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Spaces, Emotion and Heavy Metal Subcultural Control: Music Consumption and Civilising Processes.

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For Lena Boylan

Abstract

Despite the longevity, cultural relevance and global popularity of heavy metal, it has been noticeably absent from both the Birmingham School's subcultural studies, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) and in consumer community contexts informed by post-subcultural perspectives (e.g., neo-tribes). This study examines the Irish heavy metal scene. The literature review considers the problematic aspects of applying both frameworks (subcultural and post-subcultural) to heavy metal and other similar contexts. I argue that Norbert Elias's figurational sociology (relatively underutilised in previous consumer research), can be used to bypass the agency–structure dualism that impedes both approaches. It is also advanced that such a perspective can become incorporated into the wider consumer culture theory (CCT) framework.

Data was collected through a combination of interviews, participant observation of live events, and observation of Irish fan forums. The positioning of the researcher as an 'outsider-participant' represents a departure from previous 'metal' studies and increasingly common 'insider' accounts of youth cultures. Additionally, the adoption of the Eliasian position concerning the balance between involvement and detachment addresses some of the challenges that come with researching (sub)cultures that are as controversial and divisive (in an aesthetical sense) as heavy metal. The seemingly chaotic and 'uncivilised' associations with heavy metal subculture represent an interesting context in which to explore Eliasian concepts concerning civilising processes and the increasing social constraint towards self-restraint or self-steering. I draw from empirical data collected in the field and previous figurational histories concerning Irish civilising processes (Dolan, 2005), sportisation (Elias and Dunning, 2008a) and technisation trends (Elias, 2008a). In doing so, I explain how heavy metal is a figuration based on control. The different fan spaces are co-constructed through a combination of subcultural and marketplace controls. Such spaces are used to facilitate a sense of comradeship and generate cathartic experiences, as the fans engage in a 'controlled de-controlling' of emotions (Elias, 2008b). The significance of the heavy metal experience is dependent on the visibility and quality of marketplace influence and the successful enforcement of the subcultural fan code. The dynamics of the complex figuration of heavy metal, the unique modes of behaviour, and the communication and interpretation of different symbols within the scene are analysed with regard to how status and subcultural capital is displayed. Fundamentally, I argue that the ability of the fans to adapt their behaviour to the fluid heavy metal scene and its evolving subcultural code is dependent on their ability to self-steer. The analysis contemplates the breakdown of the subcultural code, the lack of restraint demonstrated in the online spaces, and the retreat of what have become unacceptable modes of behaviour to 'behind the scenes' and the virtual social scene.

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Declaration

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part for another award in any other third level institution.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the DIT's guidelines for ethics in research.

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Signature _____ Date _____

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study examines the Irish heavy metal scene, with particular focus on participation in the Dublin scene. Heavy metal is a global subculture (Wallach et al. 2011), developing from its origins in Birmingham city in the 1960s/1970s (Bennett, 2001; Harrison, 2010), that whilst incorporating a distinct sound, an easily identifiable style, and unique rituals (Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000), has evolved into a series of subgenres (Kahn-Harris, 2007) that have incorporated a variety of meanings across the globe. Even during a period of increased music piracy and declining profits within the music industry, heavy metal has continued to diffuse rapidly (Janssens et al., 2009). It plays a significant cultural role globally as one of the highest selling genres of music in the world[1]. This is despite its positioning on the margins of both mainstream culture and its alienation from cultural fields that exclude genres based on their artistic credibility and level of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). This is a product of metal fans and musicians positioning the scene on the periphery of the marketplace and the controversial nature of the scene in terms of its 'extreme' sounds and aesthetics, and engagement with themes regarding Satanism, fascism and misogyny. This has created moral panic and in some instances the censorship of heavy metal (Chastagner, 1999). However, it still remains one of the highest selling genres of music in the world and continues to be culturally relevant.

Heavy metal has attracted researchers from a variety of disciplines including sociology (Weinstein, 2000, 2011), musicology (Walser, 1992, 1993), psychology (Arnett, 1996) and philosophy (Irwin, 2007). However, despite its relevance and popularity it has been overlooked by both the Birmingham School's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies

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[1] There are different distinctions between what constitutes a 'rock' recording and a 'heavy metal' recording which makes locating exact sales of heavy metal records difficult. However, Walser (1993) reports that 20% of American music sales could be attributed to heavy metal artists in the 1980s. As the genre has increasingly evolved into a series of sub-genres in the following decades it has become increasingly difficult to locate precise figures on heavy metal sales.

(CCCS) framework and more significantly, considering the positioning of this thesis, consumer research – specifically Consumer Culture Theory (CCT). This is particularly important when we consider the growing emphasis in consumer research on the 'sociocultural, experiential, symbolic and ideological aspects of consumption' (Arnould and Thompson, 2005: 868). Subcultures, or 'subcultures of consumption' as Schouten and McAlexander (1995) describe them, have been particularly beneficial for researchers who have found that they 'provide influential meanings and practices that structure consumers' identities, actions and relationships' (Kozinets, 2001: 67). Similar music subcultures to heavy metal, in terms of their alternative styles, rituals and ethos, have been explored from a consumer culture context. Goulding et al. (2002) and Goulding et al. (2009) have considered the hedonistic and ecstatic feelings that participation in temporary (sometimes 'deviant') rave and dance communities creates. Miklas and Arnold (1999), Latham (2002) and Goulding and Saren (2007, 2009) have examined Goth subcultural consumption practices, the fluid identities and meanings explored within it, and its relationship with the mainstream.

However, it is evident that discussing the heavy metal context in such constraints illuminates some of the more problematic aspects of CCT and marketplace culture analytic frameworks, particularly the post-subcultural inspired consumer tribe model. Arnould and Thompson (2005: 869) write:

> CCT is an interdisciplinary research tradition that has advanced knowledge about consumer culture (in all its heterogeneous manifestations) and generated empirically grounded findings and theoretical innovations that are relevant to a broad constituency in the base social science disciplines, public policy arenas, and managerial sectors.

Although CCT research acknowledges the role of marketplace resources and ideologies in influencing consumer behaviour, it places greater focus on the agency of consumers, their identity projects, the sociability of consumer cultures and the empowerment that consumers experience from contributing to the construction and maintenance of marketplace cultures.

Although, this framework is an important resource in this study, I want to examine the structures of heavy metal subculture more explicitly. I want to generate insights into the ways in which what are taken as forms of agency are produced by and produce the structure. However, I am not advocating a return to critical studies or the traditional subcultural framework. I will demonstrate how such frameworks (particularly the CCCS) are overly rigid and can place too much emphasis on structural processes and the determining influence of constraints such as social class.

Consequently, I have adapted Norbert Elias's (2000) figurational sociology framework as a resource to examine the Irish heavy metal scene. Elias outlines the specific, but interrelated trajectories of different nations and how certain social processes (e.g. technisation, feudalisation, state formation, and industrialisation) combined with developments in the individual psyche, transform the nature and scope of social relations. Drawing from Dolan's (2005) figurational explanations, I examine the specificities of Ireland's (non-linear) civilising curve and how widening figurations, a product of growing social differentiation and increasing functional specialisation, have transformed the importance and meanings associated with consumer culture. This particularly relates to the growing emotional significance and commercialisation of sport and leisure in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Elias and Dunning, 2008a). Elias and Dunning classify music as a form of leisure. However, few studies have actually examined the emotional significance of music subcultural spaces, using such a framework, with the exception of Atkinson's (2003, 2006) study of 'Straightedge' subculture.

Elias's focus on civilising processes and the importance of self-restraint and self-steering in social life makes heavy metal a particularly interesting context in which to apply the figurational lens. Heavy metal has been described as 'uncivilised', 'violent' and 'immoral' (see Gore, 1987; King, 1988; Shuker, 2001; Kong, 2006). This is mostly a consequence of

aggressive metal rituals (e.g. moshing, headbanging and crowd-surfing) that encourage participants to lose control (Riches, 2011). I explain how such behaviour can be understood in the context of broader civilising processes. I focus specifically on the prevalence of anger and negative emotions within the scene, feelings that have been relatively underrepresented in previous descriptions of consumer communities; despite the increasing attention emotion has received in the discipline. I stress the therapeutic qualities that engaging with the anger aesthetic of the scene provide. I describe how heavy metal rituals and other fan practices are controlled to varying degrees in the different fan spaces (e.g., concert, online, and individual). This is achieved through a combination of evolving subcultural codes, the actions of other stakeholders (e.g. musicians) within the scene and the influence of marketplace resources.

I describe the nature of this complex figuration within the Dublin scene, the hierarchies that are constructed, the contestations for subcultural capital, the creativity of the fans, and most importantly, how the fans use the spaces of the metal scene to control their emotions. In short, I outline how figurational sociology understands the nature of social relationships and emotions differently than Maffesoli's (1996) tribal theory. Control is an overlooked phenomenon in both CCT and other post-subcultural frameworks. Using the figurational perspective can provide explanations that prioritise emotional control. There is more emphasis on social processes, widening/narrowing chains of interdependencies, developments in the individual psyche, and how this relates to the controlling of emotions. In particular, I explain the relationship between control (both individual and collective) and the distribution of subcultural capital (see Thornton, 1995) within the scene.

Although figurational sociology has been used as a framework to examine the consumption of sport and leisure (Elias and Dunning, 2008a) and food (Mennell, 1996), it has not been incorporated in any great detail in studies concerning consumer culture, apart from Dolan (2005, 2009a, 2009b) who focuses on its development in an Irish context. Bradshaw and

Canniford (2005) look at the shifting practices and meanings regarding excrement using Elias's historical analysis of manners. Canniford and Shankar (2007) and Canniford and Karababa (2012) have drawn from figurational theory somewhat, arguing that the increasing routinisation of everyday life and social relationships has facilitated a growing desire for consumption practices (in this context surfing) that evoke a sense of 'primitivism'. However, figurational sociology only played a small role in the theoretical illumination of such contexts and studies. Additionally, as Canniford and Karababa (2012: 22) suggest, such studies can be augmented with 'descriptions of the lived feelings' that such sport and leisure based communities entail. There have been an increasing number of figurational studies (see Atkinson, 2003, 2008; Liston, 2005) that have incorporated methods (e.g. interviewing and ethnography) which illuminate the personal experiences of participants in sport and leisure contexts. Similar to such studies, I combine previous historical figurational accounts relevant to this context with the data collected from participation observation and interviews. My position as an 'outsider-participant' in the heavy metal scene receives particular attention because of the uniqueness of adopting such a role in comparison with previous heavy metal studies. Additionally, I provide a detailed analysis of the practicalities involved in attempting to maintain a 'relative' position of detachment in the research process. It is argued that figurationalists have been unsuccessful previously in providing much assistance regarding the implementation of this Eliasian methodological position (Hargreaves, 1992).

Chapter two examines the origins of heavy metal, its characteristics, emergence as a global subculture, and evolution into a series of subgenres. Following this I discuss the most common frameworks used to analyse music subcultures and speculate why heavy metal has been overlooked in previous research. This involves a detailed examination of the CCCS subcultural model and the inherent problems which led to the development of post-subcultural perspectives. Here, I focus in particular on Maffesoli's tribal model and its

incorporation into CCT research contexts. I discuss the problematic aspects of adapting either approach to the context of the Irish heavy metal scene.

Chapter three demonstrates how figurational theory can be used as resource to enhance our understanding of music consumption. I draw from key secondary figurational histories concerning civilising processes (Elias, 2000) such as sportisation (Elias and Dunning 2008a) and technisation (Elias, 2008a) to situate the development of the music industry and the increasing importance of sport and leisure in society. Additionally, I draw from Dolan's (2005, 2009a, 2009b) figurational explanations to position the unique but interrelated trajectory of Ireland's civilising process and the development of consumer culture in this country. I ask what makes Ireland's heavy metal scene different from the increasingly globalised scene.

In chapter four, I describe the sociology of knowledge perspective and my role as an outsider-participant in this research. The analysis of the data is divided into three chapters. The first (chapter five) focuses specifically on the emotional significance of heavy metal and rituals that take place in the live heavy metal events. Chapter six outlines how the fans become interested and consequently socialised into the heavy metal scene. There is particular focus regarding the hierarchies, contestations for subcultural capital, and the complexity of the subculture code that characterises the scene. Chapter seven considers the polarity of behaviours that are evident in the online spaces of the scene. Finally, I connect the various threads of analysis to present an overall framework which explains the nature of the heavy metal figuration and how figurational sociology could be incorporated into a broader CCT framework.

CHAPTER TWO: THE ORIGINS OF HEAVY METAL: EVALUATING SUBCULTURAL AND POST-SUBCULTURAL CONSUMPTION THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Introduction

In the following chapter I will introduce the music genre of heavy metal as an area of interest for consumer culture research. This will involve a discussion of the origins of heavy metal, its evolution into a series of extreme subgenres, and the subsequent attention that it has attracted from both academics and 'moral guardians' because of its controversial aesthetics and use of satanic, racist and sexist themes.

Following a description of the development of heavy metal subculture, I will discuss the numerous disciplines which have sought to theorise different aspects of the heavy metal scene. This will lead to an examination of both the CCCS's subcultural model and the post-subcultural framework that has been adopted frequently by consumer researchers to theorise brand communities and consumer tribes. I ask how such frameworks could be used to examine heavy metal subculture in Dublin and why they have not been adapted in this context previously. In concluding this chapter, I will argue that Elias's figurational theory could potentially be used to bridge some of the more problematic aspects of applying both the subcultural and post-subcultural CCT frameworks to a study of heavy metal fans.

Heavy metal

The origins of heavy metal subculture: Etymological, geographical and musical

Walser defines heavy metal subculture with a description of the scene that still holds resonance today:

> "Heavy metal" now denotes a variety of musical discourses, social practices, and cultural meanings, all of which revolve around concepts, images, and experiences of power. The loudness and intensity of metal music visibly empowers fans, whose shouting and

headbanging testify to the circulation of energy at concerts. Metal energizes the body, transforming space and social relations. The visual language of metal album covers and the spectacular stage shows offer larger-than-life images tied to fantasies of social power, just as in the more prestigious musical spectacles of opera. The clothing and hairstyles of metal fans, as much as the music itself, mark social spaces from concert halls to bedrooms to streets, claiming them in the name of a heavy metal community. And all of these aspects of power provoke strong reactions from those outside heavy metal, including fear and censorship. Walser (1993: 2)

Walser (1993) reports that the first use of the term 'heavy metal' is thought to have been in the William Burroughs novel (published in 1964) *Nova Express*, and the first use of the phrase in popular music was in the Steppenwolf (1968) song 'Born to be Wild' (Tawa, 2005). However, Walser (1993) argues that the term 'heavy metal' has been used in the English language since the early nineteenth century, when it was associated with descriptions of large guns or people with great power. He suggests that its previous meanings, centred on power and masculinity, reverberate with the modern usage of the term. It is also the case that the expression 'heavy metal' has been used for centuries to categorise the metals in the periodic table. Weinstein (2011) describes the difficulty in determining when exactly heavy metal emerged; suggesting that it probably existed in some form in the late 1960s and early 1970s before it was actually labelled. Whatever the origins of the term, it began to be associated with an increasingly prominent subgenre of rock music in the early 1970s by music critics, particularly 'in the writings of Lester Bangs and Dave Marsh at *Creem* [Music magazine]' (Walser, 1993: 8).

Bennett (2001) links the geographical genesis of heavy metal to the working-class communities of Birmingham, where bands such as Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin and Judas Priest emerged with a heavier rock sound in the 1970s. Taylor (2009) suggests that the development of the genre can be linked to the social and economic problems that the industrial city of Birmingham suffered after the Second World War. Harrison (2010) argues that the development of heavy metal in Birmingham was no coincidence. In the same way

that surfer rock was influenced by the American west coast, and rap music emerged in inner city ghettos, heavy metal music matched the industrial dreariness of post-war Birmingham.

> Heavy metal music could only have been born out of the industrial neighbourhoods of Birmingham. The intersection of a changing youth culture in a city dominated by the sounds of a heavy industry was a potent mix unique to post-war Birmingham. (Harrison, 2010: 153)

It would seem that the geographical origins and the potential place of the working classes (see Weinstein, 2000, 2011) in the formation of this genre would position it as the ideal context in which to explore the traditional CCCS framework. The influence of social classes in the formation of subcultures and the CCCS framework will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter. Cope (2010) claims that it was the location of Birmingham, half way between Liverpool and London, which contributed towards the development of the heavy metal sound. The 'Merseybeat' pop and rock sounds coming from Liverpool and the British blues revival in London created

> an ebb and flow of musical concept and style [that] spun a web of vibrant activity that not only shaped the 'Birmingham sound' but also influenced the musical and aesthetic direction of influential bands such as Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin. (Cope, 2010: 9)

Bennett (2001) and Walser (1993) link the musical origins of heavy metal to both the blues music of the 1950s and the rock music of the 1960s and 1970s. Walser particularly highlights the role of American rhythm and blues musicians such as Robert Johnson and Chuck Berry. He maintains that if it was not for prominent rock and roll musicians of the 1960s and 1970s, such as Jimmy Page and Eric Clapton, appropriating this music, then heavy metal would never have emerged. Straw (1983) argues that in the early 1970s, as psychedelic rock was waning in popularity, rock music went in three alternative directions. These were country rock, progressive rock (or prog rock) and heavy metal. Walser (1993: 3) describes how the heavy metal genre of music began 'to attain stylistic identity in the late 1960's as "harder" sort of hard rock and a relatively small but fiercely loyal subculture formed around it during the early 1970's'.

Although bands such as Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and Deep Purple did not identify themselves as 'heavy metal', they are considered as highly influential in formulating the distinctive heavy metal sound through using unusually fast and powerful rhythms, heavy riffs and incorporating themes concerning mythology and the occult. Their classification as 'heavy metal' is indicative of how bands can fall in and out of certain genre labels. Weinstein (2011) argues that mapping heavy metal's genealogy is difficult as it involves charting the development and combination of various genres and subgenres whose boundaries are highly contested by the scene's stakeholders (musicians, critics, fans, and promoters).

> It has no line of development with fixed stages; it is a cumulating archive. Complicating things further, styles of music that were once seen to be outside the genre became grandfathered into it years later. The music's fans add another level of complexity: those who consume mainstream media have a different understanding of metal than those who exclusively recur to specialized media, such as indie metal record labels. (Weinstein, 2011: 36)

Despite the difficulties in locating its emergence as a global subculture, there are specific periods that were fundamental to heavy metal's evolution. Walser and Weinstein identify the second generation of bands (e.g. Judas Priest; Motorhead) who were the first to claim the name 'heavy metal'. Influenced by the likes of Black Sabbath, these bands built their sound on heavy guitar riffs, emotional lyrics and spectacular live shows that incorporated greater pyrotechnics. Walser (1993) describes how these bands emerged at the same time that popular music criticism became increasingly professionalised. Despite the fact that critics disliked the 'brashness' of this form of music it suited them and the record companies to label and segment different genres at a time when the record industry was experiencing growth and a strategy of diversification. This was also reflected in the increasing specialisation of radio and television channels. Walser (2004: 366) writes that the uniqueness of heavy metal suits the culture industries as capitalism 'feeds on novelty as a spur to consumption and mass culture may colonise existing tensions and ambiguities for consumer purposes.' Despite the high number of 'sell out' tours and concerts, heavy metal bands did not receive much air play

and suffered a decline in record sales in the late 1970s as disco and mainstream rock took over the airwaves. However, heavy metal regained popularity in the early 1980s as a result of a British invasion of metal bands (e.g. Iron Maiden) known as the 'New Wave of British Heavy Metal' (NWOBHM[2]). 'For the most part, the new wave of metal featured shorter, catchier songs, more sophisticated production techniques, and higher technical standards. All of these characteristics helped pave the way toward greater popular success' (Walser: 1993: 12).

Additionally, Borthwick and Moy (2004) outline how heavy metal's increasing commercial success was aided by the growing number of specialised music magazines and the advent of music television (MTV). The popularity of MTV and the high frequency with which heavy metal videos featured on the channel, introduced young fans to a subculture to which individuals previously had to be introduced personally (Weinstein, 2000). It is not just the spectacular live shows which 'made it natural for television', as Walser (1993: 13) notes, but the visualisation of the unique style, fashion and rituals which the music videos communicated. The distinctive heavy metal style (which still largely remains the same) consisted of long hair for males, black heavy metal band t-shirts, combat trousers and leather or denim jackets (Straw, 1983; Weinstein, 2000).

Straw also observes the influence of satanic symbols and heroic male fantasy literature on the aesthetics of the scene. Despite the overt themes of masculine control and power that were evident in the music and the videos, heavy metal attracted a broad global audience in the 1980s and became part of the mainstream popular music industry. It declined in mainstream popularity in the early 1990s, as a consequence of the growing popularity of grunge and the moral panic surrounding the music. However, it emerged again at the end of the decade with

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[2] For a description of the varying genres and subgenres of heavy metal, see appendix 1

'Nu-metal', a hybrid of heavy metal that incorporates rap music, grunge and funk (Weinstein, 2011).

The globalisation of heavy metal

Wallach et al. (2011) describe the increasing global appeal of heavy metal music and the development of fan bases in countries within Asia, Africa and South America. Initially, the scene spread from America and Britain into other developed countries as scene members lengthened social ties through sharing fanzines, tape trading of albums and the touring of both small and big bands. This, in addition to radio and television, and Ireland's proximity to Great Britain, accounts for its growing presence in Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s (although there is no Irish heavy metal academic literature that documents this process). The increasing digitalisation of the music industry and the growing speed of internet search engines have expanded the global presence of the scene, incorporating 'less' developed countries (Weinstein, 2011). Weinstein compares heavy metal's global development to rave music in terms of its fluidity and its disregard for cultural or national boundaries. Harris (2000: 20) outlines how the spread of the global scene initially created local scenes which 'produced very similar sounding music and within which place was not musically attended to … the Extreme Metal scene was a truly global space, within which location was musically and institutionally unimportant.' Wallach et al. argue that heavy metal scenes do not differ much around the world. They explain that it would be difficult to make a distinction between a heavy metal gig in Cairo and one in New York:

> the fact that metal music, fashion, and behavior exist in all these places does not necessarily imply that they mean the same thing in these quite different cultural contexts … in every setting, metal is embedded in local cultures and histories and is experienced as part of a complex and historically specific encounter with the forces of modernity. (Wallach et al., 2011: 4)

Harris also describes the importance of local scenes to the development of heavy metal as a global subculture. He identifies the importance of San Francisco's Bay area to the development of 'thrash' metal and Scandinavian cities to the emergence of 'black' metal. He argues that the increasing popularity of black metal was indicative of a 'glocalising' effect on heavy metal scenes as 'it became more common to produce music that attended to place, cultural origin and nationhood' (Harris, 2000: 20). This, Harris argues, was a response to globalising forces and the increasingly homogenised sounds of local scenes.

Wallach et al. (2011) and Levine (2008) examine how different countries have cultivated unique metal sounds and subgenres related to their own culture and identity. Levine (2008) in particular, highlights how heavy metal has been used as a means of protest in theocratic Islamic countries. Weinstein (2011) cites such processes as the second phase of heavy metal's global diffusion. The first concerned the initial flow of heavy metal music from Great Britain and North America to the rest of the world. The second concerns how other countries began to formulate their own scenes and produce their own forms of heavy metal, which were in turn incorporated around the world. An example of this is the 'second wave' of black metal that emerged from Norway in the 1990s, that incorporated Norse, pagan, and Viking mythologies with traditional heavy metal sounds, creating a distinct scene that became popular globally (see Kahn-Harris, 2007). Ireland has also combined its unique culture with heavy metal sounds. Trafford and Pluskowski (2007) report that 'Celtic' metal, a subgenre of folk metal and heavily influenced by Scandinavian Viking metal, have blended traditional Celtic music with heavy metal sounds. However, Trafford and Pluskowski observe that such forms of heavy metal are not particularly popular in Ireland, let alone the wider global metal scene. Consequently, the Irish heavy metal scene is hard to distinguish from its British and North American counterparts. A more detailed discussion of Irish culture and its importance as a context within this study will be outlined in the next chapter of the literature review.

Hjelm et al. (2011: 14) argue that despite the differences in each country and each subgenre, the battle for legitimacy and criticisms of genres such as 'Nu-metal' and 'Grindcore', the overall heavy metal genre is united by a 'relatively stable canon of artists – Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Black Sabbath and Slayer being particularly revered – and a core of themes and preoccupations that are pursued across metal sub-genres'. The theme that unites the subgenres is that of transgression. This refers to the need to challenge boundaries of taste, whether it concerns the devil, the occult, violence or sex. This is particularly the case in more 'extreme' forms of heavy metal.

Extreme metal: A scene of transgression and control

Kahn-Harris (2007) argues that heavy metal is far more diverse than it is given credit for. This is clearly evident considering the number of subgenres that have been discussed thus far. Following heavy metal's globalisation and increasing popularity in the 1980s, a new form of 'extreme' or 'underground' metal emerged in response. Kahn-Harris describes how it was the influence of conservative pressure groups (i.e. the Parents Music Resource Centre), combined with growing fears in the metal community concerning the potential commercialisation of the genre, which contributed towards certain facets of the subculture moving underground and developing new and more experimental subgenres such as black, death, doom and thrash metal. Kahn-Harris refers to these terms under the umbrella term of 'extreme metal'. Weinstein (2000: 286) explains the genre's development as 'analogous to the way plants and animals in isolated areas evolve to produce wildly extreme forms'. Essentially, it is indicative of how the heavy metal scene as a whole (despite the differences amongst the subgenres) has developed over the years, becoming increasingly experimental, pushing the boundaries of what is acceptable artistically and what is considered appropriate subcultural behaviour.

The scene is 'extreme' in that it has evolved from traditional heavy metal culture sonically, thematically/lyrically and in terms of how the fans control their body. Kahn-Harris (2007) notes that the more 'extreme' subgenres of metal (that developed in response to the mainstream commercial success of the genre) lost any resemblance, in musical terms, to the blues music which can be linked to the emergence of the first heavy metal bands. He observes that there is a lack of improvisation in these genres (unlike early metal music) and that the transgression of the music centres on extreme metal's 'aim for total mastery and total control' (Kahn-Harris, 2007: 31). Although, to the untrained ear, the music sounds chaotic or like loud random noise, Kahn-Harris argues that it is an incredibly complex musical form that requires experience to understand and appreciate. Walser (1993) describes how some of the most influential heavy metal musicians have studied classical music, and notes the similarities between the genres. The 'extreme' sounds represent not only a departure from traditional heavy metal sounds, but a complete separation from the main characteristics of the music of western society.

This form of transgression also relates to the lyrics of the songs and the 'extreme' opinions that are communicated through press releases, fanzines, fan forums and other areas of the scene. This, for Kahn-Harris, represents one of the problematic aspects of heavy metal culture as a whole, as both musicians and fans have been known to experiment with satanic or fascist themes. The use of these symbols has long been a part of traditional heavy metal culture and this is one of the main reasons that it has attracted attention from concerned 'moral guardians'. Walser (2004) argues that satanic or dark fantasies are used by the fans to gain a sense of control, and that the bands use such symbols in a purely artistic sense, much like horror films. However, elements of the extreme scene have taken this symbolism seriously, with church burnings in Norway and a number of murders being connected to the scene and some of its members (see Spracklen, 2006; Hagen, 2011). Although only a very small

minority of the scene would participate in such modes of behaviour with any trace of seriousness, it is still a crucial aesthetic that separates forms of extreme metal from the rest of metal culture. Hjelm et al. (2011) note how extreme forms of metal, such as 1990s Norwegian black metal, use controversy (whether it is the scene members intentions or not) not only to maintain a level of subcultural capital (see Thornton, 1995) that distinguishes it from other subgenres within the wider heavy metal scene, but for attracting attention externally from the heavy metal scene. They suggest that incidents such as the church burnings act as a trigger for a moral panic which, similarly to the 'satanic panic' of the 1980s, creates a controversy. Hjelm et al. (2011: 8) argue that such controversy is crucial to the 'image' of heavy metal and 'an integral part of heavy metal culture – almost to the point where it is in the "nature" of heavy metal to be controversial'.

Literature relating to heavy metal moral panics and subcultural capital will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter. These subjects will also be considered under a figurational lens in the second chapter of the literature review. In fact, the increasing levels of experimentation and emphasis on control in the extreme metal scene makes it an interesting context in which to explore Elias's civilising processes. It is not just the development of new modes of behaviour and etiquette that grew out of the traditional heavy metal scene that is important from a figurational perspective, but how this behaviour relates to our understanding of what it means to be 'civilised' in polite society. Do such subcultures and modes of behaviour reflect a de-civilising curve? What do the fans get from engaging in these different parts of the metal subculture and how does this relate to the management of their emotions?

Heavy metal: A masculine subculture of control

Heavy metal subculture, regardless of the type of subgenre or location, has been described as sexist and misogynistic (Weinstein, 2000). Such criticisms emerged as heavy metal began to increase its popularity and global appeal, attracting a larger female fan base. Walser (2004)

reports that by the end of the eighties attendances at heavy metal concerts were split evenly between the genders. This increasing popularity can be attributed to the emergence of artists such as Bon Jovi (described by Weinstein, 2011 as 'metal lite'), who brought an increasing pop sensibility to heavy metal with songs about love and romance and other themes which did not typically feature in heavy metal songs. Additionally, Walser claims that 'glam' metal bands, such as Poison in the 1980s, became increasingly popular to both men and women because of the blending of the androgynous visual spectacle with traditional simplistic heavy metal sounds. However, there was an inevitable reaction to the increasing popularity of heavy metal and its presence on our television screens.

Heavy metal is singled out as example of an overtly masculine subculture and how 'on the whole, youth culture and subcultures tend to be some form of exploration of masculinity' (Straw, 1983: 87).This is particularly evident in the concert rituals (e.g. headbanging, crowd-surfing and moshing), which are used to demonstrate the dominance of masculine control in the scene. According to Collins (2009: 277-78):

> Slam-dancing [moshing] (almost always by males) consists of running into other dancers, pushing and flailing, bouncing like bumper-cars off each other and the human wall of spectators. A pit forms spontaneously when two or three people begin to crash into each other to the beat of the music; others give them space and form a circle around them.

Kaplan (1987: 17) claims that heavy metal bands are 'sexist' and Frith and McRobbie (1978: 74) describe heavy metal as 'cock rock'. They highlight the displays of male bonding, the sexist overtones that are present in heavy metal from the use of guitars and microphones as phallic symbols in performances to the sexist lyrics and themes pertaining to masculine dominance and control. Krenske and McKay (2000: 290) claim the masculine overtones emphasised by the bands in their music are reproduced in the rituals, the dress code and the bodily practices within the scene. They argue that this reinforces the 'hegemonic masculinity' of the subculture, whilst at the same time degrading women and homosexuals.

Walser (2004) argues that the relationship between genders in heavy metal is a microcosm of wider society. As opposed to critiquing or judging heavy metal based on the displays of male hegemony that are present in the scene, he claims that heavy metal is the perfect context in which to explore gender relations. He argues that the sexist overtones in metal are simply reproducing what is inherent in our patriarchal society and that 'popular music may teach us more than any other cultural form about the conflicts, conversations and bids for legitimacy and prestige that comprise cultural activity' (Walser, 2004: 346). In other words, he is suggesting that heavy metal as a culture is more knowingly aware of gender divisions because they are so explicit within the scene. The displays of hyper-masculinity in the scene are representative of a crisis of masculinity within modern society. Men are attempting to regain a sense of control and power through engaging in such subcultures. However, he also maintains that females can access the power that is usually associated with males in everyday society through heavy metal music. He is suggesting that the gender relations in the heavy metal scene are more complex and criticisms of the genre are based on a one-dimensional conception of the scene:

> Heavy metal as a genre includes a great variety of gender constructions, contradictory negotiations with dominant ideologies of gender that are invisible if one is persuaded by metal's critics that the whole enterprise is a monolithic symptom of adolescent maladjustment. (Walser, 2004: 367)

Walser is arguing that women can use the music scene to challenge traditional conceptions of gender. However, Krenske and McKay argue that women who do challenge traditional conceptions of gender through heavy metal music have to do so on men's terms. The females who participate in the scene do so in order to escape what they see as the oppressive conditions of their everyday lives. However, the escape from an oppressive context led them straight into another one in the form of the heavy metal scene.

The feminine aesthetics of certain aspects of the scene demonstrates the contradictory nature of heavy metal culture. Walser (2004: 57) describes the popular glam scene: 'members of bands like Poison or Motley Crue wear garish make-up, jewellery and stereotypically sexy clothes including fishnet stockings and scarves, and sport long, elaborate, "feminine" hairstyles'. Although long hair has been a common mainstay amongst male heavy metal musicians and fans, the use of make-up and fishnet stockings divided many of the fans, despite the similarities that the glam rock bands shared with other metal bands in terms of sound. It would seem that glam rock potentially represents a decline in the traditional hyper-masculine imagery that one would associate with heavy metal. However, according to Denski and Scholle (1992), the androgynous appearance of these bands is just an alternative way of affirming control over women, and falls in line with other subgenres of metal. It is, as Walser (2004: 361) suggests, men appropriating 'the visual signs of feminine identity in order to claim the powers of spectacularity for themselves'. He again argues that glam rock is an example of the complexity that is inherent in heavy metal ideology across all subgenres. Goulding and Saren (2009) consider the complexities of gender identity in their examination of the 'Whitby Goth Festival'. They describe the Goth's use of vampire imagery to blur the boundaries between the masculine and the feminine. Vampires demonstrate both the masculine (sharp, violent teeth) and the feminine (enveloping lips), which generates 'a profound erotic ambivalence that destabilizes the representation of sexual roles' (Goulding and Saren, 2009: 29). Goth fans are seen to be challenging established conceptions of gender. Kaplan (1987), however, claims that heavy metal's gender politics carry no importance and that the bands that are engaging in this form of androgyny are just doing so for the fun of rebellion, rather than articulating a message that has any real political meaning.

Attracting the detractors: Theorising heavy metal culture

Whilst attracting a broader base of fans, heavy metal also caught the attention of American conservatives (Weinstein, 2000). In addition to criticism concerning the apparent sexist nature of the subculture, it has been accused of possessing low moral standards. The unusual aesthetics that are associated with heavy metal, the position it takes on the margins of popular culture, in addition to the controversy and moral outrage which it has attracted for a variety of reasons, make heavy metal a potentially rewarding topic of research for academics from a variety of fields. Weinstein (2011) claims that research concerning heavy metal has drawn from multiple disciplines including social psychology, sociology, musicology and political science in what is becoming an increasingly popular site of study. This is not surprising when one considers the global popularity of heavy metal and its development into a series of subgenres (see Wallach et al. 2011). However, this was not always the case. The prominent literature regarding heavy metal in the 1980s and the early 1990s was mostly reactionary to the moral panic that surrounded the emergence of heavy metal and rap music in America.

Chastagner (1999), Lynkwiler and Gay (2000), Weinstein (2000), and Wright (2000) have documented the outrage that has surrounded the music genres of heavy metal and rap and in particular the role that the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) has played in attempting to blame such music for corrupting the youth of America during the 1980s and early 1990s. The PMRC essentially saw heavy metal as a threat to the moral fabric of society and link what they perceive as the 'uncivilised' characteristics of the music to the social problems of teenage suicide, murder, sexism, racism, drug abuse and violence. Lynkwiler and Gay (2000: 67) describe how they sustained a large media campaign which 'portrayed heavy metal music as dangerous' in that it glorified a lot of these issues, and Weinstein (2000: 264) suggests that 'much of the public believed that heavy metal was disgusting and dangerous, if not downright evil'.

The level of mistrust and panic that heavy metal caused in America even resulted in the prosecution of Heavy metal musicians. Richardson (1991) describes the high profile cases against Ozzy Osbourne and Judas Priest. In the case of Osbourne, his song 'Suicide Solution' was blamed for the suicide of a nineteen-year old teenager, and for Judas Priest it was alleged that their music was responsible for the suicide of one teenager and the attempted suicide of another. Such court cases and moral panics were supported by academic studies and media articles (see Gore, 1987; King, 1988). In the midst of the PMRC campaign, the psychologist Paul King (1988) testified in court and argued that there was a correlation between mental illness, drugs and listening to music such as heavy metal. His argument stemmed from research which found that 83 per cent of his patients listened to heavy metal. This issue of cause and effect is controversial in studies of heavy metal. Quantitative research conducted by Stack et al. (1994), Scheel and Westefeld (1999) Lacourse et al. (2001), and King all identify the link between heavy metal and a list of well-known suicide indicators which include alienation and substance abuse. Lacourse et al. link substance abuse to suicide and argue that adolescent heavy metal fans were more likely to drink alcohol or use drugs than their adolescent counterparts who did not listen to heavy metal. Consequently it was suggested that because of their greater levels of substance abuse there is an increased probability that they will possess suicidal tendencies.

Alienation is a theme that is common in heavy metal research. Arnett (1996: 17) writes: 'Heavy metal is a reflection of the alienation that many adolescents feel as a result of the lack of instruction provided to them by their culture, including family, school, community and religion.' It is because of this disaffection that they seek out music such as heavy metal. As a result, Lacourse et al. argue that the fans are more likely to engage in a form of hero-worshipping when they find something (heavy metal music) that communicates to them and connects with their own personal sense of estrangement. This, in addition to the greater

emphasis that they place on their peer group (i.e. other metal fans), will supposedly lead to an increased risk of suicide. They insist that an over-reliance on peers is indicative of problems in an individual's identity formation, which can then result in substance abuse. It is evident that a lot of the connections are tenuous at best. Another example is provided by Stack et al., who use a sample of adolescents who have been considered at some point suicidal and found that 50 per cent of the adolescents surveyed had subscriptions to heavy metal magazines. This is indicative of some of the research that has been carried out on suicide and its connection with heavy metal. There is obviously an assortment of other factors that can contribute to the decision of a young person to take his or her life. In the case of Stack et al., it is surprising that they believe that there is a significant correlation between magazine subscriptions and suicide, considering that heavy metal was one of the most popular genres of music at the time. It could also be quite possible that 50 per cent of the participants liked football, but using the same cause-and-effect strategy does not seem to fit here. It is clear that there is an agenda to link heavy metal with suicide and this could potentially skew the findings.

Scheel and Westefeld (1999) raised the possibility that many of these fans may have nursed suicidal tendencies before their interest in heavy metal developed. Lester and Whipple (1996) conducted a study which suggested that past depression or suicidal tendencies and the consumption of heavy metal could not be related to present feelings of depression, proposing that depression may be a transient state for many young people and that the preference for heavy metal could be linked to altering life circumstances. McFerran et al. (2007: 11) suggest that whilst heavy metal can be connected to an individual's harmful mental health, most of their participants used heavy metal to control their mood, and suggested that this 'finding supports a more complex relationship between selected music and mood, which is influenced more by intention of listening than by the inherent nature of the music itself'. Saarikallio and Erkkila (2007) highlight how previous research relating to the effects of music on individuals

has mostly focused on the negative impact of the music. In their research they examine how mood can be improved through listening to music. Field et al. (1998) have explored the effect of rock music on adolescents who have been diagnosed with depression and report that after listening to this music the respondents showed improved biochemical measures (meaning they were less depressed), although the respondents did not report any personal feelings regarding mood alteration. The positive effect of the music could relate to any cathartic effect that the music elicits. Arnett (1996) in particular describes the emotional catharsis that many of the fans he interviewed experienced in listening to heavy metal. Following the 'moral panic' that surrounded heavy metal, he cited the failure of American society to socialise its youth as a defining reason why teenagers sought out cultures such as heavy metal, which provide feelings of camaraderie and an escape from the alienating features of modern society.

Heavy metal is still somewhat framed as a problem in Arnett's book and, understandably, some heavy metal academics have sought to protect their subculture from attack. Walser (1993) and Berger (1999), writing from a musicology perspective, observe the criticism heavy metal has attracted from popular music journalists and academics. They claim they fail to take the genre seriously and dismiss it as 'noise'. Tsitos (1999) and Weinstein (2000) defend their subculture from criticism from the liberal left and the conservative right but tend to mythologise or romanticise the genre and its fans. This is a potential problem that will be discussed in more detail in the methodology section. This is not to say that all 'insider' heavy metal literature accounts suffer from this strong advocacy position. Walser (1992, 1993, 2004), Kahn-Harris (2007), and Waksman (2009) have all commented on the negative aspects of heavy metal culture in conjunction with its positive and empowering characteristics. These authors focus more on the history of heavy metal, its origins, meanings and the development of rituals and customs that are shared around the world and reinterpreted in the localised context.

Evidently, the academic literature on heavy metal is quite fragmented with no dominant framework. The most widely used approach to the study of music fans and consumer subcultures has developed from the CCCS and the post-subcultural frameworks that have emerged in more recent times. These frameworks have tended to overlook heavy metal. However, consumer research regarding consumer communities or subcultures is highly influenced by Maffesoli (1996) inspired post-subcultural literature and to a lesser extent traditional subculture perspectives. Consequently, I examine these theories in detail, determine their suitability for examining heavy metal as a context, and additionally introduce the potential benefits of using a figurational approach in research concerning music fans.

Subculture theory

Bennett and Kahn-Harris (2004) observe that it is unknown where the term 'subculture' emerged. The concept can, however, be traced back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where it was used to describe London apprentices who displayed a distinct group identity in the ways in which they dressed and behaved.

British researchers in the early part of the twentieth century adopted the term 'subculture' to explain criminality and the deviant behaviour of young people (Blackman, 2005). They mostly relied on applying psychology and psycho-analysis theory to their analysis of individual acts of deviance. However, the subcultural model did not really develop until the Chicago School began to challenge previous studies on deviance, insisting that such behaviour was a normal response to social conditions. 'Their aim was to explain the social and cultural context of deviance without reducing young people's actions to symptoms of psychological inadequacy' (Blackman, 2005: 3). This shift from a positivist, more psychologically-oriented perspective on criminology and deviance studies was similar to the sociocultural shift in modern consumer research. Arnould and Thompson (2007) argue that

adopting psychologically-based consumer behaviour paradigms to explain the behaviour of consumers is overly constraining and dependent on the assumptions of rationality and cognitive processing. Similar to CCT, the Chicago School sought to understand actors' experiences through empirical ethnographic research. However, the Chicago School differed drastically from modern CCT in terms of how social structures were incorporated into their analytic framework. There was a greater emphasis from the Chicago School in mapping the territories in which these 'deviant' groups gathered and in linking their deviancy to wider societal conditions and adapting social theory to explain such behaviour.

British subcultural theory pre-World War Two was preoccupied with psychological and psychoanalytic frameworks (Blackman, 2005). Here, individuals who belonged to 'deviant' groups were considered mentally unstable, lacking in morals and possessing substandard intelligence. Humphries (1981: 19) claims that these studies were based on a defective methodological approach and 'failed to situate behaviour in the broader class context of poverty, inequality and exploitation'. Post-war, the Birmingham School and its CCCS looked to bypass such psychologically-based theories of subculture and instead focus on the emergence of youth groups in the context of structural changes and social class divisions, as opposed to labelling members of these groups as emotionally or intellectually inferior. Hall and Jefferson's (1976) edited book *Resistance through Rituals* plays the most significant role in outlining the CCCS framework. This collection of essays documents the unique style of working-class/lower-middle-class subcultures such as 'mods', 'teds' and 'rockers', and theorises it as the collective response of youth to the dominant culture. They describe how the British youth of the post-war generation felt the need to respond (symbolically) because of a sense of disillusionment they felt regarding political and cultural institutions and the perceived distance between the social-classes. Clarke et al. (1976: 15) write:

> Through dress, activities, leisure pursuits and life-style, they may project a different cultural response or 'solution' to the problems posed for them by their material and social class position and experience. But the membership of a sub-culture cannot protect them from the determining matrix of experiences and conditions which shape the life of their class as a whole.

They employ Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony to explain the relationship between the dominant and subordinate classes. Hegemony is essentially the process of dominant classes exhibiting social and cultural leadership over the subordinate classes. Clarke et al. (1976: 39) argue that it works 'primarily by inserting the subordinate classes into key institutions and structures which support the power and social authority of the dominant order'. Hegemony has to be won and is determined by the balance of power within a society at the time. It is achieved not through direct rule, but through cooperation and consent. Hebdige (2002) [1979] maintains that subcultures (particularly punks in Hebdige's research) engage in counter-hegemonic practices through appropriating objects and symbols from the institutions into which they are incorporated, and using them to communicate their resistance against the social authority. For example, Clarke (1976) explains how the CCCS have borrowed the Levi-Strauss concept of 'bricolage' to understand the significance of how such symbols are adapted. He offers the example of the 'Teddy Boys' who created a distinct subcultural style through appropriating Edwardian fashions. This provided the previously upper-class Edwardian appearance with a new meaning and at the same time seemed to communicate symbolic resistance against the upper class. This, Hebdige holds, is the meaning of subcultural style.

Moral panic

Traditionally, conservative reactions to what is perceived as 'deviant' or uncivilised behaviour by subcultures have been theorised in cultural studies as 'moral panics'. Cohen (2002: 1) defines a moral panic as a

condition, episode, person or group of persons [which] emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians, and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible.

Cohen was interested in the reaction that groups such as 'mods' and 'rockers' received in the 1960s as a result of their unusual subcultural style and behaviour, which seemed to challenge 'established' society. They did this through their use of music, fashion, violence, alcohol and drugs. Consequently, their 'deviant' behaviour provoked a reaction from both the media and the British government. Cohen is concerned with the extreme severity of this reaction, how this social tension developed and the specific conditions that lead to our society questioning its moral standing. Cohen (2002: 20) reports the newspapers' sensationalist headlines and their use of phrases such as 'riot' and 'orgy of destruction' in their description of events that Cohen claims were nowhere near as terrible as reported and most certainly not 'without parallel in English history', as one newspaper editor described it (Cohen, 2002: 149). The case of the mods and rockers is used as a microcosm in which to analyse the wider societal reactions to and consequences of moral panics.

In order to explain this reaction, he introduces a deviance amplification model which positions the actions of the 'deviants' and the societal reaction in a structural and cultural context. Cohen (2002: 167) first identifies the initial problem which developed as a result of the working-class position of the mods and rockers. This then leads to their 'deviant' reaction through their use of style and music, which in turn creates a societal reaction, which Cohen believes, contains elements of misperception and misrepresentation, due to concerns regarding the long-term moral health of society. As a result of this apprehension, the media sensationalises the problem and creates stereotypes which lead to further deviance and polarisation, thus confirming the stereotype.

According to Brown (2003), heavy metal subculture has been ignored in CCCS subcultural studies. This is despite the similarities it shares with other subcultures such as 'teds', 'mods' or 'punks' in terms of its unique subcultural style, the importance associated with resistance and the moral panics that it has created. It is also unusual considering the significance of Birmingham as a city, important both to the origins of heavy metal and the development of the CCCS in the University of Birmingham. Bennett (2001), Walser (2004) and Kahn-Harris (2007) maintain that as heavy metal has become increasingly popular it has transcended class dimensions. However, Kahn-Harris suggests that although there is a lack of evidence that demonstrates there is any real dominant class within the scene, it appears that it is still made up of predominantly lower-middle-class young white males. Weinstein (2000: 114-15) argues that heavy metal has a working-class or blue-collar ethos, citing its emphasis on male bonding, alcohol consumption and 'boisterous' behaviour. It would seem that the 'deviant' behaviour of young heavy metal fans, its growing popularity in the 1970s and 1980s, its connection to the working classes of the English midlands and the moral panic that it created (mostly in America), would make it the ideal context in which to explore the cultural studies framework.

Brown (2003: 213) believes that it is has been ignored because of the apparent lack of a political agenda within the heavy metal scene, with Weinstein (2000: 115) suggesting that 'the members of the metal subculture normally do not have the sense of themselves as political actors in the way that punks did.' Although recent research into heavy metal has highlighted the political significance of the scene's increasing presence in theocratic Islamic countries (see LeVine, 2008; Hjelm et al. 2011), Brown suggests that western heavy metal scenes (at least in America and Britain) have been almost completely de-politicalised. Brown (2003: 213) argues that the heavy metal scene creates challenges with regards to its compatibility with 'the emergent features of the youth culture with the conceptual framework

the CCCS developed to explain the striking synchrony or "homology" of elements of style to the class "messages" that subcultures carried'. This is a reflection of a wider problem with the subcultural theoretical framework. The flaws of this approach will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter in the 'criticisms of subculture theory' section.

Subcultures of consumption

Although music is crucially important to the subcultures discussed by the Birmingham School, it is referred to as just another material or object which is used to create a unique style (Brown, 2003). The significance of such forms of subcultural resistance is that the increased spending power of the post-war teenager provided them with the materials with which to demonstrate their opposition through greater levels of consumption. The consumption of subcultural styles attracted attention from the media and essentially provided a greater visibility to these new forms of youth culture. This created what Clarke et al. (1976: 51) refer to as a 'generational consciousness', a means by which members of working-class subcultures or even the middle-class counter-culture of the 1960s could differentiate themselves from their parents. According to Clarke et al. the symbolic messages that are communicated through subcultural style convey what is only an imaginary solution. 'In ideology, men do indeed express, not the real relation between them and their conditions of existence, but the way they live the relation between them and the conditions of their existence' (Clarke et al.,1976: 48). In other words, this symbolic resistance does not offer any solution to working-class problems concerning education, unemployment and the gap between the rich and the poor.

The term 'subculture' has been adopted more recently in consumer-oriented research, with greater emphasis placed on how individuals construct meaning and identity through consumption in subcultural participation, rather than focusing on consumption as a 'solution' or 'response' to cultural hegemony. Goulding and Saren (2009: 27) write:

> …there is gaining acceptance that subcultural contexts offer us an opportunity to glimpse the spectacular (Penaloza, 1998), the extraordinary and, what might be considered deviant, aspects of consumer behavior. They are sites of contestation where orthodoxy is challenged and identities are constructed and 'performed'.

In particular, Schouten and McAlexander's (1995) 'subculture of consumption' framework has been referred to widely in CCT literature. Similarly to the traditional subcultural framework, they identify characteristics of loyalty and shared commitment to certain brands or consumer activities. Consumers are not separated into convenient categories in order to explain consumption patterns. It is the consumption of objects and the meanings, identities and relationships that form as a result which attract the attention of consumer researchers in subcultural contexts. This seems to be how consumer culture theory interprets what Hebdige (2002) [1979] refers to as the 'meaning of style'. Schouten and McAlexander (1995: 59) explain:

> In our consumer culture people do not define themselves according to sociological constructs. They do so in terms of the activities, objects, relationships that give their life meaning. It is the objects, and consumer goods above all, that substantiate their place in the social world. It is through objects that they relate to other people and make judgments about shared values and interests.

However, the terms 'subculture' or 'subculture of consumption' have tended to be adopted by consumer researchers for contexts that would not normally be considered 'deviant' in the traditional subcultural or criminological sense (see Martin, 2009). This is one of the main differences between the CCCS framework and the subcultures of consumption framework. Schouten and McAlexander use examples of mundane activities such as gardening or fly-fishing as embodying the subculture of consumption framework. Grossberg (1992) argues that the term has been overextended somewhat. Kozinets (2001) acknowledges the theoretical background of the meaning of the term 'subculture' in terms of its relationship to the moral order. He writes that 'it may be theoretically useful [for consumer researchers] to designate a related term completely free of these connotations' (Kozinets, 2001: 68). However, Miles

(1995) suggests that the CCCS focus on the relationship between resistance and symbolic consumption caused them to ignore the variety of meanings and identities that individuals construct through consumption. In other words, consumer researchers have adopted the term 'subculture' as a useful concept in which to understand any alternative form of consumption or committed relationship between a particular brand and a consumer community. The term is no longer directly associated with its roots in criminology (see Martin, 2009).

Brownlie et al. (2007: 112) describe how the concept of subculture rested on the notion of style 'as the basis for strategies of resistance enacted through the conspicuous consumption of style-inscribed commodities'. Despite the fact that none of the CCCS literature or Willis's study on 'bikers' (1978) is cited by Schouten and McAlexander, the emphasis on a shared group identity, a hierarchical social structure and 'modes of symbolic expression' (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995: 43) within the Harley Davidson subculture, shares many commonalities with previous cultural studies (e.g. Hebdige, 2002 [1979]). Although their study shares many similarities in this regard, it also differs in that they look at 'Harley' owners across many different social categories and lifestyles and base their findings on empirical data as opposed to the CCCS's (mostly) theoretically-constructed notions of subculture. The use of ethnography and depth-interviews and a more individualised focus on the experiential and emancipatory aspects of subcultural consumption was in many ways a preamble for the post-subcultural conceptions of 'consumer' subcultures or 'tribes' that followed this research (e.g. Kozinets, 1997, 2002; Cova and Cova 2002; Goulding et al. 2002; Goulding et al. 2009). This also extended to critiques of the initial Schouten and McAlexander subcultures of consumption framework (see Kates, 2002; Martin et al. 2006; Schouten et al. 2007). This literature will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Criticisms of subcultural theory: Moving towards a more consumer-orientated framework

The CCCS framework has played a significant role in informing our understanding of youth cultures and also subcultures of consumption to an extent. However, it has been subject to a number of criticisms which has led to the development of new theories competing for supremacy in a field of study Muggleton (2005) refers to as 'post-subcultural' studies. Firstly, traditional subculture theory has been criticised for the emphasis that it places on class relations as an explanation for the formation of subcultures. Bennett (2005: 256) argues that using class structures to theorise the behaviour of young people seriously undervalues the 'agency of youth in creatively resisting the circumstances of their everyday lives'. Although, consumer researchers (e.g. Schouten and McAlexander, 1995) began to introduce the subcultural concept into their accounts of consumer culture, it is noticeable that less attention has been paid to the influence of social and structural processes. This is evidence of what Askegaard and Linnet (2011) describe as a more agency-based approach. Goulding et al. (2002: 262) comment on how CCCS scholars used 'structuralist accounts to explain behaviours which are effectively examples of consumer autonomy'. Rather than focusing on categories of age, class or gender in distinguishing the nature of individual subcultures or brand communities, post-subcultural research has instead placed a strong emphasis on the relations between consumers within the subculture, the flow of subcultural capital and the 'identity projects' offered through participation (e.g. Thornton, 1995; Kozinets, 2001; Goulding et al., 2002; Goulding et al., 2009; Kahn-Harris, 2007).

Clarke claims that the CCCS paid too much attention to 'spectacular' subcultures and consequently they presented an analysis which was 'essentialist and non-contradictory' (1990: 82). Bennett and Kahn-Harris (2004) and Muggleton (2005) have pointed to the rigidity of the subcultural concept. They cite the homogenous descriptions of youth culture and the lack of attention paid to older participants and females, and the opportunity that such

subcultures provide for individuals from a variety of social class backgrounds. Schouten and McAlexander's (1995) research on the Harley Davidson 'subculture of consumption' has been critiqued in the marketing literature for similar reasons. Holt (1997) argues that the subculture of consumption framework presents difficulties in that it assumes that similar consumption practices imply similar identities. Kates (2002) suggests that this framework fails to account for how status or hierarchies can be contested and negotiated within a variety of different contexts that take on different meanings for individuals within a subculture in his study of gay communities. Goulding et al. (2012: 6) also claim that subcultures of consumption and brand communities tend to place too much significance on one particular brand or consumption activity. This differs from consumer tribes (which will be discussed in the next section) where there is a greater emphasis on the social relationships between consumers rather than the objects of consumption.

In particular, the CCCS has been criticised for the absence of a significant female subcultural perspective. LeBlanc (1999) argues that the majority of the early subcultural theorists were male and hence they tended to sympathise with and romanticise male groups. This dominance created a clear polarisation within youth culture research. McRobbie (originally a member of the CCCS) insists that it is impossible to attain a full and valid description of subcultures, regardless of whether they are dominated by males, if you do not account for the role that women play in men's lives (McRobbie, 2003). The CCCS's theorisation of groups such as 'teds' and 'mods' focused on their public displays on the streets, but never looked at what occurred behind the scenes when they went home to their mothers and girlfriends. What was the significance of their role in the formation of subcultures? McRobbie and Garber (1976) have previously put forward the concept of 'bedroom culture' as an explanation for the absence of women in traditional subculture studies. Weinzierl and Muggleton (2003: 18) write:

> If male subcultures organize largely in the public sphere of the neighbourhood, then teenage girls are more likely to be engaged in a culture of pop 'fandom', the buying of records, magazines and posters that can be consumed and displayed within the private sphere of home.

The teenage girl's life in the bedroom is more centred on the pop idol and the fantasy of romance rather than the music itself. The concept of acting upon or interpreting the music was never considered. Lincoln criticises McRobbie and Garber for their failure to recognise the importance of music to young women. She writes, influenced partly by Tia DeNora, that

> for everyday young people, music is highly significant and is a medium through which they are able to create 'soundtracks' to their lives, the complexities of which reach way beyond 'the code of romance' attributed to pop music in McRobbie and Garber's bedroom culture. (Lincoln, 2005: 401)

This approach differs markedly from McRobbie and Garber's research, which argues that women's relationship with music is very simple. They use it as a form of escapism. There is no consideration of how the girls incorporate/resist the music in relation to their lives and wider society. This again mirrors a wider problem for subculture theory in terms of its rigidity. LeBlanc (1999) and Lincoln (2005) have sought to provide a more fluid description of the female's role within subcultures. Martin et al. (2006) and Schouten et al. (2007) have acknowledged similar flaws in the subculture of consumption framework. They have sought to address them by providing a more detailed account of women in the Harley Davidson subculture and through developing a more fluid conception of how hierarchies and status are defined in such communities. It is through examining women in such masculine environments that consumer researchers can highlight the views of the minority that have previously been ignored in subcultural studies (Martin et al., 2006: 171). Martin et al. explain that women are motivated to engage in such a hyper-masculine environment as part of an ongoing identity project in which they can challenge the traditional conceptions of femininity. This raises questions about how gender is constructed in the similar hyper-masculine environment of heavy metal subculture. Schouten et al. (2007: 67) write: 'As our

wider culture evolves, subcultures of consumption also evolve, taking on new shapes and forms, leaving behind old meanings and developing new ones'. Here, the emphasis is placed on the 'lived experience' of all cultural consumers. Consequently, this has led to the employment of research methods that seek to capture such 'experiences' whilst they are occurring.

The CCCS has been criticised for its lack of empirical research. Muggleton (2005) describes how data was collected via second-hand sources. The CCCS employed a semiotic methodology where they provided their own understandings of the 'the meaning of style' and the explanations of what such subcultures represented. They did this without actually asking any of the participants that were involved in these youth cultures about their personal experiences. Clarke (1990) argues that this approach was too limiting and told us nothing of how subcultural styles became popular, how subcultures declined, transformed or survived. Kahn-Harris (2007: 17) observed that 'their interaction within "everyday" society was only weakly explored, as subculture was assumed to be the primary context for interaction and identity.' However, Martin (2009) suggests that this critique of the CCCS has been exaggerated and only ever really applied to Hebdige's (2002) [1979] research on punk subcultures. Such criticisms have led to a burgeoning emphasis on frameworks that emphasise the fluid and emancipatory elements of subcultural participation and consumer culture. Such perspectives will be discussed in the next section.

Post-subcultural research: The time of the 'consumer tribes'

Building on the flaws of CCCS subcultural theory, Weinzierl and Muggleton (2003: 3) describe the emergence of a postmodern perspective that has sought to 'capture the experience of fragmentation, flux and fluidity that is central to contemporary youth culture'. Hesmondhalgh (2005) comments in particular on the increasing use of the terms 'neo-tribe'

or 'scene' in youth and popular music studies. Kahn-Harris (2007) uses the concept of a 'scene' with which to describe the institutions, practices and interactions of extreme heavy metal fans and musicians who are situated between the global and local nexus. 'The advantage of the scene is that it locates musical practices in specific spatial and temporal locations' (Kahn-Harris, 2007: 19). However, Hesmondhalgh (2005) argues that the term 'scene' has been used in too many contradictory ways. He cites the different definitions contested by authors such as Cohen (1991), Straw (1991) and Shank (1994) and suggests that as a result it has ceased to be a useful concept.

