaurant, but as they could not agree on a venue, instead suggested that we get takeaway and have the focus group in the centre. In the end, two 'food focus groups' were carried out with the boys and girls separately due to demand, and as will be discussed later, because the girls were unwilling to eat with the boys present.

I developed a topic guide for the focus group based on my previous observations about food at the centre, so that I could both feedback my perspective whilst getting their views on my interpretation. The questions were open ended and intended to allow young people to contribute the issues they considered important, or to challenge my previous assumptions. The focus groups were held in the computer room, and without the presence of a youth worker. With the group's approval, I placed an audio-recorder in the corner of the room, and I later transcribed the

recording verbatim. The day before the focus groups, the young people that signed up gave me their food order (see figure below) for the following evening. There were multiple requests from national fast food chains that I collected prior to the focus group. At the start of the focus groups I discussed the groups' rules before handing out the food. After we had finished eating I handed out the consent forms and started the discussion. By doing it in this way I attempted to ensure that the young people did not feel obliged to stay for the food, but could leave after eating. The youth workers also collected fast food (with me) to provide for the remainder of the group, so that no one was left out. I analysed the transcripts alongside my fieldnotes, and using the same approach that I described above.

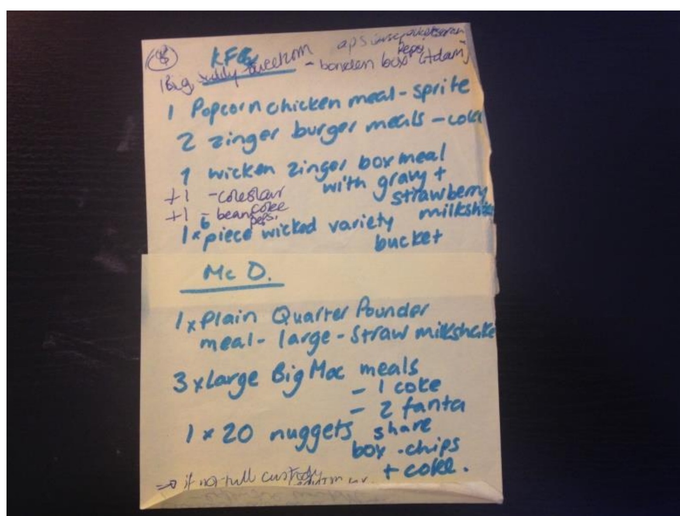

Figure 4. Food order for the boys' food focus group

The food focus groups provided me with the chance to feedback my interpretations on one my themes, however there were other informal opportunities that I had to clarify the other issues I identified. Firstly, as I will turn to in Chapter 5, I attended community meetings at the Common for information about the cuts that were proposed and then implemented over my fieldwork. Secondly, two projects that I participated in enabled me to look at the meanings around sexual health that will be addressed in chapter 6. The first project was a sexual health project that ran for an hour over four weeks with the girls that I sat in on. There was a separate session that ran with the boys, but I was not allowed to observe because of my gender (to be discussed subsequently). The second project was a residential project for the girls where they were tasked with looking after imitation babies. Within these projects, the

significance of gender and gender relationships were embedded in the discussions and allowed me to refine my findings. On both of these projects, I was explicit that I was taking part as part of my research.

3.4 Reflexive account of the research methods

The reflexive turn in ethnography

In this section, I reflect on the research process to explore how my position, and the relationships I established, influenced the account I produce in this thesis. In doing so, I follow the position of other ethnographers who regard ethnography as a way of seeing (Wolcott 1999) that comes from a particular position and affects what we can know. In other words, the relationships that I established with my participants and the role I took as a researcher have a subsequent impact on the knowledge I have access to. In particular, I draw on feminist authors who have disputed previous forms of 'hygienic' reporting of research and called for more reflexive honest accounts of the process (such as Stanley and Wise 1993, Alcoff and Potter 1993, Coffey 1999). In doing so, I will discuss the often messy and embodied experience of doing fieldwork that led to the data I collected. In addition, I will also discuss issues of power, authority and othering that are enduring and inherent in the research process (Davies 1999, Foley 2002). In taking this approach, I am drawing on the reflexive turn in qualitative research, and in particular, in anthropology.

The reflexive turn in anthropology emphasises that ethnographers should move beyond viewing themselves as objective knowers (Foley 2002). Influenced by feminist and post-colonial researchers, this approach recognises that researchers are a "positioned subject, never outside the field of research and always radically implicated in the production of knowledge" (Shehata 2006, p.261). As Roberts (1981) makes clear, taking an objective detached stance is unethical when we expect participants to be open and reveal themselves. Instead, it is increasingly acknowledged that researchers' embodied experience and emotions are an important, but often silenced, part of knowledge production (Irwin 2006). This is contrast to previous approaches where personal subjectivity was a bias and threat to objectivity (England 1994).

It is now common practice to offer a reflexive account of fieldwork, but as I will continue below, this cannot eliminate issues of power. Firstly, ethnographers can use reflexivity to position their research as legitimate. Secondly, accounts of reflexivity can fail to account for the reflexivity of participants, instead being about the ethnographic self (Skeggs 2002). Turning to the former, Adkins (2002) argues that reflexivity can be gendered, classed and raced. Some researchers will be regarded as able to transcend their positionality, while others will be deemed fixed and thus their accounts as unreliable. She gives the example of her account of being a female in a male-environment deemed questionable in relation to a male account of being in a similar male-environment. This stance is supported by other researchers, such as Bhavnani (1993) who has proposed that reflexivity can be a way that some accounts come to be authentic and others inauthentic.

A number of authors, such as Keith (1992), however, have been critical of the reflexive turn in the social sciences, claiming that too often it is an exercise in narcissism, rather than focusing on how positionality affects issues of power on the relationships of fieldwork. Clifford (1986) further claims that the reproduction of reflexive subjective experiences is a privileged stance. There is growing awareness that accounts of research "rely on accruing the stories of others in order to make them into property for oneself" (Skeggs 2002, p.349). Therefore, reflexivity should not just be an account of a researcher's experience, but rather a practice that takes into account the locations of power (Skeggs 2002). Instead, practices of reflexivity should be aware of how we represent participants, and avoid essentializing discourses that may further subject them to symbolic violence. This particularly pertinent when conducting research with already marginalised groups, such as children and young people, whose voices may be appropriated by adults.

Although it is now recognised that research does not neatly follow a systematic process "in which no problems occur, no emotions are involved" (Stanley & Wise 1993, p.153), I was confronted with accounts to the contrary. Over the past few years whilst discussing my research I have been repeatedly met with accounts of 'perfect fieldwork'. A number of researchers who had similarly conducted ethnography with young people happily told me how 'wonderful' their experience of fieldwork was, and the close personal relationships they established with 'all' of their participants. As I

will go to discuss, this did not reflect my own experience, in which my participation and acceptance was always conditional. At the same time, I recognise that reflexivity should not simply be about the ethnographer. Therefore, in this section I will attempt to tread between offering my experience of fieldwork, knowing that there is always a risk that any difficulties reported could be reinterpreted as weakness (Smith 1974, Stanley & Wise 1993), whilst avoiding decaying 'into narcissism' (Keith 1992)

Relationships at the Common - being 'suspect'

In contrast to the previous chapter where I discussed young people being seen as 'suspect', here I discuss how my position as a researcher made me a suspect to my participants. Ethnographers have frequently reported that they have been suspected of being spies, government employees, or police (Hammersley and Atkinson 2001). In particular, there may be additional suspicion in areas of disadvantage (Connolly 1992). Embedded in this suspicion is power inequality, that the researcher has the power, and often the authority, to make claims about people and places that the participant has no control over. Ethnographers have also reported that their own research has been 'haunted' by the mistakes of previous researchers who have exploited their participants (such as Brown 2005)[9]. Therefore, it could be argued, their suspicions were well justified given past experiences. Although the manager, the formal gatekeeper, had welcomed me to the youth centre, I was yet to convince the informal gatekeepers, the youth workers and young people.

Developing relationships in the field with both the youth workers and young people proved difficult for the first few weeks. With the exception of one female youth worker, Suzy, who on my first day invited me to join the session I described in the interlude, I was ignored by the other male youth workers. It took a few weeks of regular attendance before the staff started noticing me, and starting asking about my research and background and allowing me to join in their conversations. It was only after a few months of volunteering that a partial view of the context of this suspicion was available to me. As I found out, the Common was approached by volunteers on at least a monthly basis, and by researchers every couple of months. These volunteers

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[9] Jacqueline Nassey Brown (2005) described being haunted by the ghost of a former academic, Muriel Fletcher, at the University of Liverpool, whose racist report hampered Nassey Brown's acceptance in the research area that was still damaged decades later.

and researchers, like me, would be introduced during an evening session and the youth workers and young people would be required to spend time speaking to and getting to know the newcomer. Without exception during my fieldwork volunteers and researchers would attend for a few hours one evening, and then never come back again. Over time, I found myself unintentionally becoming more and more like the youth workers on my first night, jaded, and holding little expectation that the volunteer or researcher would return. Therefore, it was only after repeatedly visiting and demonstrating my commitment to the centre that the staff at the Common began to accept me.

Although my presence was only marginally noticed by the youth workers on the first few evenings this was not the case with the young people. A few approached me directly to assess my role and I noticed even those who did not come to talk to me directly watched me. This echoes what Coffey (1999, p.73) has described as being a 'watched body' as well as being a 'watching body'. Initially, it was a group of young girls, who came over to me and asked '*do you work here?*' I explained that I was a researcher at the University and I that I was going to be volunteering and doing some research projects with young people. They nod but don't look convinced '*so you are not getting paid to be here?*' one asks. I tell them I am a volunteer. '*I wouldn't do that*' remarks her friend. '*Why did you come here? It's rubbish here*'. This conversation is repeated over the first few weeks with different groups. They all assume I am a worker as an adult in the youth centre.

For the first few months, I take on a more observational role in which I help at the centre and informally introduce myself. Like Christensen (1993), I try to wait to be invited into interactions rather than to impose myself on young people. Furthermore, I engage with what Coffey (1999) has described as a 'self-conscious presentation of self'. I choose to not wear the uniform given to staff and volunteers in an attempt to distance myself from a formal 'worker' role. At the same time, I did not try to blend in with young people either but rather I made sure that I was dressed casually; wearing clothing that would allow me to move freely, to bend over pool tables and sit on the floor in the girl's room without exposure. Secondly I tried not to take on the disciplinary role expected of staff (such as picking up on swearing) in order to remind the young people that I was a researcher and volunteer. As time progressed however

the staff and young people pull me over to intervene in arguments and take on more of a 'worker' role. There were, however, incidents where I felt I had to take a duty to intervene in the absence of a youth worker. This led to the manager barring a few young people on my account, which made me feel uneasy. However, more generally, I felt anxiety that I was not being a good enough 'worker' and that I was not pulling my weight. It took time to reconcile that I just had to be a good enough ethnographer while trying to find a role that felt comfortable and useful to the centre.

Conditional acceptance

It is the duty of researcher to negotiate difference, and this was particularly pertinent given that I was an outsider on two levels. On the first level, I was not a young person and youth researchers have been at particular pains to warn about using the memory of being a young person to try to claim an insider status. In particular, Biklen (2004, p.716) suggests, "memories of youth map a gaze, providing a way of seeing the informants through a particular understanding of youth, and youthful experiences". My experience of youth is related to my own gender, class, ethnicity and generation and cannot be used to relate to the experience of youth that young people at the Common have. More often than not, however, my age was used by young people to position me in relation to other adults. For example, guessing my age in reference to their elder sisters, aunts, mothers, or simply ascribing the general age status of 'student'.

Secondly, I was an outsider to the community. Although I was living in the area, I had only been there a few months. Even without this knowledge, I was clearly identifiable as an outsider: I was Scottish, ginger[10], female, and white. My multiple positions as a gendered, raced, and classed researcher affected in different ways on my research. As Abu-Lughod (1990) has noticed, these positions come to the foreground in some situations, whilst retreating to the background in others. Furthermore, Best (2007) has suggested that white researchers should be open about their own racial location, recognising that research is a "racialized process whether it is conducted by racial insiders or racial outsiders" (p.213). It is also a gendered and classed process that is constantly under negotiation. I have attempted to pay attention to when my position

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[10] I was told by several young people that it was my hair that made me stick out in the neighbourhood

became an important feature of the research, such as in Chapter 5 when I was witness to racism, and my whiteness came to the foreground. I will return to these issues, where relevant, throughout my thesis, particularly as they can shape the claims made in the writing process (Stacey 1988, Nielsen 1990).

One marker of difference, however, that I could more legitimately try to overcome was familiarity. I attended the Common almost every week, and some weeks almost every evening. Some of the young people appeared to accepted me as familiar relatively quickly, as '*part of the firm'* to quote one young person, whilst for others it was only after 6, 9, or 12 months that I felt accepted. Of course, some young people chose not to engage with me at all, and like the interlude at the outset of this chapter, demonstrated that young people are not powerless in the ethnographic encounter (Kondo 1986). Therefore, my acceptance was always conditional. For example, any absence I took from the Common led to me being seen as unfamiliar again, and I had to spend a number of weeks back at the centre before returning to my previous standing. This was because of the importance of 'being there' at the Common. The main way I gained familiarity was through participating and sharing experiences that could later be discussed. Without this, it was difficult to participate. Although some young people enjoying filling me in on what I had missed, others didn't have the time, interest, or inclination to update me.

In gaining familiarity, I was also attempting to gain trust. One of the ways I tried to achieve this was through demonstrating my reciprocity, and showing that I was not simply there for my own gains. Like other volunteers at the Common, I helped set up and clear up for every session in addition to helping in the kitchen. I also helped young people with their college or job application forms and brought in baking once a week. Feminist approaches attempt to reduce the distance and power imbalance between the researcher and participants through the development of closer, more reciprocal, relationships. I also tried to be available to listen to young people, whilst being aware that trying to overcome power through friendship could be exploitative (Stacey 1988). Nevertheless, more intimate and reciprocal relationships during fieldwork continue to be advocated as a means of reducing distance between researchers and participants, but with a caution that power is not something held by individuals, but rather within the research process itself. I attempted to always be

aware of situations in which my fieldnotes of the discussion could lead to betrayal or be interpreted as inauthentic (Abu-Lughod 1990).

Researcher role at the Common – conforming and challenging expectations

I was assigned the role of volunteer-researcher by the manager of the Common. In this role I was free to do research, in discussion with the centre, but would also be another female adult presence in the building. I was not obligated to carry out any youth worker duties, but as male youth workers could not enter certain spaces, I was asked to be available to be called upon to help when needed (by checking the girls' bathroom for example). However, it was the other youth workers who had the biggest impact on my role over the fieldwork. The youth workers were predominately men and there were only two permanent female staff. The female youth workers also rotated shifts in order for there to be a gender balance during evening sessions, meaning that there was only ever one female youth worker. On Fridays however, the female youth workers were assigned on 'outreach work' on the streets, which meant that I was often the only female 'worker', meaning that I was asked to take on more responsibility than I would on my other nights.

Amongst the staff at the Common there was a very dichotomous view of gender in regards to roles, male youth workers were expected to work with the young men, and the female youth workers were expected to work with young women. Although other staff-youth relationships were clearly established, when called upon by management these had to be put aside in order to work with the 'correct' gender. I had an interest in gender, and naively thought I could work equally with both, but found myself pushed and pulled into conforming to these roles. I always started the evenings in the main room, but when the girls would arrive (which was often sporadic) I would be pulled physically into their periphery spaces. The girls would call me into 'meetings' in the computer room, crisis talks in the bathrooms, and ask me to be a guard to stop the boys coming into the girls room. The staff, particularly the male staff, would also push me into working with the girls. If I was sat with the boys playing cards or talking I would be shouted over by the male youth workers and told to start work with the

girls. Six months into fieldwork there was only one female youth worker left at the centre, and two nights a week I was the only female adult in the building, making the pressure more acute.

There were no formal roles or duties at the youth centre, and activities were ad-hoc. This made finding a role at the centre problematic. During the first few months of fieldwork I felt shamed in my out-of-placeness, and without something in particular to do, I felt redundant. I was no good at pool, or table tennis, the main activities at the centre. Instead I ended up in a provider role. After observing the centrality of food in my second week I decide to bring along some baking as a way of engaging a few young people. I am increasingly encouraged to do cooking in the kitchen, which leaves me frustrated at being stuck in one room and away from the action. In addition, the boys and youth workers start making demands of what they would like me to make; chocolate brownies, chocolate cake, chocolate macaroons, and millionaire's shortbread. Soon I have started baking every Thursday and the young people put in specific orders for their birthdays. My baking tins become a familiar sight, and the boys soon run over to the main table and sit with me while discussing their verdict on the week's goods.

Over time I found myself trapped by feelings of obligation to meet this demand. I found myself feeling guilty when I was unable to bring in cakes, and thus let myself be coerced into going into the kitchen to make some more. I became socialised by the boys and the youth workers into a provider role. This was reinforced by the approval from the boys. Over the months many of the young people would come and spend time with me baking, or watching me bake, and many informal interviews were carried out in the kitchen. Papanek (1964) reported that women may receive and feel more pressure to adhere to gender role behaviours, and I felt by taking on a cooking/provider role I was conforming to what was expected of female staff at the youth club. In general, female members of staff were asked to make the men cups of tea, begged to do the washing up, and wound up around feminism, often in the presence of young people.

My own status as a researcher-volunteer was intimately tied to my role as a provider. It did however, allow me engage with young people in the private space of the

kitchen, and it became of way of demonstrating my reciprocity to the young people and youth workers at the Common. Although I conformed to the role expected of me, I also made active attempts to challenge the norms at the youth centre. I started playing pool which was the reserve of male youth workers, and which will be described in chapter seven, even though at the beginning some of the boys would sigh and roll their eyes at my incompetence. I also made the decision not to remain just as an observer, and did not leave sexist, racist, or homophobic comments unchallenged. Kondo (1986) in particular has discussed the challenge of dealing with these issues in fieldwork, stating that is unethical to record but not challenge these comments. In addition to challenging sexist claims in public at the centre, as did the other female youth workers, this was informally reported to management and with the board during the process of dissemination.

Embodied experience of 'being there'

I take a brief trip, here, into a more narcissistic account of my experience of fieldwork. I do so, however, to recognise that some of my feelings of 'being-out-of-place' (Probyn 2004) are not only shared amongst ethnographers, but amongst other young people and youth workers who join the Common. Furthermore, these feelings taught me about my positionality and how my body was reimagined during fieldwork. Lastly, I address how the challenges of doing fieldwork, as Coffey (1999) has noted, can be stressful and emotional.

The first few months of fieldwork was characterised by an acute sense of being out of place. I felt a sense of shame that filled me with discomfort as I approached the youth club each evening. In particular, when I did not have a role at the youth club, I felt not only a bad ethnographer, but a bad volunteer. Moreover, without wanting to intrude on young people's space, I was always waiting for an invitation to participate, and sometimes this did not appear. Even when I was, I always had an acute awareness that my out-of-placeness could be used against me at any moment.

Furthermore, my body that I had felt relatively comfortable with took on new meanings. I was wary of my unfit and unaccomplished body as I attempted a sponsored bike ride with the boys, or after hours of practice could still not win a game of pool. I was conscious of my gendered body, of overemphasising my femininity by

the way I dressed, but also worried about not being feminine enough in front of hyper-feminine girls. Moreover, it was this inter-subjectivity, my aged body in comparison to young bodies that brought out the most acute shame, from such silly exchanges as the game of 'guess how old Louise is' which provided both moments of relief and discomfort as I am identified and placed by others.

Lastly, when I recall my time at the Common I remember feeling wired. Although the youth centre was only ever open for four hours, it was nevertheless an intense experience that left me both wide-awake and exhausted at the end of each evening. I agree with Coffey (1999) when she refers to fieldwork as 'emotional labour'. As will be made clear in later chapters of this thesis, being at the Common meant being exposed the often difficult circumstances and events that affected young people. Hearing accounts of grief, assault, depression and self-harm was not only a very emotional lived experience for young people, but it was also distressing for the youth workers and volunteers. With no formal outlet for managing these feelings, I used the lift I shared home with one of the youth workers as a way to debrief every evening, in addition to writing my fieldnotes. I am conscious, that young people at the Common did not have such as outlet.

Blind spots in the research

There are a number of blind spots to the research. The first relates to the discussion above. As a female member of staff, there were certain spaces that I had access to without restriction (such as the girls' bathroom and girls' room). However, I did not have access to certain male spaces, which the male youth workers controlled, such as the football pitch and gym. Furthermore, although the female youth worker allowed me to attend meetings in the staff room with young female attendees, this did not extend to the boys. As I discussed above, I was sometime pulled and pushed into different spaces with different young people, which influenced who I spent time with. However, as previously mentioned, the boys were more regular attenders and thus I did still spend significant amounts of time with them. In addition, the girls were less engaged with the youth centre, and only attended sporadically, resulting in disrupted accounts. In addition, the girls did not engage with the photography project. As I will discuss in later chapters, photographs were closely monitored and controlled by the girls themselves online, and were frequently under surveillance through what they

made available. The photography project, therefore, could be interpreted as another form of surveillance.

The second blind spot was in regards to online ethnography. There was a code of conduct that I was sent at the outset of my research, in which it was clear that youth workers and volunteers were not to have a young person's contact details on their personal phones, and were not to add young people as 'friends' on social media. Although I agreed to this at the time and it made the ethics process easier, it wasn't until I began fieldwork that I realised the seriousness of this omission. As I will discuss in the thesis, all of the young people were connected through online messenger and social media. A large part of discussions, therefore, were in reference to events and talk that had happened 'online'. I also later found out that this code of conduct was frequently broken by staff. This relates to the next blind spot, that most of my fieldnotes are public, rather than private, accounts. Therefore what follows are the experiences and events that happened within the public space of the Common. These accounts are therefore partial.

Issues of representation

Who speaks for whom, why, how, and when? (Probyn 1993, 2)

The last issue I want to address in this chapter is about representation, which has been one of the most dominant debates in ethnography (Geertz 1988, Clifford 1986, Van Maanen 2011). The debates have draws attention to ethnographies as the product of fieldwork, and the process of writing as a way of knowing (Foley 2002). In other words ethnography has to be understood as a constructed text that only reflects partial truths. However, of concern for me, are the debates around who has the power to represent, and about who has the authority to speak. This is of particular importance when writing about young people, who can be silenced by adult voices. As has been recognised, the power to write and represent participants can be considered an act of objectification (Acker, Barry, and Esseveld 1983, p.429). In addition ethnographers have been guilty of using writing forms that prioritise asserting "the authority of the narrator" (Abu-Lughod 1990, p.10), rather than focusing on what the outcomes might be to participants.

Wacquant (2002) draws particular attention to the ways in which we present participants that already experience exclusion and marginalisation. He notes, that often we present participants under a romanticised light in order to avoid further labelling, or present the sensational rather than everyday life. Both, he notes, are dishonest. Waterston (2012) suggests that these various representations constitute a cynical understanding that everything you write about those who are disadvantaged will be used against them. She counters, then, that it is the role of the ethnographer to confront the power and structures that impact on those living in disadvantage. Through this thesis, I have tried to be aware of the impact my editing choices might represent the young people in my study, and how they are represented.

I try, in the chapter that follow, to represent a balanced picture of what I observed at the Common, the good, the bad, and the everyday. Nonetheless, I recognise that ultimately I have decided what to select, and omit from my findings. Mostly, I have made these choices out of necessity, what fits and what doesn't. For example, the role of music and the way it was controlled and used to present identity was important to young people at the Common, but I have decided to omit from the body of the study. Firstly, because it didn't necessarily slot it anywhere, but secondly, because the themes that it illuminates are covered in other chapters. But perhaps, more seriously, is to regard what I have chosen to present about young people's lives. In order to protect young people's confidentiality I have ammended, and sometime merged details, of a few of the young people. As far as possible, I have not changed any details that would impact or distort the findings. Instead, I have tried to focus on what Ellis (2007, p.26) neatly sums up as ethical practice:

> As a researcher we long to do ethical research that makes a difference. To come close to these goals, we constantly have to consider which questions to ask, which secrets to keep, and which truths are worth telling.

Concerns about identifying information has been a recurring concern. Although I have anonymised the youth centre and the names of staff and young people, there remains a worry that it may be recognisable. In particular, I have been concerned that my own background and location may be used to try and locate the youth centre. Indeed, when I have presented the study, audience members have used several bits of

my own biography to incorrectly guess my fieldsite. If I tell people where I am from, or my University, or where I am now living, my fieldsite is mistakenly located nearby. What I learnt from these experiences, in which the audience members were convinced they knew of the location, is that the Common is similar to a number of other youth clubs in similar areas. It is not unique. Perhaps, though, I am giving this undue weight given the current ongoing attention to Alice Goffman's (2015) widely publised ethnography, in which journalists have used her address to locate her fielsite, and attempted to 'out' her participants.

3.5 Summary and conclusion

This chapter set out to describe the methodological approach of the current study. In doing so, I have looked at how my choice of a qualitative interpretivist approach was driven by ontological and epistemological concerns that led me to ethnography. In particular, I have described my epistemological position recognising 'situated knowledges' (Haraway 1988) which proposes that we will only ever have an incomplete and partial view of the world, and an ontological position that recognises that we both produce and are produced in the social world. Ethnography, as an inclusive method has been considered particular useful for working with marginalised groups, and in this case young people. In particular the method focuses on working within young people's own environment, and with their interests. In focusing on a youth centre I have also tried to avoid creating obligations for young people to participate in the study. The Common is a space that is voluntarily inhabited by its attendees, and in which they can exercise their freedom to refuse to take part in any activities they do not want to. After all, the centre runs in their spare time, they are not obliged to stay.

Secondly, I have drawn attention to feminist concerns about power, positionality and reflexivity. Throughout the course of fieldwork I have tried to maintain reflexivity as a practice rather than simply an account of my conduct in the field. In critically reviewing my methods I have focused on what my method allowed to me to see, and to be aware of the blind spots. Practically, I was limited to which young people turned up and for how long, requiring a flexible research strategy. In this case, observation rather than formal methods were appropriate. I was also restricted access to certain spaces and practices such as the gym and football pitch as part of a wider process that

meant that I was pushed and pulled into engaging with the girls. In addition, by following the protocol of the youth club, I did not access the online spaces and network that made up a significant part of young people's lives. Lastly, I tried to maintain awareness that:

> We may be able to build rapport, connect with youth, and feel like we are part of their lives, but it is crucial to remember that we will not be seen as their peers, and that this will shape what youth are willing to tell us (Taft 2007, p.212)

In this chapter, I have given a brief outline of my fieldsite The Common. In order to situate the study, the next chapter will give more detail about the location of the Common, and about the young people and youth workers that attend. In doing so, I can begin to explore who came to the Common, and what they did when they were there. I hope that this background will set the scene for the following finding chapters, in which I explore in more detail the role of the Common in Sandyhill, and the different ways in which young people use the youth centre as a way of gaining value, creating exclusions, and as a place of escape.

Interlude 4

Kima (15, Black British) sees the Wii and goes up to the box of games. She picks up Just Dance and looks round at the table grinning. Youth worker Suzy encourages the other girls to join her but they cover their faces shouting *'shame, no way!'* Kima has none of these concerns and selects Beyoncé's 'Crazy in Love'. Suzy shouts '*I knew you would pick that one*!' The song starts and Kima follows the directions. She does this very casually, following the moves without any particular concentration or enthusiasm but the game keeps scoring her 100%. She hardly has to put any effort in. She puts another song on and Raymond (11, Black British) walks over to her and starts copying the moves regardless of not having a controller. More and more people have started watching and smiling at their efforts. Raymond exaggerates the movements shaking his hips and spinning around and soon people from basketball are over from the window looking over and laughing. Soon everyone has stopped what they are doing and are just watching although no one else is volunteering to take part. "I want you back" by the Jackson 5 is the next song. It is closing time and we are still in full swing. The manager Don comes in and smiles watching the TV, '*I love it when you see them having fun like that...makes you feel bad kicking them out'*. He lets them finish the song before turning it off.

Chapter 4

The Common and Sandyhill

The Common is a youth and community centre in a neighbourhood of a mid-size town in the North of England. It has been open for over four decades and was originally established as a boys club for the area. The commemorative sign from its opening as a boys club is still displayed, and despite a few extensions over the years, the main hub of the centre is the original design. Over the decades the building, due to lack of funding, has fallen into a state of disrepair despite the best efforts of the centre's manager who does the maintenance in his spare time. The centre is independent of the council youth services that have been subject to intense cuts over the past two years. While this freedom is seen as a positive asset, they are also dependent on charitable donations that have been increasingly difficult to secure.

The Common is located in Sandyhill, a neighbourhood on the outskirts of the town that was originally associated with African and Caribbean migrants, but is now home to a wider range of ethnic groups. The main street of the neighbourhood consists of independent and local businesses; barbers, newsagents, grocers, fast food takeaways, restaurants and an ice-cream parlour. The youth centre is positioned off one of the main roads in and out of the area. The Common sits on the corner of a residential road that leads to row of boarded up houses. The Common itself is unremarkable from the outside, an anonymous redbrick building. There are a few steps outside the main door where young people often sit before the centre opens but other than this visual cue there are no other indications of the building's function.

Inside the Common, 80% of the attendees are male, and the resources are mainly allocated towards sporting equipment that is used by the boys. The boys come into the centre on their own and typically join in one of the activities in the main room, pool tables and table tennis, or go to play football or basketball in the gym. The girls in contrast will never come into the centre unaccompanied, organising to meet with friends beforehand. Once insides the girls stick together, and avoid being left on their own. There is a girl's room on the outskirts of the main building (see figure 5 for the

layout of the centre) with sofas for hanging out. The lights don't work, and the heating is broken. Consequently they are often sat cold, in the dark looking out the windows in to the gym. The boys occupy the main space; control the music, while the girls are on the periphery. The girls often spend time in the foyer, in the bathroom or in one of the side rooms, rarely sitting in the main space. The centre tries to encourage more girls to come in, offering arts or cooking playing into traditional notions of gender. It is often to the frustration of the staff that the girls refuse to do these activities, while the boys are keen to. The manager at the youth centre tells me that it is not so unequal amongst the younger groups, where they have a larger number of Muslim girls, who are not allowed by their parents to move into the teenager groups when they are old enough for religious reasons.

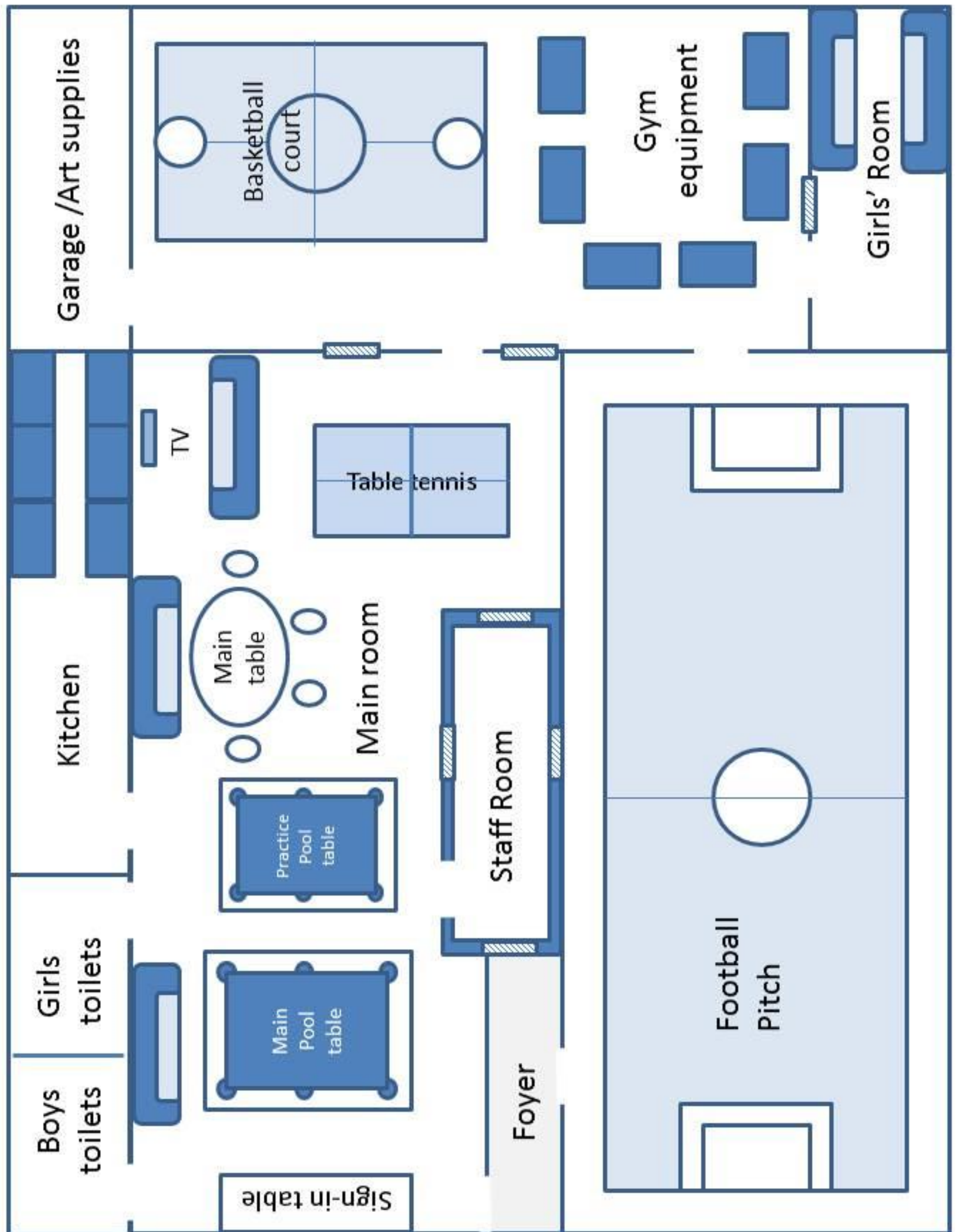

Figure 5. Layout of the Common

4.1 The Youth Workers

There are always four youth workers on shift, and typically a volunteer every other night. As can be seen in figure 6 there is a regional manager, Carrie (41 years old, White British), who spends one night a week at the Common, and a centre manager Don (39 years old, Black British). Most of the young people know the managers but spend their time predominantly with the youth workers, who are all from or live in the neighbourhood. There are two male senior youth workers, JP (35, Black British) and has been working at the centre for ten years, and Colin (28, Black British) who has been working at the centre for six years. There are two female youth workers, Suzy (42, White British) who has been at the centre three years and Robin (30, Black British) who has been at the centre for ten years. Robin is only part-time, so Suzy is the lead female youth worker.

