

Spaces of Privilege

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Abstract

There have been extensive developments in 'gay rights' in the past 10 years. This has prompted the contention that some gay white men are increasingly able to access privilege at the expense of continued marginalisation for various gendered, raced and sexual others. Homonormativity describes a process through which gay white male subjects are increasingly understood as normalised and accepted within existing relations of inequalities and that this temporality is accompanied by depoliticisation and tendency towards privatisation and domesticity. I use evidence from 15 in-depth interviews with men drawn from my socio-sexual network in Brighton & Hove and autoethnographic writings in the form of reflective diary entries and short vignettes to develop a complex and fluid understanding of gay white men's spatial practices and experiences of privilege.

Compared to processes of marginalisation, the study of privilege has been less prevalent, yet the concept can be found in a broad variety of disciplines and foci of study. Privilege has been predominantly developed 'on the margins' of academia to understand how certain knowledges and identities come to be 'centred'. It is only recently that privilege has been adopted as a critical tool, used to explore the production of inequalities by 'mainstream' academia. The thesis integrates Foucaultian understandings of power with a queer and feminist conception of performativity and critical geographies to contribute an understanding of privilege as processual and situated, able to explore the multiplicity of intersecting spatial practices through which individual experiences are produced occur.

This thesis contributes to understandings of privilege, building upon previous work to demonstrate how participants normalise their identities and their positioning within relations of inequality. These normalising practices render the spatial production of privilege invisible through specific discourses of legitimation, in the process (re)producing relations of inequality. I develop this spatial conceptualisation of privilege, by exploring where the participants describe becoming privileged, where they feel restricted, how these processes operate and how they are experienced and understood. By using critical theories of space and place, this thesis works across multiple identities (such as race, class, gender and sexuality) to show the processes through which different individuals may be simultaneously marginalised and privileged by different apparatuses of power relations. I augment discussions of queer temporalities and the spatialities of everyday lives for gay white men by tracing an apparently normative trajectory from 'coming out' through participation in 'gay scene' spaces and towards private domesticity. This process is facilitated by the participants changing abilities to access privilege in different places as they move through their lives. However, my research demonstrates that the participants' spatial practices are not as linear as this normative trajectory suggests. While men in this research are able to access privilege, this is a fragile process, vulnerable to contestation, demonstrating the continued importance of examining processes of heteronormativity.

Overall, my work contributes empirical evidence of the manifestation and maintenance of privilege in the spatial practices of gay white men living in Brighton & Hove to develop a nuanced, complex and explicitly spatial understanding of privilege in everyday life.

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I want to thank my family for their unstinting love. My university career has been turbulent at times and without their support, I would not have been able to make it through. I'm an outspoken dissident with strange ideas yet I know that their home will always be a place of safety and security for me, no matter what else might happen and I draw a great deal of strength from that knowledge.

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This work is dedicated to all of the silent and lonely ones, to the angry and isolated ones. To those who have given up hope in making it stop, and just want to understand: Why me?

I haven't found my answers, but I'm still looking.

I turn to face my demons.
Seeing them, I comprehend
though I may never triumph
with humility and wisdom
I shall endure.

Authors Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university of a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed

Glen Noble.

1 Introduction

Outline

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Introducing Privilege
- 1.3 Introducing Homonormativity
- 1.4 Researching Unstable Subjects
- 1.5 Brighton as Research Context
- 1.6 Outline of the thesis
- 1.7 Conclusion

1.1 Introduction

‘The new homonormativity – it is a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilised gay constituency and a privatised, depoliticised gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption... we get marriage and the military then we go home and cook dinner, forever.’

(Duggan 2002, p179-189)

‘Queer patriarchs... Certain EuroWhite-identified gay men—relatively youthful, of some means, and typically childless—are well positioned to take advantage of key avenues of exploitation and profiteering in post-industrial world orders... Moreover, many elite (mostly white) gay men have access to the means by which to consolidate and shore up previous rounds of patriarchal white privilege accumulation.’

(Nast 2002, p880)

Since these key articles regarding homonormativity were published, there have been extensive changes to ‘gay rights’ in Britain. The Civil Partnerships Act (2004) provides legal recognitions for same-sex relationships similar to those of heterosexual marriage; while in July 2009 ‘Soldier’¹ celebrate the 10 years since the UK military was forced to drop its ban on homosexuality². These, along with the Sexual Offences Act (2003) and the Equalities Act (2010) represent huge changes in the legal governance of certain forms of sexual dissidence. Similarly, recent research shows that younger gay male students in some schools are less likely to experience homophobia (McCormack 2010; 2011; 2012) and Weeks (2007) has declared this a ‘world that we have won’. Yet Duggan (2002) challenges us to think critically about the effects of these changes and what she sees as a ‘narrowing’ of political ambitions, while Nast (2002) questions who they benefit and their effects on others. Both are concerned that the apparent acceptance of certain forms of sexual identities is accompanied by a reinforcement of other exclusions. Together these papers provoked a discussion of *homonormativity*, which considers the abilities of gay white men to access privilege and how privilege comes to be manifest, distributed, used and denied (see Brown 2008; 2009; Bryant 2008; Collins 2009; Denike 2010; Elder 2002; El-Tayeb 2012; Haritaworn 2007; Oswin 2005; 2007; 2008; Robinson 2012; Rosenfeld 2009; Seidman 2005; Sothorn 2004; Puar 2006). However, this debate has yet to be supported with empirical research into the everyday spatial practices of these homonormative subjects. Indeed this project represents one of few attempts to explore the spatial manifestation of privilege in gay white men’s everyday experience in the global North (although see Robinson 2012; Visser 2008). I do this using a combination of 15 in depth interviews and autoethnographic writing.

¹ ‘Soldier’ is the in-house magazine for the British army see <http://www.army.mod.uk/soldier-magazine/soldier-magazine.aspx>.

²See rulings; Lustig-Prean & Beckett v. The United Kingdom - Legal judgment, Strasbourg, 27.09.99; Smith and Grady v. The United Kingdom - Legal judgment, Strasbourg, 27.09.99.

This thesis will explore *where* and *how* privilege is manifest in the everyday lives of allegedly homonormative gay white men living in Brighton & Hove. The research has four main aims, these are:

- First; to produce empirical evidence of where privilege is manifest in the everyday lives of gay white men, what forms privilege takes and how their spatial practices are shaped through privilege.
- Second; to investigate how privilege is subjectively experienced and how relations of inequalities are naturalised and becomes invisible.
- Third; to examine how privilege is implicated in the production and alleged normalisation of homonormative temporalities.
- Fourth; to develop a spatial and performative approach to the study of privilege as a series of contingent and situated practices.

This thesis will address the spatialities through which privilege is enacted and experienced, rather than seeking to identify stable factors that create a universally and homogenously privileged subject.

This chapter introduces the key concepts used and outlines the scope of the thesis. Introducing privilege and homonormativity and discussing some of the complexities and tensions involved. I begin to position the thesis in relation to existing literatures and the focus for the project. I introduce Brighton & Hove and demonstrate why the city provides a good opportunity conduct this research before concluding with an outline of the coming chapters.

1.2 Introducing Privilege

'To run or walk into a strong headwind is to understand the power of nature... you make so little progress. To walk or run with that same wind at your back is to float... You do not feel how it pushes you along; you feel only the effortlessness of your movements... Only when you turn around and face that wind do you realise its strength.'

(Kimmel 2003, p1)

To talk about privilege is to call attention to the existence of those tailwinds, to try to make sense of them and their effects, to question the processes of their production. This is no easy task. As Kimmel (2003) and many others have emphasised, the beneficiaries of privilege are often unaware of its influence in the production of their daily experience. Since the term was popularised by McIntosh (1988) and her discussion of 'the invisible knapsack' this lack of awareness has been described as *invisibility* (see Chapter 2.3.1; Blum 2008; Bonnett 1997; DuBois 1920; Frankenberg 1993; Hurtado 1996; Iyer *et al.* 2003; Kimmel & Ferber 2003; Lensmire 2010; Magnet 2006; Maxwell & Aggleton 2010; Rains 1998; Stephens & Gillies 2012). Even individuals sensitive to the struggles of those around them might remain comfortably oblivious to the myriad ways that privilege benefits them at different times and in different places. It is easier to 'see' those who are struggling, and to understand that their problems might be alleviated, than it is to begin to question your own *lack* of problems. For those who experience privilege this lack of problems is the normal

operation of the world, rather than an experience produced through inequalities and the shaping of spatial relations to favour some positionalities and not others. To benefit from these tailwinds is not a neutral experience. It is predicated upon the existence and maintenance of inequalities.

Part of the difficulty lies with the multiplicity of processes, abilities, resources and practices through which privilege might be expressed or manifest. Privilege might be understood to be a relative freedom from fear of violence and the consequent ability to use, occupy and pass through space; or being easily recognisable, belonging and ordinary in a broad variety of spaces and not having your presence challenged. Privilege might be understood as the experience of seeing your racial, sexual or gender identities represented in positive ways, having access to state resources and not facing discrimination in employment, wage disparities or education. Being able to find places, indeed knowing with certainty that many places will welcome and enable your social, personal and sexual life practices while excluding those who are different from you is also an example of privilege. Being able to create safe and stable home environments is a privilege; seeing your interests represented politically by people who are like or similar to you; and being able to afford the lifestyle that you desire are privileges. Understanding your identity to be normal, blank and invisible, the centre against which all other identities are compared can produce an 'ontological security', which represents a vast and permeating experience of privilege (see Johnston & Valentine 1995, p102). In response to this multiplicity Hurtado (1999, p226) argued that 'we lack an elaborate language to speak about those who [are privileged] how they feel about, think about it'. The study of privilege is about finding that language and using it to understand the processes of producing, maintaining and contesting the power relations through which we are all positioned and constituted.

It is primarily through the work of those who are marginalised by particular apparatuses of relations that we have been able to explain and describe the production and effects of privilege and inequalities. For well over a century, black and critical race scholars have described their experiences of marginalisation (see Chapter 2.2) and their knowledge of the privileges of whiteness (Alilunas 1940; Black 1950; Brophy 1945; Brown 1939; 1940; Clement 1949; Cothran 1950; Drake 1951; DuBois 1899; 1903; 1906; 1920; 1935; 1943; Fanon 1967; Frazier 1929; 1937; 1939; 1949). Black and critical race scholarship is at the forefront of exploring privilege and the processes through which whiteness becomes centred, normalised and valued. Although there is also a body of research conducted by white academics exploring aspects of privilege, for example by addressing social stratification (Fagen & Tuohy 1972; Krisberg 1975; Lenski 1966; Mathews 1978; Scott 1982; Turner & Starnes 1976; Portwood & Fielding 1981) or education (Anderson & Vervoorn 1983; Graetz 1988; Van Den Berghe 1973), it has historically been framed to avoid critically

exploring *whiteness* directly (Duster 1976; Katz 1978; Little 1943; Lorimer 1978; Strong 1946; Wellman 1977).