It seems counterintuitive to dismiss a concept because it has competing definitions, considering that contested meanings and ideas is what creates academic discussion and enhances knowledge. However, Hesmondhalgh does raise an important issue that can also be considered within the context of the 'neo-tribe' framework. In this thesis, I use the terms 'scene' and 'subculture' rather loosely to describe heavy metal fans and their behaviour as a collective. This is perhaps an example of Bennett's explanation of the phrase 'subculture' as a '"catch all" term used to describe a range of disparate collective practices whose only obvious relation is that they all involve young people' (Bennett, 1999: 605). He claims that the media are responsible for the widespread use of the term and I argue that the phrase 'scene' has undergone a similar process. Both fans and academics use both terms freely, without knowledge of the academic distinctions and meanings behind the two terms, such that theoretical distinctions have become redundant. Hence, I use both the terms 'subculture' and 'scene' interchangeably to describe the collective of heavy metal music fans. However, I do not necessarily use these terms from a theoretical perspective but on the basis that they are commonly used, both in academia and everyday life. In this section, I will place a greater focus on the 'neo-tribe' concept rather than that of the 'scene'. This is because the tribal

framework has been adapted by consumer culture scholars to describe subcultures or cultures of consumption.

Neo-tribes: Theoretical background

The term 'neo-tribe- is drawn from Michel Maffesoli's seminal work entitled *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*. Maffesoli (1996) critiques research (e.g. Jameson; Baudrillard) that places emphasis on the 'negative' effect of the 'postmodern condition' – the fragmentation of the 'self', the decline in traditional institutions and loss of community. In contrast, Maffesoli argues that the conditions of postmodernity have actually facilitated the birth of a new tribal era and the decline of individualism. Having experienced an extreme form of individualism, people 'are embarking on a reverse movement to recompose their social universe' (Cova and Cova, 2002: 596). Maffesoli believes that we are experiencing a nostalgia following the decline of modernist institutions, and as a result we look to long past generations for direction on how to live our lives as a community, an emotional community. Maffesoli (1996: 11): 'we are witnessing the tendency for a rationalized "social" to be replaced by an empathetic "sociality" which is expressed by a succession of ambience, feelings and emotion.' In other words, Maffesoli is celebrating the movement from a controlling modernist academic approach, where our actions are seen as a means of economic forces, to a social approach where identity is constructed 'as part of an ecological interaction' (Maffesoli, 2007: 29).

Maffesoli places great emphasis on the power of the 'tribal aesthetic', the aura of shared sentiment within social groups and how this creates a collective bond. He describes this as the ethical experience. It is not the ideology or the commitment of these temporary groups that is important, it is the shared experience of the emotional community. Maffesoli (2007: 32) writes: 'Big meetings, large gatherings of all kinds, group trances, sporting events, musical excitement and religious or cultural effervescence – all raise the individual to a form of

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plenitude that s/he cannot find in the grayness of economic or political functionality.' Hence, it can be seen how this approach has been adapted to consumption contexts such as sporting events (e.g. O'Connor and Brown, 2007) and music fandom (e.g. Bennett, 1999; Goulding et al. 2002; Goulding and Shankar, 2011).

Consumer tribes

Maffesoli's 'tribal' theory was offered by many cultural studies and consumer researchers as a possible solution to the conceptual problems in their respective fields. Bennett (1999), Goulding et al. (2002), and Goulding and Shankar (2011) all use the term 'neo-tribes' to describe the transient, playful nature of contemporary dance or rave music participants. The 'ravers' are not united by a strict formal code like the 'punk' and 'mod' subcultures theorised by the CCCS. Bennett (1999: 614) believes that 'neo-tribalism provides a more satisfactory framework [than the CCCS] as it allows for the shifting nature of youth's musical and stylistic preference and the essential fluidity of youth cultural groups'. Goulding et al. (2002: 261) suggest that the development of new communities, epitomised by rave and dance culture, facilitates the construction of identity, the sharing of emotions and 'the need for escape, engagement and prolonged hedonism'.

Arnould and Thompson (2005: 873-4) and Cova et al. (2007a) describe how the tribal perspective has been incorporated into a variety of consumer culture contexts from French in-line roller skaters (Cova and Cova, 2001) to Stockholm Yuppies (Ostberg, 2007). Goulding et al. (2002: 263-265) explain how there has been a growing recognition within the consumer behaviour discipline that individuals construct a sense of themselves and the groups they belong to through their management of the marketplace resources that are available to them. Fundamentally, they maintain that consumption can be considered in one of two ways. Firstly, we can view consumption as something that we do as a means of temporary 'compensation' in what is a fragmented, alienating society. One can also look at it with

greater optimism (see First and Venkatesh, 1995). Here, the conditions of postmodernism are considered a 'liberatory force' (Goulding et al., 2002: 264). Individuals are able to draw upon symbolic resources from increasingly accessible media technologies, lengthen social ties, and develop meaningful (although temporary) emotional communities.

Goulding et al. (2012: 4-5) summarise the differences between consumer tribes and subcultures of consumption. Unlike subcultures of consumption, there is no defined hierarchy or commitment to one specific 'tribe'. Membership is transient, as different tribes emerge and disappear, and rarely does membership of a specific tribe involve exclusion from another:

> Tied to multiplicity of membership and fluidity of identity, tribal consumption is often devoid of the long-term moral responsibility or religious zeal felt by members of a brand community….Instead, value is placed on the possibility to invigorate passion and generate social links through deconstructing and reassembling marketplace resources. (Goulding et al., 2012: 5)

Cova et al. (2007b) explore the emotions experienced, the articulation of meanings and identities, and the creative and fluid relationships that individuals establish through tribal participation. They describe consumer tribes as 'activators', 'double agents', 'plunderers' and 'entrepreneurs'. Through explaining consumer tribes in these terms, Cova et al. are highlighting the creative aspect of tribes, who invert and play with the meanings of brands as part of ongoing identity projects. They are stressing the changing relationship between producers and consumers, and the increasing power that such consumers exert in the marketplace. Kozinets (1999) believes that tribal consumption is vital to our sense of self and that the strength of such relationships within a tribe will determine the level of involvement and hence consumption. In the context of this thesis, the question is whether the consumer tribe framework can be used to illuminate our understanding of heavy metal music fans? This particularly relates to the nature of the social relationships that heavy metal consumers develop (both with other fans and musicians) and the types of emotion that they experience in tribal participation.

Consumer productivity: The changing consumer–producer relationship

Goulding et al. (2012) observe how consumers learn about brands or become socialised into tribes through engaging with both subcultural and mass media. In addition to creating more knowledgeable consumers, it has also provided them with an increasing voice and influence. There is a growing acceptance in consumer behaviour literature that there has been a shift in power between the consumer and the producer. Cova et al (2007b: 20) describe 'how a tribe is no longer trying to resist economic actors or the market but instead itself became a legitimate economic actor in its marketplace, without losing any of its communitarian nature or forms'. In other words, so-called tribes are actively taking part in the creation and maintenance of products/services. They have a powerful influence in shaping the meanings associated with them.

Cova and Dalli (2009) suggest that the consumer's readiness to participate is dependent on the creativity of the consumer and their access to new technologies which have provided the platform for such creativity and engagement. This can be particularly related to research concerning fan cultures and Fiske's (1992: 38–9) concept of 'fan productivity'. This is 'material which fans produce and circulate amongst themselves, texts which are often crafted with production values as high as in any official culture'. Jenkins (1992) describes such fans as textual poachers, engaging with and producing materials based on music, film and television. The production of such material is generally associated with more dedicated fans who have reached a stage in their fandom where they express the semiotic meanings they have received from mass media within their own culture. This was particularly demonstrated in the early days of the internet where fans would create videos, pictures and texts that would extend the meaning of their object of fandom and communicate their own unique interpretation of it. However, as the internet has developed into a mass medium, the consumer tribes literature has recognised that 'fan productivity' has extended beyond the

accounts of traditional fan cultures. The marketing literature initially focused on cult brands such as Apple (Muniz and Schau, 2005) and Star Trek (Kozinets, 2001). However, this has extended to mass market convenience-based products such as Nutella (Cova and Pace, 2006) and influenced the marketing strategies of products such as Nike, Walkers and Heineken among many others. Such brands have encouraged their consumers to create their own products and advertisements. Consequently they have ceded control of their brands, in varying degrees, to consumers.

Consumers are well aware of the commercial nature of the market. However, any opposition or resistance to escape the market tends to be temporary. This is despite the shift in power towards consumers, as consumers learn how to say no 'to forms of marketing they find invasive or unethical' (Cova et al., (2007b: 19). The illusion of authenticity is important here as marketing managers (as well as the tribes themselves) have to ensure that their products or participation in a consumer tribe appears to be as close to the outside of the marketplace as possible. Mitchell and Imrie (2011) describe the benefits that marketers can attain from a brand/consumer loyalty perspective. Through targeting consumer tribes, they can facilitate consumer–consumer relations; develop spaces in which the participants can share their passions and also gain knowledge from influential members in each tribe.

Subcultural capital: The fluidity of hierarchy and status in consumer communities
However, the challenge for marketers lies in actually developing a level of subcultural capital in which to infiltrate consumer tribes. There is also the possibility of unintentionally decreasing the credibility of the tribe as a result of their commercial presence. The issue of subcultural capital has been mentioned in passing already in terms of how it is used to distinguish forms of hierarchy within tribes or subcultures. In this section, I will discuss the concept in detail and explain how it has been appropriated into post-subcultural research regarding consumer tribes.

Thornton (1995) developed the concept of subcultural capital as a framework in which to understand the fluid boundaries and hierarchies within British 'club culture'. Drawing from Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, Thornton explains how club cultures, and youth cultures in general, develop hierarchies on the strength of one's taste and knowledge of the practices and meanings of a particular subculture. This differs from determining status on the basis of an individual's education, social class or family background. Bourdieu has written at length about how cultural capital produces social status and that essentially one's tastes are an indicator of one's social class. However, Thornton (1995: 11) writes that 'it is possible to observe subspecies of capital operating within other less privileged domains. In thinking through Bourdieu's theories in relation to the terrain of youth culture, I've come to conceive of "hipness" as a form of subcultural capital.' Essentially status or hierarchy is based on adapting to changing music and stylistic fashions and displaying knowledge of the latest trends. The only demographic which is used as a basis of distinction in such subcultures is that of age where members of club cultures tend to be below thirty.

Post-subcultural and consumer researchers (e.g., Kates, 2002; Brownlie et al., 2007; Mitchell and Imrie, 2011) have adapted this concept in order to make sense of the fluid roles and hierarchies within the subcultures or tribes they examine. Consumer culture researchers are more concerned with how hierarchies are developed within micro-structures on the basis of consumption patterns and the symbolic meanings attached to them. Thornton (1995: 164) writes that 'taste in music, for youth in particular, is often seen as the key to one's distinct sense of self'. This framework is attractive for post-subcultural researchers in that it incorporates the complexities and array of meanings that subcultures are composed of. Kates (2002) in particular has been critical of the rigid subcultures of consumption framework and the simplistic notion that a high level of commitment is equal to high status. As has been documented already, one of the key characteristics of tribal membership is that it tends to be

fleeting. In fact, Kates outlines how demonstrating a high level of devotion to a particular aspect of a subculture would tend to lead to disapproval and mocking. He provides the example of gay subculture and how anybody who subscribes to the stereotypes and the clichés is often not taken seriously within the community. Instead, 'cultivating individual distinction is the basis for garnering subcultural capital and is practically achieved by eclectically and individualistically combining elements of subcultural meaning' (Kates, 2002: 396).

Arsel and Thompson challenge the common conception within consumer research that 'marketplace myths' (consumption activities or brands that individuals draw meaning from to advance their identity projects) are an 'iconic resource for identity construction' (Arsel and Thompson, 2011: 792). In their study of 'indie' consumers they show how their cultural identities are threatened by 'hipster' or 'scenester' marketplace myths. The 'indie' consumers consequently employ demythologising strategies to protect their identity investments. Strategies include 'aesthetic discrimination', 'symbolic demarcation' and 'proclaiming (mythologised) consumer sovereignty'. Consumers defend themselves from 'hipster' labels by sophisticating their aesthetic interests and distinguishing themselves from individuals who only consume 'indie' because 'it is cool'. Such boundaries are normally defined by consumers with high status and cultural authority. Arsel and Thompson also identified individuals who downplayed their involvement in 'indie' culture in order to protect their field capital. They feared devaluing associations with 'stereotypical hipsters and also from indie consumers who have less status in the consumption field and hence lack the cultural license to flaunt the symbolic boundary between legitimate and illegitimate expressions of indie culture' (Arsel and Thompson, 2011: 799).

Kahn-Harris adopts a similar approach in his analysis of extreme heavy metal subgenres. He identifies 'mundane' and 'transgressive' as two types of subcultural capital that can be

accumulated within the scene. Mundane subcultural capital can be attained by demonstrating knowledge of the scene and participating in the collective rituals. This is far easier to acquire than transgressive capital, which is gained through unique acts of individualism that seek to challenge and evolve the scene. These acts normally involve members who have attained a high level of power and status as a result of their previous participation. Kahn-Harris (2007: 121) writes: 'Subcultural capital is both endowed by other scene members in the form of prestige and power and claimed by scene members for themselves in the ways they perform their identities.' The question is how participants in the Irish metal scene acquire and use subcultural capital both inside and outside the scene. According to Kahn-Harris, it requires a high level of commitment and appreciation of the traditions within metal to gain status and subcultural capital in the heavy metal scene. This differs from the tribal conception, where if anything, commitment is met with a sense of derision.

What distinguishes Thornton's research from that of Bourdieu is that she draws on the influence of the media, both micro and mass. Thornton describes how the members of the club cultures use the media as a resource to help them demonstrate their knowledge of the subculture and hence attain status. Ostberg (2007: 102) applies this idea to his analysis of the Stockholm 'brat' enclave. He describes how the members display their tastes which are 'drawn from quasi-historical pop cultural references [and] embodied in the form of being "in the know", using (but not over-using) current slang'. Redhead (1990) and Thornton claim that the media aid in the construction of music subcultures and can hence provide a music scene with credibility. They both dismiss the idea of media-free space in which subcultures grow. Thornton describes the influence of micro-media such as flyers, posters and fanzines, and how niche media such as style magazines often try to identify and develop subcultures. The form of media that is used is obviously important here. If a subculture attracts the attention of the mass media (such as newspapers and television), it can potentially lose its

credibility as the subculture becomes appropriated in the mainstream. Clarke et al. (1976) argue that the media can mythologise music scenes, both in terms of their perceived legitimacy and in terms of the stereotypes that it creates about subcultures such as heavy metal. This is perhaps why Kahn-Harris (2007) insists that any subcultural capital accumulated in the heavy metal scene is not easily transferable within other cultures. According to both Weinstein (2000) and Kahn-Harris, there is an element of snobbery regarding the cultural significance of heavy metal amongst the cultural 'gatekeepers' or music critics. Increasing media attention can weaken a subculture's claims of credibility as it can attract the attention of the 'culture industries' and become an object of commercialisation. It was explained at the start of this chapter that traditional heavy metal went through such a process at the height of its popularity. Additionally, Goulding et al. (2009) comment on the shift in the club music scene from an impromptu 'rave' scene that took place in a variety of informal locations (e.g. warehouses and fields) to an increasingly commercialised 'dance' scene that takes place in licensed bars and nightclubs.

Cova et al. (2007b) insist that developing an understanding of how this capital works presents a great opportunity for marketers. The problem for marketers however, is how they connect with tribes without diluting the values and meanings of particular communities through commercial intervention. Acknowledging this fact is particularly important when it comes to studying subcultures that exist on the margins of the marketplace, such as heavy metal subculture. Mitchell and Imrie (2011) recognise this as a major issue, in addition to the difficulties presented in developing long-term relationships with consumers whose engagement with a tribe tends to be fluid and temporal. Mitchell and Imrie (2011: 48), following Kozinets (1999) and Cova and Cova (2002), recommend determining the different roles and levels of involvement that members of a tribe take on. They range from 'sympathisers', with low participation, to 'chiefs', who hold a high level of capital and are

'influential on other members (both potential and existing)'. The hierarchy of roles that is presented bares much similarity with Abercrombie and Longhurst's (1998: 141) audience continuum which separates the different types of fans from the consumer to the petty producer in terms of their involvement within a scene. From a marketing perspective, it would make sense to try and connect with the opinion leaders, the members who have high subcultural capital, and hence influence the wider scene through their position in the hierarchy. Additionally, consumer tribe researchers (see Cova and Dalli, 2009; Mitchell and Imrie, 2011) recommend providing spaces in which those who are enthusiastic about a particular tribe or brand can connect together. This has been discussed previously in terms of highlighting the creativity of consumers, their engagement with brands and their 'fan productivity'. This is particularly displayed through their use of new media technologies and their presence in online communities.

Tribes online: Considering the overlap between 'real' and 'virtual' tribal interactions
Music culture scholars have placed a greater emphasis on the importance of online activity between fans and the distribution of subcultural capital within such fan spaces. Bennett (2004: 163) suggests that 'youth cultures may be seen increasingly as cultures of "shared ideas" whose interactions take place not in physical spaces such as the street, club or festival but in the virtual spaces facilitated with the internet'. Similar to the online consumer tribe research, Williams (2006) acknowledges the importance of such online spaces for attaining subcultural capital. Surprisingly, heavy metal research (e.g. Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000; Harris, 2000; Kahn-Harris, 2007) has paid little attention to the online or virtual spaces of the scene. Kahn-Harris (2007), Weinstein (2011) and Wallach et al. (2011) have acknowledged the role that the internet has played in globalising heavy metal and some of the recent heavy metal literature draws from the forums (see Spracklen, 2010). However, research that focuses on the nature of online heavy metal communities, the interactions between the fans and the

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role of the online spaces in facilitating hierarchies and distribution of subcultural capital is relatively scarce.

The research on music fans (e.g. Robards and Bennett, 2011) has tended to position the groups who contribute online as possessing tribal tendencies, in that individuals form fluid, temporary attachments to different online communities. As De Valck (2007) argues, there is no sense of fixed community or loyalty to such online communities because of low entry and exit barriers, although switching communities takes a lot of effort on the consumer's part. I am interested to see if this is the case in heavy metal subculture. There has been an increasing emphasis in fan literature on the overlap between online and 'face-to-face' music scene participation (see Wilson and Atkinson, 2005; Hodkinson, 2007; Robards and Bennett 2011), with the consensus being that subcultural behaviour is continuous across the 'real' and 'virtual' spaces of fandom, no matter how contentious these terms may be. This raises many questions for this research. Does the fixed sense of identity and commitment that heavy metal scholars describe as characteristic of the 'live' heavy metal subculture transfer online? Is there any evidence of a clear hierarchy or is it more indicative of the fluid tribal structure? Does online activity facilitate the offline integration of the scene and does the behaviour of the fans differ in online and 'face-to-face' contexts? Additionally, De Valck (2007: 261) observes that the consumer literature concerning online consumer tribes has tended to romanticise the communal features and ignore the 'tensions, rivalries, and diversity that are also an inherent aspect'. She suggests that marketers can learn much from analysing the conflict in such communities as when the different tribes are warring, they define their value systems and what it is that is important to them about participating in such tribes. Kahn-Harris (2007) has documented the contested meanings of heavy metal identity and the importance of such discussions in contestations for subcultural capital amongst bands and

fans. It would appear that the online forums would provide a heightened structure to examine

such contestations which makes an analysis of such interactions vital for this research.

Criticisms of CCT: The challenge of incorporating the heavy metal context into existing consumer communities perspectives

The post-subcultural model can become quite problematic when we try to apply it to a

context such as heavy metal. In particular, Kahn-Harris (2007) has argued that the 'neo-tribe'

concept is difficult to apply to group formations that do not share the same characteristics as

club cultures. For example, heavy metal is based on the notion of a defined sense of style and

a commitment to a group ethic. Maffesoli (1996: 11) has suggested that his framework

provides a suitable description for similar subcultures, citing punk as an example. However,

there is an absence of empirical or even conceptual studies (both in cultural studies and

consumer research) that attempt to apply this theoretical framework to such music-based

subcultures.

Hodkinson suggests that caution must be taken in applying terms such as 'neo-tribes'. While

such post-subcultural terms seem to exemplify some modern cultural patterns, 'the current

enthusiasm for emphasizing them across the board carries the danger either of

misrepresenting or excluding from analysis any collectivities whose empirical reality fails to

fit the picture' (Hodkinson, 2004: 141). Shildrick and MacDonald (2006) argue that post-

subcultural research has placed too much focus on 'spectacular' contexts and ignored the

majority of 'ordinary' contexts which do not quite demonstrate the emancipatory and creative

opportunities provided by consumerism in quite the same way as Redhead (1990), Thornton

(1995), Bennett (1999) and Goulding et al. (2002) do in their accounts of dance and rave

culture. The CCCS has been subjected to a similar critique, but it could be argued that

consumer researchers have applied the 'post-subcultural', 'tribal' paradigm to a host of

contexts which would not be deemed 'spectacular' such as brand communities centred around convenience products (see Cova and Pace, 2006).

Hayward (2004: 8) claims that consumerism has taken over our lives and that it is 'confronting us at every turn, bombarding us with an unprecedented array of aspirational messages. … consumer culture and aspirational culture are now locked in a deadly embrace, each begetting the other.' The message from this aspirational consumer culture is that we are all individuals and that consumption offers us the opportunity to embrace this. Blackman (2005) and Martin (2009) have suggested that post-subculture theory is effectively an apology for consumerism. They argue that consumer research places too much emphasis on consumer choice and the opportunities it provides them. Hesmondhalgh (2005) singles out Bennett's use of the neo-tribe theory in particular, suggesting that it is not critical enough of consumer culture. Bennett (2005: 256) responds by arguing that Hesmondhalgh and Blackman have seriously underestimated the ability of young people to look beyond their everyday environment through their creative use of consumption. Secondly, he suggests that critics of the neo-tribe model have ignored the large amount of activities and products that do not require the consumer to possess a high income, such as listening to the radio and watching television. Martin argues that such activities are more passive than creative and that consumption reflected in class division is more complex than Bennett's position suggests.

Heavy metal would have to be considered a spectacular context, and, according to Kahn-Harris (2007), it bypasses subcultural preoccupations with class and social divisions, which would seem to make it ideal for consumer culture researchers. It is possible that one of the reasons heavy metal has been overlooked in post-subcultural consumer culture literature is that the stereotype of heavy metal as negative, dark and gloomy does not seem to fit in with this positive, creative, free, postmodern conception of consumer cultures or 'neo-tribes'. Arnett (1996), similarly to other postmodern critics (e.g., Baudrilliard, 1998; Jameson, 1998),

focuses on the alienating features of an individualised consumer society and links issues such as the decline in the nuclear family, the high divorce rate and the diminishing role of the community and religion in adolescents' lives to their participation in subcultures such as heavy metal. According to Arnett, heavy metal offers them the opportunity to not only express their individuality but to attach themselves to some form of community in what is an individualised society. This argument is similar to the one that Maffesoli makes with the exception that he and his followers see such communities as fluid and temporary and focus on the positive emancipatory aspects of 'tribes' such as the 'ravers'. Arnett, on the other hand, is wary of heavy metal subculture and worries about the consequences of young adolescents becoming socialised within such communities and the angry emotions that are expressed.

Blackman (2005: 12) insists 'that postmodern subcultural writing seems to down-play the collective nature of subcultural practice identified by Maffesoli because their postmodern critique of the CCCS wants to give priority to the individual'. Blackman's argument has merit when the emphasis that is placed on individualism in post-subcultural theory is considered. However, many of these accounts are based on a Maffesolian framework that heralds the 'decline of individualism', the advent of the 'time of the tribes' and the 'emotional community'. Critics of Maffesoli (e.g., Shildrick, 2002; Blackman, 2005; Martin, 2009) cite his unwillingness to consider the influence that social structures and institutions play in influencing consumption patterns and the relationships that consumers develop with the marketplace. Askegaard and Linnet (2011: 386) argue that CCT research has become preoccupied with 'the lived experience' and the 'identity projects' of consumers which has led to the 'relative neglect of structural foundations and limitations of consumers' experiential universe'. Askegaard and Linnet describe how CCT developed out of what many consumer researchers felt was an overly rigid structural approach to understanding consumer

behaviour. Key studies such as Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) 'experiential consumption' and Belk's (1988) concept of the 'extended self' strived to move away from the constraining motivational, psychoanalytic and economic based accounts of consumption and place the consumer's experience at the centre of analysis. 'Thus, the legacy of CCT research has been working towards a predominantly agency based view of the consumer' (Askegaard and Linnet, 2011: 386).

This approach is reflected in the accounts of 'consumer tribes' where the consumer's experience is positioned as pivotal in any theoretical explanation. Askegaard and Linnet (2011: 383) acknowledge that the Maffesolian influenced consumer literature, in addition to the research conducted on consumer communities, has focused more on the collective aspects of consumption. However, they argue that this has in fact reinforced the individualistic paradigm of the CCT in that this research tends to prioritise the participant's experiences and assumes that their behaviour is aimed towards the development of a collective identity, which bares similarities to the personal 'goal-directed' identity projects. Askegaard and Linnet (2011: 386) suggest that the CCT's phenomenological approach has ironically 'served as a continuation of the psychologising tendency in consumer research that some of the founding fathers (and mothers!) strived to overcome'. This is based on the notion that the phenomenological interview tends to bypass some of the more critical elements of consumer culture, since interviews consider the everyday experiences of consumers. Consequently, a critical analysis of the social structure would tend to be absent in most consumer accounts.

Although prioritising the experience of the consumer is crucial in developing an understanding of the emotions experienced in a context such as heavy metal subculture, it is clear that consumer researchers need to go beyond accounts of consumer experience and consider the structural or social factors that can also influence consumer behaviour. Arnould and Thompson (2005: 876) have acknowledged this issue themselves, and write that 'broader

analyses of the historical and institutional forces that have shaped the marketplace and the consumer as a social category' are noticeably absent from CCT research. However, Arnould and Thompson (2007: 10) suggest that more recent studies have incorporated a more complex dynamic intertwining agency with dominant ideologies and structural processes. Askegaard and Linnet refer to studies that intertwine institutional factors, social categories, and ideological and mythological forces with interpretive accounts of individual experience. For example, they cite Holt (1998), who criticises 'individualist' accounts of consumption such as Schouten and McAlexander's (1995) subculture of consumption. He intertwines Bourdieu's (1984) concept of cultural capital with ethnographic data to demonstrate how social class is reproduced in American consumption. Askegaard and Linnet suggest that Bourdieu is a particularly useful theorist for consumer culture researchers. They point to his analysis of practice and how it involves the simultaneous reproduction of social constraints and the development of strategies to comprehend unpredictable environments. Bourdieu demonstrates how actors experience identity formation and frame resistance within such social structures. Bourdieu's framework has also been tweaked in post-subcultural studies with Thornton's concept of subcultural capital being willingly adapted to research regarding subcultures of consumption (e.g., Kates, 2002) and consumer tribes (e.g., Ostberg, 2007). This was discussed in detail in the previous section. However, it is clear that even in using a Bourdieusian influenced concept such as subcultural capital that the research on consumer tribes and subcultures of consumption still draws on individualistic explanations that are divorced from the influence of broader social structures. Although Thornton stresses the influence of the media in deciphering the materials and boundaries that make up subcultural capital, consumer researchers draw on the concept in a fashion that emphasises the internal differences within tribes or subcultures, whilst at the same time placing somewhat less focus on the influence of different forms of capital or external forces.

The we–I balance: Towards an Eliasian perspective

Essentially, the debate regarding the merits of the CCCS and the post-subcultural/consumer

tribe perspectives represents a clear dualism between structure and agency. Elias (1991a) uses

the concept of a we–I balance to address such dichotomies. He argues that a shift towards

individualisation is a reflection of structural developments in a society and their relationship

with developments in the individual psyche. An example of such a change is the shift in

power from state and continental authorities to the global level. Elias (1991a: 186) writes:

'the canon of behaviour, and especially the scope of the identification between person and

person, changes with the transition of a new stage of integration in a specific way. The scope

of identification increases.' Such processes create a growing number of increasingly complex

figurations which can lead to individuals seeking to differentiate themselves. However, the

individual cannot be understood conceptually without reference to his/her figuration (network

of people). For example, Wouters describes how the traditional, standardised communal

practice of mourning the dead has now been altered and rituals are now increasingly flexible

and individualised. He writes:

> I–identity took on a stronger emotive charge as compared to their we–Identity (the
> groups people refer to as we). In this trend towards individualization, as the We–I
> balance was tilted towards the I, the need for the twin function of ritual declined.
> (Wouters, 2002: 2)

Wouters holds that when one comes to mourn the passing of a loved one, he/she will find it

difficult to find a group or community to bond with. Maffesoli argues that community ethic

and solidarity are linked through the performance of ritual. Maffesoli maintains that this need

for community and ritual can be satisfied through 'tribes' or temporary group formations and

that there has been a decline in individualism. Wouters (2002: 18) argues that such groups

'merely provided another part-identity'. In other words, he interprets the presence of such

'neo-tribes' as an example of how the we–I balance is shifting towards the 'I' and that such

'part-identities' do not offer a 'secure sense of belonging' (Wouters, 2002: 19). The decline of ritual and its relation to the individualisation of society are interesting in the context of heavy metal. Arnett (1996) links the decline in the family and the high divorce rate with the feelings of alienation that American teenagers experience in social relationships. He identifies their disaffection towards school and the diminishing role that the community and religion play in adolescents' lives. Clearly, these issues are relevant to everyone. However, this still leads to questions concerning the role that heavy metal and its rituals (e.g., moshing and crowd-surfing) play in terms of establishing an emotional community, the strength and consistency of this collective, the feelings it generates and how consumption of heavy metal can help the participants cope with such issues.

Adopting an Eliasian approach can bypass such dualisms as structure and agency and manage the problems and issues that continuously resurface in research regarding music-based subcultures. Elias places emphasis on the way that the composition of the human being forms and changes in combination with social organisation over time. He argues that the interweaving of individual relations and their complex interdependencies, combined with our biological and cultural inheritance, shapes each individual habitus. Similarly to Elias and his followers, Maffesolian influenced research places emphasis on the importance of social relationships and emotion. However, they differ in that figurational sociology as a framework stresses how the nature of social relationships and social structures are intertwined, how the nature of interdependencies and social codes are related to transformations in the individual psyche. To put it simply, individuals are not mere free agents who express themselves in the spaces of the marketplace, escaping from their everyday lives. We must also consider what this emotion is a product of, if the chains of interdependencies have widened or lengthened and the consequences of increasing integration (harmonious or discordant) on the emotions and identities of the individuals and groups under examination. Adapting this perspective

prioritises issues concerning emotional control (both individual and collective) and creates

questions concerning how such control is used to attain status and capital within subcultures

such as heavy metal.

The next chapter of the literature review considers such processes (drawing from previous

figurational histories) as state formation, class integration, the development of Irish consumer

culture and technisation and relates them with transformations in the individual psyche and

social relationships. The key, which is reverberated throughout this thesis, is to relate the

figurational conception of these processes and connect them with the Irish heavy metal scene

and the behaviour of its consumers/participants – to link the individual and the social without

having to prioritise either. This is not to advocate a return to the traditional subcultural

perspective or even to follow the recent critical turn in marketing (see Saren et al. 2007). It is

not following the deterministic Marxist paradigm that the CCCS was influenced by, but

bypassing the problems of this approach in terms of its rigidity and lack of empirical

research. Although, the acknowledgment of the need for a social turn in consumer research is

welcome, there is a danger of reproducing the inherent problems of the traditional subcultural

approach by adapting a critical perspective. The criticisms of the CCCS have been well

documented in this section and there is no need to return to them here or for that matter to

engage in a discussion of critical marketing, which is a distinct field in its own right.

Conclusion

Heavy metal has been criticised for its unusual aesthetics, loud chaotic sounds, and the

controversial themes the music engages with. Apart from attracting criticism from feminist

scholars for its sexist overtones and apparent misogyny, metal has drawn attention from

influential conservative groups and academics (particularly in the early 1990s) for its

potential connections with suicide and morally dubious, anti-social behaviour. However,

heavy metal has evolved from early cause and effect based studies and emerged as an important subject matter amongst cultural theorists (mostly heavy metal fans) with a rapidly growing body of literature. Such literature has sought to celebrate heavy metal, its global appeal, and cultural significance.

Heavy metal has incorporated interest from a variety of disciplines, but has been overlooked in consumer research despite its commercial success and the similarities it shares with other subcultures or tribes that have been studied within a consumer culture context. It is evident that the consumer tribe model can be used as a resource to illuminate the fluidity of modern consumer communities and the nature of subcultural interactions in the different spaces of the marketplace. However, after examining both subcultural and post-subcultural frameworks in detail, it appears that the reason heavy metal has been overlooked as a context within such theories owes much to the fact that the characteristics of the subculture do not fit within the theoretical constraints of a 'subculture' or a consumer 'tribe'. Although heavy metal shares many similarities with other subcultures studied under the CCCS framework, it has still been ignored in studies using this framework. This, according to Brown (2003), is possibly because of the lack of a visible political agenda and synchronicity it shares with the resistant style that the working-class 'mods' and 'punks' were associated with. However, the CCCS framework has proven to be problematic in explaining modern subcultures. It does not allow for the fluidity of styles and identities that modern subcultures take on and overlooks the role that females and older participants play in such communities (Muggleton, 2005). Additionally, there has been a shortage of empirical research conducted by the CCCS, reflecting the lack of emphasis that is placed on the actual experiences of subculture members (Goulding et al. 2002; Bennett, 2005). Instead, there has been an overreliance on structural processes, particularly class relations. Alternatively, although tribal research has addressed the issue concerning the lack of attention paid to the consumer's experience, it has come at

the expense of any acknowledgment of the importance of structural processes, placing too much emphasis instead on agency and consumer choice (Hesmondhalgh, 2005; Blackman, 2005; Askegaard and Linnet, 2011). It is also evident that the emphasis in heavy metal subculture on commitment and well-established hierarchies (e.g. Weinstein, 2000; Kahn-Harris, 2007) fails to empirically fit with the tribal model, with its prioritisation of fleeting commitment and transient identities.

'The opposition between dupe and hero has probably constituted the central debate about consumer culture' Slater (1997: 59). Both perspectives differ in how they conceptualise consumer control, prioritising either individual or social processes. I have briefly introduced Eliasian theory as a potential resource which can address such a theoretical impasse. This approach will be elaborated further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: FIGURATIONAL DYNAMICS AND THE QUEST FOR EXCITEMENT IN IRISH CONSUMER CULTURE

Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to discuss some of the key concepts that shape the theoretical framework of this thesis. This involves an outline of Elias's figurational theory and the subsequent figurational sociology of sport and leisure that emerged from this framework (Elias and Dunning, 2008a). Drawing from previous figurational histories, I discuss processes (i.e., technisation, sportisation and Irish civilising processes) that are important to the development of heavy metal in the context of modern Irish consumer culture. I outline how figurational sociological theory interweaves explanations concerning developments in the individual psyche within the broader context of the social processes discussed.

Civilising processes

Elias (2000) examines the historicity of western society's habitus and the development of social processes and attitudes. He argues that a more evenly controlled and continuous sense of self has developed in the context of increasing social interdependencies, and rising levels of class integration and relative equalisation. He claims that in Western Europe, since the Middle Ages, advancing standards of etiquette and manners, allied with the heightening shame of transgression, were aspects of increasing social constraints towards self-control. This process is a consequence of the development of complex networks of social interdependencies and the influence of social processes such as state formation. As we become increasingly integrated we must learn how to control our emotions and behaviour in order to participate in society. In such circumstances, Elias argues that society is engaged in what he refers to as civilising processes. Such processes do not occur in a straight line.

Interdependencies can reduce over time and certain social structures combined with changes to the individual psyche can create low levels of mutual identification and lead to de-civilising processes.

A key aspect of Elias's theory is his examination of historical processes and changes in modes of behaviour from the Middle Ages. For example, he describes the differences in etiquette, manners and morals in the Middle Ages compared with those of today. This is particularly relevant for this research on heavy metal culture, when one considers the violent, aggressive characteristics of the bands and their music and the behaviour of the fans at concerts (see Arnett, 1996; Weinstein, 2000; Kahn-Harris, 2007). Heavy metal has often been the subject of a moral panic, particularly at the height of its popularity in 1980s America (see Gore, 1987; King, 1988; Shuker, 2001). Kong (2006: 107) observes how heavy metal music has been classified in the media as 'uncivilized and savage, reinforced by the performativity of slam dancing, characterized as violent'. This raises the question of how heavy metal culture could develop or exist in what is supposedly a 'civilised' or 'polite' society. Thus figurational sociology is an excellent resource in which to explore this subculture.

What does it mean to be civilised?

Elias divides his argument into four main sections. Firstly, he examines the diverse meanings given to the term 'civilisation' in different countries, with particular emphasis on the French and German development of the word. To study heavy metal culture in this context, an understanding of how the actual concept and meaning of the term 'civilised' developed must be articulated from an Irish and consumer culture perspective. Elias (1991b: 61) is concerned with how symbols and meanings transform over time, representing changes in society and how individuals experience such transformations. Elias (2000: 5, original emphasis) notes that:

> By this term [civilisation] Western society seeks to describe what constitutes its special character and what it is proud of: the level of *its* technology, the nature of *its* manners, the development of *its* scientific knowledge or view of the world, and much more.

In other words, the term 'civilisation' is used to denote a self-consciousness of the west or a national consciousness. Elias discusses the German and French meaning in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The French – and to an extent the English – meaning of civilisation refers more to social, political or economic factors. The German meaning, communicated through the word 'kultur', 'refers essentially to intellectual, artistic and religious facts' (Elias, 2000: 6) and differs also in that the term 'civilisation' is more concerned with the behaviour and value of an individual's actions. This term was developed by middle-class intellectual Germans to distinguish their values from the 'Zivilisation' of the German nobility.

This raises questions over what the Irish meaning of 'civilised' is today. Dolan (2009a, 2009b) documents the changing habitus in Ireland in terms of perceived standards of living and the development of consumer subjectivity in twentieth-century Ireland. Dolan (2009a) argues that in the nineteenth century there was a low level of mutual identification and animosity between lower/middle-class Irish and the British elite. Dolan (2009a: 735) writes that: 'As a cultural principle, luxury was emotionally and morally associated with they-groups in contradistinction to the emerging national we-image.' In other words, the elite groups of London were associated with an artificial sense of civilisation and the Irish (particularly in rural areas) were associated with a more 'authentic' code of living. However, processes of industrialisation, which followed the advent of a greater level of national independence in the twentieth century, led to a reduction in class barriers, a decrease in hostility, an increasing restraint of emotions and a growing mutual identification between social groups. Dolan argues that this led to a shift from the previous negative connotations that were associated with consumerism and luxury to more positive associations, and that consequently 'a relative social standardization of conduct develops' (Dolan, 2009a: 737).

Inglis (2008) has documented the shift in Irish society from a habitus deeply rooted in Catholicism to a consciousness dominated by consumer capitalism. During the Catholic Church's period of power, heavy metal and other cultures which emphasised individualisation and participation in experimental modes of behaviour would likely have been denounced as immoral and identified with shame. However, due to the changing habitus in Ireland, the lines between what is moral and what is civilised are not as clear. Elias describes how the concept of civilisation has changed and developed over centuries and will always hold varying meanings for different societies at different stages of development.

The question is how heavy metal subculture (with its controversial aesthetics) corresponds with, or rebels against, the Irish national consciousness of what it means to be civilised. This question requires a greater level of discussion concerning my use of Elias's framework and how it relates to Irish civilising processes and the development of consumer cultures. This will be outlined in the following sections, where I will provide a demonstration of how Elias links changes in the individual psyche with developments in the social structure. Following this, I will use this framework to demonstrate how Ireland developed from a largely Catholic, religiously-orientated society to a consumer-orientated society.

Canniford and Karababa (2012) have also documented the changing meanings and associations of what it means to be 'civilised' or the fluid symbolism of what is denoted by the notion of 'primitivism' from a consumer culture context. They describe how the concept of the 'primitive' is 'expressed differently by changing figurations of social actors in manners that serve colonial, contemplative and countercultural intentions' (Canniford and Karababa, 2012: 1). They argue, using the example of the commercialisation of surfing and what was once considered an 'uncivilised' activity, that the image of primitivism is now constructed as a marketplace ideology. This attracts consumers who need to experience a form of excitement from a routinised society. Consequently, they engage in consumption habits or leisure

pursuits that will supposedly reacquaint themselves with a romantic, utopian conception of what it means to live a 'primal' life. It is this connection with 'primitivism' and 'chaos' that makes heavy metal an interesting context to study. This is an issue that will be explored further in my discussion of Elias and Dunning's (2008a) figurational sociology of sport and leisure framework.

Manners and etiquette: 'Shameful' modes of behaviour

Elias presents historical evidence of how the psyche has changed over centuries through his analysis of etiquette and manners books which demonstrate shifts in behaviour. This part of the theory is particularly relevant to this research in that it highlights the appropriate ways to act in a society at any given time. This raises the question of what constitutes appropriate manners and etiquette in society today. How do we understand the development of the unique rituals of a subculture such as heavy metal within this context?

In locating a foundation for this study Elias grants that there can be no correct starting point in the civilising process as there is no beginning or end. Consequently, he decided to start around the post-medieval age and examine the first manners books in order to document changes in social processes in western society. Through documenting the changes in manners books over the course of hundreds of years, he explains how eating habits at the dinner table and social etiquette are symptomatic of social transformation. Elias (2000: 59) writes: 'The forms of behaviour of medieval people were no less tightly bound to their total way of life, to the whole structure of their existence, than our own behaviour and social code are bound to ours.' Such books and poems that he (2000: 72) used to examine medieval societies are important in that they themselves contributed to the direct conditioning of individuals to these 'modes of behaviour'.

The act of eating meat and the development of cutlery at the dinner table is a good example of civilising processes at work. Elias claims that we have completely hidden the fact that we are eating an animal when we eat meat, and that developments such as this occur as a result of the changing structure of social relations. Elias also explains how the changes in manners accompany and bring about different social relations. In medieval times animal carcasses were carved at the dining table and hands were used instead of cutlery. This eventually moved on to repugnance at the sight of a dead animal, and gradually to the common use of a fork so as not to repulse other diners. Elias uses the book *On Civility in Boys* by Erasmus (first published in 1530; approximately 130 editions followed in a variety of languages with the latest being printed in the eighteenth century) as a basis for many of the examples he uses. The book illustrates several rituals that are now taken for granted and previously acceptable modes of behaviour which modern society would find shameful and embarrassing. Such instances include etiquette regarding the blowing of your nose, spitting, and defecating in public. Elias argues that these acts began to be associated with shame and embarrassment and were gradually hidden 'behind the scenes'. This is indicative of how our impulses and emotions are moulded. Elias writes (2000: 114):

> Erasmus's treatise marks … a point on the curve of civilization which represents, on the one hand, a notable rise of the shame threshold, compared to the preceding epoch; and on the other, compared to more recent times, a freedom in speaking of natural functions, a 'lack of shame', which to most people adhering to the present-day standard may at first appear incomprehensible and often 'embarrassing'.

Elias provides evidence here of how humans developed self-control and emotional restraint. The shame that surrounds our impulses led to their restraint. The repetition of such behaviour could then potentially become habitual. Elias uses the theories of Freud regarding the super-ego and the unconscious to understand this process and the changes in the structure of the individual's psyche. Elias historicises and contextualises such psychic structures and processes:

But however it is expressed, the social code of conduct so imprints itself in one form or another on human beings that it becomes a constituent element of their individual selves. And this element, the superego, like the personality structure of a whole individual people, necessarily changes constantly with the social code of behaviour and the structure of society. The pronounced division in the 'ego' or consciousness characteristic of people in our phase of civilization, which finds expression in such terms as 'superego' and 'unconsciousness', corresponds to the specific split in behaviour which civilized society demands of its members. It matches the degree of regulation and restraint imposed on the expression of drives and impulses. (Elias, 2000: 160)

This extract is crucial in that it establishes a link between changes in personality structure and the development of 'civilised' social codes of conduct, and wider processes of structural change that take place within society. Bradshaw and Canniford (2005), in one of the few consumer research studies that adapt Elias's framework, outline the changing attitudes towards defecation and the increasing shame and taboo that surround such practices since the Middle Ages. They ask why such an important issue that affects our lives in so many different ways is completely ignored in consumer research and suggest that discussing such behavioural practices publically carries a stigma and is considered repugnant. They relate this to a broader issue within consumer culture, regarding how some aspects of consumer behaviour remain hidden. To understand the development of codes of behaviour which are influenced by the prospect of shame, disgust and embarrassment, we must consider the influence of historical and structural processes.

Social trends and civilising processes: The increasing constraint towards self-restraint
Elias uses the example of the sociogenesis of absolutism to demonstrate his point regarding the relationship between social processes and transformations in the individual psyche. He observes that, with the growing circulation of money, kings gathered a share of all wealth in the form of taxes. This wealth led to military power, control of weapons, and hence a monopoly of violence and a centralisation of power. This monopoly of physical violence changes the way individuals depend on each other. It influences the dynamic of interdependencies. Elias (2000: 269) refers to this as the 'monopoly mechanism'. This is

where a system of open opportunities is turned into a system of closed opportunities. The acquisition of an absolute monopoly does not occur in a straight line, in accordance with the principle that civilising processes are unplanned.

An example of this is the period of feudalisation in France during the twelfth century, where conditions such as limited economic structure and lack of communication made it difficult for one ruling central power to emerge. Elias looks at how the growing population brought about vast changes in the structure of relationships and the institutions related to them. Unplanned processes such as this, Elias maintains, will eventually lead to a monopoly and this is evident in the social structures that have existed thus far. It is the interweaving of many individual and group interests, whether going in similar directions or not, that creates this monopoly. Elias (2000: 305) explains that:

> In feudal as in modern times, free competition for chances not yet centrally organized and monopolized, tends through all its ramifications towards the subjugation and elimination of an ever-increasing number of rivals, who are destroyed as social units or fall into dependence; towards the accumulation of possibilities in the hands of an ever-diminishing number of rivals; towards domination and finally monopoly.

A monopoly will eventually encompass an increasing number of integrations and functions as it becomes larger. This means that it is dependent on an increasing number of people. In such societies this creates an increase in the division of labour, where each individual becomes either directly or indirectly dependent on every other. These are known as interdependencies. It is as we become increasingly integrated (in a technical sense) and the chains of interdependencies lengthen that the individual psyche and the nature of social relations on a more micro or face-to-face level transforms.

For example, Elias (2000: 387–97) documents how the process of 'courtization' led influential members of court society, such as warriors and knights, to control expressions of violence. This required a restraint in emotions and impulses which subsequently spread to the

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rest of the population. He observes how the evolving rules and regulations of the royal court in conjunction with increasing interdependencies created a figuration where one's actions and emotions had to be carefully monitored in order for one to become socially accepted. He believes that this filtered into everyday society where etiquette and ritual became the signifiers of social identity and verification of each individual's standing within a social network. The careful management and control of emotions was now crucial to achieving social acceptance. Elias argues that those who could not demonstrate appropriate levels of restraint displayed weakness and others could take advantage of this in their rivalry for power and prestige.

Can such a concept, concerning the importance of both individual and social control, be used to illuminate explanations regarding subcultural status and hierarchy? Can it be used to demonstrate how subcultural codes or modes of behaviour transform and evolve? The issue of control is particularly relevant when we consider how heavy metal has been characterised as chaotic and hence 'uncivilised'. Drawing from such historical processes can enhance explanations regarding the Irish heavy metal context. Consequently, in the following section I will focus on previous figurational histories regarding Irish consumer culture (Dolan, 2005), sportisation (Elias and Dunning, 2008a) and technisation (Elias, 2008a).

Figurational sociology and consumer culture: Irish civilising processes
Dolan (2005: 40) explains how 'Elias's focus on movement, in terms of identity, symbolic and social formations, and the connections between such movements, are useful models for the examination of consumer culture.' However, it comes as a surprise that this framework has been used so rarely in consumer research with only Dolan (2005, 2009a, 2009b), Bradshaw and Canniford (2005), Canniford and Shankar (2007) and Canniford and Karababa (2012) applying it to consumer culture contexts. Bradshaw and Canniford emphasise the

importance of locating the consumption behaviour of individuals within the context of historical institutional processes. They adapt Elias's framework to their discussion concerning the shifting practices and meanings associated with excrement in society. They critique the tendency in consumer behaviour research to position the marketplace as 'a blank book of possibility unrestrained by history or institutional powers' (Bradshaw and Canniford, 2005: 110).

Dolan's work is particularly useful for this thesis as it outlines the conditions that led to the development of the modern Irish consumer habitus and its connections with processes of civilising in twentieth-century Ireland. Through discussing Dolan's and also Tom Inglis's (1998, 2008) historical accounts of the development of Irish consumer culture and Irish civilising processes, I will be able to set the scene for an empirical analysis of heavy metal subculture in modern-day Ireland. I have briefly alluded to social processes such as feudalisation and absolutism and their relationship with developments in personality structure in my explanation of Elias's theory. This section also provides the opportunity to explain the significance of structural processes in more detail, as I focus on the uniqueness of the Irish context. Dolan (2005: 22) writes that the 'distinct, though interrelated, social trajectory of nations means that specific sociological models of social change needs to be constructed for each particular nation'. In other words, although the curve of each nation and its civilising and de-civilising processes are connected, each nation encounters different types of social processes that create a unique habitus and form of national identity. For example, in this section I will draw from Dolan's historical figurational analysis of the shift from an agrarian-based society to a more urbanised and commercial structure. He documents the de-secularisation of Irish society and the lengthening chains of interdependencies that Ireland developed with the rest of the world as a result of becoming enveloped within a wider process

of globalisation. These rapid changes in social relations are connected to increasing forms of self-control and restraint, and the development of an Irish consumer culture.

Though civilising processes are broadly unplanned, some institutions become involved in deliberate civilising offensives or missions. They can then subsequently become targets of subcultural resistance as they tend to represent dominant, established values. Inglis (1998) describes the moral monopoly that the Catholic Church developed in Irish society from the nineteenth century to the second-half of the twentieth century. Larkin (1972) argues that this increasing power and subsequent influence on the state was based in part on Ireland's response to a dying language and shame regarding the decline of Irish cultural identity – a result of British colonialism. Additionally, Dolan (2005) maintains that the insecurity of Irish life in the nineteenth century, because of British colonialism and the famine led to an increasing reliance on the Church.

Inglis describes how the Catholic Church was an active agent in developing institutional control over the behaviour of individuals and their bodies. He notes the role that the Catholic Church played in spreading civilised behaviour throughout the western world with its emphasis on control, restraint, shame, and guilt. Consequently, Inglis argues that Ireland's civilising process took place in the nineteenth century as a result of the increasing dominance of the Church in Irish society. The Church developed a controlling role in both health and education as it began to increase its resources and dictate the actions of the state. Inglis (2008: 157) writes that it was 'through the schools that bodily discipline, shame, guilt and modesty were instilled into the Irish Catholic'. Priests and nuns acted as moral specialists here, not only through communicating what it meant to behave in a civilised manner, but also through demonstrating such modes of behaviour through their continuing presence in all aspects of social life.

Such moral specialists relied on social prestige formed through their demonstration of control and restraint, as opposed to defining themselves through possessions. The Church advocated an anti-materialist ethic, and this connected with the lower and middle class Irish who resented the ruling powers of the British empire and their emphasis on 'luxury' and economic capital as a means of social prestige and 'civilisation'. The Irish rural way of life was considered to be a more 'authentic' way of living. Consequently, Dolan (2005) argues that even after Ireland achieved 'independence' the anti-materialist ethic engrained into the Irish/Catholic habitus combined with a newly formed emphasis on self-sufficiency, and blocked Ireland from developing functional specialisations or lengthening chains of social interdependencies through connecting with the rest of the world.

Government parties relied on the support of the Church to get elected or to make major decisions regarding national policy. This is particularly evident when we consider the development of censorship laws and the establishment of organisations such as the 'committee on evil literature' formed in 1926 (Inglis, 1998: 91–92). This organisation was responsible for censoring any book that was thought to contain obscene or morally dubious material. The Irish state (under the influence of the Church's 'morality') placed great emphasis on censoring artistic materials through such committees at this particular time.

Consequently, Catholic morality was dominant in Irish society. This made it extremely difficult for 'controversial' literary or musical cultures or subcultures such as heavy metal to develop in such a religious state. Although, it must be still acknowledged that there were many people opposed to the influence of Catholic morality, and who engaged in activities that were considered 'deviant' in Irish society.

Although Inglis (1998: 203–208) and Dolan (2005: 236) disagree on the time when the Church began to lessen its foothold on Irish society (probably around the 1950s), they agree that the decline of the Catholic Church played a pivotal role in the development of modern consumer culture. Factors which contributed to the decline include the drop in vocations (Inglis, 1998: 212–213), the scandals regarding the abuse of children in Catholic institutes (Inglis, 1998: 215), and the more active role that the state played as the power ratio shifted in their favour due to the acceleration of social restructuring in the 1960s and 1970s (Dolan, 2005). For example, Dolan (2005: 237) cites the increase in state-funded jobs that created more social opportunities for the young. Both Dolan (2005) and Inglis (2008) argue that individuals began to place a greater emotional and symbolic significance on material goods and leisure practices as an alternative to religion, another consequence of weakening connections with the Church. The Catholic Church does, as Inglis (1998) maintains, still play an active role in Irish society: the majority of schools remain Catholic-run, and the vast majority of Irish citizens are baptised and married under Catholic ceremonies.

It is evident that the decline of the Catholic Church has contributed somewhat to the development of a consumer-orientated habitus in Ireland. However, there are clearly a number of other developments in the social structure that have influenced this transformation. Dolan (2005: 261) argues that Ireland's consumer culture has developed as a result of increasing functional specialisation, rising class integration and growing social differentiation. This, he argues, has led to an increasing sense of individualisation within Irish society and an internalised 'psychologisation of needs, or the development of wants' (Dolan, 2005: 261).

The shift from a rural agrarian society to an urban industrialised society is crucial to the development of such processes. Dolan (2009a, 2009b) documents this shift and identifies the changing relationship between Ireland and Britain as one of the key factors in this process.

He explains how an increasingly industrialised Britain developed a greater dependency on the agricultural output of Ireland. In the context of such a changing relationship between the two countries and Ireland's struggle for forms of independence, the power balance between landlords and tenant-farmers in Ireland transformed. This, combined with the growing consolidation of farms and improvements in agricultural technology, led to a reduction in the dependency on farm labourers and a consequent decrease in the rural population. The sons and daughters of farmers sought work in urban areas which lengthened the chain of interdependencies, creating an increasingly integrated (in a technical sense) Irish society. This led to the development of social constraints based on mutual interdependencies and widening scopes of functional specialisation. Dolan (2005: 254) summarises:

> The figurational changes in Ireland over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be summarised as a process of the increasing, multiplying and lengthening chains of social interdependencies bonding people together. In the course of this process individuals have come under more diverse, and evenly applied, social pressures.

Such forms of integration widened further into other countries as Ireland developed a decreasing 'they-group' (see Elias and Scotson, 2008) antipathy to other nations through becoming involved with the European community. In other words, Ireland did not view other countries with as much suspicion or paranoia as previously. Ireland experienced evolving industrial and commercial relations with countries such as the USA and increasing levels of emigration, particularly in the 1950s. Consequently, Ireland shifted from a Catholic, anti-materialist ethic towards a more consumer-orientated, individualistic society.

Inglis (2008) considers the problem that globalisation has created for countries such as Ireland. It has made Ireland similar in many respects to other countries, but at the same time it is possible that it may have lost a sense of individual difference. Mennell (2004: 133) writes that such rapid change in a society 'leaves people relying on symbolic and emotional repertoires to reacquaint themselves with the national habitus'. Hence, as we become increasingly integrated and globalised we draw on the symbolic opportunities that

consumption provides us to construct our identity through the complex webs of social interdependencies. In other words, we can draw on our national identity, our habitus, when we seek to distinguish ourselves.

However, Inglis (2008) argues that this is becoming increasingly difficult in a globalised world. The question that this creates for this thesis is how the development of an Irish consumer culture combined with Ireland's unique history localises the global subculture of heavy metal. In short, what is different about the Irish heavy metal scene? This is a question that can be explored further in the findings section where I analyse my experience of the Irish heavy metal scene and connect it to the development of this Irish habitus and its modern consumer culture.

The figurational sociology of sport and leisure: The quest for excitement

Elias and Dunning (2008a) suggest that increasing functional specialisation and urbanisation have created a clear divide between work and non-work time. In addition, the social constraint towards self-restraint in increasingly complex social formations has created a growing demand for sport and leisure in modern society. This is particularly relevant to the development of the music industry and subcultures such as heavy metal – music being defined as a leisure activity by Elias and Dunning.

In this section, I will discuss the implications of this from a figurational and consumer culture perspective. Recent consumer research (see Canniford and Shankar, 2007; Goulding et al, 2009; Canniford and Karababa, 2012) has referred to literature (e.g. Elias and Dunning's figurational sociology of sport and leisure) regarding social regulation and connected it to the development of marketised consumer cultures such as surfing and rave music. Such examples will be discussed in this section. However, figurational sociology does not receive much theoretical attention, and there is little discussion of how Eliasian theories can be

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incorporated into the wider CCT discipline as a potential analytic framework.

Understandably, this is not the concern of such authors since the legacy of the tribal approach still dominates CCT research. This makes a detailed adoption of Elias's ideas problematic for consumer researchers – particularly in light of the supremacy of the tribal model and even the recent shift towards a more critical understanding of consumer behaviour. However, given CCT's infancy and permeability, its boundaries are still being constructed and figurational perspectives could be incorporated into a broader CCT framework. Figurational sociology shares a similar emphasis on the significance of emotions and sociality in explaining social behaviour. However, there is a greater focus in figurational studies on the importance of self-restraint and emotional control in social interactions. More attention is paid to the increasingly complex interdependencies that are a product of our modern consumer culture. In addition to this, Eliasian theory can be used to address the lack of theoretical focus on broader structural and historical processes in CCT, contributing further to our understanding of consumer culture and the relationships and interdependencies that form around it. I will now examine how it can potentially be used to illuminate explanations of consumer communities.

Sportisation: The development of rule-based sport

Elias (2008b: 23) relates the development of the British parliament in the eighteenth century to the development of professional sport. He writes that:

> Sport and parliament as they emerged in the eighteenth century were both characteristic of the same change in the power structure of England and in the social habitus of that class of people which emerged from the antecedent struggles as the ruling group.

Elias describes the power relations between British political parties in their battle for power, and the use of violence and humiliation in the contestations for such power. However, the politicians had to learn how to restrain their feelings and emotions in order for parliament to

function. He believes that the peaceful handing over of power and the subsequent responsible handling of that power 'presupposed a high level of self-restraint' (Elias, 2008b: 17). Elias (2008b: 15) describes how 'hostile factions united by a "gentlemanly" code of sentiment and conduct learned to trust each other sufficiently for the emergence of a non-violent type of contest in parliament'.

The development of the British power structure in the eighteenth century emerged due to what Elias terms a 'double-bind process', whereby the political parties feared each other and the potential violence that a conflict would cause. Consequently this resulted in compromise and pacification. Elias refers to this process as ''parliamentarization' and links this to the process of 'sportization' (Elias, 2008b: 17–18). He maintains that the relationship between parliamentarisation and sportisation was not casual but correlative.

Elias and Dunning use the example of the development of football games in England to illustrate this point. They (2008b) describe the violent and anarchic nature of football in medieval times. It was a relatively lawless game that shared very few similarities to the games of soccer or rugby that we are familiar with today. Dunning (1999) reports that early football matches were candidly emotional conflicts where physical aggression was the prevailing theme. However, during the early nineteenth century, the game of football started to take shape. The public schools all played the sport under different rules and this reflected the political tension felt in the country at the same time (Dunning, 1999). However, due to the restraints and pacifications in the creation of the state and the process of industrialisation, new forms of the game which were a reflection of developing social conditions surfaced in public schools. This entailed the commitment of the rules to writing, which legalised the number of players allowed for each side, the length of each match, and restrictions concerning the level of physicality in a match. This conciliation of rules and pacification mirrored the changes in the British parliament. This process, Elias and Dunning explain,

occurred only in Britain and reflected the unique social conditions of the country at the time. The relations between the classes became more evenly balanced as the monarch could not attain absolute power.

The process of 'sportisation' only transpired within Germany and Italy in the late nineteenth century, owing to the fact that these countries were disunited until this time. In an Irish context, Dolan and Connolly (2009) and Connolly and Dolan (2010) have explored processes of sportisation concerning the national sports of hurling and Gaelic football respectively. They outline the development of both games and the increasing self-control that is displayed by both players and spectators. They argue that this transformation was shaped by growing interdependencies between Ireland and other nations which created increasing social constraints on emotional or violent displays.