There are two other youth workers, Scott (26, White British), and Nick (24, Black British) and three trainee youth workers. The trainee youth workers are young people from the centre who have been encourage to train and gain their youth work qualifications and include Ben (20, Black British), Mark (21, Mixed Race), and Marcus (23, Black British). On nights when the trainees are not working they often come into the centre as young people, which sometimes confusion. All of the youth workers have day jobs, as coaches, teachers, and security workers to supplement their youth work. During my fieldwork a number of young people were identified as potential future youth workers, and approached to volunteer in order to gain some experience.

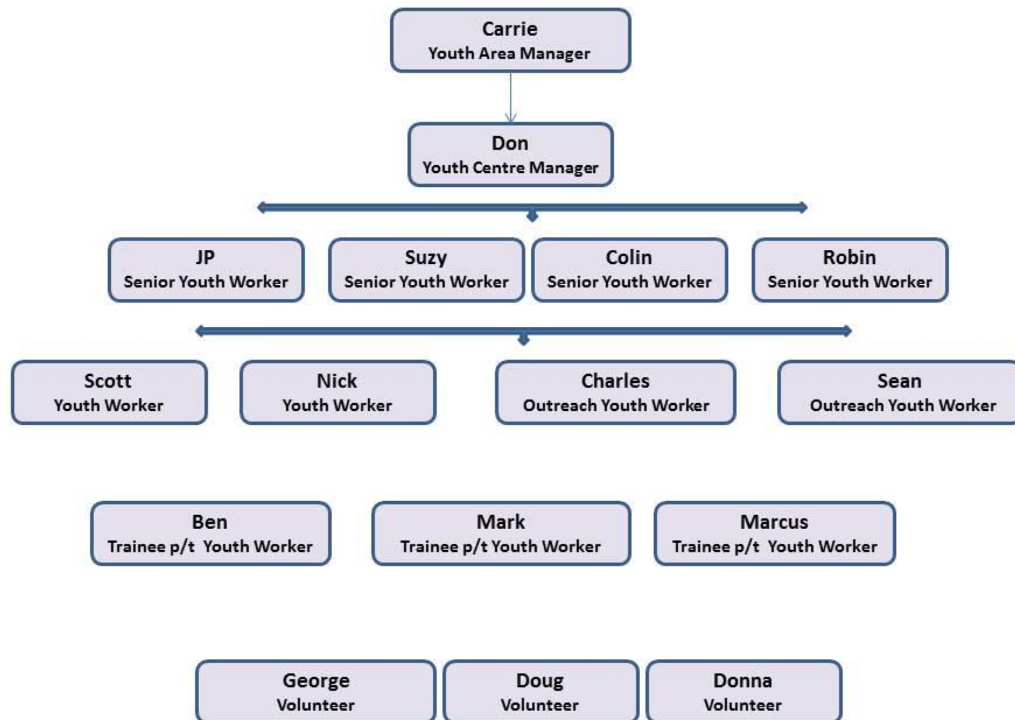

Figure 6: Organisational structure

4.2 The boys

The boys′ friendship network, shown in figure 7, is considerably different from the girls. Although the boys come into the centre on their own they are in larger and more informal friendship groups. The boys who come to the centre generally fall into the largest group closest to their age. The oldest group of boys, mainly consisting of seventeen year olds Theo, Jackson, and Kian, I have named the 'gym boys'. Although they have been attending the Common for a number of years, their engagement is now limited to using the gym. The gym is a serious endeavour and they will spend hours on a designated routine. They do still engage with the youth workers in the gym space, talking over training regimes, or when signing in in the main room. They talk to the youth workers as peers while discussing their plans for the future over pool. The gym boys more recently take an interest in volunteering at the Common in order to gain experience and enhance their C.V.s.

The second group I have named the 'established boys'. This group of 14-15 year olds describe themselves as the main group. Led by Mitchell (15, mixed-race), the established boys have been attending the Common since childhood. Therefore they know the rules and are in the prime position to attend trips out and any other activities. Their group comes to the Common in casual wear, appropriate for taking part in the sporting activities. They engage with the youth workers when they know it will benefit them, but are otherwise peer orientated. The group associates predominantly with other boys. The girls in particular regard this group as hostile. The youth workers keep an eye on this group knowing that some are compliant and can be trusted, such as Lucas (14,White British) and Naman (15, Asian British). Mitchell (15, mixed race), Carver (14 Black British) and Kinesse (15, Black British) however are seen as in need of more intervention given that they are involved in a number of physical alterations in the Common and have a number of run-ins with the police.

Next in the hierarchy are the 'up and coming boys' which consists of the young boys at the Common. Both Reuben (13, mixed race) and Henry (14, mixed race) have kinships links to the established boys and to members of staff. Through these associations the 'up and coming boys' are socialised into the rules at the Common. In contrast to the older groups they still engage with the youth workers and spend a large proportion of the evening play-fighting and running around the centre. They have a wider peer group that includes a number of girls. While they will wear casual gear they try to be smarter with more expensive sports coats and occasionally jeans. The group all carry combs that are brought out on an hourly basis to comb their hair flat on the understanding that it will subsequently grow it straight. The group are not hyper-masculine like the established boys, instead they use their romantic and platonic relationships with the girls to display their masculinity.

The last grouping is amongst the lowest pecking order and consists of more casual attenders to the Common. The newbies/groupies group consists of newcomers who do not know the rules and the groupies who are outside the main groups who want to fit in. The group are mainly the younger and physically smaller boys who do not conform to typically heterosexual norms. As they do not fit into the group they also spend time with the girls and the youth workers. All the members of the group are

attempting to move into the older groups, gaining value through participating in accepted rituals and games. These groups will become clearer throughout the main findings.

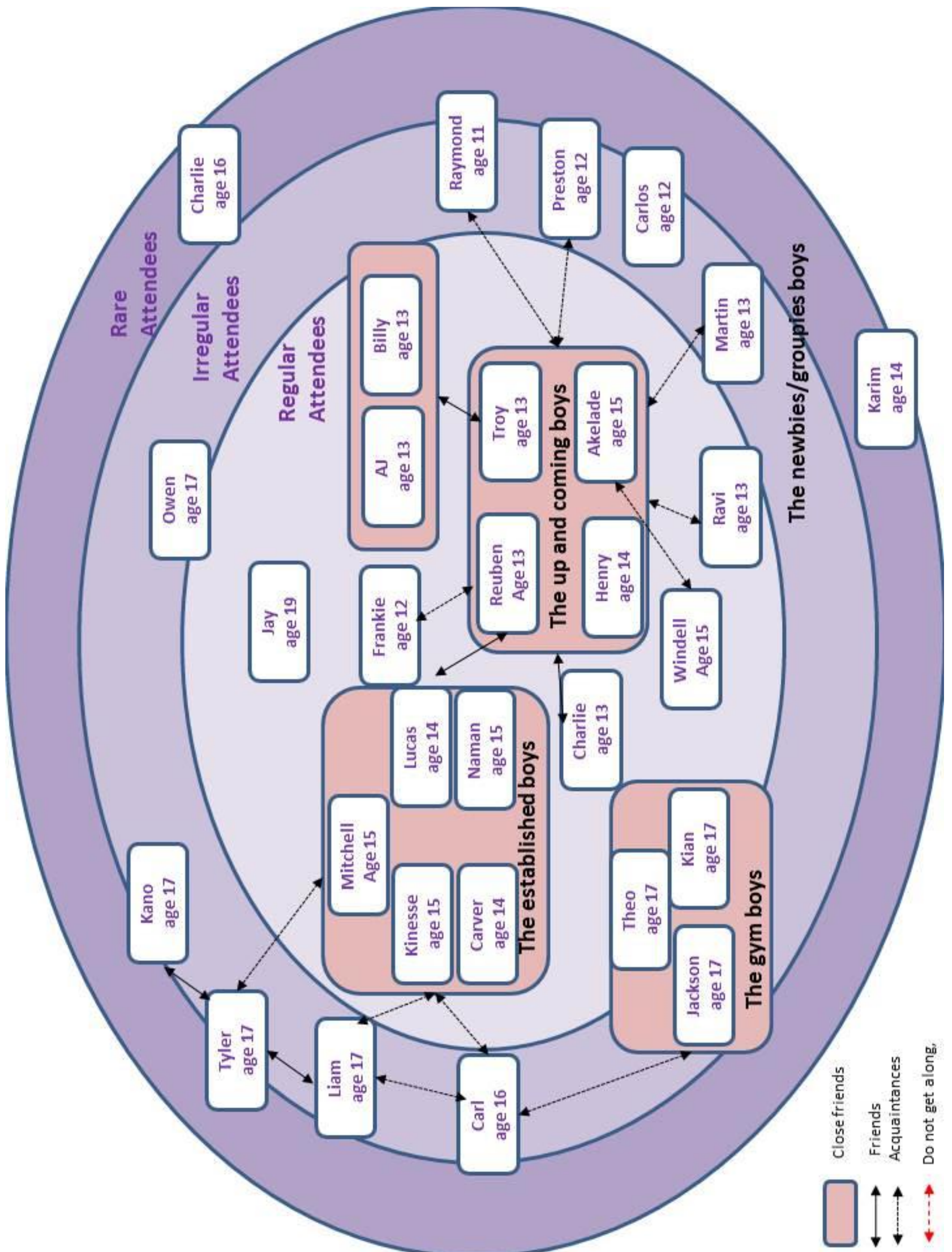

Figure 7: Boys' friendship network

4.3 The girls

While there is greater attendance amongst the juniors, there are a limited number of new girls who graduate to attend the senior sessions. The girls at the Common are described as by regional manager Carrie as troubled: in contact with social services and with significant family and school problems. The girls turn up late to the youth centre sessions and are more transitory, coming in for brief periods and then going to the local shops and homes nearby. The girls do not want to take part in activities, often refusing loudly before even hearing what has been proposed, and actively seek spaces aware from adult surveillance. When they do take part in any activities they quickly become distracted, often by friends or their phones. Conflict is more common amongst the girls, with the dyads and small groups having to share the same space. This is evident in the friendship dynamic in figure 8. I found the girls harder to engage with initially but once a relationship had been built I was privy to much more personal information than I was with the boys.

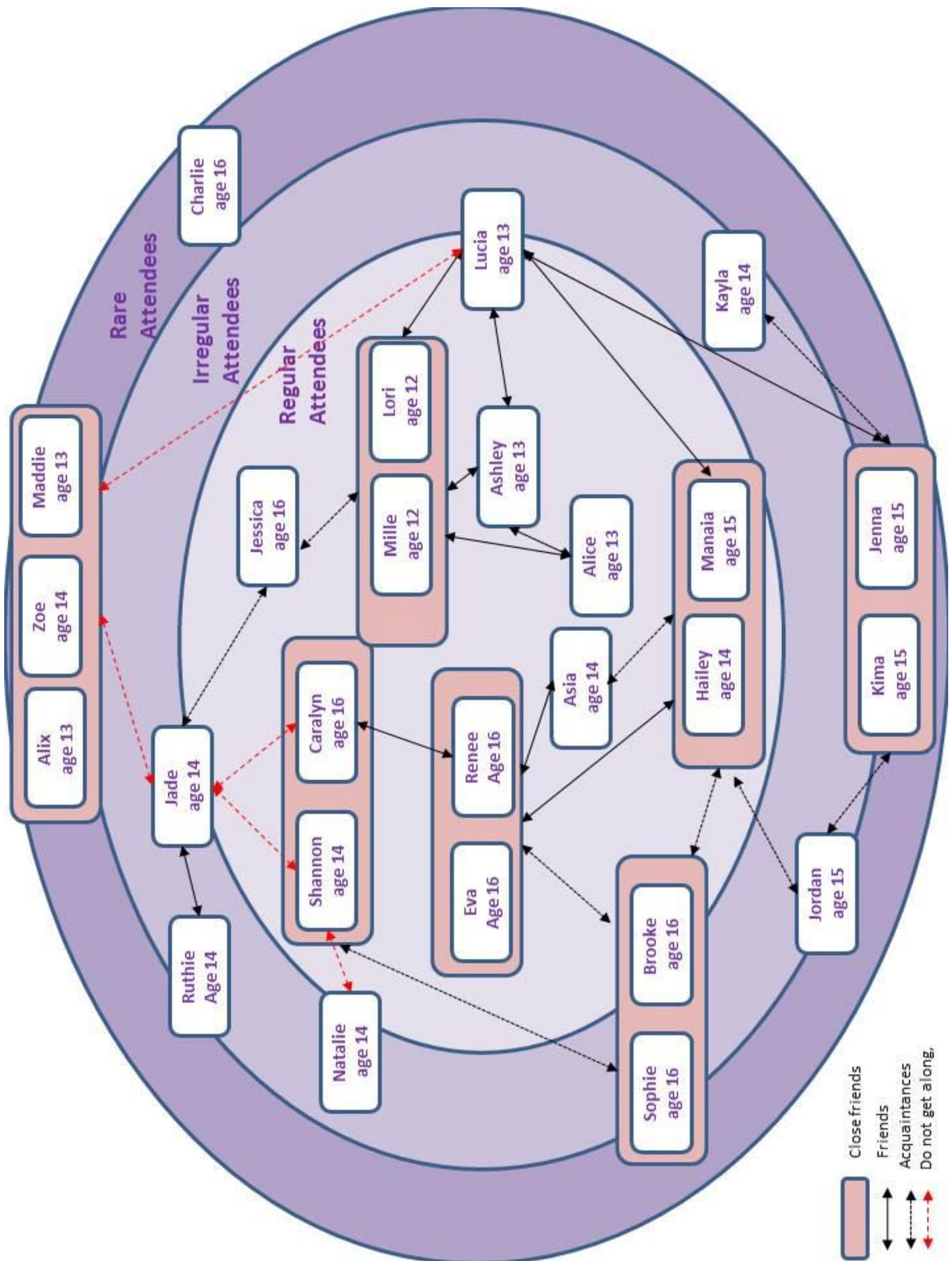

Figure 8: Girls' friendship network

Interlude 5

Figure 9. Trip to Radio 1xtra Live to see Plan B

Chapter 5

Insecurity, exclusion and the significance of place

The song 'Ill Manors' was released in the middle of my fieldwork by UK rapper Plan B. Described as a protest song in response to the 2011 riots[11], the white working-class artist, originally from North East London, also draws on his own childhood experience of exclusion and feelings of being an 'outcast' (Lynskey 2012). It was commonly played on the radio, which piped through the youth centre, and one evening a few young people gather to watch the video. As it ended, the area manager, Carrie, came over to turn it off, '*clean songs only, no swearing*', and followed up with '*it's a bit militant*'. A few months later, I chaperoned a few of the young people to a BBC Radio 1xta event where Plan B headlined amongst a number of other acts. The song seemed to follow me, but it was only listening to it on the radio driving home from my last night at the Common that I felt its significance. It summarised not only a critique of the national mood about young people following the 2011 riots, but also how I felt the young people at the Common were characterised by those both in and out of the neighbourhood of Sandyhill.

Whilst I was at the Common, Sandyhill was the subject of public scrutiny in which it was labelled as a problematic ghetto. It was not just Sandyhill, however, but other areas of disadvantage that were similarly characterised as 'bad' places. In particular, a spokesperson from the UN caused controversy by describing several areas in the north of England, similar to Sandyhill, as 'no-go areas' through drug and gang warfare, comparing them to Brazilian Favelas (Brown 2012). Nationally, the UK Prime Minister David Cameron (2011) lamented the 'slow-motion moral collapse' in

[11] Following the, what some interpreted as racially motivated, police killing of Mark Duggan in Tottenham a number of riots broke out across the country, including the North of England, over August 2011. The Prime Minister David Cameron (2011) in his speech about the events put the blame on young people and poor parenting for the riots and gave power to the courts to hand out extended punishments to convicted 'rioters'.

such communities, seen as the fault of broken families, in order to justify punitive austerity measures. Closer to home, the young people at the Common were described as yobs and gangs in local press. These discursive assaults sat at odds with what I was seeing inside the Common. Jake (13, mixed race[12]), one of attendees at the Common described the discord he felt, capturing how it was possible to hold multiple conflicting views of the area:

> **Jake:** I don't like it round here to be truthful. I just don't like the mouth on them, the abuse, all the stress. Sometimes I swear I just wanna walk.
>
> **Louise:** Where's better?
>
> **Jake:** Different areas but I like it here, I like that its, what's the word, multi…multicultural. Yeah, yeah I like it here because of that. If you go outside you won't find that.

5.1 Framing the chapter

Aims of the chapter

In this chapter I will be exploring three key themes that address the main aims of this thesis, namely exploring how young people experience exclusion. Firstly, I will describe how young people and their families in Sandyhill, many of whom are already experiencing disadvantage and exclusion, are experiencing increased insecurity and precarity. Of particular interest is how welfare and state cuts, framed as austerity, exacerbate pre-existing deprivation in the community, and for some result in displacement from the neighbourhood. While there have been comprehensive reviews outlining the range of welfare cuts that will affect the lives of young people in the future, such as Ridge (2013), there are few studies exploring how these structural cuts actually manifest in young people's everyday lives. I will also discuss how young people suffer displacement and insecurity through loss, which could be described as a consequence of structural violence, and the disruption of informal kinship care in the community.

Secondly, I will consider how displacement from the neighbourhood means exclusion from an area that is perceived as safe and a place of belonging for some young people.

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[12] These are the self-identified 'heritages' that young people reported when they registered at the Common

Thus, I will look at the conflicts of belonging that arise from Sandyhill being both a safe and unsafe space for certain young people. Thirdly, I will focus on how displacement and exclusion are not experienced equally; rather they become attached to certain bodies and spaces. In the case of Sandyhill, young black males are the subject of surveillance and suspicion in public spaces. As I will go on to describe, racism is experienced both inside and outside of Sandyhill, and hierarchies around racial identity emerged in social interactions in the Common. This is turn, leads to me to reflect on how these exclusions influence who attends spaces like the Common.

Perhaps unsurprisingly these topics were not at the forefront of issues discussed at the Common. I would argue, however, that this does not mean they are not important. Not only do the background conditions surround and inform the findings that follow, but the fact that they are not foreground issues is significant. I would suggest that this is because these issues lie along a fuzzy boundary between public and private, of what can or cannot be spoken about. This would support other research in this area that has suggested that young people don't talk about exclusion and disadvantage directly (cf. MacDonald et al 2005). Instead, the data I am drawing on are relatively small snippets of discussions, and the interviews from the visual photography project, that gave me an insight into young people's lives outside the Common. I propose that these fragmented accounts and narratives presented in this chapter, and indeed in this thesis more broadly, reflect the often precarious nature of young people's lives that are often disrupted through circumstance and conditions.

Literature and approaches drawn on

In this chapter, I will return to some of the literature I introduced in the previous chapter, specifically the work on exclusion and structural violence. These literatures, I argue, help me to look at the context of young people's lives through examining the processes through which young people's agency is influenced by structural constraints. This is especially important given the current situation in the UK (and other Western contexts) in which austerity and welfare cuts are justified through blaming individuals for their poverty (Slater and Anderson 2012, Slater 2014, Hancock and Mooney 2012, Wacquant 2007, 2008, 2009). As Bourgois (2003) further notes, it is important to note that structural condition and forces which make

specific groups vulnerable. Within this chapter, then, I aim to show that it is not only young people as a group that are made vulnerable, but that this experience varies by class, gender, and race[13] (and sexuality, although I will not be addressing this here).

I will also be drawing on Wacquant's (2008, 2009) work on advanced marginality and territorial stigmatisation. Both of these concepts, which I will later explain in greater detail, focus on how particular spaces and people become segregated, labelled, and stigmatised through an increasingly punitive regime against those living in poverty (2008, 2009). It is important therefore, as Waterston (2008, 2012) urges, to look at how these social forces isolate and marginalise young people but also how young people actively negotiate or challenge their imposed exclusion. I will talk about how these concepts relate to Sandyhill and the Common in more depth throughout the chapter. In later sections, where I outline how young black men are particularly marginalised, I also refer to the literature by a number of post-colonial, feminist, and queer theorists (such as Anderson 2004, Puwar 2004, Probyn 2004) to look at how these bodies become visible and, in turn, subject to surveillance.

5.2 Precarious conditions leading to insecurity and displacement

The impact of welfare cuts on insecurity and displacement

The austerity measure that had the most talked about impact on young people was the bedroom tax. Shannon (14, White British) first tells me about what she describes as a '*spare room fine'*. Shannon, who comes to the Common with her best friend Carolyn (16, mixed race) is known for being boy crazy and always carries around a list of her current 'top five' although she refutes these claims, '*I'm not that obsessed, why does everyone use boys as a way of getting me to do these things – my parents used that as a reason to get me to go to this stupid festival*'. At the same time, Shannon frequently discusses how all she wants to '*be married to a rich man'* and have kids. She also claims she isn't going to be '*domesticated*' and that she will need a chef and butler in the future. When she tells youth worker Suzy her plans, Suzy is quick to tell her '*no you will not'* and signs her up for the teenage pregnancy project the Common is running. Shannon says that she is almost coming up to the age that her mum had

[13] I have not included other intersections here, such as disability and sexuality, although I acknowledge they are also important lens through which disadvantage is experienced.

her, so she will probably do the same. Later, at the teenage pregnancy residential, her enthusiasm of 'robot-baby' Colm, see image below, quickly wanes.

Figure 9 Shannon's robot-baby 'Colm', taken by Carolyn

Despite these claims about wanting to be a wife and mother, Shannon is constantly involved in extra-curricular and community activities to bolster her future. She is on the board of the regional youth association and a volunteer youth member of a local arts organisation. She is also a volunteer with the juniors at the Common, where she runs the disco on Friday afternoons and designs all of the posters for the youth centre advertising events. Shannon is, additionally, an A grade student at school and a member of a national dance troupe. Her diary, which she shows me on her phone, is packed and she often complains of feeling tired and worn out.

Cooking one evening in the kitchen, Shannon talks about her home life. She lives with her parents and with her uncle (her dad's brother). He moved in for a few weeks when she was seven and has been there ever since. '*It's good for the extra rent*' she says and asks me if I know that if you have an empty room in your house you have to pay £10 a week to the council[14]. She explains that her grandparents aren't well so they sleep in separate rooms to avoid this. Suzy warns her to be careful who she tells, as someone could report her, '*you don't know who is listening*'. This warning echoes the findings from Wacquant (2008) and Rhodes (2011) whose work on disadvantaged

[14] Known as bedroom tax, the amount varies according to the house and occupants

neighbourhoods of Paris, Chicago and Burnley respectively, which suggests that when resources become tight, increased competition leads to suspicion and distrust.

It is only when Shannon's parents decide to separate a few months later that the issue is discussed again. Although Shannon and her mum intend to stay in the house, and her dad and uncle to move out, the bedroom tax disrupts the plan. Her mum cannot afford to stay in the house and pay the bedroom tax on Shannon's uncle's room. Additionally, as secondary caregivers are not allowed a spare room under the rules, she will not be able to visit and stay with her dad. Her living situation becomes uncertain, and her life is further complicated as the tiredness she complains of is diagnosed as a chronic illness, sending her into hospital. Given the health concerns, her parents decide to stay in the same home, together but separated, until they can make a decision about the future.

Whilst Shannon's situation was uncertain, she remained for the time being in Sandyhill. Others, however, were forced to move, often outside of the area. Max (12, Black British) starts attending the Common late into my fieldwork. Although he is only small in stature, around four foot when we spend an evening taking measurements with a novelty wall chart, he wears his hair in a stiff Mohican that adds some height. He doesn't engage with staff for the first few weeks, meeting questions with a glare or the sucking of his teeth in disdain. Like the other boys he establishes his credentials through sport – in particular football and table tennis.

Max's relationships with the youth workers changes over the activities of the centre, such as the table tennis match Max plays with Big George. George, who taught the majority of young people at the Common how to play, considers himself the best player and brings in his own expensive bat to play. Although the game starts out amicably, George realising Max's skill suddenly has to concentrate and put his head down. I sit at the main table to watch while a few of the other boys come and join me. George is beaten and is furious '*I can't believe I was beat by you, look at you – pipsqueak. Right let's play proper now*'. They play again but George keeps changing the parameters of the game '*best to 11, best to 24*'. Max gives an uncharacteristic grin.

He is not strong at pool however, so on a number of occasions he asks me '*have us a game*' when the centre is quiet. Whilst we are playing on the practice table one

evening, older boys Liam (17, White British) and Tyler (17, White British) are at the main table. Max asks them if anyone else here lives in a nearby neighbourhood. '*You moved*?' asks Tyler, '*Yeah, had to move to a smaller house…its better though*' says Max before continuing '*know anyone else from there?*' Liam shrugs '*nah, not any bad mans, pure white down there*'. Interestingly, Liam is white himself suggesting that there are multiple meanings in what makes a 'bad man' and 'pure white' relating to class and multiple forms of whiteness. This has been discussed by Wray (2006) in terms of middle class whiteness and 'scruffy whites'. Suzy later confirms to me that Max's family were moved due to the bedroom tax and welfare changes. Unlike some other young people similarly displaced, such as Akelade who I will discuss shortly, Max remains a regular attender, cycling to the centre every evening.

In addition to the bedroom tax, there were a number of other economic changes that made life in Sandyhill more precarious. Some of the changes were made as councils were asked to make cuts from their own budget. The local council that covered Sandyhill, due to large-scale budget cuts, decided to cut school uniform grants. These grants funded school uniforms for children living with parents on receipt of welfare benefits, every school year. One of the long-term volunteers Donna was attending a protest meeting about the cut, and explained to me that, for her, this grant enabled all school children to look the same. The cut to the grant, however, meant that children from poorer backgrounds were forced to wear other, or old, uniforms that made them stand out. One of those affected was Carlos (13, mixed race). Despite the Common's rule about uniforms or smart clothes, Carlos commonly turned up in his school uniform. As the new school year began it became apparent that he was wearing last year's uniform, and upon pressing by youth worker Colin, Carlos confessed that he had been in receipt of the grant in previous years.

Carlos is a regular attendee during the first few weeks of fieldwork, coming to the Common six nights a week without fail. We first interact over the charity bike ride for Comic Relief that he has signed up for, and that youth worker JP and I are organising. He discloses that he doesn't have a bike yet, but is getting one for his birthday in a few weeks, and checks in with me daily with the amount he has raised. After a few weeks later however, as I feedback Carlos's fundraising progress to JP, I am told that it is highly unlikely he will be getting a bike. According to JP, Carlos lives alone with

his mum who is an alcoholic, and that he is the first to arrive and last to leave the centre. Trainee youth worker, Mark confirms that they often have to convince Carlos to go home.

As Carlos's birthday passes, no bike appears, but he is increasingly being pulled into the staff office for lashing out, and most evenings I see him sitting looking down at the floor, shaking, while being told off. However, he is not lashing out indiscriminately. I am witness to some of the established boys winding Carlos up most evenings, laughing as his face turns redder; about the bike ('*you don't have a bike, you don't even have a wheel*'), and about his mum ('*I saw your mum with her tits out at the corner shop, honest, I saw her*'), leading to the fighting. The other boys are not reprimanded as they scuttle off as a youth worker approaches. A few weeks after school has started the boys also notice that he is wearing an old, and now undersized, school uniform. After playing football, they point to the sweat on his uniform with disgust and the misshapen nature of his jumper, and ask if he is wearing it to school tomorrow, '*bet he is*' states Mitchell (15, mixed race).

Carlos's biography is shared amongst the youth workers, in order to raise awareness that he is not cared for properly at home, and although this ensures that Carlos is fed at the centre (a theme I will return to in a later chapter), this is not used to explain his anger. They tell me that Carlos '*doesn't get anything*', but in only attending to his anger and behaviour as he lashes out, the shame that is used to wind up Carlos by other young people is often ignored. After one week in which is he repeatedly told he smells, and is accused of stealing (although I confirm he was talking to me when the offence happened), he stops coming to the Common altogether.

To be clear that I am not insinuating that the cut to the school uniform grant was the cause of Carlos's problems, but rather that the cuts exacerbated the stigma Carlos already experienced due to the disadvantage he was living in. Similarly, with Shannon and Max, the bedroom tax was not the only changing condition in their lives, but it had an effect; uncertainty for Shannon, and displacement for Max. As I will go on to further explain, these cuts can have different implications for those moved out of Sandyhill, and for those who are in more transitional living situations.

The impact of loss and bereavement on insecurity and displacement

Almost all of the young people I engaged with at the Common had experienced at least one significant loss prior to the age of 16 – parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, siblings and friends. That the young people at the Common weren't displaced through loss and bereavement more surprised me given the number affected. As other researchers, such as Rubin (1976) and MacDonald and Shildrick (2013), have found, there was an excess of loss in this, working class, area. Importantly these deaths were often premature and accidental.

Although national statistics (ONS 2014) highlight that in areas listed as having multiple indexes of deprivation, such as Sandyhill, there are higher than average number of people living with chronic illnesses and lower than average life expectancy, the volume shocked me. Although bereavements signify 'critical moments' for young people (MacDonald and Shildrick 2013), I found myself becoming acclimatised to the almost every day and matter of fact reporting of loss. Bereavements were not often discussed in detail, but mentioned offhand or reported through friends. Here, I will briefly discuss a few examples where bereavement was discussed, rather than a second-hand account, to illustrate how loss in addition to disadvantage increased precariousness and insecurity.

Jade (14, White British) was a dominant figure during my time at the Common, despite her sporadic attendance. As will be discussed in the next chapter, Jade was the subject of controversy at the youth club and was frequently at the centre of conflict. Although Jade discusses her everyday relationships and school life, falling out with friends, her boyfriends, a pregnancy, I hear little about her home life. After a fight with a group of girls on the street outside the Common I asked to keep an eye on Jade and her friend Jess (16, mixed-race) whilst the managers speak to witnesses and call guardians.

Jess sits on one of the tables next to me, but Jade remains standing, facing the door so she can watch out for the group of girls coming back, biting her nails and periodically checking on the bruises on her leg where she was kicked. Jade tells me that thirteen year old Maddie (White British) asked her to buy cigarettes from the local newsagents. Jade says that she refused, '*I told her I wouldn't get served, and I*

wouldn't do that, I wouldn't buy them, my mum died from smoking, from lung cancer'. Jade repeats that she would never buy cigarettes because of lung cancer when suddenly Jess who has been sat quietly sucking her thumb says '*if you say that C [cancer] word again I'm going to explode and I will punch you. Stop it*'. Jess pulls her hoodie sleeves over her hands and puts them over her mouth. Jade tells me that Jess's dad died of cancer a few months ago, but she doesn't like to talk about it. Their friendship, which on the surface had little common ground, was perhaps based on this shared experience. Both of their parents died in their early forties.

They both talk to me separately and in different ways about their loss. Jade is initially placed in foster care after losing her mum a couple of years ago but she is later put into the care of her aunt after running away from her foster home. Jade tells me that her aunt also has cancer, and that she worries that it runs in the family; her aunt, her mum, and her gran. Her aunt's health deteriorates and Jade is moved into another foster home. She runs away again. Although most of the young people know about Jade's mum, the sympathy she is offered does not last long, which I will discuss in the next chapter. For now, I should explain that Jade has a reputation for insulting other young people's family members who are unwell, over text and on social media, leading to her exclusion from friendship groups.

Jess in contrast retains sympathy. Although she avoids talking about her dad, occasionally a reminder will bring it to the surface. Jess is the only regular at the Common during my tenure. She is also the only girl who arrives unaccompanied, instead spending more time with the youth workers. She and I soon establish a routine, checking in by the radiator to ask about each other's day. Usually when I ask about her day she smiles and recounts how she was bored at school, but one day I get a different response, '*No, I've had a terrible day, I've not stopped crying since I came home.'* Upon further prompting, she continues '*My rotty [Rottweiler] got put down while I was at school and my auntie told me when I got home. He had cancer'*. I ask if she is ok and she nods, puts her headphones back on and goes over to sit at the main table.

Later, Jess comes back over and tell me she is not going to be able to sleep. She explains that when her dad died she didn't sleep for days, and doesn't think she will

be able to sleep tonight either. Jess lives with her mum, a younger brother, two aunts, and three beloved dogs. Her grandmother, who is frequently hospitalised, lives around the corner and is involved in her day to day life. Her brother, who is estranged from the family, is in and out of prison. She reports that the police frequently stop at her home, despite the fact that her brother has not lived with them for ten years, often raiding the house looking for him. Jess explains that she misses him, that he looked after her, but she can't forgive him for disrupting their life. Her family twice had to move house and neighbourhood after his arrest.

For a small number of young people at the Common, the experience of loss and grief manifested in self-harm and suicide attempts. Eva (16, mixed-race) tells youth worker Suzy, her friend Renee (16, Black British) and I, about ending up in hospital over New Year after a suicide attempt. She had taken an overdose of medication she found at home, her mum's blood pressure tablets and her sister's epilepsy medication, and was kept under observation for three days. She explains that a psychiatrist diagnosed her as depressed, a diagnosis she disagrees with, but that sometimes her '*mood turns, just like that, it's since my big sister died*'. She describes her sister as a second mother, and that her death was unexpected.

A few weeks later her dad has a stroke. She is matter of fact about it, '*me dad had a stroke on Saturday…he's had two strokes before, sad, but you know*'. Suzy asks her how old he is. '*46*' Eva shrugs. '*That is young!*' says Suzy. '*No, not really, I don't see him that much anyway*' Eva explains. Eva has been excluded from school, for verbally abusing a member of staff, but she is allowed to go in to take her GCSE classes and exams and comes out with eight GCSEs including three A*s. She tells us that she is '*trying to be good',* but that sometimes she gets angry, especially with her mum, but she doesn't know why.