In contrast, the past three decades has seen a huge growth in research that explores privilege from the perspective of those who are themselves the recipients of privilege (see Chapter 2.3). Leading to the development of new areas of research such as 'Whiteness Studies' (Chapter 2.3.1) or 'Masculinities Studies' (Chapter 2.3.3) and a variety of less well recognised topics such as critical studies of heterosexualities (see Hubbard 2000; 2008; Jackson 1999). What is different about this work is not just the quantity of material produced, but also that it represents concerted effort to document privilege in a variety of ways from *within*. Arguably McIntosh's (1988) paper is one of the most well known examples of this 'mainstream' interest in privilege for its enunciation of 46 privileges 'of whiteness' and a further 8 that she associates with heterosexuality (see Chapter 2.3.1; McIntosh 2012). Her model of critical self-reflection has been widely emulated (see Case 2012; Fine *et al.* 1997; Lee 2008; Magnet 2006; Wray & Newitz 1997). However, such self-reflection has also been criticised. Bonnett (2000, p2-3) writes that 'the endless musings and reminiscences that characterise an increasing number of engagements with [privilege]... provide little context or insight into the social formation of [privilege]'. Bonnett advocates a focus on privilege in the terms of political economics and labour historians such as Hill (1997), Roediger (1992; 1994; 2005) and Ignatiev (1995). I would argue that both of these approaches are valid and have much to offer understandings of privilege. Self-reflection focuses on the details of how privilege is enacted and manifest within everyday experience. While political economy allows for explorations of global and historical processes outside the realm of personal experience.

However this 'new' growth of interest in privilege, and the development of dedicated disciplines such as 'Whiteness Studies' or 'Men's Studies'³ is not something which has been uncritically accepted. There are dangers associated with the re-centring experiences of privilege at the expense of the experiences of those marginalised by power relations (see Leonardo 2002; 2004; Gillborn 2006; hooks 1992).

'First of these is the green light problem. Writing about [privilege] gives [privileged] people the go-ahead to write and talk about what in any case we have always talked about: ourselves... Related to this is the problem of 'me-too-ism', a feeling that, amid all this (all this?) attention being given to [marginalised] subjects, [privileged] people are being left out. One version of this is simply the desire to have attention paid to one... Another is the sense that being [privileged] is no great advantage... burdened with responsibilities we didn't ask for. Poor us. A third variant is the notion of white men, specifically, as a new victim group, oppressed by the gigantic strides taken by affirmative action policies.'

³ Or even 'Privilege Studies', see McIntosh 2012.

For Dyer, discussions of privilege by 'privileged subjects' present a number of challenges and potentially opportunities for the retrenchment of relations of inequality. Threatened by the loss of autonomy and privilege some 'privileged' groups aim to utilise an essentialist form of identity politics to advance a reactionary politics of privilege. Examples include; the discourse of 'reverse racism', denial of racism and opposition to affirmative action policies (Duster 1996; Harris 1993; Rollock 2012; Staples 1995; Swim & Miller 1999; van Dijk 1992); the mythopoetic men's movement (Bliss 1995; Bly 1990; Faludi 1991; Gilmore 1990; Kimmel 1987; Kimmel & Kaufmann 1995; Messner 1993; 1997; Schwalbe 1996); the rise in radical racist organisations and neo-conservatism (Blee 2002; Dwyer & Bressy 2008; Feagin 2000; Fekete 2001; Ferber 1998; Gallagher 1995; Josey 2007); or the local defence and maintenance of particular resources and exclusions such as 'NIMBY' campaigns (Hoelscher 2003; Holloway 2005; 2007; Hubbard 2005; Neal 2002; Nelson 2008; Vanderbeck 2006). Yet Dyer also warns against the more subtle dangers of reification and normalisation that can come with discussion of privilege. He fears that for privileged subjects to spend time talking about privilege will distract from continued exploration of inequalities and reinforce existing marginalisations.

One way to mitigate these dangers is through critical examination of the processes and spatialities through which privilege is produced. Critical understandings of space provide an opportunity to analyse how privilege is situated, produced and maintained. Geographers have argued extensively that the power relations and performativities of subject formation and the maintenance of inequalities are all explicitly and unavoidably spatial (Agnew 1987; Allen 2004; Ellis *et al.* 2004; Gregory 1994; Gregory & Walford *eds.* 1989; Harvey 1996; Herbert & Smith *eds.* 1989; Herbert 2008; 2009; Jackson 1989; Michael 1998; Said 1978; Sibley 1990; 1995; 1998; Sidaway 1992; Simon 2009; Wilton 1998). Spaces and subjects coproduce one another and operate to enable or disable, restrict or broaden the possibilities of action and construct complex geographies of inclusions, exclusions and boundaries (see Chapter 2.4; Butler 1990; 1993; Amin 2007; Darling 2009; Gregson & Rose 2000; Hood-Williams & Cealey Harrison 1998; Johnathan 2009; Massey 2004; Nash 2000; Nelson 1999; Rose 1995; Slocum 2008; Tauchert 2002; Thrift & Dewsbury 2000; Valentine 2008). Situating this research within geographies of sexualities and an exploration of the everyday lives of 'gay white men' presents a timely opportunity to research the spatial manifestation of privilege, augmenting existing literature by exploring the situated contingency and performative reproduction of privilege through discussions of homonormativity.

1.3 Introducing Homonormativity

Homonormativity has been described a process through which '[some] lesbians and gay men are now constituted as citizens worthy of inclusion', citizens who have achieved a level of acceptable visibility (Richardson 2005, p521). Duggan (2002, p190) has argued that this visibility is only accessible to a privileged few and yet it is increasingly used as a normative measure against which 'the democratic diversity of proliferating forms of sexual dissidence' are compared. Duggan (2002) suggests that the language of the gay movement is increasingly configured around a premise of *equality* rather than *liberation*, a change that has allegedly 'narrowed' the scope of political action and ambition. Debate has focused on the normative figure of the gay white man as a visible position of privilege, which allegedly no longer troubles dominant discourses of racism, classism and patriarchy (Bell & Binnie 2004; Brown 2008; 2009; Collins 2009; Duggan 2002; Elder 2002; Haritaworn 2007; Nast 2002; Oswin 2005; Puar 2006; Rosenfeld 2009; Sothorn 2004; Stryker 2008; Visser 2008). Increasingly, gay and lesbian lives are represented by popular media and have become targets for specific products and services, yet these media images frequently present far from 'realistic portrayals of a broad spectrum of gay men's lives ... (not all men act or look like those on the gay white malecentric TV series *Queer as Folk*)' (Nast 2002, p880).

Homonormativity aims to interrogate the normalisation of particular forms of gay white male identities and the processes through which other subjects are excluded or marginalised. Duggan (2002) has argued that this normalisation represents a radical break from previous forms of gay identification and politics, a specifically '*new* homonormativity'; an assertion which is challenged by Stryker (2008), who suggests that trans* persons have long been aware of the privileges that cisgendered queer subjects are able to access. Duggan (2002) argues that a homonormative politics, couched in the terms of equality, is a neoliberal attempt to access the privileges of a fundamentally oppressive model of normative identities centred on ambitions of domesticity, military service and a restricted vision of the State (see Bell *et al.* 1994; Brenkman 2002; Cohen 1997; Edelman 2004; Halberstam 2005; Halperin 2004; Nast 2002; Puar 2002; Sullivan 1995; Warner 1991; 1999). Homonormativity has therefore sparked a subsidiary discussion of gay life courses and the temporalities through which gay men's lives are imagined, desired, planned and experienced (Dinshaw *et al.* 2007; Edelman 2004; Eng *et al.* 2005; Halberstam 2005; Taylor 2010).

I argue that homonormativity describes how some gay and lesbian subjects are able to access privilege. I will investigate what the variety of work addressing privilege has to offer the interpretation of homonormativity (see Chapter 2.3). By addressing the experiences of gay white men I seek to offer empirical evidence and material to the discussion, answering Elder's (2002, p989) search for 'more complex and nuanced

individuals'. Elder (2002) and Sothorn (2004) both argue that the figure of the gay white man used by Nast (2002) is reductive and ignores the complex spatial practices of 'real' lives (see Brown 2008; 2009). Despite these calls for more nuanced approaches, there has been relatively little empirical research which explores the extent to which various theorisations of homonormativity might represent the materialities of gay white men's lives (although see Collins 2009; Robinson 2012; Rosenfeld 2009; Visser 2008). In seeking to address the everyday spatial practices of the men who took part in this study I draw on strands of poststructuralist, feminist and queer geographies which seek to destabilise the apparent fixities and uniformities of identity. The following section introduces some of the tensions surrounding poststructuralist understandings of identity that underpin the thesis.

1.4 Researching Unstable Subjects

Conceptions of homonormativity are predicated upon the existence of a relatively stable identity and the changing context and relations of power in which that identity is situated. However, Brown (2009) asks us to consider the possible effects and dangers of such reductive and potentially reifying approaches:

'What happens when... queer critique of normalising tendencies ends up performatively (re)constituting those tendencies as particularly one-dimensional and hegemonic? Do these representations add to the power of 'homonormativity', making 'it' seem less open to challenge, and discouraging potentially successful political interventions and challenges?'

(Brown 2009, p1487)

Brown suggests that critique of normalisation must remain sensitive to the complexities of lived politics and experience in order to avoid the kinds of reification discussed by Dyer (1997). This argument has been made extensively by both scholars of whiteness (Bonnet 1997; 2000; Delgado & Stefancic 1997; Dyer 1997) and masculinities (Connell 1995; 2000; Jackson 1999; Kimmel 1994) and its replication is an indication of quite how much these 'different' fields of study have in common with one another (see Chapter 2.3). In this thesis I will explore the difficulties of identifying an allegedly privileged 'gay white man' within a poststructuralist understanding of identification that challenges the unity and fixity of those identifiers (see Chapter 2.4). If gender, sexuality and race are all performative iterations of apparatuses of power relations and there is truly 'no doer behind the deed'⁴ then the foundation of these identities is fundamentally unstable (Boyne 1994; Bondi 1990; 1992; Butler 1990; 1993; 2004; Digeser 1994; Foucault 1977a; 1980a; 1980d; 1983; 1984; 1984; Gregson & Rose 2000; Hood-Williams & Cealey Harrison 1998; McNay 1992; 1994; Nelson 1999; Rouse 2005; Salih 2002; Thrift & Dewsbury 2000). It becomes difficult, if not impossible to point to a stable sexed, raced, sexualised and gendered body as being unambiguously the location of a pre-existing structural

⁴ See Nietzsche 1969 cited Butler 1990, p34.

privilege. Indeed within this framework, there can be no pre-existing structures or stability, only the continual repetition of action that congeals in a 'process of materialisation that stabilises over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface that we call matter (Butler 1993, p9). If this is the case then on there are few, if any, grounds upon which to focus the recruitment of participants for a study. If masculinity, maleness, whiteness, gayness are all apparatuses of power relations with only the appearance of stability then my attempts to explore the manifestation of privilege through a particular positionality of identity, that of gay white men, seems counterproductive. Nayak summarises this tension:

'The premise that there are distinct races with biologically inherent characteristics or culturally immutable ethnicities, has proved to be little more than a fabulous fiction, a myth of modernity... there is no such thing as race... However, the recognition that race does not exist has failed to lessen the impact of racialisation as mode for the social organization and regulation of human society... Furthermore, the deconstruction of race associated with social constructionist paradigms is yet to halt the dense economy of signs and signifiers that proliferate in contemporary culture.'