Canniford and Shankar (2007), Stranger (2011) and Canniford and Karababa (2012) have all documented the commercialisation of surfing from what was seen as a dangerous, 'primitive' ritual performed by savages into a controlled leisure pursuit or a sport enjoyed by westerners. They describe how Euro-American presence in Hawaii, the introduction of western pass-times, in addition to the framing of surfing as dangerous and 'evil', led to the decline of surfing in the early nineteenth century. However, surfing became popular once again as it was reinterpreted from a western perspective in the context of transformations in socioeconomic circumstances and processes of industrialisation and modernisation for a 'tourism culture that served the desire for hedonic-erotic consumption and leisure ethics' (Canniford and Karababa, 2012: 11). Elias and Dunning argue that the commercialisation of pastimes into leisure activities and sport is a reflection of an emotional need within western society. The social trends that were discussed here provide an understanding of how the process of 'sportisation' occurred. This leads to questions regarding the social etiquette within heavy metal subculture – a music scene renowned for its aggressive rituals and the anarchic

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behaviour of its fans – which draws parallels with Elias and Dunning's description of the early chaotic, 'ruleless' versions of football and rugby. How is fan behaviour controlled within the moshpit? Are there certain rules or forms of etiquette that the fans have to subscribe to in order to facilitate the successful enactment of heavy metal rituals?

Routinisation, societal and self controls: Mimesis in sport, leisure and consumption

Elias and Dunning (2008a) challenge the traditional meaning of work and leisure. They argue that the terms 'leisure' and 'work' have been too loosely defined. The assumption has been that 'all the time not spent at work in the sense of paid occupational work, all sparetime, can be devoted to leisure activities' (2008a: 51). This is an inaccurate polarisation. Elias and Dunning (2008a: 48) cite a number of activities that one has to engage in every day which would not be considered either work or leisure, including rest, catering for biological needs, family management and sociability. They are interested in the relationship between work, sparetime activities and leisure. They argue that the routinisation of social relationships, work and sparetime activities has placed an increasing importance on leisure. It has been discussed how, with the increasingly complex web of relationships and interdependencies, there has been a growing intricacy in how one manages emotions and behaviour. Dunning (1997: 482) writes:

> The high degree of routinization in which people in large numbers are subjected to a complex of externally and internally imposed controls … [means] such people need sports and other more or less exciting leisure activities in order to experience a pleasurable upsurge of emotions, an enjoyable 'de-controlling of emotional controls'.

The emphasis in figurational sociology has mostly concerned the role of sport and emotion. In this thesis, I am concerned with applying this framework to other leisure activities, with particular emphasis on the relationship between music consumption and emotion. Elias and Dunning insist that many people in western society are subjected to strong social and self controls. Consequently, individuals have to seek alternative outlets from which to find

excitement and experience a sense of emotional catharsis. Elias and Dunning take the medical

meaning of the term 'catharsis', which refers to harmful substances being cleansed from the

body, and apply it to the emotional experience felt by those who participate in sport and

leisure. Referring to Aristotle, they observe that leisure activities 'have a curative effect

which they bring about, not through a movement of the bowels but a "movement of the soul"'

(Elias and Dunning, 2008a: 59). Arnett (1996) describes the cathartic effect that heavy metal

fans experience through listening to the music and engaging in the rituals, and Goulding et al.

(2009) describe the feeling of catharsis that clubbers feel after the monotony of the 'working-

week'. Elias and Dunning argue that individuals experience such an emotional effect through

engaging in what are described as mimetic activities, taking on emotional experiences similar

to the actual activities they replicate. They define the term 'mimetic':

> The term refers to the fact that the events and activities grouped together under that name
> share the following structural characteristics: they arouse emotions of a specific type which
> are closely related to, yet in a specific way different from, those which people experience in
> the ordinary course of their non-leisure life … people act out sentiments but in the mimetic
> context, all the sentiments, and, if it comes to that, the emotional acts connected with them are
> transposed. (Elias and Dunning, 2008c: 105)

Examples include films or dramatic tragedies where the viewer is subjected to feelings of

happiness or anger. This creates tension which is then resolved in one way or another. In

other words, it is a controlled danger which functions as a fantasy representing particular

experiences. Elias and Dunning claim that for sports such as football, spectators and

participants have a far greater scope for generating and releasing tension. There is a greater

connection between motion and emotion. For example, football fans can jump up and down

on the terraces whereas those who attend an opera or a play are expected to sit quietly and

applaud at designated intervals. Elias (2008b: 32) cites the example of a classical music

concert:

> Only at the end may an audience indicate through the strength and length of its movements –
> its applause – how strongly it has been moved in silence before. In the case of the game of

football, motion and emotion are intimately linked to each other… the spectators have a greater scope for conveying their feelings to each other and to the players by means of movements, including those of the tongue, lips and vocal chords. However not only football but sport in general has the character of a controlled and non-violent mimetic battle.

This may be the case in sport but in more modern and popular forms of music, motion and emotion are also intrinsically linked in the live performance. Fans are encouraged to participate. This would particularly seem to be the case for heavy metal music, which would make the figurational sociology of sport an appropriate model for the study of this genre and its fans. Elias and Dunning were aware that different forms of leisure would develop and that figurational sociology would contribute to the understanding of such leisure activities. They (2008a: 72) observe how the uncertainty associated with leisure excitement can be witnessed today in the new and experimental ways in which people seek out excitement. In order to gauge the personal and social repercussions of this, one must understand the role that mimetic excitement plays in leisure activities.

Holyfield (1999) relates the concept of mimesis to the outdoor leisure industry, where the emotional experience of rafting and the perceived danger are sold to consumers. These companies specialise in manufacturing adventure and the emotional experience that comes with it. Canniford and Shankar (2007) and Canniford and Karababa (2012) argue that surfing has become increasingly popular and hence attracted the attention of marketers as it presents consumers with an opportunity to get back in touch with nature and what is considered a more 'authentic' way of living. Canniford and Shankar (2007: 46) suggest that marketers have taken advantage of this emotional need and that 'the various portrayals of surfers as noble savages and modern savages, and the products that have constructed these portraits succeeded by marketing ideals of freedom, simplicity, escape and excitement'. Canniford and his colleagues are examining the romanticism and excitement that is evoked from engaging with activities or products that are connected with such primitive themes. It would seem that

engaging in such consumer pursuits relates to Elias and Dunning's position regarding the role of sport and leisure activities and the contexts they provide for pursuing mimetic emotions and experiences. This raises questions regarding heavy metal fans and bands, and their engagement with primitive or what has been described as 'uncivilised' themes and modes of behaviour. Is this subculture a product of what Elias and Dunning refer to as the 'quest for excitement' amongst individuals in an increasingly routinised society? What are the mimetic features of heavy metal rituals and how are such rituals and modes of behaviour controlled to limit their potential danger or harm?

Matsinhe (2009) explores the notion of mimetic excitement in his analysis of nightclubs in Canada. He describes the unique environment of the dance floor and likens it to medieval times where 'emotional controls … are relatively decontrolled, moods can swing quickly from one extreme to another, often with serious consequences. A brawl can erupt out of an enjoyable simulated (mimetic) behaviour taken too far' (Matinshe, 2009: 123). Elias and Dunning (2008a) examine the personal leisure needs that have been developed in more civilised and complex societies of our time and the characteristics of each individual leisure event for the satisfaction of such needs. For instance, if we look at the structure of the nightclub in the study that Matsinhe provides, we can see how the lights, the music and the dance floor create a setting that satisfies the needs of the people who visit the nightclub. This environment allows them to express themselves and engage in mimetic behaviour under the safe control of the nightclub surroundings. Football matches are another example where one can witness the satisfaction of a number of emotional needs through engagement. Frustration and anger is released through shouting at the players, and pleasure can be gauged from the enjoyable tension aroused by a close match. Elias and Dunning look at how the mimetic excitement can transform itself into non-mimetic behaviour which can cause harm and danger. However, social controls are still in place to thwart any real danger in nightclubs,

football stadiums and adventure parks. Bouncers and police stop nightclubs from getting out of control and adventure activities such as rafting and surfing are heavily supervised and subjected to controlled safety procedures.

Technisation: The development of the music industry

Thus far, I have considered some of the social transformations that have facilitated the development of modern consumer culture and the increasing emotional need within society for spaces of leisure. In this section, I will narrow the focus somewhat and consider the influence of technisation processes in facilitating the development of the music industry. Clearly, it would be a gross understatement to suggest that technological advancements have played a crucial role in developing the modern music industry, in allowing for heavy metal to emerge as a global subculture. For example, we just have to consider an object such as the electric guitar and consider how pivotal it was to the emergence of heavy metal and its many subgenres (see Walser, 1992). However, it is not as simplistic as this – technological progress does not determine the nature of social life. Dant (2006: 296), drawing from Elias's concept of technisation, writes that 'neither civilization nor technisation is the leading process or cause of the other'. In other words, civilisation and technisation are intertwined.

Dant argues that Elias's comprehension of the development between technisation and civilisation can help eradicate difficulties concerning Braudel's (1992) concept of material civilisation. In brief, Braudel argued that classical sociologists such as Durkheim and Weber have essentially overlooked the significance of material objects in the interweaving of social and cultural relationships and the transformation of society. Although, according to Dant (2006: 291), Weber and Marx describe transformations in material civilisation in terms of advances in production and industrialisation, they 'remark on the change in material life in general only fleetingly'. Braudel looks beyond economic and capitalistic processes.

Essentially, he emphasises the equal significance of historically examining developments in both the infrastructure and the superstructure. He is interested in the minute details of what he refers to as our 'material civilization'.

Dant outlines Braudel's concept of a 'material civilization' using the example of water and its influence in many aspects of our social life from the practical (drinking, eating and washing) to the demographic and the symbolic (e.g. religious ceremonies). Braudel focused on its use before the beginning of the industrial revolution and the subsequent swift transformation of our material life because of technological developments in how water is managed. Dant (2006: 294) considers how we now take water for granted, the increasing number of ways in which we use it and how it helps maintain the 'material life of a modern society'. It is through examining the history of something as simple as water that we can relate how advances in technology can influence the scope of our material civilisation. He suggests that Braudel's history of material civilisation leading up to the period of industrialisation is problematic in that he merely described such changes. However, Elias's figurational sociology can be used to 'analyse the social impact of material civilization'. (Dant, 2006: 295).

Dant maintains that we have always lived in a material environment. However, he argues that modern technology has contributed to an increasingly changing material habitus characterised by a growing volume, functional complexity and material specificity of objects. Elias is concerned with the long-term process of such changes, the lengthening and shortening of chains of interdependencies and its influence on the dynamic complexity of social relationships. However, advances in technology cannot be analysed as a separate entity. Changes in social conditions and individuals' 'drive control' have to be considered in any explanation of the rapid progress of science and technology. Elias notes how technology, like other processes, advances because of the competition and cooperation between individuals

and also the rivalry between nations. Technisation receives impetus 'from the prevailing overall composition of humankind, from the dynamic of the development of humankind and the various survival units – from the tribes and states which they form over time' (Elias, 2008a: 88). He insists that this process is unplanned without any long-term aim or discernable direction. What emerges from these technological developments, however, is completely reliant on the intricacies of social processes and their relationship with changes in the individual psyche.

Essentially, as Sterne (2003: 370) suggests: 'there is no yawning gap between technology and society'. It is not the actual object of study that is important but how it is 'socially located' (Sterne, 2003: 383). Sterne particularly relates this concept to Bourdieu and his analysis of photography and television (Bourdieu et al., 1990; Bourdieu, 1996). He is not concerned with the technological 'object' per se, but what its use tell us about our society. Elias (2000) illuminates our understanding of social practice with analysis of technologies as basic as the fork. He explains how the introduction of the fork represented an advance in shame and embarrassment and also an increase in the social constraint towards self restraint. Elias (2000, 2008a) uses his discussion of different technologies as a metaphor in which he can contextualise transformations in social life and the growing complexity of society. This is particularly evident in his discussion of the automobile and the development of the vast systems of roads and motorways. Elias describes the simple road system of the warrior society, where the danger came from soldiers or thieves: 'Life on the main roads of this society demands a constant readiness to fight, and free play of the emotions in defence of one's life or possessions from physical attack' (Elias, 2000: 368). This is in comparison to modern society and the increasingly complex modern roads system. Here, the threat comes from the prospect of individual drivers losing control or departing from socially and legally accepted modes of behaviour. Drivers do not fear physical attack, but must negotiate travel

within an expanding network of roads that connect cities and countries, whilst, at the same time, cooperating with an increasing number and variety of vehicles. A more multifaceted regulation of one's self-restraint is required to guide one's self through traffic. Evidently, this is just a metaphor Elias uses to explain transformations in society and how human beings have become increasingly interdependent. Essentially, it demonstrates how we have come to rely on each other more as chains of action become further interwoven and modes of social behaviour become increasingly complex.

Elias (2000: 367) notes:

> As more and more people must attune their conduct to that of others, the web of action must be organized more and more strictly and accurately, if each individual action is to fulfil its social function. Individuals are compelled to regulate their conduct in an increasingly differentiated, more even and more stable manner.

Elias (2008a) considers the civilising and de-civilising effects which have emerged as a result of such technisation processes. He maintains that although the development of modes of transport such as the automobile lengthened the chains of interdependencies, it actually had an unintended de-civilising effect on society in terms of the number of violent deaths that followed. This emphasises the non-linear movement of processes such as technisation and the unintended effect such innovations can have on society.

The functional specialisation of the music industry

The 'accidental' development of the modern music industry is a case in point. Laing (2004) identifies the technological developments (particularly the phonograph) towards the close of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century as being particularly significant. Middleton (1990: 84) describes how the phonograph materialised in response to the need for individuals to communicate more easily with one another and subsequently ended up as a device which allowed music recordings to be heard. Thomas Edison, who has been credited with developing the device, visualised it being used for children's toys, recording families' sheet music, and commercial activities such as office dictation (Conot,

1979: 4). The concept of using the phonograph for the reproduction of music to be sold to the public was never even considered. In fact, the major source of income from music at the time came from performance, music publishing and music instruments (Laing, 2004). The companies involved had little interest in using the phonograph to play recorded music at a mass level. They only used the instrument to advertise their products. However, Middleton (1990: 84) argues that the development of the phonograph coincided with improvements in technology and musical instrument design. He writes that 'once the embryonic businesses saw the possibilities of mass dissemination, the necessary mass production technology, cheap playback equipment, and a global distribution network were developed with remarkable speed'. Indeed, as Gronow (2004) explains, the recording industry began to flourish at the beginning of the twentieth century as the leading companies built their businesses around a series of technological developments and expanded internationally into the music industry that we are familiar with today.

Peterson (2004) examines how these technological developments, coupled with other subsequent factors, contributed to the advent of rock and roll. He describes how the record industry went from a monopolised, homogenous market into a heterogeneous market where a few companies interacted as an oligopoly, but also allowed room for a large number of small, specialised record companies. He documents this change in industry structure in the period between 1948 and 1958 and indirectly links it to new technologies regarding radio and television. It is suggested that, because of the arrival of television, radio would become redundant, so radio licences became easier to acquire than had been the case previously. Concurrently, radio stations began to develop a growing relationship with record companies as their business began to boom in the post-war years. The increasing number of specialised radio stations (i.e. the increasing volume and functional specialisation of the broadcasting media) contributed towards this, as a greater variety of artists and musicians was now able to

be showcased. It is described in chapter two how such specialised stations contributed towards heavy metal's growing popularity in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Peterson notes how an industry which had been controlled by four companies became fragmented as small firms began to compete. The reason for this lies in the need for the radio stations to create an audience in the midst of increasing competition. Consequently, they 'sought out attention-catching records irrespective of their source' (Peterson, 2004: 283–4). The small labels then began to develop the creative talent that would then be snapped up by the 'majors' if they proved successful.

The development of television also played a significant role in influencing the ways in which music was accessed, whilst familiarising audiences with their favourite artists in a more personal and visual way (Frith, 2004). The importance of MTV in popularising and introducing heavy metal to new fans in the 1980s has already been noted in this thesis in 'the origins of heavy metal' section (see Weinstein, 2000; Borthwick and Moy, 2004). Walser (1993: 13) has commented on how the increasing popularity of music videos at the time suited heavy metal as it visualised the unique style of the subculture, whilst demonstrating the spectacular nature of the live shows and the unique rituals that accompanied them. In other words, more and more fans could access the music and also learn more about the subculture at the same time.

Dolan (2005) has commented on how 'objects' such as television have facilitated the experience of mobility and interconnectivity in a visual sense. He argues that 'television viewing as a practice is an aspect of broadening social interdependencies' (Dolan, 2005: 155). However, it must be reiterated that technologies such as television and radio are social in nature. To reiterate Sterne's (2003: 377) argument, technologies 'are structured by human practices so that they may in turn structure human practices'. In other words, such technologies are not static; they evolve and mean different things to different groups of

people. This has already been discussed with regards the unintended mass use of the phonograph (Laing, 2004) and is also demonstrated in the transformation of the turntable from a playback device into a musical instrument (Thornton, 1995). It is also particularly evident in the increasing digitalisation of music consumption. This will be elaborated upon in the next section.

The era of rock and roll began with the development of the mass medium (the radio) that could showcase a greater number of artists. Such artists gained further exposure and prominence because of the broad reach of television and the suitability of this medium for show-casing the unique visual aesthetics of the genre. It is outlined in chapter two how heavy metal music developed as a consequence of the specialisation and fragmentation of rhythm and blues and rock and roll music. Hence, heavy metal could never have emerged and evolved to its current form without the development of such mass mediums. Walser (2004: 366) suggests that the uniqueness of heavy metal suited the cultural industries, as capitalism 'feeds on novelty as a spur to consumption and mass culture may colonise existing tensions and ambiguities for consumer purposes.' To put this in figurational terms, the chains of interdependencies increased as the music industry expanded and this created a larger volume of music genres and products, lengthening ties between musicians, fans, critics, promoters and distributors. Consequently, this created an increasing demand for new forms of music both from the consumers who sought to distinguish themselves in their respective social groups and the producers who sought to differentiate themselves within an increasingly integrated marketplace. This led to the increase in volume of different genres and subgenres which evolved from the initial mainstream and the functional specialisation of such genres as heavy metal. As it has been discussed, this process was facilitated by radio and television, with the advent of satellite television in particular providing a platform for specialised genres such as heavy metal.

It is vital that the nature of the social structure and its relationship with the changing dynamic of social relationships and the personality structure is considered. Elias (1993) charts Mozart's evolution from a craftsman artist of court society and patronage to a musician who could sell his product to anonymous buyers and a wider market. At the time of Mozart's birth, the idea of a musical genius or freelance artist did not exist. The social structure did not offer any place for outstanding musicians. It was only as a market for musicians emerged that their role attained any real importance within wider society. Mozart's life came at a transitional period for artists, when they began to break away from court society and create their own art which could be seen or heard publicly. This is demonstrative of the beginning of a shift in the social structure at the time, as the gap between the bourgeoisie and court society decreased. Changes in state formation, technisation and other globalisation processes resulted in the lengthening of chains of interdependencies and an increasing demand for spaces of leisure. This allowed for the development of a mass medium and the industry that supported it. We have looked in brief at how the modern industry has developed and this differed from previous generations where the social structure did not support the development of music as a mass medium. This has mostly concerned a discussion of technisation processes and unintentional consequences of specific innovations (e.g., the phonograph, the electric guitar, radio and television) and their relationship with the social structure. This raises questions regarding how more recent technisation processes have altered the music industry, the producer–consumer relationship and hence the consumption patterns and behaviour of heavy metal music fans.

The digitalisation of the music industry: De-civilising music fan consumption?

In the first chapter of the literature review, the increasing prominence of virtual subcultures was discussed. It was argued that this has altered the way music fans connect and share music. There is little doubt that this has lengthened the chains of social relationships within

music subcultures/consumer tribes and contributed towards the globalisation of music genres such as heavy metal. However, Dant (2006: 303) writes:

> It seems likely that the increase in the social complexity, autonomy and substitutability of our material world reduces the direct dependence we have on other human beings… [In simple terms] as 'we become less aware of the consequences of our actions on other humans, there is a decivilizing effect.'

Hence, if we return to the questions posed in the first chapter of the literature regarding online heavy metal participation and potential differences in the characteristics of the online and 'face-to-face' subcultures, it would suggest that the behaviour of heavy metal fans would differ online and would in fact constitute forms of uncivilised behaviour due to this idea that we are less aware of our actions and that there are less social consequences for our actions in what is a relatively anonymous medium of communication. However, this theorisation potentially contradicts recent literature regarding other music scenes and 'tribes' (see Wilson and Atkinson, 2005; Hodkinson, 2007; Robards and Bennett, 2011), with the consensus being that subcultural behaviour is continuous across both 'real' and 'virtual' spaces of fandom. However, there has been little heavy metal research that has considered the behaviour of metal fans in such spaces. This alone makes an investigation of the online spaces of heavy metal scene imperative. Additionally, there is a lack of consumer research that considers some of the more confrontational or undignified aspects of online interaction (see De Valck, 2007).

The increasing presence of online spaces has not just changed the way fans interact with each other: it has also altered the music industry and the way music is consumed. This particularly relates to shifts in the format of music and the ways in which it is shared – the digitalisation of music. For example, the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) has recently reported (IFPI, 2012: 6) that digital music revenues have overtaken physical music revenues in the USA (the largest market), growing 8% in 2011. Overall, 32% of global

industry revenue is sourced through the sales of digital recordings. However, illegal file sharing is still damaging the industry: it is estimated (IFPI, 2012: 9) that 28% of internet users access unauthorised services to download or share music illegally. Wang and McClung (2011) write that by June 2008 there were over two hundred million computers with at least one peer-to-peer (P2P) application, with Siwek (2007) reporting that over twenty billion files had been illegally downloaded by 2005 alone. Worldwide retail sales of physical music products (e.g., CDs, records) were estimated to have dropped by 3 billion (32 billion dollars to 29 billion dollars) from 2006 to 2007 (IFPI, 2007) [3].This is not even considering the increase in downloads since then, and the advent of websites such as YouTube and MySpace where music can be played for free.

The high number of illegal downloads raises several questions about modern music consumption. Firstly, what does the current trend of illegal downloads represent in terms of the moral standards and ethics of the modern-day music consumer? What are the social conditions and factors relating to the individual psyche which allow for this illegal activity to occur so predominantly? In other words, how is this behaviour justified and how is it located within long-term processes of civilising that have been discussed in this chapter? Is it an example of a technisation process creating an unintended de-civilising effect? The explanations that have been provided thus far have suggested that the illegal consumption behaviour is based on the financial benefits and the convenient ease of access to the material (Ceinite et al., 2009; Wang and McClung, 2011). Lysonski and Durvasula (2008) insist, however, that the record industry is wasting its time trying to appeal to the moral code of those who download illegally, as the 'downloaders' believe they are not doing anything wrong. This is an issue that will be of particular interest in the data analysis section and is of obvious relevance to developing a picture of the modern music consumer.

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[3] Recorded music includes the retail value of all physical audio and excludes mobile tones and licensing.

Sterne (2006) argues that research regarding the digitalisation of music places too much focus on the legal and economic consequences concerning this technological shift, rather than the aesthetic nature of the mp3. For example, he states that the majority of academic articles concerning this issue fail to inform the reader that mp3s are efficient sound files that can be stored and shared easily. Sterne (2006: 827) writes: 'A robust understanding of the technological and aesthetic dimensions of the mp3 provides an important context for discussions of the legal, political economic and broader cultural dimensions of file-sharing.' He provides a detailed technical history and analysis of the technology that addresses this issue. At the same time, he uses such information to demonstrate that a 'gestural, tactile form of embodiment is the requirement and result of digital audio' (Sterne, 2006: 827).

Although his discussion concerning the specificities of the technology are beyond the scope of this thesis, Sterne's analysis is useful when we come to consider the cultural impact of the changes in format in which music is consumed. We have gone from the phonograph, to the vinyl record, to the cassette and the CD. The key similarities between these products are that they are real physical products to collect and become attached to. They represent a physical manifestation of fan identity (Straw, 1997). Although the increasing popularity of digital music files allows one to consume and collect more music, there is the possibility that this lessens the importance of material objects in music consumption. Sterne disagrees, arguing that mp3s can be considered as cultural objects, as consumers treat them like artifacts in the ways that they collect and talk about them. He challenges the concept of the 'virtual' that has been over- emphasised in studies of digital mediums, through highlighting the embodied dimensions of digital music consumption and 'its direct and sensuous interaction with an embodied, sensing, unthinking subject' (Sterne, 2006: 836). Magudda (2011) argues that digital files have actually led to rejuvenation in the role of material objects. He uses the examples of three objects – the new (iPod), an object that has altered in purpose (the hard

drive), and an older existing object (vinyl) – and examines how these three objects have been reconfigured in terms of their meanings and functional competences.

There is also the potential that the manner in which these files are consumed has shifted the ways in which we listen to music. Bull (2007) argues that although the iPod represents a trend towards the privatisation or individualisation of music listening – it follows a long list of objects which had similar functions, from the transistor radio to the walkman. The difference, however, is in the greater level of choice and control that the listener has over their listening experience. The increasing shift towards the digitalisation of music consumption has changed the way that we consume music and potentially the dynamics of social relationships that we form as a result of music consumption. This represents an example of the impact of technisation processes. The questions raised here concern how such processes are reflected in the Irish heavy metal scene. How do the fans access digital music and how is this related to status and capital within the subculture? How do the participants listen to music and how is it used to control their mood?

Critiquing figurational sociology: The expediency of adopting a figurational approach
In this section I will take on a more critical stance and examine some of the potential problems of adapting a figurational approach. Jary and Horne (1987) have previously suggested that figurational sociology has awarded itself a high status, particularly in the sociology of sport and leisure and that it does not engage with other theories enough. This is a valid point, and as a consequence, I have sought to address this critique through comparing CCCS and CCT research frameworks regarding consumer communities to the figurational approach I apply to this research context. It must also be acknowledged that Dunning (e.g. 1983, 1992, 1994) has attempted to address this critique of figurational works through

examining other approaches to spectator violence. However, it seems that the scarcity of such

figurational works that engage with other frameworks emphasises Jary and Horne's critique.

In answering criticisms of the Eliasian model, this section will also provide a platform in

which I can outline in greater detail how the figurational framework can help alleviate some

of the more problematic aspects of the subcultural and post-subcultural frameworks discussed

in chapter one. This section will be divided into three sections – evolutionism, functionalism

and gender.

Responding to the critique of evolutionism: Informalisation processes

The most prominent critic of Elias is Hans-Peter Duerr, who examines *The Civilizing Process*

in a five-volume series *Der Mythos vom Zivilisationsprozess: Nacktheit und Scham*, thus far

only published in German. According to Van Krieken (2005: 273), Duerr's main argument is

that:

> although Elias set out to analyse the self-perception of Western Europeans' civilized nature
> and demonstrate the social conditions underlying processes of 'civilization', he ended up
> taking on that self-perception largely as his own, and actually believed that human conduct
> has become considerably more civilized.

According to Van Krieken, Duerr believes that Elias is predisposed by the way we perceive

European history, the power of mythology and the manner in which it influences our modes

of thinking in terms of advancement and evolution. He argues that we have more in common

with our historical predecessors and less developed countries than Elias claims. One of the

examples he uses to make this point is how Elias exaggerates the apparent lack of restraint on

sexual morals in the Middle Ages, arguing that there were no lines between the private and

public spheres. Duerr disagrees, suggesting that this would be impossible considering the

typical family dynamic of the time, and the rules governing what one could and could not do

sexually. Duerr explains how medieval villages and members of tribal societies were actually

subjected to a more differentiated and flexible level of restraint than those who live in

modern industrial cities. He contends that in such medieval villages, everyone was far more likely to know each other and thus integrate into 'finely meshed social webs' (Van Krieken, 2005: 275). He cites the neighbourhood and secret warrior groups that existed and argues that there was just as much need for people in these societies to contain their impulses and feelings.

Firstly, suggesting that Elias was influenced by the mythology of European history is a strange argument to make considering the strong emphasis that Elias places on the balance between involvement and detachment in research. Although this will be discussed in the next chapter, it must be stressed here that Elias is not claiming that one can become completely detached from the object of research. He is concerned with how one can lessen the effect of involvement. Elias (2008c) insists that this is a common misperception of his work, where critics see it as an ode to the superiority of western civilisation.

Secondly, Dunning (1992), in response to claims of evolutionism, argues that the title *The Civilizing Process* is a poor translation and it really should be interpreted as *On the Process of Civilization*. Dunning believes that this could be one of the reasons that figurational sociology has been viewed as some form of social Darwinism. Dunning (1993: 42) insists that the process of social development does not have the same certainty as the succession of biological steps which human beings go through or the characteristic of irreversibility. Mennell (1998: 234–7) argues that Elias always sought to avoid using the term 'evolution' in a social context as he was aware that it had the potential to be misinterpreted and associated with biological evolutionism.

Elias (2008c) believes that Duerr has turned a blind eye to the vast changes in modern-day standards of self-steering. A reflection of this, he holds, is the longer period between childhood and adulthood in the present day. Elias (2008c: 12) writes that this is one example

among many of the differences between the present and medieval times in the 'civilisatory shaping of the individual'. It must be acknowledged, however, that Duerr does not question the long-term structural changes in terms of the development in the 'technical or material sense' (Mennell and Goudsblom, 1997: 731). His contention is that shame is innate, which does not necessarily mean that the further we go back, the less restrained we are. He insists that any changes in the nature of the human psyche (if any at all) are random. Duerr believes that in small communities, or tribal groups, social control and restraint are greater because of the smaller number of relationships (Mennell and Goudsblom, 1997: 731). He maintains that, in modern society, the greater variety of differentiated forms of behaviour has led to looser forms of social control. For example, in our modern consumer culture, subcultures like heavy metal would be identified as examples of groups in which there are looser forms of social control.

One only has to compare the behaviour of the participants of the heavy metal scene with previous generations to conclude that it appears to be indicative of a society that is more relaxed and open, despite the moral panic that surrounded the genre. This perception is articulated by Mennell (1998: 246–50) who claims that there is a widespread view that modern society is more dangerous and violent than ever before. Additionally, Elias first wrote about civilising processes at a time when millions of people lost their lives as a consequence of the violence of the Second World War. Considering Elias's emphasis on increasing societal and self controls, the increasing shame associated with violent behaviour, and accusations regarding the 'evolutionism' of his theoretical framework, it is evident that this view of a more violent society potentially 'undermines the plausibility of the thesis [Elias's ideas on civilisation]' (Mennell, 1998: 246). However, Mennell maintains that it is a false perception that we live in an increasingly violent society and argues that societies for hundreds of years have voiced similar concerns. This is not to say that we are living in an

increasingly pacified society either. Mennell again emphasises the non-linear direction of civilising processes, and supports Elias's contention that violence and aggression occur not as a result of an 'inbuilt unlearned mechanism' (Mennell, 1998: 249) in man, but as a consequence of the social figurations which produce and allow for acts of aggression to occur. Conversely, social figurations have developed in which feelings of shame are associated with acts of violence and displays of aggression. In such figurations, individuals have to develop a high level of control in order to avoid feelings of shame.

It would appear to an 'outsider' that subcultures such as heavy metal could potentially represent a caveat to the civilising process or an example of a de-civilising process. Although diminishing standards in etiquette and manners appear to contradict one of the central arguments of the civilising process, this is not the case. Wouters (2002, 2004, 2007) argues that the relaxation of standards in fact calls for an increase in one's self-control in what is referred to as the process of informalisation. This aspect of the civilising process was introduced in an effort to understand the relaxing of restraints in twentieth-century society. Wouters argues that the growing influence of the lower classes led to their looser and more informal manners being incorporated throughout society. There has been a growing tolerance for foul language and public displays of emotion within modern society. Kilminster (2008) examines counter-culture behaviour and argues that subcultural groups who expressed themselves through clothing, style, music and different symbols (e.g., hippies, mods, punks) felt the need to differentiate themselves, as the interdependencies between groups and social classes increased. These groups wanted to emancipate themselves from the social constraint towards self-restraint that increasing integration created. These groups consequently separate themselves by engaging in alternative music scenes and experimenting with sex and drugs.

Wouters (2004) observes that the conventions of human relations become increasingly flexible and less routinised as power relations transform. As a result we are bound to deal

with an increasingly shifting network of social relationships through developing a more complex method of regulating ourselves. The alternative, experimental behaviour of the counter-cultural modes of behaviour that Kilminster describes, does not represent the loss of self-control, but in fact calls for individuals to develop a more differentiated and flexible self-restraint in a social structure characterised by complex webs of social interdependencies. Atkinson describes the complex social figuration of the 'straightedge' subculture, where a high level of emotional restraint and control is needed. There is an emphasis on abstinence from drugs and alcohol which differentiates the straightedge scene from its rock and punk counterparts. Hence, rather than placing their acts of deviance (tattooing, listening to loud music etc. or straightedge's deviance to such subcultural norms) as unruly and uncivilised, it can be actually understood as controlled and rationalised, as the participants have to learn to adopt to a complex, fluid subculture in order to fit in and attain status. Essentially, acts of resistance and deviance are placed in a wider perspective and considered in the context of developments in the social structure and changes in the individual psyche.

Functionalism: Misinterpreting figurational sociology

Critics of figurational sociology (see Jones, 1977; Jary and Horne, 1987) have suggested that Elias frames individuals as mere 'cogs' in a machine where autonomy is limited. However, this is another example of how Eliasian theory has been misinterpreted. Dunning (1989, 1992) argues that the emphasis Elias places on connecting broad structural changes in society with transformations in social behaviour and the individual psyche has been misconstrued as some form of determinism. Perhaps critics see figurationalists as denying agency because of the lack of Eliasian studies that involve personal interviews or other methods of data collection that place the individual's experiences at the centre of analysis.

In fact, Elias has throughout his career contested such dualisms as agency–structure and individual–society. This, as Dunning (1992: 242) reiterates, is a 'false dichotomy'. Elias

(1991: 54) comments on the curiosity of how one group of theorists can think everything depends on the individual and how the other group can view it all as dependent on society. Instead, Elias maintains that both individual and society have to be studied in conjunction with each other. He is concerned with the relational aspects of social life, how the 'structures of the human psyche, the structures of human society and the structures of human history are indissolubly complementary' (Elias, 1991: 36). It is the interweaving of individual relations combined with our biological and cultural inheritance that shapes each individual habitus. Elias (1978: 167) argues that 'it is usually forgotten that there are always simultaneously many mutually dependent individuals, whose interdependence to a greater or lesser extent limits each one's scope for action'.

The fact that structural and historical transformations take place beyond the intentions of individual human beings does not imply that we live in a chaotic society. Elias argues that the actions and thoughts of people beget structural changes in an order and direction that is 'neither "rational" nor "irrational" but social' (Elias, 1991: 37). However, this does not make us mere cogs in a machine or lifeless identical coins, to borrow a metaphor from Elias. There is always a level of individualisation in society. We only develop distinguishing modes of behaviour or characteristics through a long process of social moulding where we learn to shape our selves within complex figurations. The scope of such individuation is dependent on how differentiated a society and its structural functions are. Thus to summarise, Elias does not deny agency. He views individuality and social conditioning in relational terms, as two different functions which cannot survive without each other.

The question may be asked of how this discussion regarding Elias's position on the agency–structure dichotomy concerns research involving consumer communities and, more specifically, heavy metal subculture. Firstly, it has been outlined in chapter two how post-subculture, consumer-centred accounts began to dominate literature concerning subcultures,

brand communities or tribes. Such theoretical lenses have emerged in response to criticisms regarding the traditional CCCS subcultural model. This refers particularly to the apparent constraining influence that its emphasis on economic and cultural structures has had on explanations concerning subcultural behaviours. This has come at the expense of focusing on the actual subcultural members themselves. However, in the 'Criticisms of the post-subcultural approach' section it was argued that modern CCT research could benefit from placing more consideration on the role of historical and structural processes. This point in particular emphasises the theoretical impasse between the subcultural and post-subcultural approach. Therefore, considering the positioning of the thesis within the field of consumer behaviour, the two most likely perspectives that could be used to analyse heavy metal subculture within this field are constrained by the dualism of agency–structure. Figurational sociology's positioning on this point can be used to address this issue in research regarding consumer communities. It can be used to develop explanations that consider how subcultural behaviour is shaped through the combination of structural processes, transformations in the individual psyche and the nature of the interdependencies that are a product of such a dynamic interplay. It is a position that privileges neither the 'individual' nor 'society'.

Academics within the CCT discipline have acknowledged the flaws of recent consumer research and its tendency to overemphasis the autonomy of the consumer. They have sought to draw on theorists such as Foucault and Bourdieu (see Holt, 1998) and connect the consumer experience with broader changes in the social structure. Arnould and Thompson (2007: 11) have in fact addressed this point:

> In parallel to the prior discussion of ideology and market-based emancipation, CCT research is seeking to push beyond the dichotomous opposition between sociological determinism and existential autonomy/authenticity (Sartre, 1956) or models of consumer which entail untenable and or culturally naive models of sociological agency (Fuchs, 2001; Meyer & Jepperson, 2000; Swidler, 1986), in favor of more nuanced discussions of social reproduction.

In response to such calls, there has been a shift towards a more critical perspective of

consumer culture (critical marketing), incorporating, for example, Marxist-influenced and

feminist frameworks into research concerning consumer behaviour (e.g. Saren et al., 2007).

However, there is a danger of reproducing the inherent problems of the Marxist approach that

were discussed in chapter two. Although, this critical marketing perspective has not been

applied to contexts regarding consumer communities as of yet, the potential application of

this could possibly lead to what may be perceived as overly political and value-laden analyses

of such contexts. This is particularly relevant when we consider the controversial nature of

heavy metal and the effect that critical approaches have had on some of the research

involving the subculture (see chapter two). The argument put forward by Elias (2007) that

one needs to separate the research process from political and value-laden ideologies (as much

as is feasibly possible) is one of the major criticisms of figurational sociology (see

Hargreaves, 1992). Consequently, whilst I use the next section to demonstrate the potential

weaknesses of adopting a structuralist-based critical marketing perspective for a subculture

such as heavy metal, I will also begin to formulate the seeds of a response to the

aforementioned critique of figurational sociology.

Figurational sociology and heavy metal moral panic

Rohloff (2008) holds that the concept of a moral panic has not progressed since the ground-

breaking work of Cohen (2002[1972]). She supposes that this is reflected in the three core

problems of normativity, temporality and (un)intentionality. Normativity refers to the

inherent presumption among researchers examining moral panics that they are in fact

overreactions or misguided. Rohloff cites the problem of temporality in that most moral panic

studies are done at the time of the 'panic' and conducted over a relatively short period of

time, and (un)intentionality refers to the idea that past studies have failed to recognise the

volume of differing and polarising opinions and reactions that issues under study provoke. In other words, every individual decodes and incorporates messages from the media differently.

She proposes that figurational sociology can be used to engage with such problems. Rohloff and Wright (2010: 411) conceptualise moral panics 'as short-term, partial decivilizing processes that occur within (and partly as a result of) civilizing processes'. Rohloff (2008: 70) compares the symptoms/outcomes of a moral panic with the characteristics of a decivilising trend. She argues that the initial concern occurs because of the perceived lack of action from a governing body; the creation of 'scapegoats' or 'folk devils' is reflective of a decrease in mutual identification. A decrease in reality congruence is evident in times of moral panic as there is a decline in rational decision-making and assessing of the situation and its possible solutions.

Rohloff also contends that the disproportionality of moral panics and the increase in perceived danger are a direct result of the enhanced specialisation and differentiation of roles within society. In other words, in modern society a large amount of trust is placed on individuals who specialise and become experts on certain topics to inform. This is in fact a civilising trend, and an example of how a civilising trend can facilitate a decivilising trend. This is most certainly seen in the PMRC's attack on what they saw as profane music. A variety of so-called experts, such as King (1988), were recruited to validate their concerns over heavy metal and this contributed to the decivilising trend.

In positioning moral panics as decivilising processes, Rohloff and Wright examine how the problems of normativity, temporality and (un)intentionality can be transcended through a figurational lens. Arnould and Thompson (2005) have suggested that there is a greater need for historical perspectives in consumer behaviour research. The short time period over which studies of moral panic studies are undertaken would not occur under a figurational

framework, where emphasis would be placed upon long-term societal trends and the balance of power between established and outsider groups. Dolan (2005, 2009a, 2009b) has adopted an historical figurational approach to his research concerning Irish consumer culture and Canniford and Shankar (2007) and Canniford and Karababa (2012) have developed an historical analysis that borrows from figurational theory, somewhat, in their analyses of surfing. Similarly to Bradshaw and Canniford (2005) and Liston (2005 and 2007), I draw from previous historical figurational research to locate key social processes and transformations in the social structure. Through examining the long-term trends of functional specialisation and the division of labour, Rohloff and Wright claim to account for the magnification of potential dangers because the increasing 'democratisation of knowledge, which allows counter claims to be voiced and heard… further contribute to the incalculability of danger' (Rohloff and Wright, 2010: 412). By drawing from previous figurational historical research (e.g. Elias, 2000; Wouters, 2004; Dolan, 2005, 2009a, 2009b; Elias and Dunning, 2008a; Elias, 2008a) and with the figurational emphasis on pursuing as detached a position as possible I can examine the phenomenon at hand and limit the potential of political ideology interfering in analysis. Clearly, it is impossible for one to detach one's self completely from ideological influence. However, there are certain strategies that one can use to diminish the influence to some degree. This will be discussed in detail in the methods chapter (see chapter four).

This is a key point and possibly explains why much of the moral panic research has positioned 'panics' as typical conservative right-wing over-reactions. This seems to be evident in the work of heavy metal academics such as Weinstein, who can be accused of mythologising and romanticising the subculture at times. This can particularly occur in times when heavy metal culture is under attack. Weinstein, in outlining her defence of heavy metal, separates the critique into two sections. On the one hand, she suggests heavy metal is

stigmatised and censored by the conservative right led by the PMRC. On the other, she

argues that the cultural liberals of the left fail to take heavy metal seriously as an art form and

consequently the music and the subculture becomes stereotyped and ignored in the mass

media. Whether Weinstein is correct in her assumptions here is not the issue. The problem is

that as a result of this apparent stigmatisation, Weinstein goes as far as comparing heavy

metal fans to homosexuals and black people, in terms of the persecution they have suffered.

Because she goes this far to defend her subculture it becomes difficult to then take her

descriptions of the heavy metal scene completely seriously. For example, Weinstein's love of

heavy metal endows her analysis with a level of romanticism and political bias. In her

description of the live event she affords heavy metal a special status over other genres of

music:

> It is an ecstatic experience, a celebration of heavy metal where the metal gods rule from the
> stage as cultural heroes… at the point of perfection, time stands still and one feels that one
> belongs to a higher reality, far away from the gray, everyday world. (Weinstein, 2000: 231)

Although she provides an interesting and thought-provoking analysis of the genre and its

intricacies, her one-sided view of heavy metal tends to diminish her opinions concerning

heavy metal and its relationship with social morals. Rohloff and Wright argue that using

historical figurational accounts can facilitate a more detached focus, and hence generate

significantly greater theoretical developments whilst overcoming the problems of normativity

and temporality that are inherent in moral panic research. Although in this study there is no

historical analysis of the development of heavy metal in Ireland, it is worth understanding the

political context in which previous research has been conducted. Does the fact that heavy

metal is not as popular as it once was, and that this research is located in a country where the

reaction to the subculture has not been as severe as in America, reduce the potential of values

interfering in the research? This issue of involvement and detachment will be discussed in

greater detail in the methodology section, but it is worth highlighting this point in order to

gain a more balanced perspective in reviewing literature concerning heavy metal and its detractors. However, figurational sociology has been critiqued, particularly from critical feminist researchers, for adopting such a 'value-free' approach. This will be discussed in the next section.

Transformations in gender relations: Considering the crisis of masculinity under a figurational lens

One of the major criticisms of heavy metal culture is the apparent dominance of males, both musicians and fans. At the beginning of the first chapter of the literature review, I discussed the growing female fan base at the time of heavy metal's commercial popularity and how as a result it attracted criticisms of sexism and misogyny (see Frith and McRobbie, 1978; Kaplan, 1987). For this reason alone, gender identity is an important aspect of the heavy metal subculture which warrants a discussion. Walser (1993 and 2004) suggests that the patriarchal nature of heavy metal offers a great context in which to explore gender relations as it represents a microcosm of our patriarchal society.

Figurationalists have also been criticised for ignoring women in their research (see Hargreaves, 1992). Feminist research has attacked figurationalists for what Hargreaves describes as its 'value- free' research, which she claims is a product of the figurational methodological pursuit of 'detachment'. Liston (2007) suggests that Hargreaves's criticism of the Eliasian methodological practice is based on a misreading of the figurational understanding of the involvement–detachment balance in research. This will be discussed in greater detail in the methodology chapter. However, in opposition to the feminist critique, I argue that figurational sociology is a useful theoretical context in which to explore gender identities, both generally and within the narrower perspective of the heavy metal scene. Elias (1987) understands gender relations as a power dynamic which can change over time depending on broader developments in society. For example, he describes the division of

labour in early societies where men were responsible for the hunting of food, and hence asserted their dominance through their greater physical strength and organisational capabilities. However, there was a shift in male power due to developments within society. The decreasing importance of physical strength, in addition to a number of other factors (e.g., advances in female organisations and developments in technologies such as contraception), have led to a reduction in men's power. However, it must be noted that this shift in the balance of power does not occur in a linear direction. It can change at any time, depending on developments in the social structure.

Wouters (2004) demonstrates the impact of such changes in his analysis of manners and etiquette books from the United States of America, Holland, Germany and France. He presents evidence which documents the changes in courting and dating codes, work practices, sexuality and emotions. Changes in the relationship between the sexes are just one aspect of a wider process that Wouters describes as informalisation. For example, he uses the changes in dance etiquette over the last century to demonstrate the reduction in inequality between the sexes, the lessening of emotional restraints and the shift in the we–I balance:

> At the beginning of the twentieth century, the popular waltz visualised the prevalent ideal of relationships of harmonious inequality between the sexes: the man led the woman followed, and together they created harmonious figures… individualised dancing became popular in the 1960's… in individualised dancing, each individual tries to adjust his or her movements to the music as well as those of the partner. The dancer follows less of a set pattern; their movements are more informal and more varied. It is less easy to see who is leading and who is following, and it is less predictable. (Wouters 2004: 2–3)

In the previous discussion concerning heavy metal, it was suggested that the exaggerated displays of masculine control in the scene (Straw, 1983; Kaplan, 1987; Walser, 2004) could be a product of what is perceived by many (see MacInnes, 2001) as a crisis in masculinity. The figurationalists Atkinson (2008) and Dunning (2008) have argued that this 'crisis' could be a result of the reduction in the power that men hold over women. Dunning (2008) believes that the shift in the gender nexus has led to men using the spaces of sport and leisure to

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project symbolic expressions of machismo. Could this help explain the development of the hyper-masculine heavy metal subculture? This issue becomes more interesting when we consider the apparent increase in female heavy metal subcultural involvement (Weinstein, 2000; Walser, 2004). Liston (2005) examines the increasing participation of women in sports which have been traditionally thought of as masculine in Ireland. She applies Elias and Scotson's (2008) 'established and outsider' theory to explain how despite the increase in female involvement, women still occupy a position as relative outsiders in sport due to their lack of organisational resources. Liston does, however, maintain that the greater numbers participating have led to feelings of emancipation amongst females and resistance amongst males.

Liston notes that men stigmatise women who play such sports as 'butch' or 'lesbian'. Elias and Scotson (2008: 4) argue that 'exclusion and stigmatisation of the outsiders by the established group were thus powerful weapons used by the latter to maintain their identity, to assert their superiority'. The men engage in this in order to assert their dominance and the women, as Liston (2005: 70) observes, 'are constrained to internalise negative characteristics attributed by the established as part of outsider conscience and self image'. The women, Liston explains, internalise feelings of inferiority from a young age and place emphasis on the importance of skill over strength in their narratives in order to maintain their femininity. Elias and Scotson (2008: 12) maintain that outsider groups experience their 'power inferiority as a sign of human inferiority' as much as established groups see their higher status as a sign of human superiority. The discussion of such figurational dynamics raises questions about the relationship between the genders in the heavy metal scene. It raises questions regarding the role that women play in such a patriarchal environment. It considers if projections of hyper-masculinity and sexism are in fact a response to a shifting balance of power between genders?

Atkinson suggests that in response to the supposed 'crisis' in masculinity, men are reconceptualising what it means to have a 'masculine' identity. He believes that men's increasing use of cosmetic surgery is being 'reconciled as civilized masculine practice' (Atkinson, 2008: 68). The men are responding to fragmented institutions of control by using cosmetic surgery as a source of social control in the milieu of cultural ambiguity. Central to this hypothesis is the importance that Atkinson ascribes to body modification and how processes such as tattooing (see Atkinson, 2002) and cosmetic surgery are used to reconfigure traditional gender roles. The men he interviewed talked about their management of pain to demonstrate their masculinity and to 'tactically reframe cosmetic surgery along established masculine lines of power and authority' (Atkinson, 2008: 83).

Johansson (2006) also considers the difficulties men encounter in modern society and the strategies they develop for protecting themselves. He maintains that masculine and feminine meanings are not as black and white as they once were. Referring back to the first chapter of the literature review, I discussed the androgynous aesthetics of the heavy metal scene – particularly 'glam' metal – as well as the popularity of the long haired look and the use of make-up. This represents an interesting contradiction for what is essentially a hyper-masculine subculture. Are the male fans challenging traditional conceptions of masculinity through such bodily practices, using such subcultures to pursue identity projects as Goulding and Saren (2009) suggest? Is this a way of affirming power over women as Denski and Schoelle (1992) argue, or do such statements carry little or no meaning at all (Kaplan, 1987)?

It is a valid criticism that not many figurational studies have focused on gender (see Hargreaves, 1992). However, recent research from Eric Dunning and Katie Liston has responded to such a call. In doing so, they have emphasised that adopting a figurational approach is quite suitable for a study concerning the hyper-masculine subculture of heavy

metal. They have demonstrated how broader changes within society, transformations in power balances can be linked to the behaviour of sport and leisure participants.

Conclusion

Elias's figurational sociology has allowed us to develop a framework which identifies some of the key processes which led to the development of modern Irish consumer culture, an increasing demand for sport and leisure, and the emergence and consequent fragmentation of the modern music industry. This facilitates our understanding of how genres such as heavy metal developed, and more importantly, the emotional significance of such subcultural spaces. Focusing on broader developments within the social structure addresses a lacuna within many modern consumer culture studies, particularly research regarding consumer tribes or marketplace cultures. However, the strength of figurational theory lies in how it connects transformations within the social structure with developments within the individual personality structure. The connection between social structure and the individual personality structure is not the preserve of figurational sociology, but the figurational perspective offers a distinctive way of approaching research problems by virtue of several interconnected threads – changing social structure, habitus formation, emotional control and the need for excitement, and a relatively detached methodological perspective. In particular, I have focused on the interweaving of social change with an increasing (non-linear) constraint towards self-restraint. Elias and Dunning argue that this places a greater strain on social relationships and that consequently we place an increasing emphasis on controlled environments in which mimetic emotional tension can be generated and released. Can this explain the intensity of heavy metal music and its aggressive rituals?

The seemingly 'uncivilised' nature of heavy metal makes it an interesting context in which to explore Eliasian ideas concerning 'civilising', 'de-civilising' and 'informalising' processes. It

creates questions regarding the characteristics of the subcultural spaces created by heavy metal fans and the nature of the social relationships and emotions expressed within the scene. I suggest that Wouters' informalisation concept is useful for explaining unusual modes of behaviour which seem on the surface to be lacking in any restraint or control. Wouters argues that the relaxation in standards in fact calls for a more differentiated and flexible form of self-control, as developing social codes merge with established forms of behaviour to create new forms of conduct.

Adapting a figurational perspective differs from previous cultural studies accounts of subcultures, as well as from previous research concerning heavy metal. The controversial nature of heavy metal has attracted criticism from feminist scholars and it has also been the source of moral panic at various points in its evolution. Consequently, it is argued that heavy metal research – which has adopted a critical stance in both attacking and defending the scene – has been affected, to a degree, by an overemphasis on the political sensibilities of the genre and the controversy that it has generated. Elias's emphasis on striving to achieve a level of detachment can help bypass some of these issues and lead to a more reality-congruent analysis of heavy metal subculture.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Research is an arduous process, and very often in academic accounts of the frameworks and methods employed in the field we are presented with descriptions which betray this reality. We are often subjected to sequential processes where every step that is completed in order is ticked off without any trace of problems or sense of deviation from the chosen method of data collection. In this section I will provide a 'warts and all account' of not only what worked well in the research process but what went wrong also. I will first define the actual research

problem and the questions that came from this. It will then be demonstrated how adopting

Elias's figurational sociology of knowledge as a framework can be beneficial in answering

such questions. Finally, I will outline the actual research processes that took place in the

collection of data.

Problem definition: Research questions

Maxwell (2005: 34) identifies the formulating of a research problem as a key task in that it

can illustrate the importance of the research as well as justifying it. This research was based

on a general interest in music and a curiosity concerning the types of behaviour that heavy

metal fans engaged in, and the motivations they had for participating in such a subculture.

Silverman (2009) argues that research problems should be defined clearly and in simple

terms. Norbert Elias places emphasis on the ongoing relationship between theory and

empirically-informed research in which both are refined in respect of one another through a

'combination of reflection, experience and practice' (Bloyce, 2004: 153). After an extensive

review of the literature which considered both traditional and post-subcultural consumer

culture paradigms as potential frameworks for understanding heavy metal, it is argued that

there are inherent problems in adapting both approaches. It is also claimed that many of the

previous studies of metal either focused too much attention on the dangerous or negative

aspects of the culture, or justified and defended the scene. There is clearly a gap in both the

literature of music subcultures and heavy metal academic studies.

Figurational sociology represents an alternative paradigm in which consumer communities

can be examined and such problems can be bypassed. This approach is ideal to examine the

marketplace culture of heavy metal as a context because of issues regarding the supposed

'uncivilised' nature of heavy metal and the apparent lack of 'control' that its participants

display. This led to the central research question:

- **How does heavy metal subculture – its rituals, customs, etiquette and emphasis on emancipated displays of emotion – relate to social constraints towards self-regulation in the context of complex social interdependencies?**

Focusing in particular on the nature of emotional control within the scene and its connection with broader civilising, de-civilising and informalising processes raises several connecting issues that will be examined in the data analysis chapters. I will allow such auxiliary concerns to emerge in the findings rather than listing them here.

Research framework: Sociology not philosophy

Considering that the figurational sociology framework forms much of the basis of this thesis it is appropriate that Elias's methodological approach is discussed. Baur and Ernst (2011) highlight criticisms from German academics Duerr and Schroter who argue that Elias failed to carry out a major empirical study in the twenty years that followed *The Civilizing Process* or provide any methodological guideline in his work. This refers to a wider criticism of figurational sociology and the apparent absence of any major details regarding a methodological framework or philosophy. The lack of research focusing on individual experience and lack of details regarding the Eliasian methodological process is perhaps one of the reasons why figurational sociology has been mostly overlooked within modern consumer culture studies.

The use of the term 'philosophy' and its implications regarding the pursuit of knowledge in the social sciences is a good place to start in structuring the figurational methodological approach and the research framework for this thesis. Kilminster (1998, 2004, 2007, 2011) describes Elias's abandonment of philosophy and his critique of sociological methods that relied on philosophical questions such as 'How do I know what I know?' and 'What determines my actions?' Elias believed that it was overly time-consuming to concern oneself

with the philosophical nature of how knowledge is attained rather than the scientific and practical ways in which it can be achieved. In short, he found debates concerning the advantages and disadvantages of different types of philosophical epistemologies irrelevant. Quilley and Loyal (2004: 2) criticise the divisions that are inherent in the field of sociology and suggest that many academics take 'refuge behind impenetrable jargon and theoretical obscurantism'. Elias sought to sidestep such tensions and focus on developing a sociological theory of knowledge. This approach places emphasis on the ongoing relationship between theory and empirical research.

Sociological theory of knowledge

In the literature review the concepts of figurations and interdependencies were used in order to explain both the sociogenesis of our society and the psychogenesis of individuals. This same mode of thinking can be applied to a methodological discussion. Elias (1991b: 9) writes that 'the expectation of a specific type of explanation is not due to an individual's personal experience, but to the collective experiences of a whole group in the course of many generations'. Elias is challenging the idea of trying to seek out universal truths or understanding knowledge as an individual process. He argues for a *homines aperti* approach – people rather than person – as opposed to a *homo clausus* (closed) comprehension of the research process. Quilley and Loyal (2004) explain that Elias wanted to answer sociological questions about the connections between social processes and reality-congruent knowledge – rather than trying to find universal truths in philosophically-oriented problems.

Elias (1991b) stresses the importance of using a multi-disciplinary approach. This is particularly the case in *The Symbol Theory*. He laments the departmentalisation of academia in searching for answers to problems such as the development of language. Using the study of languages as an example, he condemns sociologists for ignoring biological issues and

biologists for ignoring sociological problems. He believes that this approach is typical of the single-mindedness that exists in academia, where academics place their subject as the authority on a phenomenon that can 'explain all social events, including human communication, in terms of individual actions' (Elias 1991b: 20). The discipline of consumer behaviour has also suffered as a result with economical, psychological and sociological theories fighting for supremacy within the field (see, Arnould and Thompson, 2005, 2007; Askegaard and Linnet, 2011). Arnould and Thompson refute suggestions that CCT is a unified or grand theory – insisting that it is open to multiple disciplines and theories. 'Consumer research is a vital and maturing field of inquiry, not because it has steadily advanced towards a singular body of theory but rather because it can generate and sustain multiple theoretical conversations, each speaking to distinctive theoretical questions.' (Arnould and Thompson, 2007: 876).

Elias not only chooses language as an example with which to emphasise the divisive nature of academia, but also to demonstrate the role that communication and symbols play in our understanding and sharing of knowledge. Elias claims that the reason we have a plethora of dichotomies within the social sciences, with examples including inductive and deductive research, and quantitative versus qualitative methods, is owing to the fact that the languages we have developed may not have allowed us to formulate the appropriate symbols with which to communicate, understand and explain the vast complexities of our society and the processes which have occurred. Elias believes that the development of more reality-congruent symbols is essential to the establishment of a sociological theory of knowledge. We must understand that the transferring of symbols from one generation to the next can lead to both an increase and a decrease in fantasy-laden knowledge.

Elias notes the importance of fantasy in terms of emotion and the urgent need in our society to find outlets in which to generate and release emotional tension (see Elias and Dunning,

2008a). However, according to Quilley (2004), Elias was of the opinion that in order for knowledge to become increasingly reality-congruent, sociology could learn from disciplines such as physics and chemistry which develop knowledge in a more scientific manner. This is particularly the case in terms of the natural sciences' capacity for relative detachment, which will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter. However, it is important that we note that Elias is not trying to duplicate the physical sciences. It is, as Quilley (2004: 44) describes, 'sociology as science'. Elias believed that applying a scientific approach to the examination of social processes could be as thorough as any of the natural sciences. He arranges the scientific disciplines along a continuum and observes that they differ in 'degrees of differentiation, interdependency and functional integration' (Quilley, 2004: 45). For example, at the top end of the spectrum, the subject matter of disciplines such as physics displays low levels of integration, functional differentiation and complexity, and hence it is well suited to process reduction. As we move down the continuum to disciplines such as the natural sciences, and then social sciences, there is a decreasing use of scientific laws and hence an increase in theoretical formulations, as the levels of integration and complexity increase. Elias (2007), however, links the connections between interdependencies as a social process and the biological hierarchal order of the body. Human behaviour has:

> stage-specific dimensions that emerge from the pattern of interdependent interaction and participation in social processes… this provides a convincing rationale for the relative autonomy of social processes as a field of investigation, whilst specifying fairly precisely the relationship to natural scientific disciplines. (Quilley, 2004: 47)

Elias, in presenting this hierarchy, is demonstrating the historical emergence of a continuum of scientific disciplines and signifying the benefits of a scientific sociology of knowledge. Rojek (1986) has been critical of this supposed 'scientific' approach, arguing that Elias gives too much weight to the idea that somehow scientific methods are more objective than purely theoretically-based sociological studies. The emphasis Elias places on a 'scientific' mode of

sociological inquiry has led to claims that figurational sociology advocates a positivistic framework (e.g. Pels, 2003). This is a complete misunderstanding of his position and goes against his concept of *homines aperti*. Elias and Scotson (2008: 50) write that 'models of configurations, of social patterns or structures can be no less precise and reliable than the results of quantitative measurement of isolated factors or variables.' The application of a process-orientated methodology never pretends to present a finality of findings like the absolute positivistic inquiries.