Despite Eva's optimism that the school will let her attend their associated sixth-form after her good GCSE results, the school refuses at late notice. Suzy and Colin both work to contact colleges, and arrange an apprenticeship for Eva. She starts an apprenticeship and is looking to start volunteering with the juniors. Unfortunately, she becomes increasingly distressed. She quits her apprenticeship, and drops volunteering, she tells us '*I'm just not doing anything'*. A few weeks after, at the

teenage pregnancy residential she has a number of panic attacks, lashing out at youth worker Ben who has to restrain her, and tries to run away. Later, her mum appeals to the Common for help, with Suzy offering extended support at home, but despite some progress the last I hear is that Eva has been sectioned after threatening herself and her mum with a knife.

The disruption of informal kinship care

One of the consequences of bereavement was that young people were displaced from their home. As with Jade in the account above, many of the young people at the Common who experienced loss, or disruption more generally, moved in with extended family members. As I will examine in this section, extended family members played a large role in the caring of young people in Sandyhill. In particular, I will discuss informal kinship care, which refers to being under the care of an extended family member that is arranged informally rather than through the state foster system (Dow 2015, Leinaweaver 2013, Leinaweaver 2014). Researchers in the United States have described how kinship care, that was once associated with black communities (Stack 1975), is becoming increasingly common. Kinship care can be regarded as protective, avoiding the involvement of the state, allowing the young person to remain in a familiar place and with familiar people, often keeping the lines of communication open with their family (Leinaweaver 2013, Leinaweaver 2014). Dow (2015) further argues that kinship childcare, for some groups, can be protective against racism from institutions.

The role of kinship care was an essential, and normal, practice around the Common. It reflects the nature of Sandyhill with kin living in close proximity and providing a supportive role in care. This adaptive strategy however, I will argue, is being disrupted by welfare changes such as the introduction of the bedroom tax. This mainly affected the girls. There was fluidity in the girls' home lives, moving between kinship care, most commonly with female caregivers, homes and foster care. For the girls, the availability of a spare room with an aunt or grandmother was not only to provide a home after bereavement, but a more general resource that meant that potential conflicts with parents could be diffused.

Renee (16, Black British) and her best friend Eva (16, mixed race), start to attend the Common towards the end of my fieldwork. Despite being newcomers, they are from around the area and are immediately recognised and welcomed. This familiarity was demonstrated when they arrive late and, after signing in, come over to the table where I am sat with Kayla (14, mixed race) who has recently been excluded from school. As they catch up Renee explains that she is now living with her dad as her mum kicked her out. Kayla laughs, replying that her mum kicked her out too, and she is living with her nan after her exclusion. Eva says she wishes she had somewhere to go; she is fighting with her mum all the time.

These sorts of exchanges were common, and I would argue that this sharing practice could help normalise the experience of being out of the family home, and to reduce potential stigma. Whilst kinship care was described in positive terms by many young people, Lucia (13, Black British) highlighted to me that kinship care could make you vulnerable. Lucia is the youngest of four and has been through a series of kinship care arrangements. She started out living with her eldest sister, staying with her mum on a Thursday evening. She then moved to stay with another sister temporarily before moving in with her nan. This is preferable to Lucia, her nan '*buys me things and besides my sister was always dead strict*'. However when recalling a fight she had had at school resulting in suspension she revealed that the boy in question had told the class that she didn't live with her parents because '*they didn't love her. I'm sorry but he deserved a battering*'.

As Lucia's movement between family members demonstrates, kinship care was under continuous negotiation, with the girls often circulating between female family members when relationships become strained. The girls were aware of who was strict (but often fair and caring), who was not strict (but a bit unreliable) and would move depending on current needs. Manaia (15, Black British) is the care of an aunt, who she describes as a '*worrier*', tells me '*she's always ringing to check where I am, even if I tell her where I'm going*'. This led to Manaia becoming increasingly frustrated and planning a move, trying to run away over Christmas. As she recounts the story in the girls room, she describes her aunt rugby tackling her in the garden to stop her leaving, leading to Hailey (14, mixed-race) and Lucia shrieking in laughter. Manaia continues with the story whilst becoming frustrated, telling us how she got mud on

her trousers, '*I was fuming, you have no idea*'. We ask her where she was going to go and she tells us she was going to stay with her other aunt instead.

Manaia doesn't end up leaving her aunt's house. Rather by threatening to leave and move to the more relaxed aunt, she is negotiating with the first aunt into changing the rules. This was a common thread with family members played off each other. What is important to note however, is that this relies on flexibility in terms of space, and on female family member's willingness to provide this care. In particular, informal kinship care is disadvantaged in not being recognised by the state, and therefore is unsupported financially. Formal foster parents, in contrast, have access to both support and finances that are not available to kinship carers.

Kinship care, therefore, carries both emotional and financial costs to family members. It can also entail obligation (Leinaweaver 2013). Wacquant (2002), in critiquing a number of ethnographies in which kinship care arrangements are described only in positive terms, argues that these arrangements can constitute a form of kinship servitude. Often women, aunts and grandmothers, feel obliged to take in young family members despite a lack of funding or their own difficulties, such as Jade's aunt who is suffering from illness. As Graham (Graham 1993a, b), has previously highlighted this caring servitude often falls on women. In addition, some young people did not want to move away from their home, but found themselves through circumstance in kinship care.

In addition to the lack of financial support for kinship care, the introduction of the bedroom tax and other cuts (such as the uniform grants) has increased the strain on kinship care. This informal care network allowing children to avoid conflict at home while staying out of the care system has become unstable and precarious, and for some it has gone. The flexibility and proximity required for these informal networks of care are no longer readily available.

It is also worth noting that unlike national figures on care indicating that more boys are taken into state care, at the Common it was the girls moving between formal and informal care. The boys, although suffering similar issues, did not, from what I observed, were more likely to stay at home. The older boys, however, discussed the need to look after themselves, as no one else would. From Wendell (15, Black British)

claiming that '*you can't always rely on your family, you can't*', to Kano (17, Black British) who says '*I don't like half my family, and I'm sure they don't fucking like me either*'. These boys keep their attachment to their families on a firm leash, knowing the dangers of letting up and being dependent. The only person who could let them down would be themselves.

So far I have discussed the various forms of insecurity and displacement I observed which threatened to, or did move young people around or outside Sandyhill, and therefore away from the Common. The implementation of welfare measures, such as the bedroom tax, and the lack of available housing in the area, as I will go on to discuss, meant that families were being forced to relocate. In addition, the increased rates of unemployment in Sandyhill, and precarious forms of employment such as the rise of part-time and zero-contract meant also contributed to insecurity. The possibility of displacement is an important concern given the role of kinship care that relies on proximity, and provides a vital support network.

I have focussed on displacement to demonstrate how these movements were often imposed on families and young people rather than through choice. I have chosen the term given its definition that to displace is to move something from its place. In this case young people are being moved from their home and their place of safety, as I will go on to discuss. In the next section, therefore, I will discuss how Sandyhill and the Common are understood by young people as both safe, in comparison to 'other' areas, but also as unsafe through disinvestment in the area.

5.3 The conflict of belonging – displacement from place of safety

The role of the neighbourhood is important, as I have implied above, and previous research suggests it is particularly significant for marginalised groups (MacDonald and Marsh 2005). Manzo and colleagues (2008) have noted that in disadvantaged or isolated neighbourhoods, residents develop strategies of support and maintain a strong sense of community identity. This in turn creates a sense of familiarity and security. The loss of place, therefore, can have distressing impacts on well-being as displacement disrupts the emotional connections people have to place (Fullilove 1996). In the field of youth studies, MacDonald and colleagues (2005) have talked about the conflict that emerged in young people's narratives about living in

neighbourhoods that are both disadvantaged but supportive. He has described the problem of young people choosing to stay, or becoming trapped, in neighbourhoods because of familial and kin support networks. I would argue however, that the conflict is not as straightforward especially given the added complications of displacement through welfare cuts, and need not necessarily be detrimental for all young people. In any case, here I explore young people's perspectives, which show that they are more likely to hold multiple views of the neighbourhood demonstrating that they are neither naïve nor blind to the conflict.

Sandyhill as a 'good' space

Akelade (15, Black African) joins the Common a few months after I do, having recently arrived from Ghana. He lives with his mum and step-dad who have already been living in Sandyhill for a few years, Akelade tells me '*I used to be small, and my mum, she left me to grow up [in Ghana] and then I come here, when I'm older'*. He was in kinship care with his maternal uncle and brother in Ghana. For several months I mistakenly assume he is around 12 years old before realising he in fact three years older after finding him sat doing homework with his classmate, the six-foot body builder Carl (16, Black British). Akelade in contrast is around four foot and so slight that the youth workers are able to pick him up with ease. He walks with a slight limp that becomes more pronounced when he runs as he explains:

> **Akelade:** My feet hurt, when I walk around they are sore, and that affects the spine
>
> **Louise:** Are doctors looking at it?
>
> **Akelade:** Yes, yes well they have never seen anything like that, so they are still investigating. Yes, they think it is a serious case, so that's why I don't play around so much

He very quickly becomes of interest to the other boys who bombard him with questions about what it is like to live in Africa, often while practicing their best accents. It becomes routine for everyone arriving at the Common to greet him with '*Akelade, Ake, Ake, Ake!*' to which he smiles and jokingly sighs '*that's my name*'. His good nature is also routinely joked about, with Naman (15, Black African) commenting that Akelade is never unhappy even when being told off, and youth worker Colin likes to tell him '*you can see that smile from space, kid!*' Initially, like

other newcomers, he spends time with the youth workers before establishing himself within the peer network. I still spend a lot of time with Akelade, playing pool together every evening, often to the confusion to other young people who don't understand what we have in common. They miss that Akelade and I share the experience of being unfamiliar and join similar activities such as pool in an attempt to gain value.

One evening he comes in and sits at the main table quietly, without his characteristic smile. It's so unusual that the whole room suddenly feels duller, and a few of the other attendees go over to ask what is wrong. Later in the evening, he tells youth worker Suzy and me that he is moving north to Cumbria in a few weeks. His mum, a public sector worker, has been made redundant and there is nothing else around here. We don't see him for a few weeks and are unsure if he will return. The youth workers press for details through his close friend, AJ (13, Black British African) who Akelade often refers to as his 'cousin' although they are not kin relations. AJ is unable to tell us what the situation is.

A few weeks later, during half term, Akelade appears again. Big George, one of the community volunteers calls him over to the main table where we are sitting, '*Where've you been*?' Akelade grins and tells us he isn't moving to Cumbria anymore. '*Cumbria*?' mocks George in an African accent, '*that is way north, the snow would come up to here*' gesturing above his shoulders, '*you would disappear*'. '*Your mum found another job love?*' Suzy follows up and he tells us that he is still moving, to a different neighbourhood, but he can still travel to the Common.

The distance, however, does prove to be a barrier and he only appears during school holidays. Over one of our games of pool I ask him how things are going in his new house, which is in more affluent area. He replies '*it's ok, but there are lots of alleyways*'. I ask him what that means and he explains '*Alleyways are scary and you might get shot, it's scary*'. I am surprised to hear this. I pot the black, winning the game, and he stomps his feet shouting '*rematch*'. Despite the neighbourhood of Sandyhill having a reputation and becoming an eponym for all the evils and dangers (Rhodes 2011), it was an area of safety for Akelade. Although the neighbourhood was multi-cultural, as described by Jake, this was unusual in a largely white town. Although the area Akelade had moved to was more affluent, it was a white area.

Suddenly being black and from Africa became a marker of exclusion rather than of value and belonging.

Akelade's account is similar to Max, described in the section above, who similarly moved to another, all white neighbourhood. Although they both moved to more advantaged areas, it was 'other' to Sandyhill. Max, however, managed to keep his ties to the Common. According to the youth workers, who grew up in the area, the Common was central to the sense of community in Sandyhill. Therefore, by continuing to attend the Common, young people like Max could continue to gain the positive aspects of being part of the community. Youth worker Donna described the Common as the hub of the area and part of a safety net keeping an eye on young people:

> If there was an issue in the community where, you know, there's a missing child, people will come here, if there was health that was needed, they'd come here, if a parent had a problem, you know with their son, their daughter, they'd phone us, they'd let us know, it's an integral part of the community... there's a strong community feel, I bet in other areas, in their communities they don't even know what goes on, who works there or not. Ask anyone around here, do you know any staff that work at the Common, and yeah, they know them, they'll know. You could walk round and they'd be like, oh they work at the Common, it's known.

Sandyhill as a 'bad' space

As Wacquant (2002) has argued, ethnographies sometime fail to provide a realistic picture of life of areas affected by poverty. He argues that in an effort to challenge dominant narratives about an area, ethnographers can make the mistake of romanticising the neighbourhood, or on the other hand, focusing on the sensational rather than the everyday. Indeed, this is a concern I share. Here, it would be all too easy to provide a contrast to the problematizing discourse around Sandyhill, by showing the feelings of safety and inclusion young people experienced. On the other hand, it would be misleading not to describe the occasions in which Sandyhill was not safe for young people. It is my aim, then, to give an account of some of the events that affected on young people's experience of safety, whilst avoiding blaming discourses.

Although accounts of gun and knife crime were reported in local press, the youth workers were quick to point out that the incidents were often targeted that meant that

it did not impact on the everyday safety of the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, when there were concerns about violence in the area the police would contact the centre manager Don, and on two occasions over my tenure, the Common was put on lockdown (nobody was allowed in or out of the building) until the threat was over. On neither occasion did anything happen around the Common. There were more frequent occasions, however, where the youth workers were contacted by parents and guardians to chaperone a young person home if they had concerns in the neighbourhood. One such example was with 13 year old Troy (Black British).

Troy is a long-standing member at the Common, starting with the juniors at the age of five. He is known as a high achiever, representing England at a number of sporting events. Youth workers Ben and JP who chaperone a lot of the sports activities at the Common take a particular interest and pride in Troy's achievements, frequently announcing to whoever will listen, '*he's going places*'. His successes are evident in his photographic elicitation project, an example of which can be seen below, with his bedroom shown covered in medals and sports uniforms. He surprises me, then, by explaining that he is struggling to choose between sport, drama and music at school. I ask him about music and he reels off the instruments he can play: piano, guitar and he mimes a wind instrument. I guess clarinet and he nods telling me '*Yeah, I've just been given one to take home*'. He says that he can play '*Adele on the piano, it's easy*' and we joke about him playing all three instruments at once. I ask about drama and he says that he tried out for a play at one of the local theatres. He tells me, '*I didn't want the part; I just wanted to see if I could get it, if I was any good*'. I ask if he got it and he smiles, '*yeah!*'

Figure 10. Troy's medal collection

Amongst Troy's other photographs were a number of his possessions, his new television, his new PSP, and his new Wii[15]. These products are given as a reason for his growing absence at the Common; that there is enough entertainment at home now. After our interview, Suzy comes in to chaperone Troy home, even though it is only a five-minute walk down the road. When she returns she explains that there was a shooting, a few weeks ago, on Troy's street. His mum has been worried about Troy being out in the evenings, and bought these new devices to encourage him to stay at home. Similarly, Watt (2006) describes this withdrawal from public spaces and neighbourhoods as a self-exclusionary practice. For the time being, Troy is only allowed the Common for an hour each evening, on the condition that he is accompanied there and back.

Amongst the girls, there were a number of other complaints about the area. Twice I was witness to reports by a number of girls about a flasher outside the Common, and fourteen year old Ruthie (Black British) came in distressed after being approached by car whilst waiting at the bus stop and being encouraged to get in by a man. These incidents were reported to the police, although it was the male youth workers who searched the areas and acted as informal security. This was illustrated on the rare occasion were a member of the public made it past the security door and into the building. One such example occurred when I was sitting at the main table with Suzy, Kayla (14, White British) and Jenna (15, mixed race) discussing the teenage pregnancy project when an unfamiliar man walked into the main room.

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[15] PSP is a handheld gaming device, and Wii is a gaming console.

The man is loud and walking over like he knows everyone, which makes me wonder if he is a parent. He comes over to our table. His shirt has poppers and is half open showing his swollen belly. He seems proud of this, pulling his jacket back, and it becomes apparent that he is drunk. He stands at the back of the two girls, who look at him with disgust. Suzy looks around the room for youth worker Colin, she stands up and tells the man '*you're going to have to do up your shirt if you are in here*'. The man gestures at Suzy, '*you, shhh, sit down and go to sleep; I'm more interested in these lovely sisters*' pointing at the girls. '*Where is Colin?*' Suzy asks me, I spot him and she calls him over. Colin sees the man, and casually puts his arm around him and steers him out, '*you can't be in here*' he says calmly and the man leaves without a fuss. '*I'm not walking out in case he's there*' says Kayla, '*can you give me a lift home?*'

Sandyhill as simultaneously good and bad

I want to be clear that threating events, as described above, were not the norm, although undoubtedly they had an impact on young people's feelings of safety. As is the aim of this chapter more generally, here I want to focus on the implicit forms of structural violence in the community, rather than focus on individual behaviour or events. In doing so, I can demonstrate how young people negotiate both positive and negative experiences of Sandyhill. I will focus on how racism affected young people at the Common's experience of Sandyhill in the next section. First, I will turn to issues around housing and the wider neighbourhood

There is a shortage of properties in the neighbourhood, especially smaller residences, which has become more of a problem with the introduction of the bedroom tax. It is to the frustration of residents, who use the centre for community meetings about the cuts that a regeneration project that would have increased housing in the area, has stalled. Meanwhile, there had been significant investment in improving the high street in the town centre. The abandoned regeneration project was visible not only on old billboards but in the streets behind the Common. I wasn't aware of this until during the photo-elicitation project both Jake (13, mixed-race), and AJ (13, Black British African) raise it as an issue. I had already interviewed a few young people, and one of the most common photos was of their streets, so when I first see Jake's photo I miss the obvious:

Jake: I took some [photos] around the community, that's off the main street. That's not near mine though, that's like around the community isn't it.

Louise: I didn't notice all the windows

Jake: Yeah, they're all banded in. I tried to go downwards instead of upwards. Obviously the others will have taken photos of Joe's Parlour up and around the main road, but I went down the other side, how horrible it is down there like, all the boarded up houses.

Figure 11: 'Abandoned Streets' taken by Jake, age 13

Although Jake tries to distance himself from these streets through highlighting how this isn't near *his* house, he nevertheless associates it with the community. He later tells me that he often walks this route between football practice and coming to the Common. He tells me it is fine to do this, but his next photo suggests that it not always ok. Again, I miss the detail in the photograph, mistaking it for the same street at a different angle, so I am surprised when Jake explains what the photo is:

Jake: I think that was a car that almost hit me. It never hit me like, but I crossed over and it…it's a bit freaky really. It was going dead fast. I think I've tried to take a picture to get the number plate but I haven't used the flash.

Figure 12: 'Speeding Car' taken by Jake, 13

During AJ's (12, Black British African) interview, Akelade (15, Black African) took the lead role in interviewing and chose to ask not only about the photograph, but of the affective nature of taking the photograph:

> **AJ:** There are like houses that are boarded up and they're not good anyway. I reckon they should just blow them up, make them ghetto and all that. Like this house is burnt
>
> **Akelade:** Why did you take a picture of a house that was burnt?
>
> **AJ:** Because it shows that the houses are no good no more, they should just rebuild and take the insides out and put new stuff back in and make it better so that people can live there
>
> **Akelade:** How did you feel when you were taking those pictures in those places?
>
> **AJ:** I felt ok; it weren't that much of a big deal to take them

Figure 13: 'Ghetto Houses' by AJ, age 13

AJ supports the concern of community members; that abandoned housing when there is a dearth of suitable housing in the area is unjust. The lack of investment in the neighbourhood extended not only from housing, but also to the Common itself. The youth centre is dotted with wheelie bins to catch rainfall from the leaking roof, and certain rooms are blocked off as unsafe. As Liam (17, White British) tells the main table, the Common has been open for '*forty years and it's been waiting to be renovated for twenty! Other youth clubs have got Apple Macs, what have we got? Casios?*' The entire table bursts into laughter as he continues '*every time a youth centre closes the Common goes and raids it, taking the footballs and everything, its ghetto man*'. Even the youth workers report that what goes on at the Common is despite the fact that '*we're in the nastiest, ugliest, dirtiest, scruffiest building ever, kids still come here*'.

In this section I have attempted to show how Sandyhill and the Common were experiences as both good and bad places. Despite the reputation around Sandyhill, for young people such as Akelade and Max, it was a place of familiarity and safety. Threating experiences in the neighbourhood did occur, and had to be managed, but it is important to note that the threats were from adults rather than other young people. Most of the conversations I had with young people at the Common about the youth centre and neighbourhood were conflicted, it wasn't great but that it was better than 'other' areas or that it was where they knew, where they grew up. Walking around the neighbourhood with Lucia and Manaia the familiarity was clear as they greeted or were greeted by the majority of residents as we walked down the main street. I will expand on these issues in the following section, showing young people's experience of neighbourhoods were impacted by class, gender, and race.

5.4 Insecurity and precarity attached to certain bodies and spaces

As I discussed at the outset of this chapter, Sandyhill was negatively portrayed in public discourse. Research in other disadvantaged areas, like Sandyhill, in the UK have described how places and their residents experience, and are subject to, stigma (Slater and Anderson 2012, Nayak and Kehily 2014, Rhodes 2011). Stigma is "a social process, experienced or anticipated, characterised by exclusion, rejection, blame or devaluation" (Scambler 2009, p.441). Sandyhill therefore, given the negative representations associated with the neighbourhood and lack of public investment,

could be regarded as a stigmatised area given this definition. In stigmatised areas, Wray (2006) argues, notions of dirt, danger, disgust and risk become attached to particular bodies as well as places.

The notion of stigma becoming attached, or sticking (Ahmed 2004a), to bodies is supported in ethnographic findings by Nayak and Kehily (2014). In two contrasting ethnographies, they found that in a poor white neighbourhood of Newcastle the focus of stigma was young, poor white men labelled 'chavs'[16], whilst in the south of England, it was young teenage mothers that were negatively represented (Nayak and Kehily 2004). In both cases, young people contested their negative representations. Taking this forward to Sandyhill, I will explore how stigma is particularly attached to young people, and more specifically, on young black men in the area. In raising this issue, I link back to earlier sections of this chapter, by suggesting that insecurity and displacement due to current economic conditions is particularly significant for these young people given that their neighbourhood could be interpreted as protective, or safe, against racism (Watt 2006, Wacquant 2008). In other words, young people in Sandyhill are not just at risk of displacement from their homes, they are at risk of further exclusion through racism (in addition to age-based, classed-based discrimination).

Stigma and surveillance of 'suspect' young black men

> That's a reflection of the community though, you're very welcome in the area, but I think that some of the kids grown up with what they believe, so confident in here and acceptable in here and then they get out there and it hits them, it hits them, and that's why I say we can fail.
>
> Robin, female youth worker

Robin's statement about the safety of the neighbourhood compared to '*out there*' lends support to Sandyhill as comfortable 'good' space, part of which is attributed to multiculturalism being the norm rather than the exception. The concern, then, is that outside of the community it may be uncomfortable and unsafe for young people from Sandyhill. There was evidence, however, of racism outside and inside of Sandyhill, particularly towards young black men. First I will discuss two examples of

[16] 'Chav', according to Tyler (2008, p17), is a 'ubiquitous term of abuse for the white poor' and is used as a way of differentiating respectable and 'scruffy' whites (Watt 2006).

discrimination that occurred on trips outside of Sandyhill that I was a first-hand witness to (there were many second-hand reports of racism). Following this, I will describe racism within Sandyhill, which is seen as imposed by formal institutions such as the police. Lastly, I will discuss alternative forms of racism that emerge during interactions at the Common, demonstrating that young people used hierarchies about racial identity and heritage that have an exclusionary effect.

My first residential trip with the Common is a week camping in South Wales. We arrive after an arduous ten-hour minibus journey at an established camping site by the coast. At the end of our first evening, exhausted after the journey and setting up the camp, we head to the social building that has an underage disco and bar. The young people are given free time and break away into groups. After an hour Carrie, Suzy and I start walking up the hill back towards the camp and see a couple of boys from the Common run in the wrong direction. Carrie suggests we go over to see what is happening. It is pitch black so we walk over looking around, our torches doing little to illuminate the area. Up ahead there is a lamppost and as we get closer it is apparent there is a fight going on so we run over. Everything is a blur, a bundle of men and boys scrambling on the floor, it is rough and aggressive. Although we try to break it up, it is only the approach of the security van that causes it to disperse.

'*Go back to where you came from, go on, dirty bastards*' shout the men as the fight breaks apart. The men are white and Polish, I remember noticing them in the bar earlier drunk and shouting. Everyone scatters and a few boys fall in with Suzy and I as we make our way back to the camp. As security are looking for boys running away from the scene, by walking calmly beside us, white women, the boys are disguised and they tell us what happened. Carver (14, Black British) explains that they had been running between caravans playing and as Mitchell (15, mixed-race) ran past the Polish group, one of the men put his arm out and '*clothes lined*'[17] him, shouting '*citizen's arrest*'. Seeing this happen, the other boys come to Mitchell's defence and the fight broke out. As we get back to camp we are surrounded by security, and shortly after by three police vans that corner us in. Carrie and Don refuse to disclose

[17] 'Clothes lined' is a wrestling term for hitting an opponent with an outstretched arm, sending them to the floor

which young people were involved, and are threatened with arrest. The men have told the police they want to press charges so we have to leave the campsite.

A few of the boys were adamant that the incident was about race, suggesting that the statements shouted by the men were racially motivated. Indeed, Fanon (1970) similarly interprets racism as being associated with dirt, stating, "when one is dirty one is black – whether one is thinking of physical dirtiness or of moral dirtiness" (p.134). For me, it was not just racism but multiple issues that the incident encompassed. Firstly, it brought to the forefront that adult voices carry more weight. Despite the fact that the men started the fight and had been drinking, they were never questioned as anything other than victims. It demonstrated that young people are automatically assumed to be troublemakers, and that running around in a public space suggested to the men that they were wrongdoing and justified adult intervention. It was also gendered; a fight or attention would not have been drawn if it had been the girls running away. It was also about race, with the young people seen as outsiders in the mainly white area of South Wales. Personally, it also raised the function of my whiteness. Firstly, by walking back with me the boys were instantly disguised; as Goldberg (1996) has previously discussed, whiteness is powerful as it allows the person to become invisible. Chaperoned by a middle class white woman, the boys could not be identified as the same boys involved in fighting. Secondly, I was interviewed by the police and given more authority; by which I mean my account was accepted when the accounts of the young people were repeatedly challenged.

It was not the only time that I was asked, as white and therefore somehow objective and impartial, to verify accounts of racism. As I have previously mentioned, I was assigned to organise a sponsored bike ride for Comic Relief with youth worker, JP. The bike ride covered a 30-mile trail that started in a small residential village before going onto cycle tracks then ending in a city centre where we would get the train back. In total there were sixteen cyclists, all male except me. As we travelled along the first village in an affluent white area local residents seemed concerned, stopping and looking, with one elderly white man shouting as he saw us approach '*hey, what is going on here, what are you doing?*' The boys turned to me on their bikes to see if I had witnessed it, '*did you hear that?*', '*he was racist wasn't he?*' Although the

language of the man does not imply it was racially motivated it is interesting that the boys interpret it in this way.

I suggest that what they are drawing on is how the man pulls attention to their bodies' being–out-of-place. Puwar (2004, pp.41-42) drawing on Fanon (1970), claims that black bodies are "constantly challenged by a look which abnormalises their presence and locates them, through the workings of racialized framings, as belonging elsewhere". This suspicious gaze has been written about extensively, suggesting that being 'other' is to be "constantly vulnerable to the accusation of trespass" (Crowley 1999, p.17). I also find it useful to think about Scambler's (2009) division between enacted and felt stigma here. Despite the fact that there was no overt racial language in the exchange, it was 'felt' and perceived as such. As such, it should be regarded as a racist incident. Later as we arrived into the city on the way to the train station a 4x4 car drives past and lowers the window while shouting '*black bastards*' at the group. There is no doubt here. The boys again turn to me '*did you see that?*' When we return to the Common I am asked to verify the stories to staff. The boys fundraise close to £600 for Comic Relief, and although there is talk of getting some positive media stories it never materialises.

Back in Sandyhill, the youth workers and young people frequently recall how the police target young people in the area, citing institutional racism. In the accounts the police as regarded as outsiders, imposing their own (white) views on young black men in the area. In addition to the multiple stop-and-searches reported, with Colin commenting that '*you go on your bike to get a pint of milk are you are stopped by the police',* there is a constant police presence around the Common. In addition, almost all of the boys at the Common have a criminal conviction, which could significantly affect their future opportunities. Without exception the criminal convictions were under the Public Order Act (1986), called a section 5, which vaguely covers any activity or language that could be interpreted as threatening or cause distress. The youth workers spoke to me about this in detail, as they were also young people in the area and subject to scrutiny through the police:

> **George:** if you ask me personally the police have got to targeting young black males and criminalising at an early age be it Section 5 public order be it whatever you want do you know what I mean you know this offensive

> weapon thing's gone now that used to be like the favourite one… what I mean now this Section 5 is like the way forward for them most kids inside here will probably have a Section 5, most kids
>
> **Mark:** I've got a Section 5 and so has Ben
>
> **George:** do you know what I mean that's their whole intention to criminalise every black male and that's true I've seen that even like you know even when we weren't even involved in no kind of like criminal activity when I was younger, college everything else same thing we used to get stopped and you know the kind of language that they used to talk to us like would be like you were a criminal you know what I mean and then when they found out oh you've got no criminal record and you know you're not wanted and they used to be like changed attitude slightly but I hate the police, I hate them with a passion I've got no love with them whatsoever if they were eradicated tomorrow like rats that they are it would be a good day do you know what I mean that's just my own personal view

When I asked to clarify who was targeted, the answer was unanimous with Ben explaining that it is '*males that's are targeted, the only way females are going to come into contact with police is if they've been drinking…other than that young black females usually get a blag do you know what I mean*'. This meant that young black men in the area were not only a focus outside of Sandyhill but also within the community.

The distrust of the police was evidenced not only by the high prevalence of section 5 convictions but also in the ASBOs (Anti-social behaviour orders) that were handed out which barred young people from the main areas of, or the whole of, Sandyhill. Inevitably there was local press labelling them yobs, and naming their groups of friends as gangs. For some boys this went further, with fifteen year old Mitchell (mixed race) imprisoned for nine months after receiving a number of ASBOs and section 5s. His actual conviction was for not disclosing who had stolen a bike, and by not confessing was found guilty himself. It was well known that Mitchell had not been involved, but by protecting a friend he ended up in jail. The fact that Mitchell had a number of mental health and physical health conditions, meaning he was often heavily medicated was not taken into consideration.

In a community where young black men feel under surveillance and restricted in public spaces, it is no surprise that the Common becomes a safe space. However, like Donna at the start of this section, the youth workers and volunteers were concerned

about making the young boys aware of the problems they could face outside the safety of the youth centre. One example of this occurred the evening after fireworks night. The front page of the local newspaper had a picture of the fireworks and an article describing a local event as a success which was juxtaposed with an article saying '*local fireworks ruined by yobs'*. The photograph used for the second article showed a number of young people from the Common. The image showed the main street of Sandyhill with fireworks going off on the road. The young people were on the pavement observing, and surrounded by police.

As I am looking over the local newspaper report with fourteen year-old Carver (Black British), George comes over with sixteen year olds Theo (Black British) and Jackson (Black British) and joins us at the table. '*Were you there?*' asks George looking at Theo and Jackson. '*Yeah*' replies Theo. '*What were you there for?*' asks George, sounding incensed. '*Just watching the scene*' says Theo and Jackson nods in agreement saying '*we weren't involved we were just watching*'. Suzy wanders over to the table and tells the boys '*You could have got picked up for just being there*'. '*Nah*' they reply. George sits down and looks up at them asking '*are you black?*' They don't reply but nod in agreement, '*were you wearing black?*' George continues and they nod again, '*then yeah! You could have got picked up*'.

Hierarchies of belonging – racism and value in the Common

> Race is a massive, massive issue in here. There's a child who will class themselves as black but then be racist towards a black person, and be like I'm black but I'm not that kind of black, what are you? You know it's all; it's literally all about their identity and what they've learned from their parents and what they identify with, their culture, what is black to that person – is it about being ghetto? Is it about using certain terminology? Is it about dressing or acting with a certain attitude? They're literally living of what they maybe see as a stereotype. And then you've got a child who is black knows who they are, maybe they've come from the African continent will come and be like, well I see you as white. All sorts, there's so many different cultures in here.
>
> Don, manager of the Common

There was universal agreement and open discussions about the experiences of racism outside of Sandyhill, and racism in Sandyhill that was imposed by the outside. Other forms of racism, as raised by Don above, also occurred but were rarely discussed.

When I first arrived at the Common I was surprised that discussions around race and ethnicity were framed around the idea of heritage. I want to be clear that this is the term used by the young people at the Common. Young people did not rely on visual cues, but instead would ask about heritage to establish ethnic identities. The idea of heritage recognises that skin colour does not represent identity, as twelve year-old Millie (mixed-race) reiterated '*I look white, I have blonde hair and blue eyes, but my mum is black, so I'm black*'. The problem was that using heritage had the effect of establishing hierarchies in the Common. Some heritages were more valuable than others. The establishment of these hierarchies inevitable brought attention back to skin colour, as I will show with AJ (Black British African).

Thirteen year-old AJ has been coming to the Common since he was five years old and was born at the local hospital. His parents were originally from Zimbabwe. This African heritage is often raised by other young people. As racial language is banned, the other boys sometimes use the term 'African' as a way to circumvent the rules, and on a number of occasions I hear AJ addressed as a '*little African*'. The meaning of this heritage was expanded in an exchange between some of the up-and-coming boys in AJ's absence. At the back table Henry (14, mixed-race), Reuben (13, mixed-race) and Frankie (12, British middle-eastern), start talking about a party that weekend at AJ's house. '*It's not really his party though*' says Henry, '*it is just at his house because he has the house to himself. I don't like his house anyway*' he continues, '*it smells*'. '*Yeah, of spices and shit*' agrees Reuben. AJ's home, through his African heritage is seen as dirty.