(Nayak 2006, p411-412)

Even as this project attempts to work through and with this contradictory tension between fixity and deconstruction, by (re)citing the discourses of race, gender, sexuality it contributes towards the maintenance and proliferation of those fictions. The production of categories of identity and their reification as fixed, obvious and *really existing* phenomena is one of the key practices through which inequalities and privilege are reproduced and legitimised. Chapter 3 discusses the difficulties in attempting to explore the spatialities of privilege without reference to the discourses through which certain phenotypical corporealities of skin, bones and genitalia and practices of sexuality, posture and performance come to be differentially understood and privileged. Selection of participants for the research becomes virtually impossible without some way of refining and describing the characteristics of who is of interest to the project (see 3.3.1). Yet doing so is, in itself, productive of the very categories and relations that the project seeks to explore and critique.

Queer geographies offer a way through this problem, a mode of understanding that allows for these kinds of contradiction and complexity. Oswin's (2005) suggestion of the 'complicit queer' is one example of how the project might proceed. Oswin argues that the search for definitive positions of innocence and guilt is impossible and, indeed, undesirable. Oswin suggests (2005, p83) that the production of a stereotypical 'homonormative' gay white man as a figure of absolute guilt operates to produce "other' gays and lesbians... [who] are implicitly portrayed... as absolutely outside spaces of complicity, and therefore harkened to as the source of a rejuvenated queer politics'. Oswin rejects this formulation and instead argues for a more ambiguous figure of the complicit queer, simultaneously engaged with practices

which challenge existing relations yet also a part of them and complicit with their reproduction (Oswin 2005; 2006). In this spirit Brown (2008; 2009) has aimed to bring to life the quotidian differences and variety of 'ordinary' gay experiences and spatial practices.

Drawing on these literatures, I seek to examine the spatial constitution of gay white men's everyday lives. The thesis itself is produced in a space of complicity and contradiction, simultaneously a constitutive part of processes reproducing and maintaining the relations it attempts to explore and critique. It is a part of the sedimentary recitation through which power relations congeal, yet its purpose is to contest and disrupt that process. Similarly, the lives and practices of the men in this study are simultaneously disruptive and constitutive of existing relations of inequalities, just as they are both the beneficiaries and victims of those relations.

The following section briefly describes Brighton & Hove and why the city makes an interesting place to situate this research.

1.5 Brighton as Research Context



Fig. 1 'Brighton is still very gay and full of balls'⁵
(Samuel Rogers letter to Thomas Moore 29, January 1829)

'Brighton has had a particular notoriety as a place of illicit sexual liaisons, captured in the notion of the 'dirty weekend' and the traditions of 'kiss-me-quick' seaside lasciviousness.'

(Browne & Bakshi 2011, p183)

Brighton & Hove has an established reputation as 'the gay capital of the UK'; a place of leisure, sex and excess. The city is a tourist hub and is represented as a place where decadence, sexual (and other) dissidences and extraversions are visible and welcomed (Browne & Bakshi 2011; forthcoming; Munt 1995). Brighton & Hove has history as a place for the exploration, nurturing and expression of 'alternative' lifestyles and experiences, particular in relation to tourism and the 'dirty weekend' and this is a key part of its status as the 'gay capital' (Browne & Bakshi forthcoming). Venues, businesses and organisations marketed and branded using symbols of 'LGBTQ' acceptance such as the rainbow flag positioned in shop windows are highly visible across the city. Tourist information and directories of the city all prominently

⁵ This line is widely featured on tourist memorabilia such as the mug this image is compiled from.

feature a section focused on bar and club venues, hotels or other services aimed specifically at LGBTQ or more predominantly gay male markets and constituencies. Brighton & Hove also hosts one of the largest 'Pride' festivals in Europe attracting large, multinational, crowds of tourists that effectively shut down sections of the road network for a portion of the day, effectively suspending 'normal' operation for a time (Browne 2007; Johnston 2005).

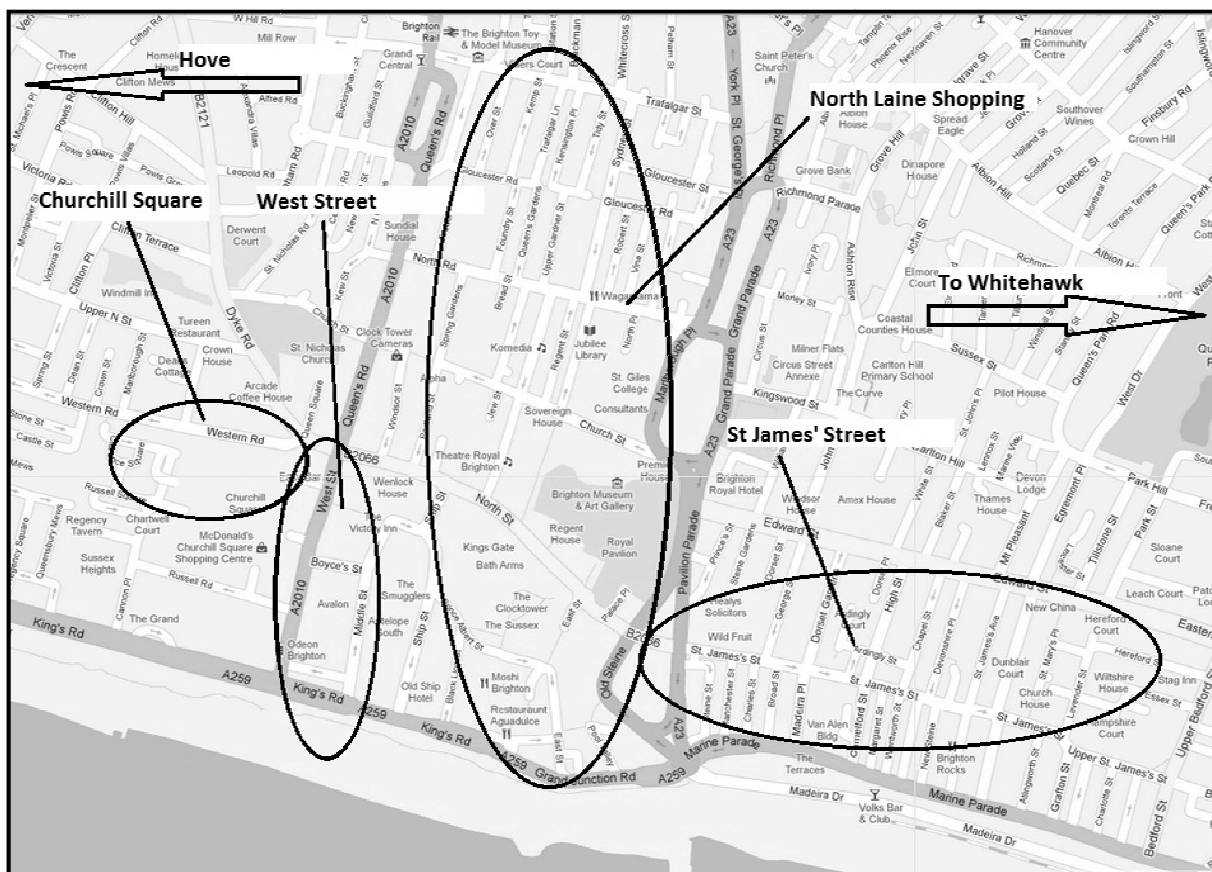


Fig. 2 Brighton & Hove town centre with key areas highlighted (Google Maps 2012)

The city has an estimated population of 251,000 (based upon 2003 figures; Brighton & Hove and Hove Council 2004), although this varies due to the relatively high number of students attending universities in the city. The city is majority white British (white British 89.5%; white non-British 5.4%; non-white 5.1%; Census 2004) and estimates place the LGBTQ population at 15% - 20% of the city total, approximately 35,000 to 40,000 (Brighton and Hove Council 2004; Browne & Bakshi forthcoming).

Brighton & Hove is a relatively compact city, a feature reflected in the fact that nine of the participants living in the central zone featured in Fig. 2. The six areas highlighted on this map represent the major 'places' in the city mentioned by the participants during their interviews. While there were few mentions of other places, these six features of the city are the most relevant. These features are the residential areas of Hove and Whitehawk; shopping areas of the North Laine/South Lanes and Churchill Square; and the bars and nightclubs concentrated around St James' Street and West Street. Broadly speaking these are represented by the participants as binary areas of

privilege and marginalisation, or safety and danger (respectively in each of the 'pairs' given).