Baur and Ernst (2011) note that Elias was one of the earliest advocates of mixed method research and describe how he uses quantitative methods to triangulate qualitative data. This is dependent on their suitability for examining the micro level and their aptness for reconstructing both the macro level and a figuration's sociogenesis. Quantitative data was collected by Elias and Scotson (2008) in the shape of statistics such as income, occupation and age, but they argue that this data was not relevant to their understanding of why a particular neighbourhood positioned itself as 'superior' to another similar neighbourhood. Although the statistical data provided them with potential information regarding age or class differences, it could not possibly explain this phenomenon in terms of locating specific power structures or configurations. Elias and Scotson argue that positivists would separate all the different factors and variables in such a way that they exist independently from the whole social configuration. Through surveying each individual they would assume that each individual has formed an opinion of their own, independent of the influence that other people have played in forming their attitudes and opinions. No matter how accurate the statistical data were, it was apparent that the relationship between the two neighbourhoods had an historical element. In short, the use of quantitative methods provided the researchers with independent answers to questions to which they needed interdependent answers.

Involvement and Detachment: Controlling the influence of the researcher

The problem of cause and effect in heavy metal studies: Re-evaluating the ethnographic turn

The circumstances of Elias and Scotson's study share many similarities with this research, in that an understanding is needed of the relationships between heavy metal fans themselves as well as with other groups within society. To do this, each factor has to be understood within a figuration, as well as examining the social processes behind the development of heavy metal culture itself. Based on this research context, it would be illogical to employ quantitative methods to answer the research questions that are asked in this particular study. In previous studies of heavy metal, the dangers of applying a cause-and-effect analysis to understanding the subculture have created numerous problems and controversies. Quantitative-based research conducted by King (1988), Stack et al. (1994), Scheel and Westefeld (1999) and Lacourse et al. (2001), all identify the link between heavy metal and the list of well-known suicide indicators. It was explained in the literature review how the connections found in these studies were tenuous at best. It was also demonstrated how there was a danger that the studies that responded to this particular 'moral panic' (see Cohen, 2002) had the potential to romanticise or mythologise heavy metal subculture in defending it (see Tsistos, 1999; Weinstein, 2000). This raises questions about the researcher's position in this research.

The level of involvement of insider or outsider accounts has always been a contentious issue in subcultural studies. Bennett (2002) describes the 'ethnographic turn' in the study of youth cultures and popular music (see Redhead, 1990). He argues that this shift in methodological practice is a reflection of criticisms of the CCCS (e.g. Hall and Jefferson, 1976) which failed to adequately capture the voices of the social actors involved. Bennett, however, claims that despite this welcome emphasis on ethnography and participant observation, there is an absence of critical debate concerning the methods employed in the study of youth culture and popular music. There has not been enough reflection on the research process and the benefits

of being an insider in studies of Punks, Goths and other youth cultures. He suggests that there is a tendency for these researchers to take their own experiences as those of everyone, as they fail to explain what is inherently known by members of a particular subculture to an outside audience.

However, it is not only subjective perspectives that fail to inform but also studies where the researcher claims a level of objectivity from the research site. In this research process I take on the position of an 'outsider-participant'. Prior to this research I had no knowledge about heavy metal music or the heavy metal scene. In the next section the balance I sought to attain between involvement and detachment will be discussed. Although it is impossible to ever obtain a position of complete detachment, it was believed that suspending as much of the researcher's own values or preconceptions about heavy metal practices from the study could only be advantageous. This position follows Elias's notion of a scientific sociology of knowledge. It will be shown how taking a 'detour via detachment' can bypass problems in heavy metal literature concerning either the chastising or romanticising of the scene. Additionally, this framework and the outline of my strategy of participation in the subculture will provide a much-needed account of the process that is involved in researching a subculture through the use of participant observation. This follows Bennett's (2002) call for a greater level of detail with regards the ethnographic process in the examination of subcultures and consumer tribes.

Misrepresenting involvement and detachment

Hargreaves (1992) has criticised figurationalists, particularly in the sociology of sport, for failing to adopt any ideological focus to research and for suggesting that it can be carried out without compromising objectivity. Rojek (1986) has accused Elias of tarnishing his supposed realist approach with idealist conjecture. He writes that Elias's explanation of involvement in research 'seems to be portrayed as the mere expression of "involved" consciousness' (Rojek,

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1986: 587). However, Elias always maintained that individuals only learn to control their emotions and relations with others under specific societal conditions. In other words, scientific detachment is not related to individual acts of consciousness, and figurations are not produced from acts of social consciousness. Rather, 'social consciousness is a product of the structure of groups' (Rojek, 1986: 588).

Rojek believes that Elias, a critic of dualism, has placed a dichotomy of involvement and detachment at the heart of his methodological framework. These assumptions are based on a misreading of the figurational conception of involvement. Elias (2007) always maintained that the balance between involvement and detachment is dependent on specific societal conditions and the ability of individuals to control their own emotions. Kilminster (2004) describes how Elias was influenced by Weber and Schutz, who sought to limit the influence of individual values and preconceptions in the research process. However, Elias argues that Weber and Schutz took for granted the individual's capacity to regulate emotions. Hence, 'scientific detachment is not… synonymous with individual acts of consciousness or cognitive distinction' (Kilminster, 2004: 27). In other words, an individual's ability to control their emotions is dependent on the figuration.

Elias is fully aware that it is impossible to achieve a position of complete detachment. He is, however, focused on developing a position that seeks to limit the impact of individual values and preconceptions which may affect the research process. Wouters (2007) has discussed the possibility of a third nature developing in our society in what he describes as the process of informalisation. This process, which was discussed in the literature review, essentially posits that as we become increasingly integrated we acquire greater levels of mutual identification and self-control. In such instances we can learn to adapt to increasingly complex social figurations. Quilley and Loyal (2004) explain how having less control over our nature can

lead to more emotionally based accounts of our social world. Achieving greater control can lead to more reality-congruent knowledge.

Marxists and feminists may ask why figurationalists feel the need to reduce the role of values in research. Critical theory has been heavily influenced by the Hegelian philosophy which places emphasis on comparing a system or a particular institution with its ideal form. Marxists – and hence early cultural studies conceptions of subcultures which were influenced by this school of thought – have always sought to understand the phenomena under study in terms of a political context. For example, if heavy metal was to be studied under this traditional subcultural framework, the scene would most likely be situated in the context of a moral panic and its relationship with dominant classes. The pitfalls of studying heavy metal in such circumstances are that it can lead to value-laden theoretical formulations. This has been discussed already in relation to some heavy metal studies that have fallen into such a trap (see Tsistos 1999; Weinstein, 2000).

Feminists have pursued what Hargreaves describes as a 'passionate objectivity' methodological approach. She claims that figurationalists cannot change or affect the way we live because their objective of detachment results in the failure of figurational sociologists to pursue social change. She maintains that we as individuals have more power to change things. Hargreaves (1992: 169) contends that figurationalists pay little attention to the personal choices which individuals can make that can have influence both politically and economically. She suggests that these personal choices create values which generate changes in the personality structure and 'the supposed successful civilizing of the individual'. Rojek has also argued that ideologies in science can actually be productive in sociological enquiries. However, this is not a point that Elias ever disputed.

Detour via detachment: Secondary involvement and the subjectivity of art

It is not, however, the case that figurational sociology advocates some sort of cold, heartless positivist position when it comes to research. Elias simply believes that political discussion should only come into the research either before or after it has been done, as criticising certain power structures or institutions has the danger of clouding judgement. Citing Elias, Kilminster (2011: 111) writes that 'the researchers execute a "detour via detachment", whereby they suspend moral and political convictions but return to them in a new form after theoretical-empirical enquiry'. Kilminster (2007) describes the passion and enjoyment that can be attained by secondary involvement. Dunning (1992: 254) explains this as where one gains distance from objects of research and then 'gets back in'. Elias (2007) compares the effect of renaissance paintings to the development of sociological thought. He describes how these painters separated themselves from their objects in order to achieve perspective realism in their art. In secondary involvement, the viewers of these paintings could involve themselves in the aesthetics of the art and gauge understanding and pleasure from interpretation. Elias believes that this can be applied to sociology, where political passion and values becomes detached in the research process but one then becomes secondarily involved in evaluation and can attain pleasure in comprehension.

Elias (1993) in his study of Mozart described how artists developed a level of psychic distance through controlling the fantasy stream of their personality. In a way, Elias's discussion of artistic detachment bears comparison with this research. No matter what my personal feelings are regarding heavy metal, I would have to try and limit these feelings and the influence of such preconceptions in the research process. The arts in particular have the power to move people. Kramer contemplates the power of music to alter one's subjectivity. He writes that 'the transmigration of feelings (especially the more poignant feelings) proves to exemplify the general power of music to implant subjective states in the listener that are

paradoxically both native and alien, impossible either to own or disown' (Kramer, 2001: 159). This presented a problem in this research. Music, particularly music as divisive (in terms of musical taste) as heavy metal, has the ability to stir up powerful feelings and emotions that can potentially distort evaluation and comprehension. Similarly to Kozinets's (2001) ethnography of Star Trek, my field notes contain many examples in which I was confronted with the negative stigma of heavy metal. It is clear from the following extract that I am wary of the stigma attached to heavy metal and look to distance myself from it in discussions with people who do not participate in the scene.

> I am picked up by the taxi driver at 6.45 pm. I find it hard to understand him as he speaks with a heavy Cork accent. He tells me that he has brought other fans to the Marquee earlier. I notice that I make a point of telling the driver that I do not like this music and that I am attending the gig for research purposes. I find it interesting that I have to justify myself for going to a heavy metal gig… When we arrive at the venue the taxi driver asks me what time I think the show will be over. I suggest around 11 but that he would probably pick up some people around 10.30. When I pay him he tells me to enjoy the 'noise' and have a good time. I ask him if can we swap places. (Field notes, 14/06/10, Machine Head, The Olympia, Dublin City Centre)

However, Kozinets (2001: 76) suggests that once the boundary of stigma is crossed it 'encourages depth of involvement'. This created further problems for me as I become more integrated into the scene and sympathetic to the heavy metal community, I found myself transferring from a position as an outsider to that of a relative insider.

Bloyce (2004) argues that just being aware of your own position as a researcher is enough of a guideline in the quest for finding a balance between involvement and detachment. However, arguments such as this give some credence to Rojek's claims that figurational sociology suffers from the unwillingness of Elias's 'disciples' to critique Elias. In this research, for example, my position as an outsider has the potential for me to collect and analyse data from heavy metal fans with an attitude that positions them as 'alien', 'strange', 'violent' and potentially dangerous. However, by understanding my role in the research and the preconceptions I bring (as well as the preconceptions of those around me) to the

phenomena under investigation, I can potentially form a more reality-congruent analysis of what is witnessed in the field. For example, I can comprehend how my initial dislike for heavy metal music may have influenced the initial analysis of the bands I witnessed, and how my anxiety concerning the aggression involved in participation could potentially have distorted the initial understanding of the dynamics of the heavy metal rituals and my personal feelings towards members of heavy metal subculture. Additionally, as I spent more time with the fans it was likely that I became more sympathetic and hence defensive of the overall scene. That is not to say that my values will not impact and influence the findings to some degree; it is to say that I will be aware of the role that I play and that I can strive to control my emotions in formulating knowledge of heavy metal subculture. However, it is felt that just being aware of one's position is not enough and that further guidelines are needed.

Guidelines?

Liston (2007) proposes that the reason Hargreaves has misinterpreted the importance of detachment in figurational sociology is owing to the lack of empirically-informed discussions concerning the methodological and practical use of the concept. Although there are some empirically informed instances where guidelines for achieving a detour via detachment are presented (see Perry et al., 2004), it is fair to say that there have not been enough examples presented which demonstrate Elias's concept. Dunning (1992) concedes that this argument has substance. He does, however, offer some practical guidelines which are evident in Elias's work. He lists (1992: 252–5) locating the objects of research historically and in a wider system of social interdependencies, exploring structures and processes for their own sake, and relating your work to an existing body of knowledge and theory in a 'two-way traffic between theory and observation [that] is one means for moving in the direction of that blend between involvement and detachment which is most conducive to reality-congruent knowledge' (p. 252). He also recommends secondary involvement, which has been discussed

previously. In the next section I will outline this researcher's role in attempting to find a balance between involvement and detachment. This has the purpose of providing a much needed example of the application of a figurational sociology methodology and it also serves the function of evaluating the practicalities of taking up a research position as an 'outsider-participant'.

Detour via detachment in practice: The balance between being an 'outsider' and an 'insider'
Baur and Ernst (2011) maintain that it is vital that the researcher outlines their partiality right from the beginning of the research process. I had a unique position in this research from the start in that I knew relatively little about heavy metal music. This represents a departure from what have become the traditional 'insider' accounts of subcultures (see Weinstein, 2000; Hodkinson, 2005; Kahn-Harris, 2007). Hodkinson observes how 'insider' research has become quite popular in doctoral studies of subcultures. Following on from Bennett's (2002) call for greater detail in this ethnographic position, he provides an account of his own 'insider' status in the Goth community and the advantages that he believes he acquired in taking up such a position. Hodkinson claims that because of his Goth identity he could gain access to and trust from fellow fans quickly. He writes that 'there were few social rewards for those who displayed partial or temporary involvement' (Hodkinson, 2005: 135). In other words, he is suggesting that those who fail to display the required commitment in the scene will not acquire subcultural capital or the respect of others in the scene. This may harm potential 'outsider' researchers from forming significant relationships within the scene. Through incorporating his own experiences into the research site, Hodkinson was able to draw a large amount of data easily from the respondents. In response to this I would argue that the objective of the social scientist is to obtain scientific rewards. My position as an outsider did not restrict me from gaining access to or collecting data from heavy metal fans.

This will be discussed in greater detail when the specific research methods that were employed are evaluated.

The 'outsider doctrine' suggests that if we were only to take insider accounts as truth we would be ignoring how a large part of our history as human beings has been constructed (Merton, 1972: 24). Merton (1972: 33) writes that 'it is the stranger, too who finds what is familiar to the group significantly unfamiliar and so is prompted to raise questions for inquiry less apt to be raised at all by insiders'. As I was an outsider, I found myself asking questions which most insiders would take for granted. For example, when I interviewed participants I could ask them the simplest question regarding what I had seen at a heavy metal gig, and due in part to my status as an outsider and the participants' knowledge of this fact, they would explain a particular phenomenon in basic terms. They were more likely to elaborate in consideration of my status as an outsider.

Taking on the role of an outsider, though, cannot guarantee a position of detachment. Merton describes how some white social scientists who conducted research concerning African Americans became influenced by guilt concerning the prejudice that African American people were subjected to by white people. Consequently, they became more hard-line than some of the insiders. This was a problem that I was actively aware of throughout the research process. I entered the field conscious of the possibility that my distaste for the music might skew my judgement. I documented these feelings in a research diary where I charted each step made in the field and the thinking behind it. Reflecting on these early stages, I felt that I was so concerned with my status as an outsider that I initially ended up overly compensating in my analysis of the heavy metal fans, as I tended to fall into the trap of defending the subculture. Although I never went 'native' (see Schouten and McAlexander, 1995: 46), I had to be careful about how my own feelings about the music and the new relationships I formed

with fans influenced my analysis of the genre. I did this by constantly thinking and writing about my position in my research diary and through discussion with colleagues.

> I felt a bit shook after the Marduk gig. I knew Black Metal was intense but this was another level. I still can't get too grips with what attracts people to it. Is it exciting, it it actually pleasurable to listen to?...I need to interact and participate more, I have to let go of my inhibitions and join in with them metal fans more, possibly find a common ground to gain access. I can't be worrying about my own personal image or the consequences. (Research Diary, 03/02/10, Black Metal Gig, Whelans Pub, Dublin)

Merton argues that ultimately there are no absolute 'insiders' or 'outsiders'. There are different facets of our identity that make us 'insiders' or 'outsiders' in particular circumstances. For example, I interviewed some heavy metal fans who shared similarities with me regarding gender, age and the college that they attended. There were also various similarities I shared with other participants in terms of common interests in sports or film. This in some respects would make me an insider in their world.

In examining this issue from a figurational perspective it would be argued that research, like social life, is a process and that our position as an 'insider' or 'outsider' is in flux and dependent on changes to specific structural characteristics. My position as an 'outsider' cannot be considered in isolation. The more time I spend with the fans and attend gigs, the greater level of subcultural capital I acquire. Consequently this moves me further into the position of an 'insider'. It is apparent then that, like the relationship between involvement and detachment, there is a balance between occupying the position of an 'insider' and an 'outsider'. It has been demonstrated here how occupying both positions can contribute to more reality-congruent knowledge. I will now move on to discussing the approaches that were used to collect data and how they relate to the research framework that has been outlined thus far.

Research methods

Justification for methods selection: Triangulating the research methods

Miller and Dingwall (1997) explain how by using a number of different qualitative collection methods each technique can be used to contribute something distinctive to the understanding of the area under discussion. The author used depth interviews and participant observation of live gigs and observation of online forums as research instruments. It will be shown how each instrument contributed to the exploration of the research problem.

As a result of my limited knowledge of the heavy metal scene, I decided to attend small metal concerts to attain a basic knowledge of the subculture. Wilkinson (2000: 51) argues that participant observation is useful in that it provides direct evidence of the process under study; it offers deep insight into the complexities of the setting, and it requires little practical support in that the researcher is the research instrument. DeNora (2004: 46) maintains that ethnography or participant observation can be used to 'illuminate music as it functions as a resource for meaning construction and for the structuring and organisation of social settings'. DeNora found that her participants would use the music that was being played in the ethnographic setting to articulate emotions that went beyond the music itself. It was believed that engaging the heavy metal participants in a setting where music was played could potentially have the same effect.

After attending the concert and taking extensive field notes I could triangulate the data through semi-structured interviews. O'Leary (2005) contends that we do not always understand why people do certain things and react in certain situations. This creates the need to question these actions in order to understand. Gaskell (2000: 39) claims 'the more in-depth understanding offered by qualitative interviewing may provide valuable contextual information to help explain particular findings'. Bloyce (2004: 161) explains that semi-

structured interviews 'lend themselves well to a figurational approach, not least because if used in conjunction with other research methods they can help establish if data already uncovered corroborates with the knowledge of the interviewee'. Considering my initial position as an 'outsider-participant' in this research, it became clear quite quickly that there were many incidents occurring at the gigs that required an 'insider' perspective to provide a sense of clarity and comprehension. For example, after writing up my field notes concerning one of the first events attended, I noticed that I was finding it hard to distinguish between the different subgenres of heavy metal. Although I could ask some of the fans at the show, I found it far more beneficial to get the interview participants to explain the intricacies of the music to me in greater detail, in a much more quiet and relaxed atmosphere, as opposed to the loud frantic surroundings of the mosh pit.

It also became apparent in the interviewing process that online interaction was a significant part of the heavy metal scene. Consequently, I extended my participant observation to online forums which concerned the gigs that were attended. Hine (2000) describes the crisis that has developed in ethnography. She believes that post-subcultural studies have increasingly focused more on the researcher's reflexivity rather than documenting the research phenomenon that is under question. According to Hine, ethnography has become more of a storytelling exercise where speech is given more weight than the written word. She argues that using the internet as a site of participant observation represents an opportunity for providing greater validity to this research tool because of the textual evidence that is available.

Maclaran and Catterall (2002: 321) argue that using the internet as a source of data 'enables researchers and their clients to see the world through the eyes of consumers in the context of their everyday lives'. Leander and McKim (2003) write that the decision of whether to take participant observation online is a difficult one. On the one hand, they argue that if key

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informants are interacting here, then this must be an important site of data collection. However, they also warn about potential questions of authenticity that come with studying the virtual aspect of such a community. This problem was solved by actually interviewing some of the online participants 'face-to-face'. This allowed me to triangulate the data. I wanted to move away from the traditional subcultural approach which favoured theory over the collection of empirical data. Morley (2002) argues in his description of television audiences that interviewing media audiences is far more beneficial than sitting at home thinking of why people engage in certain cultural practices. Additionally, understanding the experiences of consumers has been central to modern CCT studies and analysis of such phenomenona as 'consumer tribes' (Cova et al. 2007a). Using informal interviews in addition to participant observation allowed me to develop knowledge of heavy metal fans on both an individual and interdependent level which would not have been possible with the use of documents – the approach that has tended to be favoured by figurationalists.

Elias (2000) examined manners and etiquette books from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. It was suggested that collecting and examining data over a significant amount of time could aid in suspending some of the researcher's values from the research process. In this particular research site it was believed that examining magazines, reviews or other documents related to music (in particular heavy metal) could have been a rich source of data. It would have been highly beneficial to draw on such resources to document the changes in heavy metal fans from the 1970s to the modern day, for example. However, I drew from previous figurational histories. Additionally, a greater emphasis was placed on developing an understanding of the present behaviour of heavy metal fans and the significance of their current rituals and customs. Sourcing primary historical documents is not a prerequisite for using a figurational framework. Similar to previous figurationalists (see, Hughson 2000; Atkinson, 2003, 2006; Bloyce, 2004; Liston, 2005, 2007; Elias and Scotson, 2008; Powell,

2008; Lever, 2011; Loyal, 2011), I have drawn from previous figurational histories. I have supplemented my analysis of the Irish heavy metal scene through incorporating previous figurational histories regarding the development of Irish consumer culture (Dolan 2005, 2009a, 2009b), sportisation (Elias and Dunning, 2008a) and technisation (Elias, 2008a) processes.

Sampling and access

Identifying participants

For this research, purposive sampling was used for selecting interviewee candidates and the sites for participant observation. Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 202) describe how researchers who carry out 'purposive, and not random sampling, methods… seek out groups, settings and individuals where… the processes being studied are most likely to occur'. As was mentioned previously, I attended a heavy metal concert in order to attain knowledge of the scene and to meet people who participate. Marshall and Rossman (2006: 65) believe that the researcher should base any decisions on site or sample on his/her ability to fit in, comfort levels and 'access to a range of subgroups and activities'. The ability to integrate with heavy metal fans and feel comfortable was an extensive process that took a lot of time and effort. I had to attend an unfamiliar venue to collect data on what was at the time an alien music genre with people I had never met before. However, through participant observation I was able to arrange interviews and pursue what is known as 'snowball sampling' whereby I would get each interviewee to recommend a friend who is also interested in heavy metal music. This is advantageous for reaching out to members of groups which are difficult to access.

Patton (2002) suggests that one of the disadvantages of adopting such an approach is that the researcher might take on the prejudices of a specific sub-group which excludes other networks within the main group that is being studied. I avoided this by adopting a multi-

method research framework which attained data from other sources outside the interview candidates and through opening up new networks which could accumulate participants. For example, I also sent e-mails to Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) students asking anybody who had an interest in the genre to participate. This yielded more responses than expected and consequently led to more snowball sampling as they recommended friends, who recommended their friends. I also posted a topic on the MetalIreland website forum looking for fans that were interested in taking part in the research and this also proved quite successful in terms of responses and general interest in the project.

Participants who were found at the live events were presumed to be fans. At the beginning of the research I selected the gigs I attended on the basis of when the next heavy metal gig was on as I sought to familiarise myself with the genre. Then I became open to recommendations from both interviewees and online heavy metal sites which advertised gigs. As the research progressed I strived to attend a variety of different subgenres and gigs of different sizes in order to provide a greater overall picture of the heavy metal scene. I attended seven different concerts in total. The online participant sample was a small one. The heavy metal website MetalIreland.com had been brought up frequently by interviewees and I had also found out about many of the gigs I attended on this site. Because of this I felt that it was appropriate that I consider these forums and document the online activity of participants that I engaged with 'face-to-face'. I was able to do this as some of the interview participants told me their online usernames and five of the interview participants were sourced online. Extending the online sample any further would have complicated the research unnecessarily.

The candidates that were sourced outside the participant research site were selected on the sole criterion that they considered themselves fans of heavy metal and had attended a heavy metal concert at some stage. Issues of gender or class were not considered as it was felt that seeking out or avoiding fans based on these characteristics would only bias the findings. I

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only sought out more females to interview as this became an issue in the data collection. Additionally, I only interviewed people over eighteen, but this was due to ethical issues rather than any discriminatory sampling practice. Fifteen heavy metal fans were interviewed in total. Although it is difficult to make assumptions regarding the demographics of heavy metal fans based on this particular snowball sample, it is important that the characteristics of the interviewees are discussed at this stage to provide an idea of the type of fans that participated in this study.

Twelve of the fifteen participants are male and nine of the fans are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, with the oldest fan being in his early forties. The fact that many of the participants were sourced from the Dublin Institute of Technology explains the higher proportion of young fans and also partially explains why fourteen of the fifteen participants have attended third-level education. However, the high percentage of college attendees does not relate to the class status of the participants – which varied. Social class was identified through a combination of references to parents' occupation, their own occupation and the location in which they were brought up. Only seven of the fans were born in Dublin (in a variety of areas including Tallaght, Walkinstown and Howth) with the rest of the participants coming, bar two (America and Pakistan), from the rest of Ireland. Their parents' occupations ranged from executives of large companies to tradesmen and musicians. Several of the participants held middle-class jobs themselves and were pursuing degrees ranging from electrical and biomedical engineering to graphic design and marketing.

What is a fan?

This leads to questions concerning what actually defines a metal fan as a 'fan' and what defines a music gig as a 'metal' one. There was no problem in identifying heavy metal gigs. These were mostly advertised on heavy metal websites or categorised on ticket websites such as Ticketmaster as 'heavy metal' or as distinctive subgenres such as death, doom, thrash or

grindcore metal. There are also specific venues or bars that I attended that described themselves as 'metal'. The problem comes in defining the fans. Fiske (1992) and Jenkins (1992) define fans in terms of their level of productivity rather than their reception. Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) identify a number of different positions an audience member can take up. In explanation, they give a chain of positions which as they progress increase with involvement in both consumption and reception. A table of positions is given below.

Figure 1: Audience Continuum

Consumer—Fan—Cultist—Enthusiast—Petty Producer
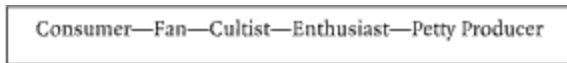
Source: Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998: 141)

It became clear in my conversations with participants that there were many different levels of fandom. Consequently, I decided that anyone who was involved in either consuming or producing any aspect of the scene qualified for the interviewing process. Constructing an account of the many different practices, institutions and interdependencies that made up the heavy metal scene would provide a more reality-congruent description of its intricacies. It transpired that most of the promoters, musicians and underground record labels that I talked to were fans of heavy metal anyway, which helped the sampling process.

Number of participants

After establishing the appropriate sampling procedures for both interviews and participant observation sites, I was left with the question of selecting a suitable number of cases. Maxwell (2005) describes how usually qualitative researchers study a fairly small sample size. This research is not concerned with making any explicit, generalised claims from one sample of heavy metal fans. It is concerned with understanding how the actions of these fans, the meanings they hold and the events that are witnessed in participant observation can be

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understood in the context of their personal circumstances and broader figurational transformations. Rock (2001: 33), in response to criticisms that qualitative research and in particular ethnography draws data from too small a sample, writes that 'ethnography is intense, lengthy and data rich, and it cannot and probably should not embrace too many people and too wide a field of activity'. Consequently I focused on a small number of gigs and forums. This enabled a greater level of focus on the data and a more detailed, comprehensive understanding of what was occurring at these events.

Riley (1996) advises that the data collected from qualitative interviewing can become saturated between eight and twenty-four interviews. Guest et al. (2006) criticise the lack of practical guidelines that are in place concerning qualitative sample sizes. They suggest in their empirical study that evidence of saturation is reached at around six interviews and most certainly within twelve. I did not enter the interviewing process with any specific target number of interviews for a number of reasons. Firstly, entering a qualitative research process having rigid rules can potentially obstruct any originality or creativity in the development of data or relevant themes.

Secondly, research is an ongoing process. Ultimate truths and fixed answers are never going to be found for the research questions asked in this thesis. New questions and issues emerged during participant observation and in each interview conducted. For example, during the interviewing process it became apparent that I would need to interview both promoters and some of the underground record labels, as this would provide a more detailed account of certain practices in the scene that some ordinary fans could not explain. I constantly monitored and coded the data that I was collecting in order to ascertain the appropriate steps to take in both the interviewing process and the selection of a site for participant observation. I found half way through the research that I lacked both a female perspective on the scene and the experience of attending a large heavy metal gig. Consequently, I found more female

participants and attended larger heavy metal events as a point of comparison. It came to be that, after fifteen interviews and seven different gigs attended; I was finding a consistency in the data. I was returning from the field with the same answers to questions and the same observations. I decided that this was an appropriate time at which to stop data collection and begin analysing the data.

Interview structure

Hesse-Bibber and Leavy (2005) suggest that structured interviews are not appropriate for qualitative interviewing. For this research, I wanted to draw on the experience of the respondents to generate a greater scope of data and insight. Structured interviews are 'designed to elicit specific information or "facts" from the interview subjects' (Seale, 2004: 181). Due to my initial lack of knowledge concerning heavy metal subculture it would have been impossible for me to enter the research site with a standardised set of questions that I could ask every participant. There were an unquantifiable number of potential subjects that could come up concerning the participants' fandom or everyday life which would have made developing a structured set of questions impossible.

On the other hand, it was important that I did not interview participants in a completely unstructured manner. Mason (2002) believes that, in the generation of data, one must construct collection techniques which allow for the comparison of data. There were certain issues that I wanted to explore, as I have documented in my research questions. Mason suggests dividing the research questions into subcategories and translating the questions into topics of discussion. The initial topic guide and the issues and questions that were prepared in later interviews are presented in the appendices (appendix 2 and 3). I developed a standard topic guide for the first set of interviews and then altered this slightly when new subjects or issues arose. This was particularly the case if I was interviewing anyone who had a specific

role in the heavy metal scene that differed from the fans I usually interviewed. For example, I

interviewed a promoter and the owner of a small underground heavy metal label and this

required me to prepare specific questions concerning their respective roles in the scene.

Although I had a series of questions and topics that I wanted to cover, I took a flexible

approach to the interviewing process and allowed for any other issues or topics of interest

that emerged during the course of each interview. Mason (2002) describes this form of

interviewing as a 'semi-structured' approach. Mason argues that researchers have to

consistently critically evaluate the structure of their interviews and always consider 'what you

are doing and why' (Mason, 2002: 5). She advocates an active reflexive approach where the

researcher continually considers their actions, the consequences of asking particular

questions, and how this will impact on the research process as a whole. In the early

interviews, I encountered certain topics and issues which were presumed to be of marginal

importance or subjects that had not been considered in the literature review previously.

Consequently, I had to adapt the structure of the interviews and reconsider the line of

questioning and the areas of research that the interview topic guide focused on. The

interviews were used as a combination of what Seale refers to as a resource and a topic:

> Interview-data-as-resource: the interview data collected is seen as (more or less) reflecting the
> interviewees' reality outside the interview. Interview-data-as-topic: the interview data
> collected is seen as (more or less) reflecting a reality jointly constructed by the interviewee
> and the interviewer. (Seale, 2004: 16)

In one way, the interviews were a resource in that I needed to understand how the

interviewees lived their lives as heavy metal fans and the nature and significance of particular

modes of behaviour within the subculture, and gather information concerning how I could

gain access. However, the interviews could become quite informal and lead to conversations

regarding a series of topics unrelated to heavy metal or I could end up sharing some of my

experiences in the mosh pit. The respondents discussed the emotions they felt themselves in

the mosh pit and their feelings regarding a number of other issues within the heavy metal scene. Consequently, it could be argued that the data created by the interview structure indicates that the interviews were used as a topic in which a jointly constructed reality has been created.

Interview preparation

Rubin and Rubin (2005) observe how each individual's personality can impact upon the interviewing process and how issues like nervousness and fatigue can potentially harm the data that is being collected. In order to avoid any of these problems, I prepared in as much detail as possible for the interview. Sampson (2004) suggests conducting a pilot study before entering the field in order to prefigure any potential problems with the topic guide or line of questioning. I conducted an informal interview with a friend of mine who also attended some heavy metal gigs with me. This proved highly beneficial as he advised me not to try and pretend in any way that I was a metal fan and that my interviewees would appreciate my honesty. He also identified a couple of questions that sounded a bit too 'academic' which he advised me to reconsider. It was helpful in that I was able to identify a technical problem I had with the digital audio recorder I was using for recording purposes.

In addition to the pilot interview, I also sought to learn something about the participants before I interviewed them. In this way I could alter the topic guide slightly to elicit a greater response and establish a level of trust. For example, I was aware that one of the interviewees was a big football fan and attended the Irish international games regularly. It just so happened that I was interviewing this candidate the day after a game we had both attended. Consequently, I could ease both of our nerves regarding talking to a complete stranger by initiating the conversation in talking about the match. Rubin and Rubin advise accommodating your personality to the interviewing process. I always tried to start the interviews in quite a relaxed, easy tone. To achieve this I would often make jokes about how

I found myself researching heavy metal fans for a living and I would tell anecdotes about what this research entailed in order to engage the respondents and to make them feel comfortable talking. However, I never revealed the main research questions as this could result in the participants positioning themselves as academic experts and seeking to answer the questions directly.

Establishing trust

Establishing a level of trust was particularly important considering that I was a stranger to all of the interviewees. It was obvious that the respondents would be in some way suspicious of my role in this research and what my motivations were. Denscombe (1998) argues that establishing trust in your role as researcher is vital, as the quality of the data is likely to reflect the participants' perceptions of the interviewer. I began every interview by outlining exactly what the research was about. I always explained this to the interviewees in layman's terms without any 'academic speak'. I assured them that they would remain anonymous in this thesis and any subsequent publications, as no real names or placenames were used in extracts of analysis that were quoted. I then provided them with a chance to ask any questions. At this stage there were normally some enquiries about the nature of the research and this helped to create dialogue with the respondents and consequently a level of trust when they got to know me. Inevitably the interviewees became curious about my role in the research and my relationship with heavy metal. Perry et al. (2004) describe both the ethical issues of disclosing the researcher's sexual identity and the methodological issues in terms of identifying an appropriate strategy that will elicit data. Fortunately I didn't have to consider such decisions and consequently I was completely honest with my participants about my 'outsider' status in the research. I took this position as I knew they would find out in a matter of minutes that I was not a heavy metal fan and hence I would be considered with even greater suspicion.

I sought to gain their trust, however, by outlining my dedication to learning about the scene. Before starting each interview, I would tell the respondents about heavy metal gigs I had attended for the research, and inform them about some of the bands I had heard and ask for recommendations. I would always talk about the positive aspects of what I had seen. In some ways I followed Hathaway and Atkinson's (2003) 'good cop/bad cop' persona. They advise that the early stages of the interview should be friendly and accommodating, where mutual identification is established in order to facilitate a trust between the interviewee and the interviewer. This allows for the 'bad cop' persona to ask more critical and challenging questions towards the latter part of the interview. This was a particularly effective way of eliciting responses from participants about potentially sensitive topics regarding Satanism in some of the 'extreme' heavy metal scenes. In the early part of the interview, or most commonly before recording, I would discuss anything I had in common with the interviewees in order to make them feel relaxed. Just because I am an 'outsider' in terms of heavy metal subculture does not mean that I am a complete outsider to them. For example, I could share similar experiences in student life and the people I know with the participants I interviewed from DIT.

Extracting data from a position of detachment: self-control

After establishing a level of trust with the participants, I had to then adopt strategies which allowed me to elicit quality information from them. Perry et al. (2004) used the position of an insider in order to attain data from their gay/bisexual respondents. They argued that, because of the sensitive nature of the research and the level of mutual identification that a gay researcher would have with the interviewees, adopting this approach would lead to a greater quality of data.

However, I found that I could use my position as an outsider to extract information from the participants about the heavy metal scene. Following Hathaway and Atkinson (2003) and

Atkinson (2006), I employed an 'active interviewing' strategy. Atkinson used his position of an 'insider but outsider' to enable the exploring of interview narratives. Atkinson was studying the straightedge scene with particular emphasis on tattooing in this scene. Although Atkinson was an insider in terms of tattooing, he knew little about the straightedge scene. Consequently he would become confrontational in order to 'probe motivations for being Straightedge, emotional accounts of its performance, and elements of practitioners' social biographies' (Atkinson, 2006: 78). I consider myself to be quite knowledgeable about a range of different music genres and I was able to use this understanding to engage the heavy metal fans. For example, I could start a line of questioning by talking about a particular type of music that we both may be familiar with. I could then take the context of this discussion and use it as a vehicle in which I could get the participants to talk about heavy metal, explain it and draw on past experiences. I could elicit data from the interviewees by questioning them about some of the supposed negative aspects or controversies of heavy metal. One particular instance was when I questioned one of the respondents about the link between heavy metal and Satanism. On hearing this he articulated his anger at 'outsiders' always thinking that all metal fans were 'devil worshippers'. Employing such strategies proved a very worthwhile exercise, although naturally this did not work all the time. It took the pilot interview and a few of the initial interviews before I made the most of my status as an 'outsider'.

It is of course sometimes difficult to execute such interview strategies without being able to in some way control one's emotions. Perry et al. (2004: 18) write that 'involvement–detachment is seen as an especially useful sensitizing concept for researchers who use semi-structured interviews to explore emotionally laden issues'. They outline some guidelines on how to deal with this issue. This proved considerably helpful in that the topics of heavy metal and everyday life discussed in the interviews brought forth many emotionally sensitive issues for both the researcher and the interviewee. For example, Perry et al. suggest that one

identifies feelings that are brought on from participation in the research process, considers the influence of emotion on the reliability of the research, and identifies motives. Throughout the interviewing process I was confronted with certain issues which I knew would influence my position in the research and my ability to detach myself from the research objects. I used my research diary to identify such issues and it proved highly effective. For example, in the following passage I explain my relationship with the interviewee Andy and the effect his illness had on our interview.

> I really grew to like Andy; there was something very innocent about him. Unfortunately he revealed to me that he is suffering from a serious illness in the form of diabetes and escalating liver problems. Hearing this news upset me, particularly as Andy seemed quite disharmonised as he had just gotten bad news the previous day. Upon hearing this news it wasn't long before the interview ended. (Research diary, 15/01/10)

Undoubtedly this will have an impact on my assessment of Andy's heavy metal fandom as he has shared some very personal issues with me. This was the case with many other respondents, with the issue of bullying particularly coming to the surface. It was also the case that there were a small number of interviewees that I disliked and I consequently felt uncomfortable in their presence. The identification of these emotions was also recorded in the research diary. I certainly saw the effect of these emotions in the early stages of analysis where I found myself becoming overly critical about one of the respondents' political and racial views. An example of this was when I was talking to him during my time in the field and after he said something rather bigoted about Jewish people, I wrote that 'I didn't even want to question him on this view as it was ridiculous'. When I looked back over these notes I realised I was letting my feelings get in the way of potentially engaging data.

This is where having the option of calling on a second researcher, colleague or supervisor is particularly beneficial. In this case my supervisor noticed in one of my early field work notes that I was letting my negative feelings towards a particular fan block me from extracting further information about himself and his relationship to the scene. Consequently, after some

of the early interviews, I learned how to deal with such emotions and tried to separate them from what I wanted to achieve in the interviewing process. Although, they were evidently going to have some impact on me, by understanding these issues I was able to develop a better sense of detachment with experience.

Participant observation in practice

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) claim that there is no right way of conducting an ethnographic study but that it is imperative that the researcher is able to explain the reasons for using a particular setting, the level of involvement, and the methods used to record data. I have already discussed to some degree why I chose participant observation and how I selected observation sites, in addition to theorising my involvement. In this section I will discuss some of the practicalities that were involved in the actual act of conducting participant observation.

Although the characteristics of each gig – the venue, the music that was played, and the type of fan – varied somewhat, I typically approached each visit to the research site in a similar fashion. I would ask the participants to recommend a gig to attend and research the venue and bands that I would be going to see. In attendance, I would start by observing what the fans and bands were actually doing and draw a layout of the venue. I would then begin to question some of the fans about anything I did not understand or anything that differed from my previous participant observation. As each gig came towards a close, and typically the most popular bands performed, I would try to participate in any of the rituals that were occurring. This was dependent on whether I had attended the performance with somebody I knew or I had established connections at the gig that would provide me with an access to the mosh pit. This was also reliant on whether any mosh pits or any other rituals actually took place at the events I attended.

The main issue in my participant observation was how I was going to translate what I observed in this social world into reality-congruent data that can be understood in the scientific world. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argue that it is the job of the ethnographer to turn the field into a text. Consequently, I recorded my observations in the following three stages.

Field notes

Emerson et al. (2001: 353) explain that 'fieldnotes are a form of representation, that is a way of reducing just-observed events, persons and places to written accounts'. I often spent long hours in the field when it came to participant observation. It could start hours before the gig if it involved travel or it could end hours after the gig if I continued to talk to fans or felt the effects of my participation the next day. For example, attending a large event in Cork City required me to leave from Dublin in the early hours of the morning. Because of the large size of the gig and the interest that surrounded it, there were fans on the train and all around Cork City in the hours leading up to the gig. It was not just the actual gig which required analysis but the entire day leading up to it and the events which occurred afterwards. As a result, it would not have been possible to remember everything that occurred without the aid of notes. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) describe the difficulty in selecting what to and what not to record in observation. They explain that at the beginning of a research project the scope will be quite wide, and that the researcher's attention will eventually narrow as the project progresses. As I coded the data collected at the early events, I ended up focusing on particular issues when I returned to my participant observation. However, because of the variety of different gigs I attended I still had to adopt a wide ethnographic gaze. I essentially took an approach of taking a note of anything and everything that took my attention. However, it was not possible to take detailed notes of everything that was happening for a number of reasons. Firstly, I had to try and fit in with the fans as easily as possible. If I was taking notes while

they talked to me, this would clearly have obstructed the nature of what they may say. Heavy metal gigs are quite loud and frantic, which makes note-taking even more difficult. There is constantly something going on so I was afraid that I would miss something if I was too busy writing up notes. Additionally, the events which I attended varied in size. Consequently, it was far easier for me to take note of what was going on at smaller gigs. An example of this is the 'Filth Fest' which took place all in the space of a small room in the upstairs area of a small bar in Dublin. Although I could not witness everything that took place, it was much harder to miss any significant incidents compared to the larger events I attended. For example, in observing the online forums concerning the 'Megadeth' concert I attended, it emerged that a young boy had his arm broken when he was removed from the mosh pit by a bouncer. This is where the online forums proved an invaluable resource as there were several witnesses to this incident. They were also important in that they provided confirmation regarding the details of some instances I observed.

It was also the case that I participated in some of the rituals, and trying to take notes while you are crowd-surfing or in the middle of a mosh pit is a near impossibility. Because of these obstacles I took shorthand notes whenever I had the opportunity. I carried a tiny notebook in which I wrote little words to trigger my memory when I came to write the notes in full. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) refer to these as inscriptions or intermediate texts that do not represent the finished text. I also carried a phone to write notes if it was too dark to see my notepad or if I felt uncomfortable writing up notes in front of fans. As a consequence of the rising popularity of smartphones, writing notes on a phone looked no different to the observer from texting. Although this did not adversely affect field relations – as texting in public is socially acceptable – there were some instances in which writing on my phone did not seem appropriate. For example, I attended a performance where there were only a handful of people in the audience. As the lead singer was a matter of yards from me, it would have

been quite rude to take notes (or appear to be texting) during the course of his band's performance. The privacy of the bathroom also proved to be beneficial in that it offered me the opportunity to compose myself and make as many notes as possible with the benefit of light and without the distraction of other people. This was particularly important in gigs which I attended with other people or where I engaged in the rituals for an extended period of time. This would leave me with no opportunity to make a note of what was occurring and consequently the bathroom was the best place in which to record short notes.

Transcription

When I returned from the participant observation site I immediately translated what all the little word triggers meant on to a blank Microsoft Word page. In doing this I would try to remember anything else I might have forgotten to write down or anything which I did not have the chance to record. In translating these notes I was able to form a basic narrative of the timeline in which the events of the gig occurred. I could also look online to ensure that I was accurate in reporting the names of certain bands and the order of the line-up. For some of the gigs I attended I also incorporated notes on what was being discussed in the forums in both before and after a show.

Text

Once all of the notes had been translated I could then write up the entire event into one text. Hammersley and Atkinson describe the difference between the Chicago School of ethnography, which allowed a certain poetic licence in terms of the use of metaphors and lyrical language, and other genres of ethnography which focus more on exactness and clear reporting. Every writer has their own unique style, however. I tried to provide as accurate an account as possible whilst reflecting at all times an honest appraisal of my own position and feelings within the research. It was the case that in certain descriptions I would get carried away with the emotion and intensity of the rituals that I witnessed or took part in – but I was

able to reflect on these through writing up the field notes in three distinct stages. Additionally, it was found that the notes derived from online sources bypassed issues of accountability or exaggeration. Kozinets (2009) argues that online participant observation or 'netnography' is a far more naturalistic and less interfering form of data collection than traditional ethnography and focus groups and interviews. Using online sources had the obvious benefit of automatic transcription and was advantageous in that I didn't have to recall or take a note of what fans said online.

Analysing the data

Marshall and Rossman (1995: 111) define data analysis as 'the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data'. Maxwell (2005) observes that the analysis of qualitative data is often not given the same level of attention as other aspects of the research process. It is vital in this research, with its emphasis on a sociological theory of knowledge, that an accurate and reliable account of the analysing process is given.

Organising the data

I used the qualitative software programme of QSR NVIVO 9 to organise my data. Bringer et al. (2004: 249) describe the capabilities of the software:

> In NVIVO there are many options for document preparation (plain text, rich text with sections, audio clips, pictures), coding (e.g. inductive or deductive, in vivo or researcher defined, manual or automated), retrieval (e.g. by node [category], by document, text searches, matrix searches, refined by attributes), dynamic links to memos, documents, and nodes, and visual representations (e.g. coding stripes, models).

This software allowed me to import all the interviews, participant observation field notes and any other notes regarding the research into one place. It also provided me with a fast and efficient way of organising the coding structure and displaying it in an uncomplicated visual style. It is the ease with which users can access and retrieve their data which is the main advantage of NVIVO (see Richards and Richards, 1991; Morrison and Moir, 1998).

According to Richards and Richards (1991), using qualitative analysis software can contribute to the rigour of qualitative research as it allows one to use the search functions to integrate the data in an efficient manner which eliminates the possibility of human error. This can appease critics of qualitative research who argue that it is too open to interpretation, and it is particularly advantageous to researchers with large data sets and qualitative researchers who incorporate what Mason (2002) describes as a literal approach to analysing data. However, critics of NVIVO and other qualitative data analysis software programmes (see Kelle and Laurie, 1995) have argued that using such approaches can potentially standardise analysis of qualitative data, limit creativity and essentially transform qualitative data into a quantitative analysis. I avoided this potential problem by choosing not to use all of the different functions that were available. I instead used a combination of manual and electronic methods for analysing the data. Although the search function provided me with information concerning the most-used terms and where and when a particular phrase was used, the variety of different contexts and meanings in which the data emerged required me to read (and reread, over and over again) and interpret the data myself. The relatively small size of my data set allowed me to become familiar with all of my interviews and participant observation notes. I could then begin to place the data into a variety of what are described in NVIVO as 'nodes' or what are traditionally referred to as 'themes' and 'sub-themes'. The real advantage of using NVIVO came in being able to retrieve and access the material quickly and in being able to display the material in a clear visual style. This essentially provided me with the clarity and time in which I could code and interpret the data.

Coding and interpreting the data

Charmaz (1983: 111) describes coding as 'simply the process of categorizing and sorting the data'. The data was analysed on an ongoing basis in conjunction with the data collection process. This allowed me to explore new themes that emerged from the different stages of

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analysis. As mentioned previously, I familiarised myself with the data through reading the transcripts and the online forums, and listening to the recordings over and over again. This allowed me to identify common themes which were initially categorised in NVIVO as 'free nodes'. This was a form of open coding where I placed any data relating to a particular theme into that node. For example, in my initial period in the field, I attended heavy metal gigs and noticed that the appearance of the fans was unusual. I would then read over each interview and my field notes (sometimes aided by the search function) for any description of a fan's appearance or anything else related to it and categorise it in the 'appearance' free node. I provide an example of a semi-developed sub-theme in the appendices section (appendix 4). In total, I created fifty-three of these nodes, and it was often the case that there was no relationship across the data set or that the theme became irrelevant under closer inspection. The nodes that were relevant were reduced into smaller categories in what is referred to in NVIVO as a 'tree node'. The sub-themes were then reduced to further sub-themes and this process continued until there were no longer any relevant themes. I would then cross-examine all of the themes and sub-themes to see if there were any significant relationships. Bryman and Burgess (1994: 5), citing Glaser and Strauss, refer to this process as 'axial coding'.

It is evident that, with the specific emphasis that this thesis places on the potential for using figurational sociology as a framework, some of themes that were constructed were influenced by Eliasian theory. However, it must also be stressed that the data was not completely guided by the issues discussed in the literature review. There were many unexpected themes which developed from the analysis and they play a significant role in the data presented in the substantive chapters and the theoretical framework outlined in the conclusion.

After deciphering the dominant codes and sub-codes I moved on to the important task of interpreting the data. Mason (2002: 78–9) suggests that there are three dominant strategies for interpreting qualitative data: a literal, an interpretive and a reflexive approach. The literal

approach is concerned with dialogue, the order of it and what is actually said in a 'literal' sense. This research is more concerned with a combination of both an interpretive and reflexive approach. This means that I place emphasis on interpreting data for what I think it means in the context of the research and that I also examine, at the same time, the context of my position in the research and how I may have influenced the interaction between participants.

DATA ANALYSIS: INTRODUCTION TO FINDINGS
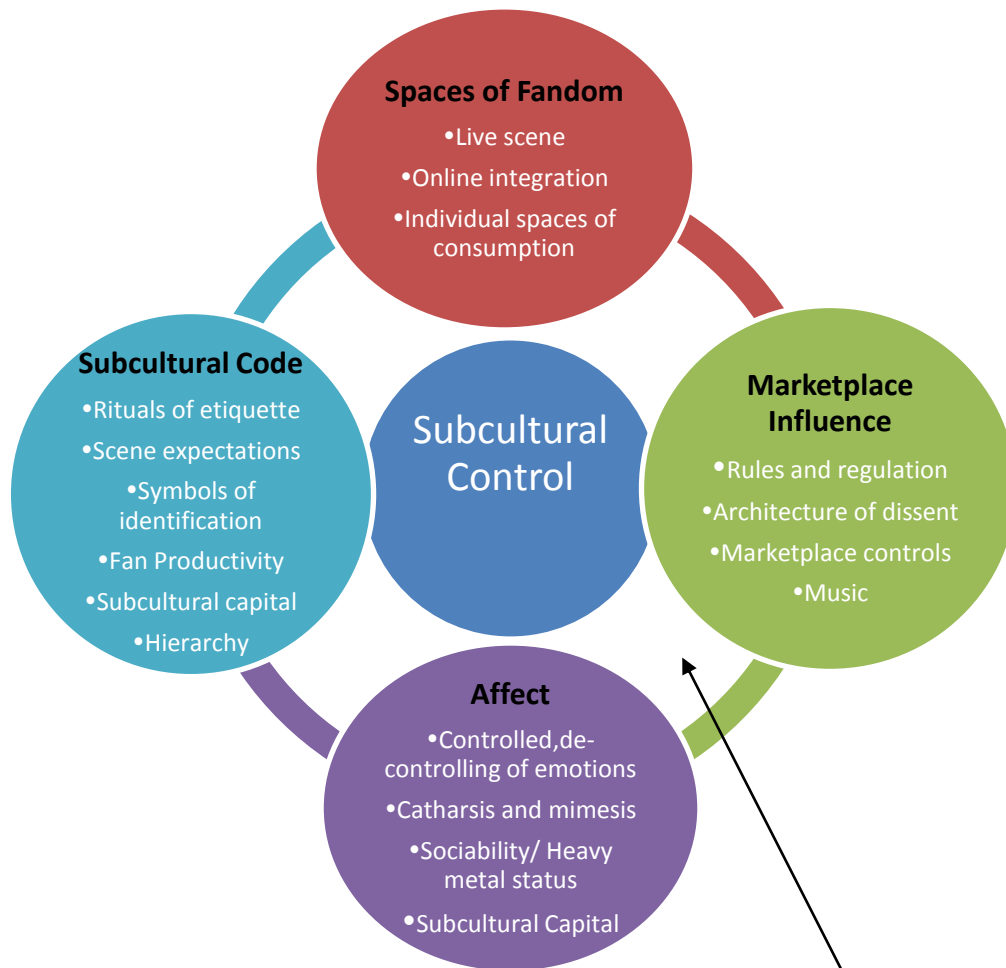
Figure 2: Subcultural Control

Above is a visualisation of the key themes that will be discussed in the

following three chapters of data analysis. Elias (see Mennell, 2006:

83) has argued against the use of flow-charts as they seemingly

represent 'process-reduction at its worst'. However, visualising the

connection of all these themes to subcultural control illuminates the

overall figuration of heavy metal subculture. It demonstrates how

emotional control and heavy metal fandom interweave within broader

Processes of integration

- *Changes in the media landscape*
- *Developments in national habitus*
- *Development of Irish consumer culture*
- *Changing gender power dynamics*
- *Changing family roles*

processes of integration (in a technical sense).

In the first data analysis chapter **(chapter five)**, the unusual rituals, customs and etiquette of the Irish heavy metal scene are introduced via extended extracts from my time in the field. Here, control is a crucial factor. I will outline how seemingly chaotic, hyper-masculine rituals, are actually controlled by a combination of the social constraint of the subcultural code and a variety of factors (e.g. the influence of the musicians and marketplace controls). This allows for what is described by Elias (2008b: 27) as the 'controlled, de-controlling of emotions' within the scene. The feelings of catharsis and sociability experienced by participants in the 'live' scene are discussed. Additionally, I consider how the fans use heavy metal music to control their mood outside traditional fan spaces, in their own private spaces.

However, control is also a useful analytic framework in which to examine how heavy metal fans are socialised into the scene. Those who are able to submit to the etiquette of the subcultural code and scene expectations are more likely to attain subcultural capital within the scene and establish a position high in the hierarchy. **Chapter six** considers how heavy metal fans become integrated into the scene and learn about the subcultural code and scene expectations. Here, emphasis is placed on the emotional community of outcasts that is the Irish heavy metal scene and the underappreciated roles of family and older scene members in influencing heavy metal subcultural participation.

Chapter seven considers the participants use of online fan spaces. I examine further how social ties within the scene have expanded and how the participants use the online spaces to produce their own heavy metal materials and consequently blur the boundaries between consumer and producer. However, the online spaces heighten contestations for capital and a clear lack of emotional restraint is demonstrated in the heavy metal forums in comparison to the 'controlled' live scene. I also use Elias's explanations of control and restraint to theorise

the consumption practices (that are often illegal) of the Irish heavy metal fans within the digital age.

The implications to both CCT and figurational research that the findings demonstrate are articulated at a higher level of synthesis in the conclusion chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: HEAVY METAL RITUALS AND THE 'CONTROLLED DE-CONTROLLING OF EMOTIONS'

Memo:

The following are edited extracts that are drawn from two separate heavy metal gigs I attended. The first concerns a small heavy metal festival that took place in a heavy metal bar. This event featured a large number of bands from a variety of heavy metal subgenres that were attended and organised by prominent members of the Dublin underground scene. The second extract is drawn from my experience attending a commercially popular heavy metal band at a mid-sized arena in Dublin City Centre. This was a much bigger spectacle that attracted a larger crowd.

(Field notes, 03/10/11, Filth Fest(ival) on in The Pint Pub, a small metal bar in Dublin city

centre.)

As I walk down Eden Quay (Dublin City Centre) I feel the usual nerves I experience before attending a heavy metal gig. I feel tension because of the potential of becoming embroiled in a mosh pit or some other metal ritual that I am not aware of. I have participated in mosh pits at previous gigs I attended for this research, but I have also opted out of participating in certain circumstances – instances where I have made excuses to myself. I am apprehensive, but at the same time somewhat excited to see what will happen this time at the heavy metal venue. However, I am comfortable with the fact that I am now more experienced and have come to terms with the fact that I am unlikely to get hurt…

I see a young couple wearing heavy metal t-shirts, with piercings and tattoos and maybe seven or eight metal fans standing outside the pub. I don't even have to look for the name of the pub as I know this is the place. The fans are smoking, drinking beer and chatting in what appears to be an upbeat tone. I immediately recognise Damien, whom I interviewed previously, fixing a table by putting a beer mat under it. He and his record label contributed to the organisation of this event. I don't want to interrupt him while he is fixing the table so I just walk inside…

At approximately 7.30 after hearing what sounded like the opening notes of a metal song and grunting I decide to head upstairs and check out the bands. When this music is heard, I see a couple of metal fans walk from the outside smoking area with a quick pace and a sort of confident swagger. I see two of them lick their lips and they seem to be quite tense. On my way to the stairs, I hear a knock on the emergency doors. I open them for a young guy with long hair holding an amp who thanks me for holding the door. I ask him if he needs a hand as I grab the other side of the amp that he struggles to hold on to. I bring it up the stairs with him and place it down beside the area where you pay. I asked him if he was playing himself tonight and he said 'yes, but only if this shitty gear works!' He thanked me and rushed back down the stairs again. I pay the ten Euro fee to get in and he scribbles a green highlighter on my right hand…

It is not hard to move to the front as all I have to do is walk a couple of yards. I don't have to fight any crowds; I just have to make sure I don't block anybody's view in this small venue. The one thing that I notice as I move closer to the stage is that the music hits you with greater force. You can feel the loud sound of the bass drum and the bass guitar hit you in the chest. This is the physical effect of heavy metal. Despite this feeling, I notice that the crowd are not too receptive of the band. Although the place is a lot busier now, there are still very few people in or around the stage. The lead singer started by facing away from the crowd with his

hood up. He bounced in time with the slow distorted intro. The music slowly builds faster and faster until he turns to face the crowd. However, you can hardly see his face because of his hood and the way he holds the microphone tightly with his two hands right up to his face. He gradually zips down his hoddie to show his tattoos on his chest, one of which included a batman logo. His hood then came down for the next song and before the end of this song he is topless and singing with great intensity. It is interesting to see how he psyches himself up for what must be an emotionally draining job as a heavy metal singer. He, like other singers I have seen at Filth Fest, scream their vocals relentlessly through each song. In addition to this, they move around the stage a lot, headbang and shake their arms up and down. They are expected to connect with the crowd. This particular singer gets down on his knees at the end of every song and starts the next on his knees as he psyches himself up yet again for the breakdown or chorus.

(Field notes, 28/02/10, Machine Head, The Olympia, Dublin City Centre)

The energy that the opening number brought to the crowd was so visible. The anticipation waiting for the band to come on stage could be heard verbally when they literally asked for the band. The small sound of silence that greeted the descent into darkness which signalled the bands arrival was quickly followed up with a ferocious collective roar which made the hairs at the back of my neck stand up. The way the band slowly began the intro for their first song before it increased in pace and lead to the heavy breakdown resulted in a release of energy that could be felt around the arena and which I could not help but find impressive.

The singer/rhythm guitarist joined him playing his guitar in a similar fashion rocking his head back and forth at his band mate. As this was going on, I looked down at the pit which had formed into a circle. There was a gap in between the circle that the fans took it in turn to run into and shoulder other fans. This happened for a couple of minutes as I could see the fans near the front manoeuvring for room as they moved their fists above their shoulder and wave them back and forth in the direction of the stage. It was at this time that the singer shouted into the microphone "I want to see more of them fucking circle pits Dublin". The band then broke into an extended version of the chorus and I could see people crowd surfing. One man in particular was moving across the top of the crowd quickly and as he was passed into the front of the pit one of the bouncers reached in and batted him down with his hands before he got over the barrier that separated the stage and the pit. I saw another young man, possibly in his early twenties, with a shaved head, his t-shirt tied around his waist, sporting army combats, step onto the two people's hands either side of him and jump on top of the fans in front of him. They kept him up by pushing his backside up as the people in front of them passed him along with their hands…

As we begin to make our way down the stairs I hear the sound of three or four fans chanting "Machine Fucking Head". On the way down the stairs we notice the guy who shouted at us earlier putting his shirt back on while he stumbled down the stairs. He was clearly very drunk. When we finally do get down stairs there are at least a hundred people standing around smoking. My ears are ringing and I have a slight headache. This is from the long time I have been exposed to the high volume of the band. There is a good atmosphere around as I can hear people laughing and see people pretending to fight, laughing whilst they do so. As we walk out of the smoking area and back on to Dame Street. I asked David what he thought of the gig and he said it was "amazing". We discussed how they constantly change tempo throughout each song they play. When I asked David this, a young teenager possibly about fourteen or fifteen had approached us asking for a cigarette. He obviously overheard me asking David about his opinion regarding the gig and he said to me: "Are you joking? That was the greatest gig ever". He turned around and pointed at the back of his black t-shirt to the big capital white writing which displayed the message "Machine Fucking Head" and ran back to his group of friends, throwing his arms around them.