This is further discussed through AJ's skin colour. There is a large group at the main table doing art. Ravi (13, British Middle-eastern) is drawing a square head like a robot. He then proceeds to colour it in using a black felt tip pen so only the white eyes and teeth are visible. '*It's AJ!*' he pronounces and there are giggles across the table. He goes over to the main pool table where AJ is playing and puts it on the table in front of him. AJ looks seriously at it before looking around and going to the bin and dumping it in there. His skin colour is continually commented on; he is told that he is darkest person at the Common. Hierarchies however mean that Ravi, who used AJ's skin colour to shame him, is in turn picked on for his heritage that is often mistaken as Asian. Out by the pool table youth worker Colin, who is playing Tyler (17, White

British), is asking Ravi about getting a modelling job. Tyler hands over the cue to Colin and looks at Ravi, '*modelling for what? Masala Hut?*' Ravi doesn't say anything, he smiles, but moves away from the table.

These categories are in constant negotiation that creates a state of confusion. This was made clear when young people were asked to fill in sixth form, college, or job applications and came stuck when ethnic identity was required. This happened when seventeen year olds Jackson (Black British), Kian (White British), Theo (Black British) and thirteen year-old Reuben (mixed-race) were asked to fill out some questionnaires for the regional manager, Carrie. I sit down in the middle of a conversation as Reuben calls Theo a '*Malteaser head*'. Jackson is cross and explains he is always called '*Bourneville*' that is unfair, '*I'm not that black, it's like saying I'm white*'. Kian asks '*what does that make me then?*' Reuben replies '*Milkybar!*' chuckling. Skin colour is played out through chocolate, and again the darkest type Bourneville is seen as undesirable. They get back to the questionnaire but then hesitate and ask for help.

'*Which box am I?*' asks Jackson pointing to the demographic question, '*Afro-Caribbean?*' I look over the question, and Afro-Caribbean is the only black category. Theo throws down the questionnaire, '*I'm not Caribbean, do they not have a black British category? That's what I always say, because that's what I am*'. As I am using young people's own reported ethnic identity, it is clear in the descriptions so far that it is not just Theo who prefers the category Black British. Indeed, in later discussions at the Common during Black History Month it was agreed that Black British was the preferred term that captured the broadness of identities in an acceptable way. It is interesting to note that British, not English, was used. Solomon and Back (1996) have suggested that Black and Englishness are mutually exclusive categories.

There are a number of points to be made about the hierarchies used around the idea of heritage at the Common. Firstly they were not fixed. For example, although AJ's African heritage is regarded with derision, associated with blackness and dirt, Akelade, who I introduced earlier in the chapter, found his African heritage a source of value, seen as an exotic experience. Nevertheless, 'African' or 'little African' was frequently used in a derogatory term. Secondly, although some heritages were openly

valued, such as Caribbean, and others deemed less valuable, such as Asian, white heritage was racially unmarked. A number of race theorists note that white bodies are accepted as 'normal' and thus become invisible. Puwar (2004) expands on this point, arguing that "a white body is more likely to be automatically accepted – their right to enter and exist is not an issue in quite the same way" (p.21). Whiteness only became an issue in differentiating between respectable and 'scruffy whites' (Wray 2006), with some young people, especially white sexually active girls as I will discuss further in the next chapter, described as *'white trash'*.

In summary young black males in this neighbourhood were subject to overt forms of racism that constructed Sandyhill as safe, regardless of the negative constraints imposed on the area which lead to instability and displacement. Young black males were targeted through surveillance and criminalisation in Sandyhill by police that young people and the youth workers at the Common described as institutional racism. This finding supports other work that highlight that young people, especially young black men have to "navigate a mainstream adult gaze in ways that challenge their hypervisibility as objectified and caricatured images of violence, degeneracy and danger" (Gordon 2009, 173). Within the Common itself, ethnic identity was in constant negotiation around ideas around heritage and hierarchies that placed less value on dark skin and heritage of African origin, compared to Caribbean heritage. Of course this behaviour of belittling and competing around heritage to move up the hierarchy could simply be seen as a form of one up-manship amongst the boys. However, I would argue it was about trying to find their place, finding a way of being comfortable. For the boys then, the Common was simultaneously a safe space away from surveillance and judgement but also as a space that required work to fit in.

5.5 Discussion

> **George:** oh if they keep cutting, watch, I'm telling you right now we'll take it to the streets if they keep doing what they're doing
>
> **Ben:** the bedroom tax
>
> **George:** they're squeezing, they're squeezing the people so tight just now there's going to be an explosion and when it explodes they won't recover do you know what I mean this town will be mashed, all the cities will as soon as it kicks off in one city that's it they are going to lose pure control. Well they seen it last time the little mini riots that was just like a little taster of what's going on do you know what I mean and how people were

> feeling, but now they've been squeezed ten times more than that so what do you expect them to do carry on with this bullshit nah can't carry on with this nonsense they've got nowhere else to go

This chapter has set out to explore how young people were experiencing exclusion in Sandyhill, and the Common, particularly because of welfare cuts. Here, therefore I am talking about young people's exclusion from the neighbourhood through displacement caused by welfare cuts, bereavement, the disruption of informal care arrangements, or through ASBOs. It is important, however, to clarify that I am aware that the insecurity resulting from welfare cuts is occurring in the context of existing, historic, disadvantage and lack of investment in Sandyhill. It could be argued, then, that young people living in Sandyhill have always suffered through disadvantage. The area has long been reported as being amongst the highest 10% in the index of multiple deprivations (Department for Communities and Local Government 2011). Multiple forms of deprivation in neighbourhoods is associated with higher levels of mortality and incidence of chronic illness (Pickett and Pearl 2001). This is evident in young people's accounts of bereavement as well as familial and personal experiences of ill-health. Turning to investment, planned regeneration projects in the area have been started and then put on hold for decades. This is evident in the abandoned housing in the photographs above, but also in the quality of services in the area. There is only one GP surgery, that is oversubscribed, and one dentist. I attended both; they were run down and understaffed. The Common itself was also lacking in support, with promised funding failing to materialise.

Despite the disadvantage in Sandyhill, young people's accounts show that to be excluded from the neighbourhood through displacement is unwanted. In this way the positive elements of the neighbourhood come to the forefront - it provides safety and familiarity for its residents. In particular, the neighbourhood was, as Jake described it, multicultural and enabled young people to be seen as being-in-place, rather than out-of-place in areas where being white was the norm. This finding replicated what has been found in other studies, such as Reynold's (2013) four year ESRC study that concluded that 'black communities' provide young people with a sense of belonging, particularly when they are stigmatised, avoided or excluded in other spaces.

I have also suggested that it is not as simple as Sandyhill being a good or bad place. There is a conflict of belonging to Sandyhill given that is an area subject to stigma but is also home[18] to young people. As seen in AJ and Jake's photography project, young people develop strategies that allow them to distance themselves from undesirable aspects of the neighbourhood. In other words, they are not naïve to the negative representations of the community. Youth workers are also aware of the conflict, and describe it as their job to make sure that the young people that attend the Common are aware, and can critically assess situations in which they may experience racism due to their age and presence in public space.

I have discussed how in the current study stigma in public spaces focused on young black men. It is clear, that young people in Sandyhill, and particularly young black men are regarded as 'suspects' by adults and those in authority, such as the police. This is not limited to Sandyhill, or the UK. Elijah Anderson (2004), writing in the United States has referred to this discrimination as the 'Anonymous Black Male'. According to Anderson, the Anonymous Black Male is treated warily and with suspicion in public space. Treated with fear and suspicion the young black male becomes "aware of his place as an outsider, he may try and turn the tables when he can, expressing himself on his own terms, behaviour that is viewed, especially in public, as threatening, "oppositional", and justifiable given their initial reactions" (Anderson 2009b, p.20). Anonymous black males are negatively stereotyped and automatically assumed to be dangerous, criminal, and guilty (Brooks 2008). In Sandyhill the use of Section 5 orders by the police are interpreted by community members because of this stereotype.

Situating the findings – expanding on previous research

I have tried to focus on the structural conditions that surround and affect young people at the Common. In doing so, I recognise that it is important to critique and challenge the current public discourse which individualises poverty as a moral failure. This is particularly important for areas, such as Sandyhill, given that these blaming discourses mask the effects of poverty, and now the cuts. This approach has led me to look at Wacquant's (2008) model of advanced marginality. In particular I want to

[18] Recognising that home cannot be presumed to be a safe space

discuss how Sandyhill can be seen to both support and challenge Wacquant's model. Where my findings challenge Wacquant, and other researchers drawing on his work, is moving beyond the idea of 'being trapped'. It is important to highlight that Wacquant himself has warned that there will be significant differences between cultures and contexts. Therefore I need to be aware that the findings may not be applicable to other areas. Sandyhill has a particular history, like all places, that makes it a unique space.

Wacquant (2008) examined and compared segregated working class areas in Chicago and Paris, and defined advanced marginality as a regime of poverty "against the backdrop of resurging class inequality, welfare state retrenchment, penal state expansion, and spatial polarization" (Wacquant 2008,p.3). One of the key defining features he addresses is the metaphor of the ghetto, looking at how some urban spaces become segregated, that becomes a marker of difference. Sandyhill has historically been an enclave for ethnic minorities, as Doug a community volunteer explained:

> the city councils and the government dealt with any type of like influx or migration of people by just throwing them in Sandyhill that's what they used to do no matter who it was, be it Kosovans be it Albanians be it flipping Somalians be it flipping Arabs be it, be it whoever you want first place, first influx, send them all to Sandyhill, throw them all there let them get on with it do you know what I mean and that's why we have the diversity of what we have

In this way the makeup of Sandyhill is understood as being a consequence of political action. This can also led to competition over limited resources (Wacquant 2008) and cause racial division within the area, created by conditions whereby entitlement rather than need is seen as important (Rhodes 2011). Doug suggests that this can create conflict amongst neighbourhoods, giving the example of housing:

> you know black people were struggling to get housing but then they brought in a next set of black people and give them priority housing so someone's been waiting 10 years to be moved from like a 2 bedroom the family's grown to like 4, 5 kids still can't get like a three bedroom house but then the next influx of black people come to the community are getting

> not just a 3 bedroom house, double houses for their families put together so then you're already starting that like racist inner thing carrying on

The most cited and utilised aspect of advanced marginalisation is territorial stigmatisation, which widens Goffman's concept of stigma (1963) to encompass the stigma of place. Wacquant (2008) proposes that territorial stigmatisation is superimposed onto areas already experiencing stigma associated with ethnicity, class or poverty. This is certainly the case with Sandyhill. These areas, therefore, become susceptible to being labelled as dangerous, lawless and disordered (Kelaher et al. 2010). This in turn leads to fear and disgust, further justifying intervention (Slater 2014). This can be applied to Sandyhill, represented continually in negative tones that conflate it with moral failures. Jake demonstrated that it is possible to hold simultaneous conflicting opinions of Sandyhill, to recognise negative aspects while distancing through promoting its benefits. Slater (2014) has made the point that we should be cautious about focusing too much on place stigma, as he clarifies stigma "is not a property of the neighbourhood, but rather a gaze trained on it" (p.12). As I discussed in later sections of this chapter, the gaze is often focused on particular bodies and spaces.

Looking at territorial stigma in Sandyhill, it is possible to link to broader work on structural violence and social suffering which has been defined as resulting "from what political, economic, and institutional power does to people and reciprocally, from how these forms of power themselves influence responses to social problems" (Kleinman, Das, and Lock 1997, p.ix). Using this work we can see that conditions of modernity, such as austerity, are likely to exacerbate suffering (Wilkinson 2006). Displacement and discrimination demonstrate some of the everyday ways in which suffering can affect young people.

5.6 Conclusion

> Privilege is a buffer zone, how much you have to fall back on when you lose something. Privilege does not mean we are invulnerable: things happen, shit happens. Privilege can however reduce the costs of vulnerability, so if

> things break down, if you break down, you are more likely to be looked after.
>
> (Ahmed 2014)

It is only recently that reports on austerity measures implemented by the Coalition Government since 2010 have been published, and almost universally they report significant negative impacts on the lives of those most vulnerable in society (for example Wolfe 2014). The reviews outline the range of cuts that will affect the lives of young people, such as Ridge (2011, 2013), but not how this is manifesting in young people's everyday lives. This chapter addresses this gap by exploring how welfare cuts exacerbate insecurity in a community subject to territorial stigmatization (Wacquant 2008). It demonstrates that rather than simply being trapped young people can be displaced through circumstances out of their control. Young people at the Common can be seen as lacking a 'buffer zone' as described by Ahmed (2014) above, they are made vulnerable through structural conditions. To go back to the aims of this chapter, I have shown how young people's lives are increasingly precarious leading to the threat of exclusion from their neighbourhood.

I have also shown that it is surveillance, particularly in public space, that treats young people as suspect, and represents young black men as problems. Therefore, by providing an alternative gaze, the Common becomes a safe space. The boys are the most frequent attenders at the Common, and it is possible to suggest that they attend to avoid unwanted, outside, surveillance. In addition, the investment into sport and gym resources would also support this. The allocation of resources from the council, which is often towards updating sporting equipment according to the regional youth manager Carrie, supports the assumptions that young men should be occupied, inferring that they may become a threat if they are not kept out of public spaces. From this perspective, it doesn't matter (too much) if girls do not come to the Common; they are not the subject of moral panic. As I will discuss in the next chapter, the girls only become a concern if there is a risk that they may become pregnant and teenage mothers. Whilst so far I have focused on the public gaze towards the boys, I will illustrate that although the girls managed to navigate the gaze in public space, there were less able to do so in other spaces, such as the Common.

It is also important to note that the place stigma and racism I discussed in the chapter are not my inference – but rather emerged out of discussions with young people and youth workers. I have noted the multiple ways that these issues emerged. Youth workers raised it in discussions, and young people at the Common were encouraged to vigilant and aware of their raced bodies, to develop 'double consciousness' (Fanon 1970). Furthermore stories of racism were circulated and repeated which reaffirmed these ideas. Finally, the rates of criminalisation and surveillance through ASBOs and Section 5s provide evidence of how this perception translates. Whilst there is previous research that shows that young people are excluded from public space, here I demonstrate that these experiences have implications for other spaces. In particular, it shows the importance of the Common in being a place of inclusion for young black men. As Sibley (1995), has noted, "exclusion in the home, in the locality, and at the national level are not discrete issues" (p. xvi).

Throughout this chapter I have also highlighted the affective nature of insecurity and displacement. Young people described feeling anxiety over actual, or potential, displacement from Sandyhill, in additions to feelings of loss. In the later sections of the chapter I described how hierarchies were established around the notion of 'heritage' and ethnicity that used affects such as disgust and shame to mark the boundaries of difference. I will follow this thread in the next chapter, by looking at how affect is utilised as a strategy of exclusion in everyday interactions at the Common. By looking at this further, I can explore young people's subjective experience of exclusion.

Interlude 6

Fieldnotes – Visit 46

Lucia (13, Black British), Manaia (15, Black British) and Hailey (14, mixed-race) are sitting on the floor of the girls' room. Next to them is a photograph that has fallen from its place on the wall. Lucia picks it up to move it out of the way but hesitates. The girls stop to look at it. '*I remember when they took that*' says Manaia. The photograph shows five girls dressed up for a fashion show. They are all smiling and pouting towards the camera. I tell the group I only recognise one of the girls from the photo (the youngest girl, Rhea) and ask '*did they just stop coming to the Common?*' Lucia lifts the picture up to the windowsill and we all gather round. They move along the photo, girl by girl, telling me the story, '*she doesn't come here, she ran away I think, she doesn't live around here anymore, this girl hasn't been seen for years*' narrates Manaia. Lucia and Hailey nod, '*yeah most of them ran away, gone*'. The picture is put back on the floor, the image facing the wall, and the girls go back to their phones.

Chapter 6

Affective strategies of exclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to look at the subtle practices of inclusion and exclusion that take place at the Common. Whilst in the previous chapter, I discussed the exclusion young people experienced in and around Sandyhill; this chapter will look at how exclusion is experienced within the Common. More specifically, I will look at how the girls, who are not under the same surveillance in public spaces as the boys, instead become hyper-visible within the space of the Common. The girls are subject to various forms of exclusions that leave them on the periphery of the youth club. In addition, the girls come under increased attention from attendees and authorities when they are regarded as sexually active, or at-risk of teenage pregnancy. So although the boys are regarded as a threat to others in public space, the girls are regarded as a threat to themselves and society through their private behaviour.

Looking at these practices, I consider what Yuval-Davis (2005, 2006) has described as the 'politics of belonging'. I find this approach useful as it takes a more critical perspective on belonging as a process which constructs and defines the borders of inclusion and exclusion or more simply "the 'dirty work' of boundary maintenance" (Crowley 1999, p.30). Here, I look at how exclusion processes construct and regulate acceptable forms of (heterosexual) femininities and masculinities. I show how affects such as shame and disgust are productive in establishing the rules, and how they are used to punish those who violate the norms. As such, affects in the Common can be interpreted as a strategy of exclusion. In this chapter then, I focus on the girls and boys on the periphery at the Common and in doing so I suggest that belonging looks and feels different to those on the margin.

6.1 Framing the chapter

Research aims

The first section looks at spatial practices that confine the girls to periphery space. These practices suggest that belonging is shaped by space, such as who gets to control

the main space and who is denied access. I also discuss how the girls, and some boys, subsequently carve out private space away from public view. By doing this, they are giving up their stake in the main space of the Common to the main groups of boys; however this private periphery is frequently invaded. As other authors have found (such as Thorne 1993), invasion of space signals to the girls that they are not entitled to privacy and tightens the boundaries around where they can comfortably spend time. Therefore, this primary section focusses on how bodies learn *where* they can belong, whilst also examining why some young people assume to belong, whilst others are not allowed.

The second section will further explore this gendered form of exclusion by looking at how the attendees at the Common are socialised into conforming to these roles. Through following the girls' practices that change and shift in order to fit in, I look at how girls learn to 'toe the line' of femininity through certain forms of heterosexual femininities that allow them to fit but can also make them vulnerable to other exclusionary practices. I will also discuss the boys who do not display certain, approved, forms of masculinity and are also exposed to exclusionary practices. Belonging at the Common therefore relies on the performance of approved gender roles. The consequences of this form of exclusion are illustrated in the preceding interlude, as young people who cannot and do not belong simply stop coming. I repeatedly observed the patterns of new groups of attendees arriving, learning the limits of belonging, and then leaving. This stands in contrast to the strong retention of certain groups of boys at the Common that often extend into adulthood.

The last section looks at how emotions, such as shame and disgust are used to monitor and guard these acceptable forms of masculinity and femininity at the Common. In particular I want to focus on the use of these emotions as powerful and potentially destructive way to patrol the borders of normality. In this study, shame is an important mechanism used to monitor and punish the girls, and boys, around heterosexual norms and acceptable forms of gender. This is most evident in discussions around sexual behaviour, where the girls' sexuality is monitored and condemned. In addition, this is reinforced by local and regional policies that only allocate funding for the girls when they are considered sexually deviant and in need of intervention. Through these three areas, I argue that belonging is conditional and

hierarchical that draws on existing social norms that determines both who should, and who can, belong at the Common. Subsequently, those who do not conform are excluded through affective strategies.

Literature and approaches drawn on

In this chapter I draw on two bodies of work to help me understand the findings. The first is a critical approach to the idea of belonging, that has been described as the 'politics of belonging' (Anthias 2006, Crowley 1999, Yuval-Davis 2006, Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran, and Vieten 2006) and the second is the 'the politics of emotions' (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990, Ahmed 2004a, b, Probyn 2004). I use them both together to explore how belonging is enacted using emotions. I use the notion of belonging as it challenges the taken for granted idea of inclusion as normal, and explores how experiences of belonging emerge out of the exclusion of others (Yuval-Davis 2006). The term belonging has been criticised by some authors, such as Antonsich (2010), for being poorly defined meaning that it can stand for a number of other ideas (such as citizenship). However, Yuval-Davis (2006) has proposed two specific threads in the analysis of belonging. The first is the personal experience of feeling 'at home' that is produced in everyday practices, and which more closely links to the concept of belonging that I described in the previous chapter in reference to place. The second thread, which I will address in this chapter, describes belonging as a form of power that constructs and claims inclusion for some whilst excluding others. It is those in positions of power who grant or deny belonging (Crowley 1999).

Sociological theories of emotion, or affect is it sometimes referred, take a cultural approach that sees emotions as embodied and social. Therefore, emotions can be understood as involving both private feelings and as given meaning in relation to others (or imagined others) (Leavitt 1996). In this way researchers, who cannot easily access an individual's emotional experience, can explore how emotions are used to convey sociocultural messages (Geertz 1973). This is often referred to as the politics of emotion (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990) which is defined as how "emotion discourses establish, asset, challenge, or reinforce power or status difference" (Abu-Lughod 1990, p.14). Emotions, therefore, can act as moral evaluations which "come to articular what are unspoken sentiments in contemporary society about class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity" (Nayak and Kehily 2014, p.1331). Thus emotions relate to

power, in that they can be boundary marking, as a way of policing and producing certain moralities (Probyn 2004, Manion 2003). For example, Skeggs (1997) has described how emotions such as disgust are projected onto classed bodies that serve to differentiate between those who are respectable and those who are not. Therefore in this chapter I explore how emotions can be used to mark moral boundaries at the Common that subsequently affect who can, or cannot, belong.

6.2 Spatial exclusion within the Common

Girls interrupted

The girl's room was a divisive space at the Common, not least because of its physical separation from the rest of the youth club, because of the boundaries that were created and constructed around the room by staff and young people. The girl's room had been assigned a few years previously in an attempt to attract more girls to the centre. The managers of the youth club recognised that girls were often reluctant to come into the Common and join in activities, but rather than encouraging integration or challenging the domination of space by the boys, the girls' room was offered as an alternative solution. Consequently, the girls were constantly encouraged out of the main room by staff and into the assigned room to get '*peace from the boys*'. In creating the girls' room staff unwittingly signalled that the rest of the youth club was the boys' space. As well as *how* space was assigned, *what* space was assigned is also important. No 'male space' was given up in order to make room for the girls. Instead a disused room on the periphery of the building (see figure 6) was opened up. This disused room had no heating and faulty lighting. In other words, nothing valuable was given up.

The criteria for accessing the girls' room also created problems, as officially it was only girls that were allowed in. This boundary was porous for the girls, who often gave permission for certain boys to access the room depending on their friendship network; however it also resulted in other boys invading the room. More often than not, when there were boys in the girls' room they were uninvited. Youth workers were frequently called upon to stop the boys interrupting their discussions and invading their space. For the boys invading the girls' room is the height of fun as they run around the room shouting. For the girls, however, this is disruptive and frustrating as they are already excluded from the main room and then their only assigned space is

taken over by the boys. This pattern of segregation and interruption of space reproduces findings from ethnographic work in schools. In the prominent study by Thorne (1993) boys controlled over ten times more space while girls were restricted into enclaves that were subject to interruption and invasion by the boys. As put forward by Thorne this invasion of space signals that the boys "see girls and their activities as interruptible" (1993, p.83). It also suggests that they see the girls' space as their space. The interruptions force the girls to respond defensively, often with the placement of guards such as youth workers and volunteers.

Gendering of space

Another problem occurred when boys regularly wanted to spend time in the girls' room. A number of boys attended the Common with a group of female friends. They did not want to spend time with the other young people at the centre in the main room; rather they wanted to be included in the private space of the girls' room. The boys I observed who came in with female friends were marked as 'gender-deviant' to use Thorne's (1993) term by other young people. In other words they did not conform to the norms of masculinity in the centre. One such example occurred with Simon (14, Black British) who comes to the Common with a group of girls he knows from school. He is given permission by his friends to enter the girls' room and as such the youth workers do not challenge his presence. A few weeks after he starts coming Simon and his friends Lucia (13, Black British), Manaia (15, Black British) and Katya (13, White Eastern European) are sitting cross-legged on the floor of the girls' room in the dark. We are interrupted by two older boys I haven't seen before who stand in the doorway and kick a football at us. As the ball bounces loudly off the wall behind us I ask them to get out. '*Why can he stay in?*' says the taller of the two, looking at Simon. '*He has permission*' I state. '*Is it because he's batty*[19]*?*' they say mockingly. Lucia comes over by the door and defends Simon, '*fuck off, he's not*'. The boys continue, '*batty boy!*' I get up and escort them out, calling youth worker Colin over to remove them from the centre for homophobic language. The girls keep watch at the door, watching to make sure the boys leave. They wait for an hour to make sure the coast is clear before leaving the centre together. Simon does not come back to the Common.

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[19] Batty is a derogatory homophobic term

This was not the only incident where boys, like Simon, were subject to homophobic language for being in the girls' room. There is a contradiction, therefore, between the main boys at the centre who can invade the room or be invited occasionally to join in discussions, and other boys for whom being seen in the girls' room by choice was interpreted as displaying deviant non-heterosexual behaviour. It does not matter whether or not these boys were gay, but rather that other young people made assumptions about their sexual orientation that resulted in increased surveillance. For Simon, attending the Common with the girls and being seen in the girls' spaces made him visible and subject to scrutiny. Yuval-Davis (2006, p.526) proposes, "how subjects feel about their location in the worlds is generated partly through experiences of exclusion rather than inclusion per se". I would suggest that the homophobic language directed towards Simon was used by the other boys as a way of marking acceptable gender norms. This tactic was successful in excluding Simon.

The practices at the Common therefore created a dichotomy between male and female spaces that left little places for mixed gender friendships. The girls' room is instead reproduced as a space for girls and gender deviant boys. Young people who do not want to conform to these norms, like Simon, are made to feel unwelcome and are subject to exclusionary strategies. In addition, the main group of boys at the Common were aware of this and manipulated this association to their own advantage. Secure in their own position in the Common, the 'established' boys would give fake confessions, always in jest, that they were gay in order to avoid being ejected from the girls' room. This behaviour provides further evidence that these associations were being made in the Common.

These patterns and practices of spatial exclusion were reproduced outside of the Common. I observed two residential trips during my sojourner. At the first residential, camping in South Wales, the girls ate their food and spent their time in one large tent while the boys took over the rest of the field and campsite. At the second residential, a virtual baby weekend at a youth hostel, the girls again were restricted into a single room while the boys dominated the rest of the three storey building. Furthermore, the virtual baby trip was meant to be girls only, but the regional manager announced that it wasn't fair that the girls were getting a weekend away and insisted that the boys should come along to use the accommodation.

Subsequently on the trip there were eight girls and fourteen boys. Like at the Common, the girls remove themselves from the main space and hide in the bedroom to avoid the boys. They are angry, '*why are the boys here?*' asks Kima (15, Black British) as she points out that '*this was meant to be a girls' project*'. Eva (16, mixed-race) comments that '*it's not fair*', and Jordan (15, Black British) suggests that this is why she doesn't come to the Common anymore, '*it's all about the boys*'. The girls have to care for the virtual babies through the night, but again the boys spend a large portion of the evening and night running in and out of the girls' room.

Lefebvre (1991), in looking at how social space is made, claims that it is important to determine who is able to dominate space. In the case of the Common, it is clear that the boys control the majority of the space. If you have no space, Lefebvre (1991) further claims, you have no stake at inclusion. The girls are relegated to the corner of the building, but as this is invaded the space for the girls is increasingly constricted. When no space is left, the only option is to leave. The lack of retention of the girls reflects this. In addition, young people who do not meet the heterosexual gender norms imposed by the boys at the Common have no space and thus little claim to inclusion.

6.3 The socialisation of gender norms at the Common

Learning acceptable forms of femininity at the Common

This section argues that The Common can be understood as a site of gender-making practices. This has been consistently reported in schools, with a number of authors noting that children and young people learn which gendered identities are 'acceptable' and 'appropriate' in these institutions (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 1996, Thorne 1993). Here, I will explore how the girls learn the informal rules about acceptable femininity at the Common. Like other research has demonstrated, girls often have to toe the line of being feminine, but not too feminine (Day, Gough, and McFadden 2003, 2004, Renold and Ringrose 2008, 2011, Ringrose and Renold 2009, Ringrose and Barajas 2011, Ringrose and Renold 2012). I will trace these practices through following two girls who move from the juniors to the seniors at the Common, and how their bodies, behaviour, and demeanour are shaped as they conformed to the role of the girls at the Common.

The role of the Common as a space in which gender norms were socialised was most obvious in observing new girls adjust to the centre. Millie (12, mixed race) and Lori (12, mixed-race) were juniors at the Common that moved up to the senior teenager session. Over their first week they arrive at the start of the session and spend the evenings running around and play fighting, using the whole space of the Common. Their behaviour contrasted with the other girls at the Common, who arrive sporadically and are confined to periphery spaces. What struck me over their first few weeks of attendance was how Millie and Lori's behaviour was similar to the boys. They lacked the self-consciousness of the older established girls, and were able to utilise the main space of the Common. They spent their time running around in the main room and were happy participating in activities, such as eating and playing pool. During an evening in their second week they ask if they can play the Wii and get out Just Dance. They select the song 'When I grow up' by The Pussycat Dolls and stand in the middle of the main room. They energetically follow the moves, laughing hysterically as their moves are scored lowly for missing the timing. They seem completely unaware that they have an audience.

Millie and Lori were comfortable in their visibility and become friends with a range of other attendees, male and female. Over a few months, however, their behaviour and appearance begins to shift, which coincides with starting high school. They change who they associate with at the Common, spending more time with the older girls. Suddenly the play-fighting they were doing with the boys became a self-conscious activity, and they are accused of flirting. Millie and Lori stop running around and spend more time in the girls' room or out of the Common altogether, segregating themselves from the boys. They also take up the styles of the older girls, wearing makeup and adopting similar fashions. They follow the look common amongst the middle group of girls (aged 11-14 years): jackets from 'Paul's Boutique', leggings, vest tops, and 'van' trainers. This was accompanied with bright red lip-gloss and body spray that had to be carried at all times.

This common look almost acted as a uniform, as a prop that allowed the girls to blend in, to become invisible. There appeared to be a need to preserve this look. Lip-gloss was reapplied at half an hour intervals, and spritzes of body spray filled the spaces around them. Millie and Lori in adopting this look signalled to others that they were

part of the older group. Bartky (1988) describes make-up and haircare as disciplinary practices through which the ideals of femininity are internalised. As she notes, this look requires investment of time and money. As Puwar (2004) has noted, women, and girls, moving into masculine space where they are not the natural occupants have to vie with respectable notions of femininity. The girls' presentation of self through this uniform suggests that they have become enlisted into recognising and presenting their body in a certain way (Skeggs 1997).

Managing the presentation of self therefore became a way of expressing their femininity and managing their visibility in the Common. This presentation of self also extends online where, in contrast to offline interactions, it is about maximising visibility and the uniformed looks of the girls become increasingly emphasised. BBM[20] is the main social online platform at the Common and it is not unusual for each young person to have around 500 people in their contact list. The contacts are mainly school friends but extend to people they have never met in person. BBM was an important presence at the Common that was central to being able to participate, both in the online interaction but in the discussions that spilled over into the offline world. BBM required considerable labour to manage the constant interactions, especially as they often carry on well into the night.

BBM provides not only textual information but visual and audio displays and messaging. The profile picture is particularly important, but is near identical in every girl's case: a selfie[21] with red lip-gloss and pouting towards the camera. These are regularly updated. Selfies with friends are also commonly used in feeds that were shared across BBM, Snapchat and Facebook. Rather than simply acting as a memory point, they are used to communicate meaning. The girls used specific images to portray an idealised presentation of self. Millie and Lori swap their IPhones for Blackberry phones soon after starting, and soon begin to participate in these visual displays. Learning to be female in the Common therefore, involves learning the appropriate spaces to be and people to be friends with. It also involves investing time

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[20] BBM stands for Blackberry Messenger service. It is a free messaging service provided on Blackberry mobile phones. While Blackberry has fallen out of fashion with adults, the abundance of spare handsets and cheap prices means they are affordable for most young people.

[21] Selfie is a photograph in which the photographer is the subject. It is usually taken at arm's length on a mobile phone.

in presenting themselves according to a certain form of femininity that allows them to manage their visibility in online and offline spaces.

Learning acceptable forms of masculinities at the Common

In this section I look again at the boys who were marked as gender-deviant to reveal what it then means to be masculine at the Common. In order to do so, I examine Ravi (13, British Middle Eastern) who was marked and labelled as gay by staff and other young people, although he had at no point 'come out'. Ravi, like Simon, displayed gender deviance that resulted in shaming practices intended to bring him back into line or to exclude him. Although Ravi used to live round the corner from the Common, his parents split up and he moves in with his Dad in a neighbourhood on the other side of town. His Dad drives him to the Common most evenings and he stays with his mum over the weekends. Although the other young people refer to him as Asian, he is quick to point out that he is from the Middle East which he is associates as a better heritage on the hierarchy. I am focusing on Ravi to explore the fluidity of his gender performance. He spends time with the girls, and is often allowed into the girls' room depending on the group, whilst also trying to fit into the main 'up and coming' group of boys, which requires a display of hetero-masculine behaviour. As he traverses this tight rope he has to negotiate homophobic name calling which polices the boundaries of masculinity (Adams, Anderson, and McCormack 2010, Anderson 2008, Anderson 2009a).

At the Common young people are astute at policing each other over racial insults however this work did not occur around homophobic slurs. Some researchers, such as McCormack (2014), have argued that there has been a softening in homophobic attitudes in schools. McCormack's (2014) study, however, was conducted in a white sixth form in the south of England and therefore it does not necessarily translate to contexts such as the Common. Research by Cann (2014) supports the limitations of McCormack's (2014) work and found that while teenagers were reflexive about masculinity, boys and girls recognised the importance of displaying appropriate forms of masculinity. She further discusses the role of taste in gender work suggesting, "texts inscribed with masculine value could…be drawn upon by boys as a way of conforming and reproducing their masculine identity" (Cann 2014, p.22). As I will show, Ravi drew on a number of masculine inscribed resources to fit in.

Ravi is known for his style, and he is commonly compared to the celebrities Zac Efron or Joey Essex in terms of his look. Both of these celebrities are known for displaying alternative, metrosexual, masculinity. For example, Zac Efron became famous for his role in the film 'High School Musical' in which his character struggled to pursue both singing (seen as a feminine activity) and basketball (conforming to masculine ideals). Joey Essex is a reality TV star from 'The Only Way if Essex' who has a business selling tanning and hair products. Ravi draws on the styles of these celebrities to display metrosexual masculinity. He does not dress like the main established boys, who attend the Common in 'trackies'[22], but arrives in smart jeans and sport coats. He also comes in wearing branded clothing such as Jack Daniel's jumpers and carefully styles his hair. This style can lead Ravi to be the focus of criticism, rather than the capital he seeks.