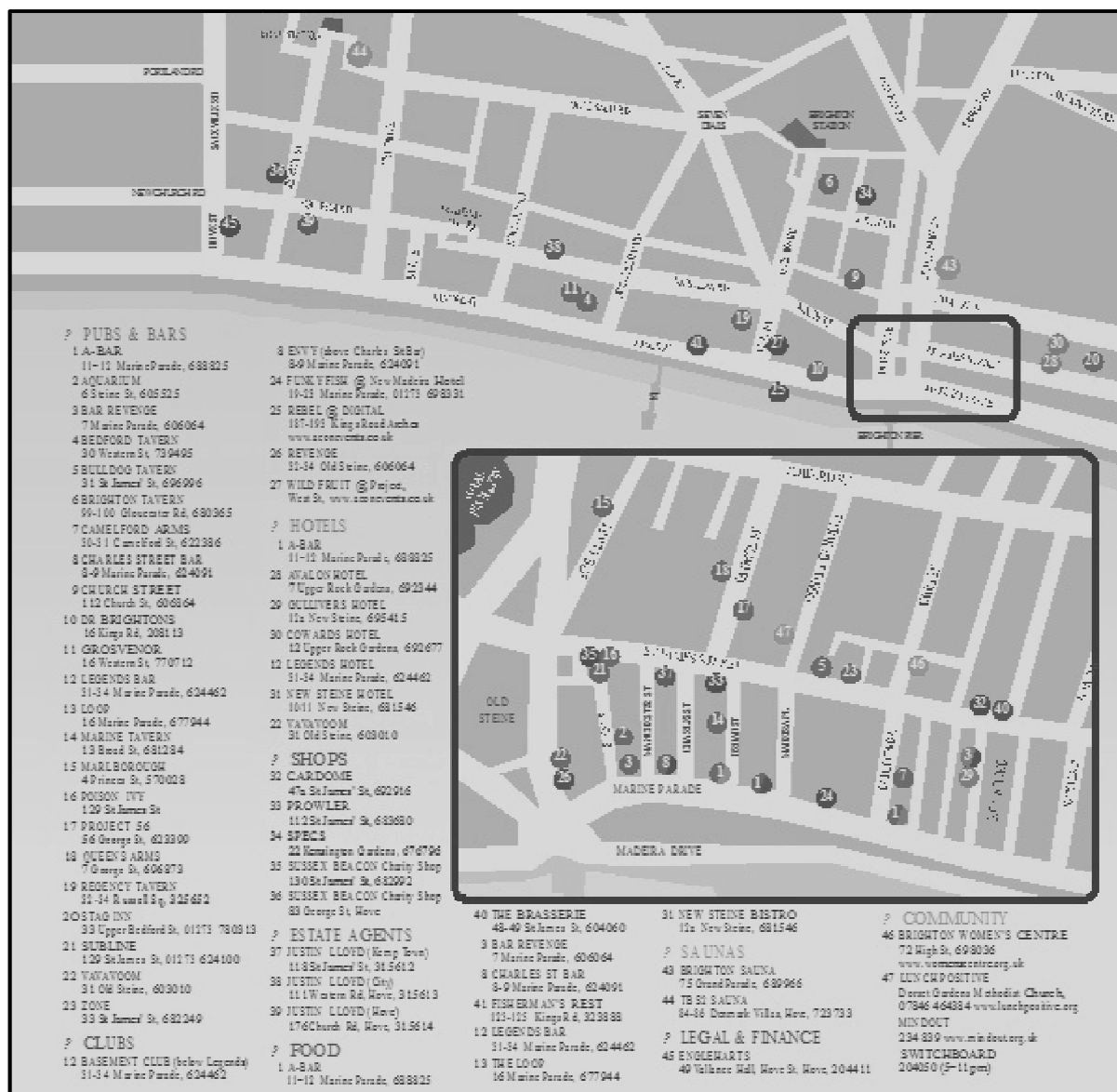


Fig. 3 Brighton & Hove town centre showing 'GScene' advertisers (2012, reprinted with permission)

The perceived tolerance of Brighton & Hove is predicated to a large extent on the presence of *the scene* and a *gay community*, which is constituted through a highly visible yet fluid series of spaces, and practices (see Browne & Bakshi 2011; Ridge *et al.* 2006; Valentine & Skelton 2003). Fig. 3 shows some of the businesses, primarily bars or clubs and hotels that paid for advertising with 'GScene' a local publication aimed at lesbian and gay consumers and provides a reasonable example of the number and distribution of venues which market themselves explicitly towards a gay audience. The development of 'gay ghettos' and 'scene' spaces and the particular forms of social interaction and identities that they foster and enable have been widely discussed in academic literatures (Bassi 2006; Bell 1991; Bell & Binnie 2004; Binnie & Skeggs 2004; Binnie & Valentine 1999; Brown 1991; Browne & Bakshi 2011; Chauncey 1994; Fraser 2008; Johnston 2005; Kirby & Hay 1997; Knopp 1990; 1998;

LeBeau & Jellison 2009; Nardi 2000; Nash 2006; Peterson 2011; Seidman 2002; Valentine 1993; Visser 2003; Weston 1995). These spaces can be key sites for the development of practices of resistance to marginalisation and of learning to perform intelligible gay identities (Holt & Griffin 2003; Kitchen & Lysaght 2003; Myslik 1996; Ridge *et al.* 2006; Valentine & Skelton 2003). Yet these spaces reproduce other boundaries and can be experienced as highly marginalising and exclusionary for a variety of bodies/identities (Bassi 2008; Bell 1994; Browne 2007a; Casey 2004; 2007; Cohen 1997; Kuyper & Fokkema 2010; McDermott 2011; Padva 2002; Podmore 2006; Rodriguez 2009; Sinecka 2008; Skeggs 2000; Slevin & Linneman 2010; Taylor 2007; 2008; Valentine 1995; Whitesel 2007; Wood 2004). Scene spaces can therefore be understood as privileging particular formations of gay identities and are associated with processes of homonormativity by centring experiences and needs of gay white men (Bell & Binnie 2004; Duggan 2002; Nast 2002).

Brighton's reputation means that it is generally understood and represented as being a 'better' place, more 'tolerant', more 'liberal' and more 'diverse' than a proliferating series of *elsewheres* which fail to live up to the egalitarian ideal of 'the gay capital of the UK' (see Browne & Bakshi 2011; forthcoming; Munt 1995; 1998; Shields 1991). The city has a 'large' number of venues, shops and hotels that actively promote themselves as LGBT or LGBT 'friendly' spaces, as shown in Fig. 3. There is also a variety of charities, community groups, peer support networks and public services that cater towards provision of LGBT orientated services⁶. The quantity of these groups and services, the variety of spaces in which they take place around the city and the highly distributed organisational structure means that rather than a specifically bounded 'gay community', 'gay scene', 'gay ghetto or 'gay village' the city as a whole tends to be interpreted as a place of widespread normative acceptance for LGBT subjects. Because of this, Brighton & Hove offers the opportunity to explore a relatively unique place for gay subjects, one in which homonormativity (understood as acceptance, provision of services and an experiences of *becoming normal* for some gay and lesbian subjects, see Browne & Bakshi forthcoming) is more 'advanced' than in other places. Brighton & Hove therefore offers a promising context to explore privilege and the effects that privilege has on the everyday lives and spatial practices of gay white men.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

This work is divided into two broad sections; the first reviews the literatures, theories and methodologies that are used in this project, while the second presents the original research and analysis that forms the core of my thesis. I close with a

⁶ The *Count me in Too* project has made an extensive survey of service access and provision for LGBT subjects living in Brighton & Hove see <http://www.countmeintoo.co.uk/library.php> for resources.

concluding chapter that draws together and synthesises this work, along with discussing some of the limitations of the project and ideas for future development.

Chapter 2 – Literatures of Privilege reviews the literatures that are used in the thesis. I show that privilege must be understood in relation to marginalisation and that it is vital to contextualise literatures of privilege through understandings of exclusion and inequalities. This chapter engages with four areas of research; whiteness, masculinities, class and sexualities and their engagements with privilege. I demonstrate that despite their differences, these areas of research share an understanding of privilege and I develop and refine this understanding using a theoretical framework of power, place and performativity.

Chapter 3 – Methods and Methodology outlines the principles and procedures through which the research was designed and performed. I discuss the problems of applying poststructuralist and queer theoretical approaches to the task of researching a particular intersection of identity and the ethical considerations that structured the project. The chapter outlines the methods of autoethnography and interviewing, along with issues of sampling and analysis procedures. It also discusses the challenges encountered, including the decision of five interviewees to withdraw from participation and the impact of this decision on the project.

Chapter 4 – Producing and Defending Privilege introduces the participants' understandings of themselves in relation to privilege. I argue that conceptions of privilege as invisible do not sufficiently account for the spatialities and processes through which privilege is produced and maintained. The chapter demonstrates the participants' ability to represent and marginalise 'the other'. I advance discussions of homonormativity by exploring how the identity of 'gay white man' is fractured by a power-geometry that produces a hegemonic 'normal' gay masculinity.

Chapter 5 – Trajectories through Scene Spaces explores the development of a normative temporality and the ways it is used to centre particular spatial practices and performativities while marginalising others as having 'failed' to develop appropriately. I address how the participants learn to access privilege in scene spaces and argue that further demonstrates privilege as a performative and situated practice. I show that the participants use understandings of '*Brighton-as-tolerant*' to reinforce an ontological security in their ability to access allegedly 'normal spaces' which transgress binary understandings of space as straight or gay. This discussion points towards an understanding of privilege that moves beyond homogenising narratives to focus on situated practices.

Chapter 6 – Geographies of Heteronormativity complicates and develops understandings of privilege by exploring experiences of homophobia, fear of crime and marginalisation through heteronormativity. I demonstrate that while the

participants are able to access privilege in a variety of places, they remain contingently subject to marginalisation and that these processes coexist to produce nuanced experiences of space and identity. The chapter augments existing understandings of the spatialities of homophobia and gay men's fear of crime and advances these discussions by demonstrating the participants' understandings of homophobia being located within bounded, identifiable places. The chapter demonstrates that practices of passing continue to be used by those under threat of marginalisation.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion synthesises the work of the thesis to produce clear indications of the contributions to knowledge that I will have made and the value of the research that I have done. The chapter describes the key points of my work and discusses some of the challenges that animate the project. It also presents some implications and considerations for future research based upon my work.

1.7 Conclusion

There have been numerous attempts to call attention to a diverse set of processes and effects that might be conceptualised as 'privilege'. Yet there has rarely been much coordination or integration between these engagements and some authors have even sought to refute the concept (for example Leonardo 2004; Hartman 2004). It is only relatively recently that the term has become broadly accepted as a worthwhile concept with which to interpret and conceptualise social life. The thesis uses a combination of 15 interviews and autoethnographic reflection to explore where and how privilege is manifest in the everyday lives and spatial practices of gay white men living in Brighton & Hove. The following chapter reviews literatures that have engaged with the concept of privilege.

2 Literatures of Privilege

Overview

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Studying Marginalisation

2.2.1 Intersectionality

2.3 Literatures of Privilege

2.3.1 Whiteness and Critical Race Theory

2.3.2 Class and Work

2.3.3 Masculinities and Hegemony

2.3.4 Sexualities and Homonormativity

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Power

2.4.2 Place

2.4.3 Performativity

2.5 Conclusion

2.1 Introduction

The term 'privilege' like 'marginalisation' performs a variety of functions; as a material thing, a process, a practice, an experience, a symbolic artefact, an analytic concept, an ephemeral moment and more. This chapter begins by reviewing the development of understandings of marginalisation and their impact on the conceptualisation of privilege. I discuss the importance of *intersectionality* for developing nuanced understandings of identities. The second section of this chapter discusses four areas of research which study of privilege; whiteness and critical race theory; class and work; masculinity and hegemony; sexualities and homonormativity. This is a necessarily partial attempt to represent diverse and complex fields and is by no means an exhaustive representation of each of them, only how they might be relevant for this study of privilege. The third section outlines the theoretical framework through used in this thesis. I use a combination of poststructuralist, queer, feminist and geographic theory to enunciate a Foucaultian conception of power, place and performativity. I conclude the chapter by synthesising this material into a conceptualisation of privilege as the performative effect of situated power relations through which certain subjects gain access to resources and abilities that are denied to others within similar spaces.