Introduction: Description of heavy metal rituals

One of the most prominent aspects of heavy metal culture is the live show and the enactment of well-known collective rituals such as 'moshing', 'crowd-surfing' and other lesser known customs like 'the wall of death'. Riches (2011) is surprised that very little heavy metal academic literature has focused on the importance of the mosh pit or other heavy metal rituals. Arnett (1996: 2) describes moshing or, the American term, 'slam dancing' as the act of 'jostling, colliding, and slamming into each other, arms flailing, legs pumping, and bodies convulsing or careening while the heavy metal music plays'.

This was the ritual that occurred most frequently in participant observation. The extract below is my first experience of participating in a mosh pit.

> On one occasion I was out on the dance floor when a particularly heavy song began. As the boy about eighteen, nineteen began to scream the opening lines everybody created a circle where people took it in turns to bump into each other. As a result of this I got an elbow in the face but this didn't stop such behaviour as other people who got hit or pushed to the ground immediately jumped back into action smiling as they pushed into each other at a pace dictated by the music. (Field notes, 04/12/09)

The 'wall of death' is another ritual which is brought up by the interviewees. The following description emphasises the aggressive intensity and at times violent nature of the behaviour of heavy metal fans:

> essentially the band, the focal member of the band asking the crowd to divide into two sort of groups, one group to the left and the other to the right and then you know they would say hold and stay there and slowly build on the music and on one particular instance of time he would say go at it, you know if you recall the scene from *Braveheart* two eh [groups of people] going at each other and really sort of slamming into each other. That is the wall of death. And they have a song also called 'Crushed in the Wall of Death'; it's by Lamb of God. It's about a fan that got crushed in the wall of death and died as a result. (Sam, depth-interview (DI), male, 31)

These rituals are unquestionably dangerous and each participant has a story about either themselves or someone they know getting hurt. Moshing is particularly dangerous in that if anyone falls, a group of people collapses, or if there are too many people involved, it can crush some of the fans. Mark (DI) worried for his life at one point when he was crushed

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against the security barrier and Bill (DI) attended two separate gigs in which fans lost their lives tragically as a result of moshing. In a similar fashion to old army veterans, the heavy metal fans recount old battle scars from the pit. Mary, June, and Gordon (DI) inform me of incidents where they accidentally broke bones and acquired scars; Thomas (DI) got kicked in the head by a fan crowd-surfing who happened to be wearing steel capped shoes; and almost all of the participants have reported temporary problems with their hearing after attending heavy metal gigs. This was a problem that I was specifically worried about in attending these events, in addition to the small cuts, bruises and cramp that came from engaging in these rituals. A teenage girl was also witnessed collapsing in the pit, where she had to be dragged out by security and attended to by paramedics who were on standby in the venue.

It must be acknowledged, though, that the majority of other gigs that were attended passed without anyone getting seriously hurt. However, these rituals are still potentially very dangerous and yet they are allowed to take place frequently. In this section, I explain how these rituals are allowed to occur and how seemingly anarchic customs are controlled by a complex combination of both internal (the heavy metal fan subcultural code) and other controlling factors (i.e., rules and regulation, security, the role of the musicians, the layout of the venue and the influence of marketplace forces). The coproduction of such fan spaces and the suspension of normal social rules and etiquette that this creates will also be discussed. This will particularly involve an examination of how gender managed in such spaces, with emphasis on the exaggerated displays of masculinity that heavy metal rituals can bring into being. Following this, I explain how the fans use these social spaces (as well as individual music consumption spaces) to generate and release emotional tension and the sense of comradeship that this engenders. In particular, I will focus on how the participants use anger and negative emotions in a positive and emancipatory fashion.

In the literature review, focus was attributed to the unique 'subcultural style' of cultures such as heavy metal and the controversy that its aesthetics and rituals can generate outside the heavy metal scene. The concept of individual and collective emotional control was also discussed in the context of Elias's civilising process. It will be demonstrated how aggressive rituals such as moshing represent the perfect context in which to examine figurational theory and its explanations concerning how we control our emotions. It can be used as a resource with which to establish an understanding of the significance of such spaces to the fans and what the creation of such rituals means in a wider societal context.

Subcultural control

The code of the moshpit

The internal (heavy metal fans) code of the mosh pit is governed by what Mark (DI) describes as the 'unwritten rules'. Collins (2009) observes that violence is likely to occur in situations where there is a set of rules or etiquette that eases what he argues is the basic human fear of violence. I observed how the etiquette serves the function of lessening the damage that acts of aggression or violence create because of the focus on the code of etiquette and the necessity of actually following it. These rules exist to ensure the safety of the fans. The fans are conscious of the dangers of entering the pit and emphasise a lack of sympathy for anyone who gets hurt, as they should be aware of the consequences when they enter. Michael compares the rules of the pit to the regulations in physical sports:

> It is mental kind of describing it you just run at each other, kind of shouldering each other, kind of pushing each other. It is almost like playing Gaelic or rugby or football sort of but generally you don't punch, you don't elbow, you don't go out to hit anyone… you are kind of going crazy but you are not trying to hurt… (Michael, DI, male, 19)

The participants describe a number of different details of the etiquette which include rules against spitting, punching, using elbows or trying to hurt anyone in any way. The number one

rule which every fan reported was that if anybody ever fell over they had to be picked up straight away. Riches (2011) and Ambrose (2001) report a similar code of etiquette in the mosh pit that places emphasis on the safety of the participants. Palmer (2005) compares the ritual of moshing to the Newfoundland custom of 'mumming', where people visit neighbouring houses in disguise. Palmer claims that in both rituals the participants place a high level of trust on the behaviour of others in what can be a risky environment. This is especially true in the act of 'crowd-surfing' where fans jump off the stage and rely on their fellow fans to catch them from falling to the ground.

For both 'mumming' and 'moshing' to occur successfully and safely, those involved have to be aware of the unwritten rules (which are frequently written in online forums). The participants become aware of these rules (as I did) by engaging in the rituals and learning through experience. Goulding et al. (2009) and Goulding et al. (2012) write about the importance of consumer relationships in creating a pleasurable experience. 'As with any community of practice, members define and adhere to a set of moral codes that act for the greater good of that particular community' (Goulding et al. 2012: 22). The moral codes of the Irish heavy metal scene share many commonalities with Schouten and McAlexander's Harley Davidson 'subculture of consumption'. This is in consideration of the ethos of the subcultural code and the long-term commitment of the fans to the scene. Whilst this unofficial code of conduct is used to guarantee the safety of the mosh pit, it also simultaneously reinforces the sense of comradeship fans feel by participating in these rituals together. Goulding et al. (2002) describe how the shared moral codes and values in rave and dance tribes – no matter how temporary – help create a common bond amongst the ravers.

Mary describes this in the following extract:

> I suppose there is the comradely [comradeship] of it because if you are in a mosh pit, if someone goes down the very first thing that people do is lean over and help you up. It is not like okay you have fallen down we are going to trample the shit out of you, it is straight away you have half a dozen hands pulling you back up. There is a sense of comradely about it and

if somebody gets hurt which is bizarre because why do you get involved if you don't want to get hurt but straight away everyone is like oh Jesus are you okay, I am really sorry. It kind of defies belief. (Mary, DI, female, 32, heavy metal radio DJ)

'Breaking' or 'transgressing' the code: Bodily transgression and subcultural capital

Status is not just attained by displaying knowledge of obscure heavy metal bands and their back catalogues (this will be discussed in particular in the second and third chapters of data analysis). Through demonstrating knowledge of heavy metal rituals and control in enactment, fans can gain respect within the community and accumulate subcultural capital. Kahn-Harris (2007: 43) refers to this as 'bodily transgression'. In other words, one gains respect within the heavy metal community by being able to control one's body and one's emotions.

An interesting aspect of this unwritten code is the enforcement of the code when it is broken. Tumbat and Belk (2011) suggest, in their study of Mt. Everest climbers, that consumer research tends to place more focus on the positive effect of consumers sharing and constructing experiences together (see Arnold, 2007; Allen et al. 2008) rather than acknowledging the negative effect that other consumers can have on the experience of others. Accordingly, consumers' 'active participation of these experiences appears to be a more complex phenomenon than reported previously' (Tumbat and Belk, 2011: 57). They argue that marketplace tension tends to develop from consumer activities which involve an element of uncertainty or tension. This could also be the case in the intricate figuration of the heavy metal scene where because of the complex and unpredictable nature of the rituals at times, participants can hinder the experience or even injure other fans. There have been instances where I have been elbowed in the face and participants have informed of other fans punching or crowd-surfing with dangerous shoes. June (DI) describes 'people that are in there [the pit] who are solely there to fuck other people up'. It is clear that these unwritten rules are broken at times.

When fans become over-physical the security is there to intervene, but this section is particularly concerned with how these matters are dealt with internally by the fans. When Mark (DI) was questioned about the consequences of breaking the code, he claimed that the perpetrators 'normally get fucked out, the lads [other fans] will just grab you and throw you out. If they throw digs they will throw digs back at you. You will find your place after that.' This is consistent with Berger (1999) who reports fans forcibly removing other fans that have lost control and that have overly disrupted the mosh pit. The use of violence to reinforce the code was also reported in the online forums where the user 'Donstevo' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 02/03/10) wrote that he had to put his elbow in some man's face because 'some lad kept aiming for me in the pit'. There were several of these posts where the forum users recalled similar incidents. Although I was at this gig I did not see any incident of this sort and no other form of 'punishment' for any fans that break the 'code' has been observed.

Additionally, the code does not possess the same influence or power over the fans at larger gigs. Instances where fights broke out or fans were overly aggressive or violent all occurred at what Neil (DI) describes as 'concerts', as opposed to the smaller 'gigs'. There is less control demonstrated in the mosh pit and this could be a result of the heightened 'emotional' reaction to what inevitably are more popular bands playing the bigger arenas. This breakdown in what is generally a form of controlled chaos bears similarity to Le Bon's (2001) theory of crowds. Le Bon claimed that individuals' behaviour tended to be more chaotic and uncivilised in bigger crowds, a result of the ease with which one can hide one's actions in the midst of a big crowd. Collins (2009) has also written about how violence, as opposed to aggression, is more likely to occur as a consequence of audience encouragement and that groups are more violent than individuals. Hence, the control that the subcultural code has on heavy metal rituals reduces at events where the number of fans involved increases.

The quality of the experience for the participants diminishes when the code is diluted. Some of the fans, including Damien (DI), believe that the big crowds attract 'the weekend warriors'. These are people, according to Thomas (DI), 'who are not really in the scene and that is when you are going to have trouble'. It is also the case that the code can become lost in translation amongst the many different genres of heavy metal. Weinstein (2000) describes how moshing only really became popular in heavy metal with the emergence of thrash metal. Kahn-Harris (2007: 44) maintains that the 'emphasis on control also manifests itself in an avoidance of the pit'. This is in reference to the areas of the extreme metal scene which have actively resisted aggressive rituals. This is a further example of how the fluidity of the rituals is directly linked to the complexity of this social scene and the accumulation of subcultural capital. Such modes of behaviour from the fans 'in the know' shares many similarities with Kates' (2002) research on gay subculture and the ridicule that members who acted 'stereotypically' were exposed to within the community. Heavy metal fans that subscribe to the cliché of the 'headbanger' and essentially try too hard to prove their worth as a heavy metal fan, by engaging overzealously in mosh pits, tend to be mocked within the scene for living up to such stereotypes.

The reality is that the etiquette required for participating in the rituals is quite complex. Thomas (DI) argues that 'you can't mosh to every genre of metal.' He is referring here to subgenres such as doom metal which incorporate slower tempos and lethargic themes which do not suit fans jumping around or charging into to each other. The fans just stand still and nod their heads along to the beat of the music and clap after each song. Because of the variety of subgenres that heavy metal incorporates, it is difficult to understand how the fans are supposed to react to different types of music. It is an example of the intricacy of the social scene. Michael encapsulates this when he expresses his anger at a group of fans for 'moshing' inappropriately:

> It was Alice in Chains [and] it was a slow song, there was no reason for it but they were doing it, but they were going mental anyway and I had to have my arms around my friend making sure she didn't get taken out of it or anything because we were so close to it. (Michael, DI, male, 19, student)

Gordon laughs at fans who don not know when the appropriate time to mosh is:

> These Polish 'meatheads', as I like to call them, were at this black doom metal gig and you know that is not music to mosh to and anyway they are there playing really slow, depressing but good metal music and then they are there going [roars] and just the two of them and they kept bumping into people and I was there going… just looking at them going, fuck off like. (Gordon, DI, male, 23)

The figuration of the scene requires the restraint of an individual's emotions and the incorporation and adaptation of a social code that is continuously evolving. The code evolves as popular aspects of the scene become increasingly integrated. I explain such processes of integration and heavy metal socialisation in chapter six. Kahn-Harris describes how heavy metal developed 'extreme' subgenres because of the popularity and commercialisation of the traditional heavy metal scene. As the scene becomes progressively integrated, this leads to fans attempting to differentiate themselves from others through acts of subcultural and bodily transgression (i.e., the extreme metal scene) that in the long term can change the dynamics of the social code within the scene. An example of this could be restraining oneself from entering the mosh pit or producing music that pushes the boundaries of what has come before. This is indicative of what Wouters (2007) describes as the process of informalisation. Although aggressive and sometimes unrestrained violent behaviour seems to suggest that heavy metal subculture is 'uncivilised', this is not the case. The social code of rituals demands a high level of self-steering and the control of one's emotions. I have experienced the difficulties of integrating with heavy metal fans in the context of such complex social codes and rituals. It was found that by documenting experiences through field notes and a research diary, one can adapt to the alternative forms of behaviour suitable for the different types of metal gigs.

The masculine nature of the 'mosh pit'

Before concluding the discussion of the influence of the subcultural code, and beginning the examination of the role of other heavy metal stakeholders (e.g. the musicians, the security and promoters) as controlling factors in the development of these ritual spaces, it is crucial to understand the significance of these spaces from a gender perspective. If the normal rules of restraint and control are suspended (albeit in a controlled fashion) in heavy metal spaces, are the societal norms concerning the relationship between males and females also set aside? This is a particularly important issue in the context of the heavy metal scene, considering the debate in the heavy metal literature regarding its sexist nature (see Frith and McRobbie, 1978; Kaplan, 1987; Walser, 2004), and the aggressive hyper-masculine rituals that have been observed in analysis.

Walser (2004) states that heavy metal's fan base, at it most popular time in the late eighties, was evenly split between men and women. This, however, is not the case in Ireland where the ratio of men to women even at the more mainstream gigs was heavily weighted towards men. This is particularly evident at the smaller, 'underground' events, where it was estimated that the ratio of men to women ranged from eighty to ninety percent in favour of men. This is confirmed by long-time participants Bill and Thomas (DI) and by female participants June and Mary (DI). Mary argues that 'most mosh pits are male-dominated and it is a form of aggression and getting the testosterone out'.

It is not surprising that the heavy metal scene is male-dominated when one considers the aggressive nature of the rituals and sexist lyrics and themes in many heavy metal songs. Thomas (DI) describes bands with names like 'Anal Cunt', and the heavy metal posters he and his friends had of half-naked women. The contributors on the forums frequently use derogatory language concerning women and have usernames such as 'Whore Ensemble'. Sam (DI) explains that 'there is something about innate violent aggression; I find that maybe

at the time I found it very masculine'. The interviewees place emphasis on the masculine nature of the music by focusing on the aggressive tone and through highlighting the feminine characteristics of other genres of music. Sam and Dennis (DI) compare their interest in fast aggressive music with their female partners' preference for slower, more melodic metal music. Listening to slow metal music in this case shares similarities with Martin et al.'s (2006: 179) description of motorcyclists who are patronised for sitting in the side-saddle or stigmatised for engaging in any activities that are considered feminine. The fans lose respect for metal bands and performers who fail to fit in with the masculine archetype. Sam describes the new wave of heavy metal bands in the following passage:

> Pussies, people like that, these are the sort of words, and I mean for instance some of these older bands are changing their look to suit modern times. For instance Napalm Death, a really cool band. I love Napalm Death's earlier stuff and now the guy has cut his hair and he is a fat bloke and he doesn't scream the way he used to. It's totally different, the music sounds kind of rocky, bluesy, jazzy. It's not heavy metal. You know that (imitates noise of heavy guitar)… (Sam, DI, male, 31)

A further example of this is presented in the web forums. During a conversation relating to the dangers of listening to loud heavy metal music, the forum user 'Bloodytroopsofdoom' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 03/03/10) suggests that one of the posters complaining about the loud noise should 'head on home [and] slap on a fresh fanny pad'. These demonstrations of masculinity seem to be heightened in the online spaces of the heavy metal scene (see chapter seven).

The mosh pit is another space where the male heavy metal fans demonstrate a form of hyper-masculinity. This is not just in the group displays of strength and aggression but in the overly protective role that they take on concerning the safety of the few females who venture into the mosh pit. June (DI) reports that 'when a girl goes into the pit, the pit stops, haha. I guess metal guys are a lot more polite than generally they are branded as'. Dennis (DI) claims that he cannot mosh or crowd-surf, as he feels the need to protect his girlfriend: 'Yeah, the

girlfriend was getting all squished and she wasn't liking it so I was like, right, we will move back.' Ciara (DI) describes how men she did not even know would stand in front of her to protect her and this exaggerated form of chivalry was also witnessed several times during participant observation. Again, such displays of masculinity are heightened when they are discussed in the website forums. 'Xspodx' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 01/03/10) writes, 'I know that some cunt is going to wake up with a black fucking eye tomorrow and might think twice before forcing himself upon a girl again.' All of the posters fully support his actions and share similar personal experiences where they have used violence to protect women (which implies that a few offending men were not chivalrous). Protecting women is one of the major aspects of the subcultural code.

Conceptualising broader shifts in the male-female power balance within heavy metal spaces

The obvious question that is presented here concerns the role of women in such a hyper-masculine subculture. Martin et al. (2006) have criticised previous consumer research regarding subcultures of consumption for ignoring the multitude of different voices (i.e., genders, races) within each subculture. The older participants interviewed report that women have become more and more involved in the scene and have increased in numbers.

> Girls do actually partake in the pits nowadays and that wouldn't have happened years ago from what I saw in documentaries and even older metal heads telling me about it. Metal actually used to be a strictly boys club and the only time you would see women would be, you know, holding the boyfriend's jacket while he goes in the pit and goes [he roars]. (Gordon, DI, Male, 23, unemployed)

Although there has been an increase in numbers, the participant observation and the low number of females available for interview still suggests that women are under represented. Mary (DI) describes how women are not taken seriously and have to fight harder to gain respect in the heavy metal scene:

> I do know a few girls who are like seriously into metal; there is a girl who plays in a band from Celbridge called Dead Label and she is their drummer and she is tiny, nineteen, she is

small, blonde, really small voice, really unassuming, but if you put her behind a drum kit she will scare the bejesus out of the tallest bloke on the planet. There is herself and the two guys in the band and you see them on stage and you wonder who wears the pants in that band and it is neither of the two boys. She is amazing, and even then, it has gotten better and they have been going for two or three years now, and you know she wasn't taken very seriously for a while, you know – oh God it is a chick drummer – but she is better than an awful lot of male drummers that I have ever seen. It is getting better but it's not great. (Mary, DI, female, 32, heavy metal radio show DJ)

Liston (2005) claims that women have become increasingly active in traditionally physical and masculine dominated pastimes such as gaelic football and rugby. This, she argues, is a product of a changing (although not linear) balance of power amongst the sexes, facilitated by civilising processes in Ireland such as the increasing pacification of social relations (see Dolan, 2005; 2009a; 2009b). Martin et al. (2006: 190), in their study of female Harley Davidson bikers, suggest that women are engaging in masculine consumer cultures 'as part of an identity project in which they expand, complicate and empower their own femininities'. In other words, it provides the female bikers with a sense of control. A similar description could be applied to female heavy metal fans, particularly when they are praised for their role in the scene as the female drummer is in the previous extract. Michael (DI) also praises women who have 'held their own even more so than I could in the pits'. Similarly to the male fans, the female participants have to adapt to the complex social codes of the heavy metal figuration. However, because they are female it takes a higher level of control and self-restraint as they have to try harder to prove themselves in what is predominantly a hyper-masculine subculture. Krenske and McKay agree that women are challenging traditional gender roles. However, they suggest they are doing it on men's terms. Although women are accepted into the scene, they are only given respect when they display masculine qualities. Hence, engagement in such masculine subcultures is not as liberatory or emancipatory as Martin et al. suggest.

Martin et al. (2006: 190) argue that many of the female Harley riders 'go out of their way to accessorize and feminize their appearances in order to communicate unambiguous femininity

and heterosexuality'. However, appropriating feminine qualities into the heavy metal scene

leads to derision from other female members who think that dressing or acting in any way

feminine will lead to loss of respect within the scene:

> …the women that are there are usually the type that have big huge dreads, multi-coloured dreads, real skinny, tons of make-up, dressed all in black, real gothy, massive New Rocks and you know I can't be arsed. I usually go out in jeans and a fecking Metallica T-shirt; I don't care. I suppose the ones that are there are just real pretty and tied up or they are into it because their bloke is into it, whereas they wouldn't necessarily be into it themselves. (Mary, DI, female, 32, heavy metal radio show DJ)

Another important aspect of the broader developments in the gender nexus and the increasing

participation of women in traditional masculine activities is the impact that this has had on

men. Dunning (2008) argues that men engage in exaggerated displays of masculinity in the

spaces that sport and leisure provide, and that this is a product of the reduction in the power

men have over women. Consequently, this suggests men could be attracted to heavy metal

because of the opportunity it provides them to reassert a sense of power, a sense of control

they may have lost. Liston (2005) describes the stigmatisation that females have been

subjected to in traditionally masculine sports. There were many examples of this presented in

the heavy metal scene. Bill (DI) suggests that if a woman was to enter the mosh pit she

'would want to be pretty butch [laughs]'. Thomas (DI) describes a confrontation he had with

a woman in a heavy metal bar. He dealt with this unusual confrontation by emphasising her

gender and the usual type of interaction that would take place between a man and a woman at

a bar:

> T: I once had a girl try to fight me at a gig in Whelan's in the pit.
> G: What do you do there?
> T: Haha eh "You're alright, like do you want a drink?"

It is clear that heavy metal is a hyper-masculine subculture and that this is reinforced by the

stigmatisation that women who participate and adhere to the masculine code are subjected to.

However, it is not as simple as this. Heavy metal is a scene of contradictions. The following

extracts hint at the masculine nature of the clothing a lot of the men wear in terms of the

leather jackets, camouflage trousers, the facial hair, the shaved heads and the tattoos.

However, it indicates that both men and women share a lot of the same trends which cross

both the masculine and the feminine in terms of appearance:

> The guys were typically dressed in black band T-shirts, had long hair and either black or blue jeans. Some sported head bands and the more extreme-looking sported piercings and tattoos. Another popular look was the shaved head with piercings in the nose. Leather was another popular choice with some people also wearing long trench jackets which went down to their knees. The girls also dressed in dark attire and sported highlighted hair with mostly dark colours. They were also characterised by the make-up they used on their faces, which consisted of dark eye-liner and white face paint. The clothes were also dark and a lot of them wore band T-shirts like the men. (Field notes, 04/12/09, popular heavy metal bar in Dublin's city centre)

> He was wearing a black metal T-shirt (which he points out to me is black metal), army boots and blue jeans. He has really long hair which he keeps tossing and running his hands through. He strikes me as quite feminine and confirms this when he puts what looks like red gloss over his lips. (Field notes, 02/02/10, black metal gig taking place at small music venue)

The manner in which male heavy metal fans dress presents a contradiction. On the one hand,

their use of tattoos, army attire and the colour black emphasises the masculinity of the metal

scene. On the other hand, the popularity of long hair, the use of piercings and make-up would

seem quite feminine. Goulding and Saren (2009) describe a similar ambiguity in their

research concerning the 'Whitby Goth Festival'. They observe the androgynous nature of the

scene, its connection with vampire iconography, and how the appearance of fans is used to

blur the boundaries between what is considered masculine and what is considered feminine.

They argue that the festival provides a liminal space in which the Goths can engage in

practices of liberty, 'a space to enact desired gender identities in a collective environment'

(2009: 43).

Is this the motivation for the participants of the Irish scene? When questioned about the

heavy metal appearance, most of the participants described it as rebellious, but it was always

framed in masculine terms. Atkinson (2008) argues that men are beginning to reconceptualise

what it actually means to have an 'established' masculine identity. He provides the example

of men's use of cosmetic surgery, which he argues 'is a response to a collectively felt loss of

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established hegemony in a range of figurational contexts, and reconciled as civilized masculine practice' (Atkinson, 2008: 68). Atkinson argues that the men are acting in response to the now-fragmented institutions of control. It could be the case that the male heavy metal fans have inverted traditionally feminine aesthetics and merged them with the rebellious, masculine symbolism of the heavy metal scene. They are attempting to reassert a control that has been reduced as a result of a broader shift in the balance of power between the sexes.

Marketplace controls: The 'sportisation' of music scenes?

In the previous section I examined the role of the fans in creating and controlling the heavy metal spaces of ritual. Similarly to Goulding et al.'s (2009) study of clubbing experiences, the heavy metal fan spaces are co-created by security, rules and regulation, heavy metal musicians as well as the fans themselves. The role of these controlling factors will be examined in this section in addition to a discussion regarding the influence that heavy metal venues play in shaping the experience of the fans. A key issue here concerns the impact of marketplace forces on the overall quality of heavy metal events and how such forces interact with the subcultural code and facilitate/hinder the experiences of the Irish heavy metal fans and the emotional needs that they seek to fulfil in participation.

Purveyors of chaos: The role of metal musicians in controlling the fan experience

> On entering the club you do not just hear the music; you feel it vibrate up your feet and through your entire body. The music bypasses normal cognitive processes of perception and … this has a powerful effect on the crowd. (Goulding et al. 2009: 765)

> 'The music is just that aggressive, that is why we want to dance around to it. The music pretty much makes you want to do that' (Gordon, DI, male, 23, unemployed).

It is clear that the music and the bands have an influence over the fans and control, to a certain extent, their engagement/non-engagement in heavy metal rituals. However, in the relatively small amount of literature concerning heavy metal rituals, there is very little

attention paid to how the music and the relationship between the band and the fans can influence the configuration of the mosh pit and the rituals that take place.

The fans are conditioned to react in certain ways to different types of metal music. For example, with popular bands or songs that the fans liked, the breakdown or chorus in each song would act as a consensual signal which the fans used to enhance the sense of physicality and aggression. Goulding et al. (2009) highlight the importance of the DJ in the dance clubs and their controlling effect over the clubbers experience. Similarly, the band can dictate the crowd through the tempo and structure of the songs they play. For example, David (field notes, 28/02/10) reports that when the band Lamb of God start the opening chords of the song 'Black Label', the crowd automatically separate into two sides and prepare for the song to break into the chorus. Then the two opposing sides of the mosh pit will charge at each other in a ritual known as the 'wall of death':

> They [Machine Head] opened with a very high fast tempo fast song with the singer screaming. The song then slowed down in the middle with focus altered to a tense drum beat and bass riff building the song up, which gets the crowd going. They seem to know what is coming and then as the music gets a little bit quicker and then quicker again they launch into an aggressive chorus where the lead singer screams at the top of his voice. The crowd then began to mosh near the front of the stage gathering in a circle of around fifteen people barging into each other with their shoulders. (Field notes, 02/02/10)

The fans connection with the music is similar to the description of football matches Elias and Dunning (2008a) present. They observe the unique pattern of figurations that the two teams who play against each other conjure up and, depending on the circumstances of the match; this creates a certain level of tension for the watching audience. An example of tension being released is cheering or jumping up and down when a goal is scored. This is comparable to the way in which metal fans and musicians generate tension by starting a song slow and building the tension both in the song and in the mosh pit before it is released when the chorus breaks in. Elias and Dunning claim that, for sports such as football, spectators and participants have a far greater scope for generating and releasing emotion. Elias (2008b: 32) cites the example

of a classical music concert and the restraint that spectators have to demonstrate during a performance. They argue that there is a greater connection between motion and emotion that distinguishes sport from music in this sense. It is apparent, however, that heavy metal music incorporates a similar relationship between movement and feeling. Similar to the key role that the 'star' DJ plays in dance clubs, the heavy metal musicians are crucial to orchestrating the experience of the participants. In the field it was observed how bands directly coordinate mosh pits as they literally instruct the fans to create pits and (field notes, 02/02/10) 'take out all their anger on these guys [the other fans]':

> He (the singer) then shouts at the pit that he wants to see another circle pit which actually leads to one. I watch as the crowd mosh, shoving each other, throwing their arms around the people beside them and jump fast up and down throwing their fists into the air. Three or four people then form their own mini pit pushing each other before more people join in. (Field notes, 28/02/10)

For the larger gigs where fans have paid a significant amount of money for a ticket and have been following bands such as Megadeth and Machine Head for many years, it is easier for the lead singer to connect with the crowd and get them on their side. Weinstein (2000) observes how heavy metal bands engage with local fans of each city in which they play by praising the local culture or even trying to speak a bit of the native language. The popular bands that were observed pursued similar strategies where they described their love for Ireland and commented on how great the fans always are.

The lead singers spent a lot of time attempting to develop a relationship with the audience. It is the job of the singer to communicate the anger and emotional turmoil of the music to the audience and to do this s/he must develop an image or a persona. The importance of the crowd interacting with the audience is emphasised by the many times when members of the performing bands actually jump off the stage and try to initiate mosh pits and activity within the crowd. In one particular instance, when I was standing near the stage, the singer jumped off the small stage, lay on the ground and screamed into the microphone which was right

beside my ankles. It is apparent that forging this relationship is an extremely difficult skill, as in many instances such as this the crowd did not react at all or just stood still nodding. This then has an impact on the participation and quality of the rituals that take place at heavy metal concerts.

The musicians play a crucial role in influencing the level of participation in heavy metal rituals. However, they are also partly responsible for when rituals fail to materialise. This was particularly evident at the 'Filth Fest' event (field notes, 03–04/10/11) and the 'Marduk' gig (field notes, (02/02/10) where a series of what were relatively unknown bands were observed. Similar to the large gigs, the singers asked the crowd to get a mosh pit going. Such demands frequently failed to transpire.

> In-between each song the singer would talk in a rhythmic tone that was again inaudible with guitar distortion in the background. The crowd did not move much during their performance, despite the singers gesture for people to jump up and down. There were two guys who responded to the singer when he did the devil horns with his hands but that was about it. Most of the fans just stood quietly paying attention to the band. They did not play long and after another three songs which started in similar vein with the distortion and talking, they wrapped up with a long instrumental and an impressive guitar solo technically – if not in the researchers opinion aesthetically pleasing. They received a quiet round of applause for their efforts. (Field notes, 02/02/10)

It was normally the case that a band would have to be well known or popular with the fans to be able to provoke a mosh pit or control the actions of the heavy metal fans with any authority. It emerged in the data that certain subgenres of heavy metal or performers were not suited to mosh pits or crowd-surfing. Various bands (mostly support bands) failed to provoke a response from the audience because they did not possess enough subcultural capital within the scene. If the fans are not familiar with a band, it is hard for them to engage with the rhythms of their music and incorporate moshing or crowd-surfing with the band's performance. What was interesting about bands such as the one described in the field notes below is the empty space that develops in front of the stage which is normally reserved for 'moshing' fans. This is indicative of the complexity of the heavy metal figuration:

> The crowd didn't move much during their performance. There were two guys who responded to the singer when he did the devil horns with his hands but that was about it, despite the singer's attempt to get the crowd going. Most of the fans just stood quietly paying attention to the band. They did not play long and after another three songs … they received a quiet round of applause for their efforts. (Field notes, 02/02/2010, early support band at a small black metal show)

However, the band's relationship with the crowd and the music that is played is just one factor amongst many that dictates the type of heavy metal experience the fans can be exposed to.

Marketplace regulation: Alcohol, insurance and bouncers

It was discussed already how heavy metal concerts and their rituals are potentially quite dangerous environments. Accordingly, there is security and rules and regulations to make sure that people do not get hurt. There are different levels of security depending on the size of the gig. For example, at one of the larger events attended there was a strong security presence which included police as well as bouncers. The police were there to manage a large crowd and ensure that alcohol regulations were enforced:

> When I reached the ticket inspection point I saw three different security guards that were sectioned off into three different areas. They had a ticket scanning machine which was used to check the barcode of the tickets. Behind them were wheelie bins which were full of unopened beer cans and vodka bottles. The security guards were joined by two policemen. (Field notes, 14/06/10)

The regulations regarding alcohol are very different at the larger events compared to the smaller underground shows. Fans can be searched on their way into the venue and the alcohol that is served is presented in plastic glasses to ensure safety. Although the use of plastic containers makes sense from a safety perspective, it is apparent that the strict supervision of alcohol consumption is not only concerned with the safety of the fans but with the heavily sponsored concerts which sell alcohol on site. In other words, if only the sponsor's brand of beer is available, the participants will have to drink that as it is forbidden to bring in their own alcohol.

Alcohol plays a considerable role in heavy metal rituals. It makes participation in what are sometimes dangerous rituals easier. The fans drink alcohol to prepare themselves for the ritual. An example of this occurred in the field (28/02/10) when David, in discussion before the gig, informed me that 'you need drink for these things'. Gordon (DI) describes being able to deal with pain inflicted from the mosh pit because 'it would happen when I am drunk and I would just laugh about it' and John (DI) explains how even playing live would require a few drinks beforehand. However, consuming too much alcohol can potentially harm the rituals and lead to fans bypassing the expected etiquette:

> It can go too far but that is normally people out of their minds. I have never been at a gig where somebody sober has done anything stupid. It is always someone off their head on pills or drunk out of their mind or someone doing something stupid so I wouldn't really blame that on the music, blame that more on drink or drugs. (Mark, DI, male, 19, student)

Atkinson (2003) describes the sobriety of participants of the straightedge subculture. Straightedge is a music scene similar to punk, with the exception that the fans actively resist alcohol and drugs. Atkinson suggests that the participants' control of their bodies is an example of what Elias would explain as the development of a 'second nature'. Gordon (DI) observed an increasing trend in heavy metal of straightedge bands that completely resist alcohol, drugs and meat. This was witnessed in participant observation at the 'Filth Fest' festival attended (field notes, 03/09/11) where emphasis was placed on the vegan BBQ rather than the consumption of alcohol. Although there was no moshing or crowd-surfing at this event it could not be reported with any certainty if the straightedge philosophy had any bearing on their engagement/lack of participation in heavy metal rituals.

Alcohol has been used for centuries as a social lubricant and it is no different in the heavy metal scene. Weinstein (2000: 209) writes that 'beer has a Dionysian significance at the concert, aiding and representing release into ecstatic experience'. There is a sociability that is created by consuming alcohol. Elias and Dunning (2008c: 104) write that 'people drink alcohol in company because, by depressing the inhibitory centres of the brain, it facilitates the

friendly reciprocal stimulation on a relatively high level of emotionality which is the essence of leisure sociability'. In other words, alcohol allows for public displays of emotion and the loosening of inhibitions. The use of alcohol to construct these spaces shares similarities to the Goulding et al. (2002) and Goulding et al. (2009) studies which report how the drug ecstasy is used by clubbers to enhance the clubbing experience and allow for clubbers to dance for hours. Goulding et al. describe the contained illegality and 'knowing wink' of the club promoters and bouncers which allows for drug consumption. They are aware it forms part of the experience. The control of rules and regulations regarding alcohol could then be seen to have a significant influence on live heavy metal gigs as it impacts upon the participation and behaviour of fans in heavy metal rituals.

The degree to which the rules and regulations determine the amount of alcohol that is actually consumed by fans is, however, debatable. In participating with fans before live events it was observed that they drink a lot before the show, because of the high prices at large events and the consistently high prices in Dublin bars. It was also evident that fans under eighteen are very unlikely to get served at the bigger events, but this did not prove to be the case in some of the smaller shows which were attended. The rules and regulation concerning alcohol have an effect on the participants in that they will find it far more costly and difficult to attain alcohol during the show and this has an effect on their sobriety and hence their participation in the rituals.

The rules and regulation concerning alcohol and drugs are also in effect influenced by the high insurance costs and potential legal fees that concert promoters can be deemed liable for. Thomas describes the difficulty in attaining insurance for heavy metal events:

> Yeah well when we were our production festival XXX Productions we had our own insurance and everything and we actually went and got it sorted and it was very hard, we had to go around the houses for ages and eventually we found somebody in the UK who would do it, but yeah when you mention metal people would eh [makes a face of disgust]… so we would go oh it's hard rock but when they look it up on the website. So yeah they do see it as far more risky but I think, eh, and it would be very hard to convince people of this, it is no more risky than any other type of live gig. (Thomas, DI, male, 28, promotes heavy metal concerts)

The difficulties the larger events have in attaining insurance means that the promoters must take the necessary steps to guarantee the health and safety of the fans who attend. At the large events attended, there were clearly designated emergency exits and first aid tents. The issue of noise levels is also very important. As reported previously, I had difficulty hearing properly in the hours after both large and small gigs. In the forum discussion after the Machine Head concert, many of the posters commented on how the sound was too high and that this was unusual considering that health and safety regulations had been brought in. The older participants also reported safer sound levels compared to the shows in previous years. However, it is still noticeable that quite a lot of fans wear ear plugs, and that the noise levels are quite dangerous, particularly for the musicians. Still, many of the fans object to some of the regulations arguing that louder music contributes to an overall better experience.

The tickets for the larger gigs are issued with rules stating that anyone under eighteen must be accompanied by a guardian and that crowd-surfing and moshing of any kind is prohibited. None of these rules appear on the tickets of any of the smaller gigs. These legal issues surfaced when the web forums regarding the band Megadeth's performance were examined after attending their show. One young fan broke his arm, apparently as a result of overzealous bouncers. His mother, who posted on the forum looking for potential witnesses, was informed by some of the heavy metal posters that she may have difficulty in receiving compensation as the boy was under eighteen, was crowd-surfing and had consumed alcohol. In general there was sympathy for the mother and the boy and this led to a discussion regarding the attitude and behaviour of bouncers at heavy metal gigs. The control or lack of control that bouncers asserted over the fans and their enactment of rituals emerged as a significant issue in the heavy metal scene.

Goulding et al. (2009) describe how bouncers play a key role in selecting who gets into nightclubs. They compare the bouncers in big dance clubs to the fashion police as most of the

clubbers are judged on their appearance and 'hipness'. This directly contradicts the philosophy of the previous rave culture where anyone who knew when and where the typically impromptu raves took place was allowed to participate. This is not an issue in heavy metal subculture where anyone of legal age is allowed into the heavy metal venue. However, bouncers play a far more practical role in heavy metal venues and their participation (or lack of) is crucial to shaping the quality of the rituals, the live heavy metal experience and the overall consumption experience. At the larger heavy metal events there are always bouncers who stand in front of the stage behind a railing. At the smaller events moshing and crowd-surfing is generally self-policed by the fans themselves with bouncers on the door of the pub potentially interfering if the rituals get out of control. Although interference from the bouncers varied at each gig (I attended), it appeared that they mostly try to stop crowd-surfing and were in general powerless to stop mosh pits:

> The moshing is getting more aggressive than I previously noticed for this particular song as I see one person punching another in the shoulder and then throwing his shoulder up in the air. The man he punched spears him (runs into his chest head first) and lifts him over his shoulder. I notice that the bouncers do nothing except when someone is crowd surfing and comes close to the barrier. I in fact notice that the bouncer who was dressed in black with the ear phones is banging his feet against the floor and clapping after each song. He, like the other bouncers, never turns around to watch the stage. The only time that they turn their back on the crowd is when they get bottles of water which they throw in the crowd and drink themselves. (Field notes, 28/02/10)

The fans become angry when the bouncers obstruct rituals such as moshing and crowd-surfing. They report instances, that they have been a part of or witnessed, where bouncers have been excessive in their use of force. The forum poster 'Eoin McLove' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 17/06/10) accuses bouncers of 'being steroid munching meat-heads' who use heavy metal gigs to take out their aggression on unsuspecting metal fans. The participants believe that the bouncers at the larger events do not understand the rituals. Consequently, such bouncers possess less subcultural capital than other participants in the marketplace because of the diminishing effect of their interference on the heavy metal experience.

Thomas (DI) argues that 'it is bad training on behalf of the security not realising it [moshing] is part of the show'.

> it is their work and if people are punching the shit out of each other, then their instinct is to break it up… when it comes to metal gigs they have more of that testosterone punch and they are a bit more hyped up and aggressive but it doesn't mean they are necessarily going to turn to violence. (Mary, DI, female, 32)

Many of the participants compare the Irish bouncers to their counterparts abroad. The forum posters praise the organisers of the German heavy metal festival 'Wacken' for training the bouncers and providing them with an understanding of what to expect from heavy metal fans and how to deal with it. Here, as is the case with smaller gigs in Dublin, security or bouncers only intervene when fans get out of control. This would involve instances where the 'etiquette' that was discussed previously is broken. 'Monkeysplurff', a bouncer at heavy metal gigs, contributed online to a debate about when security should intervene in the mosh pit. He has no problem with the rituals but he has had to 'fuck out cunts that kick or punch from behind' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 18/06/10). It has been established that the security or bouncers at heavy metal events contribute to the enactment of heavy metal rituals through either their absence, the 'knowing wink' (Goulding et al. 2009: 759) at what is occurring, or in disrupting the ritual through enforcement. This can at times be overly interfering and aggressive. Consequently, this can diminish the experience and emotional features of heavy metal rituals.

It is clear that the rules and regulations concerning heavy metal concerts are in place to secure the safety of its participants and hence the commercial interests of those involved in organising the events. However, as heavy metal events become larger the scene is exposed to a form of 'sportisation' similar to rugby and soccer (see Elias and Dunning, 2008a) and development of surfing as a consumer culture (see Canniford and Shankar, 2007; Canniford and Karababa, 2012). It is evident that in such instances the heavy metal fans feel that their

enjoyment and freedom is curtailed by an over-emphasis on rules and regulations (and their enforcers) for rituals which they believe can be controlled by their own subcultural code. This is despite the fact that much of the aggressive behaviour of the fans is overlooked by the security at both large and small events. This is an aspect of the 'sportisation' process that has not been really addressed by the researchers cited above. Although they have located the developments of such sports and leisure activities, and speculated on their attractions to consumers, they have never been able to gain first-hand accounts of the consumer experience and the impact of such restraining forces on their participation, with the exception being the sociological accounts of hooliganism (e.g. Dunning et al. 1986) that involved participant observation. Bariner (2006: 591) has responded to this critique of the figurational sociology of sport stating that 'the fact that one does not spend large amounts of time with the hooligans would not necessarily disqualify trained sociologists from commenting on what they see around them – at football grounds, in pubs, at railway stations and so on.' However, it would perhaps be more difficult for these trained sociologists to theorise a subculture such as heavy metal seeing that it is not as visible as football fan culture (even hooligans) and exists on the margins of the marketplace.

Evidently, there has been consumer research which has considered the effect of marketplace forces on the consumer experience, from Pike's (2001) description of commercial vendors at pagan festivals to Kozinets (2002) ethnography of 'Burning Man'. However, this research examines the controlling effects of such processes on the experience of the fans from a figurational perspective, drawing from wider social processes.

The connection between the marketplace forces and the potential diminishment of the participant experience is also quite clearly linked to the type of venues that such heavy metal events take place in. The importance of the heavy metal venue will be discussed in the next section.

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Architecture of dissent: The role of the heavy metal venue in shaping fan experiences

I attended or was informed of a surprising number of different venues in which heavy metal events took place. These included bars that were tailored specifically to heavy metal, traditional live music pubs, large standardised arenas, medium-sized venues which specialised in live music, outdoor festivals, cinemas, churches, farmhouses and even cruise ships. Kronenburg (2011) argues that very little literature concerning popular music focuses on the physical spaces in which performances take place and the consequent impact it has on the music event. Kronenburg (2011: 1-2) writes: 'the architecture of a venue can have a highly significant effect on character, power, and relevance of the performance adding layers of meaning and expression for both performer and audience'. It is when the actual structure of a venue is examined – its location, the sounds, the smells and the visuals – that one understands the controlling influence of the physical spaces in which heavy metal fandom takes place. For example, Mark describes how the lights and special effects heighten his excitement when attending an Iron Maiden concert:

> The big memory I have of that is the first time they came on and all the lights went off and everybody went insane, the noise just from the crowd was nearly deafening and then the lights just shone on. I remember this happening and I couldn't move. I couldn't believe it like and then they started playing 'Number of the Beast' [a famous Iron Maiden song] and the lights were flashing… (Mark, DI, male, 19)

The use of lights and special effects is a prominent part of the modern live music experience and they have an influence over the behaviour of heavy metal fans whether they are conscious of this fact or not. This is particularly evident at the larger concerts. For example, the music that is played over the speaker system can be used to prepare the crowd for the headline act. The gaps between songs and the dimming of the lights heighten the anticipation of the crowd and let them know that the band will be on stage soon:

> When a song that is being played over the speaker system ends there is a sense of expectation that this could be when the band enters. Loud cheers go up when a song ends and this hope is erased as the song progresses. The fans chant 'Megadeth, Megadeth' in attempt to coax the

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band on the stage. There is even a chant of 'ole ole ole' in between songs. Some of the fans also whistle… When another song finishes there is a long pause and a lot more fans run in from the entrance as many of the fans scream. This could also be because they are testing the lights so it goes from dark to bright and dark again very quickly. There are two young fans beside me possibly in their early teens who think that the show is going to begin when they hear a loud guitar start. It turns out it is just the beginning of another song that is going to be played over the speaker system. However this song seems to spark excitement amongst the crowd. I begin to feel energised myself. (Field notes, 14/06/10, attending a Megadeth [one of the most popular heavy metal bands in the world] concert)

The silence and descent into darkness that follow large-scale production heavy metal gigs is the signal for fans that they can go 'insane' as Mark (DI) describes. They can engage in aggressive rituals under the cover of darkness.

Lights are also used during the performance to encourage or highlight crowd participation. Specific instances have been observed where the spotlight is shone on the mosh pit in front of the stage when a song breaks into a chorus or the opening notes of a particularly popular song are played. This all helps to control the behaviour of the participants. Weinstein (2000) suggests that lighting and stage effects are used to emphasise the relationship between the band and their fans. It is in essence an acknowledgment of the importance of the fans to the spectacle by literally shining a light on them. Additionally, because of the high volume of heavy metal music and the technical expertise it requires to make it audible, the 'acoustics' or sound quality of a particular venue are vitally important to the participants quality of experience. This is particularly evident in the forums where there are entire threads dedicated to the sound quality of particular gigs and the venues which hosted them. For example, participants who attended the Machine Head concert in the Olympia Theatre (music venue in Dublin City Centre, holds 1300 people) complained on the forums about the unsuitability of the acoustics and the high volume which was potentially dangerous. One poster, who did not even attend claimed he could hear the performance from one hundred metres down the street.

'Don't tell me to sit down': The layout of modern music venues
The layout of the venues can also impact upon the behaviour of the heavy metal fans and in

some cases completely alter their experience of a performance. Surprisingly, the importance of seating or standing areas has been under-researched in literature concerning live music. Weinstein (2000), in her extensive account of the live heavy metal event, only mentions briefly the effect of seating in heavy metal gigs. She describes how thrash metal fans at large venues are frustrated by the lack of space in which they can partake in heavy metal rituals. This seems to be characteristic of the large arenas in North America which are mostly all-seated. Most of the gigs attended were 'underground' shows, and this was not an issue as there was always a space allocated in front of the stage for the fans, with seating located only at the back of the venue or at the side beside the bar. It was clear that increased seating in a venue created barriers to audience participation. In the lead up to the Machine Head gig (which had a larger proportion of seats compared to the underground gigs), all the standing tickets sold out within the first hour of when they went on sale. However, the remaining seating tickets only sold out in the hours before the actual gig. The lack of standing tickets clearly upset some of the fans in the forums. 'Corrosive Machine' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 08/12/09) says he hates sitting at metal gigs and offers his friend's virginity for a ticket and 'Patrickreborn' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 08/12/09) writes that sitting at a gig like Machine Head is 'pointless'. When actually attending the gig I was in the upper balcony where all the seats were located. As the seating area was unassigned, fans were standing in the aisles and on the seats at times when they were particularly excited about the performance. Despite their excellent viewpoint for watching the performance, many of the fans expressed jealousy of the fans that were located beside the stage that could 'go mad', mosh and crowd-surf.

The stress that this issue causes the fans is indicative of what Thompson and Holt (2004) describe as the drama inherent in everyday consumption. In their account of American masculine ideologies, they suggest that it is not only the service providers that create a level

of anxiety and tension that is relieved through consumption (see Arnould and Price, 1993) –
but also the individuals who dramatise even the most mundane of consumption activities.
They argue that 'the dramatic structuring of everyday consumption is central to all [their]
informants' masculinity projects' (Thompson and Holt, 2004: 438). Is this dramatic reaction
to the possibility that they may have to sit at a heavy metal gig symptomatic of the hyper-
masculinity that was discussed previously? Is it further evidence of how men use leisure
spaces and consumption activities to resist their decreasing level of power within society?
King (1997) has commented on how the introduction of modern all-seater football stadiums
has increased the distance between the footballers and the fans (as well as the fans
themselves) and eradicated the spaces (the terraces) in which they could express their
masculinity. Similarly, the data here indicates that the seating hinders the fans from engaging
in the rituals and consequently lessens the physical and emotional experience of a heavy
metal gig.

The issue with the seating is inherently tied up with the clear divide in the data between the
large and the small gigs and resistance that many heavy metal fans have articulated regarding
the modernisation of live music events. Newly constructed venues such as the O2 arena, a
(14,000 seated multi-purpose venue in Dublin's docklands) are an example of the
modernisation of live music venues where there is a greater emphasis on seating, safety and
ensuring that the performance can be seen from every part of the arena. Although heavy
metal performances typically take place in small pubs, it is interesting to see the impact that
the layout of these venues has on their fandom and their behaviour at the larger gigs.
Goulding et al. (2009) discuss how dance music moved from the impromptu arenas of
warehouses and all-night raves in fields to more established venues with licences as it
increased in popularity. This suited both the entrepreneurs who looked to commercialise the
popularity of the scene and the police who were now able to control and monitor the

behaviour of the participants with greater ease than previously. However, Goulding et al. (2009: 762) argue that 'the cultural practices invoked through clubbing moved away from the countercultural, oppositional framings of rave toward the realm of mass cultural orchestration'. The big stage productions can create physical barriers between heavy metal bands and their fans. This is obviously an inevitable consequence of the success of such bands as Iron Maiden, Metallica and Megadeth. However, the increase in physical barriers seems to have led to a certain negativity and suspicion from the participants concerning these increasingly commercialised productions – the high prices, the presence of marquee tents, sponsored overpriced bars, merchandise stalls and the large-scale production costs. Essentially, the fans control over their experience decreases as the primitive qualities of the experience (see Canniford and Karababa, 2012) diminish. One can also attain a greater level of subcultural capital by attending or getting involved in less formal 'underground' or smaller heavy metal gigs.

The symbolic importance of the heavy metal bar

Although the participants would go to almost any venue if a band they liked were playing, it became apparent that certain venues were popular with the metal fans and central to the Irish scene. Fox (1987) describes small punk bars and the importance of their loyal subcultural clientele to the scene. Similarly, there were a small number of metal bars that the participants attended weekly. In the forum postings 'Colmstesticles' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 08/02/10) writes that all venues have their pros and cons but he likes Fibbers as 'sure it is a dark hole but generally good sound, good smoking area, cheap (ish) drink, decent location. Very intense when the place is packed.' The following is a description of the venue from the first visit:

> According to the pub's website it can hold up to a thousand people and 'If you come for the live show, be prepared for an intimately intense experience'. The pub had low ceilings and was darkly lit. The bar which is on the left as you walk in had a sign which read 'Rock bar.

Regulars only after 1.30'. The ground floor had two pool tables beside the bar with the main stage situated at the back of the ground floor. A table where two girls were selling the merchandise of the band that were playing separated the pool area and the stage area. The stage was small enough with barely room for the five members of the band that were playing. The area beside the stage was big enough for what I would estimate would be eighty to a hundred fans. Behind that floor area was a mixing booth and a DJ area. The walls were covered with band T-shirts and large frames with album cover posters from bands such as Slayer. (Field notes, 04/12/09)

It is the presence of heavy metal memorabilia, toilets filled with graffiti, low ceilings and what was described to me as 'the smell of metal' that instantly signifies that this is the home of heavy metal in Dublin. Elias (1991b) observes how we use symbols to orientate ourselves and identify our relationship with the world. He focuses mostly on the development of language as a set of symbols in his theory of knowledge development. However, the visual and audio signals and smells of places such as Fibbers can also act as symbols which communicate to fans. Elias describes how in society language has developed at a very high level of synthesis:

> highly self-controlled people have to adjust themselves to each other as part of an increasingly intricate mesh of contacts and social necessities, which requires a socially standardized, high-level symbol of timing to enable this to be done with great accuracy and predictability. (Elias, 1991b: xv-xvi)

The heavy metal fans communicate in their own standardised language that differentiates themselves from other groups whilst at the same time reinforcing their sense of group comradeship. It is, however, the non-verbal communication of symbols such as heavy metal posters on the wall, small darkly lit basements and even the smells that heavy metal fans can interpret, share and understand as common symbols. This is difficult to replicate in bigger venues, despite the presence of heavy metal fans, bands and the use of heavy metal imagery in the stage productions.

The metal bar also acts as the meeting point for musicians and fans to maintain the sense of community in the scene and share their passion with like-minded people. Neil (DI) observes that 'every person in there seems to be in a metal band or friends with a metal band'. David

(field notes, 28/02/10) suggests that everyone who is attending the Machine Head gig will 'be in Fibbers later' and remembers seeing members of popular bands in the venue. There is certainly a sense of comradeship that comes with attending a venue like Fibbers regularly. Mary (DI) observes that 'most people know each other or at least know each other to see… I was at Rich Hall in the Olympia last weekend and I find it so strange going to gigs that I don't know anybody'. Burrows (2009) and Kristal and Byrne (2005) have written about significant venues and the role they have played in different music genres, but they specifically focus on the bands that played in such venues as the CBGB and their historical significance. Snell and Hodgetts (2007) examined the role that one specific metal bar played in negotiating a sense of community for New Zealand heavy metal fans. They suggest that the metal fans' shared sense of identity and style was manifested in the physical environment of the metal bar which had dark gothic aesthetics and was filled with heavy metal memorabilia. Sites such as the bar described here 'can be read as physical manifestations of symbolic boundaries between the Metaller community and the imagined mainstream' (Snell and Hodgetts, 2007: 443).

Although the metal bar can be conceptualised as a location where fans can forge a sense of collective identity, it was also observed that the integration of these fans in locations such as Fibbers impacts upon their own personal behaviour and the aesthetics of the scene. The presence of like-minded fans who share the same sense of style and similar values helps develop a unique complex social code which is constantly evolving and hence requires a great deal of self-control and restraint to adapt to. As Kahn-Harris (2007) maintains, those who seek to transgress the scene by challenging preconceived conceptions of what heavy metal represents can accumulate a high level of subcultural capital and prestige within the scene. Venues such as Fibbers allow for all these fans to come together frequently to share, challenge and demonstrate these values. It is the presence of the symbols of heavy metal –

the dark, rough underground atmosphere, the low ceilings, the shirts and posters of heavy metal fans – that communicate the social code to the fans.

Controlled de-controlling of emotions

The live heavy metal experience is co-constructed through a combination of marketplace forces and the controlling influence of the subcultural code. It is through the development of this figuration that heavy metal fans can scream, mosh, headbang and 'lose' control. In this section I will examine how the participants use the development of such fan spaces to manage their emotions and the significance of this to the wider scene and the everyday lives of the participants.

The anger aesthetic: Emancipation of emotions in the heavy metal scene

The rituals that have been discussed thus far indicate that anger and the generation and expression of emotion is prominent in heavy metal subculture. This is a theme that has been particularly evident in observation of online interactions (see chapter seven), but was also identified to a lesser extent in interview transcripts and in the participant observation of live events. It is not just in the aggressive demonstrations of the mosh pit, but in every aspect of the scene, from the appearance of the fans, the speed of the music, the lyrical content, to the anti-establishment views that many of the interviewees articulated. This anger is communicated to the audience straight away when one is introduced to the names of bands such as 'Hate Breed' with songs called 'Destroy Everything' and 'The Injustice of it All'. The themes of the songs generally concern social disorder, morbidity, personal struggles and general anger and aggression at society. The following are lyrics from the song 'Destroy Everything':

> Cleanse this world with flame
> End this, cleanse this
> Rebuild and start again

> Obliterate what makes us weak
> End this and embrace destruction
> End this to embrace new life
> Even a nothing threat deserves a response you won't soon forget
> I must destroy everything that tries to infect (Hatebreed, 2006)

Although many of the bands observed in the field sang lyrics which were incomprehensible, owing to the speed and high volume at which they were screamed, the expression of both the singer and the actual music of the band communicated rage and aggression:

> The bass player continues to do the intense stare at the crowd and really psyches himself up in the slow intro of one of the songs before screaming into the microphone. The sound of the singing like many of the bands is distorted by effects which make it impossible to actually distinguish the quality of the singing voice but also make it easy for anyone with a poor singing voice to get away with singing for this type of metal band. There is more emphasis on the actual theatrical performance of each lead singer as it is their job to engage the crowd and act out the emotions of each song which are normally anger-orientated. (Field notes, 03/09/11)

It is also the visual signals and the aesthetics that communicate the anger that is inherent in the scene. The fans wear T-shirts and jackets with words printed on them such as 'no fucking slaves' and 'fuck you'. They wear morbid black colours and sport piercings and tattoos that symbolise the anti-establishment ethic of the scene. It is not just the fans but the actual environment of the venues where many of these heavy metal gigs take place. The use of dark lighting, morbid colours and the presence of other heavy metal symbols communicate a sense of negativity or anger. Wouters (2007) argues that there has been an emancipation of emotions in that there is an increasing tolerance of foul language and public emotional displays, and this seems to be evident in heavy metal subculture.

After much neglect, emotions have recently been accorded a more central position in consumer research. In particular, there has been a growing focus on the emancipatory qualities that consumption provides for individuals, subcultures of consumption (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995), consumer tribes (Cova et al. 2007a), and the positive emotions and pleasure (Goulding et al. 2009) that can be experienced through consumption and the

communities that are formed around it. However, such research could be enhanced by examining contexts in which angry or negative emotions are central to consumer experiences. Using the heavy metal figuration as a research site allows one to explore the significance of negative emotions in framing communal experiences and hence provides a broader spectrum of the range of emotions that consumers manage in marketplace participation. This can potentially provide alternative explanations regarding the tensions and conflict that are inherent in consumer sub(cultures). It can illuminate our understanding of how participants of such communities experience rituals and interact with the marketplace. However, the question is why the fans feel the need to express anger in the spaces of the scene.