He comes into the Common one evening after getting a haircut and immediately draws attention. Youth worker Colin is playing pool and looks round at Ravi as he arrives into the main room and signs in. '*What happened to that?*' Colin asks pointing at Ravi's freshly cut hair. Ravi defensively puts his hand up to his hair, '*I just had it cut, what's wrong with it?*' '*You should get your money back, they didn't finish it*' Colin continues. A few of the other young people sat around the pool table begin to chip in with their comments, '*you look like Joey Essex*', '*it looks gay'*. '*Seriously though mate, go back and get it sorted*' says Colin. '*Stop bullying me*' Ravi responds. '*Look man, I'm trying to stop you getting bullied*' says Colin. Kayla (14, mixed-race) who is standing next to me says '*I like it, it looks cool*'. Ravi looks relieved but pulls his hood over his head and walks through to the girls' room.

Ravi tells me in one of our discussions in the kitchen that he wants to become an actor or model in the future, but recognises that he will probably need to have a more realistic back-up job. He is mocked for his ambitions by the boys, and he tells me he doesn't want to talk about acting in front of the others but asks me to help him with application forms in the staff room. He attends a drama school with a number of the other girls at the Common and in the privacy of the girls' room he is allowed to put on, as he describes it, his dramatic turn. He is also freer in his movement in this environment, hugging and being affectionate with the girls. It is generally the

[22] Trackies is short for tracksuit bottoms.

younger group of girls that allow Ravi to come into the room as he annoys the older girls. As Cann (2014) comments, activities seen as feminine are often kept private, and Ravi makes deliberate attempts to keep his acting aspirations out of the main masculine space of the Common.

In an attempt to fit in with the boys, Ravi starts to play football with the main 'established' and 'up-and-coming' group of boys. He plays in goal and in doing so he is able to participate in the banter around the games. Unfortunately he is regularly injured in these attempts, splitting his lip and dislocating his shoulder twice. Ravi also puts on other heterosexual displays, coming in with love bites and bragging about kissing girls. However, despite these attempts Ravi remains low on the hierarchies and is never quite allowed to belong to main boys. Reuben (13, mixed-race) and Henry (14, mixed-race) in particular let Ravi participate when it is convenient for them, often sending Ravi to Joe's Parlour to pick them up milkshakes, but call him gay and a 'faggot' when they seem him in the girls' room and they don't invite him to join activities outside of the Common that they publicly discuss.

This seems to encourage Ravi to up the stakes. A few weeks later he gets his hair cut short in the style of the other boys and distances himself from the girls. One evening he comes over to the main table and tells me he has brought in a knife. Before I have a chance to respond he brings out what looks like a switch knife. I reflexively move back and Ravi smiles as it flicks out to reveal a comb. He starts combing down his hair (a habit of the 'up and coming' boys). He tells me it cost him £8 but combing his hair when it is growing will make it come out straight. I smile waiting to see if he is joking, he isn't. He then tells me it scares people but can't get him in trouble, as it is just a comb. '*A woman in the newsagent freaked out earlier*' he reports. Reuben comes over and is impressed by the comb, he whispers in Ravi's ear and they leave the Common together.

Ravi's behaviour suggests that he recognises the rules he has to conform to, hiding activities which could be seen as feminine, and attempting to perform more hyper-masculine behaviour in order to fit in with the main boys. While he tries to balance different conflicting forms of masculinity, he is brought into line through homophobic language and has to defend his position. Nevertheless his sexuality

continues to be called into question, even by the youth workers. The male youth workers are quite involved with 'up-and-coming boys', playing pool and play fighting, but they also do not include Ravi in this play confirming his status as 'other'. Trainee youth worker Ben comments '*it is going to be hard for him when he eventually comes out'*. Like the girls then, acceptable forms of masculinity have to be performed in order to belong. In order to belong they have to learn the 'right' way to be (Morris-Roberts 2004). In this case, belonging in the Common is a gendered process (Yuval-Davis 2006).

6.4 The use of emotion as a strategy of exclusion

Yuval-Davis (2006) suggests that it is important to examine not just how belonging confers membership and rights to space, but also the emotions that are evoked in these processes. In this section, therefore, I continue to look at how acceptable forms of gender are made, but I focus on particular forms of exclusion that are enforced through emotions. In this section I will look at how borders around sexuality were publicly monitored in the Common through the use of shame and disgust in order to mark the boundaries of (un)acceptability. The emotions become attached to certain forms of behaviour and bodies (Ahmed 2004) that marked certain relationships as respectable and others as unacceptable. I will give a brief overview of some of the writing about shame and disgust to make clear that I am examining emotion here not as simply felt but as productive; it acts as a form of control. Following this I will look at how these emotions circulates around the girls who were named as 'sluts' and publicly shamed by other young people.

Shame and disgust are claimed to arise when our most deeply held values and emotions are threatened or lost (Kleinman 2006). Shame is embodied, but also is formed in interaction through proximity to other bodies, and is utilised as form of control and regulation (Probyn 2004). These emotions, however, are not simply the product of external disapproval (Sayer 2005). Irvine (2009, p.75) proposes that "shame acts politically when it reinforces social boundaries about which citizens are worthy and acceptable and which are not". He further claims that it is when these shared values about boundaries become taken for granted, and consequently invisible that shame becomes a mechanism for control (Irvine 2009). Through shame and disgust people internalise expectations and norms that reinforce boundaries (Ahmed

2004a, Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990). In creating boundaries that distinguished between those that are morally worthy and unworthy, therefore, they become strategies of exclusion.

In the Common, many of the young people used shame and disgust that seemed to particularly focus on marking the boundaries of acceptable female behaviour and sexuality. The use of shaming can be interpreted not only as a way of patrolling and monitoring borders, but as a way of assigning responsibility. Five girls in particular over my time at the Common are publicly vilified as 'sluts' or 'slags'. The five girls, in different ways, are seen as responsible not only for their actions, but for the consequences. When looking at background factors, there are some similarities and important differences between the girls. All but one, are in care, moving between formal care and informal care through extended family members. Their lives are precarious and unstable, moving between a number of homes and schools. Two girls, Jade (14, White British) and Kayla (14, mixed-race) are not from around the area, and so are already marked as outsiders. Hailey (14, mixed-race), Kima (15, Black British) and Jordan (15, Black British) grew up in the area. I would like to focus on two of the girls, Jade and Hailey, to explore how shame manifests.

Jade as the abject figure

I have chosen Jade, who I introduced in the previous chapter, as she was a girl that I had repeated contact with, and that other young people at the Common talked to me about. I hear about Jade, before I ever meet her. Jade, I am told, is fourteen and is a slag. I hear about her from Asia (14, Black British), her boyfriend Reuben (13, mixed-race) and Raymond (11, Black British) sitting talking in the girls' room. They are questioning why Jade comes to the Common, and Reuben replies '*you know why*'. They quickly start talking about the boys (and men) that Jade has reportedly slept with. Asia mentions that Jade always talks about sleeping with Black men, but says that Jade is a racist. Reuben calls her disgusting. Raymond comments that he thought that Jade had been raped. Asia and Reuben scoff, and Asia replies '*it's not rape if you enjoy it*'.

In this initial exchange the stories about Jade that circulate at the Common are first exposed. Jade is seen as wholly responsible for her behaviour. Even when there are

reports that Jade has been raped, the blame is projected back on to her. This is evoked through the idea of pleasure. Jade is ultimately deemed responsible to maintain and manage the boundaries of the body, and thus is responsible for the failure. I first meet Jade a few weeks later when she comes into the Centre with Carolyn (16, mixed-race), who she lives with in foster care, and Shannon (14, White British). Jade wears a red baseball cap that she keeps pulling over her short cropped hair, but other than this detail her clothing resembles the 'uniform' of the other girls. Jade immediately draws attention, the gaze of others fixing on her as she walks though the centre and later that night we are told she is pregnant.

A few weeks later, however, I hear a different story from Shannon and Carolyn. Shannon's phone keeps going off, and she and Carolyn seem agitated. I ask what is going on and they explain that they are having a fight on BBM with Jade. I ask why and they tell me that they aren't friends with her any more as she is a liar and has been saying things about Carolyn's family. Shannon tells me '*Jade isn't pregnant*'. '*Well…*' says Carolyn, '*I heard she got jumped and she lost it*'. Shannon says she also heard that Jade had an abortion, '*so who knows*' she says going back to her phone. She shows me the last message they sent each other which is filled with expletives, '*don't you say a fucking word about Car's auntie you stupid slag*'. Shannon and Carolyn cut all ties with Jade explaining that the only reason they were friends with Jade the first place was that they felt sorry for her, referring to the death of her mother. The girls are very vocal about their disapproval of Jade, and work to publicly distance themselves from her. It was as if any association with Jade would taint or contaminate them.

Contamination was a big issue in regards to Jade. Jade had only two consistent friendships at the Common with Jess (16, mixed-race) and Ruthie (14, Black British). Jade tried to initiate a number of other friendships but they appeared to quickly dissolve once they know of Jade's reputation. Ruthie explains to me that she doesn't think it is fair how Jade is treated, explaining that perhaps it is because Jade isn't from around the area. However, she then tells me that '*Jade likes the attention, even if it is bad*'. As evidence of this Ruthie gets out her phone, showing me Jade's BBM profile. Jade's profile picture is a selfie; she is wearing false eyelashes and red lipstick and pouting towards the camera with her arms pushed against her chest. Ruthie says

'*it's bad isn't it, wait you should see the older one, it is worse*'. The style of Jade's older picture is the same except she is only wearing a bra. '*See*' Ruthie tells me, '*she likes the attention*'. In showing me these pictures Ruthie is suggesting that Jade is actively pursuing attention, refuting norms of girls as passive, through a specific unacceptable, form of visibility. Ruthie sees the pictures as attention seeking, which transfers from online to offline behaviour. In the following months there are a number of reports that there are explicit images of Jade circulating at the centre and although there are disputes about who circulated the pictures, Jade is ultimately blamed for them. The consensus at the Common is that by pursuing and enjoying attention, Jade is deserving of the consequences.

Moreover, there are consequences to Jade's behaviour. She is subject to abuse on a regular basis. From the girls this sometimes takes the form of refusing to acknowledge Jade's presence, or more explicitly by loudly shouting across the room '*eugh, what is she doing here, no one wants her here*'. The boys, in contrast, are more likely to publicly shame Jade, shouting and sneering about her behaviour as she walks past, calling her '*fucking foul*'. Jade is expected to respond to this shaming, perhaps to show remorse, but instead chooses to feign ignorance that is misunderstood as bravado. However, not only verbal assaults and threats faced Jade. On a number of occasions she was physically assaulted, twice while I was at the Common by groups of girls. The assaults were the result of Jade allegedly insulting someone's family member, but her status as a 'slag' was explicitly linked.

Some of the youth workers collude in avoiding engaging with Jade, warning me '*don't let her drag you in; she has done it to all of us, getting attention, telling lies, getting sympathy. Don't get involved*'. Youth worker Robin's words echo the other young people, '*I don't even know why she comes here. I went to her house, when she was in foster care, and she was soooo rude to me, so rude, and just lies upon lies, I want nothing to do with her*'. The staff, by refusing to work with Jade, reinforce the moral boundaries around the centre and collude in her stigmatisation. Jade is treated as undeserving of their support. Jade stops coming in regularly, but she continues to be discussed, serving as a moral warning story. Shortly after I finish fieldwork, Jade is reported as missing.

Hailey's loss of respectability

Hailey (14, mixed-race) comes to the youth centre with her best friend Manaia (15, Black British). The pair are inseparable, but they also have a wider friendship network than most of the other girls and are friends with a number of the boys. Hailey starts to date one of the group, an older boy called Kano (17, Black British), who uses the gym at the centre. The relationship is public knowledge and youth worker Suzy is quick to talk to Hailey about it. Hailey tells Suzy that she is a virgin but feels pressured about starting to have sex with Kano. Suzy encourages her to wait until she is ready and starts a health relationship course with Hailey and group of girls. Over a couple of weeks the girls are pulled into the training room to do a few sessions on (un)healthy relationships before they are given condom and contraceptive advice. During the first session the girls have to write lists of what they would expect from a healthy/unhealthy relationship. It takes a while for the girls to get started, looking around to see what everyone else is doing. Occasionally they look up and start reading out messages, partly for a laugh, and partly to give Suzy the message that they don't need this training.

'*No sex before marriage*' shouts Hailey. '*Hey, stop copying me*' says Manaia wrapping her arms around her piece of paper. Suzy gets them to read their answers aloud. After some nudging Hailey starts, '*no sex before marriage*' and then immediately reads her next statement, '*always have safe sex*'. Suzy frowns and asks if that isn't a mixed message. When it comes to making a list about unhealthy relationships the girls find it a lot easier to come up with answers. After the lists have been read out Suzy goes through the workshop notes for the session and talks a little about control. Suddenly Hailey's head pops up, '*oh my god, that's me, I was controlled, I was controlled wasn't I?*' referring to her relationship with Kano. It is the first thing that has caught the groups' attention as they all recall accounts of controlling behaviour by the boys. The moment passes quickly however, and soon they are asking about nipping out to the shop.

A few days later I go to the alcove of the girls' room and see Hailey sitting with her head in her hands on the sofa. A few of the boys, Lucas (14, White British) and Reuben (13, mixed-race) are wrestling with Frankie (12, British Middle-Eastern) on the arm of the sofa oblivious. I see Hailey's shoulders start to shake and I ask her if

she is OK or if she wants me to get someone. I ask the boys to get out and give us some privacy. They take notice of Hailey for the first time and as they are pushed out of the door poke their heads round asking if she is OK. Manaia comes over and Hailey lifts her head. Her mascara has left stains down her cheeks. She tells us that Mitchell (15, mixed-race) has told her that Kano said he didn't care about her. Manaia asks if she believes Mitchell. Hailey shrugs and says that she doesn't really get to see him anymore. It turns out Kano is currently playing football, and she doesn't want to leave in case he sees her crying. It is, however, our only route out to the main room. Manaia gets some tissue and tells Hailey to dry her eyes. We quickly go back to the main room and find Suzy. Suzy asks Hailey if she is happy in the relationship. '*Sometimes*' is the only response. Suzy tells her all Hailey can do is speak to him, and decide whether she is happy.

The relationship has not gone unnoticed by the others at the centre and soon the boys start asking questions, and taking a stake in what has gone on. One night Hailey and Manaia ask to do some cooking so we go into the kitchen to make pizzas. Ravi (13, British Middle-Eastern) bounds in also wanting to help but is more interested in grabbing the girls' phones rather than cooking so I send him out. Ravi comes in again and stands between me and Hailey. He leans his head against my shoulder and when I look at him he smiles cheekily, 'hiya!' He leans his head on Hailey next. As we prepare the toppings Ravi suddenly leans over to Hailey and asks her if she has had sex yet. She pushes him away and says nothing. '*Well, have you?*' he continues. Hailey tells him to mind his own business. When he asks again Manaia shouts '*No!*' When he leaves I ask Hailey if things are going ok with Kano now. She tells me it is going well, but then Manaia whispers something and they leave the room. A few weeks later Hailey and Kano break up and there are rumours that Kano is now seeing Jade.

Hailey's appearance and behaviour starts to change after the break up. She starts coming in with more makeup and pulls her hair into a tight donut bun, like the older girls. She also starts coming into the centre drunk. Suzy pulls her into the office and asks her if she was drunk on Saturday night. Hailey initially denies this, looking down. Suzy gets angry and starts delivering an abstinence message concluding with '*what happens is… you can get cirrhosis of the liver, turn yellow and die*'. This sets

Hailey off into the giggles, '*Well if I am going to turn yellow and die….*' Suzy tells her she is being serious and that she is going to have to come on the virtual baby project. Hailey crinkles her nose in disgust, '*I'm not doing that, you can't make me*'. Suzy insists she can, especially '*if you are going to be flirting with boys and getting drunk*'. Her best friend, Manaia is surprisingly on Suzy's side, telling Hailey '*you know what you are like around boys, always flirting'*. Manaia sighs when Hailey leaves to speak to a few of the boys and tells us she is fed up with her.

Soon the boys are referring to Hailey as a slag and there are weekly stories circulating about her getting drunk. This reputation has a knock on effect on her friend Manaia, who becomes tainted by association. One evening, when Hailey isn't in, I am called into the girls' bathroom where Manaia is crying. The door is pushed back as I try to enter as they check who is at the door. Once verified I am let in and find Lucia (13, Black British) trying to comfort Manaia, who is sobbing and shouting. She tells me that the boys are telling lies about her, shouting that '*they are fucking lying*' while punching the door of the bathroom stalls. She explains that Carver (14, Black British) has been telling people she slept with him, but she didn't. This news has reached her family, causing problems with her Dad.

The boys are still in the centre, so we move out of the bathroom into the foyer, not venturing any further. She starts shouting, '*I'm going to fucking kill them, I am, I can't stand it*'. Youth worker Colin is in the staff room and calls us into the office. Colin tries to be understanding but Manaia gets angrier. She blames Hailey for what is happening claiming '*Hailey is my friend, but Hailey is a 'ho', I'm not a 'ho'! What have I done to deserve this? I don't even do any of that messing around and stuff and they call me a fucking slag? I wish they would drop dead right now!*' Colin smiles and replies '*No you don't*'. Manaia stalks across the room '*yes I do! That's Hailey, that's not me*'. As Manaia explains the situation Colin tries a different tack. He tells her not to get upset when they call her a slag, that '*you know you're not so why does it matter what they think*'. Colin continues, '*you should take it as a compliment! It's because they fancy you, and want everyone to think they can get you, Carver is full of shit, everyone knows he hasn't done it, it's a compliment to you*'. Manaia doesn't look convinced.

After this experience, Manaia does continue to attend the Common but without Hailey. She tells us that what Hailey does has nothing to do with her now. Manaia is distancing herself from the source of contamination, Hailey. When Hailey does come into the Common she begins to attract similar attention to Jade, and soon she is the subject of shaming discourses. Suzy reports that she sees Hailey during her outreach work, and has to intervene one evening after Hailey is sexually assaulted. Suzy encourages her to report the incident to the police but Hailey refuses, threatening to kill herself if anyone finds out. Suzy explains to me that Hailey was assaulted by a boy she knew, and who knew of her reputation, and therefore Hailey thought this would be used to discredit her account.

I would argue that the girls at the Common are punished through shame and disgust, which is rationalised through positioning the girls as deserving. This can be seen through the incident in which Jade's rape is dismissed , but also in the way that the boys talk about Jade and Hailey, with 17 year old Kano who was involved with both girls claiming '*if she's a lady treat her like a lady, if she's a whore treat her like a whore*'. This is about girls at the Common deserving to be treated according to their status and behaviour. While this finding is not new, shame provides a new way of examining the disciplinary practices that impact on the girls. Shame is a way of marking moral boundaries that determine acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Jade and Hailey's personal life becomes publicly owned and shared. Stories of their behaviour circulate, are the subject of gossip, and most assign blame.

In my year of knowing Jade, I never heard her side of the story. She strictly refused to talk about the subject. Perhaps discussing her experiences would mean that she had to recognise and acknowledge the shame that had been put on her, thus her safety was in her silence. For Hailey, her labelling led to social support from Manaia being withdrawn and the sexual assault led to a complete form of silencing. Opotow (1990, p.1) has argued that the 'morally excluded are perceived as non-entities, expendable or undeserving, consequently harming them appears acceptable, appropriate or just'. I would argue that the shaming of the girls does exactly this.

Secondly it is clear from the examples above that there are consequences to what others have termed 'slut-shaming'. Shame is used as a means of control but it also

functions to punish those who transgress the moral norms. Jade and Hailey suffer through the shame imposed by others. For Jade her time at the Common is about the withdrawal of care, with the other young people refusing Jade attention and friendship. In addition, the young people and the boys in particular, could also be seen to be recruiting the youth workers into withdrawing care from Jade. This was something I was not immune to. When Jade came into the centre I was challenged if I engaged with her. The girls were also punished in more explicit ways. Jade and Hailey are physically assaulted while some of the other girls, such as Kima and Jordan, self-harm because of shaming practices. The very real consequences mean that we should regard these affective strategies of exclusion as more than something felt but rather as productive in governing moral boundaries around sexuality.

6.5 Discussion

This chapter has explored the politics of belonging through looking at processes of inclusion and exclusion with a focus on the marginal groups at the Common. Through looking at how space is assigned and controlled, and how gender is reproduced and monitored I have shown that belonging is conditional on conforming to local norms. It supports the literature on the politics of belonging, which suggests that belonging should be understood as fluid and under constant negotiation rather than fixed, or static. Belonging is tied to power and as Carillo Rowe (2005, p.29) has suggested, "unearned privilege is the condition for belonging, and this entails excluding others". At the Common being male and hetero-masculine entails the privilege of being at the top of the hierarchy, while the girls learn their value through reproducing specific forms of respectable femininity. Young people who don't fit into these dichotomised categories are 'othered' and find themselves further down the hierarchy. The lower down the hierarchy the more difficult it becomes to 'fit in'.

In these examples, shame is an affective form of exclusion closely linked to disgust. The reaction of the boys and the girls is to withdraw from the source of contamination – the girl's body being the ultimate source of abjection (Thorne 1993). Emotions can be performative and as Ahmed (2004b) comments the use of emotions as a way of assigning moral evaluation "relies on previous norms and generates the object that it names" (p.93). Therefore, the use of shame and disgusts draws on the gender norms that are established through restricting and invading the girls space,

and which set outs acceptable forms of femininity and masculinity at the Common. These are social emotions as they are used as public displays of disapproval. I want to reiterate that I do not want to moralise the girls' sexuality. Ringrose (2011) has warned, in particular reference to sexting, that moral panics around girls' sexual practices produce moral norms about sexual subjects. Ultimately they construct girls' sexuality as a particular problem that has to be regulated and constrained. As youth worker Suzy told me, '*the girls have been fed a lie – they are told they can do the same as the boys, but the standards haven't changed'*. Thus, it supports other girlhood research that note that girls retreat from situations where "they are labelled and judged sexually" (McRobbie and Garber 1976, p.178).

The data I have with the girls illustrates the ways in which they are monitored and made visible in the Common. Although I am drawing on the specific case of the youth club, it is interesting to note that this is echoed in other work that demonstrates that girls and women become particularly visible as 'sexualised bodies' (Puwar 2006, p.79). The girls' visibility also makes them vulnerable to processes of exclusion when they are seen to violate acceptable forms of femininity. In the case studies, there are clear signs of public shaming, and it is important to consider they draw on existing social norms for their power. Looking at the Common and its gender norms, it is clear that centre's prioritisation of the boys and marginalisation of the girls has much deeper impacts than simply confining the girls to the periphery. The girls' room was one of the few investments in resources for female attendees, but paled in comparison to the investment in sporting equipment for the boys. The sole pot of funding specifically for the girls was for a virtual baby project and was only supplied by the city council when there was a spike in teenage pregnancy rates.

Although I have drawn on data from just two boys in this chapter, I hope to illustrate why boys who don't fit into the hetero-masculine norms at the Common may choose not to attend. I want to be clear that I am focussing on these boys because their peers and youth workers see them as anomalies. By taking this approach I resist the temptation to impose a label on their gendered identity, but rather look at how behaviour is shaped. Despite reports that homophobic attitudes are on the decline, at the Common homophobia continues to establish acceptable, heterosexual, masculinities, and forces boys to hide, play up, and manage alternative masculinities.

6.6 Summary and conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed how the Common becomes a mechanism that shapes and produces gender, which leads to processes of inclusion and exclusion. The performance of gender becomes a key way of navigating the Common and the recurring theme that I propose brings together the three sections of this chapter is that to be highly visible is to be the subject of surveillance and control. The fieldnotes in this chapter continues to support an argument running through my findings, that young male bodies are considered risky in public spaces justifying the provision of activities to keep them off the street, while female bodies only became visible through their sexuality.

In these first two chapters I have focused on how young people at the Common experience exclusion, and the strategies of exclusion that are used to establish norms and social rules at the centre. In the next chapters, however I want to explore the practices that allow young people to participate, to be included. In the following chapter, I consider how the boys use activities at the Centre to participate and gain value. In particular, if boys in Sandyhill are excluded in public space how they find their own ways of gaining value and worth outside of a surveillant gaze. I also look at how the girls can participate, when there are suitable conditions, but when they do they are unable to gain the value that the boys do.

Interlude 7

Figure 15. Transport to the Common

Figure 14. Summer activities

Chapter 7

Finding value in the Common: the role of pool

The previous chapters described the exclusions that young people at the experienced in public space, and the strategies of exclusions that occurred within the Common. In this chapter, I use pool, as one of the main activities at the centre, to draw attention to ways in which the boys create order, manage time, and find value at the youth centre. Whilst previously I described how the boys were perceived in public space as disordered, uncivilised, bodies, here I challenge these assumptions by showing the boys as ordered, managed, and skilled bodies. In doing, so my intention is not to describe the game of pool, but rather what pool illuminated about the set-up of the Common. In particular, I show how participation in activities, such as pool, offers some young people, but not others, a way of mitigating exclusion and thus as a way of belonging. Therefore, I treat pool in a similar way to Geertz (1973), who famously used the example of the cockfight in Bali to draw attention to the way in which an activity can represent a cultural practice that represent ways of participating in society.

7.1 Framing the chapter

Aims of the chapter

This chapter has two aims. Firstly, to demonstrate what pool told me about the young people at the Common and the way they organise time and bodies around the game. I will consider how young people are socialised into participating in pool and in particular, and how the informal rules and order around the pool table are enforced. Secondly, I will consider how participation in pool was a way of gaining value and worth at the Common. I will discuss how the boys can gain worth in terms of masculinity through pool, which excludes the girls. Therefore, even when girls do play pool, they cannot access the value that pool offers the boys. Therefore, it is not rational for the girls to play. Together, I will look at how the everyday interactions around the pool table reveal who is allowed to play and the nature of how value and status is achieved. I aim to demonstrate that participating in pool is a way of gaining

value at the Common, and that as value is a condition of belonging, to participate is to belong. However, as I will discuss, restrictions on who can participate subsequently restricts who can belong. Belonging is therefore, conditional and hierarchical.

Literature and approaches drawn on

There are two key texts that I loosely draw upon in this chapter, Geertz's (1973) seminal text on the cockfight in Bali and Wacquant's (2006) account of boxing in Chicago. Both authors use the activities of cockfighting and boxing to illustrate the cultural practices underlying them. For Geertz (1973, p.2), "much of Bali surfaces in a cock ring". For it is only apparently cocks that are fighting there. Actually, it is men". He explores how the community organises itself around the cockfight; from the men that participate in order to demonstrate their masculinity through to the audience which set the stakes of the game. Wacquant (2006, p.56), in contrast, looks at boxing as an embodied and ordered bodily practice that stands in "symbolic opposition to the ghetto that surrounds and enfolds it". In other words, he examines how the boxing gym can be a way of escaping the disorder of the street through creating order in their boxing practice. In this short chapter, I have no such grand aims. Rather, I want to demonstrate how the boys organised their evenings around the pool table, and in doing so, the way that participation in pool became a way of gaining value, and avoiding exclusion, at the Common.

After months of observing the pool before recognising its importance, I also understand the pool table using the concept of the 'humility of things' as described by anthropologist Daniel Miller (2010). He argues that it is when objects merge into the background that they become significant, explaining that

> The less we are aware of them, the more powerfully they can determine our expectations, by setting the scene and ensuring appropriate behaviour, without being open to challenge. They determine what takes place to the extent that we are unconscious of their capacity to do so (Miller 2010, p.50)

At the Common, action and behaviour orientates around the pool tables, with bodies literally and metaphorically masking the pool table itself. It is such as established presence at the Common, that it becomes taken for granted.

7.2 Pool as established strategy for creating order at the Common

Setting up the pool table

Over the first few months at the Common I was aware of the lack of formal activities at the youth centre, but make the mistake of assuming that this meant there was no structure to the evenings. In particular, I saw the female youth workers Suzy and Robin encourage the girls to take part in projects and to spend supervised time in the girls' room, but see no obvious organisation amongst the boys and male youth workers who move between activities in the main room. Although I spent time with the girls when they were at the centre, the majority of my time was spent in the main room with the boys. This included many hours spent playing pool, cards, dominos, talking about food, and eating food. As I recorded the everyday mundane routines of the centre it became clear that there was an informal structure that organised the evenings. For the boys, specifically, their evenings were centred on the pool table.

At the Common there are two pool tables (one full size, one three-quarter size) which sit in the main room of the Common, located near the entrance. As can be seen in Figure 4, the location and positioning of the other furniture in the room allow the game to be viewed from 360 degrees. Therefore, the pool tables are the focal point of the main space. Playing pool at the Common, however, is not a formal activity organised by the youth workers. Rather, the boys at the Common take it upon themselves to set up the table every evening. The boys arrive at the centre at the start of every session and take off the cardboard covers from the table, and inspect the felt for any marks of scuffs that could have a detrimental impact on their game. Next, they blue-tack a blank piece of paper to the wall, carefully writing their name at the top of what becomes the waiting list. As more young people arrive they too put their name down on the ever-increasing waiting list, and take a seat nearby to spectate and offer their critique of the game at hand, before being called to take their turn.

Being socialised into the informal rules

There are unwritten but distinct informal rules for the main full-size pool table, here after referred to as the main table. Other authors, such as Broom (1992) in her ethnography of female pool players in a University bar have found that the rules of the game were not openly explained or shared. Here, however, it is the informal rules,

rather the specific rules of the game, which are not shared amongst the uninitiated. Instead, the informal rules are predominantly learned through being inducted into the game. Many of the boys, who attend the Common as juniors, are socialised into the rules by the youth workers prior to joining the senior session. As many boys attending the centre become volunteers or youth workers at the Common they subsequently become responsible for socialising the junior or new senior members. Therefore, the informal rules are transmitted between generations ensuring their maintenance. For newcomers to the senior session, however, becoming socialised into the rules was more challenging given that, as I explain below, they also have to learn when they can play.

The primary informal rule of the pool table at the Common is that the 'winner stays on'. This is significant in a number of ways. Firstly, this rule means that there is only one rotation of players after each game is completed, which means that the number of potential players in the session is reduced. The winner of the first game potentially can stay on the table for the duration of the session. Secondly, this means that there is an ever-increasing level of competence. With the change of only one player, the level is never reset. Following this logic, the winner early on is more likely to be beaten, whereas the winner later on is unlikely to. This means there is a strategy in knowing when to start playing. Thirdly, and most importantly, this ensures a random selection of opponents. The opponent cannot be selected, and friends cannot arrange to play each other.

Newcomers at the Common, therefore, find themselves disadvantaged compared to the regulars who have learnt to manage and manipulate this rule. The regulars know to add their name to the list immediately after signing into the centre. Arriving earlier increases their possibility of getting on the table first, and having more games if they happen to win early on. Based on their position on the waiting list, the boys will sit and wait their turn, or go to play table tennis/football for an estimated amount of time. New players, however, quickly learn that they need to stay nearby in case their name is crossed off by a regular player. Failure to pay heed to these rules means that newer members are less likely to get a game assuming they can simply approach the table to play immediately.

Newcomers also have to learn the informal etiquette of winning and losing. For the players at the Common winning the game entails certain privileges beyond staying on the table. New players soon learn that as the challenger they have duties to fulfil. The challenger has to rack up, collect the balls, and arrange them in the triangle for the start of the next game. The winner gets time to relax and plan their strategy for the next game. The winner also gets to break. Breaking and taking the first turn is seen as an advantage. For the more experienced players, breaking and potting early on can mean that the challenger will only have limited opportunities to even take a turn, ensuring the winner's continuation on the table. Newcomers with less experience, therefore, may find little opportunity to progress as they are quickly beaten by more experienced regular players.

The rules as a way of ordering time

Pool is a way of occupying and ordering their time at the Common. Wacquant (2006), described the boxing gym as a way of filling time, and here the boys at the Common can use pool to expand time and use the informal rules to put pressure on other players' time. The boys at the Common manipulate time in playing the game. More specifically, the rules outlined above put pressure on time. It is not just as simple as waiting for your turn. Time is manipulated in a number of ways through pace and tempo. A typical pool game at the Common lasts around 20 minutes, however, the lengths of games are not solely determined on the demands of the game, but rather on the opponent. Players can be seen changing the pace of the game based on the perceived competency of the opponent. Players regarded as incompetent or inexperienced, a 'bad' opponent, can be quickly discarded. Shots are not planned in the same meticulous way rather it is about quickly getting rid of the bad opponent, in order to play someone better. Players quickly move about the table, forgoing rituals (such as chalking their cue). The balls are quickly snapped into pockets, rather than planned. They do not want to waste their time on someone insignificant. If there is an opportunity for a good game or improvement these are valued and this given more attention.

On the other hand, against a 'good' opponent, games are slowed down. The boys at the Common stalk the table making decisions and planning future shots. The chalk is picked up and carefully brushed against the tip while they bend their knees to get a

better angle. The speed of the ball considerable slows as well, with shots slowly and accurately directing balls into the pocket. Shots in which the white ball kisses the other ball into the pocket are the norm, compared to the speed and power dispatched in the previous scenario. Time spent with 'good' opponents is longer in part because of the demands of beating someone with the ability to win, but there is also pleasure involved, of enjoying a 'good' game. That is not to say there aren't exceptions. If the centre is quiet, and the time pressure is not as demanding, then games can slow down to absorb more time. Often this slowing down is to give 'bad' opponents a chance, and can often entail the more experienced player explaining shots and offering pointers (such as marking a spot on the felt for the correct angle). The overriding notion is about maximising time at the pool table.

Lastly, success at the table is measured not by number of wins, but length of time at the table. Players will often ask and cite the time as a means of calculating success, as suggested by George, one of the volunteers, who shouted across the room to me one evening as I was sat at the main table, '*Lou, how long have I been here?*'. I look at the time and suggest it is about an hour and a half. He looks around the spectators at the pool table '*hear that, no-one can beat me. I've been at the table for that long!*' He gives the room regular updates, '*two hours, two and a half*', cementing his claim to be the best. At the end of each night, however, the table resets. The winners of today have to start again at the beginning tomorrow in order to re-establish their winning streak. This also offers hope; tomorrow could be the day that you stay on the table.