2.2 Studying Marginalisation

In keeping with the understanding of privilege developed in this thesis I understand marginalisation as a variety of situated processes through which subjects, individuals, groups or identities are restricted in their abilities to act and access resources. This section contextualises discussions of privilege through an understanding that marginalisation and privilege are reciprocally produced and interconnected. I also discuss intersectionality and its implications for the conceptualisation of the subject and privilege. I start by exploring early forms of social research as a method of producing governmental knowledges of social groups constituted as in some way 'deviant'.

Governmental knowledges which construct their subjects as 'social problems' operate to produce and regulate marginalised groups and identities (Elden 2007; Foucault 1967; 1973; 1976; 1979; Li 2007). Examples might include 'classic' studies of the conditions of the British working classes (Beveridge 1942; Booth 1967; Chadwick 1842; Kiernan 1987; Mayhew 1852; Rowntree 1971); or of the black population in the United States (Brown 1939; Burma 1946; Hatt 1948; Stonequist 1935; Strong 1946); drug users (Becker 1953); street sellers (Whyte 1943); the homeless (Anderson 1923); 'gangs' and criminality (Thrasher 1963); and foreign bodies (Malinowski 1916). They are characterised by the use of normalising discourses through which difference and inequalities are pathologised and addressed only as

problems for a reified 'ordinary' social body. However, by paying attention to these knowledges it is possible to gain insights into the privileged understandings of normalcy that structure understandings of difference.

Studies that overtly address the abject and marginalised 'other', also implicitly illustrate the positionality of the silent and 'privileged' centre because those concepts only ever gain meaning in relation to one another (Derrida 1979; Foucault 1970; 1972; 1977). Reciprocal production tends towards the formation of logical dichotomies between constructed classes of objects that do not and cannot interact (Boyne 1994; Jay 1981; Nelson 1999). Classes of objects are represented as homogenous and diametrically opposed to one another. In the process relations become hierarchically organised with one object taking the position of the immutable and bounded centre assuming the properties of the sacred and pure while the marginalised becomes infinite and shifting and assumes the position of the abject and profane (Jay 1981). Derrida (1978) argued that there is a *rupture* in such logics; they are fundamentally unstable because they are predicated on the relationship between the two elements (see Derrida 1997). Each is only ever given meaning through its relationship to the other and thus the centre has never been a fixed locus but rather is a function of logic. A reconfiguration which destabilises the organising structures through which categories and hierarchies are produced because there is no true centre or origin, therefore no part of the structure which is ever 'absolutely present outside a system of differences' (Nelson 1999, p280).

In contrast to biopolitical or governmental knowledges of or about 'marginal' groups (Allen 2004; Foucault 1979) are various critical projects that aim not only to document the lives and experiences of those marginalised by social relations, but also to develop knowledges that will enable and empower those groups. Often examples of this kind of work are developed and advanced from within as individuals seek to understand processes of marginalisation in their own terms. Critical ethnographic projects of race explored the production of black experiences in a number of contexts (DuBois 1899; 1906; 1935; Frazier 1937; 1939); the impact of racism (Black 1950; Brown 1939; Frazier 1949); race and class relations (Brown 1940; Drake 1951; DuBois 1943); and institutions of black culture and community (St Clement 1949; Frazier 1929). Postcolonial projects similarly explore how marginalisation is produced in relation to processes of colonial power and privilege (Alexander & Mohanty 1997; Ashcroft *et al.* 1995; Gilroy 2005; Kipfer 2007; Minh-Ha 1989; Shome 1999; Smith 1999; Spivak 1988). Similarly the development of a variety of feminisms aim to address the marginalisations faced by women and the power relations which produce and maintain those experiences (Ahmed 2010; Bondi & Domosh 1992; Bondi 1990; Braidotti 1990; Ellis & Peel 2011; Harraway 1991a; Kelly 1979; McDowell 1992; McNay 1992; Pateman 1989; Rose 1992; Sharp 2009; Simons 1979; Spelman

1988). Geographers have contributed significantly to these discussions through understandings of the spatialities of marginalisation and the importance of place. Boundary production, distancing, policing, mobilities and control of space are all important processes through which marginalisations are produced and regulated (Bell & Valentine *eds.* 1995; Cresswell 1999; Gregory & Walford 1989; Harvey 1996; Herbert 2008; 2009; Hubbard 1997; Jackson 1989; Laurier 2003; Roberts 2006; Sibley 1990; 1995; 1998). Policing and regulation of space through a rhetoric of community participation, regeneration or public safety can lead to practices of purification through which 'undesirable' elements are excluded (Allen 2004; Atkinson & Laurier 1998; Delaney 1999; Elden 2007; Ellis *et al.* 2004; Fenster 1999; Fischer & Poland 1998; Hannah 1997; Hubbard 1998; 2002; Hubbard *et al.* 2009; Michael 1998; Reyes 2011). This leads to the production of 'moral geographies' and the production of some places as deviant, immoral or dirty (Agnew 1987; Agnew & Duncan 1989; Bannister *et al.* 2006; Hubbard 1999; 2001; 2004; Hubbard *et al.* 2009; Jayne *et al.* 2010; Wilton 1999). Similarly the representation of the threatening, invasive or alien other operates across national boundaries in a colonialism that writes a stable (inferior) monolithic identity onto 'foreign' spaces (Abbott 2003; Castree 2004; Gilroy 2005; Gregory 1994; Kipfer 2007; Said 1978; Sidaway 1992; Simon 2009). The ways in which places operate to exclude or marginalise in relation to various dis/abilities have also come under scrutiny (Butler & Parr 1999; Castrodale & Crooks 2010; Gleeson 1996; 1999; Imrie 1996; Milner & Kelly 2009; Sothorn 2007; Valentine *et al.* 2003).

Experiences of violence, vulnerability to violence and the fear of vulnerability are powerful forces in the spatial production of exclusion (England & Simon 2010; Hale 1996; Pain 2000; Pain & Smith 2008). Explorations of women's fear of crime has yielded a variety of insights into how fear of violence shapes and differentiates women's experiences of mobility and their abilities to use and occupy space (Guiffre & Williams 1994; Koskela 1999; Pain 1991; 1997; Painter 1992; Stanko 1996; 1997; 2000). While it has generally been women's fear of crime that has dominated this literature, the fear and victimisation experienced by people of colour should also not be overlooked, particularly in relation to the security responses of the 'war on terror' (Cole 2002; Mamdani 2002; Puar & Rai 2002; 2004; Zacharias 2003; see also Hawkesworth & Alexander *eds.* (2005) *'Signs' Special Issue: War and Terror: Raced & Gendered Logics and Effects*). Fear of crime has been examined in relation to various factors such as the differences between fear in urban environments and suburban or more isolated places (Kern 2003; Neill 2001; Vrij & Winkel 1991), the correlations between experiences of violence and socio-economic class (Hubbard 2003; Klein 2006; Peake 1993; Taylor 2005; 2011), or in geographies of sexualities, the experience of fear in 'safer' spaces and the presence of straights (Herek 1992;

Kitchen & Lysaght 2003; la Pastina 2006; Moran *et al.* 2001; 2003; Moran & Sharpe 2004; Valentine 1993; 1998). Further the effects of the public/private dichotomy in producing understandings of the home as a 'safe' space has been criticised for hiding domestic or intimate partner abuse (Holmes 2009; Kelly *et al.* 2011; Messinger 2011; Murray & Mobley 2009; Stanko 1987) and as a potentially marginalising place for sexual dissidents (Gorman-Murray 2007; Johnston & Valentine 1995; Valentine 1993; Waitt & Gorman-Murray 2011), particularly those who are young (Adams 2006; Valentine *et al.* 2003).

Geographers have contributed to understandings of how marginalised groups claim and produce their own spaces of resistance. While marginal spaces on the peripheries of urban centres or rural space might be understood as being dirty, undesirable or dangerous, often these spaces are chosen or at least claimed as radical and autonomous spaces of difference specifically in order to provide places for marginalised identities and practices to thrive (Brown 2007; Jeppesen 2010; Kitchin 2002; Lee 2010; Myslik 1996; Philo 1998; Valentine *et al.* 2003). These might include spaces of alternative sexual practices (Andersson 2010; Brown 2008; Delaney 1999; Hubbard 1999; 2001; Hubbard *et al.* 2008; Hubbard & Sanders 2003; Hurley & Prestage 2009; Muanoz-Laboy *et al.* 2007; Noel 2006; Westhaver 2006) or the formation of communities around particular identities such as 'race' or ethnicity (Alexander 2011; Bassi 2008; Clayton 2009; Delaney 2002; Duneier & Black 2006; Durlington 2006; Dwyer & Bresseley 2008; Fortier 2007; Kundani 2000; Tolia-Kelly 2010 Valins 2003 Veninga 2007). Travellers or gypsies are one such group whose use of marginal spaces, often on the edges of towns and in the face of local objections, have been explored (Atkinson & Laurier 1998; Holloway 2005; 2007). Similarly, the development of LGBT urbanism and the formation of networks of businesses, charities, friendships and intimacy provide an opportunity to examine the appropriation and reconstruction of marginal spaces into supportive 'safer' spaces of visibility.

Although predominantly centred on the experiences of gay white cisgender men, the theorisation and research exploring the spatial practices of sexual dissidents provide examples of how marginalised subjects can claim and produce space (Bell 1991; Bell & Binnie 2004; Binnie & Skeggs 2004; Binnie & Valentine 1999; Brown 2008b; Browne *et al.* 2007; Chauncey 1994; Kitchen & Lysaght 2003; Knopp 1990; 1998; LeBeau & Jellison 2009; Levine 1998; Myslik 1996; Nash 2006; Visser 2003 Weston 1995). These analyses of resistive and empowering spatial practices has been extended to explorations of suburbs (Gorman-Murray 2007; Kirkey & Forsyth 2001; Lynch 1992), ruralities (Bell 2000; Bell & Valentine *eds.* 1995; Phillips *et al.* 2000; Rasmussen 2006), cyberspaces (Hillier & Harrison 2007; Mowlabocus 2010; Whitesel 2007), and tourism, leisure and the spectacles and celebrations of 'Pride' events

(Browne 2007; Browne & Bakshi 2011; Collins 2009; Gorman-Murray 2009; Johnston 2005; Visser 2003). Lesbian and gay homes can provide a place for the formation and nurturing of resistance to heteronormativity (Gorman-Murray 2006; 2007; 2008; Kentlyn 2008; Waitt & Gorman-Murray 2007). These examples require understandings of identities that extend beyond individual frames of reference and are able to account for the subject as multiply positioned. The following section introduces the concept of intersectionality and its importance for the theorisation of privilege.