Metal as therapy: Experiencing emotional catharsis in a routinised society

The generation and release of emotional tension plays a prominent role in a heavy metal subculture, where aggression and anger form an emotional aesthetic that is evident in every facet of the scene. Elias and Dunning (2008a) note society's increasing need for leisure and excitement and the development of rule-based sports as a reflection of an emotional need within western society. Like sport and leisure, heavy metal music provides a cathartic release for its fans. The therapeutic quality of heavy metal music and its rituals is a theme that is consistent in the narratives of the participants. In particular, it was found that that the fans used the music to deal with their anger. Engaging with the angry aesthetics of the scene heightens the cathartic effect of the music:

> I would listen to Machine Head if I am angry 'cos that is such angry music, it sort of vents it and that would actually calm me down I would find. Recently or in the last year or whatever I would have found that like if I would be frustrated or whatever and I put on something really loud. (Ciara, DI, female, 19, student)

In addition to this, Sam (DI) reports using the music to get himself angry whilst doing weights in the gym. Michael (DI) explains how he sometimes uses the noise of heavy metal to distract him from negative emotions. June (DI) felt a connection with heavy metal artists

who also experienced elements of rejection and depression, and Gordon describes how he

uses the music to deal with anger and pressure:

> You know [I was] always getting in trouble at school and it was sort of me against the world rebellion thing and I first started getting into music when my brother bought Nirvana's *Nevermind* and before that I used to listen to whatever was on the radio or whatever like that and I didn't really give a shit about music before that but when he bought me or played Nirvana for me I was like this is pretty cool and you know the whole fucking mosh pit thing, make you go so mental and unleash the aggression that the daily world will put on you as a kid and hell still to this day the daily world puts a lot of pressure on me and I have to go out an blow out a lot of steam which I unleash at a mosh pit or at a gig headbanging and [roars]. (Gordon, DI, male, 23, unemployed)

These findings support Arnett (1996), who also found that his participants used heavy metal

to calm their mood. Mark also uses music to alter his mood, but it is not just the volume or

tempo of the music that generates or releases tension but the themes and lyrical content of the

songs he listens to:

> It [metal music] tells you not to worry about it [problems in life] just like you are going to fucking do it anyway, you are going to get over it… it is not like where it [the band] is going to whine… why me kind of stuff, it is just like don't fucking worry about it get your head up and start again. (Mark, DI, male, 19, student)

It is possible, as Arnett (1996) suggests, that there is a link between the higher levels of

testosterone that teenagers produce and the need for the emotional excitement of the mosh

pit. McFerran et al. (2007) ask the question of how successfully teenagers can use music to

influence and alter their mood. It was found that those who on average spent more time

listening to music and/or preferred heavy music were more likely to be at risk of

psychological distress. The findings that are presented here seem, however, to contradict this

idea as the participants in fact use the music to alter their mood for the better. Even when

they use the music to generate anger, this is in order to vent tension and emotion which serves

the purpose of calming them down. However, it must be noted that McFerran et al. argue that

generally the teenagers in the study felt that they successfully managed music in their lives.

They are not suggesting that heavy metal is causing the distress, as others have before (see

King, 1988; Lacourse et al., 2001), but that perhaps heavy metal fans seek out such music because they may be suffering from problems in their everyday lives. There is evidence in the data that the fans become attracted to heavy metal because of emotional difficulties, family problems or a sense of alienation. This will be discussed in the next chapter of analysis.

For Elias and Dunning, the concept of mimesis is vital for understanding the generation and release of emotional tension. This suggests that the emotional experiences of the heavy metal fans replicate dangerous or exciting feelings. The music serves as a fantasy function which can counteract against the emotions which they experience in their everyday non-leisure lives. Arnett (1996: 14), paraphrasing the philosopher William James, suggests that young men need the sensory equivalent of war and an 'activity for young men that engages all their faculties the way war does and inspires them to direct their energies on behalf of collective ideals the way war does – but does not involve killing and destruction'. Heavy metal can provide this kind of risk and sensation (within a controlled environment). The fans are looking to experience a sense of the 'primitive' (see Canniford and Karababa, 2012), a sense of anarchy or freedom. However, it is the use of anger and negative emotions in participation that heighten such excitement and experiences of catharsis in this context.

Heavy metal in everyday life: Controlling mood in individualised fan spaces
Elias and Dunning (2008a) suggest that there has been an increasing need for sport and leisure as individuals suffer from emotional starvation in a progressively routinised society. But what are the emotions that the respondents experience in their everyday non-leisure lives? What is the attraction of the genre to older fans? In other words, what is it about the participants' everyday lives which require the need for heightened emotion and feelings of catharsis that the spaces constructed by the heavy metal scene provide? Similar to Goulding et al.'s (2002) description of the ravers 'working weeks' and 'rave weekends', it was found that, for many of the older respondents, listening to heavy metal (or any activity involving the

music or the scene) provided an escape from the routinisation of their work lives and responsibilities.

> I have to get up at six a.m. every morning, give the kids breakfast, get them ready for school and then bring them to the crèche. I work till two, go to the gym and then pick up the kids. I then get home, eat dinner, watch the news, maybe Facebook and go to sleep. I do this every day and the weekends are worse because we have to deal with the kids all day and find something to do for them. (Sam, DI, male, 31, married with two young children)

Following my interview with Sam, I attended a heavy metal concert with him. Although he arrived late because of his work and family responsibilities, he was very excited and energised when the heavy metal bands arrived on stage and banged his head up and down to the opening chords of the first band that performed. He told me about how rare it was for him to actually get out of the house and how much he appreciated the chance to get out and see some of his favourite bands. Sam (DI), Mary (DI), Bill (DI), June (DI) and Thomas (DI) all describe how they have had to tone down their appearance and essentially suspend their heavy metal identities whilst working in various different jobs. Sam (DI) explains that 'you are expected to look a certain way if you are a doctor or a dentist. Would you go to a doctor or dentist who looks like a heavy metal fan?' This is reminiscent of Goulding et al.'s description of the young professionals that lived double lives – one as a clubber who took ecstasy and danced away the weekend and one in which they worked hard all week in well-respected jobs. However, it must be stressed that it is more difficult for heavy metal fans to live such double lives if they adhere to the unique heavy metal style, as many of the fans still do in their everyday working and studying lives. Goulding et al., and other tribal research concerning music scenes or communities, could be enhanced by extending the framework to incorporate an understanding of how the music is used by the fans outside the spaces of participation, outside the clubs and the raves. 'Tribal' research tends to focus on the transitory nature of the experience, rather than how the music is used in every part of their lives. This does not just relate to how many of the participants use the heavy metal style to

distinguish their difference within a routinised society, but how the fans use the music to manage their mood throughout the working day. Heavy metal music does not just offer the participants the chance to break from the routine in their leisure time after work; it offers them the chance to escape at times during work. Mary describes how music got her through a particularly monotonous job in a factory:

> M: …it was the most horrible work I have ever done in my life because it was so boring.
>
> G: What was it?
>
> M: I was putting metal bits into plastic bits, put them into a machine, put them into a box and do that for eight hours.
>
> G: That does sound pretty boring alright.
>
> M: Yeah, and on the upside you could have like little radios or a Walkman which was something which I doubt you are actually allowed to do now with health and safety and all that. (Mary, DI, female, 32)

Advances in media technologies (see chapter three and chapter seven) have changed how individuals listen to music. The iPod provides the participants with the opportunity to incorporate music into their everyday lives and routines. Bull (2007) argues that although the iPod represents a trend towards the individualisation of music listening, it follows a long list of objects which had similar functions, from the transistor radio to the walkman. However, the difference is in the greater level of choice and control that the listener has over their listening experience. They have an almost infinite choice of music to listen to, with which they can alter and set their moods throughout the day. It has been argued in this chapter that the fans use heavy metal music to both generate and release emotional tension. It is used to control their mood. This is also the case with the iPod where, as Bull (2007) argues, 'technologies like the Apple iPod permit them to synchronise their music to volition, purpose and mood – to fine tune the body and the rhythm of their chosen music'. Mark's description of his listening habits concurs with this:

> I listen to it in the morning to wake me up; I listen to it at night to get to me to sleep. If I am pissed off or real angry, I am depressed I will listen to it. If I am real happy I will listen to it. All the time! No boundaries when I can't listen to it. (Mark, DI, male, 19, student)

Whereas the live rituals and meeting of fans were about constructing a social space in which the collective could generate and release emotional tension, the use of the iPod and earphones is how the individual social space is constructed and where emotional control can take place. The emphasis in post-subcultural tribal accounts tends to prioritise the social aspect of music and the emotional benefits that come with such interaction. However, the data indicates that individual spaces of consumption (still connected to social life) are just as important for releasing emotional tension throughout the working week. The participants used the music as a soundtrack to their daily routine. They develop playlists to get them through particular work tasks, domestic chores, exercise, commuting, or even other leisure activities. Thomas even finds music that is in synchrony with the weather:

> If I wanted to get myself psyched up if I was going for a run or something I might throw on a bit of Pantera or I find Ramstein very good because of the beats and Amon Amarth are very good for running too because of the drum beat which is very easy to run in sync to. It kind of varies. I find music suits different types of season. Dark winter morning if I am going to work early I'll put on some death doom that I like to listen to those type of mornings. If it is frosty or snowy I'll put on Immortal or some other black metal just 'cos it is kind of Scandinavian and they write a lot about the winter and that. Thrash metal is very much for the summer, so is power metal or I suppose, you know, more of the mainstream stuff – AC/DC, Def Leppard always go down well in the summer when you are driving along and the sun is shining, you know that kind of thing… Doom is great in the autumn like if it is a rainy day and the leaves are falling off the trees put on some My Dying Bride. There are some things that suit like if it is a sunny day I'll end up listening to the death doom, I might put on something more like the epic doom which is more of a different vibe again and so, yeah, I do think eh – you know, even time of day – what I would listen to in morning would be different from what I listen to at night, winding down and stuff, different moods and stuff. (Thomas, DI, male, 28)

Heavy metal and positive emotions: Comradeship and sociability

The heavy metal scene is not just used to express negative emotions. It generates feelings of happiness, and stimulates bursts of adrenaline and energy. The anger expressed serves as a form of catharsis that is pleasurable to the fans. In the following extract I describe the sense of elation and excitement that a heavy metal gig can provide:

While the crowd waits for the band to begin their set they cheer every little noise that comes from the stage. This could be the roadies tuning a guitar or testing the microphone. When a song that is being played over the speaker system ends there is a sense of expectation that this could be when the band enters. Loud cheers go up when a song ends and this hope is erased as the song progresses. The fans chant "Megadeth, Megadeth" in attempt to coax the band on the stage. There is even a chant of "ole ole ole" in between songs. Some of the fans also whistle. I also notice one fan lifting an Irish flag above his head at the front of the crowd. The Irish flag has Megadeth written in black on it. When another song finishes there is a long pause and I notice a lot more fans running in from the entrance as many of the fans scream. This could also because they are testing the lights so it goes from dark to bright and dark again very quickly. There are two young fans beside me possibly in their early teens who think that the show is going to begin when they hear a loud guitar start. It turns out it is just the beginning of another song that is going to be played over the speaker system. However this song seems to spark excitement amongst the crowd. I begin to feel energised myself. I had initially felt tired after a long day of travelling and walking around but the visible tension and excitement in the arena has given me a second wind (Field notes, 14/06/10)

Although the participants had described the sense of ecstasy and enjoyment they got from seeing their favourite bands, I could not relate to it because of my lack of knowledge of heavy metal and my initial preconceptions of the genre. Although I could not say that I particularly enjoyed the events I participated in, I could relate to the 'high', or sense of excitement, that good heavy metal gigs provide. Moreover, by participating in and observing heavy metal shows, I witnessed the emotional warmth and comradeship that was created through the sociability of the rituals.

It has been mentioned briefly how the maintenance and enforcement of the heavy metal code serves the purpose of installing a sense of comradeship amongst the heavy metal fans. Moshing and crowd-surfing serve as rituals of trust in which the fans can reinforce their sense of community. Maffesoli (1996: 17) maintains that community ethic and solidarity are linked through the performance of rituals and it is the repetition of rituals (such as moshing and crowd-surfing) that brings comfort to people and guarantees the existence of the group. It is the presence of this emotional bond that is important to the fans. Gordon (DI) uses terms such as 'tribal attitude' and 'brotherhood' to depict his fellow heavy metal fans; June (DI) describes her friends in the scene as 'kindred spirits' and Mary and John (DI) articulate a sense of belonging from seeing the same people in the same places all the time. It is not just

in attending gigs and socialising at metal bars but the playing of the music in their own

amateur bands and the emotions that are shared in the participation of the rituals. Michael

describes one of his first experiences at a heavy metal gig:

> There was a great atmosphere. No matter who you were beside you would like have your arm around their shoulder screaming every word then kind of like if the crowd kind of got messy and ended up falling over so you might end up further back if anyone fell, especially in the pit would be instantly picked back up. Everyone would stop and make sure everybody was up and safe before it went mental again. (Michael, DI, male, 18, student)

Maffesoli condemns the excessive use of individualism in postmodern research and argues

that individuals will always feel the need to belong in a group and that the presence of an

emotional community, no matter how fleeting, will always be important. Elias and Dunning

(2008c: 101) maintain that sociability is an important aspect of all leisure activities. The

pleasure of being in others' company creates a 'higher level of emotional warmth, of social

integration and of stimulation'. The emotions are created by the figuration of the fans

participating in the rituals. Consequently, such states of excitement and ecstasy are enhanced

in the presence of others. The heavy metal scene provides a sense of belonging for the

participants, a feeling of mutual identification. However, the emotional community of heavy

metal fans is not restricted to the 'spaces' of the scene. The comradeship extends outside the

traditional subcultural spaces. Mark (DI) observes that there is a bond between heavy metal

fans that do not even know each other personally. The heavy metal appearance acts here as a

shared symbol of mutual identification in every aspect of the participants' everyday life:

> M: That is one weird thing my friend pointed out to me before. If you are ever on a bus and there is a load of like everyone is one seat [there are no two seats free], you always go down and sit beside the metal fan.
>
> G: Even if you don't know him?
>
> M: Yeah, it's an instinct. I never really noticed it before he pointed it out to me the other day. Like we are on the bus and there is loads of these fucking UCD [University College Dublin] heads or whatever and they are all blabbering away and there is one metal lad down the back, I instinctively went down and sat beside him, didn't think about it at all.
>
> G: How did you know he was a metal lad?

M: Long hair, you could hear the music, beard, eh, Down T-shirt on, which is a band I love so I sat down beside him. Think we gave each other a quick nod and just there was something weird. I never noticed it before 'cause [Mark's friend] sat down behind me and was, like, you realise you always do that. (Mark, DI, male, 19, student)

The intensity of the emotion shared in the live spaces may decrease outside the subcultural spaces but the sense of mutual identification and comradeship remains the same. This could be due to a number of reasons. It could be a product of heavy metal's unique style. Although it has evolved somewhat in the different subgenres, it remains more easily recognisable than that of the dance or club scene for example. Heavy metal style is easily distinguishable and hence communicates the rebelliousness of the scene and its participants. It could also be argued that it is due to the sense of commitment and longevity that is so important to heavy metal subculture and the status of its participants. The participants all report being long-term members of the scene, with the older fans in particular, emphasising that heavy metal subcultural membership is anything but temporary. Hence, there is a high level of integration and mutual identification within the heavy metal figuration. This creates a sense of shared morals, shared difference and a high level of comradeship – not just in Ireland but with other heavy metal fans (who are also easily identifiable) around the world. This in turn lengthens the chains of interdependencies throughout the wider scene.

Conclusion

The controlling influence of the subcultural code amongst the heavy metal fans and the relative authority of marketplace controls demonstrate how the interdependencies among fans, musicians, concert organisers and security contribute to the development of spaces of ritual within the heavy metal scene. These rituals are performed in fan spaces which are not subject to normal societal codes of pacification and restraint. This allows physical, aggressive and sometimes violent rituals to take place among heavy metal fans.

Controlling one's body facilitates a safe environment in which individuals can generate and release emotional tension and experience a feeling of catharsis. The effect of the code diminishes at the larger gigs which lessens the quality of the experience. Following the rules of the 'unwritten' subcultural code and adapting to the complexities of the scene is not only crucial in allowing the rituals to occur, but important for attaining status and subcultural capital within the scene. Fans who have engaged in forms of 'bodily' transgression through controlling themselves and resisting any form of moshing or crowd-surfing are indicative of how the heavy metal code evolves and symptomatic of the figurational concepts of 'civilising' and 'informalising' as opposed to 'de-civilising'. The figuration of the scene requires the restraint of emotions and incorporation and adaptation of a social code that is continuously evolving in line with the music style itself. This demonstrates how control (both individual and collective) is crucial to attaining subcultural capital and status within a subculture. This point will be elaborated upon in the next chapter when I consider the socialisation of heavy metal fans.

The relationships and dependencies among producers, consumers and organisers of the heavy metal music event are crucial to the quality of experience the participants are exposed to and the survival of the overall scene. It was shown how the larger a heavy metal gig becomes in commercial terms, the more rules and regulation and involvement it receives from marketplace forces. The commercialisation of such parts of the scene was compared to Elias and Dunning's description of 'sportisation' processes. However, there is a lack of figurational research which examines the participants' experience of such processes. Marketplace forces can improve the heavy metal experience through providing bigger venues, well-known bands, better special effects, and sound quality, and can create a safer experience through superior organisation and more stringent regulation. However, the fans are inherently suspicious of such commercial intrusions, the interference of bouncers and the distance that develops

between fans and bands in such larger events. It diminishes the individuality and rebelliousness of the scene and hence the participants are attracted to smaller or 'underground' events in which they can attain subcultural capital (see Thornton, 1995; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Goulding and Shankar, 2011). The significance of the venue in determining the experience of fans cannot be overstated. There were a small number of 'metal' bars that the majority of the fans frequented weekly and it is argued that the unique symbolism of each venue – its smells, sounds and aesthetics – contribute to the unique code of the heavy metal figuration. This is something that is hard to replicate at the larger heavy metal events. The small 'metal' venues communicate to the participants that they can 'lose' control and participate in unique heavy metal rituals without any interference.

This is where the emotional community is built as the morals of the scene are demonstrated and challenged. The difference between this context and the club cultures reported by Goulding et al. (2002) for example, is that the sense of mutual identification and emotional community transcends the traditional subcultural spaces into the everyday lives of the heavy metal fans. This is, no doubt, a consequence of the different characteristics that heavy metal subculture possesses in comparison to club cultures. However, current consumer communities literature (particularly regarding music scenes) could be enhanced by extending the focus of the analysis outside the traditional consumption spaces of the emotional community.

The co-creation of the heavy metal spaces provides a platform for the fans to express anger, aggression and physicality in a figuration which allows for a 'controlled de-controlling of emotions' (Elias, 2008b: 27). The emphasis on anger and negative emotions makes heavy metal a particularly unique context, especially considering the emphasis that is placed on the positive emotions experienced in the contexts of 'tribal' research. Although the dominant theme of anger has created controversy outside the scene and led to questions concerning the

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mental wellbeing of heavy metal fans in listening to such music, it was demonstrated how the fans use the music in a positive and cathartic fashion. The use of the heavy metal anger aesthetic actually heightens the therapeutic and cathartic qualities of the consumption experience. The music is used to generate adrenaline and energy, and creates feelings of happiness and elation. The fans use heavy metal to control their mood and generate and release emotional tension both in the routine of their everyday lives and in the sociable spaces of the heavy metal ritual, which heightens the feelings experienced. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on some of the factors that can be linked to the participants need for the emotional intensity of heavy metal.

The creation of these spaces also transforms the rules of normal social relationships. The male fans use the rituals to perform exaggerated displays of masculinity in what, it is suggested, is a response to the decreasing power men have over women. Men are trying to re-establish a sense of control. However, some areas of the scene represent a contradiction to what is in essence an overtly masculine scene. The androgynous appearance of some of the fans leads to questions concerning the fluidity of meanings associated with gender identity and what we constitute in our society as 'masculine' and 'feminine'. The creation of such spaces in the heavy metal scene magnifies such issues. This is particularly evident in the analysis of women who participate in the scene. They have to demonstrate masculine qualities in order to achieve status within the scene, which consequently leads to stigmatisation from both sexes. This contradicts consumer research of female participation in masculine subcultures (see Martin et al. 2006) which maintains that women are seeking to assert a sense of control in such participation, as part of an identity project. The problem is that in order to gain control female participants must adapt to the hyper-masculine subcultural code. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on the heavy metal code, how fans learn about heavy metal and become socialised into the scene.

CHAPTER SIX: THE SOCIALISATION OF AN EMOTIONAL COMMUNITY: SCENE EXPECTATIONS AND SUBCULTURAL MODES OF CONTROL

Introduction

Following the introduction of the heavy metal experience in the first chapter (its rituals, emotions and marketplace presence), I will now shift the focus towards examining how heavy metal fans become a part of the scene in the first place. This will firstly involve a discussion concerning the sense of alienation that is evident amongst some of the participants. Consequently, I will consider the de-alienating qualities that the emotional community of heavy metal potentially provides. Following this, I will discuss the differing roles that families and peers play in socialising participants into the scene. Once again, control is identified as a crucial theme here as I analyse how the fans attain subcultural capital and hence a place in the metal hierarchy.

Particular attention is accorded to the role of 'older' fans and the changing media landscape in facilitating both the fans' knowledge of the scene, and their interaction with fellow fans and bands. This chapter considers how the social ties of the Irish scene have expanded to connect with the increasingly globalised heavy metal subculture. In closing, I discuss the influence of transformations in the Irish habitus on the scene.

Outcasts united: The development of a heavy metal emotional community

There has been a growing emphasis in consumer research on the opportunities that consumer culture provides (see Firat and Venkatesh, 1995). Goulding et al. (2002: 264) write: 'As the traditional institutions that formally provided the basis of identity disintegrate consumption as a means of constructing and expressing identity becomes ever more dominant.' Arnett (1996) cites high divorce rates and the decline of the family as an institution in modern society as

reasons why American adolescents were drawn to heavy metal music and its themes of alienation. Arnett (1996: 17) writes: 'Heavy metal is a reflection of the alienation that many adolescents feel as a result of the lack of instruction provided to them by their culture, including family, school, community and religion.' Consequently, Arnett maintains that young people are not socialised properly, which creates feelings of alienation and makes subcultures such as heavy metal seem attractive.

Many of the fans interviewed in this study came from families with divorced or separated parents. Clearly, there is no direct link between heavy metal and divorce; otherwise heavy metal would be the most popular music scene in the western world. Moreover, there are many metal fans that have been brought up in stable family homes. However, there are several instances in the data where the relationship between the participants and their families can be linked to their developing interest in heavy metal. Mary describes her troubled upbringing and the relief that heavy metal brought from her troubles:

> I was a bit of a loner, a bit of a shit childhood, and you know like a lot of Irish people, a lot of family situations and it wasn't really pleasant. But I started getting into music, maybe even heavier music… After that I started making friends and I started making friends with the sort of people who were interested in the things that I was and I was maybe sixteen/seventeen. (Mary, DI, female, 32)

Mary is demonstrating the de-alienating qualities of heavy metal here. She has found a group of people who share her taste in music, and a genre of music to which she can relate her life. Martin et al. (1993) explain how adolescents who described themselves as interested in 'heavy' music were more likely to have less-close family relationships and consequently associate themselves more strongly with peers who had similar interests in music. Dunning (1994: 153), writing about football hooligans, explains that

> more 'respectable' working class and middle-class males from 'broken homes' or who are otherwise experiencing conflict at home or school might be attracted to football hooliganism, perhaps because they have come to identify in a school, work or leisure context with the lifestyles and reputation of local 'roughs'.

Although Dunning's explanation of football hooliganism is mostly centred on the dominance of male working-class participation in such activities, his hypothesis potentially has some resonance with the heavy metal fans in this study that have come from 'broken homes'. It was the case that semi-structured interviews and the participant observation that took place could not feasibly allow enough time for the researcher to create a rapport with the participants, where they would reveal the deepest intricacies of the relationship with their families. However, it is also evident that the family still plays an important role in a number of other, more intricate ways which have influenced the respondents' participation in a heavy metal scene. Such issues will be elaborated upon when I examine how metal fans become socialised into the scene later in this chapter.

The decline in the nuclear family has placed a greater importance on institutions such as schools and the interaction between peers as the chains of interdependencies expand. However, engagement with peers has heightened the participants' sense of alienation. Heavy metal is a subculture that exists on the margins of popular youth culture and the participants association with the metal scene contributed to them being positioned as 'outsiders' in school. The common perception is that heavy metal fans tend to be outcasts in school. Recent research in Ireland, Minton (personal communication, 22/11/11) reports, from initial data, that participants in 'alternative' subcultures such as 'emos', 'Goths' and 'moshers' (i.e. heavy metal fans) were most likely to be bullied in school. Participants, particularly from small towns or schools, reported experiences of bullying and how this intensified because of their interest in heavy metal. Heavy metal fans formed a minority in the participants' schools:

> There was a couple of lads eh, I'd say out of a school of near a hundred of us I'd say six or seven or eight of us would like Metallica but out of that six, seven or eight there were at least four musicians, four or five musicians, and we all had some common ground there. (John, DI, male, 18, attended small country school)

Their musical taste led to them losing even more respect and status amongst their peers. The respondents are trapped somewhat in a vicious circle or what Elias (2007) describes as a double-bind. Elias used this concept to describe the relationship between nations experiencing conflict. The violence in one group facilitates violence in the other and consequently creates a vicious circle as the intensity of the violence escalates. Because of the danger involved, neither nation is able to create a sense of detachment which would help them to reduce the level of danger. Similarly, here, the heavy metal fans are stigmatised in the first place because of their status as outsiders. Although they use the music to deal with such stigmatisation, it in fact increases or reinforces the boundaries between them and the established social group. Because of the emotional intensity of the conflict between the two groups, it is difficult for either of them to detach themselves away from the conflict and compromise on the issues that cause the conflict. The respondents describe the narrow-minded mentality of their peers, and in the following extracts share some of their unpleasant experiences. Gordon recalls the tough times he experienced in school and later reveals how none of the teachers ever intervened in the bullying:

> There was a small number of us and we were known as the outcasts, the typical story and eh you know there would be the jocks and all the others who would look down on us and walking down the hallway they would push us and all of this and calling us eh fag, cut your hair and all that crap… (Gordon, DI, male, 23, went to small country school)

Dennis (DI) remembers being called a 'mosher', Mark (DI) speaks of getting his long hair pulled, and many of the other interviewees speak of the 'slagging' [mocking] they received daily. Damien believes that the term 'bullying' is too strong a word to use and that many heavy metal fans play on being the 'victim' or the outsider:

> … you have this Marilyn Manson and emo culture and kids actually play on being victims. Being bullied seems to have become a social trend and this self-harming thing has come along with it… that was never a part of life in school when I was growing up. (Damien, DI, male, owner of heavy metal record label, 33)

He suggests that it is a result of Americanisation and the influence of American bands on the Irish scene. Although it would be extremely unwise to take Damien's attempted theorisation of heavy metal and bullying seriously, it is clear that the participants have incorporated American phrases and themes that are associated with American 'secondary' or 'high-school' education. For example, if we are to return to Gordon's description of his bullying we can see that he uses the term 'jocks'. There are other examples of this in the data where John (DI), for instance, uses the term 'nerds' and describes the different cliques in the school. June, the only American interviewed in this research, describes her high-school experience. It is evident that it has many similarities to that of John and Gordon:

> G: You said you had a brother, older or younger?
>
> J: He is older, three years older and a fairly typical American jock, completely haha.
>
> G: What do you mean by that?
>
> J: Athletic, good looking, he looks like he walked out of an Abercrombie and Fitch ad [advert]. Haha.
>
> G: Do you get on well with him?
>
> J: I get on well with him now. I didn't in high school; well in high school we were polar opposites.
>
> G: … How did you find school then?
>
> J: When I found myself and found you know that I didn't have to fit in to the popular crowd and then I started liking school. When it was very much a popularity concert, maybe around middle school or high school, I didn't like it, did not like it at all … I stopped caring

The potential Americanisation of the Irish heavy metal scene and its effect on the fans is an issue that will be discussed at the end of this chapter. There is no doubt that the concept of being an 'outsider' or an 'outcast' is a crucial part of the aesthetics of heavy metal and it is possible that many of the fans interviewed may 'play on being the victim', as Damien has suggested. However, it is clear that many of the participants in this study were singled out and in many cases bullied because of their heavy metal fandom.

The participants discussed different strategies for dealing with bullying. Gordon resorted to violence, Thomas and Mark (DI) made fun of the people who 'slagged' them and John (DI) played sports to avoid unwanted attention. However, the dominant strategy was to find other metal fans and stick together. Although many of the participants got bullied because of their interest in the music, ironically, the fans also used the music and the scene to deal with problems or issues they encountered with their peers. It was no coincidence that many of the interviewees reported feeling happier when they left school and moved to Dublin where, John (DI) suggests, 'you have more diversity of people', and Neil (DI) notes that it is easier to find other metal fans and people who share similar interests.

The impact of the music on the emotions of the respondents was discussed in the previous chapter of analysis. It was argued that the fans used the music to alter their mood and in some cases deal with some of the negative aspects of their everyday lives. The cathartic effect of the music is heightened when they find other metal fans that may also use the music to deal with anger or alienation. They are described by June (DI) as 'kindred spirits'. Consequently, as a result of common interests and shared predicaments, the heavy metal fans tend to stick together in school. Elias and Dunning (2008c) argue that in everyday life we are subject to aspects of control and restraint that may restrict how we relate emotionally to one another. The development of the *homo clausus* habitus has left us with an emotional yearning, and the spaces of leisure that heavy metal fans create can provide the participants with an environment in which a sense of 'we–identity' can be experienced. They are emphasising the importance of sociability in sport and leisure. The description of heavy metal fans is reminiscent of Maffesoli's (1996) 'neo-tribes', the emotional communities that develop in our alienating, fragmented and routinised society – connecting individuals through the consumption of brands (Cova et al. 2007a), sports (O'Connor and Brown, 2007) and more importantly in this context, music and leisure activities (Bennett, 1999; Goulding et al. 2002).

Although, the heavy metal scene shares similarities with the tribal features of the dance and club cultures in this respect, it differs in character regarding the importance of commitment and longevity in the scene and in terms of how hierarchies are formed. The presence of the emotional community leads to an increasing integration of numbers within the scene. This results in the socialisation of fans through incorporating scene expectations.

Scene expectations: Learning to be a heavy metal fan

It has been outlined how fans become attracted to the scene because of the emotional rewards it provides. However as Goulding et al. (2012: 2) maintain, 'consumers are not ready-made community members … consumers learn how and what to consume in order to enter marketplace cultures'. The participants describe a similar process of socialisation within the heavy metal scene. Goulding et al. emphasise the importance of engagement as a mode of learning about a community or a scene. Most of the participants in this research reported becoming interested in metal at school; their interest developing as they found out about new bands and learned the symbols and rituals of heavy metal culture. Thomas explains:

> … it wasn't until I went to secondary school that it really took off. I met new people, I suppose, found other bands that way; it kind of grew from there. I kind of listened to what would be considered mainstream heavy metal. (Thomas, DI, male, 28)

The visual signals of heavy metal are very important. The fans were able to seek out other fans and communicate their own interest through incorporating the unique heavy metal style (see Straw, 1983). Dennis (DI) observed how he had never talked to one of his friends before he was approached because he happened to be wearing a Megadeth T-shirt that day, and Mark (DI) describes how he would feel comfortable striking up a conversation with any stranger if they looked like they were a heavy metal fan. Damien explains how his heavy metal fandom grew:

I grew up in a small town, Greengrange, about four thousand people, but when I was twelve I went to boarding school in Perrygrove and there was a couple of rockers in the school as well. Iron Maiden posters, Iron Maiden patches, long hair blah blah all that sort of stuff so I was kind of familiar with it and that is where I got the Guns N' Roses and all that sort of stuff – so when I was fourteen I saw metal heads around the town and one or two who I knew and you had Metal Hammer, which was widely available, and Kerrang at the time and you had magazines that were easily accessible and easy to get so that was my first exposure, people and magazines. (Damien, DI, male, 33)

The appearance of heavy metal fans is quite distinct and draws attention to them, even in schools where all the students have to wear the same uniform. These visual signals bring the fans together and reinforce the idea that heavy metal fans are 'outsiders' or 'outcasts'. Goulding et al. describe how members of the dance music tribe become socialised through learning to separate their work life and their new social life through practices of drug taking, listening to club music or altering their appearance. However, the heavy metal fans learn to incorporate heavy metal identity throughout both their working and social lives – they dress in heavy metal clothes and listen to the music everyday.

However, learning to dress like a heavy metal fan is just one aspect of the complex social code that the fans must adapt to in order to attain subcultural capital. They must also learn how to behave at live events and educate themselves about heavy metal music. This is crucial to establishing a level of subcultural capital within the scene. In the first chapter of analysis, I wrote about the development of the subcultural code and how one must learn (and at times enforce) the unwritten rules of the mosh pit. Such codes are learned through a combination of experiencing the rituals, listening to established members of the scene and through engaging with subcultural media.

Shaping tastes: The importance of family and the 'group of elders' in heavy metal socialisation

Bennett (2006) argues that research regarding music subcultures or scenes has often neglected the role of 'older' fans. This problem relates to the rigidity of the CCCS framework

which focuses a disproportionate amount of attention on the 'youth' of 'youth cultures'. The reality is that the youth cultures documented by the CCCS in the 1960s and 1970s have grown up and become the 'parent' culture themselves. Grossberg (1992) suggests that the generational boundaries that have traditionally separated young rock 'n' roll fans from their parents have diminished. As well as influencing their own children's interests, the older fans also play a significant role in the heavy metal scene itself.

The CCCS emphasises the generational tension and 'rebellious' features of youth cultures. Similarly, the participants describe how they viewed their preference for heavy metal as a form of teenage rebellion against their parents. Neil (DI, male, 19, student) explains how he went through a 'very rebellious and "screw you Dad" kind of phase' when describing his growing interest in metal: 'I thought it was the ultimate rebellion but it really wasn't, but I liked the metal and I don't regret not listening to it.' Gordon (DI) notes that he got into metal music at a time when it 'was sort of me against the world rebellion' and relates this to some of the religious values his mother tried to instil in him. It is clear that for a lot of the respondents, their interest in heavy metal created conflict with their parents. Mark (DI) explained how his mother feared he was getting into some sort of satanic cult, Thomas's (DI) parents criticised his long hair, and Bill's (DI) mother had problems with the lyrics of some of the metal songs. The CCCS have documented how post-war 'youth' subcultures were able to differentiate themselves from previous generations through engaging with such unique (in terms of style and aesthetics) cultures as a result of an increasing amount of disposable income. This provided them with a broader sense of identification. Children were no longer expected to start supporting their families from a young age and consequently there was a greater emphasis on education. This had the result of providing the subcultural members with more time in which to experiment with alternative modes of behaviour, such as Punk or Mod subcultural membership.

Elias (2008d) analyses the changes in the relationship between children and their parents dating back to the Middle Ages. He looks back on how harshly children were treated by today's standards, where they were expected to work in bad conditions, support their family from an early age and were regularly subjected to physical abuse. He describes how simple developments such as children getting their own rooms, and more complex factors such as advances in technology and health, as well as lower fertility rates, have fundamentally changed the balance of power between children and their parents. It has lengthened the period of childhood, and the socialisation of children into western society. For example, Dolan (2005) describes the lengthening of chains of interdependencies in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ireland. A key aspect of this transformation was the increasing industrialisation of a previously agrarian society where social control was primarily based on the 'parent–child relation on the family farm' (Dolan, 2005: 254). This figuration expanded – as a consequence of growing functional specialisation – providing a broader scope of identification for children outside the family home as they began to spend more time in the education system and migrated to urban areas. This fundamentally changed the relationship between parents and their children and increased the length of childhood. Parents no longer had the same amount of control over their children as they did prior to such developments in the social structure. Consequently, their participation in unusual or emotionally emancipatory subcultures (i.e., heavy metal) is not met with the same sense of judgment or shame. In other words, they have greater permission to 'lose control'.

The longer distance between childhood and adulthood has most certainly contributed towards the increasing prominence of such scenes as heavy metal. The literature concerning parents and children of 'outsider' subcultures mostly focused on the lack of mutual identification and the moral panic that scenes such as heavy metal create. This would suggest that the main role parents play in the development of heavy metal fans' interest in the subculture is to provide

the attraction of rebelling against the parent culture and the romantic connotations that come with the allure of 'forbidden fruit'. However, this conception of 'youth' cultures is too static and rigid (see Muggleton, 2005). It does not take into account the active role that many parents play in influencing their children's taste in music through their own interests.

In the literature review it was outlined how heavy metal owes its musical origins to rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll music (see Walser, 1993; Bennett, 2001). A similar progression is evident in the participants' early exposure to the music of their fathers' generation. John describes his earliest memories of music:

> Dad says he told me about this when we were in Letterkenny, and it was Led Zeppelin or Kiss that came on the radio… he had me up in his arms and we were dancing away to it. He has always been into Kiss and Led Zeppelin and you know classic rock, Motley Crue, stuff like that, so he would always have been playing stuff like that in the car. I suppose that would be the first kind of music that I would have been turned on to. (John, DI, male, 18, student)

His father passed on CDs of such music and brought John at a young age to a Robert Plant and Jimmy Page concert which led to his interest in heavy metal as he began to seek out even heavier music. This has been witnessed in participant observation, where at the large metal events fathers have brought small children to see bands such as Megadeth. Michael (DI) described how his dad would listen to Pink Floyd and the Doors and provide him with CDs of old rock musicians as well as new artists. Mark considers the influence of his uncle in shaping his initial heavy metal fandom when he received a Red Hot Chilli Peppers CD from him:

> G: And where did you go from there, what kind of music did that get you into?
>
> M: Eh, I tested out a lot of different stuff at that stage. I got into Nirvana, was another big band around, and I got into sort of poppy rock kind of stuff like Sum 41 and Greenday and that kind of stuff, all the kind of thirteen-year-old type music and from there I went through a few different things. He gave me Led Zeppelin albums and then I got into Led Zeppelin, Cream, Jimi Hendrix… and then through friends in school I got into stuff like Metallica, Iron Maiden, Black Sabbath. (Mark, DI, male, 19, student)

The high status of long-term fans: How older fans adjust their practices of fandom

The older fans have also acquired status and respect from the younger fans for their long-term

dedication to the scene. Mark provides an example:

> I was listening to Maiden like non-stop for the past like months before the gig. I was so hyped
> for it. I remember standing there and I am not the biggest lad obviously and I was even tiny,
> smaller back then. I remember standing next to this massive big fucker with a massive beard
> and a Slayer T-shirt drinking beer. I was thinking that is going to be me in thirty years. (Mark,
> DI, male, 19)

John (DI) describes the older fans as a 'group of elders' who play a significant role in

defining and maintaining the heavy metal scene. The connection between status and

longevity in the heavy metal scene is an issue that distinguishes this context from CCT based

ethnographies concerning 'tribes' or club cultures. In such instances, commitment is

temporary and identity is transient. The fact that older participants play such a crucial role in

this scene makes it such an interesting context – particularly in consideration of the physical

demands required for participating in such aggressive rituals. The older fans can no longer (in

many cases) participate in the rituals because of ageing limbs and work commitments the

following day. Mary (DI, 33) informs me that 'I was into it when I was younger and the older

I have got, I have gone, I want a nice comfortable seat, somewhere close to the bar where I

can see stuff. I am not into moshing anymore.' Thomas (28), Damien (33), Sam (31) and Bill

(mid-forties) (DI) also allude to their age in explaining why they do not participate in any of

the aggressive rituals anymore. Sam explains:

> I need to wake up the next day, have a normal talking voice, I need to feel well enough to go
> to work and I won't be if my back is out, my thighs are hurting or my neck is hurting… (Sam,
> DI, male, 31, academic, father of two)

However, they justify their participation by getting involved in the production, promotion and

business side of the scene, as well as still attending gigs. Damien (DI) describes a calmer

atmosphere at heavy metal gigs compared to twenty years ago when 'people were knocking

the shit out of each other'. Although this still occurs, the perceived change that Damien (DI)

reports is probably indicative of his own personal transformation from a young metal fan who consumed the scene into a middle-aged fan who has taken on a role as a producer for the scene. He has developed a greater level of control over his fandom because of the subcultural capital he has accumulated.

Arnett (1996) argues that adolescents have a greater biological need for adrenaline and excitement and this is one of the reasons why young fans are more likely to engage in heavy metal rituals such as moshing. These activities tend to receive more attention because of their sometimes controversial nature and the association of such rituals with concerns regarding moral standards. This is why subcultures such as heavy metal are associated with 'young' people and are framed as 'youth' cultures. However, it is clear that the older fans play a significant role in the Dublin heavy metal scene and it is surprising that this has not been documented in the subcultural literature. For example, Weinstein (2000: 111) writes:

> Adults who continue to appreciate metal rarely use the metal media, except for playing their old albums. They do not attend many, if any concerts; do not buy new metal releases or metal magazines; and do not call in requests on the radio. Many do not even play their albums all that much, but they have not thrown them out either. Once part of the metal subculture, they are now like wistful emigrants, living a continent away in another world than their own.

Grossberg (1992) argued that rock 'n' roll is dead if young people cannot use the music to distinguish themselves from their parents. This is perhaps why the fans interviewed here take their initial interest in the rock bands of their parents' generation and become interested in what can be perceived as more experimental or 'extreme' music in the form of heavy metal. This differentiates them from their parents. However, they are likely to find many of their fellow fans are the same age as their parents, and that that the older generation plays a key role in maintaining and defining the scene.

Heavy metal training: Scene expectations

One of the reasons heavy metal has survived as a subculture and maintained many of the same values and aesthetics of the early bands is the importance placed on new members learning the genre's history (Weinstein, 2011: 38). This is another example of the influence of the older fans. As the fans become increasingly involved in the scene, they are introduced at first to popular and commercially successful bands, such as Metallica, Megadeth, Iron Maiden, Slayer, and Judas Priest. Ciara (DI) recalls asking her friend why she liked Metallica and getting the response 'because they are Metallica'. There is a certain expectation that members of the scene will know about these bands. These bands also serve as an introduction to heavy metal music which leads to more 'extreme', 'heavier' and increasingly obscure bands. Bands such as Metallica and Iron Maiden are popular because they have more melodic sounds than other heavy metal bands, which has translated into the mainstream and eased many of the participants into the scene. Michael describes this process:

> I started listening to Metallica and I have heard metal that I listen to now and I have said oh God I will never listen to that now; I can't stand it… but what happened was I started listening to Metallica and that was very soft compared to stuff these days… so it kind of eased me in and from there on I moved to Machine Head, Slayer, and from there I branched out to all the different genres of metal. (Michael, DI, male, 19)

The participants tend to fall in line with the expectations of the scene, and even force themselves to listen to particular bands, even if they do not like them. For example, many of the fans reported that it was assumed that they liked the band Metallica because they had an interest in heavy metal. Sam describes literally training himself to appreciate the music:

> I didn't like the music initially. It used to give me a headache. Two tracks [and] I would get a headache. I could not bring myself to listen to heavy metal for extended periods of time. I really had to train myself, I will be honest. Initially I would train myself to like what I was claiming to like, but that training did work and I think it was for the better. I am glad that now that is perhaps the only music I can really listen to. I have trained myself to understand the complexity that is in the music. It's just too complex; it's not like a simple tune like 'Twinkle Twinkle, Little Star'. (Sam, DI, male, 31)

Although none of the other interviewees admit to training themselves to like heavy metal in such a fashion (and it is highly unlikely that they do), many of them have reported feeling an initial disdain or uneasiness regarding 'heavier' or more 'extreme' genres of heavy metal. Michael (DI) has described his initial distaste for 'extreme' metal, Thomas (DI) explains how it took him quite a while to get into 'underground' music, and Ciara (DI) remembers how she at first hated the band Slipknot: 'I used to hate them, but five years later I would listen to a Slipknot song and be like, I actually like that now'. However, the participants demonstrated a great deal of patience and perseverance in learning to appreciate the more 'extreme' forms of heavy metal. Thomas explains how he moved on from mainstream heavy metal bands to the more 'extreme' aspect of the scene:

> I used to read the lyrics and figure out what the songs were about, but definitely the connection point was the sound. The thing with it, I suppose the difference with Paradise Lost [band] as well is the vocals. It would have been the first [time] I listened to [a band] with harsh vocals as everything I listened to before would have been clean vocals really. So then kind of once I always had a barrier in my head with those kind of bands, anything thrash, death, black metal, I never gave it time. That is not for me but that opened the door completely and other things followed: Sepultra, Pantera… (Thomas, DI, male, 28)

The participants gain satisfaction from developing their taste and reading into the complexities of the music. The traditional heavy metal sounds become boring and repetitive and they seek something new and more challenging. It is with the help of both mass and subcultural media that they can evolve their fandom and learn about the different aspects of heavy metal culture.

Learning through media: The changing media landscape

> When I was really young I liked all the crappy bands like Good Charlotte, Busted and Avril Lavigne and all that and then they would wear T-shirts from harder bands and I would start listening to that and you got this whole web effect with all these other bands and because I really liked getting to know the music you would get more into it. Then from Good Charlotte I got into Avenge Sevenfold, do you know them?... and then you have all the bands that inspire them and they would then listen to older stuff, they would be more into guitar stuff like Jimi Hendrix who, you know, I never really liked but, you know, you can respect or whatever, and then a big band that links from them is Pantera and I love them and then Pantera – one of the guys in Pantera is in Down so it is all this chain. It is all linked together.

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> If you like one thing you will look for bands that are similar and then you would check them out. You won't automatically like them all – research about them. (Ciara, DI, female, 19, student)

An important aspect of this extract is Ciara's reference to research. A prominent theme in the data is the participants' willingness to look for new music within heavy metal and its subgenres. The increasing integration of fans results in recommendations and the identifying of certain bands which fall in line with the scene expectations. This is outlined in Ciara's description of the 'chain'. These bands are identified by heavy metal fans and researched via the media. Thornton (1995) and Goulding et al. (2012) identify the importance of subcultural media in helping consumers learn about key aspects of the dance music scene and surfing tribes. Developments in media technology over the last twenty years have changed the dynamics of how the fans find heavy metal music, develop their interest, and contribute to the socialisation of new members. Harris (2000) and Kahn-Harris (2007) describe how the extreme metal scene was built in the 1980s through a combination of tape trading, letter writing, fanzines and small record labels. The older fans in this study (Sam (31), Thomas (28), Bill (mid-forties) and Damien (33) remember how their heavy metal fandom evolved from such processes.

> What was a huge part of the metal scene in the eighties and then the early nineties was tape trading. Basically what you would do is, you would write to other people everywhere, say right you have a list of tapes, or list of albums, or list of demos, seven-inches, whatever, and you record XYZ for somebody and they would tape ABC for you. You would build up this huge network and this huge pile of stuff. The tape trading thing was pivotal to the underground scene I was a part of and eh basically when that started to die down in the mid-nineties. (Damien, DI, male, 33, organises heavy metal gigs)

Tape traders such as Damien were then able to record and swap tapes with fans across the world and then share them with his local heavy metal friends. The fanzines that were present at the time helped facilitate the tape-trading process and recommend bands to listen to. Damien, however, emphasises that the international tape trading that he engaged in was usually only done by hardcore heavy metal fans (such as Damien). In general, the older heavy

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metal fans spoke of the difficulty in accessing heavy metal music in the 1980s and 1990s, despite its popularity. They mainly relied on niche radio and television shows such as the Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) programme *Beatbox* or, in Thomas's (DI) case, an obscure heavy metal show that was broadcast on British television at 2.00 a.m. Pirate stations specialised in playing alternative genres of music and also played a played a major role in developing the older fans' appreciation of heavy metal . The use of tape trading and pirate stations were just the precursor for what was about to arrive in the form of the digital age and the downloading culture. What is interesting is that fans like Damien, Bill and Thomas (DI) were able to develop their interest in heavy metal and engage in the scene despite their limited access to the music. The effort that these older fans made to learn about the music has led to their respect in the scene and their high position in the hierarchy.

In the literature review, Elias's (2008a) concept of technisation was used to demonstrate how technological advancement could potentially lead to changes, not only in the way we produce and consume music, but in how we share music. New forms of media have lengthened the chains of interdependence within the overall scene and this has had an influence in shaping new modes of behaviour within the subcultural spaces. Bill emphasises the changes in how members of the heavy metal scene can access the music now compared to when he was a young fan in the 1970s and 1980s:

> Years ago you used to listen to the radio to hear new stuff, whereas nowadays you don't have to do it because you can hear it on MySpace or MetalIreland, the forum, because people will say I heard this new band or whatever and you get to hear different stuff that way. (Bill, DI, male, in his mid-forties)

Sam (DI) argues that 'it is only because of this [the downloading culture] that people like [Sam] have got into heavy metal'. Consequently, it is possible that many of the other respondents in this research would never have become interested in heavy metal music if it was not for the emergence of digital television, the internet, and the ease with which one can

download music for free. For many of the fans in this study, it was the presence of the varying forms of media which made it possible for the fans to discover the music in the first place and consequently research other bands and genres that are prominent in the scene. Michael and Neil (DI) both attribute their initial interest in heavy metal to digital television and the large number of music stations (some of which specialised in heavy metal) that were available to them:

> We got Sky Digital in at the time and I just started listening to Kerrang [a specialised heavy metal music channel] and I just remember hearing it but I never quite [heard] the name, so one day I was playing one of my PlayStation games and one of the songs was on the soundtrack so I was able to go on the menu, get the name of the band and stuff, and then went off researched it and got it. (Michael, DI, male, 19)

YouTube is also used by fans to discover new music. John describes finding his favourite band and how it contributed towards him becoming a more serious fan of heavy metal music:

> Children of Bodom are from the same town [as the band he likes, Nordea], and, eh, they sounded similar on the first album and both of their first albums came out fairly close to each other and they sounded fairly similar, but then Children of Bodom play a lot more technical kind of stuff. Nordea would be more like, we don't have to play a million notes a minute and still sound cool. I don't know what it is that I like about them but on YouTube or the thing on the side that says bands recommended for you, that is how I found out about them, and they have been my favourite band now for three years and I plan on getting a tattoo soon. (John, DI, male, 18)

The advent of high-speed search engines and social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace have also accelerated the heavy metal fans' musical education. Neil (DI) claims that 'MySpace has got to be my favourite thing. I go to a band's page that I like, scroll down to their top friends and pick the first band that is there and listen to them'. MySpace is a social networking site that all musicians, amateur or professional, can use to showcase their music. They simply upload their music and anyone can listen to it for free. As it is a social networking site, many of the heavy metal bands on it make friends with other musicians. This is how Neil, among others, discovers new bands. They explore the music of bands they already like and then pick up suggestions of other bands that share similar characteristics.

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Mitchell and Imrie (2011) observe how modern brands create spaces (i.e. websites, social networks) in which consumers can share their passions. This is no different for the heavy metal bands, big or small, as such spaces allow for their fans to communicate with other like-minded fans and even with the actual musicians in some cases (see chapter seven, the online scene). This is how the modern fan learns about the heavy metal scene and connects with other fans around the world, lengthening the figuration of the scene. Additionally, the fans can create their own websites or Facebook pages dedicated to bands or subgenres of metal they like. Thus, the fans can develop their own meanings and determine the image or levels of popularity of certain bands through their fan productivity (see Fiske, 1992). In other words, the musicians have, to a degree, ceded some control of their image to potential consumers. However, it is crucial, as Cova et al. (2007b) suggest that such spaces are not seen to be a product of commercial motivation. This is the advantage of using niche media such as social networks, which is highly specialised and efficient in locating target markets. This is a particularly important issue in the heavy metal scene and will be discussed in more detail in the next section concerning subcultural capital.

The ease of access to the music allows the fans to share music instantly for free without the need for buying CDs or tape trading. This allows fans to experiment with a wide variety of heavy metal genres which they could never have done before this technology became available. This also extends to the recent trend for illegal downloading that was discussed in the literature review. As a consequence of this free access to metal music and ease with which bands could be researched, I was armoured with a credible amount of knowledge in which to enter the field, and consequently was able to converse with the metal fans at some level regarding their interest in heavy metal. It was also evident that the majority of the posters used illegal downloading practices. The moral dilemma and strategies that the fans used to justify this form of consumption will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter

(chapter seven, the online scene). However, an important feature of such a mass form of consumption within the scene is how it facilitates (along with digital television and radio, specialised music stations, social networks and free music websites) easy access to heavy metal music. In simple terms, the fans have a greater control over their fandom and can listen to whatever music they want without the restriction of financial barriers.[4] It socialises them into the scene, allows them to learn about scene expectations and consequently, facilitates the integration of the heavy metal scene both locally and globally.

Translating scene expectations into subcultural capital: Control = status

> I think it is interesting 'cause with music, especially listening to Metallica, Megadeth, it gets really boring, and it is the same stuff over and over again. When you are fifteen you hear it for the first time, you think it is the most amazing thing in the world and you grow up you think it is kind of the same thing… [referring to extreme metal] but with the concepts and the stuff like that, it is not just about listening to guitar or singing. It is about listening to the vocals and how everything comes together and the ideas behind it gets you thinking. All that sort of stuff makes it interesting. You are able to read into it, you are able to listen to it a few different times, look for things, so it makes it accessible to me for one thing and also makes it interesting 'cause every time you listen to it you find something new and you can then discuss it with people as well. (Mark, DI, male, 19, student)

Walser (1992) condemns the cultural critics who ignore the technical and musical intricacies of heavy metal music. He argues that it should be taken more seriously and demonstrates the similarities that heavy metal shares with classical music in terms of the technical proficiencies of metal guitarists compared to the classical music 'virtuosos'. He claims that influential heavy metal musicians have been influenced by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century classical music composers and appropriated 'the more prestigious discourses of classical music and reworked them into noisy articulations of pride, fear, longing, alienation, aggression and community' (Walser, 1992: 301). It is evident that some of the participants

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[4] Kahn-Harris has argued that the internet is not as great a democratising agent in the heavy metal scene as suggested, citing the costs of computers compared to the relatively low cost of post and package for tape trading.

describe heavy metal in similar terms to classical music critics when they describe the complexities of the music:

> S: There are too many things going on at the same time so you need to have a very fine ear to work out what this person is trying to say, what this music is trying to do. And it would take a bit of training. It's like trying to listen to very complex English classical, not everyone likes, and you need to have a certain ear for it.
>
> G: An acquired taste for it really?
>
> S: An acquired taste, yeah, and you stick with it. (Sam, DI, male, 31, middle-class background)

Although Mark (DI) and Sam (DI) may acquire capital and status within the scene as a product of their demonstration of heavy metal knowledge, it is likely that such capital is not transferable outside the heavy metal scene. Kahn-Harris (2007: 69) describes how heavy metal is a source of ridicule amongst music critics and how 'such "gatekeepers" wield considerable cultural capital transferable within a number of music scenes within youth culture in general'. However, this ridicule is not based on class distinctions as the CCCS would suggest. Social class plays a minimal role in distinguishing the fans as the participants come from a variety of backgrounds. This is indicated by the middle-class sensibilities evident in the descriptions of metal music outlined above. Elias and Scotson (2008) argue that class is not the only source of conflict between groups. There are a variety of other factors that can create this established-outsider dynamic. However, this is not the focus of this study. Although heavy metal fandom does not translate into cultural capital outside the scene, understanding how subcultural capital works within the scene is vitally important to developing an understanding of how fandom is managed, and hierarchies are established, through participation in heavy metal subculture.

Demonstrating knowledge or transgressing scene expectations is vital for attaining a level of status within the heavy metal hierarchy. The 'older' heavy metal fans (the group of elders) have attained a high level of status within the Irish metal hierarchy because of their

commitment to the scene. They have acquired 'mundane' capital (see Kahn-Harris, 2007) because of their commitment to the heavy metal 'style', their adherence to scene expectations, their previous participation in subcultural rituals and their knowledge of the subcultural code (see chapter five). This shares many similarities with Schouten and McAlexander's (1995: 49) account of Harley Davidson bikers whose status was dependent on their knowledge, 'seniority, participation and leadership in group activities, riding expertise and experience'. The 'group of elders' have also gained a form of 'transgressive' (see Kahn-Harris, 2007) subcultural capital through organising their own gigs or producing their own interpretations of the scene (see chapter seven, the online scene).

The presence of a hierarchy within the Irish heavy metal subculture differs from the prominent tribal model which does not place as much emphasis on hierarchies within consumer communities. Thornton (1995) and Goulding et al. (2012) recognise that DJ's are at the top of the hierarchy with 'newcomers' on the bottom. However, Goulding et al (2012: 5) argue that 'tribal consumption is often devoid of long-term moral responsibility' and that membership is transient. This is where the heavy metal fan differs from the 'clubber' and makes applying the tribe framework to the context of the metal scene problematic. Membership of the heavy metal scene requires long-term commitment and almost certainly precludes participation in other music subcultures, if one wants to gain a high level of status within the scene.

However, as Kates (2002) argued in his analysis of the gay community, the hierarchies within subcultures are not as rigid as Schouten and McAlexander indicate in their 'subcultures of consumption' framework. Heavy metal is a complex figuration where the social codes are constantly evolving. Although longevity almost guarantees a high level of status within the scene, demonstrating commitment to the scene is not as conducive to status as one may

expect. For example, Damien (DI) describes the 'weekend warriors' who become overly physical in their participation, trying to make up for their lost time in the mosh pit, Andy (DI) mocks his friend for embracing some of the 'occult' or 'satanic' imagery of 'extreme' metal, contributors to the online forums (see chapter seven, the online scene), repeatedly deride other fans who dress extravagantly or use make-up as 'poseurs', and Mary (DI) laughs at fellow metal fans who take the music too seriously and who actually describe the community of Irish fans as a 'scene'. These fans are mocked and derided because they are incorporating stereotypes and essentially trying too hard.

The heavy metal fans are sensitive to such marketplace myths (Arsel and Thompson, 2011) because of how it devalues their own personal subcultural capital to be associated with such stereotypes. Hence, they construct boundaries within the scene to protect their aesthetic interest. This emphasises the complex nature of the heavy metal scene. Although individuals can gain subcultural capital through demonstrating their knowledge of the heavy metal code and respect through engaging in scenic activities that distinguish themselves, it is also equally possible that they will be mocked or labelled a 'poseur'. This also relates to the influence of marketplace forces on heavy metal. In the first chapter of analysis, it was observed that larger gigs were criticised by heavy metal fans because of the impact of commercial and market forces on their heavy metal experience. Such commercial forces also relate to their perceived identity as heavy metal fans. The fans distinguish themselves from normal fans through supporting obscure heavy metal bands and introducing others to new bands or subgenres. Although popular, heavy metal bands such as Metallica and Iron Maiden are well respected within the scene and are highly successful as a result; paradoxically, their success has lead to the diminishment of their subcultural capital within the scene. The fans lose a sense of ownership or exclusivity over a band once they become successful. Non-metal fans become aware of successful heavy metal bands, new albums and tours are heavily promoted, and the

commercially successful bands begin to appear in the mass media as opposed to the subcultural media.

Thornton (1995) argues that the media aid in the construction of music subcultures and can endow certain scenes with credibility. It is the presence of specialised metal websites, forums, flyers and posters that provide certain aspects of the heavy metal scene with credibility. Such media is only accessed by metal fans 'in the know'. They can gain a sense of control or ownership over bands or subgenres because they are relatively obscure or unknown. Hence, they can generate subcultural capital through such exclusive fan practices. For example, the fans in this study highlight the disparity between the ways in which they consume the traditional heavy metal scene and the more 'hip' 'underground' scene:

> I would download kind of Iron Maiden stuff or Metallica… if I download one CD it means they are not going to make another five dollars. It makes no difference to them but if it is a band that is kind of starting out and they need to be selling albums to make it to the next step I wouldn't download their stuff. I would go and buy their album 'cause it is really… I know from myself, I am in a band and stuff and trying to get into the music industry is fucking ridiculously hard so any band that has got their first foot in who are pretty decent I am going to help out in whatever way I can. It is the kind of bigger bands who are multi-millionaires who I don't give a shit about. I don't think they should be giving out about downloading. (Mark, DI, male, 19, student, member of heavy metal band)

June and Ciara (DI) note how they will always buy albums of bands that they know as they want to feel that they are supporting them in any way they can. Gordon and Neil (DI) also describe buying T-shirts and merchandise to make up for the loss of earnings that their favourite bands encounter, with Neil actually going to the trouble of paying his favourite band in person for downloading all their albums illegally. This is a story that he tells me on three separate occasions in the field and in interview, where he walked up to the singer of the band and gave him money for all their music he had illegally downloaded. Michael (DI) also reported similar activity within the scene as some of his friends have actively sought out ways to bypass buying CDs of their favourite artists in order to avoid giving money to the

much maligned Universal Records. It is here where many of the participants' favourite musicians are portrayed as rebels for clashing with the record industry and releasing music in new formats that are more in keeping with the changing times and the consumption practices of their fans.

When metal musicians are seen to support the industry's crackdown on downloading, as was the case with Metallica, the fans can turn on the band and associate them with corporate greed. Although commercially successful bands such as Metallica promote themselves through niche media or attempt to connect with fans through social networking or specialised websites, this is looked on suspiciously by the fans in this study. They doubt the legitimacy of 'tweets' and 'statuses' from popular musicians and they argue that the purpose of such media presence is 'to sell more records'. Although the small or 'underground' bands engage in similar practices in order to promote themselves, this is conceptualised in a different way by the fans. It is not met with the suspicion that Cova et al. (2007b: 19) suggest harms brands which are considered by consumers to have engaged in marketing practices that are 'invasive or unethical'. The illusion or marketplace myth (Holt, 2002) of consumer sovereignty is crucial here, as bands, like tribal brands, have to appear to be as close to the outer margins of the marketplace as possible in order to attain a level of subcultural capital.