7.3 Pool as a way of gaining value at the Common

Using pool to establish value

In a similar way to which Balinese use their skills in cockfighting to portray themselves as certain forms of players and therefore as certain kinds of men, young people at the Common are characterised into different types of players. There are a number of desirable and undesirable competencies of a good and desirable player versus a bad and undesirable player. There are a number of obvious skills such as accuracy and focus. These are "special powers intrinsic to the player himself" (Kennedy 2000, p.69) and demands not only hand-eye coordination but bodily and respiratory control (Hockey and Collinson 2007). Consistency is the key way of determining a players worth. The boys make distinctions between good players, who

use their skills to win games, and lucky players, who are casual players and rely on 'flukes'.

Jay (19, mixed race) is known as one of the most skilled, and thus desirable, opponents at the Common. He is also one of the oldest regulars at the Common. Unlike the other boys, he does not come to the centre to see friends or to participate in other activities. He comes into the Common for one reason, pool. Jay has learning disabilities including a speech impediment, and therefore he still lives at home with his family that support him. Suzy tells me that Jay is likely to continue to need support into adulthood, although he is looking for some part-time work around the area. His speech problems, in particular, sometimes make him the target of low level bullying by the other boys at the Common, especially newcomers who struggle to understand him. However, Jay gains value through pool. He is both a feared opponent and desired opponent. The other boys at the Common soon learn that to have any claim at being a skilled player they need to challenge and beat Jay.

When Jay is at the Common, which is most evenings, he dedicates all of his time to the pool table. He knows he has the skills to enter the game at any point in the evening, but he will sometimes choose to wait before putting his name on the list. Instead, he sits and actively joins in the spectating of ongoing games. He hands out compliments, 'shot!', and insults, 'how did you miss that lad!', but most of the time he acts as both referee and guide for other, less skilled, players. When Jay chooses to play, he quickly dispatches 'bad' players, spending little time planning his shots, and making a performance of closing his eyes (or holding one arm behind his back) to take shots for the amusement of others. He does, however, take seriously the games in which he comes up against a good player. He has a vested interest in doing so; he wants to maintain his position as top player at the Common. At the Common, he is known as the expert pool player rather than his disabilities. He avoids any possible exclusion from bullying through establishing himself as a skilled desired player, and thus has value.

Like Jay, becoming a desired player at the Common is about the balance between displaying the consistency of key skills in addition to displaying some skills that are less obvious but no less important, such as subtlety and entertaining the

crowd. There is a second contrast between skilled players, lacking in panache, and entertaining players, who often rely on trick shots and performance. For those with the skills but without the performance, there is reliance on being a 'feared' opponent, and the knowledge that these competencies will aid staying on the pool table for a longer duration. Billy (13, White British) is characterised as a feared opponent. He is known as a skilled but boring player – he spends too long planning shots that slowly drift across the table further extending the time. When he is not playing he is often on his phone or one of the computers playing online pool games that allow him to practice his angles. Some of the other boys, such as Reuben (13, mixed race) complain that he sucks all the joy out of the game. Nevertheless, they frequently challenge Billy to a game.

It is these two styles, 'desired' and 'feared', that boys starting out in pool look to emulate and embody. Of course these styles lead to expectations around the pool table. In this way there is a subjective assessment of who players think they 'should beat' and those they 'could beat'. When they are faced with those they *should* beat the pressure is increased, with the audience also contributing to the demand. To be beaten by someone understood as worse not only puts you out of the game and to the bottom of the waiting list, but will likely result in mocking from the audience. In contrast playing someone you *could* beat allows for more potential. There is not the expectation that you will win, meaning if you lose you have lost nothing. You can save face. If you win however, you have something to gain. You can gain respect.

The stakes of the game, where respect can be lost or gained, draw their power from an audience. The performance at the pool table works through its interaction between players and spectators. The arrangement of the room at the Common allows for visibility from all angles. It is not uncommon for there to be a few observers stood leaning against the radiator by the staff office, a few young people eating their takeaways at the side table while watching the entertainment, and a few spectators sat on the practice table and side tables swinging their legs, and leaning in to watch. While there is the expectation that players are to be attentive and focused on the game, there is also the display of showmanship that lessens the formality. To observe and spectate is not a passive role. Young people through spectating can contribute, pass judgement, and dictate the feel and rhythm of the game. They observe to be part

of the game. As an observer for the first months, I found that spending time just watching the game was enough to be able to participate in the discussions around the game.

Becoming an expert and gaining value

Frankie (12, British Middle-Eastern) was a newcomer at the Common when I start my fieldwork. Over the space of fourteen months I observed Frankie move from being someone who was bullied and excluded to someone with value that followed his transition from an incompetent to a skilled pool player. In the first few months of attendance Frankie would turn up and try to participate in whatever was going on. This caused frustration amongst some of the regulars who did not appreciate him simply joining in without being invited. The girls described him as annoying, complaining '*he just comes and sits with us, and then he doesn't say anything'*. The 'up-and-coming boys' have less patience, and when shaking him off (by leaving a space unexpectedly) doesn't work they resort to verbal insults, calling him '*a little prick'*. One evening for example he joins the main table where Reuben and Henry are talking about a comedy show on BBC3. '*Did you see Some Girls last night*?' asks Reuben and Henry replies that '*it is the funniest thing I have ever seen*'. Frankie suddenly interjects, '*yeah, I've watched it'*. Reuben dismisses Frankie's claim, '*no you haven't lad, don't lie'*. Frankie gives a description of the episode, and Reuben concedes, holding up his hand for a fist-bump. The boys, however, then get up and move through to the football, leaving Frankie behind.

The youth workers are aware of the situation, and try to include him in activities, such as the sponsored bike ride. On the day however, Frankie shows up on an old, and heavy, bike that means that he quickly lags behind the main group. In the first mile the whole group has to stop when he has a puncture, only for him to fall five minutes later. The boys are getting frustrated as they are trying to compete for the quickest time. It is my job to keep up the rear of the group, and even at my slow pace Frankie struggles to keep up. The main group, however, carry on regardless, leaving me and Frankie behind. I suggest to JP when we eventually catch up that perhaps Frankie should go up front. The other boys reject my proposal and Frankie is left at the back of the pack with me. The following week, the youth workers decide to encourage him to learn pool.

Frankie's first few weeks of pool are not successful. His attempts to join the waiting list are mistimed and he is quickly dispatched before getting a chance to play. In addition, sitting and watching pool he has his phone stolen twice in a month. His mother turns up to speak to the youth workers about helping him. As Frankie is still young, Scott encourages him to come to the last hour of the juniors to get some practice on the pool table when it is quiet. When I arrive at the youth centre before it opens to the seniors I find Frankie practicing on his own for an hour each evening. The other male youth workers also give him tips on his stance, and give him practice games in an effort to improve his game.

Soon, Frankie starts spending more time at the pool table as he wins games. In addition, when he plays the audience cheer him on as the underdog, '*go on Frankie*'. I notice that Frankie starts holding himself differently; his behaviour at the pool table suggests he is a competent player, and he has more of a swagger when coming to the centre. After a few months he has become a desired opponent at pool, he has skills that are readily acknowledged. Towards the end of my fieldwork he is an established pool player that can challenge Jay, occasionally beating him. He also becomes an accepted member of the up-and-coming group of boys.

Pool as the site of male youth work

The pool table is the site for much of the male youth work at the Common, who always play a few games over the evening. They use this as an informal way to engage with their opponents and to bring in other observers into discussions. The female youth workers, Suzy and Robin do not play. Not because they can't (one evening Suzy beats the two 'best' players at the Common, Jay and Billy, leading to outcry), but rather because they do not see playing pool as youth work. The female youth workers understand youth work as doing projects, and having formal structured work that allows them to get to the heart of the young people. They are critical of what they see as the male youth workers slacking off, having leisure time and not doing project work.

While all of the male youth workers played pool, Colin and Scott were the key players. Colin is the showman spending his time around the pool table singing (badly) and dancing while expertly playing. It is his opportunity to talk to the boy he is currently

playing, or to bring in other audience members in from the periphery. Colin manages to engage with them in a serious conversation without hesitating in his game. For example early in my fieldwork I observe Colin playing Jay (19, mixed-race), while talking to Owen (17, White British), who has just finished school. Colin asks them if they have come in to chat to the Connexions Advisor on a Wednesday night. Jay dismisses this, saying that the woman that came last week was rubbish and didn't know anything. Colin tells them he doesn't know any woman, but his cousin Anton is good, they should come speak to him. Owen says he is just looking for a bar job, that would suit him fine. Colin repeats that Anton is *his* cousin, and will sort them out. They agree to come back on Wednesday. Without skipping a beat Colin pots the black and starts dancing.

The prime spot of the pool table also allows Colin and Scott to track who is coming in and out of the centre. They ensure that everyone signs in to the centre, and will usually quickly check in for an update on how things are going. Scott is not from around the area but makes for this lack of community knowledge through his skills around the pool table. It is his way of engaging and gaining value. Scott plays pool and snooker in his spare time that makes him another form of desirable player. Boys wanting to learn, or push their skills, play Scott. He also uses this position to centre discussion, but usually on a more one to one level. It was clear to me as an observer that the youth workers would deliberately mess up easy shots in order to give the boys extra chances to win, however this was done discreetly. This was sometimes done to encourage someone to continue playing, or because they had been on the table as winner for a while, and were keen to allow the boys to take over. I did not see their, what I saw as obvious, mistakes challenged openly. However, on occasion, when the youth worker genuinely wanted to win, or were being shown up in front of the audience, they would switch, '*right that's it*', and quickly demolish the game.

7.4 Pool as a meaningful activity

Pool as rational for boys, and irrational for girls

Wacquant (2006) described how the informal rules of the boxing gym are internalised by regular participants, and that these may only become apparent when the rules are publicly broken. In the sections above, I talk exclusively about the boys. This was because over the first six months I did not see a single girl play and the male

youth workers told me that they were not interested in playing. However, the girls and some of the inexperienced boys started playing on the practice table and challenged the assumptions about who could play at the Common. I also began participating, and was informally assigned as in charge of the practice table. In this section, I look at how pool was maintained for the boys on the main table and was not available as a way of accessing value for the girls.

The rules and waiting list I described above applied to the main table in the Common, which was full-size. The second, three-quarter size table was called the practice table where the juniors played or where the seniors sat to observe the main game. Its lack of use was visible in its maintenance. Unlike the main table which was always kept in top condition, the practice table was its poorer cousin, its blue felt ripped next to the middle pocket, scratch marks, faded marker lines, and a dodgy pocket (which is as likely to spit any potted ball back out). It is a table to be used and abused.

After some time observing pool, I started to play, recognising its importance to the everyday routine of the Common. I was not a desired or feared player, nevertheless I choose to play when it is quiet or when the audience is small. Sometimes my name is read out with a groan by the boys, I am a 'bad' opponent. At other times, I am just quickly beaten, so they can continue. On two occasions I go up to check the waiting list and find that my name has been crossed off. No one takes credit for this. After a few weeks of playing I have not noticed any improvement in my game, but have noticed the boys talking to me a bit more as I sit and observe the games. '*Are you playing tonight?'* has become an opening line, my playing has been noticed. Moreover, not just by the boys. After cooking some cakes with the girls and leaving the kitchen, Jess (16, mixed-race) stands by the practice table and summons me over.

Jess looks at me, and nodding towards the pool table says '*have me a game'*. There is the usual queue at the main table, but there is no one at the practice table so we set up. Jess wants to break and we slowly play two games in succession. We cause a little attention, a few of the boys watching the main game turn to see us play, but quickly realise there is nothing good to watch and turn back. Gemma (13, mixed-race) who was sat at the main table talking to Suzy comes over to watch the game. I ask her if she wants a game when we finish and she says yes. She starts talking to Jess, asking

her what school she is going to. Gemma claims that she quite likes pool, and is unbeatable. I beat Jess in the second game by default (she pots the black midway through the game), and she stands by the radiator watching me and Gemma play. Raymond (11, Black British) signs into the centre and stands by our game.

I have not seen Raymond play at the main table before. He asks if he can play the winner. Gemma beats me, and sets up the game against Raymond. Gemma continues to play well, potting some impressive shots. Raymond doesn't play pool, and is holding the cue at an awkward angle, like a javelin. Gemma is taking her time planning her next shot, and the boys at the main table, Jay (19, mixed-race) and Henry (14, mixed-race), stop to watch. They whoop when she makes the shot, and shout '*Ray, you are going to get beat!*', '*you are going to be skitted* [beaten] *by a girl*'. This distracts him and he pots the white. As Gemma sets up the white for her shots, Jay comes over, and tells Gemma he will help her, trying to take her cue. I pull him up, saying that if he wants to help he can give her tips rather than take her shot. He gives Gemma the cue back. Gemma takes three more turns to win. Everyone cheers and Raymond smiles before moving away from the table to find his friends. Gemma has to leave as she has a curfew, but asks me if we can play again another time.

The next night I want to see if the changes had continued. I ask Jess if she wants to play and she says no, shaking her head. I wonder whether the night before was a one off. 30 seconds later she comes back over to me and says '*go on then'*. We set up on the practice table. Thirteen year olds Martin and Alice (Black British) have only recently started attending come and watch us play. They ask if they can play next. Jess and I play our game, slowly as ever with us both making mistakes and missing shots. Martin and Alice wait patiently, turning round to the laptop to put some music on. Jess and I finish and we both give our cues over. Martin asks if he can play me first as he doesn't know how to play, and Alice will play next. Martin beats me. Jess has asked to play again, and we agree that we will all play doubles. This takes a while, us all finding our feet, and Martin swinging the cue around him while he waits, injuring three people in the process. Martin and Alice win, and proceed to play themselves. I go to leave but they keep pulling me back asking me to clarify the rules and referee the game.

This pattern continues for the next month. Walking past the pool tables I am repeatedly asked to '*have me a game*'. This is a mix of girls and the younger boys who are still to establish the required skills to progress to the main table. The girls continue to play, in addition to Millie (12, mixed-race) and Lori (12, mixed-race), and Shannon (14, White British) and Carolyn (16, mixed-race). Some of the boys, Raymond(11, Black British) in particular, do use it is as training table openly claiming that they are practising and getting better with the hope of moving up to the main table. Other boys, such as Akelade (15, Black African), don't seem to be particularly interested in joining the main table, but enjoy the different rules of the practice table.

There are a number of differences in the practice table game that supported us playing. Firstly, playing at the practice table gave us flexibility from the rigid rules of the main table. There is no list, the winner does not stay on, shots can be retaken, and there is no audience. The practice table was comfortable in that there was no pressure on time, the game could be as slow or quick as we chose. In addition, with the audience attention on the main table, our game could be less visible, and would not be critiqued in the same way - there was no expectation. The practice table took on its own meanings. However, it does not last and soon things have reverted to normal. I would argue this is because the pool table does not hold the same value for the girls at the Common. The boys could find value through being a skilled player, but this did not apply to the girls. The girls were allowed to play at the practice table, but they were rarely invited to the main table, unlike some of the boys. In addition, the main room was rarely occupied by the girls, so it was not a space in which they wished to spend time. Thus, whilst it is rational for the boys to play, they have something to gain; it is not rational for the girls.

Why pool was meaningful

I want to explain here why I have chosen the pool table to focus on, by contrasting it with the other main alternatives at the Common: table tennis, football, and the gym. Through examining these alternatives, I will draw attention the role of the pool table at the youth centre. The table tennis table is situated further into the main room, past the pool tables. It is equally busy, and the noise of the balls bouncing off the tables, walls, ceiling and other people are familiar to the sounds of the centre. Unlike pool, there is no waiting list or formal rules. The boys will tell the players they

are up next, and wait nearby for their go. Less demand for games means that a waiting list is not needed. Importantly there is no audience and the speed of the game means it can be hard for an audience to keep score. Additionally there is no opportunity for the audience to contribute. Again, the girls' don't play often, but will pick up the bats when there is no-one playing, often towards the end of the night.

Although not as many of the boys play table tennis regularly, those who do are very good. The youth workers Ben and George take a particular interest in coaching the young boys they think have potential. This is because table tennis, in contrast to pool, offers progression and opportunities. Scouts for the England team hold trials at the centre as well as in the local schools. A number of the boys from the Common are put forward to the next stage of competitions. In contrast, there was no opportunity while I was at the centre for the pool players to enter into tournaments. The football pitch and the gym were two other spaces in which bodies were shaped and made, but these were exclusively male spaces. Football, like table tennis, allowed the boys opportunities to develop skills that could be used outside the Common. In contrast to pool, these activities allowed the boys to physically change, to perform masculinity through shaping and moulding their bodies. No matter how skilled a pool player becomes, their body does not change in an observable way.

Therefore, I suggest then, that while pool develops skills that have value in the Common, they may have little value outside of the youth centre. The role of pool at the Common, therefore, is a subjective practice that is given meaning in interactions passed down from youth workers. It is an established way of gaining value that young people are socialised into. The youth workers Ben and JP, further explain that they believe pool is important for the boys to expand their social contacts and to learn how to participate in the world, suggesting:

> **Ben:** it's easy to just walk to a pool table and play a game with someone you don't know. But girls aren't likely to just come and want to mix with a gang of girls they've never spoke to
>
> **JP:** he don't need to be their mate he can just play

7.5 Summary and conclusion

> To play too good a game of billiards is the sign of a misspent youth
>
> (Polsky 1967, p.16)

In this chapter I have looked at the role of pool at the Common, which can be understood as a situated practice in which some young people can gain value. In previous chapters I have discussed how the boys at the Common were subject to exclusion in public space, here, I look at how the Common offers them the opportunity to gain value and worth through participating in pool. Pool does not offer them a way of gaining a more masculine body, or any opportunities to develop their skills like other activities, instead it is a practice that is established and maintained through the youth workers and young people who attend. In looking at the boys, I suggest that participating in pool is a way for them to gain value that is a condition of belonging. Thus, participating in pool allows boys to belong. This is conditional however, as the rules and order around the pool table largely determine who can and cannot play, and to what extent participation is possible.

In addition, whilst for the boys it is rational for them to play pool as they can gain respect and worth, it would be irrational for the girls to play. This echoes both Geertz's (1973) and Wacquant's (2006) findings. In this case, though, the girls can choose to play under the conditions of the practice table, but their participation is not given value by the boys or by the girls who choose to avoid the main space of the centre. Therefore, this system of inclusion at the Common excludes the girls. In addition, it could be argued that the boys when they try to intervene in the girls' game or repeatedly claim that they were not going to get 'skitted' by a girl was a reinforcement of the norms of the centre of the centre. This was unchallenged by the youth workers and often reinforced by some of the male youth workers who do not encourage or support girls to move up to the main table and join in as they do with the boys.

In the next chapter, I look at another central activity and focus at the Common, eating, to expand on the ways in which value and practices of inclusion develop and are used. In particular, I will discuss how food is a moral economy at the centre that is not only a way of participating and signalling young people's belonging, but its reciprocal nature allows for young people to manage food poverty.

Interlude 8

Fieldnotes – Visit 72

Kinesse (16, Black British) is sitting at the laptop and youth worker Colin shouts over from the pool table asking him to put some good music on. '*Have you heard the chicken shop song?*' Kinesse asks. When Colin shakes his head, Kinesse presses play. As the song starts playing some of the boys start laughing and Reuben (13, mixed race), who is watching the pool game, shouts '*that's like you Colin, always scranning chicken!*' '*Shut up lad*' replies Colin. The video of the song, called 'Junior Spesh', is put on repeat and a small crowd gather round to watch it.

Chapter 8

Consuming Care: Food as an economy of care at the Common

In this chapter, I explore the role of food at the Common to further explore the ways in which young people can gain value and find inclusion through participating in activities at the youth centre. In particular, I consider how the consumption of food at the Common acts as a form of moral economy or rather a care economy. Food practices at the youth centre can take the form of care-of-self, care-of-others, being cared-for as well as masking an absence of care. By extension, I look at food as part of an exchange of social meanings that circulates in interaction at the Common, and through relationships. Therefore, I understand food in this chapter as a social practice, rather than as a health practice. Thus, the findings of this chapter link to the previous discussion of pool as participating in food structures the experience of being in the Common. In other words, participating in food practices is a way of gaining value and belonging.

In the Common being able to participate through consuming goods was challenging given the limited financial resources young people had. The only goods I saw publicly displayed and discussed were mobile phones and food. The role of food, then, also links to the first finding chapter, in that these practices were situated in context of food poverty. Food poverty has been defined as the "inability to acquire or eat an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty of being able to do so" (Dowler 2009, p.709). It has been linked to a rise in food bank use (Loopstra et al. 2015, Garthwaite, Collins, and Bambra 2015) particularly in the North of England. As I will describe, the Common itself became an informal food bank to provide for the young people in Sandyhill.

8.1 Framing the chapter

Chapter Aims

In this chapter, I look at two connected and distinct practices around food at the Common: the role of takeaways and cooking at the youth centre. Although they both concern the subject of food, as I will discuss, they were connected to different forms of care. First, I will consider the role of takeaways at the Common, and in particular how purchasing and sharing food constituted a moral economy of care. I discuss how takeaway food could be given and received as a gift, or shared with the assumption of reciprocity. It was given social meaning in its presence at the youth club with action and talk orientating around takeaways every evening throughout the evening. This economy of care was modelled and managed by the male youth workers who eat takeaways at the Common and often donate money to allow young people to participate. Therefore, the male youth workers provide money to young people as a proxy for care, which is valued and utilised by the boys.

Secondly, I will explore the role of cooking at the Common that I was exposed to through months of being assigned to the kitchen in my role as volunteer-researcher. I will discuss how the practice of cooking is a way of being the provider or consumer of food, and thus of care. In particular, I will discuss how the girls were pushed into cooking and more relevantly, cooking for others. This reinforced to the girls that they could gain value by providing care to others, however the girls often resisted by abandoning cooking. Although the girls could gain some value by providing care, there was a social cost to consuming care. The boys on the other hand, can cook on their own terms. They are allowed to cooking when they want, what they want, and for themselves. The boys' cooking therefore was a way of further positioning themselves as the consumers of care. Cooking at the Common was also linked to the female youth workers who were similarly encouraged to cook for the young people. Therefore, the female youth workers invest time and energy into cooking yet is not valued in the same way as the takeaways at the Common.

Literature and approaches drawn on

The title of this chapter draws on Allison Pugh's (2009) three-year ethnographic study of consumer culture with children and parents at three primary schools in

California. In the study, she proposed that social worlds operate through specific 'economies of dignity' through which actors work to make themselves visible, and therefore present in interaction. Through an economy of dignity, then, children "claim, contest, and exchange among themselves the terms of their social belonging, or just what it would take to be able to participate amongst their peers" (2009, p.6). Through techniques such as claiming access or knowledge to goods, and patrolling the claims of others, children were signalling that they were not simply deserving or lucky, but that they held the attention and care of another. In doing so, children were actively trying to conceal the potential for shame, of not being cared-for. One of the ways this is achieved is through what she calls 'consumption as care' whereby goods and provision convey meaning (pp.14-15).

While Pugh's study provides an interesting insight into the interaction work done by the children in her study, there are a number of critiques. Firstly, is that despite three years of work at schools priority is given to the adult voices. In her five chapters, four are dedicated to interviews with parents, while only one focuses on her ethnographic work with children. This also ties into the second problem with the study, by focusing on parents and by focusing on care as 'cared-for' it connects to the perception that children as passive receivers of care. Other studies however, mostly within families, have shown that children are active participants and are responsible for 'moral work' through the care of others (Mayall 2002, Such and Walker 2004). Therefore, in the chapter whilst I consider the literature on both consumption and care, I look at care as a relational in which young people are both active and passive in the circulation of care.

Feminist theories of care have been most readily applied in the literature critiquing the invisible labour of women who are 'bound internally and externally' to care (Gilligan 1995, Skeggs 1997), but I also found them useful to think through the different ways in which care is used at the Common. Care, historically, is not only often invisible but unvalued (Gilligan 1995). Instead, care theorists argue that value comes from being independent and autonomous rather than being embedded in relationships (Tronto 1995, de la Bellacasa 2010, 2011, 2012). Tronto (1993) state that care should be regarded as an everyday activity that allows members to maintain and live in the social world. This approach to care allows us to examine care as an

everyday process, enmeshed in relationships and social bonds. Furthermore, Tronto (1993) suggests for four forms of care; a) caring about (attentiveness), b) taking care of (responsibility), c) care giving (competence), and d) care receiving (responsive). Whilst I do not use these categories in what follows, they help show the variety of ways in which care is used.

Consumption literature has repeatedly shown that the socio-cultural aspect of goods go beyond their material functions in order to reveal how their meanings influences individuals and communities. Belk (1988) has suggested that through the consumptions of goods we are able to extend our notion of self, and when we are able to exert control over goods we recognise them as part of ourselves. This argument is supported in research on young people's consumption practices. Stead and colleagues (2011) outlining their research with 13-16 year olds argued that consumption helps to both create and present identity (using Goffman's (1969) concept of presentation of self) and to fit in with peer groups (Stead et al. 2011). In addition, Evans (2007) looking at children's practices at school suggests that we have to "look at how the value of subjects and objects become mutually specified, created, and transformed, in social practice, over time" (p.124). This is further explored in Thorne's (1993) study of playgrounds where she highlights that material objects hold significance in social relationships, "as a medium through which alliances may be launched and disrupted, as sacraments of social inclusion and painful symbols of exclusion, as markers of hierarchy" (p.21). Therefore, in exploring food as a significant material object at the Common, I look at how food is given value, and in turn gives value, in social action.

8.2 The role of takeaways

Public displays of consumption

For young people at the Common there is an everyday visibility of food. The location of the Common near the main street of Sandyhill means that most of the young people have to walk past a number of takeaways en-route. Before the centre opens the male youth workers get in takeaways for their dinner between shifts although more often than not they are still eating as the session starts. Furthermore, throughout each evening session there are frequent trips round to the main street to get food. This often involves going to the local ice-cream parlour, Joe's Diner, or to one of the

local newsagents or takeaways to purchase food. This was both a visible and public display, with purchases consumed back at the youth centre.

Young people at the Common, then, are faced with constant reminders and visual and sensory cues about food. Young people arrive throughout the evening with food and it was not uncommon to hear the sound of stomachs growling as the smell of a fresh takeaway spread across the room. Jess (16, mixed-race) is standing with me one evening as Reuben (13, mixed-race) comes in with a takeaway. Jess tells me '*it's when they walk past me, it makes my belly hungry*'. Carver (14, Black British) also claims that he gets food panics and that '*sometimes I am not even hungry but I get a takeaway to bring here cause I know yous will be eating and the smell will drive me crazy'*. The sight of food, as well as the smell, is a constant temptation even to a full stomach. The boys tell me that they although they sometimes have dinner available at home, the desire of food and participation means that they often end up on the regular trips to the takeaways.

Eating in the main space of the Common allows young people to participate in the everyday discussions around food. As Pugh (2009) notes, "consumption is a language" (p.51), and talk can be used to mark the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. For example, if someone arrives with a takeaway they are immediately met with demands for information, 'what *have you got*?', '*what are you eating*?' Therefore, bringing in food is way of drawing visibility and opening up discussions. Other young people can also participate through displaying knowledge of local places and the right food in their discussions; such as the knowledge that fried chicken should be bought from the local Dixy Chicken, not the competing Cottage Chicken further down the road. In addition, certain foods carry greater value at the Common, such as Figure 16 that shows one of the familiar sights at the centre, a milkshake from Joe's Parlour.

Joe's Parlour is an ice-cream store at the end of the main road that opened a few months before I started at the centre. Compared to the rest of the road Joe's stood out. The signage was neon and written in a 1950s diner style. Black and white checked tiles on the wall decorate the inside while the seating is organised around pink leather booths. Joe's speciality was ice-cream milkshakes with chocolate bars

mixed in. On an almost hourly basis a few of the younger boys make trips to Joe's to get milkshakes. AJ (13, Black British African) tells me that *'it's the most gorgeous milkshake you could ever taste, I get the Twix bar and mint ice-cream one'*. The bins at the end of most evenings were full to the brim of empty milkshake cups. Most of the boys take photographs of Joe's in their photo-elicitation project, as Troy (13, Black British) told me, '*everyone goes to Joe's. It's Joe's!*'

Figure 16: 'Freddo Milkshake from Joe's Parlour' taken by Troy, 13

Young people can also bring in the 'wrong' food that similarly draws attention. One evening, a couple of boys Carl (16, Black British) and Karim (17, White British) arrive with a takeaway. Smelling the food, volunteer George stops his game of table tennis to come over and to see what they have, opening with '*what have you bought yourself?*' Carl reports that he has a lamb kebab, to which George nods in approval, while Karim tells him that he has bought a donner burger. George shouts '*WHAT!*' looking in horror as Karim starts deconstructing the burger, pulling bits of donner meat out of the bread bun. I ask Carl what it is like and he tells me '*not good*'.

George continues '*what have you bought that rubbish for?*' and Karim shrugs. Carl suddenly pipes in "*see I told you it was rubbish, you should have got a kebab, that's dog meat*'. Karim looks embarrassed and pushes the food away. George pushes further '*well dog meat has got more protein in it than that*'. George tells Karim, 'your *nan wouldn't be happy seeing you eating that would she? Her being such a good cook and all*'. Karim shakes his head, and walking over to the bin dumps the rest of

the food. By referring to family, George is relating Karim's eating practices to his home environment (Backett-Milburn et al. 2010), and in particular the disjuncture between choosing bad foods outside the home when there is good food at home.

Takeaways as a care economy at the Common

In the section above I described the consumptions practices and routines when takeaways are brought into the Common. In what follows, I describe how these consumption practices represent a care economy in which young people not only care for themselves through food, but display themselves as cared-for (which is proven through access to money), caring (when they share food with others), and show the limits of care (that it is reciprocal and needs investment). Firstly, young people were able to show care-of-self through treating themselves to food. The youth worker Robin told me early on that from her perspective getting a takeaway is more than just the convenience or the food, but it is the only opportunity any of the young people have to use their '*purchasing power with the little resources they have, it's not just social it's a luxury'*. In other words, young people at the Common are not able to treat themselves in other ways, they had little economic capital, but they could afford to buy food. Furthermore, buying food gives them the opportunity to join in; it allowed them to be seen and to be asked about their purchase.

In addition, the display of consuming food at the Common signals to others what they were able to access in terms of care. While in Pugh's (2009) study children used goods that parents had supplied to display to others that they were cared for, at the Common (with the exception of mobile phones) having money to buy food is a proxy which allows young people to display that they are cared for. Guardians were described as caring when young people could show that they had money to participate and buy food, therefore enabling the care-of-self. However, this meant that having a takeaway was used as evidence of care, an assumption that was misleading.

Hunger and food poverty arose as an issue at my first youth worker meeting, focusing on Raymond (11, Black British). The regional manager Carrie mentions that Raymond's mum is currently having problems and he is not getting food at home. She tells the youth workers that they will need to keep an eye on him. Youth worker

Colin protests that Raymond always seems to have money for a McDonalds and JP backs him up, '*he is always eating chips in here*'. Carrie shakes her head, reiterating that he doesn't get anything, and that the staff will need to feed him on the nights he attends the centre. As I later found out, the low cost of food from the local takeaways means that despite a limited budget, most young people could participate. Scraps of change could be collected, especially as cones of chips cost just £0.30. Therefore, young people at the Common could mask a lack of food or care at home through purchasing low cost food.

Regularly buying low cost food, whilst perhaps not noticed immediately by the youth workers, was carefully observed amongst other young people at the Common. In particular, certain foods from big brands[23] were signals of a budget. Buying cheap food was referred to at the Common as 'APS'. This stands for Arse Pocket Scran [food] as the boys described it in the focus group:

> **Mitchell (15, mixed race):** Arse Pocket Scran (laughs)
> **Ahmed (15, British Asian):** change that can fit in your arse pocket
> **Frankie (12, British Middle-Eastern):** what like
> **Ahmed (15, British Asian):** like towards food
> **Mitchell (15, mixed race):** little small scran
> **Ahmed (15, British Asian):** APS
> **Mitchell (15, mixed race):** yeah like a streetwise APS
> **Frankie (12, British Middle Eastern):** oh like a Happy Meal

The boys further explain that the 'arse pocket' refers to the smallest pocket in a pair of jeans that can typically only hold one coin. Boys were able to display APS when needed, with the boys adapting their purchases depending on the money available as shown below:

> **Lucas (14, White British):** nah er when I go to Maccies [McDonalds] if I've got like about £3 I get a Happy Meal yeah if I've got more than a tenner I just get 20 chicken nuggets or you know what I mean (laughs). If I don't have the money man can't be getting what I want

[23] For example Streetwise is KFC's budget menu with most items available for under £1. McDonalds also have a 'savers menu' but traditionally the Happy Meal (for children) was the cheapest meal option.

As Lucas suggests, the boys might be restricted in their options through availability of money but they are not constrained in a way that closes off purchasing. Rather, they adjust the type of product they are buying. Although this is an acceptable practice on occasion, the boys regularly buying cheap foods are patrolled by other boys who claim '*you don't have nothing lad'*.

Being known as APS was not only understood by other young people as an absence of resources and care, but could also exclude young people from joining in the sharing aspect of the care economy. Young people would share food in a number of ways. Sometimes they would pull their money together and share food; however at other times food was gifted. This process resembles Mauss's (1970) analysis of the gift whereby objects, in this case food, circulate. In particular sharing takeaways is about the gift and the counter-gift, with the expectation that food shared out will be gifted back at a later date. For example, when one of the boys had access to money, they would buy extra food that they could share out. This is an investment for a future payout.

AJ (13, Black British African) arrives one evening with a bag of chips and immediately goes around the room and offers chips to everyone. Naman (15, British Asian) takes one and points out that Carver (14, Black British) who had takeaway earlier didn't share any. Kinesse (15, Black British) turns to Carver, '*sharing is caring lad*' while taking one of AJ's chips. AJ is positioned positively through caring for others by sharing his food while Carver is singled out as selfish for refusing to share. A few evenings later, Carver asks Naman for a chicken nugget only to be rejected for failing to participate in the sharing practices. Over the rest of that week, Carver was excluded from the care economy. He later brings in a pizza, explaining '*my mum has just been paid',* which is opened up for other to share. For others though, the ones described as APS, they were relegated from their care economy due to their inability to reciprocate.