2.2.1 Intersectionality

The literatures reviewed so far tend to prioritise a single category of identity at a time. While this has been productive, the identities represented tend to form dichotomies of self/other. Narratives of, for example, women's experiences have been critiqued as producing a universal category of 'woman' and its dichotomous partner 'man', effacing the differences between individual women and men (Hill Collins 1990; 2000; Knudson 2005; Nash 2008; Phoenix & Pattynama 2006). This problem has come to be known as *intersectionality* and was originally developed in the context of black women's experiences within feminist movements and politics, as hooks (2000, p9) argues 'black women have felt forced to choose between a black movement that primarily serves the interests of black male patriarchs, and a white women's movement which primarily serves the interests of racist white women'. Theorisations of intersectionality move beyond discussions of discrete identity categories and explore the lived experience of complexity and multiplicity; this project's focus on gay white men necessitates an understanding of the ways in which different forms of identity might intersect.

The 'politics of sisterhood' attempted to make universal claims about the nature of women's experience and their marginalisation by patriarchal systems (Crenshaw 1993; Hull *et al.* 1982; Lorde 1984; McCall 2005; McDowell 1992; Simons 1979; Yuval-Davis 2006). In contrast black feminists argued that 'the description of what we have in common "as women" has almost always been a description of white middle class women' which did not accurately represent or include their own classed, raced and gendered experiences (Spelman 1988, p124). Crenshaw (1993) argues that their position at an intersection of two different hierarchies of domination positions black women as being doubly marginalised and that their experiences will therefore be different from those of white women (Beale 1970; Hurtado 1989; 1996; Moraga & Anzaldúa 1981). Intersectionality engages with the prevailing whiteness (and heterosexuality, able-bodied-ness etc.) of the feminist movement to combat the production of hierarchies within feminist activism and research.

Understandings of intersectionality have subsequently been debated, challenged and developed (McCall 2005). Geographers have emphasised the coproduction of subjects and space and argued for an appreciation of the situated performance of identities (Davis 2008; Hopkins & Noble 2009; Hopkins & Pain 2007; Knudson 2005; Ludvig 2006; Valentine 2007; Valentine & Waite 2010). While poststructuralist feminists have suggested the 'additive model', proposed by Crenshaw (1993), assumes the identity categories that are used as indicators of difference are stable and global. Brown (1997, p88) argues that such additive intersectionalities are predicated upon a pre-Foucaultian conception of power which 'is seen to locate subjects in a field of power but the field itself is not seen to produce the subjects it locates; it is not regarded as the very medium of emergence of those subjects'. More recently Nash (2008, p1) suggests that intersectionality be reconfigured to 'grapple with intersectionality's theoretical, political and methodological murkiness to construct a more complex way of theorizing identity and oppression'. Nash (2008, p12) argues that intersectionality must take into account 'the ways in which subjects might be both victimized by patriarchy and privileged by race... in particular social, cultural, historical, and political moments. In conceiving of privilege and oppression as complex, multivalent, and simultaneous, intersectionality could offer a more robust conception of both identity and oppression'. Valentine provides a similar perspective on intersectionality:

'First by recognising the fluid, unstable nature of intersections between categories, this approach does not assume that intersections between multiple-identity categories are always experienced or 'done' in untroubled ways. Second, in understanding intersectionality as a situated accomplishment, this way of theorising recognises the ways that individuals are actively involved in producing their own lives and so overcomes some of the determinism ... that classified individuals into fixed categories'

(Valentine 2007, p14)

Valentine (2007) argues that the reconfiguration of intersectionality is not complete and that feminist geography has much to offer. Specifically, theorists regularly overestimate the abilities of individuals to reconfigure their fluid identities and underestimate how the ability to enact some identities is spatially contingent. This understanding of intersectionality is more situated and complex than prior additive models, asserting that the subject is produced through multiple positionalities and relations, that the constitution of those individual positionalities are themselves mutable and that mutabilities and interrelations are situated and spatially contingent.

The cross cutting of intersectionality within and between identities that experience marginalisation leads to a fragmentation of monolithic identity politics and an often frantic search for stability and authenticity (Ahmed 1999; Berg & Kearns 1996; Brenkman 2002; Crenshaw 1993; hooks 1990; Knopp 1998). Contests over who has an authentic claim to particular places (even those produced as marginal) produce

other margins, other peripheries and other spaces. Such struggles for authenticity and *real* connections between identity, subject and place are doomed because there has never been such a connection; '[a]uthenticity as a need to rely on an 'undisputed origin,' is prey to an obsessive fear: that of losing connection. Everything must hold together' (Minh-Ha 1989, p94). This renders the ambiguous, the aberrant or apparent contradiction into a dangerous threat to those claims for authenticity. Potentially further marginalising those whose identities, bodies, appearances or practices are already excluded and produced as *abnormal* (Browne 2006; Butler 1990; Halberstam 1998; Mclean 2008; Nash 2011; Skeggs 2001).

Intersectionality challenges the appearance of fixity and unity, in the process presenting opportunities to explore nuanced experiences of space and self. An intersectional approach enables an exploration of the ways in which individual subjects are the site of multiple interrelations of power that cannot be traced to any singular source. At the same time, fragmentation and the search for authenticity can lead to obsessive practices of boundary production and maintenance, such as can be seen in the desire for an innocent space of queer radicalism (Oswin 2005).

Intersectionality challenges researchers to recognise that identities are never singular, but are instead intersections of multiple, situated power relations. While this is true of all identities, this project's explicit focus on the lives of gay white men brings together multiple fields of study in an attempt to produce an understanding of everyday spatial practices. This discussion of intersectionality emphasises issues of spatiality and multiplicity that are developed during this project.

The study of marginalisation has been an extensive project throughout the history of social research. While this work is productive in its own right, it can also be used to explore the often-implicit understandings of privilege that act to structure the production of meaningful statements about marginalisation (Boyne 1994; Derrida 1978; 1997; Foucault 1970; 1972; 1977). When researchers and theorists produce frameworks of understanding which position certain bodies and identities as 'marginal' or existing on the 'periphery' they also, often silently and implicitly, position other bodies and identities in the 'centre'. This relationship is neither singular nor stable, rather there are multiple centres and multiple margins overlapping, complicating and intersecting with one another, yet they remain interconnected and co-productive. Studies exploring marginalised spatial practices can therefore be highly informative about where and how privilege might be manifest. By briefly reviewing how marginalisation has been researched, along with the impact of intersectional approaches to the conception of identities, this section has begun to produce the theoretical basis for my understanding of subjectivity and the manifestation of inequalities. If the subject is produced through multiple apparatuses of power relations, and those relations can be simultaneously

marginalising and privileging, then it follows that there can be no homogeneously stable positions of privilege or marginalisation. This argument is essential to the (re)conception of privilege that this project develops. The following section reviews literatures that explore privilege directly and some of their areas of similarity and difference.

2.3 Literatures of Privilege

Developing from the knowledges of those who are the subject of processes of marginalisation is a critical understanding of those who are privileged. These critical knowledges are the basis of understandings of privilege and predate widespread study, sometimes by decades. This section reviews four areas of research that engage with the concept of privilege. This review is necessarily broad as I shall draw out some of the commonalities between these fields of study and their approaches to the study of privilege. Retaining an understanding of the importance of intersectionality, this section reviews a variety of literatures that I draw upon to synthesise an approach to privilege that advances current understandings of the topic.

2.3.1 Whiteness and Critical Race Theory

‘It would be hard to imagine someone writing a book about what it means to be white. Most white people don’t consider themselves to be a part of a race... they are the natural order of things.’

(Saynor 1995, p2)

‘In what has become a familiar gesture, Saynor links the idea that whites’ identities have rarely been written about with the contention that whites are ‘invisible’ in racial discourse... I would suggest that such claims need to be treated with some care. We should not forget that until relatively recently the attributes of the ‘white races’ were not a subject about which white people were known to be particularly reticent. Colonial and racist anthropologies and histories produced a voluminous literature on the superiority of white civilisation.’

(Bonnett 2000, p119)

White scholarship has produced a great many knowledges that engaged with the taxonomies of ‘race’ and the alleged superiority of ‘white’, ‘European’, ‘Christian’ ‘civilisation’ (for a historical geography of this development and various other kinds of whiteness see Bonnett 2000). Readings of these histories demonstrate the role of ideology in the social production of knowledge and the ways in which knowledge production can operate to reproduce and legitimise relations of power (Gould 1981; Kincheloe & Steinberg 1998; Tucker 1994; Wander *et al.* 1999)⁷. One of the effects of these knowledges is to produce normativities and ‘centres’, enabling certain positionalities access to the rhetoric of *humanity* and an unmarked, universal positionality. As Dyer (1997, p2) argues; ‘there is no more powerful position than that of being ‘just’ human. The claim to power is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity’. As Bonnett (2000) argues in the epigraph for this section, *whiteness*, the

⁷ A practice which arguably continues through ongoing research into biological determinism and various forms of anthropometry including ‘IQ’ testing, see Gould 1981; Tucker 1994.

apparatuses, discourses and social practices through which 'white' skin colouration becomes a marker of privilege, is one example of such normative positioning.

While colonial taxonomies of race once placed a high premium on describing the attributes of the 'white race' and 'white civilisation' this volubility has declined over the course of the 20th century and it is predominantly through the work of black scholars that critical knowledges about privilege were originally developed (Brown 1939; St Clement 1949; DuBois 1906; Frazier 1929; 1937; 1939). DuBois (1920) suggests that those marginalised by power relations have a particular insight into the operation and maintenance of privilege⁸, he writes;

'Of them I am singularly clairvoyant. I see in and through them. I view them from unusual points of vantage. Not as a foreigner do I come, for I am native, not foreign, bone of their thought and flesh of their language.'

(DuBois 1920, p55)

Using this 'vantage' or perspective on the operation of privilege black scholars explored the ways in which class identities fracture white experiences, particularly in relation to the development of prejudicial and discriminatory behaviour (Brophy 1945; Brown 1940; Frazier 1949). Along with exploring how white populations and organisations operate to maintain their political dominance (Alilunas 1940) and the representations of whites in black fiction and cultures (Cothran 1950; Fanon 1967; Wilson 1973). They highlight the social, spatial and temporal contingency of white culture and dominance of particular places, disinvesting whiteness of its perceived universality, homogeneity and essentialism.