The post-subcultural accounts of consumer cultures have identified the fluid nature of such hierarchies and the ways in which capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Thornton, 1995) is used to determine status. However, I argue that applying the figurational framework can enhance our understanding of how subcultural capital and hierarchy is established within the Irish heavy metal scene. This can be done through using the extreme metal scene that Kahn-Harris (2007) describes as an example. Kahn-Harris outlines how extreme metal has evolved as fans and musicians looked to push the boundaries of what had become a commercialised and

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routinised traditional heavy metal scene. Consequently, subgenres of music emerged that transgressed the scene sonically and lyrically, as both fans and bands became involved in increasingly experimental forms of behaviour. For example, Damien (DI) explains how one of the Swedish bands on his label engages with Satanism and the occult:

> They [the Swedish extreme metal band] believe in some form of Satan – to me that is nonsense but they stick to their guns… I suppose they glorify the concept of it you know. The easiest way to describe it is as an inverse form of Christianity. They have all the biblical representations of Satan as a demon and stuff like that …

In chapter five I outlined how the fans of extreme subgenres of metal were demonstrating a form of bodily transgression, through absconding from traditional heavy metal rituals during live music events. This distinguished them from other metal fans. Kilminster (2008) argues that as the interdependencies between groups and social classes increases individuals will look to differentiate themselves through subcultural participation. Wouters (2007) argues that relaxation in standards and etiquette and manners that seems to be evident in subcultures such as heavy metal actually requires a more differentiated and flexible level of self-control and restraint. It is an example of an 'informalising' process. I argue that these fans are broadening their sense of identification as a result of an increasingly integrated heavy metal scene. This lengthens the heavy metal figuration. However, within such figurations, one has to have acquired a high level of restraint and control to adapt to what is an evolving social code. This demonstrates the importance of the previous discussion regarding how the participants 'trained' to like certain parts of the music and adjusted their behaviour in order to fit in with scene 'expectations'. Those who adapt to the complex social structure, or transcend the scene expectations successfully, will gain status within the scene. Those who fail to do this are associated with 'shame' or the subject of 'blame gossip' (see Elias and Scotson, 2008) within the subculture.

Consequently, it seems that gaining status and subcultural capital within the heavy metal scene is dependent on self-restraint. The development of forms of social control that are demonstrated here are connected to wider social processes that have lengthened the chains of interdependencies within Ireland and the global subculture of heavy metal. This is an issue that will be elaborated upon in the next section.

The globalisation of metal: Religion, 'Irishness' and the heavy metal habitus

Heavy metal has developed from its origins in Great Britain and America into a truly global scene (Wallach et al. 2011). Although this study focuses on the characteristics of the small Irish scene, there is no doubt that it owes its origin to wider processes of globalisation. Ireland has encountered an unprecedented rate of change over the last two hundred years, developing from a largely agrarian based society into an urbanised, industrialised country. Dolan (2005: 254) summarises:

> The figurational changes in Ireland over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be summarised as a process of the increasing, multiplying and lengthening chains of social interdependencies bonding people together. In the course of this process individuals have come under more diverse, and evenly applied, social pressures.

In the first chapter of data analysis it was argued that such social pressures, a product of broader figurational changes, have led to the increasing importance of sport and leisure and the emotional need for subcultures such as heavy metal. In this chapter, I have examined how the fans have become involved in the scene and this was linked to broader societal developments (e.g. the changing media landscape) which have lengthened the chains of interdependencies. The participants in this study report how the heavy metal scene has become centralised within Dublin as many of the fans who previously lived in rural areas migrated to Dublin both for work and the attraction of engaging in a more prominent scene. Additionally, the fans actively engage with the global scene in a number of ways, from

listening to (mainly) foreign bands, attending concerts or festivals in other countries, or through communicating with heavy metal scene members from around the world. For example, Damien runs a small independent heavy metal label in Dublin but has forged connections around the world signing acts from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Britain, and Sweden. Damien explains how there are 'thousands' of similar 'labels' around the world and that they are able to connect because of the internet:

> …the internet is a massive tool and you just end up talking to someone you know and for example I signed this band from New York last November it was and it all stemmed from, eh, I went to New York last March last year; before I went I posted up on an internet forum and said, look I am coming to New York does anybody want to meet up for a beer – so met up with these guys from a band called Villains and we went out drinking and had a really good time with them. We stayed in contact and late in November Villains played a show in Berlin which I was at and, eh, the fill in guitar player from them was playing in another band from New York, who was looking for a new label and, eh, I introduced myself, talked to them about it and now they are on my label.

Weinstein (2011) argues that there were two specific periods in which heavy metal became a globalised subculture. The first, ending in the late eighties, refers to the spread of heavy metal from its original sites (i.e., UK and USA) through subcultural media such as fanzines, tape trading and the influence of mainstream media such as MTV. This enabled the development of fan bases within these nations.

The second phase refers to how South American (see Harris, 2000), Islamic (see LeVine, 2008) and other developing countries began to produce their own bands and styles of music that spread around the world. The fans in this study report listening to bands from many different countries with Scandinavian bands in particular proving popular. Similar to descriptions of club music (see Bennett, 1999; Goulding et al. 2002), Weinstein (2011: 45) identifies the global flow of heavy metal music that is unobstructed by national, cultural or conceptual boundaries: 'Metal has constituted itself a set of communities of fans, bands, and mediators – virtual diasporic cultural groups that feel alienated from and disdainful of their various host nations, or class or ethnic enclaves.' Essentially Weinstein and Wallach et al. (2011) are arguing that despite the fact that heavy metal has been incorporated around the

world, leading to a variety of subgenres, it will look and sound quite similar whether it is in Cairo or New York.

However, it must be stressed that these authors are not belittling the effect of local factors on the characteristics and meaning of particular heavy metal scenes. For example, heavy metal is illegal in many Islamic theocracies and hence it is going to mean much more from a political perspective in Iran (see Moretti and Alvi's, 2007 documentary *Heavy Metal in Baghdad)* than it is in Dublin. Also, Harris and Weinstein have acknowledged the growing popularity of 'black' metal which places great significance on national identity, ethnicity and mythology. This, Harris (2000) argues, is a response to globalising processes. This leads to questions concerning the characteristics of the Irish scene. Inglis considers the paradox that globalisation has created, considering it has made most of the countries in the west quite similar, but also created this need in society for a sense of individuality or difference:

> there is a link between the struggle for the Irish to be the same and therefore different and the struggle by individuals to be the same, to have a sense of bonding and belonging, but also to have their individual difference recognized and accepted. (Inglis, 2008: 33)

He believes that due to Americanisation or westernisation processes, individuals and groups have sought to recapture a sense of 'Irishness' that is feared to have been lost within the context of globalisation processes. Elias (1991a: 209) writes that 'one finds that traits of national group identity – what we call the "national character" – are a layer of the social habitus built very deeply and firmly into the personality structure of the individual'. Dolan (2005) argues that although each nation becomes involved in similar and interrelated paths, each nation encounters different types of social processes that create a unique habitus and form of national identity. The question is how this habitus is incorporated into the local metal scene in the context of the global one. What distinguishes the Irish metal scene?

Answering this question creates difficulties, considering that the scope of this thesis prevents me from comparing the Irish scene with its foreign counterparts in much detail. However, many of the participants have experience of foreign scenes and prove to be a useful resource in establishing a sense of difference between the Irish scene and its foreign counterparts. For example, the participants frequently criticise the Irish scene and use other metal scenes they have encountered as a point of comparison. 'Metalwrath' (posted on MetalIreland.com 17/06/10) speaks admiringly about how well the security is trained and the atmosphere is generally more relaxed at foreign gigs. Bill (DI) believes that a larger percentage of women attend heavy metal gigs in America and Europe than in Ireland. Damien and Mary (DI) recall their experiences in large cities in America and Sweden where heavy metal is more socially accepted than it is in Ireland. Damien explains in the following passage how Sweden's culture contributes to its burgeoning heavy metal scene:

> You have in Sweden this huge metal and rock culture, huge metal and rock scene, numerous bars and a very social thing and just a normal part of society, you know. People that work in whatever job and they got long hair. A friend of mine has a job in a pharmaceutical company and he is like me, he is covered in tattoos and nobody cares, it is just normal over there, it is just a part of normal life, same in Norway, and same in Finland. It is not something that people eh frown upon, which I find interesting because to the best of my knowledge all three countries are Lutheran so they have that same sort of Protestant, similar thing that would have been the basis for America, as each man reads the bible for himself and interprets it for himself. It is up to you, there is no Catholic Church. (Damien, DI, male, 33, works in music industry)

Mark and Gordon (DI) contemplate the different genres of metal that have originated in other countries and highlight the fact that there is not an easily identifiable Irish heavy metal sound. The participants complain about the lack of Irish metal bands in terms of quality and quantity. Although the fans are very supportive of the Irish scene and identify certain bands who they believe should be more successful, they acknowledge that being an Irish band does not translate into much subcultural capital both within the Irish scene and in the wider global metal context. The Irish bands that do exist and create a following within the scene are inspired by American, British and Scandinavian scenes in terms of their musical and visual

styles.

However, it was still evident that the scene still possessed a distinct Irish character and this was demonstrated by the participants in a number of ways. For example, many of the fans speak proudly of Irish bands such as Thin Lizzy, even though they would not really be categorised as heavy metal. John (DI) and Bill (DI) comment on how they feel a sense of duty to support local metal bands. Bill explains that 'I do try with the Irish bands and I will buy their stuff and in a way it is just trying to support some of them bands as well'. The support that the participants offer their local bands is possibly a result of the small size of the scene, where even in Dublin most of the fans know each other either personally or 'to see'. Heavy metal is a marginalised culture in any country, no matter what size it is. When it is marginalised in a small country such as Ireland the diminutive size of the scene can result in the development of comradeship and support in order to maintain the survival of the scene – although there has been evidence of personal rivalry and resentment within the scene also. A sense of 'Irishness' is also expressed at the live events (especially the larger gigs) through the display of Irish flags with the name of the band written upon them, and through the singing by the fans of the Irish favourite football song 'Ole, Ole'. Michael provides a perfect example of how this Irish tradition is reconceptualised in a metal context:

> Even at one point, it is something about Irish gigs [that] 'Ole, Ole, Ole' always comes up at one point. That happened half way through [the American band Down's concert] and the guitarist went over to the drummer, one of the guitarists ran over to the drummer and they start making a song out of it and for about two songs they were doing guitars and drums while we were singing it. (Michael, DI, male, 19, from Dublin)

The bands actively encourage this as they see it as a way to connect with the fans. During every performance I witnessed from what would be considered a popular or a big heavy metal band, references to Ireland and Irish culture were made, resulting in cheers from the crowd. This is emphasised by the following participant observation notes of the performance of the band Machine Head (field notes, 28/02/10):

He [lead singer] tells the audience that he went to see the Phil Lynott statue and we should be so proud of him. He then begins to play what I recognise as the Thin Lizzy song 'Emerald' for about thirty seconds which gets a small cheer from one of the guys standing near me and David. The singer tells the audience that Machine Head's first gig in Europe was in Ireland supporting Slayer in 'fucking Dublin', and that the first gig the guitarist did was in Ireland and how it is such a special place to the band. He tells the crowd while he sips from a plastic cup of what looks like Guinness that 'I love all you drunken lunatics'.

It is apparent that the Irish scene is heavily influenced by the more prominent American, British and Scandinavian metal scenes. However, there is evidence that indicates that certain facets of the Irish heavy metal scene incorporate or celebrate a sense of 'Irishness'. This alone distinguishes the Irish scene from its counterparts. Moreover, what is particularly interesting about analysing heavy metal from an Irish context is how heavy metal religious themes and imagery are interpreted in what was until recently, a habitus deeply rooted in Catholicism (see Inglis,1998, 2008) . Inglis (1998) describes the power the Catholic Church had in Irish society, its role as a moral specialist, and its consequent decline in power. Religious and particularly Satanic imagery is prominent in heavy metal and the Irish participants actively engage with such themes. However, their interpretation of such themes is bound to be different considering their Irish habitus. The participants take a 'tongue in cheek' attitude towards metal genres that feature Satanism and cultism. Any of the participants who engaged with any of the Satanist aspects of the scene did so in a playful or experimental way, where amusement seemed to be the main objective. The fans frequently use their hands to make the symbol of devil horns, and Neil (DI) describes chanting 'hail Satan' at a gig. However, he explains it 'as a big joke and that it is metal just taken a bit too far.'

Arsel and Thompson argue that consumer culture marketplace myths can actually harm consumer experiences. They use the example of 'indie' consumers, demonstrating how 'they employ demythologising practices to insulate their acquired field-dependent social and cultural capital from devaluation.' (Arsel and Thompson: 2011: 775). The heavy metal fans

fear the impact of scenic stereotypes regarding Satanism and construct boundaries to protect their subcultural capital within the scene. This often involves the use of irony or humour when engaging with such themes. Anyone who was seen to take any of the Satanist symbolism seriously was the subject of contempt and accused of using satanic lyrics or imagery for attention or publicity (Kahn-Harris, 2004).

> I would laugh at that to be honest, I think if it is Satan or killing or whatever I don't think these guys are trying to shock more than anything. I would say how many of these guys really practice what they preach…none and fortunately none. I remember Deicide and I saw them playing in Dublin back twenty five years ago and the singer actually said that he would kill himself when he was thirty. He is still he eh must be in his forties today. I think a lot of it is just looking for publicity and then there is some bands who will write; they become a certain segment again and they will write lyrics to fit within that. I think a lot of times it is just looking for attention. (Bill, DI, mid-forties, long-term member of scene)

The bands are indeed successful at shocking those outside the scene (including this researcher) with their use of images and lyrics. For example, Sam invites me to read the track listing of the death metal band Deicide:

> S: You know these heavy metal bands, start really Christ bashing, especially bands like Deicide for instance. Here is their CD. [Shows me the CD]
>
> G: Oh Okay.
>
> S: Deicide 'Scars of the Crucifix', see the track list there.
>
> G: so 'Scars of the Crucifix', 'Mad at God', I get the picture yeah. 'Fuck your God' yeah…
>
> S: This is a very angry album. But it's great music; this is one of the CDs that I actually bought. I like the CD so much that I actually bought it. It's great; the Deicide making of this album is on it too. It's a DVD and it really sort of traces the band's history, where they came from, why they are so pissed off at Jesus and God. (DI, male, 31, born in Pakistan, practising Muslim)

This sort of imagery and religious anger is also witnessed in participant observation of the more extreme aspects of the scene with bands with names such as 'Rotten Christ', and fans wearing T-shirts of bands called 'Nun Slaughter' and 'Deicide'. John (DI), however, believes that it is becoming increasingly hard to shock heavy metal fans with the use of this violent religious imagery. Consequently, metal bands are looking for new ways to transgress the scene in this regard and attain subcultural capital. Thomas (DI), who is heavily involved in

the promotion and organisation of heavy metal gigs, explains that the bands that use such anti-religious imagery do it for artistic reasons and that the use of such images is provocative. He insists that they serve the same purpose as horror films, and that they are not supposed to be taken seriously. Damien (DI) was the only participant interviewed who actually knew fans who took the Satanism aspect of heavy metal with any level of seriousness and he suggested that even they only really saw it as a form of inverse Christianity.

However, heavy metal has attracted criticism and moral panic (particularly in America) because of its engagement with such controversial religious themes (see Chastagner, 1999). However, such panic, even in metal's period of popularity in the late 1980s and early 1990s, failed to materialise in Ireland in any significant way. This, in addition to the playful relationship that the fans have with heavy metal religious imagery, is indicative of the shift from the Catholic dominated habitus. This is not a transformation that is unique to Ireland. Guibert and Sklower (2012) describe the French relationship with heavy metal in the context of the Church's protests at the heavy metal festival 'Hellfest'. 'The public dominant in previous eras (Catholics opposed to the blasphemy and symbolic attacks) has progressively become a minority, as the influence of the Church has declined in French Society.' (Guibert and Sklower, 2012: 112). This process is magnified in the Irish context when I compare the differences between the older participants relationship with the Church with the younger participants. The older respondents reported the troubles they had in participating in heavy metal subculture because of the influence of the Catholic Church on Irish society. This effect was demonstrated both directly and indirectly. Damien, Thomas and Mary (DI) describe the small towns they grew up in where they were subjected to what Damien describes as a very 'parochial attitude' because of their unusual taste in music and the style that accompanied it. Thomas (DI) remembers a priest coming to visit his school to preach about the evils of heavy metal and many of the older fans recall problems with their parents because of heavy metal's

controversial use of religious imagery. This is particularly the case for many of the respondents who attended Catholic schools. Gordon describes his problems with the dominance of religion in school and how it conflicted with his heavy metal fandom:

> You know, the bullies and teachers would never do anything about it because they looked down on me as, like, the religion teacher tried so hard to get Slipknot hoodies banned in the school saying they were satanic and all that. All the teachers looked down on the metal folk there, so if we were being bullied they turned a blind eye to it, and one day I just snapped and nearly put a guy in hospital, and there is only so much a guy can take. (Gordon, DI, male, 23, brought up in a strict Catholic household)

There is a clear distinction here between the older and younger fans with many of the participants reporting that they attended heavy metal gigs at churches which had the consent of the parish priests. Ciara and John (DI) are examples of some of the younger participants who did not experience any difficulties with their parents' religious beliefs or the presence of the Catholic Church in their education. They have a greater freedom to express their fandom without feeling guilty about listening to music that chastises religion. They also have the support of their parents and peers who have a more open mind about the subculture than the previous generation.

> G: would you feel guilty listening to that kind of stuff?
>
> C: Guilty, eh…
>
> G: You weren't brought up religious?
>
> C: No, not really so. Well I was kind of brought up to be open-minded about stuff. I would believe in God and I used to be a Catholic but not anymore, probably a Christian I suppose, if I had to put it down to it or whatever. But eh, yeah, no [not] like guilty. (Ciara, DI, female, 19)

However, the Catholic Church still has a lasting effect on the Irish psyche, despite the decreasing influence it has in Irish society. Guibert and Sklower (2012: 113) argue that even though the French Catholic Church has declined, it remains a 'dominant moral figure, historically and geographically rooted', and benefits from traditional privileges that the Irish Church has been afforded also (e.g. schools and state funding). Many of the fans were still

brought up as Catholics and have grown up in a time when the Church has been beset by scandal and controversy. Gordon describes the impact that this has had on the Irish heavy metal music scene. Here, the Irish scene borrows from the Scandinavian bands that place great emphasis on Viking or Norse mythology, where religion and the Church are viewed as having a negative impact on society. This reiterates Harris's (2000) and Weinstein (2011) claim that in response to the globalisation of the scene; 'black' metal bands have attempted to 'glocalise' their national scenes. Weinstein (2011: 55) writes that this shift 'may reflect a rising nationalism, a resistance to the oppressive forces of economic globalisation'.

> Irish metal bands and a good few I know of, and even my mate's band are doing it and basically covering Celtic mythology and the loss of all culture and they haven't tackled [the] Catholic Church directly, but they had the whole melancholy and sorrow and the loss of our past and our ancestors and how they are ashamed of us. The church has taken that culture away from us. It is the same in Norway as well, you know the incident in Norway in the nineties and you know there were church burnings and pretty much the church in Norway asked for that in my opinion because they had a very strong Norse heritage and the church took that away from them. You know, they didn't want it and that is pretty much how it happened. (Gordon, DI, male, 23, brought up in a strict Catholic household)

It is here where we can see how the global heavy metal scene meets with the Irish national habitus to produce a local context that makes the Irish heavy metal scene unique – but still essentially tied to the global entity that heavy metal has become. The Irish scene shares common themes, rituals and aesthetics with all the other heavy metal scenes around the world. However, while the fans identify with this, they still distinguish themselves and their scene, whether positively or negatively, through their relationship with the Irish national character.

Conclusion

Similar to post-subcultural tribal accounts, heavy metal represents an emotional community in what is a fragmented and, in many cases, alienating society for the participants. In particular, I have focused on how many of the fans use heavy metal to deal with issues

concerning their families. I argue that the CCCS have overemphasised the generational

tension between 'youth' subcultures and their parents. In fact, I argue that broader

developments concerning the parent-child figuration and the increasing distance between

childhood and adulthood have allowed participants a greater amount of time and freedom in

which to explore subcultures that are potentially 'shameful' for adults to participate in.

Additionally, traditional subcultural accounts have overlooked the important role of older

fans (the 'group of elders'). As well as being highly respected within the heavy metal

hierarchy because of their commitment and longevity, they also play a significant role in

socialising younger members into the scene.

The fans come together through a shared sense of alienation and an emotional yearning for

comradeship and excitement. They develop their fandom through learning about the scene

expectations as the interdependencies within the scene expand. As the fans learn about the

scene through older members and their use of the media, they gain subcultural capital.

Although this subcultural capital is not transferable outside the much maligned heavy metal

scene, it is vital for establishing a sense of heavy metal status and respect amongst their peers.

However, translating scene expectations into subcultural capital is dependent on developing a

high level of self-steering in what is a complex and fluid social structure. The focus on

control (both individual and collective) in the distribution of subcultural capital differs from

previous accounts of consumer communities. This is emphasised in particular by the fans

description of how they train themselves to comprehend and enjoy certain aspects of the

scene. The subcultural capital of certain bands or subgenres (and by association, their fans) is

in some ways dependent on the visibility of their relationship with marketplace forces. The

fans partake in different consumption practices for commercially successful and

'underground' bands, citing marketplace forces as a motivation. However, it is not clear how

the fans establish whether a band has been discredited by marketplace forces. It seems to be

predicated on the sense of ownership or control the participants feel they possess over a band that is not known outside the heavy metal scene, and potentially known by few within it. The increasing complexity of the scene is linked to wider processes such as transformations in the media landscape and lengthening chains of interdependencies between members of the Irish scene and its foreign counterparts. It was found that although the Irish scene is reflective of a globalised heavy metal scene that is united by themes of transgression and resistance, it is distinguishable as a consequence of distinct Irish civilising processes. This is particularly evident in how the Irish fans (and to an extent the bands) have reinterpreted Ireland's relationship with Catholicism within the context of heavy metal's satanic and anti-religious imagery. Future research would benefit from comparing the Irish heavy metal scene with other Catholic countries to see if there are any similarities in the heavy metal habitus. Having discussed the expanding chains of interdependencies in the scene and the socialisation of new members; I will now shift the focus towards the virtual spaces of the scene in which these fan practices take place.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RETREATING BEHIND THE SCENES: LOSING CONTROL IN THE 'VIRTUAL' FAN SPACES

Introduction

During the data collection process it emerged that a large part of the heavy metal scene took place in the virtual spaces of the internet fan forums. Consequently, the fieldwork was directed towards an online observation of the forums that the participants were using. The increasing activity of consumers in online spaces (see Kozinets, 2009) has led to changes in the dynamics of consumer–consumer and producer–consumer relationships. Although the influential role that the internet played in globalising heavy metal as a subculture is recognised in the heavy metal literature (see Weinstein, 2011), there is little research on the nature of online interactions between fans and producers. In this chapter I will analyse the key role that the online forums play in the Dublin heavy metal scene. I will examine how the main site of participant observation (MetalIreland.com) is used to socialise heavy metal fans and lengthen social ties within the scene. The fans, similarly to the analysis in the previous chapter, learn about the scene expectations and use the vast amount of information shared between the participants online to control their experience in the 'live' spaces of the scene.

Additionally, I will examine the role of fans/consumers of metal as producers of heavy metal, both in terms of their organisation and maintenance of the scene and their creation of heavy metal 'materials'. Such practices are particularly visible in the 'online' spaces of the scene. Although I discuss the creative and empowering features of the online spaces, I also prioritise the tensions and conflict in online interactions that are often overlooked in consumer culture accounts (De Valck, 2007). I will examine the aggressive and unrestrained behaviour of the fans as they battle for status and capital within the 'coded' spaces of the online scene. Such forms of behaviour differ drastically from the socially controlled 'live' spaces of the scene where subcultural capital was attained through demonstrations of self-control and self-

steering. I will describe the significance of such interactions and other online fan practices (i.e., illegal file-sharing) where fans demonstrate a lack of restraint or control. This is in comparison to their consumption practices in the spaces of the face-to-face scene where music is purchased legally. This demonstrates a lack of self-restraint to some degree, as many of the fans identify this activity as wrong, particularly when it relates to illegally downloading smaller heavy metal bands.

Description of MetalIreland.com

There were several reasons why MetalIreland.com was used for the generation of data. First, most of the interviewees who participated in the online scene referred to MetalIreland.com frequently. Secondly, in the second phase of data collection many of the participants were sourced from this site, and in observing the forums the researcher learned about upcoming heavy metal events. The website is of particular significance considering it deals mainly with the Irish scene. The forums that are analysed focus solely on live performances that were attended so that the data collected in participant observation of live heavy metal events could be triangulated.

MetalIreland.com has existed since 2001 and claims to serve Irish fans of heavy metal and heavy rock as 'The Home of Metal in Ireland'. It focuses on promoting live gigs, bringing the community together, and reviewing all genres from amateur to professional musicians. This emphasises the support that the fans have for local bands and the local scene that was discussed at the end of the last chapter. The home page of the website, which can be viewed in *fig 3*, provides the latest heavy metal news in the centre of the page and displays small adverts on the margins of the webpage and bigger adverts on the top and bottom. These adverts promote both 'underground' and 'commercial' heavy metal events and album releases, demonstrating the importance of using subcultural media to target potential

audiences efficiently. The adverts not only target likely consumers (i.e., heavy metal fans), but provide their products/heavy metal bands with a degree of legitimacy (see Thornton, 1995) as a consequence of their association with an 'underground' or 'niche' fan website. The home page also acts a navigator for the rest of the website, with links to the reviews, blogs, gig dates and video podcasts. There is also a link to the discussion section, which includes a main forum, a section for gig discussion, sales and trades, and an area for general off-topic conversation.

The 'gig discussion' section is where the majority of the observation took place. *Fig 4* is an example of how the layout of the forum typically looks. On the left margin the poster's username and icon photo is displayed beside their post. The usernames are typically an alias that relates to heavy metal or to fictional characters from film or television. Examples of names include 'Dark Stranger', 'Eoin McLove', 'Jedifart', 'Paddyofurniture' and 'Bloodytroopsofdoom'. The icon pictures are almost never of the fans themselves but images of heavy metal bands, logos and, again, references to popular culture. Underneath the user's icon is information displaying the date the poster joined, the number of posts they have made since that date, and their location. The majority of the users do not describe their location in geographical terms. It refers more to a mental state. For example, the poster 'fires of hell' describes his location as 'Living on a razors edge, balancing on a ledge'. In the centre of the screen, the user's comments on a particular topic will be displayed with the date that it was written. The forum provides the opportunity for the users to 'quote' a previous post which enables a more readable narrative. In order to contribute to the forums and the discussion, participants have to register with a username, a password and an e-mail address. At the time of writing there are over 8,000 members on the site.
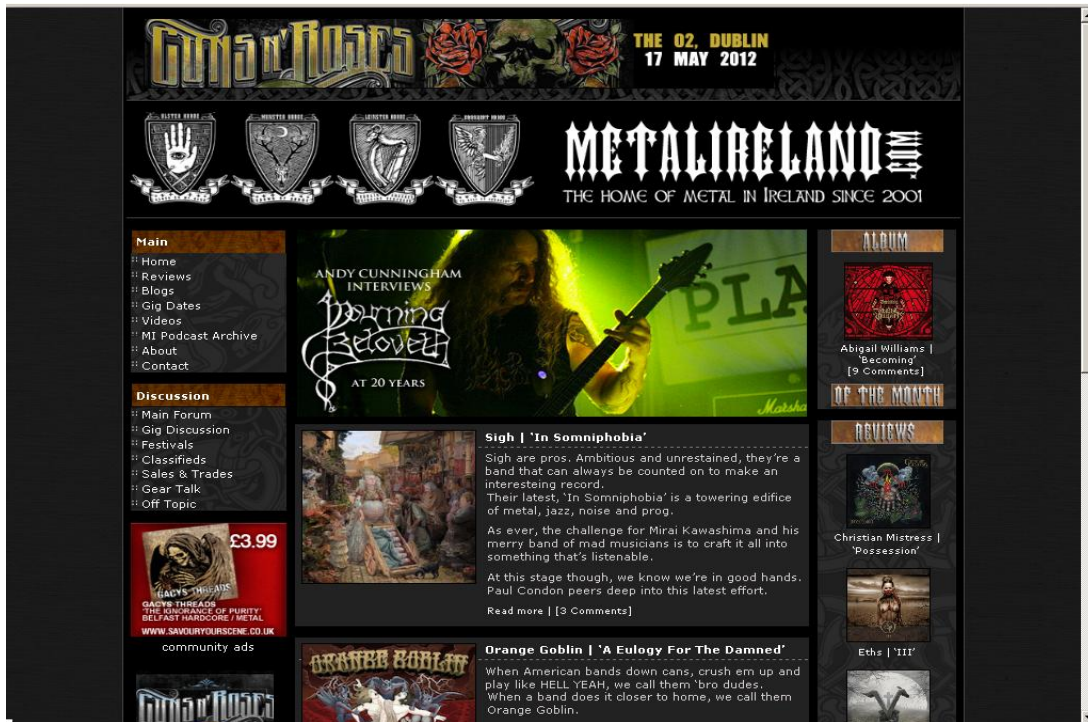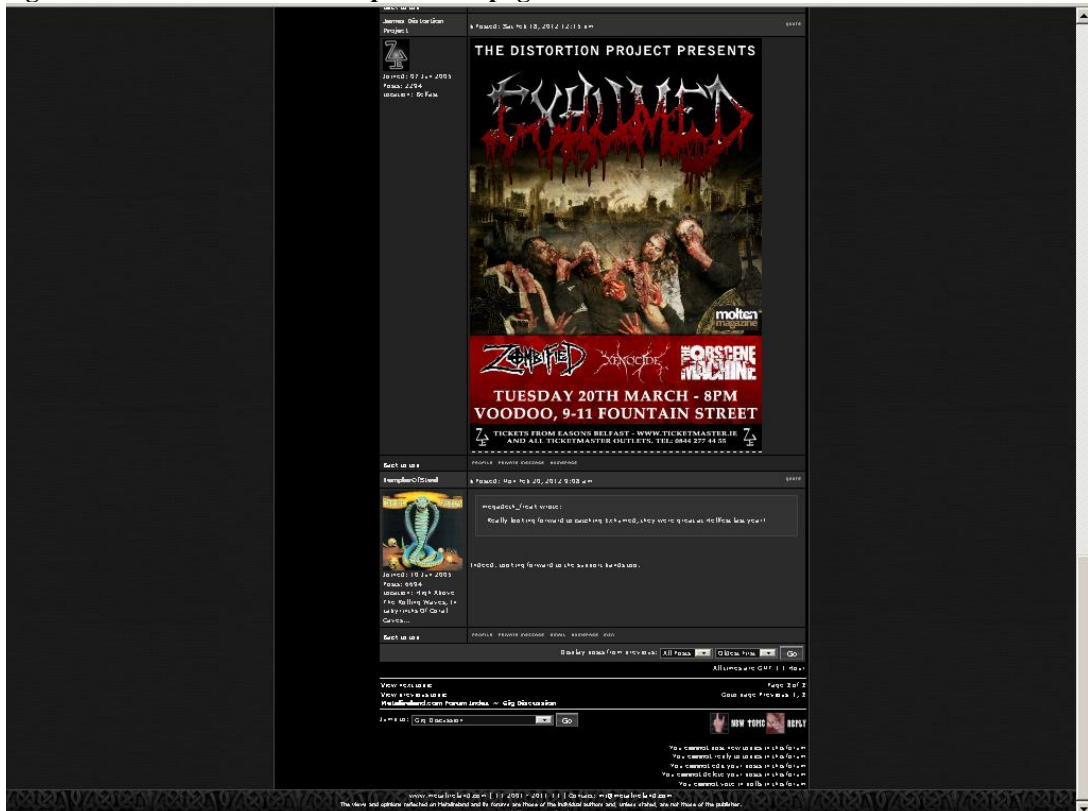
Figure 3: MetalIreland.com home page

Figure 4: MetalIreland.com sample forum page

The significance of online participation: Lengthening social ties

Learning heavy metal in the online spaces

In the previous chapter I described how the participants became integrated into the heavy metal scene through socialising with experienced members and learning about scene 'expectations' through media resources. This is evident in the forums where fans learn about new bands, hear about upcoming gigs, find other musicians, form groups and learn how to play instruments. Bennett (2004: 163) has suggested that the interactions of 'youth cultures' increasingly take place in virtual spaces. Consumer researchers have begun to recognise the importance of such spaces for facilitating/understanding consumer–consumer relationships, and the connections they develop with brands (see Cova et al. 2007b; Mitchell and Imrie, 2011). Marketers create such spaces for consumer interaction themselves, hoping that consumers will also form social networks based around their brands. However, in music subcultures such as heavy metal, the fans have always developed their own spaces of interaction, distancing them away from marketplace involvement. The fans interaction with specific heavy band sites is another issue that will be discussed later in the 'Connecting the fans and the producers' section of this chapter.

It is through websites and forums such as MetalIreland that the fans can expand their knowledge and their social ties with other heavy metal fans. Thomas describes the impact the website MetalIreland had on his fandom. He found out about the website through a friend he met in college:

> She started pointing me at Irish bands she had a couple of friends in, and from checking them out online I found links to other bands and then I found a link to the MetalIreland website. That is when I found that there were other people in Ireland who kind of are the same as me. That was amazing because while I had a couple of friends in secondary school who were into metal they weren't in the same college as me – my best friend went to Cork so I knew I think one other person in UL who was into metal and I suppose at that time in fourth year I found a few more … When I found MetalIreland it was mad because (a) you could have discussions with people, but then you could have, eh, you basically found other bands, you knew people who liked the same, like somebody you knew like Ozzy and he was talking about this other

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band and it was just, like, I'll give them a go. I would say after that, after finding that, my knowledge of bands and my CD collection mushroomed, and, eh, when I moved to Dublin I would have started going to gigs in Dublin regularly, it would have evolved from mainstream gigs, the likes of the ones MCD were doing, to actual kind of scene gigs and the underground. (Thomas, DI, male, 28, regular contributor to online heavy metal forums)

Weinstein (2011) and Bell (2011) discuss the importance of the internet in allowing fans from other countries around the world to find like-minded people, which would not have been possible before. Thomas was not aware there were other people in Ireland who shared his taste in music and MetalIreland.com allowed him not only to find other fans and become a part of an emotional community, but to expand his knowledge of heavy metal music and the 'expectations' of the scene.

Controlling the experience

The vast amount of information on the forums also allows fans like Thomas to control their experience in the 'face-to-face' heavy metal spaces. It is not just that they learn about scene expectations and etiquette through engaging with fans on the forums, they learn when and where performances will take place, the type of bands playing, their style of music and potential set lists. For example 'Tallaght Thrasher' posts the set list for the Machine Head performance which took place in Amsterdam, 'itsfish' asks about the timing of the set for each band, and 'Dawals' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 21/02/10) responds with the kind of detail that is typical of the exchanges between posters when he writes:

> MMD [a support band] were on at the dot of 7pm in London. There were only 15 min changeovers between them and Bleeding Through and Hatebreed with MH [Machine Head] on at 9.30. Can't see Dublin being any different so doors [the place will open] will probably be 6 or latest 6.30pm.

Posters typically share links to the YouTube and MySpace websites to listen to the music of bands they may not be aware of or new tracks of the bands that they are going to see. They speculate on the replication or divergence of the set list and share experiences of previous gigs they have attended, the positives, the negatives, and what they can expect for the

upcoming gig. 'Agoraphobic_Nosebleed' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 24/11/09) writes:

> They [Machine Head] were pretty good at that Halloween show in the Ambassador. What year was that anyway, 2003? Just went for the nostalgia factor. Loved Burn My Eyes [song] and The More Things Change [song] ... when I was getting into metal. Was deadly [great] hearing them play Block [song].

The discussion in the threads concerns the ticket-buying process and as the concert approaches, new posters look for information regarding opening times, tickets that are for sale, and what time they should queue at in order to secure a place in the mosh pit. All this communication aids in bringing people to the heavy metal shows. For even bigger shows it is interesting to note that even fans who cannot attend are kept informed and updated of the activities of the show by fans who are attending. Mary provides a good example of this in her description of the Guns N' Roses show in the O2 Dublin, which was clouded in controversy over the band's behaviour on stage:

> someone put it on MetalIreland and I was reading the thread the following day, and I mean technology is something else, and there was people updating the situation via Facebook and Twitter so by the time I started reading it, it was about fourteen pages long, people just updating it every minute about what was going on inside and the thing that topped it all off and the best post was somebody put up about it [the Guns N' Roses show], 'anybody got the set list for the gig?' (Mary, DI, female, 32, radio DJ)

Social networking keeps the fans informed of what is going on in the scene even when they are not present at certain heavy metal events. The information that is provided and sought out by the fans online can be used as a control mechanism with which to bring some form of structure to what is essentially the unpredictable environment of a heavy metal live event. In chapter five it was discussed how the structure of a heavy metal gig and its unique rituals were created due to a combination of an unwritten fan code and a series of marketplace factors. This allowed for the 'controlled de-controlling' of emotions (Elias, 2008b) in the mosh pit. The vast amount of information that is shared in online forums such as this is another example of how the fans can control such an experience. It serves to inform them of what type of experience they can expect if they attend and what type of rituals they may have

to participate in/avoid. For example, the forum posters warn those who are attending the Machine Head performance about the heavy-handed approach of the bouncers and recommend avoiding seating tickets in order to experience the band properly. 'Frodijr' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 29/12/09) writes: 'just wondering, when is everybody gonna start queing [sic], I wanna [want to] now [know] so I know when to start queing [sic] to be first in the que [sic]'. He is questioned by other posters about his motives for queuing up first and he responds that he wants to 'get up front cause [because] I'm a short bastard and I'm not one for moshing! and I also wanna [want to] bow at robb flynn's [member of Machine Head] feet.' He is told not to worry because of the small size of the venue and that if he does not like moshing he should definitely not try and place himself near the front of the stage.

Changing producer–consumer relationships: Fan productivity and heavy metal entrepreneurs

The fans also use the virtual spaces to produce and share their own heavy metal 'materials' and to organise heavy metal events and contribute towards the maintenance of the scene. The boundaries between producers and consumers in the scene are blurred with many of the committed members taking on the role of both. A large number of interviewees have formed their own bands, organised gigs or established 'underground' heavy metal record labels and promotion companies. In the forum thread which discussed the black metal band Marduk's show, it was noticeable how constant a presence the fan/promoter 'H' was on the site, answering questions and promoting the gig. He created the thread with an announcement of the show and the support acts. Following this there was an overwhelming response to what appeared to be his return to promoting gigs through the 'Dublin Metal Events' promotion company.

'H' would be described as a 'Chief' in the tribal literature (see Kozinets, 1999; Cova and Cova, 2002) because of his high level of involvement and influence on the heavy metal

scene. It is evident that 'H' played an active role in booking and promoting live metal music in Ireland which is indicative of the 'entrepreneurial' qualities (see Cova et al. 2007b) that are prevalent in the metal scene. Many of the fans who posted on the site relied on 'H' for information, as well as to bring in the bands in the first place. The figuration is dependent on key individuals such as 'H' to maintain the quality of the scene. The forum poster 'I8UTD' emphasises this when he writes:

> Fair play H absolutely super news you've decided to continue on keeping metal alive in Ireland!!! A few of us went over [to England] to see Belemith/Devildrier and were only saying next year we'd probably be over [to England] a fair bit seeing as you were pulling the plug so I must say really excellent news indeed. (Posted on MetalIreland.com, 21/09/09)

There is little distance between the promoters and the fans because of the small size of the scene. They listen to the fans concerns and attempt to book bands that they want to see. For example, John (DI) recalls contacting promoters directly to see if they could bring over some of his favourite bands from Finland. Additionally, many of the participants interviewed, as well as promoting and organising professional performances have organised gigs for their own bands. Forum exchanges frequently involve discussions concerning the organising of events and demonstrate the power of the fans in maintaining the health of the scene.

It is not just the distance between the organisers and the consumers that has reduced, but the relationship between the actual artists and the consumers. This was particularly evident in the threads concerning more specialised underground metal shows. Like all musicians, the relationship that heavy metal bands form with their fans is of vital importance. Such relationships are magnified now as a result of social media. However, the producers of the music can use such interaction to their advantage. Kibby (2000) suggests that although most major musicians have fan clubs, the level of communication will vary between artists. Theberge (2005) cites the example of the musician Moby, who is known as a prolific blogger that attempts to answer as many of his fans' questions as possible. Despite the smaller profile

of the heavy metal Dublin scene, it was evident that there was significance to the interactions between fans and bands online. At the smaller events almost all of the bands contributed to the online discussion concerning their show and the performances of the other bands playing. This even occurred at the larger gigs where the support band for the Megadeth concert (that attracted almost four thousand fans) posted on the forum and interacted with the other members of the site. 'Sirocco-Jim' thanked all the fans for coming to the show and his fellow band member 'Sirocco-John' got involved in the key debates concerning the event and the actions of the bouncers by writing:

> I remember seeing, even during our set, that there was a few pits started and the security came in very "eager" and very violently. Youd [you would] have thought they would have been informed about this sort of thing earlier. its going to happen no matter what they do like. (Posted on MetalIreland.com, 16/06/10)

John recalls conversations he had online with his favourite band:

> I have chatted to some of the guys on the internet and I am friends with the main guy of the band on Facebook and we have talked and he has his own engineering company or co-founded an engineering company that makes diabetes breathing machines or something like that, blood reading machines so they all still have day jobs and stuff. (John, DI, male, 18)

This emphasises how the fans expect the bands to be humble in their interactions with fans. Musicians that become successful tend to attract criticism in the forums, as their success leads to an increased distance between them and their fans. Theberge (2005) examines the increasing prominence of fan clubs online and the mounting interest that the music industry has taken in them as a potentially profitable source of income. The money made from live music is increasingly important considering the decline the industry has suffered as a result of illegal downloading. Heavy metal is no different, and commercially successful bands such as Megadeth and Metallica will seek to increase revenues from committed fans who want first-preference tickets. These websites also sell a variety of merchandise which encourages fans to demonstrate their commitment and accumulate subcultural capital.

Consequently, whilst bands and musicians are awarded subcultural capital as a result of engaging with their fans on the forums, as bands become increasingly successful, boundaries tend to be constructed and the sense of mutual identification can diminish. The online interaction with fans can be commercialised in the form of fan clubs and memberships. This does not decrease the popularity of such bands within the overall scene. Although they remain popular, they lose an element of their 'uniqueness' or 'subcultural capital' within some of the more obscure areas of the heavy metal scene as the fans view any 'obvious' marketplace involvement with scepticism. The challenge for marketers and promoters involved in the production side of heavy metal subculture is to connect with the fans without appearing to dilute the values and meanings of the community, without appearing to manipulate the fans. The 'underground' or 'extreme' part of the heavy metal scene avoids such pitfalls, as the musicians rarely become commercially successful. It is expected that any success they do achieve will be accepted humbly, and the musicians and organisers of heavy metal gigs generally contribute to these forums because they are fans of the music and active members of the scene.

It is not just entrepreneurial skills that the fans possess in organising and promoting their own gigs, but creative skills as they produce their own music, reviews and other fan 'materials'. Cova and Dali (2009) argue that consumer participation is dependent on the creativity of consumers and their access to new technologies. It is clear that the fans become increasingly involved in the scene as they learn to utilise such technologies. For example, Gordon (DI) posts both written and video blogs on websites or forums such as MetalIreland where he reviews heavy metal albums, and Michael (DI) knows many fans that have set up their own Bebo and Facebook groups specifically dedicated to black-metal musicians. Additionally, many of the amateur bands post links of their music on the threads (field notes, 03-04/09/11). This is an example of what Fiske (1992: 38–9) describes as 'fan productivity' – 'material

which fans produce and circulate amongst themselves, texts which are often crafted with production values as high as in any official culture'.

The production of such material is generally associated with more dedicated fans who have reached a stage in their fandom where they express the meanings they have received from mass media within their own culture. Cova et al. (2007b: 16) argue that as a result of such consumer/fan productivity, marketers 'have to adjust to the presence of tribes comprised of impassioned, united and expert fans'. They argue that consumers have become more empowered and attained a greater influence in shaping brand meanings. Cova and Pace (2006) maintain that companies, whilst enabling such consumer activities, cede control of brand meanings. Rather than becoming overly concerned with losing control of a brand to consumers, marketers are beginning to recognise the benefits of using online tribes and have begun to take advantage of the 'legitimacy' or subcultural capital of online tribes, who are not associated with potentially 'dubious' marketplace forces, to promote their brands.

Baym and Burnett (2008) examine the role that music fan labourers (such as the participants in this study) play in promoting Swedish indie bands worldwide, essentially doing the record promoters job for them. Baym and Burnett argue that despite the fact the fans are being exploited in this way, it empowers them as they want to participate in the community. They maintain that these fans promote and spread the word about bands in ways which record labels could never possibly do. Through analysing, critiquing and, in the case of metal, arguing about the music with each other, they serve as promoters and publicists, doing the work for the bands and the labels.

The complex social code of the online scene: 'Losing' control in the forums

The analysis of the online heavy metal spaces seems to share many of the same characteristics of research regarding 'online tribes' thus far. The online interaction of the fans

demonstrates the importance of the virtual spaces for socialising fans and integrating with other fans, musicians and promoters from the global metal scene. These spaces emphasise the shifting power ratios between consumers and producers as such boundaries become increasingly blurred. This places a great deal of significance on the relationships that producers create with consumers and how consequently influential groups of heavy metal consumers can in part shape the success of heavy metal bands and the sense of legitimacy or subcultural capital that is associated with them.

Additionally, the online spaces provide the fans with the opportunity to further engage in their heavy metal identity projects and establish a sense of empowerment through modes of fan productivity and entrepreneurship. However, in the Irish online heavy metal scene, there is not the same fluidity of membership – entry barriers are high as fans, similarly to the 'live' scene, have to demonstrate their commitment through adapting to the complex social structure of the online spaces. This once again relates to the ability of the fans to self-steer. However, in the battle to define the scene and endow one's self with status in the heavy metal hierarchy, the fans frequently clash on the forums creating a level of conflict that contrasts with the high levels of restraint that were demonstrated by the participants in the 'live' heavy metal spaces. De Valck (2007) suggests that tribal research has often overlooked tensions and rivalries in online communities in favour of focusing on the positive communal aspects of such spaces. This section considers the significance of such tensions.

Maintenance of the scene: Talking metal

There is evidence that these forums possess a certain standard of etiquette that the posters must comply with. This is referred to as 'netiquette' (see Strawbridge, 2006). An example of this is the role that the moderators play in directing the conversation and the subjects that are discussed. Posts that are considered off-topic are deleted by the moderators frequently. The moderators or regular posters also police the forum for the breaking of certain rules. An

example of this is provided by the following summary of an exchange posted on

MetalIreland.com (08/12/09):

> 'Padrepio' critiques 'TallaghtThrasher' for his use of 'text' language and says that not only is
> it against forum rules and a pain for everybody to read but it also makes him look like an
> idiot. The thrasher takes this point saying he is only new to this and that he will write in the
> appropriate language.
>
> 'Hellraiser' is delighted that 'Padrepio' moderated some posts as he has become frustrated
> with the forum. He says that there is too much rubbish posted and suggests that he will post
> more often now if this is kept up.

Hodkinson (2007) identified a trend of maintenance and enforcement of rules in his analysis

of online Goth interaction. He suggests that this is evidence of a form of communal

responsibility in which boundaries and group norms are established. However, he argues that

with the advent of more individualised forms of online participation (including blogging and

social networks), the communally-based features have diminished somewhat as people are

forming increasingly fluid attachments to groups. Although this research has not incorporated

any form of longitudinal study in the online activity of these posters, it would be beneficial to

examine how the etiquette of online exchanges develops and changes over a significant

period of time, or whether it has changed at all since the emergence of such fan-based

forums. This would be of particular interest in an Eliasian context when one considers the

ferocity of some of the exchanges and the lack of restraint that is demonstrated. The potential

'de-civilising' impact of the online spaces on the forum users will be outlined in the 'conflict

in defining the scene' section.

The ban on 'text' language is not always adhered to, as can be witnessed in some of the

extracts presented above. Kozinets (2006: 234) describes the importance of understanding the

cultural nuances of 'e-tribes' in his netnography of Star Trek fans. 'There are rules, customs,

particular personalities, and, most obviously of all, a new language. The many acronyms,

references, and questions are filled with meanings that require interpretation.' Moberg (2008:

97) claims that the increasing use of the internet for communication between Christian metal fans has altered the type of discussions that they engage in as well developing 'certain requirements on participation such as the acquisition and understanding of a certain use of language'. The fans in this study use their own unique phrases and language and one must adapt to this in order to fit in and attain a level of subcultural capital. The following exchange between the two posters, 'Eoin McLove' and 'Boobc', is an example of the unique language and 'in' jokes that are communicated in the forums. Here, the posters mock those who take black metal seriously and at the same time demonstrate their knowledge of the scene by referencing lyrics and obscure heavy metal themes.

> Eoin McLove: Black Metal is no laughing matter
>
> Boobc: Laugh, no. Howl mockery at the cross, yes.
>
> Eoin McLove: Mwahahahaha etc.
>
> Boobc: Was that laughing or mockery? Black metal is not an ambiguous matter.
>
> Eoin McLove: Tittering at the cross under a fun-eral moon.
>
> (Posted on MetalIreland.com, 08/01/10)

The fans use initials such as 'MH' to refer to the band Machine Head, 'Deth' to refer to Megadeth and use phrases such as 'spastics', 'long jackets', 'handicaps', 'goths', 'emos' and 'panda bears' to refer to fans who attended the black metal band Marduk's performance. The hierarchy is reinforced in these spaces. 'Squire' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 03/02/10) writes the following when asked about the type of crowd that was at the gig: 'Dunno, some fucking handicaps anyway. Was leaving the gig and they were outside taking necro photos in front of Bobo's [a restaurant]. Some serious knuckle draggers there last night'. Kozinets (1997) has compared interpreting such online exchanges to translating a different language. In order to do so, he recommends immersing one's self in the culture to learn the meanings behind such interactions. In returning to the participant observation notes of this gig, it was found that these fans were referring to young fans that had painted their faces white and black

(i.e. 'pandas'). It was suggested by the posters that these fans were probably attending their first black metal gig and did not understand that they were exposing themselves to ridicule by actually dressing like some of the bands that were performing.

In both the literature and previous parts of the analysis, the link between what Wouters (2007) refers to as the process of informalisation and the intricate levels of etiquette and ritual that one must adopt to in order to become accepted within the scene was discussed. This seems to become increasingly complex as the scene moves to the 'underground' and into the forums. I found it much more difficult to understand what the fans were writing about online compared to my interactions with them 'face-to-face'. However, this could have been a result of the fans acknowledging that I am not a member of the scene and hence would not understand some of the phrases used. It was also evident that I found the 'black metal' forums a lot harder to comprehend than the threads dedicated to the more mainstream heavy metal events I attended. This is where words such as 'necro' and 'pandas' would be used much more frequently. In order to become accepted into the scene, one must learn the distinctive words, phrases and symbols, as Kozinets suggests. Elias (1991b: 61) writes that 'a people's language itself is a symbolic representation of the world as the members of that society have learned to experience it'. He documents the evolution of the human language, focusing not just on the biological aspect of this development but its relationship with social processes. He asks how words and symbols come to represent an object, how the social figuration shapes the symbolic figuration and vice versa. This is a complex argument which is framed around the relationships among language, thought and knowledge. He argues that the formulation of concepts or knowledge cannot be understood unless we consider the identity of language within a group of people and the role that integration and control play in this process.

The fact that heavy metal subculture (especially online) is a highly insular one results in the creation and use of a language that can be quite exclusionary. The posters frequently share jokes and use terms that are difficult to understand for an outsider such as this researcher. If one does not adapt to this complex code of symbols, one can face derision from other metal fans (see Kates, 2002, and chapter six). This is demonstrated here with the young fans who attended the black metal gig. They painted their faces in a similar vein to many of the black metal musicians that were observed that night, but were still ridiculed and derided on the forums for dressing in such a manner, as it was inherently understood by the users of the forum that this was not the appropriate way to dress. In chapter five, it was argued that the sights and sounds of the venue, in addition to the appearance of the fans, were all symbols which signified to the participants that it was acceptable to 'lose control', in what are essentially heavy metal subcultural spaces. However, if one (such as this researcher) did not match the aesthetics and understand the language and codes of the scene, there was no evidence of stigmatisation or conflict. However, such stigmatisation takes place behind the scenes in the online forums, where it was found that there was a serious lack of restraint in the interactions of fans compared to the offline scene.

Conflict in defining the scene: The lack of restraint in online interactions

De Valck (2007) argues that marketers can learn much through analysing conflict in online communities. When consumers clash they define their value systems and what it is that is important to them about participating in such tribes. She describes how tension is created through existing members challenging each other's expertise, discussion of appropriate practices and norms and as a result of the varying lifestyles of each consumer. The tension in the heavy metal scene mostly centred on defining the scene and battles for subcultural capital. This is reflected in the debates pertaining to the merits of certain bands, the aesthetics of the scene and the appropriate behaviour of fans (both online and 'face-to-face'). For example, the

word 'metal' used in the wrong context caused conflict between the posters. The following

exchange revolves around four posters debating what metal stands for and whether arguing

about what metal represents is actually important.

> Imcwilliams: its going to be a metal Friday with Kiss, Skynrd & Machine Head tickets on
> sale…
>
> Dave Shorts: How is Skynrd metal?
>
> Don Stevo: Because he fucking said so. Don't argue boyo
>
> Dave Shorts: Well if he says its "metal Friday", then everything to be honest
>
> Jester_Script: how about we pretend he said 'mental' Friday? That way everyone's happy and
> no one's accusing a non metal fan of being metal-therefore making the earth implode.
>
> (Posted on MetalIreland.com, 24-25/11/09)

Debates such as this tended to attract posters (such as 'Jester_Script') who were critical of

such pedantry. Consequently, they used humour to belittle such arguments. Kahn-Harris

(2007) has noted that in the extreme genres of heavy metal, British fans adapted a 'tongue in

cheek attitude' to their fandom. The same is true here for Irish fans, who use humour

frequently to mock any of the fans who take black metal and other 'extreme' genres too

seriously. However, some arguments cannot be defused by humour and lead to increasingly

rancorous exchanges. Another example of this occurred when the fans simply discussed the

quality of a Machine Head album (posted on MetalIreland.com, 25/11/09). 'Metalwrath'

writes: 'their first album was pretty class. Everything else is filth though'. The poster 'Bunit'

responds (less than ten minutes later) with the following post:

> As said in the WASP [a heavy metal band] thread were [we are] all hoping with you that you
> get some form of cancer and the bother of shitty metal is beyond the realm of your thought.

This type of conflict was witnessed several times within the small number of forums that

were examined. Other examples included fans referring to each other as 'retards' and

threatening one another with violence. This was not just a feature of the fans interacting with

each other but with the bands also. It was explained earlier how the small size of the

underground Dublin scene has led to the integration of the fans and the musicians. This is especially evident online. There is a more intensified degree of conflict in interactions between musicians or between musicians and fans. A good example of this was in the forum discussion that followed the black metal band Marduk's show. It became apparent that many of the posters were critical of one of the early support bands, Zeb Crowe. This criticism was mostly constructive until the poster 'Warhorse' defended the band. This led to 'Open Face Surgery' describing him as a 'Brainless fuck wit' for liking that band (posted on MetalIreland.com, 09/02/10). This eventually resulted in a member of the band in question coming on to the forum to defend himself. The interview participants had suggested previously that it was common for members of bands to come on to forums to respond to criticism, but that this normally resulted in an escalation of the condemnation. The following exchange involves the posters 'Mire' (member of the band), 'Warhorse' (fan) and 'Nemtheanga' (guest singer for headline band). Their argument concerns the accusation that the band Zeb Crowe bought the position of the support band. 'Mire' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 09/02/10) exemplifies the lack of restraint displayed in this argument when he writes:

> … the only thing that sucked was the ball tickling you gave Daniel [one of the headline act performers at the same concert] by doing a co-vocal cabaret style insult to black metal… not one person on the tour could stand you, not 1 [one], not the crew, not AN [band], not ZC [band], and not artisian [band] -least of all me when you walked on to the bus with out introducing yourself and spurting religious hatred, I remember you from a mag [magazine] due to your tats [tattoos], but have never heard of you or your band, and you walk on to my tour bus, not helping with load/in/out and eating our food, your [you are] just a free loading cunt. Say what you like, your [you are] a jew. We all thought your were [you were a] prize prick, you and your family should be gassed. I won't be back on this site.

'Mire' was mocked by other posters before the thread was closed because of the lack of posts. It must be emphasised that this post was the most 'extreme' that I witnessed in the forums that I observed. However, there were various instances of anger, threatening behaviour and a general lack of restraint that were observed within the forums. In the next

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section, I will consider the overlap between online and 'live' exchanges and how figurational sociology can be used as a resource with which to explain the high degree of conflict and anger displayed in the forums.

Hiding behind the computer: Retreating behind the scenes

It may seem that, with heavy metal's propensity for violence and aggression, these types of encounters would be no different from the behaviour of participants in the traditional spaces of the scene. However, it was found that there was a difference in the behaviour of fans that were interviewed and their behaviour which was observed online. For example, one of the interviewees (recruited from the forums) was very polite and helpful to me in our 'face-to-face' meeting and very friendly and composed in his interactions with other metal fans. However, he was insulting and threatening in his online interactions. John describes fans 'hiding behind the computer' and the different worlds that can sometimes be the 'live' and online communities:

> I think they would be a bit nicer to your face and I think they might genuinely mean it and if they don't like you in person they won't say anything, but they won't say anything bad about you, but I think people are too, eh, hidden behind their computer. (John, DI, male, 18, regular contributor to online forums)

It became apparent, especially in the underground metal threads, that many of the posters actually knew each other and arranged to meet before gigs, shared photos, and interacted via a coded language of 'in' jokes and shared experiences that only people who knew each other well could participate in. The information shared on the forums in the run up to gigs was used as another way of controlling the experience of the live event and using online interaction to facilitate integration in the traditional spaces of the scene. Robards and Bennett (2011) describe how online communication between people in social networks tends to be replicated in 'live' spaces and used to reinforce existing relationships. Wilson and Atkinson (2005) hold that subcultural literature has tended to attach disproportionate significance to either online

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participation or experiences in the 'live' spaces. They suggest that there is a lack of concern with how subcultural expressions are continuous across the virtual–real divide. Online participation is, as Wilson and Atkinson (2005) and Robards and Bennett (2011) suggest, a part of everyday life and should not be seen as separate from it. Although there must always be a question about the dependability of online exchanges, owing to how we can represent many different versions of ourselves within online communities, the fact is that many of the participants (because of the small size of the Irish scene) in this study do not have the convenience of anonymity in which to hide from what could be considered potentially shameful behaviour.

Roversi considers the increasing amount of violent and racist content on the internet and argues that it is indicative of a de-civilising process:

> Behind these webpages there are men and women who feed an ancient predisposition for hatred that we thought had been uprooted by the development of civilization or what had at least been relegated to some inoffensive and nostalgic niche of our planet, but which here, on the contrary reappears with an intensity that is in some ways surprising. (Roversi 2008: 11)

Roversi's analysis of internet content suggests that the data that has been observed in the heavy metal forums is not unusual. In other words, the less restrained interactions between the participants are not directly related to what appears on the surface to be sometimes violent, aggressive or racist heavy metal themes. However, I argue that modes of behaviour which are not socially accepted, both within the constraints of the scene and in wider society, have retreated to spaces which Elias (2000: 103) describes as 'behind the scenes'. It can be seen as a virtual social scene 'behind the scenes'. Elias demonstrates (in his historical analysis of manners and etiquette books) that modes of behaviour relating to eating, sleeping and sex that were once considered acceptable began to be thought of as shameful. Consequently, such modes of modes of behaviour began to take place outside of the public

sphere.