One of the main ways in which the boys showed care-for-others was through food. Claiming 'sharing's caring' allowed the boys to walk up to anyone eating to get access to a share of the food. It opened up eating away from an individual behaviour into a social process. There were a number of incidents however when older boys took a

more direct caring role. The older boys at the centre frequently get involved with monitoring the younger boys, taking an interest in the skills of the younger boys at pool, breaking up arguments, and sharing their food. Preston (12, Black British) was one of the younger boys at the evening sessions. One evening Colin gives Preston some money to grab something from the takeaway in return for collecting his dinner. Preston arrives back with Colin's food and signs his name on the pool waiting list. Theo (16, Black British), who lives a few doors down from Preston, is playing pool and asks Preston what he had for his dinner. Preston, however, can't seem to come up with a straight answer. Theo asks if he had a takeaway from the same place as Colin. Preston looks around and says he ate in on the way back but cannot tell him what he had. Then Preston suggests that he dropped the money Colin gave him, followed by a story that he had dropped the food. Theo looks frustrated and keeps pushing him for a straight answer, '*if you didn't have any money I would have given you some*'. Theo goes over to youth worker Scott and tells him that Preston probably hasn't eaten.

As I mentioned at the outset of this section, the male youth workers were an important part of the takeaway culture at the Common. It was their takeaways that were visible at the beginning of each session, and they frequently asked young people to go and fetch them more food through the night. This was not greed, however, but rather than they used this is as a strategy to give money to young people. For example, the male youth workers would send boys out to collect food and reward them by allowing them to keep the change. Some boys would regularly volunteer to collect the youth workers food, whilst others were invited. Although youth workers could misread consumption they were astute at spotting other signs. There is an agreement amongst the youth workers that young people wearing their school uniform to the Common were more likely not to have gone home after school, and thus were unlikely to have had dinner. This informal system became increasingly unsustainable, with Colin that he was spending around £10 an evening, the manager of the Common approached local businesses to ask for support. As I will discuss in the second section of this chapter, this is how the Common came to become an informal food bank.

Young people as critical consumers

Given that in public discourse food is moralised, I want to point out here that the young people at the Common were not 'dupes' in regards to their food practices. Young people were aware of the dominant discourses around healthy eating, drawing on them when necessary. The boys were quick to position themselves as knowledgeable in particular when highlighting the unhealthy nature of fast food chains such as McDonalds and KFC. They rationalised their consumption, however, by positioning the body as an instrument of knowledge. During the food focus group, in which we ate a takeaway together on their request, the boys described McDonalds to me:

> **Lucas (14, White British):** Jay is Maccies[24], he has a season ticket innit going there everyday
> **Jay (19, mixed race):** I don't go there everyday
> **Louise:** What do you think about Maccies then?
> **Vince (15, Black British):** fat food, but I'm skinny so I need some fat down my throat that's what I think
> **Mitchell (15, mixed race):** Louise you can tell by me I'm skinny [pulling up his t-shirt] so I just try to eat all the fatty foods I can
> **Lucas (14, White British):** whatever's there and I'm hungry, I'll eat
> [The group start laughing]
> **Lucas (14, White British):** I swear anything

In this exchange the boys discuss how their choice of food is determined through reference to bodily knowledge. Vince (15, Black British) later explains that he trains with his basketball team three times a week and needs to consume more calories. Through paying attention to the needs of the body the boys can determine how best to care for it. In order to care for their skinny body, they need fat.

Amongst some of the other boys, however, their small stature could be interpreted as a visual sign of malnutrition. While baggy t-shirts and tracksuits mask their torso playing pool or running around, exposed limbs give away their thinness in addition to their small size. This exposure could come unexpectedly. During an art session AJ (13, Black British) starts play fighting with me, trying to paint my face with a paintbrush. As we jostle I manage to grab his arm before the paintbrush hits me. I find my hand goes completely around his upper arm and he suddenly withdraws his

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[24] Maccies is short hand for the fast food restaurant McDonalds

arm and pulls his t-shirt sleeve down. As Vince (15, Black British) says above, eating calorific high fat food is a rational response to being underweight.

The girls self-exclusion from the practices of the takeaway

In the above accounts the girls' voice is missing. While the consumption of takeaway food provides desired visibility for the boys, this very visibility stops the girls from eating at the Common. In my year at the Common I rarely saw the girls eat and when I did it was only in the girls' room and away from the public gaze. When I ask them about it the response is one of disbelief that I had to ask, such as in the following extract from the food focus group:

> **Louise:** so would you bring food to eat in here?
>
> **Shannon (14, White British):** no are you messing?
>
> **Lucia (13, Black British):** no that's proper shady you get terrorised or something bringing food in
>
> **Manaia (15, Black British):** unless it was like a big pot of Jerk chicken for everyone [laughter] they all try and come in with their forks and that
>
> **Lucia (13):** yeah when you bring food in here people all scav[25] off it like all run round you say go away

This extract shows that the girls' perceived negative reactions to bringing food in to the Common, or more accurately food for themselves. Food to share however is more acceptable. In the last section of the exchange some of the girls describing feeling almost forced to share any food, suggesting that boys are implicitly implying that food provided by the girls is for everyone, I will come back to this in the next section. The girls furthered this discussion by contrasting their eating behaviour with the boys. They suggested that the boys had no table manners and were disgusting in their eating behaviour. They contrast the boys eating behaviour with their own 'ladylike' manners.

> **Eva (16, mixed race):** spend time well girls I don't know about yous but generally the girls we actually do you know what I mean eat pleasantly instead of just like scranning
>
> **Renee (16, Black British):** people just sit there eat and talk and all that like people just pure eating and talking its nasty

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[25] Scav is short for scavenge

> **Eva (16, mixed race):** 'cause like when I've finished my dinner I like to go the bathroom and wash my hands and like do you know what I mean at least see myself just before someone else see me

The question this leads me to ask is, if they have good eating behaviour then why do they continue to avoid eating at the Common? It perhaps comes back to the female body being made visible and thus exposed, which would link to other literature in the area. Bordo (1993) has described how female eating is depicted as a "private, transgressive act, [that makes the] restriction and denial of hunger a central feature of the construction of femininity" (p.13). Bartky (1988) further suggests that women are socialised into learning their bodies as 'one's enemy', suggesting that under current body ideals mean that "women are forbidden to become large or massive; they must take up as little space as possible" (p.35).

The girls at the Common did not participate in the takeaway practices and therefore were not part of the care economy. This meant, however, that the youth workers were unable to tell if any of the girls were going hungry. It was by chance that Renee (16, Black British) revealed her hunger to me. At 9pm on Pancake Day Renee joins the main table with Jess (16) and I. She grabs her stomach and starts complaining about feeling sick. '*I feel nauseas*' she tells me explaining that she has felt unwell for about a year. She has made a number of appointments to see the GP but then '*on the day I can't be arsed*'. I suggest she tries a walk-in clinic instead and I ask what she has eaten for her dinner. She replies '*nothing*'. I ask what she had for lunch and again '*nothing, a sip of Lucozade*'. I ask if she had breakfast and she shakes her head. I tell her she might feel sick because she hasn't eaten and she seems surprised by the suggestion. She explains '*I haven't even had a pancake and I feel like one'*. I offer to make her one and we go through to the kitchen. This pattern repeats over the following months, Renee complains about being unwell but reports not having anything to eat. Following the protocol at the Common I raise her lack of food with Suzy and the manager Don. Renee is diagnosed with anaemia shortly afterwards.

In summary this section has described how purchasing and consuming takeaways allows certain young people to participate in a care economy in which food circulates. Participating in these food practices allow young people to display their purchasing

power and therefore showing that they are cared-for. These practices allow young people to be seen, and to be asked about their purchase. Therefore, care in this context can be understood as an everyday social practice that emerged in the relationships between the boys. The girls in contrast, are not included in this practice. This is in part because, like pool, they cannot gain value through being seen eating at the Common. In fact, the girls described their eating practices as private, public eating was a potential source of shame.

8.3 The role of cooking at the Common

Apart from takeaways, cooking frequently occurs in the Common kitchen especially since the centre took on its role as a food bank. As I will discuss, as a female volunteer (volunteer-researcher) I became associated with the provision of food at the Common, so was encouraged to spend my time cooking with young people. Thus I was often the chaperone and sous-chef for whoever was cooking at the time. It was here that I could observe a clear divide in the expectations young people had about providers of food. There was no gender division in who cooked rather there was a difference in expectations about who should cook and for whom. The girls are pushed into cooking by the youth workers, furthermore, they do not often get to choose what they make, meaning that more often than not they are coerced into cooking for the boys at the youth club. The boys, in contrast, were often more keen to cook, but I argue this is because the boys are allowed to cook on their own terms. They choose when to cook, what to cook, and they choose *who* they were cooking for.

The girls cooking as providers

The girls did not often volunteer to cook; rather when they arrived at the centre cooking was offered as an activity for them to participate in. On a number occasions, I am asked to help supervise cooking in the run up to an event (Halloween, Valentine's Day) and to '*get the girls to help you*'. Kayla (14, mixed race) is encouraged to make some cupcakes for the bonfire event happening the next night and I am asked to help. She tells me she doesn't really want to cook, and asks if we can do it quickly. As I get the ingredients out she searches for an apron and finds some Christmas ones in the cupboard. We start and while she creams the butter and sugar Kayla tells me she doesn't really have the time. Meanwhile, a few of the boys come in eagerly asking if we are making something for tonight. They leave disappointed when we tell them it is

for tomorrow. As we put the eggs into the mix Kayla lifts the mixer slightly out of the batter and it splatters onto her clothes. '*Eee! It's disgusting, I can't do this, it's too messy, thanks anyway*'. She takes off the apron and leaves the kitchen. This was a repeated pattern, the girls would be told to some cooking and then they abandon it halfway through which suggests it is their way of resisting.

When the girls did volunteer to cook, it was often to cook for others. One example was Hailey (14, mixed-race) and Manaia (15, Black British) who ask to do some cooking and are encouraged by manager Ron, to make some pizzas. Reuben (13, mixed-race) and Ravi (13, British Middle-Eastern) come into the kitchen to find out what's cooking. Hearing that it is pizza, Reuben and Ravi shout over their orders. Hailey gets a piece of paper and the boys write down the toppings they want, arguing over who is going to get their pizza first. Frankie (12, British Middle-Eastern) and Henry (14, mixed-race) also come in to place their order. The girls start making up the dough and take turns rolling it and making it into shapes. After ten minutes the first batches come out and the girls are impressed with themselves, saying that they look good. The boys start queuing outside and sticking their heads in. We put the pizzas on paper plates and I pass them out in the main room. I try to put aside some pizza for the girls but they tell me '*Nah it's not for us*, *they're to share*'. We continue using up the dough, making around 20 pizzas in the end. Hailey and Manaia take a few bites of the last pizza in the kitchen.

This pattern repeats; the girls cook, the boys come in to put in their order, and the food is shared out. The boys are quick to compliment and thank the girls for cooking for them and knowing this the girls are keen to ensure that what they provide is good. They tell me at every cooking occasion that '*if it's good we made it; if it's bad you made it*'. The girls only want to be associated positively with their cooking. In this pattern of behaviour, then, the girls positioned themselves as providers of care, rather than as consumers. They were providers for others, and displayed themselves positively through their care of others. This suggests that although they do not gain value through consuming food, they can gain value through producing food. Therefore, they can be seen on the periphery of the care economy at the Common. Going back to Bordo (1993) there are further links that can be made. She suggests

that constructions of femininity create a gender division of labour whereby women are “most gratified by feeding and nourishing others, not themselves” (p.118).

The boys cooking as consumers

When the boys cooked at the Common it was only because they had volunteered to. In general, they wanted more autonomy with cooking by choosing what to cook and in wanting to follow a recipe. Over the May half term, Henry (14, mixed-race), Ravi (13, British Middle-Eastern), and Frankie (12, British Middle-Eastern) attended a cooking course organised by the council and wanted to practice their skills by cooking with just the recipe. They approach me asking for a recipe, and if I would help supervise. Carrie has told the boys that they have to sell the biscuits to raise money for the centre. The boys nod in agreement but as soon as the biscuits are ready Henry quickly moves them onto a drying rack, pointing out that the biggest (and least burnt) biscuits are his. Ravi and Frankie run over, they want the good ones as well. They start licking the ‘best’ biscuits for themselves. They also tell me that since they cooked them they will not be paying for them either. Whatever is left after they are done can be sold.

The boys also used the food they cooked as part of the care economy, saving and sharing the best products for their friends. One evening, Theo (17, Black British) asks me for the recipe for some chocolate muffins I have brought in and we agree to make them at the Common the following evening. Although I give him the recipe and offer help, he is largely in charge. A number of people pop in and ask what we are making, and almost importantly, who is making it. Theo says ‘me’ as if affronted by the question. When they go to bake he returns to the pool table to wait for them to be ready. As they come out of the oven and are set out to cool more and more of the boys pile into the kitchen wanting to know if they are ready and if they are free. Carrie comes in and tells them we need to sell them for 50p. When she leaves Theo tells me he isn’t selling them. He puts ten muffins on a plate and tells me they are his ‘cut’ and leaves the rest to be sold. I see him walk around the main room offering his muffins to his friends and favourites (apart from three that he takes home with him). This is just one example of many in which the boys cook in order to receive the profits of their efforts. The priority is about getting the best of the cooking and cements the boys as consumers rather than providers.

The obligation of care

The female youth workers were, like the girls, encouraged to cook and provide at the Common. Suzy, as the main female youth worker cooks most evenings with the juniors and seniors. However, her role as a provider is not valued. Trainee youth worker Ben tells me he is fussy and that he does not like Suzy's cooking. He makes this well known, loudly refusing her food and telling the others that it is probably *'nasty'*. The boys start to follow Ben's lead and become critical of her food, waiting for someone else to verify that it was edible. Therefore while Suzy spends considerably amounts of time and effort into making food for the young people at the Common, it is not valued.

As I start to the cook at the Common and bring in baking I am also subject to critique from the boys. On the first night I make peanut butter and chocolate chip cookies and oat and raisin biscuits but I meet with suspicion as the young people peer into the biscuit tins before rejecting the offer. Giving up I go to the main table where the youth workers are finishing their takeaways. They keenly open up the tins and encourage some of the regulars to try them. After the youth workers vouch for them, '*they're good*', more and more of the boys come over. They do not get universal approval; I need to make the peanut butter cookies with milk or white chocolate next time, not dark chocolate. I am also to replace the raisins with milk chocolate chips in the oat biscuits.

The verdict on the baking was important and reputation was valuable, as the girls suggested to me whenever they cooked. My baking went through a process of quality checking. A visual inspection was followed up with queries about how I made it, verifying authenticity, and checking the content of the baking. The smell would then be checked before tentatively tasted. The verdict could then be given and approval for the others to eat it. This approval sometimes involved a simple compliment such as '*these are well peng*[26]' and other times the boys ask if I am going to apply for the Great British Bake Off[27]. Troy (13, Black British) tells the others he is convinced I am a secret baker (like the secret millionaire). At other times the compliments are not about the baking, but rather that by baking I would make a good 'wifey'. Colin in

[26] Slang for good

[27] The Great British Bake Off is a BBC reality TV baking show

particular would shout across the room that I was what the boys should look for in a wife '*imagine getting cakes every day, I bet she cleans as well*'. This continued amongst the boys despite my protests. There were a number of weeks when I did not have time to bring in baking. This was met with confusion, '*why have you not brought us anything?*', '*do you not care about us anymore?*'

This explicit connection to care situated me as a provider and thus the boys as cared-for. Over time I found myself trapped by feelings of obligation to meet this demand for care. I found myself feeling guilty when I was unable to bring in cakes, and thus let myself be coerced into going into the kitchen to make some more. I became socialised by the boys and the youth workers into a provider role.

8.4 The Common as an informal food bank

For the first six months of fieldwork, providing food for the attendees was informal and ad-hoc. Whilst there was always free fruit available, the youth workers found themselves buying or cooking food for young people out of their own pockets. As I have briefly mentioned before, the male youth workers had a system of sending boys out to collect food and allowing them to keep the change. Meanwhile, the female youth workers also cooked for the young people they knew had not eaten. Together, the youth workers have an informal risk list with young people they keep an eye on. One of them was Preston. Preston (Black British) was 12 years old at the start of my fieldwork, but was small in stature. I spend time with him playing cards, or around the pool table, but we mostly talk of food. When I first meet him he is on the informal risk list amongst the senior youth workers. They have agreed to keep an eye on him, as Suzy states '*you always see him leaving here with three bananas stuffed in his pockets to take home'*.

On one of the first occasions I meet Preston he has arrived at the youth club in his school uniform. Suzy goes over and asks if he has gone home or if he has had any dinner. He shrugs. Trainee youth worker Mark also goes over to speak to him, and tries a different tack by telling him that he should go home first so that his school clothes don't get ruined. In the meantime Suzy has gone to the corner shop and comes back holding a loaf of bread and calls me into the kitchen. She tells me she is going to make some egg sandwiches for Preston, but asks me to go and find out who

else wants one so that it is not obvious who it is being made for. Preston comes into the kitchen to watch. He asks if he can have a lemon that is sitting near the fruit bowl. Suzy asks him '*you don't want to eat that do you?*' but he smiles and says he likes them. His sandwich is ready and he goes out to the table to eat it while other young people queue up for their food. He comes back to the kitchen to return his plate and tells Suzy thanks. At the end of the evening I see him pick up some fruit on his way home.

This informal system became increasingly unsustainable and the youth workers were spending increased time and money trying to feed the seniors at the Common. The manager, Don, with some help from the members of the youth centre board approached local businesses to ask for support. Three local supermarkets agreed to provide out-of-date but edible food to the Common, and oversupplies that were not selling. Once a week then, boxes were delivered to the youth centre and the youth workers were tasked with making a meal each evening out of the free food. The selection, perhaps unsurprisingly, was random and although there was always dried pasta and rice, the rest did not necessarily lend itself to cooking on mass. In the stock room one evening I helped unpack ten bottles of balsamic glaze, three jars of artichokes, and twelve jars of sweetened coffee. Although young people were asked to come to the storeroom and come up with suggestions, it was often left to the youth workers to come up with creative ideas.

Despite the increased availability of food at the Common, the role of the takeaway did not diminish. Although the young people might have a bowl of the free food, it did not have the value or status as the takeaway. Where the food bank became more pertinent then, was making up food packages that were distributed to families in the neighbourhood. The young people who were in care or moving into independent living were also given a box to take away with them each week. As a student, the manager would also make me up a bag of 'goodies' from the things he thought they wouldn't use at the centre.

There is increased attention on the use of food banks in the UK given their rapid increase in numbers. Although politicians argue that food bank use has increased because there are more food banks opening, research has clearly demonstrated that

welfare cuts and sanctioning, in addition to unemployment, are associated with food bank use (Loopstra et al. 2015). Garthwaite (2015) highlights that people using food banks were leading increasingly precarious lives due to sanctions. Her research also refutes claims that people using food banks are unable to budget or make healthy choices. Jones in examining the cost of 'healthy' and 'unhealthy food' between 2002 and 2012 found that the cost of healthy diet was becoming less affordable, with the mean cost of unhealthy food around £2.50 in contrast to healthy food at £7.50 (Jones et al. 2014). Taylor-Robinson (2013) and others are calling the rise of food poverty a public health emergency. The need for the youth club to provide food supports these concerns.

8.5 Discussion

Throughout this chapter I have used care as an organising category to look at the practices around the consumption of food. I have demonstrated that care is not simply an imposed analytic category but that young people themselves used care to describe the exchange of food. Buying takeaways was recognised as a way of treating and caring for themselves and their bodies. Takeaways were used to establish a care economy whilst cooking became away in which young people became the providers or consumers of care. At the Common, relationships and friendships form and are cemented through food, and food in turn is turn represents and defines social bonds. This approach situates care in the everyday, and embedded in relationships, supporting feminist theories on care.

Feminist theorists using the term 'ethic of care' attempt to bring forward the notion of care into ontological thinking and away from generalising care through gender divisions. Gilligan (1995) challenges the notion of care as feminine. Instead she proposes that care is an essential part of all human activity through relationships that supports the findings addressed here. Gilligan challenges a femin*ine* ethics of care, which she proposes initiates women into obligation and selflessness in relationships. As an alternative she suggests introducing a femin*ist* ethics of care that seeks to invert the patriarchal nature of the division.

This femin*ist* ethic of care suggests that a number of ways in which we should think about care. The first is to consider how are we are bound to others through obligation

and responsibility. The practices of sharing food at the Common ties into this, as obligations are made from those who take food without giving it back. Sharing is caring as a form of gift exchange ties into this first form. The second way is to look into how we are socialised into care. The findings around the girls suggest that they are socialised into caring for others at the Common. I was subject to the same pressures, and found myself due to my gender assigned as a provider rather than consumer. The coercion of the girls and female youth workers into cooking and providing food for the boys relegates the women into a caring role.

Tronto (1995) argues that care as a form of ontology requires a different understanding of society, that we should not view individuals as rational actors pursuing their own goals and maximising their own interests (as suggested in Hardin's (1968) 'Tragedy of the Commons') but instead see people constantly embedded in relationships of care. Furthermore, relations of care are more likely to be established between those who are familiar than strangers. The Common as a youth centre in a close community is therefore an ideal site to engage in care economies.

It is important to acknowledge that the majority of consumption research has focused on fashion and other goods amongst young people; however there is renewed attention in food practices and in particular family food practices. Research has shown that parents in working class and middle class families differ in their belief that they have the ability to control and shape the eating practices of the family, with working class parents citing a lack of confidence (Backett-Milburn 2006). Backett-Milburn (2006) has also suggested that for working class parents, food was a secondary concern, given the priority of safety in less advantaged areas. In addition, qualitative research with young women in Canada found that 'healthy food' was associated with eating at home and parents, while 'unhealthy' food was related to independence from the family, pleasure and belonging (Chapman and Maclean 1993). In this case of the Common I would argue, given the increasing levels of food poverty in Sandyhill, that the takeaways they consume are healthier than no food at all.

8.6 Summary and conclusion

This chapter aimed to explore how participating in food practices at the Common became a way of gaining value and inclusion. I have shown a complex economy of care through which food circulates, gains value, and becomes an intricate part of social relations at the Common. Similar to the previous chapter, the ways of belonging and participating were conditional. For example gender norms around eating excluded the girls from the care economy, and they would only eat in spaces in which they could not be observed. For them, like pool, spending time in the main room eating takeaways is not rational. For the boys, however, takeaways provide them with the opportunity to be visible and to be part of the discussions around food.

In this chapter I show how different forms of care can be understood in one interaction. For example, through money young people are able to demonstrate not only are they cared-for, but that they have the resources to care for themselves and others. What is important here is intent. Young people are able to perform different forms of care through the manipulation of the intent of care. When cooking, the boys were able to choose the conditions of their participation and always ensured they were rewarded for their efforts. For the girls, cooking for others was a way of gaining value, but only in regards to their position as providers. It should be of no surprise then, that the girls often refused to do so or abandoned cooking as a way of resisting these pressures.

Interlude 9

After concluding formal fieldwork I decided to stay at the Common as a volunteer, continuing one evening a week. In June 2014, however, the Common closed its doors, permanently, due to a lack of funding.

Chapter 9

Discussion and Conclusion

My thesis examines what really matters to young people in their everyday lives. Over the course of setting up the research and selecting a fieldsite, these research aims became most focussed, and were further modified by my experiences of carrying out the research. Subsequently, in this study I have explored what is like for young people to live in Sandyhill during a time of austerity. There are three main themes to draw from the study. First, that young people in the Common negotiate and manage their social, economic and spatial exclusion. Sandyhill was a neighbourhood that has long been disadvantaged in terms of poverty and place stigma. There was a lack of investment in the area, evident as services in the area were reduced or closed. However, despite the stigma attached to people living in Sandyhill, young people manage to use strategies to subvert these negative conditions. Sandyhill was seen as a resource in terms of the familiarity, safety and networks. Compared to other areas, Sandyhill was enclave in which young people could belong. In addition young people who were internally mobile in terms of their living situations, found that they were able to negotiate the terms of their kinship care to their advantage. Furthermore, although young people were subject to racism they blamed this behaviour on other places, rather than Sandyhill. In addition, by attending the Common they were able to access another, safe space. However, it was apparent that these strategies to manage disadvantage were dislodged and disrupted by welfare cuts and policy changes that made it more difficult for young people to manage their exclusions. Young people at the Common often found themselves in increasingly precarious living situations and conditions as a result.

Second, young people attended the Common and found ways to belong and gain value. In attending the Common, young people were able to avoid the surveillant gaze that they experienced in public space. In addition, the Common offered ways of participating and belonging. By participating in established activities, such as pool, young people were able to join in and be visible. Although some of the practices had

no visible currency outside of the walls of the youth club, they were nevertheless an important part of finding a valued social position amongst their peers. These activities also allowed them negotiate and reshape precarious social positions in an attempt to move up the hierarchies. Furthermore, participating in food practices and a care economy cemented social relationships and provided a strategy for managing food poverty.

Third, these practices of inclusion were conditional. Inclusion at the Common was about being able to participate in activities that allowed you to gain value. However, this was not available or do not represent a rational choice for some young people. The structure of the youth club supported this, as the funding for the centre was initially allocated to keep boys from Sandyhill out of public space. Although girls were later allowed to attend, by relegating them to the outskirts of the building this set up kept the boys as the natural occupiers of the Common. This made sense for the boys as well, as they were the ones that felt most keenly the exclusion from public space. It was also important that the practices in which young people could access value were visible. The boys at the Common wanted to be visible in order to be seen to belong. The girls in contrast wanted to be invisible, as they clung and were pushed into the periphery. Instead being visible, for example by not conforming to acceptable forms of masculinity and femininity, was a practice of inclusion that in turn excluded others. Boundaries around these norms were produced and maintained using emotions, such as shame and disgust, to exclude those who deviate.

The findings highlight the importance of being able to participate, the role of social relationships, and the emotional embodied experience of inequalities. Now that the Common has closed, it is unclear what young people in Sandyhill will do to find value in sustained and locally accepted ways. In order to explore these issues, I will next give a brief overview of the key findings from each chapter whilst recognising that I included a discussion in each chapter due to the different literatures drawn upon. Then, I will make closer links between the findings and the themes and literatures I raised in the introductory chapters. In doing so, I show how earlier themes I raised on social suffering and intersectionality (in the writing of Frank 1997, Farmer 1997, 2005, and Kleinman 1997) are recurrent threads throughout this thesis that together

make a unique contribution to the field. Following this, I will consider the relative strengths and weaknesses to the study before concluding.

9.1 Overview of the key findings in each chapter

My first findings chapter most clearly addresses the overarching theme of the study by looking at the lived experience of exclusion and the way that policies can constrain or enable young people's ability to participate. Firstly, it shows that Sandyhill as a place has been disadvantaged through years of disinvestment which has in turn a detrimental impact on its residents' health. The high levels of bereavements and chronic illness amongst the young people and their families in the Common support this. Therefore Sandyhill could be characterised as experiencing advanced marginality (Wacquant 2008) in that it suffers from economic instability, stigma, and being segregated physically from the town in which it is situated. Although there are a number of studies that have explored young people's experiences of exclusion whilst living in poor and deprived neighbourhoods (MacDonald and March 2005, MacDonald, Shildrick, Webster and Simpson 2005), the majority of research in this area has concentrated on residents' being trapped through vulnerability and unable to move to better their chances.

In Sandyhill, young people were experiencing the loss of kin networks resulting in social fragmentation and were further being displaced from their homes. Moreover, displacement means exclusion from an area that is perceived by certain young people as a safe space (Watt 2006), as McKenzie (2012) found in her study of a working class bounded area in Nottingham, belonging plays an important role in resisting stigma. This is echoed in a four year ESRC study (Reynolds 2013) that concluded that 'black communities' provide young people with a sense of belonging, particularly when they are stigmatised, avoided or excluded in other space (Reynolds 2012, White 2010). Young people therefore found ways of discursively claiming belonging to Sandyhill, while distancing themselves from aspects they found stigmatising. In other words, there is a conflict of belonging to a 'tainted place' that requires holding strategies that allow you both to belong, and to distance yourself when necessary.

My findings are also support the argument that stigma is not experienced equally and can become particularly attached to certain bodies as the focus of moral panics

(Rhodes 2011). I have discussed how in the current study stigma in public spaces focused on young black men. Anderson (2004) has referred to the focus of these panics as the 'Anonymous Black Male' who is treated warily and with suspicion in public space. Treated with fear and suspicion the young black male becomes "aware of his place as an outsider, he may try and turn the tables when he can, expressing himself on his own terms, behaviour that is viewed, especially in public, as threatening, "oppositional", and justifiable given their initial reactions" (2009, p.20). Anonymous black males are negatively stereotyped and automatically assumed to be dangerous, criminal, and guilty (Brooks 2008). In Sandyhill the use of Section 5 orders by the police are interpreted by community members because of this stereotype. This is a stereotype constructed through race, gender, class and age simultaneously. I will return to explore this in further detail in the following section. Together this chapter shows how young people's lives are made insecure through structural conditions that are making life more precarious, but begins to highlight how exclusion affects some, but not all young people.

The second findings chapter narrows in on the conditions of belonging, a common theme across the study. It focuses on how space and resources are controlled and allocated which reproduce gendered bodies. Firstly, the girls at the Common are confined to periphery spaces. The girls are not seen as the priority at the Common in terms of funding, but also because it is accepted that the girls have more mobility and more space in public space. In a reproduction of a now established finding, the boys expand and use the whole space of the youth club, whilst the girls are restricted into restricted unused space that is frequently interrupted (Bordo 1993, Thorne 1993, Young 1980). In addition it supports Sibley's (1995, p.3) perspective that "who is felt to belong and not to belong contributes in an important way to the shaping of social space". The establishment of the Common as a boys club and the spatial exclusion practice reinforce girls as unnatural occupants.

Another way in which the boundaries of belonging are managed is through exclusionary practices that utilise shame and disgust to mark the moral borders of acceptable forms of masculinity and femininity. This practice not only maintains the Common as a boys' space, but as a space for certain types of boys. Boys who do not conform to 'hetero-normal' standards (Cann 2014) are made visible and thus

uncomfortable in the spaces in which they want to participate, such as the girls' room. Girls are also made visible and monitored in this way, particularly around their sexuality. Girls have to toe the line of being feminine to be valued and respectable in order to avoid being labelled as a slut. Both of these strategies of exclusion use emotions as a social force. By this, I mean they are given meaning in interaction, and are a way of openly condemning young people in an attempt to make them internalise their moral deviation. It is relevant that shame in particular is increasingly becoming part of our cultural rhetoric. 'Fat-shaming', 'skinny-shaming', 'slut-shaming' and 'welfare-shaming' are just a few of the ways in which we can see affects increasingly utilised in public life. In particular, emotions are utilised, not just as something felt, but as productive in assigning certain bodies as worthy and others as unworthy and thus undeserving. This has found to be particularly pertinent in class politics (Skeggs 1997, Tyler 2008). When the girls are confined or excluded they have no established strategy to regain value. Instead, their only option is to leave. The long-standing contrast in attendance figures between the boys and girls at the Common are testament to this.

The third findings chapter moves away from exclusion to look at how young people experience inclusion. It demonstrates that while negatively stereotyped in public spaces, the boys can gain value through participation in sporting rituals at the Common. What I describe challenges public assumptions that see young people and particularly young boys' lives as chaotic, disorganised and deviant (Evans 2007). Instead, the boys devote time and attention to developing their bodies through pool. Although pool does not mould or shape their bodies in the way that other, more physical activities, would, it none the less shapes how their bodies and competencies are perceived by their peers. This chapter also introduces the idea of hierarchies of belonging, how certain bodies are allowed to participate and gain value. In this case, rules and rituals around the pool table include and exclude certain attendees at the Common. Participating in pool is rational for the boys; they can gain worth and social standing through increased competency or performance around the table. In contrast, it is irrational for the girls to play. Although they are able to play, they cannot gain the value the boys can.

The fourth findings chapter, looked at another activity, eating and cooking food, which further explores how young people could participate in order to belong at the Common. Through participating in collecting and eating takeaways, young people at the Common, the boys specifically, could join in an economy of care through food. Takeaways allowed the boys to display that they were cared for, whilst at the same time they were able to take care of themselves and others through the sharing and reciprocal gifting of food. The male youth workers informally managed this economy in the way in which they visible and publicly consumed their takeaways and recruited young people to collect their food. In doing so, they were able to give young people the money to participate.

The other form of care practice was cooking in the kitchen of the Common. In doing so, young people were able to portray themselves as the consumers or providers of care. The girls, and female youth workers, were encouraged to cook at the Common to provide for others. Although sometimes the girls recognised that they could gain value through providing, their continual refusal and resistance suggests that this was something they aspired to. The boys meanwhile could cook on their own terms. They could cook what they wanted (within reason) for themselves and for others. In turn, whilst they could use cooked food as part of the care economy at the Common, they did not use it gain value through being a provider to others.

It is important to place the findings around food in the context of rising food poverty in the area and region. Whilst I deliberately avoided health discourses around food, regarding it as a social practice, I recognise that young people's endeavours to relieve their hunger, through takeaways, could be misunderstood as poor choices based on ignorance. In particular, food practices that do not fit into middle class ideals are often moralised and understood within a negative frame that suggests an absence of care. In particular, public health views children as passive recipients of care and teenagers as not taking proper care in their choices. What is clear, however, is that current approaches focusing on obesity and healthy eating are inadequate in understanding food insecurity and poverty. There is a lack of recognition that both being underweight and overweight represents malnourishment (Berlant 2007). As the Common became an informal bank, it is clear that there was a need. In this context, takeaway food is better than no food at all.