Critical studies of whiteness, and privilege more generally, 'owes its greatest intellectual debt to the work of W. E. B. DuBois' although his contribution is rarely adequately recognised (Twine & Gallagher 2008, p7). DuBois (1899; 1903; 1906; 1920; 1935; 1943) effectively formulated four core principles for conceptualising privilege 1) Power relations produce the experiences of all persons, regardless of individual positionalities. 2) Privilege refers to a 'public and psychological wage' of benefits, advantages and resources. 3) Privilege and marginalisation are often naturalised processes or attitudes that are invisible to privileged groups and individuals. 4) Despite its ubiquity, privilege is not a monolithic uniform process. These principles permeate all subsequent theorisations of privilege; indeed DuBois pre-empts a number of 'new' developments later in the century. One clear example of this is in his articulation of privilege as invisible which precedes McIntosh's (1988) discussion of 'the invisible knapsack'. DuBois (1899, p322) writes that 'most white people are unconscious of any such powerful and vindictive feeling; they regard color prejudice as the easily explicable feeling that intimate social intercourse with a lower

⁸ This is described by hooks (1992) as 'looking back' and resurfaces in feminist epistemologies as the 'epistemic privilege' of the oppressed, Mohanty 1997.

race is not only undesirable but impractical if our present standards of culture are to be maintained’.

Developing from DuBois’ (and subsequently McIntosh’s) work, *invisibility* has become one of the most important elements in the conception of privilege. The invisibility of privilege is so taken for granted that Kimmel⁹ (2003, p6) writes ‘one way to understand how privilege works – and how it is kept invisible – is to look at the way we think about inequality’ (see Bonnett 1997; Dyer 1997; Frankenberg 1993; Kimmel 1994; Kimmel & Ferber 2003; McDermott & Samson 2005; McIntosh 1988; 2012; Rollock 2012; Sanders & Mahalingham 2012; Wildman 1996). Comparatively, few discussions of privilege have attempted to explore the processes through which privilege becomes invisible (see Bérubé 2003; Foster 2009; Frankenberg 1993; Nakayama & Krizek 1999; Reyes 2011; Whitehead & Lerner 2009). Similarly the everyday spatialities and contingencies of privilege are only recently becoming a focus of critical study exploring where privilege comes to be manifest, rather than merely the fact of its existence (see Coston & Kimmel 2012; Housel 2009; Hubbard 2005; Inwood & Martin 2008; Kern 2003; Nelson 2008; Stephens & Gillies 2012). I argue that the study of privilege in its current variety can be traced back to the initial principles laid down by the work of DuBois. The knowledges of black scholars, published in journals such as ‘*Phylon*’ (1940-1956) and ‘*The Journal of Negro Education*’ (1932-) are a key resource for the theorisation of privilege. However, this material has been critiqued as complicit with the marginalisation of black women, which further demonstrates the need for research that foregrounds intersectionality (Cade 1970; Hull *et al.* 1982; Moraga & Anzalua 1981; Smith 1983; Wallace 1978).

This critique of the patriarchal legacy of the civil rights movements and the racism of predominantly white feminism influenced the development of distinctive black feminisms that asserted the critical importance of addressing processes of race, class and gender simultaneously (Hill Collins 1990; Hurtado 1989; Spelman 1988; Walby 1989). Lorde’s (1983) argument that there is ‘no hierarchy of dominations’ highlights the mutual interrelation of power relations and challenges liberal understandings of the universal subject (see Anderson & Collins 1998; Carby 1992; hooks 1992; Lorde 1984). These forms of black feminist writing prioritise the theorisation of difference, arguing that coalition between different identities is vital to challenging relations of inequalities and has strong ties to postcolonial theories and practice (Anchola 1995; Acker 1980; Alexander & Mohanty 1997; Antrobus 1995; Appadurai 1990; Chow 1993; Hunter 2002; Jazeel 2006; Kelly 1979; Nnaemeka 1998; Pratt 2011; West & Fenstermaker 1995). Black feminism can therefore be associated with an

⁹As just one possible example amongst many.

appreciation for coalition, resistance, the management of dual identities¹⁰, and the labour of community production (Anderson & Collins 1998; Cade 1970; Davis 1981; 1989; Hill Collins 1990; hooks 2000; James & Busia 1993; Moraga & Anzaldúa; Smith 1983). One example of this complexity can be seen in explorations of home as a place of resistance to racism, despite its implication in the marginalisation of women (Hill Collins 1990; 2000; Smith 1983). Black feminisms advance the conception of privilege through their recognition of the multiplicity and how privilege and marginalisation which might spatially coexist and coproduced.

Emerging from these critical explorations of privilege are two projects that require some discussion. The first is primarily a historical project that aims to explore the various socio-cultural contributions of marginalised voices in writing, activism, political institutions and others (Chow 1993; Fishkin 1995; Gates 1985; hooks 1992; 1998; Minh-Ha 1989; Morrison 1992; Pruett 2002). The second is a call for those who are able to access privilege to join the ongoing critique, from the 'inside'; in effect using the resources of privilege to address and challenge the formation of inequalities in ways that 'marginal' scholars might not be able to do (hooks 1998; Hurtado 1989; 1996; 1999; Morrison 1992). Both of these projects provided a key impetus for the development of 'Whiteness Studies' and broader studies of privilege authored by 'privileged' writers. Hurtado (1999, p226) has suggested that 'missing in the puzzle of domination is a reflective mechanism for understanding how we are all involved in the dirty process of racialising and gendering others, limiting who they are and who they can become'. In answer to this gap in understanding, critical studies of whiteness became more prevalent and reflexive entering a more mainstream position within the predominantly white academy (Pulido 2002; Mahtani 2006; McIntosh 2012).

'Critical Whiteness Studies' has had a rapid period of growth in the past two decades as can be seen from the number of edited collections and primers in the field (see Apple 1998; Bonnett 2000; Delgado & Stefancic 1997; Dyer 1997; Garner 2007; Hill 1997; Jacobsen 1998; Lopez 1996). The first task of a critical study of whiteness has been a re-emphasis of the racialisation of whites in an attempt to destabilise the ability of white rhetoric to access the privileges of universalism (Dyer 1988; Harris 1993; Morrison 1992; Roediger 1992; Saxton 1990). One way of doing this was through the approach taken by McIntosh (1988) in producing lists and descriptions of discrete privileges experienced primarily by the individual. By critically reflecting upon the practices and processes of privilege in her own life, aiming to address taken for granted and naturalised everyday assumptions, McIntosh set a clear example that

¹⁰ Dual identities or 'dual consciousness' (Hill Collins 1990); 'double consciousness' (DuBois 1903) and 'the mask' (hooks 1992; Fanon 1967) are all understandings of the insider/outsider perspective of marginalised identities who must actively negotiate the spaces of privilege in ways which minimise their exposure to risk and violence while also maintaining identities on/in their own terms.

has influenced a great deal of subsequent work (Bérubé 2003; Case 2012; Chizhik & Chizhik 2005; Fine *et al.* 1997; Lee 2008; Lipsitz 1995; Magnet 2006; Myers 2008; Rains 1998; Silverstein 1998; Sullivan 2006; Willis & Lewis 1999; Vaught 2008). However, critical introspection and observation has been criticised for its reliance on textual modes of reasoning and analysis compared with 'objective' material (Blum 2008; Bonnett 2000; Hartman 2004).

Another tradition has been a series of critical histories and geographies that illustrate the inessential, situated and fluid production of whiteness as a category of identification. Labour historians followed DuBois in a Marxian attempt to explain how the colour line operated to prevent 'differently' raced members of the working classes unifying in opposition to class oppression (Bonnett 1997; 2000; Harris 1993; Ignatiev 1995; Johnson 1999; Lipsitz 1995; Oliver & Shapiro 1995; Roediger 1992; 2005; Saxton 1990). One of the most important contributions has been exploring the geographical and historical specificity of whiteness and the ways in which different individuals, groups, societies come to be included or excluded from identification as 'white' (Apple 1998; Byrne 2003; Delgado & Stefancic 1997; Garner 2007; Gatson 2003; Hartman 2004; Hill 1997; Jackson 1998; Jacobsen 1998; Lopez 1996; May 1996; McGuinness 2000; Medina 2011; Panelli 2008; Shome 1999; Twine 1996; Wander *et al.* 1999).

A similar trend has explored where and how ostensibly 'white' bodies come to be excluded from access to the privileges of whiteness and how the boundaries of 'whiteness' are relocated so as to exclude particular bodies and identities (Haylett 2001; Holloway 2005; 2007; McCallum 2005; McDermott & Samson 2005; Peterson & Hamrick 2009; Roediger 2005; Winders 2003; Wray & Newitz 1997). These projects continue to deconstruct the apparent fixity and normativity of whiteness by exploring the production and fluidity of boundaries, expanding to include new bodies and identities and/or shrinking and relocating to exclude others. Whiteness operates to produce places in various ways, such as coding them as safe/dangerous, good/bad, valuable/cheap and for which groups and identities those codings are relevant, for example 'white' neighbourhoods can be experienced as safe and inclusive for white persons but dangerous and threatening to black persons (and vice versa) (Douglas 1998; Ellis *et al.* 2004; Fortier 2007; Holloway 2005; hooks 1992; 2000; Housel 2009; Hubbard 2005; Inwood & Martin 2008; Jackson li 1999; Leonard 2008; McCallum 2006; Nelson 2008; Peterson & Hamrick 2009; Shaw 2007; Willis & Lewis 1999).

Such attempts to destabilise whiteness have prompted a variety of defensive or reactionary tactics described as a period of 'crisis' (Apple 1998; Bonnett 2000; Delgado & Stefancic 1997; Hill 1997; Jackson 1998; Johnson 1998; Kincheloe & Steinberg 1998). The racialisation of whiteness has enabled a renewal of racist discourses to defend and maintain a white racial identity that is allegedly under siege

(see Gallagher 1994; Hage 1998; Kincheloe & Steinberg 1998; Tatum 1994; Winant 1994). This reconnects with an interest in the geographies of fear, either the experiences of being feared and perceived as threatening (Day 2006; McDowell 2002) or the privileged fear of the unruly and dangerous other and moral geographies of 'violent' neighbourhoods, no-go areas and issues of boundary, security and policing (England & Simon 2010; Fischer & Poland 1998; Hubbard 2003; Kern 2003; Lensmire 2010; Pain 2000; Pain & Smith 2008; Robert 1998; Winans 2005). The spatialities of fear, danger and violence are further extended into an engagement with the perpetrators of discrimination or abuse and what is described as 'hate' speech/acts or crime (Adams & Roscigno 2005; Adams 2006; Anderson & Umberson 2001; Bernard & Bernard 1984; Blee 2002; Burack 2008; Durham 2007; Fekete 2001; Herek 1992; Horschelmann 2005; Josey 2007; Thomson 2002; Van der Meer 2003). Such violence is only one of many processes through which relations of marginalisation and privilege are inscribed and reproduced, yet fear (or lack thereof) is a visible contributor to individual's abilities to use and occupy space, producing for some, what hooks (1995, p46) has described as the constant 'possibility that they will be terrorised'. Or a privileged experience of 'ontological security' associated with stability, safety and control of space (Johnston & Valentine 1995).