Are there certain modes of behaviour that have become unacceptable within the live heavy metal scene? Has increasing integration within the scene and the development of the subcultural code caused certain practices to be associated with shame? If one is to apply this concept to heavy metal fans, it is worth referring to the heightened displays of masculinity that take place within the online spaces. The forum is littered with postings regarding acts of machismo and criticisms of music, bands and fans that appear feminine. For example, the poster 'Bloodytroopsofdoom' (posted on MetalIreland.com, 02/03/10) suggests that anyone who cannot handle the loud noise of metal should 'head on home and slap on a fresh fanny pad [tampon]'. This can also relate to forum discussions regarding aggressive and violent threats. However, the participants cannot literally act on their threats of violence unless the disputes in the forums cross the online/offline divide.

However, the aggression that is demonstrated could possibly be a reaction to the civilising of the mosh pit that was discussed in chapter five. In recent years, as a result of the impact of file-sharing and illegal downloading, there has been a decrease in revenue for record companies and musicians. Consequently, there has been a greater emphasis placed on the live music scene than previously before (see Koster 2008; Schultz 2009). There has been an increasing rationalisation of the live scene with standardised venues such as the O2 appearing across Europe for example. These venues place a greater emphasis on safety, with more seating than standing areas and a greater security presence. King (1997) has written on football hooliganism and the impact that modern all-seater stadiums have had on the behaviour of football supporters in terms of how it has affected their masculine identities and their relationship with the performers (footballers). Although only the most popular heavy metal bands play in such venues and serious injuries or fatalities are rare at heavy metal gigs, it would only take a couple of major accidents in a mosh pit to spark a similar campaign over

the safety of live music venues to that which followed the Hillsborough disaster.[5]

It is evident from the analysis in chapter five that the presence of marketplace forces in the live music scene has a negative impact on their perceived experience. This decreases the level of danger and excitement and hence lessens the emotional and cathartic impact that participating in heavy metal rituals creates. Although one cannot encounter the physical experience or physiological pleasures of heavy metal rituals in the online spaces, the relative anonymity or freedom that such spaces provide allows one to relax one's control mechanism and engage in modes of behaviour that would not be acceptable in the 'face-to-face' scene and in wider society. Dant (2006) describes the de-civilising impact of technisation processes. He argues that the increasing complexity of our relationship with material objects has lessened our reliance on others. For example, Dant identifies the introduction of speed bumps as a technical device that controls the behaviour of drivers, such that we may not be aware of other people (Dant, 2006: 293). Accordingly, as 'we become less aware of the consequences of our actions on other humans, there is a decivilizing effect' (Dant, 2006: 303). Although Elias associated the removal of certain modes of behaviour from the public sphere to 'behind the scenes' as indicative of civilising processes, the fact that the online interactions between the fans takes place in public forums that are not entirely anonymous leads me to consider that such behaviour is actually indicative of a counter-spurt (or de-civilising spurt) to broader civilising processes.

Online consumption practices: The moral ambiguity of illegal downloading practices
It can also be argued that online technologies have had a de-civilising effect on the consumption practices of music fans in addition to their impact regarding the online

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[5] Ninety-six football fans were crushed to death at Hillsborough Stadium in 1989. Following the Taylor Report it was recommended that all major football stadiums be converted to an all-seater model.

interactions of fans. In chapter six, I described how almost all of the participants used file-sharing and illegal downloading practices to gain access to heavy metal recordings. This was one of many factors that contributed towards the socialisation of heavy metal fans and the lengthening of social ties within the Irish and global heavy metal scenes. However, I did not discuss the morally dubious characteristics of such consumption practices, considering its illegality. It is vital that this issue is discussed considering its prominence in the scene and the emphasis in this thesis on control.

The participants incorporated a variety of strategies to justify the illegal downloading practices. Kinnally et al. (2008), Cenite et al. (2009), and Wang and McClung (2011) have identified the financial benefit and convenience of downloading illegal music and other media content. This is consistent with the participants' justification strategies. Sam (DI) argues that 'when you get that first experience of getting something for free, you don't ever want to sort of go back to pay[ing] for something'. Michael, Mark, John, Ciara and Gordon (DI) describe how CDs are too expensive and that they are forced to download the music illegally. Michael explains this:

> CDs are overpriced, they truly are, and the record companies' argument is that people are downloading our music and that is why our prices are high but they had to start off high and if they brought them down then people wouldn't download it as they wouldn't see a need for it. (Michael, DI, male, 19, student)

The participants who believe that CDs are overpriced are all students and consequently do not have the financial resources available for music that the older fans have, nor, surprisingly, the level of income that was available to them when they were teenagers:

> I used to have money at the weekends so I would buy a CD every weekend because I wasn't drinking at that stage or eh going out or anything like that so I had money to spend and get a CD every weekend and I would be up to nearly two or three hundred – not at home but eh since I found out how to download I find it very hard to pay money for something that you could get for free. (John, DI, male, 18, student)

It was argued by the CCCS that the increasing consumption power of teenagers after the Second World War contributed to the emergence of and their participation in, 'subcultures of style'. The teenagers needed money to buy the records and the fashions that were a part of these subcultures. According to the participants' accounts, teenagers and university students are now actually being priced out of the market. However, they still have access to the music and the media through the sharing of the content online. It was discussed in the last chapter how older metal fans relied on tape trading and piracy to gain access to music that was hard to come by. Sam (DI) describes growing up in Pakistan where the only access to heavy metal music came from illegal pirate tapes and CDs. Cenite et al. (2009) explain that music fans in Singapore download illegally in order to avoid long waits and to garner access to material that is hard to acquire or that has been subject to censorship. However, it seems to be the case that it is the financial benefits that are the main reason behind the Irish participants' practice of illegal downloading.

However, saving money by illegally downloading means that there has to be someone who is losing money. Wang and McClung (2011: 674–675) claim that some of the participants in their study did not download because of high moral standards and concerns regarding the potential illegality of their actions. Bill, one of the few participants who refused to download music on moral grounds, insists that:

> It is the same as someone is making bread; you don't go into the shop and steal it because you know [if] you want bread you have to pay for it. That argument is made around music – people who have to record it, buy their instruments, studio time, it costs money to press it and record it, package and all the rest. (Bill, DI, male, in his forties)

The fans, as outlined in chapter six, justify such actions through criticising the music industry and arguing that they only download heavy metal bands they feel have 'sold out'. They argue that they support smaller bands and subsequently take this moral position in order to attain subcultural capital, emphasising the complexity of the social code. The downloading of

illegal music can be reconfigured in the heavy metal scene as a revolt against the industry.

Damien (DI): 'the simple analogy for me would be the whole prohibition thing in America in the twenties. The bootlegging of alcohol went through the fucking roof. It makes people do it more, like fuck you.' Altschuller and Benbunan-Fich (2009) ask whether illegal downloading is the new prohibition in their article which suggests that there is a similar gap between the legality and the reality of the actions. Wang and McClang (2011: 673) have warned the industry that threatening fans with legal action has the potential to create a form of psychological reactance or a 'boomerang effect' amongst music consumers, who will actively resist such threats by engaging in illegal downloading practice.

Lysonski and Durvasula (2008) argue that the industry is wasting its time trying to appeal to the ethics or moral code of those who illegally download, as they are driven by a strong belief that there is nothing wrong with what they are doing. This is not completely correct in relation to this study, as many of the respondents who downloaded were fully aware that what they are doing is wrong, but still went ahead and did it anyway. Sam (DI), for example, refers to himself as a 'thief' and Ciara (DI) argues that 'downloading is obviously wrong [as] you are stealing this music'. The illegal downloading behavioural pattern has become an internalised norm within the integrated heavy metal social circle. It is the presence of influential members of the scene in addition to other members of society engaging in this practice that provides such actions with social acceptance.

Elias (2008a: 57–93) compares the process of technisation with the process of civilising in that they are both unplanned, 'moving in a discernible direction – with spurts and counter-spurts to and fro – but without any long-term aim'. The advancement of these new technologies has obviously had an impact on the morals of the participants and it could be argued that this technological development has had a de-civilising effect on their consumption habits. Altschuller and Benbunan-Fich (2009: 49) claim that such

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inconsistencies are indicative of how, as 'technology evolves, it creates discrepancies between the way things are and the way the law expects them to be, leaving society in a muddle, trying to reconcile the two'. It appears that it is the anonymity (see Dant, 2006) of stealing files, added to the intangibility of the objects that are actually stolen, that contributes to the clouding of what appears to be right and what appears to be wrong, and the fans consequently attempting to justify their actions. This is done through reconfiguring their actions in line with heavy metal themes of resistance, the subcultural code, and through more basic utilitarian motives whereby the participants simply want to save money and still listen to their favourite bands.

Conclusion

The online spaces of the Irish heavy metal scene are used by the participants to find other fans, to become socialised into the scene, communicate their fan identities, display their knowledge of the scene and attain subcultural capital and status. Contrary to descriptions of 'e-tribes' (see De Valck, 2007), the online scene is characterised by high entry barriers and long-term commitment, as the complex subcultural code that exists in the 'live' spaces is heightened online where the development of a unique language, codes and symbols are used to exclude or disparage anyone who is not 'in the know'. These spaces empower the fans through allowing them to connect closer with heavy metal bands, demonstrate their commitment to the scene through organising metal events and in providing them with the opportunities to exhibit their own creative skills in producing heavy metal fan 'materials'. Promoters of heavy metal can take advantage of the 'legitimacy' of heavy metal 'fan labourers' by facilitating them with spaces in which they can promote the scene through acts of fan productivity.

Despite the empowerment that this community has provided the fans, the battle for subcultural capital has resulted in interactions that are characterised by conflict and tension. The posters frequently threaten each other and demonstrate a lack of restraint that contrasts with the controlled nature of the traditional spaces of the scene described in chapter five. I argue that the fans are using such spaces to vent emotional tension that has perhaps been curtailed as a result of a combination of the subcultural code and marketplace forces on the live heavy metal experience. The relative anonymity that is afforded to online participants has also translated into morally ambiguous consumption patterns. Although earlier technologies (e.g. the copying of tapes) facilitated similar behaviour, tape-trading and bootlegging did not occur on the same scale or cause anywhere near as much damage to the industry as illegal digital file-sharing has. Following Elias, I contend that modern online technological developments have resulted in modes of behaviour, concerning the online interactions of heavy metal fans and their illegal consumption practices, which are indicative of counter-spurts (or de-civilising spurts) that occur within broader civilising processes.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

The Irish heavy metal scene is a figuration based on control. Its development, maintenance, evolution and survival is a product of widening chains of interdependencies, individual self-steering, the complex dynamics of the subcultural code and the influence of stakeholders with commercial investments in the marketplace subculture of heavy metal. The question of whether the consumer or the market dictates individual consumption patterns and experiences is one of the central questions that have occupied consumer researchers. I argue that the agency–structure dualism has been reproduced to a certain extent in both the subcultural framework (CCCS) and the post-subcultural influenced CCT accounts. The figurational perspective can be used to bypass this dichotomy and address some of the more problematic aspects of applying such approaches to a study of heavy metal fans.

The traditional Birmingham (CCCS) subcultural approach was the most frequently used analytic framework for collectivities such as heavy metal. However, despite heavy metal's similarities with 'punk', 'mods' or 'teds' in terms of distinct style, clear hierarchies, the 'moral panics' it created and its connection with a working-class ethos, it was overlooked as a context of research, perhaps because of the lack of any clear political agenda regarding social class (e.g. punk's) within the scene. The emphasis on political values and structural processes has led to an overly rigid framework which fails to appreciate the agency of consumers (Bennett, 2005). It focused disproportionately on young working-class males without acknowledging the vital role that females and older consumers play in the development of such subcultures. Post-subcultural research, and in particular consumer tribes research, have sought to address such theoretical and methodological limitations through privileging the consumer's 'lived experience'.

Consequently, CCT accounts have presented increasingly fluid descriptions of consumer cultures and emphasised the transient and emancipatory features of 'tribes' such as the rave community (see Goulding et al. 2002; Goulding et al. 2009; Goulding and Shankar, 2011). They focus on the importance of marketplace consumption in facilitating the identity projects and emotional needs of consumers. However, there has been no place for heavy metal culture within this framework, despite its global appeal, cultural relevance and position as one of the highest selling genres of music in the world. It is evident that the dominant tribal model does not fit heavy metal subculture and that consequently, as Hodkinson (2004: 141) writes, 'the current enthusiasm for emphasizing them [the tribal approach] across the board carries the danger either of misrepresenting or excluding from analysis any collectivities whose empirical reality fails to fit the picture'.

Applying current consumer culture theory, particularly the tribal model, in the context of the Irish metal scene is problematic. It does not feature the same characteristics of fleeting identities, transient membership and temporary commitment. I am in no way suggesting that this research renders the tribal approach redundant, nor do I argue that the figurational framework used here is superior. There are clear benefits to using the tribal perspective to enhance our understanding of particular collectives of consumers centred on brands or leisure experiences. Maffesoli's (1996, 2007) and Goulding et al.'s (Goulding et al. 2002; Goulding et al. 2009; Goulding and Shankar; 2011; Goulding et al. 2012) research has been particularly useful in explaining certain practices within a heavy metal scene that possesses 'tribal' features. However, it is argued that applying the figurational framework is more suitable in this context. This thesis does not just illustrate the benefits of applying a figurational perspective to music subcultures, but also exemplifies the potential of incorporating one of the seminal sociological works into the CCT discipline – a field of sociology (figurational sociology) that has yet to be fully utilised in consumer research.

Why figurational sociology? What can we learn about music fans/consumers by using this model? Arnould and Thompson (2005) and Askegaard and Linnet (2011) have called for research that acknowledges the importance of historical and institutional forces in shaping consumer cultures. This possibly indicates an increasing acceptance that current consumer culture accounts overemphasise the agentic features of consumption practices. Figurational sociology can be used to address this issue. Elias provides historical analysis of social transformations and charts how the composition of human beings forms and changes with social organisation over time. For example, I borrow from previous historical figurational research to locate key processes which contributed towards the development of Irish consumer culture, the growing sport and leisure industry and significantly, the development of heavy metal subculture. These will be addressed in detail shortly. However, this does not represent a turn back towards Marxist-orientated accounts of consumer/fan subcultures, nor does it indicate a movement towards the growing area of critical marketing. Such fields, especially the CCCS approach, create problems because of their rigidity and emphasis on political values. This is particularly relevant when we consider the increasing focus on emotion in consumer behaviour research and the divisive nature of subcultures such as heavy metal. On the one hand heavy metal has attracted millions of fans because of its de-alienating qualities and the opportunity it provides to generate and release emotional tension, and, on the other, it has facilitated a strong societal reaction and moral panic as a result of its controversial nature (see King, 1988; Stack et al. 1994). However, attempting to rationalise heavy metal subculture behaviour and its rituals by applying a political lens has the potential to cloud and, in the case of influential metal researchers such as Weinstein (2000), romanticise and mythologise the scene. I have sought to evade this problematic aspect of heavy metal studies by taking on the role of an 'outsider-participant'. Elias placed a great emphasis on the scientific value of relative detachment. Incorporating his sociology of

knowledge can help bypass some of these issues and lead to a more reality-congruent analysis of heavy metal and other consumer cultures.

Considering the influence that music has on our emotions and the political and moral scrutiny that heavy metal attracts, the researcher's quest for relative detachment is of the utmost importance. Post-subcultural and CCT research has placed a greater emphasis on seeking to understand the real experiences of consumer cultures and subcultures, rather than theorising their behaviour from an 'ivory tower' (Arnould and Thompson, 2005: 875). However, such an increase in ethnographic methods has led to a large number of 'insider' accounts and Bennett (2002) argues that there has been a lack of critical elaboration regarding such 'insider' perspectives. Figurational sociology has also been criticised for failing to provide much methodological guidance to support its theoretical positioning of the involvement–detachment balance. This thesis addresses such an issue and highlights the difficulties that adopting such a methodological position incurs. Although I entered the research site as an 'outsider' in terms of the metal scene, I was still subject to forms of bias due to my age, gender, interests or political beliefs, which inevitably surfaced to some degree because of the amount of time I spent with respondents. This required a detailed, on-going analysis of the researcher's role throughout the long-term period of this project. The key to future research in this area is to acknowledge the aspects of the researcher's identity that may compromise the analysis. It is through this acceptance that one can pursue a position of relative detachment, as obtaining complete detachment is impossible.

There has been a growing emphasis on the emancipatory qualities that consumer cultures provide for individuals and groups (Arnould and Thompson, 2005), but it is argued that there has been a lack of research concerning angry or negative emotions. Figurational sociology allows us to chart the development of such consumer cultures and locate the social processes of which these emotions and modes of behaviour are a product. Elias focuses on the

interweaving of social change with an increasing (non-linear) constraint towards social restraint as the chains of interdependencies widen. This creates a routinisation of social life and the need for consumption practices and leisure spaces that evoke feelings of joy and catharsis. However, heavy metal, with its propensity for anger and seemingly unrestrained demonstrations of aggression (sometimes violence), would appear to offer a caveat to Elias's conception of civilising processes. This makes heavy metal an interesting context in which to explore the figurational perspective and leads to the central research question in this study: How does heavy metal subculture – its rituals, customs, etiquette and emphasis on displays of emotion – relate to social constraints towards self-regulation in the context of complex social interdependencies? In simple terms, this question, drawing from a figurational perspective, allows one to explore heavy metal subculture (or any other consumer culture for that matter) from a position in which emphasis is placed on the relationship between broader social processes and transformations in the individual personality structure. It allows one to connect the behaviour of the Irish heavy metal fans within the context of wider figurational changes. Moreover, it allowed me to bypass the agency–structure dualism that has divided consumer researchers and in particular subcultural and post-subcultural dichotomies regarding consumer 'control'.

Thus far, the conclusion chapter has focused on the theoretical benefits of applying figurational sociology theory to examine Irish heavy metal fans and the potential advantages of incorporating it within wider CCT contexts. I will now shift focus and present explanations which depart from conventional theory and demonstrate the contribution this research makes to the consumer research discipline, and to a lesser extent figurational sociology.

Figurationalists place a great significance on the ongoing relationship between theory and empirical research in which each informs the other. This approach, which typically involves either sourcing or borrowing from previous historical and figurational accounts, is prominent

in the few consumer research perspectives that have drawn from Eliasian theory (see Dolan, 2005, 2009a, 2009b) and those that use figurational sociology to a lesser extent (Bradshaw and Canniford, 2005; Canniford and Shankar, 2007; Canniford and Karababa, 2012). However, there have been a growing number of figurationalists who have recognised the benefits of combining previous historical figurational accounts with data collected in the 'field', that connect the 'lived' experiences of individuals within figurations with wider structural transformations (see Atkinson, 2003, 2008; Liston, 2005). Using interviews and participant observation allowed me to gain knowledge of the heavy metal scene on a personal level – the experience of the rituals, the connections between fans and the status games. This would not have been possible to form through the sole use of historical accounts. Emphasising the experiences of consumers within such contexts of consumption enhances our understanding of figurational processes, allowing us to link the social dynamics and identity projects of groups to broader social processes. Equally, incorporating wider figurational processes as a means of enhancing data derived from within the field can only augment explanations concerning consumer culture contexts.

Heavy metal music is used by both individuals and social groups in many different fan spaces (live events, online and everyday individual spaces) that incorporate different characteristics and are subject to wider civilising, informalising and de-civilising processes. Such spaces are used to generate feelings of emotional catharsis and sociability. They are used to acquire status, subcultural capital and heavy metal identity in a fluid, complex social structure that is constantly evolving as the chains of interdependencies widen and hence integrate both local and global heavy metal scenes. The success of the fans in attaining subcultural capital and creating an experience of emotional catharsis is dependent on the ability of the fans to adapt to the complex social code of the heavy metal scene and also, the marketplace forces which

play a key role in the co-creation of such experiences (this will be discussed at a later stage of this chapter).

This is particularly evident in the 'live' or 'face-to-face' social spaces of the scene. Rituals of moshing, head-banging and crowd-surfing and the sounds of aggressive, loud guitars, with lyrics depicting violence and Satanism frequently occur in these spaces. It is the unusual and apparently threatening nature of such scenic practices that have attracted the negative attention of moral and cultural guardians. Heavy metal has been described as 'uncivilised' and at its time of greatest popularity as a threat to the youth of society. However, despite the seemingly chaotic nature of such rituals, it is argued that rather than representing the loss of self restraint, participation requires a high level of self-steering to adapt to a complex and evolving subcultural code. Consequently, this represents an unusually 'civilised' conception of the heavy metal scene. The code is most visible within the mosh pits where participants are expected to look after the safety of other heavy metal fans and subscribe to a series of unwritten rules (e.g. no elbows, no spitting, pick someone up if they fall over). This ensures the safety of the 'pit' whilst facilitating a controlled environment in which a 'de-controlling of emotions' (Elias, 2008b: 27) can occur.

The fans learn to control their bodies and to adapt to the overall heavy metal subcultural code through becoming socialised into the scene and making an effort to fit in with the scene 'expectations'. 'Consumers are not ready-made community members' (Goulding et al. 2012: 2): the heavy metal fans essentially learn how to be a heavy metal fan through their use of the media and their interactions with other scene members. The role of older participants and the parents of young heavy metal fans play a particularly prevalent role. Goulding and Shankar (2004) and Bennett (2006) suggest that this has been ignored in the traditional subcultural literature or understated in previous accounts of the heavy metal scene (e.g. Weinstein, 2000). Rather than using heavy metal to rebel against their parents, the participants have been

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influenced by their parents' taste in music. I argue that this is reflective of broader developments in the parent-child figuration. Dolan (2005) outlines how Ireland moved from an agrarian to an industrialised society. A consequence of this growing functional specialisation was children moving off the family farm and broadening their identification, expanding chains of interdependencies, lengthening the distance between childhood and adulthood, and more importantly, reducing the power parents have over children. This allowed children and adolescents more time to experiment with subcultures such as heavy metal. It gives them a relative level of freedom from parental restrictions as mutual identification between the parent-child figuration increases.

Additionally, the older metal fans are respected by younger participants because of how they have demonstrated their commitment and longevity to the scene. They emphasise the importance of heavy metal history to new members (see Walser, 1993), and the significance of certain bands, styles and modes of behaviour. Their commitment is demonstrative of how heavy metal fandom transcends the liminal or symbolic spaces of the mosh pit and goes beyond traditional fan spaces into the fan's everyday life. They do not learn to separate their heavy metal fandom from the working week as the dance or rave tribe members do (Goulding et al., 2002); they learn to incorporate their heavy metal fandom throughout their everyday life – to deal with everyday life.

The fans also learn about the symbols, unique language (particularly on the online scene) and rituals through engagement with the media. The changing media landscape has accelerated the fans heavy metal education. Whilst previously, older fans relied on tape-trading, specialised fanzines or rare television or radio shows to discover heavy metal bands beyond the commercially successful, the modern heavy metal consumer can learn about the genre and the infinite number of sub-genres as a consequence of digital file-sharing practices, satellite television, increasingly powerful internet search engines, in addition to a large number of

websites that play music videos for free. It is with the help of both mass and subcultural media (see Thornton, 1995) that the participants can evolve their fandom and learn about the different aspects of heavy metal culture without financial limitations.

Besides contributing towards their socialisation into the scene, the technisation processes described here have facilitated a greater level of integration as the chains of interdependencies widen both within the local and global scenes. This created questions regarding the uniqueness of the Irish heavy metal scene in the context of the increasing globalisation of heavy metal subculture (Harris, 2000; Weinstein, 2011). Although it is difficult to compare the Irish scene to its foreign counterparts, it is clear that it is rooted in Ireland's unique habitus. Although this is a habitus that is a product of interrelated civilising trends documented by Elias in Britain and Western Europe, Ireland, and every other nation for that matter, has experienced diverging civilising curves (Dolan, 2005) that have formulated distinct national habitus and meanings within consumer culture contexts. The fans are very supportive of the small Irish scene and celebrate their 'Irishness', particularly at large metal events, through the use of nationalistic symbols (e.g. flags, songs). Additionally, the fans (particularly the younger participants) playful relationship with heavy metal religious imagery is indicative of a shift from the Catholic dominated habitus – although it is still evident that the Catholic Church has a lasting impact on the fans' (particularly the older fans) psyche. Irish musicians do not possess as much subcultural capital within the scene as American, British and Scandinavian musicians. Although there are a large number of Irish heavy metal bands and traces of a localised 'Celtic' sound, or metal that deals with issues regarding Irish culture in pockets of the scene, the real influence comes from foreign scenes. There has not been the same effort (or visible success) that has been made by the Scandinavian black metal scenes (Harris, 2000) to 'localise' or 'glocalise' the music. This makes it difficult to determine what is unique about the Irish scene as it does not appear to

have a distinct identity within the overall global heavy metal nexus. However, this still does not divert from the importance of the local context as the fans still distinguish themselves and the scene whether positively or negatively through their relationship with the Irish habitus.

Whilst the media has played an important role in socialising heavy metal fans (in addition to the part played by existing scene members) it has also facilitated the integration of the wider scene and hence contributed towards the continuing evolution of a complex subcultural code. Status and subcultural capital is produced through engaging with the code, collecting mundane capital (Kahn-Harris, 2007), through displaying one's knowledge of heavy metal history, wearing the 'right' clothes, attending the 'right' gigs and demonstrating an overall commitment to the scene. The long-term commitment of the fans to the scene and their incorporation of heavy metal symbols throughout their everyday lives are demonstrative of characteristics that differentiate this context from tribal contexts. Such research, whilst focusing to a degree on hierarchies within tribes, places a greater emphasis on the temporal and transient features of consumer tribes, where moral responsibility is not particularly important to any single tribe. However, the older heavy metal fans occupy a high position in the heavy metal subcultural hierarchy because of the longevity of their fandom and commitment to the scene in their everyday lives. Their position in the hierarchy is not dependent on other forms of capital (e.g. financial, social, and cultural) external to the scene, but capital based on their subcultural participation. However, such forms of subcultural capital are not transferable outside the boundaries of the metal scene as it has been stigmatised by moral guardians or dismissed by cultural guardians.

The heavy metal subcultural hierarchy is not as rigid as indicated by traditional subcultural accounts or more modern consumer-oriented 'subcultures of consumption' frameworks (e.g. Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). Although commitment and the acquisition of mundane capital are important to developing a heavy metal identity, it does not guarantee the respect of

other heavy metal fans. It is not that simple to translate knowledge of scene 'expectations'

into subcultural capital. The positioning of status and hierarchies are much more fluid and

complex. Similarly to Kates (2002) description of the gay community, fans that engage in

'stereotypical' fan practices (or are seen to be trying too hard) are mocked by the heavy metal

community. The code of the scene constantly evolves and the fans gain status and subcultural

capital through adapting to the latest trends or via individual acts of subcultural transgression.

The best example of subcultural transgression is the development of the 'underground' or

'extreme' heavy metal scene (Kahn-Harris, 2007). There is a danger of presenting the heavy

metal scene as a monolithic culture, a trap that an outsider perspective (such as this research)

can fall into at times. The reality is that over the years heavy metal has evolved into a

subculture with diverse meanings for many different types of fans. This is a product of the

globalisation of the scene and the fragmentation of it into a series of subgenres, as a

consequence of disaffection regarding the commercialisation of aspects of the scene and the

need for heavy metal fans to distinguish themselves from other fans (e.g. 'poseurs' and

'headbangers') as the figuration widens and new members become integrated into the scene.

The fans look to differentiate themselves through adapting alternative scenic practices. The

participants place a lot of emphasis on demonstrating their knowledge of relatively unknown

bands in obscure subgenres (e.g. Scottish Pirate Metal). Such music has pushed the

boundaries of the heavy metal scene sonically, lyrically and aesthetically. The fans gain a

sense of ownership or control over bands in the underground scene that may have been lost

with other bands that progressed to the mainstream and became popular with a broader

audience. The participants engage in contrasting consumption practices for 'underground'

musicians, emphasising their support for them by actually buying their music and

merchandise as opposed to downloading (illegally) heavy metal bands that have established a

core audience. Acts of subcultural transgression are also visible at extreme heavy metal

performances. Here the fans separate themselves from what they describe as 'weekend warriors' or 'poseurs' by restraining from moshing and controlling their bodies. They do not want to be associated with the 'headbanger' stereotypes or marketplace myths (Arsel and Thompson, 2011) that are constructed through the mass media. This devalues their subcultural capital.

Such acts of subcultural transgression and consumer differentiation have been described previously in the music scene literature (Kahn-Harris, 2007) and extensively in the consumer culture literature (e.g. Belk, 1988; Holt, 1995; Schouten and McAlexander, 1995; Kates, 2002; Arsel and Thompson, 2011), to demonstrate the complexity and fluidity of roles within such social groups. However, there has been little emphasis on the level of self-steering and control that is needed to adapt to and transgress such social codes. There is little explanation of how and why fans feel the need to train or 'force' themselves to appreciate particular heavy metal bands or subgenres. This is where it is important to marry the micro-analysis with discussion of broader social processes and why Elias's figurational sociology is such a useful analytic tool. What appears to be the relaxing of restraints in standards and etiquette in extreme heavy metal practices, particularly relating to sonic and lyrical transgressions and controversial themes regarding Satanism and fascism, actually requires more differentiated and flexible forms of self-steering. This is an example of what Wouters (2007) describes as an 'informalising' process. As the gaps between social classes decrease and interdependencies between groups increase as a result of processes such as technisation, subcultures will emerge in response to increasingly integrated figurations. However, as subcultures such as heavy metal widen in scope, and scenic practices become routinised and less shocking, individuals will again try to emancipate themselves through acts of transgression and hence new subcultural codes of behaviour emerge as the heavy metal scene evolves. Consequently, the symbols of heavy metal are important as the fans use their unique

language, music, visuals, aesthetics, and their interpretations of religious and political themes to exclude or disparage those within (and outside) the scene. Elias describes how we use such symbols to orientate ourselves and define our social relationships.

> highly self-controlled people have to adjust themselves to each other as part of an increasingly intricate mesh of contacts and social necessities, which requires a socially standardized, high-level symbol of timing to enable this to be done with great accuracy and predictability. (Elias, 1991b: xv-xvi)

This framework explains subcultural activity through focusing on the influence of social restraint. The ability of individuals to self-steer and demonstrate emotional control is connected to the fluid movement of symbols and capital in heavy metal subculture. Bourdieusian theory has played an important role in illuminating some of the significant aspects of consumer behaviour. In particular, Thornton's (1995) adaption of Bourdieu's (1984) conception of 'capital' to more localised or subcultural contexts has enhanced our comprehension of how status is awarded within 'in-groups'. This analytic framework has been used as a resource to guide this analysis of Irish heavy metal fans. However, I argue that the importance of control and self-steering is understated in such accounts. Bowen et al. argue that the similarities between Bourdieu's and Elias's theoretical perspective are often overlooked. They write (2012: 70) that 'both relied heavily on the same triad of core concepts [habitus, power/capital, figuration/field], and both deployed those concepts in a relentlessly relational and processual fashion'. In consideration of the nature of capital/power, both looked past the Marxist approach which overemphasised the influence of economic factors in social life and they both understood the connection between specific figurations and wider social processes, and how both macro and micro levels 'serve as the sources of second natures and as the dynamic contexts in which habitus (plural) function' (Bowen et al., 2012: 73). Through using both the Eliasian and Bourdieusian influenced subcultural frameworks as a resource we can locate how power/capital flows within the heavy metal scene (and to a

lesser extent how it transfers outside the scene). However, Bowen et al. claim that Bourdieu underestimated the importance of bodily regulation and self control in their analysis of Bourdieu and Elias's research concerning the development of modern sport and leisure. 'Elias saw that, in sports as well as in many other fields, emotional-bodily self-control tends to operate as the most fundamental power resource and as a prerequisite to the sedimentation of all kinds of abilities and forms of knowledge' (Bowen et al. 2012: 84). Although, the two theorists are not combined at a great level of synthesis in this research (as I have taken a predominantly figurational approach), it is argued that future research could benefit from doing so, contributing further to our understanding of music subcultures. Further to Bowen's work, there has been other research (e.g. Sterne, 2003) that considered the relationship between Elias and Bourdieu. Moreover, as a means of integrating Eliasian theory further into consumer research contexts, the prominence of Bourdieusian perspectives in CCT and the similarities it shares with the Eliasian approach can help facilitate the introduction of figurational sociology into to a discipline in which it has been relatively ignored.

Participants also gain status within the scene through demonstrating high levels of fan productivity (Fiske, 1992) where they exhibit strong 'entrepreneurial' and 'creative' qualities (Cova et al. 2007b). The boundaries between producers and consumers have blurred here as fans spend a large proportion of their time organising and promoting their own heavy metal events, reviewing and creating their own forms of metal music and contributing to the scene with other fan 'materials'. Mitchell and Imrie (2011) outline how successful marketers create spaces in which consumers can come together and share their experiences and interpretations of their favourite brands. It has been well documented in the consumer culture literature, particularly in the consumer tribe research, that marketers have had to learn to adapt to an increasing consumer presence in the maintenance of brand meanings, and to, in effect, cede a certain element of control over brand meanings to the consumers. A similar process has

occurred in the music scene where even before the advent of new online technologies fans took an active role in promoting and shaping the meanings attributed to artists. This has escalated even further now because of the increasing presence of social media. Cova et al. identify the sense of empowerment that consumers receive from taking on the role of producer, emphasising once again the emancipatory qualities that are associated with consumption in the twenty-first century. Whilst it is true that fans gain a sense of status and subcultural capital through taking on creative and entrepreneurial roles, the reality is that such practices create a high level of tension within subcultures such as heavy metal (this will be discussed later in this chapter) and are of course incorporated into marketplace strategies. This is a strategy that has been used in the music scene where Baym and Burnett (2008) outline the crucial role that 'fan labourers' play in promoting the Swedish 'indie' music scene. This is a strategy that has been capitalised on within the Irish metal scene to a limited degree, in terms of the practices of individual bands or small independent record labels.

Cova et al. (2007b) have acknowledged the importance of brands facilitating such strategies of co-production whilst downplaying or concealing the influence of marketplace motivations at the same time. Although this is crucial for consumer brands, it is of the utmost importance for subcultures such as heavy metal. This is because heavy metal positions itself on the periphery of the marketplace. The distribution of subcultural capital is dependent on the illusion that commercialised practices are resisted against and that the marketplace myth of 'consumer sovereignty' (Holt, 2002) is sustained. This is particularly evident in the live scene where the balance between the fans' subcultural code and the influence of other stakeholders (e.g. security, promoters and musicians) in the figuration play a crucial role in shaping the experience of heavy metal fans in their ritual spaces. I have already outlined the importance of the subcultural code, not only in providing subcultural capital for those who can adapt successfully to it, but also in facilitating the safe enactment of what are by nature complicated

and at times dangerous rituals. As the numbers attending heavy metal events increase, the 'controlling' influence of the subculture diminishes in the larger mosh pit, reducing the quality of the overall experience. The larger gigs are also subjected to increasing rules and regulation and the marketplace presence of stakeholders with less subcultural capital. Their involvement can both lessen and heighten the emotional experience of the heavy metal fans. This is dependent on the quality of the performers, the venue (e.g., standing/seating ratios, pyrotechnics and presence of heavy metal symbols), the enforcement/ foregoing of certain rules and regulations and the relationship the security/bouncers form with the fans.

Following Elias, I have sought to disengage as much as possible from academic discussion concerning values, philosophies or ideologies regarding the influence of capitalistic strategies on artistic integrity, authenticity or consumer manipulation. Elias (1998) argues that the meaning of the term 'kitsch', which is associated with popular or commercialised art (such as heavy metal) has shifted in meaning over time and can be seen to have positive associations for any art form or music genre (whether it is commercial or not) if it allows individuals and groups to generate and release emotional tension. Subsequently, I have focused on the emotional experiences of consumers of heavy metal, the factors that enhance and hinder such experiences and the connections between this form of consumer behaviour and wider social processes. It is evident that in larger heavy metal events there was a greater need for rules and regulation – not only to insure the safety of the fans, but to keep high insurance costs down and avoid unwanted negative attention from the media, or even stricter government regulation regarding the policing of such events. Whilst this enhances the experience to some degree, as it means there is less chance of anybody getting hurt, the visible presence of such commercial activity (e.g. sponsors and alcohol regulations) reduces the subcultural capital of the overall scene and is viewed with suspicion by the participants. This is particularly evident when considering the relationship between the bouncers and the fans. Further to their role as

the 'fashion police' in determining whether clubbers would get into nightclubs (Goulding et al. 2002; Goulding et al. 2009), heavy metal bouncers frequently interrupt heavy metal rituals, physically restraining or removing fans from the spaces of ritual. Their involvement increases with the size of the heavy metal gig and consequently fans interpret their presence as marketplace interference. As the bouncers police under a different code of etiquette than the fans, the participants view this as indicative of the distance between the fans and commercial stakeholders, who display an inability to adapt to the subcultural code. It is not just their physical presence which diminishes the enjoyment of such events; the presence of stakeholders with limited subcultural capital also disrupts imagined relationships with themes of rebelliousness or marginality which are crucial to the heavy metal scene and the rituals which celebrate it. Such problems are avoided in the 'underground' scenes or certain European scenes as they are generally policed by bouncers who are aware of the intricacies of the heavy metal scene or have been well trained. This is an issue where further research is required.

I argue that the pacification of the mainstream heavy metal scene bares similarities to the 'sportisation' process described by Elias and Dunning (2008). As certain subgenres of metal evolve from the 'underground' and become incorporated into the mainstream, events become increasingly organised and take place in highly regulated and controlled venues. This does not always necessarily detract from the experience; it can improve it as many of the participants praise the sound, lighting and special effects at such events. It is also a reality that these 'commercialised' events tend to attract the most popular musicians and bands. They play the most important role in creating a good heavy metal experience. Additionally, despite the lack of subcultural capital associated with such events, they invite easy access (because of their mass media promotion) for the 'weekend warriors' or any music fan for that matter to engage in such spaces and generate and release emotional tension. However, one of

the most significant consequences of the modernisation of modern music venues is the increasing number of seating areas at the expense of standing room. Following King's (1997) research on the transformations in football fans after the introduction of all-seater stadiums, I argue that this has had a similar effect on heavy metal fans. It has created a greater distance between the fans and the producers of the music as well as altering the connections that fans make with each other. It hinders their physical and emotional experience and reduces the spaces in which they can display forms of hyper-masculinity that such rituals usually involve. Modern venues that display such a visible commercial presence cannot replicate the 'underground' heavy metal venues or metal bars that play such an important symbolic role in communicating the boundaries between heavy metal fans and the imagined mainstream. It is the presence of heavy metal symbols in such venues – the aesthetics, the smells and the sound – that provide the scene with its identity and excludes or mocks those who fail to incorporate the meaning of such symbols into their lives (see Elias, 1991b). The unique symbols of the heavy metal scene attract a regular subcultural clientele who maintain and transgress the scene, and develop a sense of comradeship that cannot be replicated in modern homogenised venues such as the O2.

However, the reality is that there is some level of marketplace intrusion in almost all heavy metal events, big or small. The impact of such involvement on the consumer experience has been well documented in consumer culture literature (see Pike, 1991; Kozinets, 2002; Goulding et al., 2009; Goulding and Shankar, 2011). I contribute to this literature by positioning such marketplace relationships within wider figurational contexts. I argue that marketplace controls, in addition to the role played by other heavy metal scene stakeholders (e.g. musicians), and the subcultural code, have contributed to the development of a heavy metal figuration in which the fans experience a controlled de-controlling of emotions. Growing industrialisation and functional specialisation have contributed to the transformation

of Ireland into an increasingly urbanised and integrated (in a technical sense) society (Dolan, 2005). Elias and Dunning (2008a) observe how under such conditions the chains of interdependence broaden, creating an increased constraint towards self-restraint in increasingly complex social formations. Tied with a growing divide between work and non-work spheres, this has led to an increasing demand for sport and leisure in modern society, and the rising designation and commercialisation of specific sport and leisure spaces. Consumers of such leisure activities use these spaces to experience mimetic tension and a sense of catharsis in escaping from a highly routinised, emotionally starved society. However, figurationalists (particularly in figurational sociology of sport and leisure) have somewhat downplayed the importance of music consumption in such spaces, with Elias and Dunning suggesting that spectators and participations of sport have a far greater scope in which to generate and release emotional tension, citing the greater connection between movement and feeling. However, Elias and Dunning were comparing sport to classical and more pacified forms of music. This argument does not transfer to subcultures like heavy metal where the embodiment of the music and the expression of emotions are so crucial to the experience.

Goulding et al. (2002) and Goulding et al. (2009) examine how dance music consumers escape from the routinisation of the working week through attending nightclubs and raves at the weekend. They focus on the pleasure and sociality that the construction of these temporary emotional communities creates. Similar to the participants in this study, the ravers seek such communities in response to the fragmentation of society and the decline in traditional institutions (e.g. family and religion). The heavy metal fans in this research report similar feelings of alienation and find comfort in the comradeship of other fans who communicate a shared sense of marginality. However, there has been a tendency in research regarding marketplace cultures, primarily tribal based accounts, to focus mostly on the

positive emotions experienced through participation in such emotional communities. The prominence of anger and negative emotions in heavy metal culture provides an interesting context in which to explore types of emotions that are generally overlooked in research that looks to celebrate the positive and emancipatory qualities of consumption, rather than focus on the negative aspects of it.

The prominence of anger within heavy metal culture and the emphasis on displaying such emotions tells us a great deal about the everyday lives of the participants, their values, and motivations for participating in such consumer communities. Such modes of consumption amplify the tensions and conflicts that are inherent in consumer (sub)cultures, as well as their relationship with wider society. Additionally, it is evident that heavy metal is therapeutic for the fans, as they experience a great sense of catharsis in listening to angry music and participating in aggressive rituals such as headbanging or moshing. Engagement with the anger aesthetic of the heavy metal scene heightens the therapeutic and cathartic qualities of the consumption experience.

Such rituals are used to unite and celebrate the heavy metal emotional community. However, this emotional community is not as temporary as the tribal contexts presented in both the post-subcultural and consumer research. The high level of comradeship and mutual identification transcends the traditional fan spaces. Although the emotional intensity involved in the ritualistic social spaces of the scene is higher, as the social code allows for more emancipated displays of emotion, the fans also take great pride in displaying their heavy metal fandom in their everyday lives. They use heavy metal music to control their mood throughout the working day. Academic research concerning 'outsider' or 'unique' scenes tends to focus disproportionately on the communal practices of the group, the 'spectacular' subculture (Clarke, 1990) or consumer culture (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006) with very little attention paid to how fans consume and interpret the music in their own spaces, outside

the moshpit. It is only recently that research (see DeNora, 2000) has examined how individuals use music in their everyday lives. The presence of new privatised listening devices provides the participants in this thesis with the ability to synchronise a soundtrack to their everyday routine, their mood and bodily feelings. It has been the case for almost a century that music fans have been able to create personal spaces in which to listen to music and hence manage their mood. This could be the record player in the bedroom, the radio in the workplace and in complete privacy for those who had portable radios or Walkmans with earphones. However, it is the choice that is offered by technologies such as the Apple iPod (see Bull, 2007) and the availability of an unlimited selection of music through both legal and illegal downloading practice that has transformed the way in which we listen to music and hence how we control our mood.

Canniford and Shankar (2007) and Canniford and Karababa, (2012) have cited Eliasian theories (to a limited degree) regarding the increasing constraint towards self-restraint and the growing emotional need for spaces of leisure. However, they have not (by their own admission) related their historical analyses with 'descriptions of the lived feelings' (Canniford and Karababa, 2012: 22) experienced in such primitive-like consumption practices, as surfing or heavy metal. The advantages of incorporating ethnographic or personal methods with figurational histories have been demonstrated above, where I have been able to link the complex social structure and the experiences of metal fans in the different fan spaces to broader figurational processes. One interesting aspect has been the impact of technisation (Elias, 2008a) processes on the development of new fans spaces and the polarity of behaviours that is evident in online spaces compared to the traditional 'live' spaces. Consumer research has been quick to acknowledge the important role of online spaces in facilitating consumer cultures and the advantages of observing such activity for enhancing our understanding of consumer behaviour (Kozinets, 1999, 2009). Although the

importance of online spaces is acknowledged in previous heavy metal research, there is a lack of focus on the characteristics of such fan spaces and the nature of exchanges between participants. It has been reiterated in this study how such spaces have contributed to the socialisation of fans into the scene, the decreasing distance between fans/consumers and musicians, in addition to lengthening the global connections within the scene. The heavy metal fans play a vital creative role in the scene where their fan productivity is enhanced by their access to new technologies (see Cova and Dali, 2006). This provides the fans with feelings of empowerment as they battle for subcultural capital and pursue their heavy metal fandom projects within the spaces of the online forums.

However, following De Valck (2007), I argue that the conflict and tension that is characteristic of many exchanges between consumer cultures has been underplayed and offers an excellent insight into the nature of such communities. This is particularly striking in this study, considering the clear lack of restraint and control displayed by the participants in comparison to the highly restrained live scene. It is problematic to theorise this behaviour as solely a product of anonymity, considering the fact that much of the forum activity overlapped into the small live Irish scene. Modes of behaviour which have become unacceptable in the live scene, owing partly to an evolving subcultural code of restraint and mostly due to the influence of other metal stakeholders and marketplace controls, have retreated 'behind the scenes' into the online spaces of the scene. The level of danger and excitement that is associated with a 'taboo' heavy metal culture has lessened somewhat in the physical spaces of the traditional scene and hence the freedom of such online spaces allows one to relax one's control mechanisms and experience a sense of emotional catharsis through the venting of anger. Here, displays of hyper-masculinity, threatening behaviour and at times racist and fascist comments can occur without the same repercussions or 'shame' that such modes of behaviour may be associated with in the traditional spaces of the scene. It is similar

to how Elias documents the removal of certain forms of etiquette regarding eating and sleeping in court society from public view as a consequence of increasing social restraints. Although such forms of etiquette still took place in public view, they were associated with 'shame'. It is argued that in this instance technisation processes have facilitated a 'less' civilising effect on the Irish heavy metal scene or instigated modes of behaviour that are associated with de-civilising processes . Evidently, there are moderators who police the forums and there are forms of etiquette (netiquette) that the participants are expected to subscribe to regarding text language and the topics of their posts. This concept could also be used to theorise the increasing trend of illegal downloading and file-sharing that has been internalised into a subcultural norm amongst heavy metal fans here, replicating the increasing adoption of such practices amongst the wider music consumption market (IFPI, 2007, 2012). Again, the shame associated with forms of consumer engagement or consumption practices in the online spaces of the scene (i.e. illegal downloading/stealing) is not replicated in the same manner it would in the 'live' spaces of the scene.

One of the more prominent aspects of the forum exchanges was the heightened displays of hyper-masculinity. As it has been outlined throughout this study, heavy metal is an overtly masculine subculture and this is evident in all of the fan spaces of the Irish scene. The fans tend to be patronising and overprotective of women in a scene where masculine terms are used to praise aspects of the scene and contrarily, feminine terms are used to critique certain features of the scene. Additionally, it is interesting to note that Ireland has a lower percentage of female participants compared to foreign scenes, despite the increasing role of females in the Irish scene in recent years, according to the older participants. Responding to critiques regarding the lack of focus concerning females in subcultures and subcultures of consumption, Martin et al. (2006) argue that women participate in masculine subcultures as part of an identity project. It can be argued that this is the case for the female heavy metal

fans as they attempt to adapt to the masculine subcultural code. However, the reality is that they are pursuing such identity projects on male terms (Krenske and McKay, 2000). Hence, female participation in such masculine cultures is not as liberating or emancipatory as Martin et al. suggest. Although they argue that the women seek control by feminising aspects of the Harley Davidson subculture, it is evident that in the heavy metal scene, females are stigmatised and derided by other female fans if they diverge from what is evidently a masculine-orientated code.

I argue that the men participate in such a hyper-masculine subculture in response to a shift in the power balance between men and women and the increasing pacification of social relations between genders in Irish society (Dolan, 2005; Liston, 2005). The men in this study are using the spaces of the subculture to engage in exaggerated displays of masculinity (Dunning, 2008) to reassert a sense of power or control that may have been lost within wider society. However, heavy metal is a scene of contradictions and gender meanings change within the context of wider social processes and transformations in social relationships. Following Atkinson (2008), I argue that the heavy metal scene has reconceptualised traditionally feminine aesthetics (i.e., long hair, make-up) as masculine and positioned such aesthetics in line with the 'rebellious' heavy metal ethic. In other words, such appearances are now representative of an established masculine identity in the heavy metal scene.

In short, this thesis makes a contribution to CCT in the following way. Borrowing from Canniford's (2011: 70) 'typology of consumption communities' table, (excluding brand communities) I summarise below how the figurational explanation of heavy metal fans/consumers differs from the 'subcultures of consumption' and 'consumer tribe' theoretical frameworks in defined categories (see *fig 5)*. Heavy metal is used as a context to emphasise the difficulties of applying such popular constructs to consumer cultures that have been previously overlooked in recent consumer research – (sub)cultures that demonstrate

features of longevity and commitment, (sub)cultures where negative and angry emotions play a prominent role. As Canniford suggests, each consumer community has certain characteristics that overlap into others. For example, sociality and comradeship are just as important in a subculture of consumption as they are in consumer tribes or the heavy metal figuration. This is not necessarily dependant on the temporality of the experience and the level of commitment to each social group. The main difference between employing traditional CCCS subcultural theory or the post-subcultural subcultures of consumption and consumer tribe frameworks is the emphasis that figurational sociology places on incorporating wider social processes into explanations concerning the nature of social relationships, and the focus on achieving a relative level of detachment from political values in the research process. This allowed me to focus on the relationship between marketplace controls and subcultural codes in facilitating the heavy metal fan/consumer experience, limiting the obstructions that critical ideologies could potentially create for this analysis.

This is why the issue of control has been prioritised in this research. I have demonstrated how long-term social trends (with particular focus on Irish social trends) have facilitated civilising, informalising, and de-civilising processes that have contributed to the development of heavy metal subculture, its evolution into a series of subgenres and the nature of the social relationships and modes of behaviour that are characteristic of the scene and its different fan spaces. In other words, control functions to structure heavy metal subculture and it flows from the structures it helps bring about. This allows us to bypass the agency–structure dualism and focus on how consumer control is based on the complex interplay between social relations and social processes. This has been emphasised through outlining the intricate figuration of the heavy metal scene, its subcultural code, marketplace resources, marketplace controls, its many stakeholders and most significantly, the importance of the figuration as a site of emotional control.

Figure 5: Typology of Consumption Communities

Form Features	Subcultures of Consumption	Consumer Tribe	Heavy Metal Figuration
Locus	Activity	Emotion	Control
Power structure	Hierarchy of core members	Diffuse, democratic, hybrid network	Hierarchy of core members based on subcultural codes and controls.
Purpose	Sociality, response to alienation	Sociality, passion	Sociality, catharsis and control. Product of long-term figurational processes.
Marketing potential	Unpredictable, unmanageable	Linking value, entrepreneurialism	Somewhat manageable, subcultural capital and quality of experience diminishes with too much marketplace involvement.
Time span	Long-term	Transient	Long-term base with transient subgenres
Structure	Slow to change, resistant	Fluid, fast moving	Appears to be slow to change from the outside because of style and commitment of fans. However, there are a growing number of hybrids and subgenres.
Social position	Marginal	Ambivalent	Marginal but depends on the type of heavy metal subgenre.

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Appendix 1: Summary of main heavy metal genres and subgenres

Subgenre	Characteristics	Bands
Formative years	These are the bands that emerged from the dominant rock 'n' roll era of the 1960s and early 1970s. They were not labelled heavy metal but are identified within the scene now as highly influential in forming the heavy metal sound.	Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Jimi Hendrix
New Wave of British Heavy Metal/Classic Metal	The first bands to label themselves as heavy metal. They developed a faster rock sound that was influenced by the late 1970s British punk scene.	Iron Maiden, Diamond Head, Def Leppard
Speed/thrash	Often described as the first subgenre of 'underground' metal, this genre emerged in America's west coast and currently represents heavy metal's mainstream. It is characterised by incredibly fast tempos and aggressive sounding vocals.	Anthrax, Slayer, Metallica, Venom
Lite/glam/hair	This genre took the hard rock elements of 1970s metal and added lyrics about love and lust. This coincided with MTV's emergence as a defining influence on 'mass' youth culture. The softer sounds attracted a broader audience at heavy metal's greatest period of popularity. It is often referred to as 'poseur' metal and does not carry much subcultural capital within the wider scene.	Bon Jovi, Poison, Twisted Sister, Kiss
Extreme metal (death/black)	Although each style has distinctive features, it is often referred to by fans under the umbrella term of 'extreme'. The music is resistant of commercial rock or metal and is typified by its distorted or screamed vocals, downtuned guitars, speed and its engagement with Satanic themes.	Morbid Angel, Cannibal Corpse, Mayhem
Doom	Influenced by early psychedelic sounds of bands such as Black Sabbath, this is a very slow, melancholic form of metal that is also often referred to as a form of 'extreme' metal.	My Dying Bride, Pentagram

Christian	Often referred to as 'white' metal, there are Christian metal bands in every subgenre of heavy metal. The theme that connects them is lyrics celebrating Christianity	Stryper, Bloodgood, Whitecross
Nu-Metal	Combined hard rock with grunge and hip hop. This scene was hugely popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s.	Linkin Park, Limp Bizkit

Appendix 2: Topic guide for initial interviews

Note: The topic guide followed key phrases and words such as 'family'. The specific

questions underneath each heading represent probes which were used if the respondent did

not address them in the answer to the initial open-ended question.

Introduction

- Explain the research and the reason I am interviewing the participant.

- Explain the need for the tape recorder and that confidentiality is ensured.

- Explain to them that they can talk about anything they want.

Everyday Life

- Work

- Education

- Religion

- Hobbies

- Family

- Friends

- Relationships

- Social life

Music in General

- What was the first/last CD you bought?

- When did you attend your first concert?

- How did you get into music?

Consumption of Music

- How do you listen to music?

- When do you listen to it?

- Where do you listen to it?

- Do you download music?

- Do you download illegal files?

- What is your opinion of the music industry?

Heavy Metal Scene

- Why heavy metal?

- How did you get into the music?

- What are the characteristics of heavy metal?

- Probe about their knowledge of the scene.

- How would you compare it with other genres?

- Are you involved in other scenes?

- Can you tell me about the different genres of heavy metal?

- The clothes, the style, the trends…

- Ask about the Satanist aspect.

- Is there a big heavy metal scene in Ireland?

- Are your friends into the same type of music?

- What is your relationship with the scene?

- Do you see yourself as part of a scene?

- What does your family think of your participation in the scene?

- Do you think you will be still involved in the years to come?

Live Music

- Do you go to many live gigs?

- What do you do at gigs?

- What is it about heavy metal gigs that are so special?

- Who do you go with?

- The difference between live music and listening?

- How is the live scene facilitated in Dublin?

- Alcohol/drugs?

Moshing

- Code of behaviour?

- Protective clothing?

- Have you ever been injured in participation?

- Relationship with security

- Do females participate?

- Ask about the wall of death.

Emotion

- What kind of emotions do you experience listening to the music?

- Is it exciting?

- Do you listen to the music when you are angry?

- Would you say you are normally a happy person?

- Do you experience similar feelings with any other music or hobby?

- Do you feel connected to other fans?

- Do you feel comfortable about expressing your metal identity to non-metal heads?

- Are your friends into the same type of music?

Appendix 3: Additional topics that emerged in later interviews

Questions for a participant who set up a heavy metal website and organised gigs

- Why did you set up the website?

- How did you set up the website?

- How much of your time does it take up?

- What role do you have in organising gigs?

- Ask about the type of fans who comment on the forums.

- What do they talk about on the forums?

- How has metal changed in Ireland over the years?

- Explain the process of organising a heavy metal gig?

- Ask about security, insurance, permits, expense and the time needed.

- Do you enjoy it?

Questions for a participant who runs his own heavy metal record company

- Why did you decide to run your own label?

- How did you start it?

- Is there much competition? Are there many other labels?

- What kind of relationship do you have with the bigger record labels?

- Is running an underground heavy metal label profitable?

- Questions about relationships with international promoters and bands.

- Questions about the local Irish scene.

Online participation

- Do you visit specialised heavy metal websites?

- Why do you visit these websites?

- What do you do on them?

- How much time do you spend on them?

- Do you communicate with other fans online?

- What do you talk about?

- Do you use a pseudonym?

- Have you ever met any of these fans offline?

- What other websites do you visit? Do you contribute on other forums?

Gender (Questions change depending on the sex of the participant)

- Are there many women in the scene?

- Are they treated differently?

- Do they participate in the rituals?

- Female musicians?

- Is the scene sexist?

- How does it compare to other countries?

Appendix 4: An example of a subset of codes

Note: This is a small snippet of the development of the sub-theme regarding the influence of

external controls on the rituals that take place at heavy metal gigs.
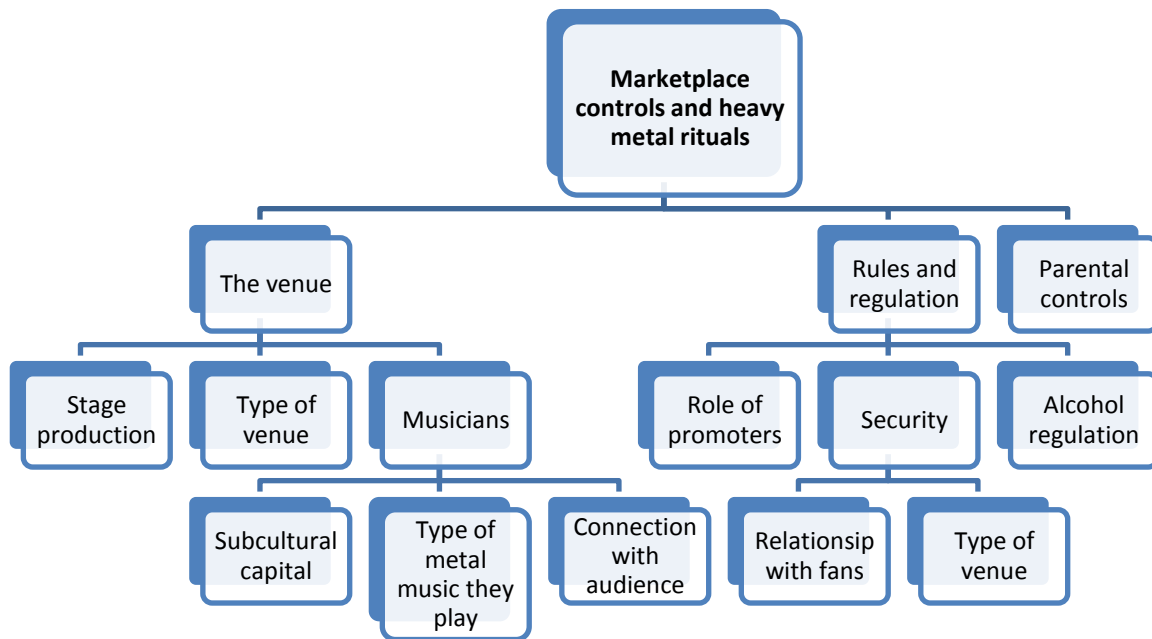
Appendix 5: Further Reading: Publications and Conference Papers

Sinclair, G. (forthcoming) 'Retreating Behind the Scenes: The 'De-Civilising' Impact of Virtual Spaces on the Irish Heavy Metal Scene', in L. Duits, S. Reijnders and K. Zwaan (eds.) *The Ashgate Research Companion to Fan Cultures*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing.

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Sinclair, G. (2012) 'Retreating Behind the Scenes: The 'De-Civilising' Impact of Virtual Spaces on the Irish Heavy Metal Scene'. Paper presented at the Crossroads in Cultural Studies conference, Sorbonne Nouvelle University and UNESCO, Paris, 2 July – 6 July 2012.

Sinclair, G. (2011). 'Heavy metal rituals and the civilising process', in C.A. Mc Kinnon, N. Scott and K. Sollee (eds.), *Can I Play with Madness? Metal, Dissonance, Madness and Alienation*, pp. 93–100. Inter-Disciplinary Press. Available at: http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/publishing/id-press/ebooks/can-i-play-with-madness/.

Sinclair, G. (2011) 'Chastising and Romanticising Heavy Metal Subculture: Challenging the Dichotomy with Figurational Sociology'. Paper presented at the Business of Live Music conference, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 31 March – 1 April 2011.

Sinclair, G. (2010) 'Heavy Metal Excitement: The Quest to be an Outsider'. Paper presented at the European Conference of the Association for Consumer Research, Royal Holloway University of London, London, 30 June 2010.

Sinclair, G. (2009) 'Music, Media and Identity: The Relationship'. Paper presented at the

    Joint Youth Study Group and Media Study Group Seminar, John Moores University,

    Liverpool, 3 September 2009.