Whilst I talk about the specific practices in the Common, I argue that these practices of inclusion will emerge in different ways in different youth spaces. As Blue and colleagues (2014, p.160) state "everyday practices are always locally situated…and emerge out of the actions and interactions of individuals in a specific context". As such, practices of belonging will vary by context, who can participate and who can give and gain value. The findings support an understanding of belonging as being fluid and conditional. Belonging as a concept has been criticised for focussing on young people fixed, or needing to be fixed, in a place. Instead, belonging is not about being stuck in a place, but how exclusion such stigma and discrimination can create feelings of 'not-belonging'. Within the Common, being able to belong was tied to hierarchies that limited young people's ability to negotiate feelings and experiences of inclusion. In particular, strategies of exclusion, utilising emotion, manage the boundaries of who can belong and feel safe.

9.2 Bringing the findings together

Using intersectionality to understand the conditionality and hierarchies of belonging

One of the recurring threads across the four findings chapters that I would like to focus on, as I believe it comprises the most significant contribution to the field, is how experiences of exclusion, suffering, and belonging are not experienced equally. In each chapter, I have discussed in detail how being able to participate at the Common, and in Sandyhill, was conditional and often hierarchical. The conditions of belonging related, in different ways, to young people's social positions such as gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, as well as the local and wider socioeconomic context. Most importantly, these social positions worked simultaneously and overlapped in various, fluid, ways. In other words, it would not be possible, or indeed fruitful, to look at one social position in isolation, such as gender, in this thesis. As I will expand on in this section, I interpret young people's social identities and positions as constructed with and through each other. In doing so, I am adopting an intersectionality approach (Crenshaw 1991; McCall 2005; Yuval-Davis 2006). Intersectionality not only emerged as an important issue during fieldwork and in the findings but, as I will describe shortly, I have implicitly drawn on this framework throughout.

The role of intersectionality in belonging and social suffering emerged as a key finding in my research, but it is also evident from the outset of this thesis. Firstly, in the discussion of structural violence and social suffering in the literature review I referred to the work of medical anthropologists such as Paul Farmer (1997, 2005) who have stressed the need to consider how various social axes impact on individual experiences. In particular, I described his fieldwork in Haiti that he argues demonstrates that "life choices are structured by racism, sexism, political violence, *and* grinding poverty" (Farmer 1996, p. 263, italics in original). Secondly, in my methodology, I used a range of feminist and post-colonial authors who point to the multiple social positions of ethnographers, and their participants, occupy that come to the foreground in certain situations and the background in others (Adkins 2002, Abu-Lughod 1990). Thirdly, in all of my findings chapters I have focused on examining the social positions and context under which young people can claim belonging, and the unequal experiences of stigma and exclusion in particular places and on particular bodies. This work, and the key authors, typically fall under, and utilise, an intersectional framework.

It is worth here, explicitly outlining what I mean by intersectionality. Intersectionality as an approach is said to have emerged because of criticism from critical race feminists (such as Crenshaw 1991; hooks 1981) who objected to feminism's tendency to treat women's experiences as homogenous. In particular, they highlighted that feminist approaches to women's experiences at the time was conflated with the experiences of white women, and black experiences conflated with men leading to the silence of black women (Crenshaw 1991). Subsequently, intersectionality has emerged as a key framework in feminism and critical race theory that have a number of common key tenets. The first is that social identities are not independent and cannot be reduced to separate categories because people "are neither singularly gendered, racialized, nor classed" (Mattis et al. 2008, p. 419). Instead, an intersectionality approach seeks to examine how social categories are not naturalised or possessive of an individual but rather are mutually constructed as a social process influenced by wider representations of identities (Crenshaw 1991; Yuval-Davis 2006). Following on from this, the second tenet is that intersectionality is not about looking at social categories in an additive way but instead recognising that intersections "converge to

produce a social location that is different than just the sum of its parts" (Hankivsky 2014, p. 255).

The third tenet of intersectionality is that it needs a view of both the macro contexts and micro experiences of individuals. For example, looking at the contexts under which people are living and examining how these contexts play out in various ways on people's experiences based on their age, gender, class, race, ethnicity and social positions. In order to do so, intersectional approaches need to consider the temporal and changing environments and be "open and ready to account for new and emerging intersections that are dependent on ever-changing political, social and economic contexts" (Hankivsky 2014, p. 258). Lastly, intersectionality authors highlight that individuals can occupy numerous and overlapping positions at different times and in different places. As such, individuals can be subordinate in one location and dominant in another. Together, these key tenets highlight the need for an intersectional approach that considers the way in which social identities converge in complex and multiple ways at different times in different places and recognising that these intersections are processes that emerge under particular contexts. In summary, the aim of an intersectionality approach is to "reflect the social realities of inequality and power in society, yet at the same time not lose sight of the individual experiences that reflect, shape and construct those social structures" (Bowleg 2012, p. 178).

Revisiting the findings under an intersectionality framework

The first findings chapter most closely examined the role of wider structural policies and context on the lives of the young people at the Common. In doing so, I was able to describe how changes to welfare, such as the bedroom tax, and increased surveillance through ASBOs have had different impacts on different young people. In particular, I looked at the intersections of gender, age, race, class, ethnicity, and location that positioned young black boys from Sandyhill vulnerable to police surveillance in public spaces. It was clear that historical representations of young black men in the area is important to consider with youth workers and community members reporting that this was nothing new. Young black men from Sandyhill have long been suspect, and indeed, during the 2011 riots the police blocked off entrances and exits to Sandyhill despite there being no unrest in the area. I would also argue it relates to class, and although working-class areas are often synonymous with white

working class areas (Watt 2006; Wray 2006), it is clear that an intersection of class, race, and ethnicity have contributed to the place stigma attached to Sandyhill through historic social and economic forces.

Although members of the community often described this stigma as a function of racism, I would suggest that it is the multiple positions of young people, place, and context that contribute to the experience of exclusion. Furthermore, although racism was considered the more prominent force in discriminating against young black boys in public space, I also described how ethnicity came to the forefront *within* Sandyhill. Ethnicity, or heritage to use young people's own term, intersected with race and sexuality within the youth club. In particular, I demonstrated how black Caribbean heterosexual masculinity was a revered heritage within the Common given higher status than other ethnicities such as black African or Asian heritages that were also linked with non-traditional heterosexual masculinity. Together, this shows that although young black boys may experience stigma in public space they also occupy a dominant position within the Common. Thus, using an intersectional framework allows for a focus on the multiple positions young people occupy and how their experiences of inclusion and exclusion varies.

This line of enquiry into multiple positions can be taken further to critique the work of Giroux (2009) and Males (1996) that was introduced in the main literature chapter. These authors have described how in times of increased precarity (referring to the United States) young people become suspect in public discourse and in subsequent policy changes. However, my findings suggest that not all young people that are made suspect. In the case of Sandyhill, austerity measures implemented by the UK Government did made young people's lives more insecure, but as I describe all the way through this thesis young people experienced different forms of marginalisation and exclusion that become them suspect and vulnerable to disinvestment. Nationally, during and after my fieldwork a number of welfare cuts were proposed and implemented. For example, the changes to educational maintenance grants (EMAs) disproportionality affect disadvantaged young people such as those at the Common. It is this same group of young people likely to be affected by the changes to housing benefits to under-25s, the dismantling of state-funded youth services, and other austerity measures. These changes are less likely to

impact on white middle class youth. Again, historically, Sandyhill was already lacking in investment and dealing with the disappointment of a number of failed regeneration projects. The closing of the Common, despite its high attendance rates, further suggests that certain young people are not deemed worthy of investment by local and national Governments.

In Chapter 6, I discussed how the girls at the Common were viewed as suspect around their femininity and sexuality. This is consistent with the ample literature that shows how girls and women have historically been subject to their surveillance around their bodies (for example Bartky 1991; Bordo 1993; Locke 2007; Manion 2003; Puwar 2004; Puwar 2006). Skeggs (1997) and Lawler (2005), for example, have described how white working class women are constantly obliged to perform respectable forms of femininity in order to avoid shame. On the other hand, disadvantaged black women and girls are often hyper-sexualised (Mattis et al. 2008) that can leave them more vulnerable to stigma when they fail to achieve acceptable femininity. This suggests that although there may be common outcomes of moral panics around sexuality, the designation of shame and disgust for example, may be experienced differently.

The 'respectable femininity' that women are judged by, however, is likely to be based on a similar stereotype of whiteness, pureness and middle-class heterosexual femininity. Karaian (2014) suggests that this 'respectable femininity' is a neoliberal strategy of 'responsibilization' to govern women through shame. Within a neoliberal context, individuals are encouraged to be moderate, rational, decision makers in control of their bodies. Those constructed as responsible can be managed through self-governance whilst those who fail are subject to intervention (Adam 2005; Rose 1996). Young women, in particular, are said to be increasingly the focus of neoliberal regulation (Harris 2004) that encourages "responsibility to choose good choices, second to take responsibility for the consequences of those choices, and third, being responsible for making those choices" (Graham 2007, p. 205). However, as Harris (2004) further explains this focus on responsibility can divide girls into 'can-do' girls and 'at-risk' girls. Davidson (2015) in an ethnography of female students at two schools in Los Angeles further suggest that 'at risk' is a racialized, gendered and classed discourse. In particular, the Latina girls in her study were subject to

surveillance from teachers that focussed on boyfriends and pregnancy risks that other girls were not. In this research I found examples in which white working class femininity was under scrutiny through Jade that positioned her as disrespectable and hyper-sexualised black femininity that led to Hailey and Jordan being labelled as 'risky'.

An emerging issue amongst the girls in the Common subject to shaming practices was how their status as 'risky' led to adultification. As Mattis et al (2008) highlights any perceived deviance can "place these women and girls outside of the boundaries of protections afforded by authentic and respectable femininity" (p. 422). This adultification means that girls labelled as sexually 'deviant' are seen as less in need to protection leading to them becoming more vulnerable. This was particularly evident towards the end of my fieldwork when some of the girls I described in Chapter 6, who were in formal and informal care, reported relationships with older, adult, men. The girls often described emotional abuse and controlling behaviour within the relationship, however they framed the relationships as positive and 'caring' due to the provision of material goods (such as food). Although these girls were no longer protected under statutory rape legislation (Sexual Offences Act 2003), under the United National Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989) they are entitled to protection from abuse. The youth workers at the Common recognised these relationships as grooming but felt they had limited power to intervene given that the girls were over the age of consent. At the same time, the girls were known as sexually active and thus were labelled as agentic, and as such, there is a risk that they can be seen as responsible for their own abuse. I would suggest that this is an area where more focussed research is needed, in terms of both sexual exploitation and domestic violence that may be experienced through emotional abuse. This group of girls fall between legislation and may be vulnerable through adultification. Further work should recognises that young people engage with relationships with adults that are structured by power and may reflect inequalities in terms of age, socioeconomic status, gender, and other intersections.

Medical anthropologists have used intersectionality to highlight the need to explore the ways in which some people, but not others, are made vulnerable to suffering (such as Scheper-Hughes 2004, Waterston 2008, Farmer 2006). Scheper-Hughes

(2002) suggests that we need to look out for warning signs of everyday forms of violence that turns some people into “waste”. These include growing distrust towards certain groups of people, withdrawal of support and care, militarisation of everyday life (such as police surveillance and intervention) and reversed feelings of victimisation (Scheper-Hughes 2002, p. 373-374). I would argue that these warning signs are increasingly evident for certain young people in the Common and requires more longitudinal work. Anthias (1998, 2002, 2013) has noted that intersectionality is temporal and fluid, and as such, long-term follow-ups are necessary. A key strength of youth studies has been its continued work amongst communities, such as MacDonald and Shildrick’s (MacDonald 2008; MacDonald & Marsh 2005; MacDonald & Shildrick 2013; Shildrick & MacDonald 2007) ongoing work with young people who are now adults in Teesside, and Rachel Thomson’s longitudinal work with young women around sexualities (Thomson 2003; Thomson 2007; Thomson & McLeod 2015). I have had limited opportunities to follow up with young at the Common after the youth centre shut down, however it may possible to use social media to explore if young people made suspect at the Common are experiencing further exclusion. From some initial contact, I have already found out that amongst the ‘established boys’ one is in prison whilst another has been recognising nationally as a youth mentor.

Revisiting the findings paying closer attention to intersectionality demonstrates the advantage of ethnography to provide depth studies of youth. Here, I would argue that the complexity of intersectionality is an advantage to explore the nuance of experiences of inclusion and exclusion. From another perspective these findings could be simply interpreted as conforming to what Griffin (1993) has described as bad boys and invisible girls. Although I suggest that these tropes are still evident in Sandyhill, it is much more complex than gender alone. Intersectionality allows for a detailed analysis of which boys are constructed as bad, as well as when and how and by whom for example. I have also shown the role of historical and geographical contexts, which should be considered when looking at which young people are made suspect. For example, Nayak and Kehily (2014) in their studies of youth and stigma found that young white working class men, represented as ‘chavs’, were the focus of moral panic in an area of Newcastle whilst in the South of England it was young teenage mothers that were subject to shame. Although in depth work in localities

offer rich detail, I suggest that comparative studies would be useful to explore how these negative representations attach to different young people at different times and places. An intersectional approach that looks at the conditions and hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion within different areas would be fruitful.

What we talk about when we don't talk about health

It could be argued that the findings of this thesis do not neatly fit into the box of health or public health that I initially described as my orientating focus in the introduction. The findings spill out more broadly to experience of precarity, insecurity and the constrained conditions of belonging, which young people have to navigate in everyday social interaction. They highlight the importance of being able to participate, the role of social relationships, and the emotional embodied experience of inequalities. Yet, I would argue, as others have done, that exclusion and belonging are fundamental to an understanding of health and inequalities (such as Bowleg 2012; Hankivsky 2012; Scott-Samuel, Stanistreet & Crawshaw 2009). Indeed, this has been raised in other health-orientated research that I described in earlier chapters (such as Austen 2009; Backett & Alexander 1991; Backett-Milburn, Cunningham-Burley & Davis 2003; Sutton 2009) who described how children and young people experience inequalities through the inability to participate.

Instead, I suggest examining health through a framework of social suffering and intersectionality to offer a complex examination of how wider structural forces shape individuals capacity to participate meaningfully in their lives. This requires an approach to health that focusses on what Link and Phelan (1995; 2004) have termed 'fundamental causes'. They propose that health inequalities can only be reduced through addressing their fundamental causes such as inequalities in power, resources, and knowledge. Furthermore, as Kleinman et al (1997) argue, this involved recognising that "trauma, pain and disorders…are health conditions; yet they are also political and cultural matters" (p. ix). Recognising that marginalised positions that lead to exclusion and stigma also have an influence on health (Bowleg 2012) brings a focus on the intersectionality that will lead some to experience greater suffering.

Taking this approach means continuing to reject the way in which lifestyle has become a de facto way of understanding, studying and talking about health. A

traditional approach to public health in this study for example would have been very different. For example, I may have focussed on smoking amongst the girls in care despite the fact that the girls themselves associated their smoking as a symptom and coping strategy of being in informal or formal care. Smoking provided an opportunity for girls with similar experiences to gather outside and provided a source of support. Furthermore, I could have looked at Hailey's (from Chapter 6) drinking as a health behaviour rather than as symptom of her experience of slut shaming, the withdrawal of care and peer support, and sexual assault. As Link and Phelan highlight wider policies can be 'health-relevant policies' even if they are not explicitly about a health behaviour which further justifies a focus on 'fundamental causes'. In addition, although my focus was not on health throughout fieldwork it became clear that health behaviours were present at the Common but were interpreted by young people as important symptoms of underlying inequalities. This would suggest that young people can understand the role of fundamental causes on health better than many UK public health policy makers.

Approaching health using intersectionality and a focus on fundamental causes ensures the examination of both structure and agency to understand "how systems of privilege and oppression that result in multiple social inequalities (racism, sexism, classism) intersect at the macro social-structural level to maintain health disparities" (Bowleg 2012, p.1267). However, intersectionality researchers point out that all too often health research explores social identities in silo, such as gender, which fails to consider the diverse range of experiences amongst groups in addition to the multiple positions people occupy (Bowleg 2012). Focussing on gender alone can undermine the complexities of health experience (Hankivsky 2012). In addition, many groups 'do not necessarily identify gender oppression as the primary frame through which they understand their lives (Nixon & Humphreys 2010, p. 150).Health research focussing on intersectionality, for example amongst immigrants in Canada, has found that health is affected by dislocation, isolation, ongoing racism and poverty in addition to gender (Browne et al. 2010).

Critical public health has made a number of calls for further intersectionality approaches over the past few years (see Bowleg 2012; Hankivsky 2012; Sen, Iyer & Mukherjee 2009) and there have been a rise in studies looking at specific health

conditions (see Doyal 2009on HIV/AIDs). After conducting this research, I propose that critical public health could move further towards the intersectionality of inequalities and fundamental causes and should explore the wider policies that have the potential to impact on health, rather than health policies per se. This would involve looking upwards to the policy makers that shape both the policies and rhetoric of those who meet or fail to meet these standards. In turn, youth studies, which have been successful at drawing attention to the role of broader contexts on transitions, should expand its scope to explore how inequalities in youth affect health. Furthermore, an intersectional approach, which is still not a mainstream framework within youth studies, could further strengthen work in this area.

9.3 Strengths and limitations

One of the main strengths of the current study is it that it allowed for issues and practices that were important to young people at the Common to come to the forefront and be taken seriously. Kleinman (1997) in his work on structural violence and social suffering proposes that we have to look at moral lives, and he suggests that in local interaction certain things really matter, such as power, position, prestige and resources. He suggests, then that we have to look at how these meanings are made in local contexts. Following this approach, I have examined the relative mundane practices of pool, eating, and occupying space to show how young people come to belong, or not belong at the Common. I also focussed on experiences of inclusions well as exclusion, unlike a lot of work on youth and intersectionality. In doing so, I can further show how young people can occupy multiple positions of subordination and domination.

Furthermore, in moving away from health per se, I have been able to open up the scope of the study that considers both the macro context (drawing on youth studies) and the micro (drawing on medical anthropology). Both of these, I have argued in this section have implications for health and social suffering. What I have found particularly helpful from youth studies is the recognition that behaviour cannot be understood without the knowledge of both individual circumstances and social conditions and contexts. Blackman (1997) suggest that we need a perspective that recognises that “actions may be uncertain and irregular but, with the close knowledge of a young person’s complex problems, the majority of behaviour patterns were

understandable and far from irrational" (p. 127). Public health approaches and policies can be strengthened by adopting this stance.

In terms of methods, ethnography has been increasingly recognised as a valuable tool in the studies of health and illness (Savage 2000). Although ethnography requires time and investment that may be thin on the ground, it has allowed me to conduct research of depth that allows to me to examine the complexity of health and nuance of health experiences. At the same time, I have emphasised throughout the thesis that there is a limitation to using the youth centre as a hub of my ethnography. Firstly, I could not be in all of the spaces at the Common. I was pushed and pulled into spaces that meant that I could only observe from the location in which I was in. Secondly, as I described in my methodology chapter, I was not permitted to use social media as online ethnography, which only limited a more thorough view on interactions at the youth club. On reflection using a traditional participant-observation approach did not help me deal adequately with the online social world in which all of the young people at the Common participated. I saw how online and offline worlds collided, but the study could have been strengthened through adopting an online ethnographic approach, although ethical consideration would have required addressing. I suggest that future research ensures that both these social worlds are taken into consideration, especially as they may have important implications for practices of inclusion and exclusion.

Thirdly, the sporadic and informal nature of attendance and activity at the Common means that I was also hindered by the partial stories and fragmented biographies of young people who dropped in and out of the Common. I was therefore, unable to follow up with young people who simply stopped attending the Common. I would like to make clear though, that as far as this would annoy a reader, only providing a short glimpse through the curtains; this fact also came to haunt me. Throughout my fieldwork it was hard not to become emotionally invested in the young people who I engaged with week on week. I worried about young people who stopped coming without reason and became distressed when young people would go missing, which was unfortunately quite a common occurrence. Often, I would scour online accounts and news clippings hoping for a conclusion that often never came. My ability to

follow up with young people is now ever more problematic with the closure of the Common.

Lastly, I would argue that the social and economic context of this study is important. While some authors that that young people have always suffered due to their marginal status (Jones 2009, James and Prout 1997) and have always been the precariat, it cannot be disputed that the scale of change over the past few years is significant. In particular, I have shown that this change and insecurity is not experienced equally. This thesis adds to a growing body of literature looking at how austerity and welfare changes are affecting people's lives, and provides a unique vantage point through its focus on young people. Furthermore, the thesis is timely given that youth spaces and services are being dismantled by cuts. The concern is that the study may simply become a unique, unreproducible, record of youth spaces that no longer exist. More importantly, however, is where do young people go and find value when youth spaces cease to exist and no alternative space is opened up?

9.4 Conclusion

This thesis is historically situated in a climate where young people are increasingly seen as suspect and austerity measures are disproportionately affecting young people and the most vulnerable. Indeed, with a new conservative government that plans further cuts, these issues are likely to become more prominent. Children and young people can be described as vulnerable as they do not have full rights to participate in the adult world that means they are already positioned as other. As life become more insecure, young people face the task of negotiating not only transitions to a precarious adulthood, but also the uncertainty of knowing what dangers to respond to, and what involuntary risks they will have to accept (Waite 2009, Waite, Valentine, and Lewis 2014). As Kleinman (1997) notes, if they do not belong, then their suffering can be silenced and help withheld. Philo (2005) further calls researchers to question who is responsible for hurting, and who is being hurt under these conditions.

In summary, this thesis showed that young people are subject to conditions that enable or constrain their ability to participate in meaningful ways in their community. As the same time, young people at the Common develop practices that

allow them to establish and maintain inclusion and belonging. In doing so, they are to manage the resources they have, in the places they live and in relationships with others. Although the study shows and supports previous research, the practices and accounts I discuss are local and situated and are therefore unique. More importantly, however, they matter to the young people at the Common.

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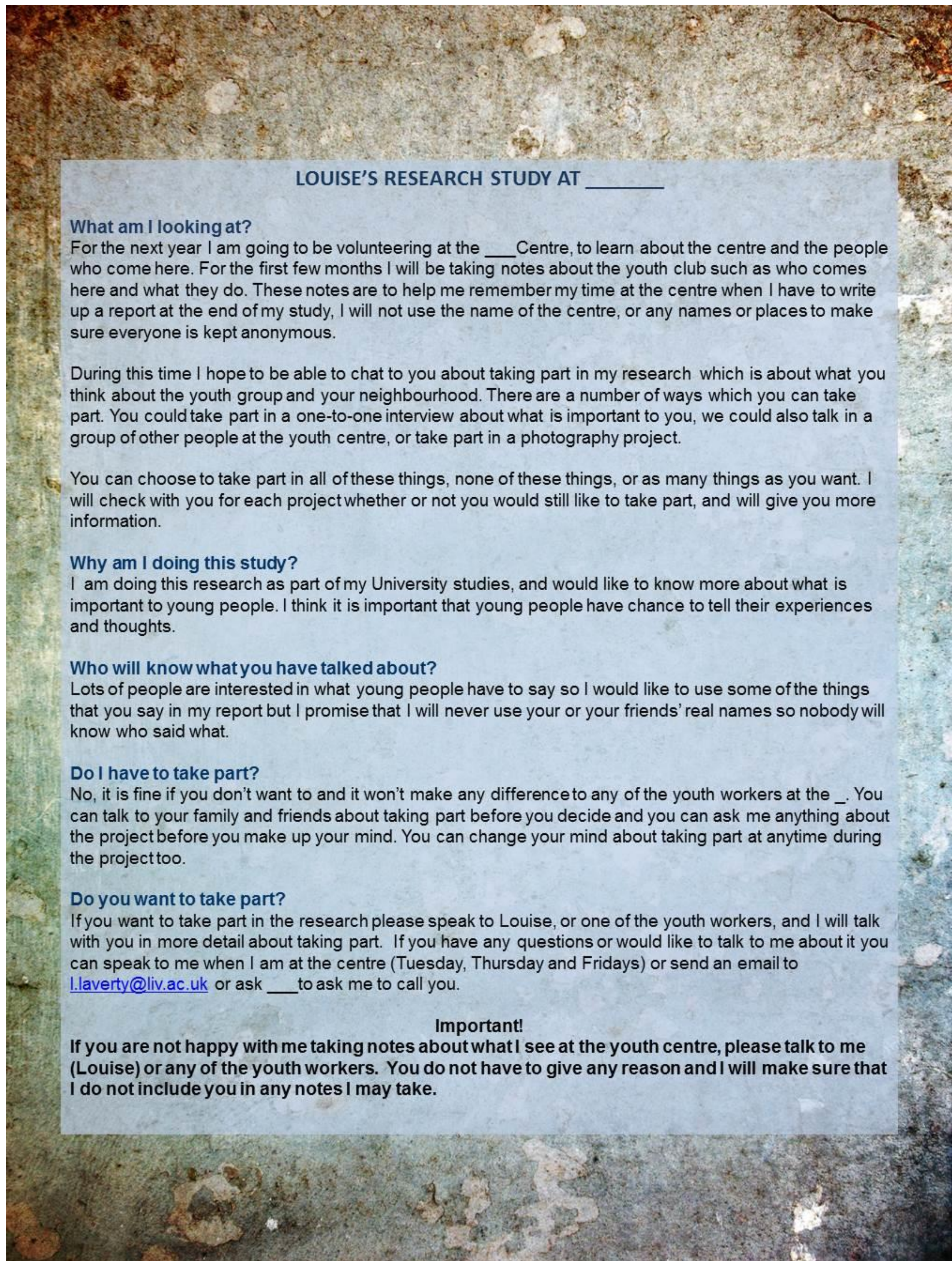
Appendix I – Poster and information sheet about the research study



LOUISE'S RESEARCH STUDY AT _______

What am I looking at?
For the next year I am going to be volunteering at the ___Centre, to learn about the centre and the people who come here. For the first few months I will be taking notes about the youth club such as who comes here and what they do. These notes are to help me remember my time at the centre when I have to write up a report at the end of my study, I will not use the name of the centre, or any names or places to make sure everyone is kept anonymous.

During this time I hope to be able to chat to you about taking part in my research which is about what you think about the youth group and your neighbourhood. There are a number of ways which you can take part. You could take part in a one-to-one interview about what is important to you, we could also talk in a group of other people at the youth centre, or take part in a photography project.

You can choose to take part in all of these things, none of these things, or as many things as you want. I will check with you for each project whether or not you would still like to take part, and will give you more information.

Why am I doing this study?
I am doing this research as part of my University studies, and would like to know more about what is important to young people. I think it is important that young people have chance to tell their experiences and thoughts.

Who will know what you have talked about?
Lots of people are interested in what young people have to say so I would like to use some of the things that you say in my report but I promise that I will never use your or your friends' real names so nobody will know who said what.

Do I have to take part?
No, it is fine if you don't want to and it won't make any difference to any of the youth workers at the _. You can talk to your family and friends about taking part before you decide and you can ask me anything about the project before you make up your mind. You can change your mind about taking part at anytime during the project too.

Do you want to take part?
If you want to take part in the research please speak to Louise, or one of the youth workers, and I will talk with you in more detail about taking part. If you have any questions or would like to talk to me about it you can speak to me when I am at the centre (Tuesday, Thursday and Fridays) or send an email to l.laverty@liv.ac.uk or ask ___to ask me to call you.

Important!
If you are not happy with me taking notes about what I see at the youth centre, please talk to me (Louise) or any of the youth workers. You do not have to give any reason and I will make sure that I do not include you in any notes I may take.

Appendix II – Photo-elicitation Poster

PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

At the _____ for those aged 11-19 years

Take photos
(with your own camera phone, or a disposable camera I can give you)

Take part in a short interview to tell me about your photos
(in private, no-one else will see your photos)

Be entered into a prize draw for 2 concert tickets

You do not need a camera or any photography skills to take part. I will give you a disposable camera and ask you to take photos of your everyday life and the things that are important to you. You own the photos and nobody will see them if you don't want them to. **If you are interested in taking part please talk to Louise (volunteers on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday) at the ___ or ask a member of staff to contact Louise for you.**

Appendix III – Food Focus Group Poster

LET'S TALK ABOUT FOOD

At the _____ for those aged 12-19 years on

____

Eat food

(I will bring in some food for us to eat)

Talk about food with your friends and Louise (this will be recorded but your name will be changed)

Louise is doing some research about food at the _____. If you are interested in taking part please talk to Louise (volunteers on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday) or ask a member of staff. Please write your name below and Louise will give you an information sheet

Appendix IV – Photo-elicitation information sheet

Keeping a photo diary for a week

What will we do and talk about?

For the next few months I am going to be volunteering at the ____ Youth Centre you attend, and hope to get know the young people who go there. For the first few months I will be taking notes about the youth club, who comes here, what we do, and what we might talk about but I will not mention any names or places. These notes are to help me remember my time at the centre when I have to write up a report at the end of my study.

During this time I hope to be able to chat to you about taking part in my research about what you think about the youth group and your neighbourhood. Part of this research involves asking some of the young people to take part in a photography project.

If you want to take photographs I will give you a disposal camera and give you a few weeks to take photos on the things that are important to you (I will give you more information if you want to do this). Although you are in charge of the photographs you take, it is important that if you want to take photographs of other people you ask their permission first.

Once you have taken your photographs I will get them developed for you. Afterwards, I would like to talk to you about the photos you took, and why you took them. The photographs belong to you and you will get to keep them. If you are happy for me to use of them in my report then I will make a note of which ones.

Who will know what you have talked about?

Lots of people are interested in what young people think so I would like to use some of the things that you say in my PhD report. I promise that I won't use your or your friends' real names so nobody will know who said what.

If it's OK with you, I will be using a digital recorder so that I can listen carefully to everything afterwards. I will ask you if there's anything you said that you don't want me to write in the report. It is only me that will ever hear the recording.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is fine if you don't want to and it won't make any difference to any of the youth workers or any of the people at [insert group name]. You can talk to your family and friends about taking part before you decide and you can ask me anything about the project before you make up your mind. You can change your mind about taking part at anytime during the project too.

What happens after?

You will get a short report on what you and other young people have said so that I can share our work with you. I also have to write a longer report and I would like to write articles that other people interested in my work could read.

Do you want to take part?

If you want to take part in the research please speak to Louise, or one of the youth workers, and I will talk with you in more detail about taking part. If you do I will ask you to fill in a consent form to say you are happy to take part in the study.

Appendix V – Food Focus Group Information Sheet

Talking about food

What will we do and talk about?

Over the next few weeks Louise is running two focus groups, where we sit and talk in a group, to find out if food is an important part of the ____ youth club. We will eat some food together in the computer room and then have a chat. If it's OK with you, I will be using a digital recorder so that I can listen carefully to everything afterwards. I will ask you if there's anything you said that you don't want me to write in the report. It is only me that will ever hear the recording.

Who will know what you have talked about?

Lots of people are interested in what young people think so I would like to use some of the things that you say in my PhD report. I promise that I won't use your or your friends' real names so nobody will know who said what.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is fine if you don't want to and it won't make any difference to any of the youth workers or any of the people at [insert group name]. You can talk to your family and friends about taking part before you decide and you can ask me anything about the project before you make up your mind. You can change your mind about taking part at anytime during the project too.

What happens after?

You will get a short report on what you and other young people have said so that I can share our work with you. I also have to write a longer report and I would like to write articles that other people interested in my work could read.

Do you want to take part?

If you want to take part in the research please speak to Louise, or one of the youth workers, and I will talk with you in more detail about taking part. If you do I will ask you to fill in a consent form to say you are happy to take part in the study.

Appendix VI – Photo-elicitation Consent form

CONSENT FORM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Title of Research Project: **'Young people's lives at the ____'**

Researcher(s): **Louise Laverty**

Please tick box

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet about the above study. I have read the information, been able to ask questions and have had these answered. ☐
2. I understand that I don't have to take part if I don't want to and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. ☐
3. I understand that the photographs I take belong to me, and I can choose who is allowed to see them. I understand that the photographs will only be used if I give permission to the researcher, and they can only be used in the ways I have said. ☐
4. I understand that any interview or group discussion I take part to discuss the photographs taken in will be audio recorded. I understand that verbatim quotes (word for word) may be used in reports but this will be anonymous and will not be used if this would make me identifiable. ☐
5. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish. ☐
6. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

Participant Name	Date	Signature
______________________	_______	_____________

______________________	_______	_____________
Researcher	Date	Signature

To contact the researcher about any questions, please speak to Louise on one of the days she is at the youth centre, or contact her below:
Louise Laverty, Room 1.14, Eleanor Rathbone Building, Bedford Street South, University of Liverpool. L69 7ZA, (0151) 794 3007;
Email: l.laverty@liverpool.ac.uk

Appendix VII – Focus Group Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Title of Research Project:	**Young people's lives at ______**	
Researcher(s):	**Louise Laverty**	**Please initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet for the above study. I have read the information, been able to ask questions and have had these answered. ☐

2. I understand that I don't have to take part if I don't want to and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. ☐

3. I understand that the interview may be audio-recorded, and that quotes (word for word) may be used in reports but this will be anonymous and will not be used if this would make me identifiable. ☐

4. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish. ☐

5. I agree to take part in the above study and have received £10 vouchers. ☐

____________________	______	____________
Participant Name	Date	Signature
____________________	______	____________
Researcher	Date	Signature

To contact the researcher about any questions, please speak to Louise, or contact her below:

Louise Laverty, Room 1.14, Eleanor Rathbone Building, Bedford Street South, University of Liverpool. L69 7ZA, (0151) 794 3007;
Email: l.laverty@liverpool.ac.uk

Appendix VIII – Photograph copyright form

Photography Ownership and Permissions

I agree that the research study can use the photo (s) I have taken. You can only use the photo (s) I have listed below. You can use it in any way that helps to educate people about this study and its message, for example you can put it in a dissertation, in book chapters, in journals, use it at a conference presentation.

At least one youth worker was involved with the study and I have looked at my photos very carefully. There are no images of people's faces and we both feel that there is nothing that might cause me or anyone I know harm or embarrassment.

These are the photos you can publish:

1. Title:

   Description:

2. Title:

   Description:

3. Title:

   Description:

4. Title:

   Description:

5. Title:

   Description:

Participant Name	Date	Signature
Researcher	Date	Signature

If you change your mind about letting me use your photos you can contact Louse, details below, and she will be happy to talk to you, and happy to stop using the photos whenever you decide.

Louise Laverty, Room 1.14, Eleanor Rathbone Building, Bedford Street South, University of Liverpool. L69 7ZA, (0151) 794 3007;
Email: l.laverty@liverpool.ac.uk