The study of white bodies, identities, practices, institutions, spatialities and privilege is not as 'new' or original as has been claimed by those proponents of a field of 'Whiteness Studies' (see Apple 1998; Bonnett 1997; Delgado & Stanfancic 1997; McIntosh 1988). Instead there is a long history of research by critical race, black and black feminist scholars which addresses whiteness and which is sadly often overlooked by more recent studies of whiteness by white scholars. In particular the work of McIntosh (1988; 2012) has been criticised for effacing the connection between privilege and marginalisation and failing to properly engage with this legacy (see *Gillborn 2006*; Leonardo 2004). In this section, I have argued that all studies of privilege draw their underlying framework from the writings of DuBois (1899; 1903; 1906; 1920). However, this does not mean that the concept has remained stable. Black feminists, with the development of intersectionality, argued for a conception of self and inequalities as multiple and complex, predicated upon their own simultaneous positioning within both patriarchal race politics and racist gender politics. Geographers have contributed to the destabilisation of unitary conceptions of race through exploring the spatialities of whiteness and the process of boundary production. By emphasising the spatial specificity and situated production of identities and inequalities, geography contributes a further degree of instability to conceptions of privilege. That whiteness can be simultaneously a powerful positionality and the site of such instability and fragmentation is one of the key

tensions that animate this project, as I seek to explore how fluid relations of power and identification congeal into formations of inequalities and privilege.

While whiteness is a field of study with a long history of engagement with privilege, others have also engaged with the concept. I next review discussions of class and work, which operate to produce spatialities of privilege through the materialities of wealth and geographies of labour and residence.

2.3.2 Class and Work

Class is a complex and fluid concept, associated with material wealth, labour and property but encompassing a variety of other aspects of the body, behaviour and spatial practice (Anderson & Collins 1998; Dowling 1999; 2009; Gregson & Lowe 1994; Maxwell & Aggleton 2010; McDowell 2001; Pratt & Hanson 1988; Reay 2007; Sayer 2005; Skeggs 1997; Taylor 2005). This section reviews some of these areas of inquiry as they relate to the production, experience and spatiality of privilege. I show that while materialities of wealth are important, privilege cannot be reduced to merely financial circumstances and must be able to take into account more complex and performative formations of identities and inequalities.

There is a vibrant critical interest in working class identities and experiences, exploring the spatialities and practices of living on lower incomes or through the welfare state (Baeten 2000; Donaldson 1991; McDowell 2003; 2008; Russo & Linkon 2005; Reay 2002; Skeggs 2004; Stenning 2008; Strangleman 2008; Taylor 2007; Vincent *et al.* 2008; Ward *et al.* 2007; Welshman 2006). Such projects explore the reproduction and experience of marginalisation and exclusions and continue a legacy of studies of marginalisation through class formations as discussed at the start of this chapter. However, there has also been a renewed interest in the practices, discourses and spatialities of the 'middle classes' and their positions of relative privilege and wealth (Donaldson & Poynting 2007; Lawler 2005; Reay *et al.* 2007; Sayer 2002). Particularly in relation to the formation of gated communities (Danyluk & Ley 2007; Durlington 2006; Gregson & Lowe 1994; Hook & Vrdoljak 2002; Mycoo 2006; Webster *et al.* 2002) and processes of gentrification (Bondi 1991; Butler 2003; Florida 2002; Gorman-Murray 2006; Hamnett 1991; Lang 1982; Lees *et al.* 2010; Watt 2008).

Studies of class have produced an interest in the concepts of respect, respectability and the ways in which they are used to distinguish, evaluate and, ultimately, distance various forms of behaviour, between the 'middle' and 'working' classes (Bannister *et al.* 2006; Skeggs 1997; 2004) and between the deserving (respectable) and undeserving poor (Boland 2010; Hubbard 1998; McDowell 2002; 2007; Nayak 2006). This contributes a complex and performative understanding of classed identities beyond a focus on finance. Class is represented and discursively constructed in ways

that operate to centre the experiences of middle classed subjects and routinely efface or marginalise the experiences and spatial practices of working classed identities. Skeggs (2004, p118) argues that 'representations of the working-class... have absolutely nothing to do with the working class themselves, but are about the middle-class creating value for themselves in a myriad of ways, through distance, denigration and disgust'. Representations of working classed bodies and communities are produced from positions of privilege and operate to re-inscribe the inequalities between groups, compounding the marginalisation (and privileging) of differently located bodies (Adams & Raisborough 2011; Howard 2010; Lawler 2005; Maxwell & Aggleton 2010; Reay 2007; Skeggs 1997; 2001; 2005; Springer 2010).

The 'chav' has developed in British media and discourse, a cultural figure that embodies the libidinous excess, sloth and scrounging (Jones 2011; Stapleton 2007). Descriptions of the 'working class' or the 'peasantry' are a long tradition in British popular media, government research and social theorising and influenced various formations of the Poor Law, work houses, restrictions on mobility, family and child welfare, social support and benefits. The languages and topics under discussion have progressed little in at least 150 years of British history (see Brundage 2002; Harris 2004; Welshman 2006). A related history can be found in North American discourses of 'white trash' (see Wray & Newitz 1997). The 'chav' is a discourse of denigration and condescension through which working class bodies and communities are othered and their exclusion legitimised through popular representations of dirt, excessive 'breeding', hyper sexuality, gauche jewellery and clothes, along with a persistent squalor and parasitic subsistence upon the supposed charity of the middle classes through the welfare state (Adams & Raisborough 2011; Johnson 2008; Jones 2011; McDowell 2006; Nayak 2006; Raisborough & Adams 2008; Sayer 2005; Stapleton 2007). In this way, materialities and practices come to be markers of a classed positionality, understood as debased or abject, outside of 'normal' middle classed social spaces.

A contrasting strand of research is the production of knowledges surrounding 'elites', constituted through their positioning within networks of governmentality or extreme personal wealth (see Hay & Muller 2012; Maxwell & Aggleton 2010). These elite theories attempt to address those individuals 'so placed within the structure that by their decisions they modify the milieu of many other men [sic]' (Mill 1953, p112). This definition has been largely accepted by studies of elites, who subsequently attempt to address the problems of 'researching up' from a position of less power and influence (Bradshaw 2001; Brayshay *et al.* 2006; Conti & O'Neil 2007; Desmond 2004; Duke 2002; Neal & McLaughlin 2009; Sabot 1999; Smith 2006). Elite theory works to explore how institutional forms of power are used and attempts to make sense of the processes through which these forms of power are exercised. Elite theories are

primarily concerned with institutions and 'work' (broadly defined) yet they have been criticised for not paying sufficient attention to explore how work places are produced as gendered places (Desmond 2004). This production operates to enable or restrict the mobilities and opportunities of subjects and elite theory has yet to fully address the situated operation and manifestation of power.

Feminist explorations of work raise sustained critiques of the undifferentiated subject, addressing the power relations through which workplaces and organisations are produced and regulated (Barron & Norris 1976; Cockburn 1983; 1991; Dex 1985; Game & Pringle 1984; Kanter 1977; Walby 1986). There has been sustained critique of how occupations come to be understood as 'masculine' or 'feminine'; highlighting that women are more likely to occupy lower paid and lower status positions, which operates to reproduce and maintain classed and gendered relations (Barker & Allen 1976; Beechy 1987; Collinson & Hearn 1994; Crompton & Sanderson 1990; Donaldson 1991; Fine *et al.* 1997; Gregson & Lowe 1994; McDowell 1997). Even within particular work places, gender relations continue to marginalise women (Amott & Matthaei 1991; Blomley 1996; Bradley 1989; Casey 1990; Ellis *et al.* 2004; Hanson & Pratt 1995; Massey 1995; McDowell 1995; Nelson 1999; Walkerdine 2003). In comparison, while previous research has demonstrated that the discourse of *professionalism* can be marginalising and exclusionary by women and non-whites (Rubens & Kerfoot 2009), there has been little examination of work as a heteronormative space and the governance of sexuality (see Deverall 2001; Mizzi 2012). Feminist explorations of workplaces as gendered places emphasise the importance in being able to address coexisting multiplicities of identities, meanings and power relations through which space is produced. Workspaces are produced not only through class and economics but also by a range of other power relations including gender. Understanding this interrelation emphasises the importance of viewing space as contested and fluid event, rather than a fixed product. A second series of spatialities that have been particularly prominent in studies of class have been those of the home, domesticity and patterns of residence.

Home, domesticity, patterns of residential segregation and the production and regulation of these spaces are mediated by various processes of privileging and marginalisation including class, race, gender and sexuality (Cloke 2008; Devadason 2010; Durlington 2006; Ellis *et al.* 2004; Fortier 2007; hooks 1990; Housel 2009; Johnston & Valentine 1995; Kentlyn 2008; Nelson 2008; Oswin 2010; Pulido 2000; Robbert 1998; Smith 1983; Veninga 2007; Webster *et al.* 2002). Home can provide a defensible space of security and retreat from the outside world (Newman 1972), yet it can also be a place of marginalisation and abuse (Stanko 1987). One of urban geography's tasks has been the description and explanation of how the social and material fabrics of towns and cities come to be segregated into discrete places, and

how class relations, space and identity coproduce one another (Fischer 1976; Herbert & Smith 1989; Herbert & Johnston 1978; Jones & Eyles 1977; Knox 1993; Kobayashi & Mackenzie 1989; Whitehand 1992). Yet a pure focus on class relations obscures the gendered, raced and sexual production of urban residential and domestic spaces (see Bondi 1991; 1992; Hayden 1980; McDowell 1983; 1993; 1997; 1999; Pratt & Hanson 1988; Spain 1992; Weisman 1992). This emphasises the ways in which space can be multiply experienced as simultaneously privileging and marginalising, for example home might be simultaneously a space of community building and resistance to racism yet also a patriarchal space of unpaid domestic labour and marginalisation (see Chapter 2.3.1; Hill Collins 1990; Hurtado 1989; Spelman 1988; Walby 1989).

Class relations, inequalities and the material markers of financial circumstances are some of the most visible resources that can be drawn upon and described as privilege. Indeed colloquial uses of the term *privilege* tend to refer solely to the markers of wealth and financial prosperity. However, studies of classed identities, representations and spatial practices extend far beyond these limited boundaries and explore a variety of processes through which class operates to produce various spatialities. This section has reviewed discussions of work and home as multiply produced places of privilege and marginalisation that cannot be described through a singular frame of reference. Despite the importance of class in producing these places, the experience of them will always require reference to other fields of power relations. Discussions and representations of class are predicated on normativity of 'middle classed' identities, spatialities and practices in ways which are only recently beginning to be challenged through the development of 'new' working class studies (see Russo & Linkon 2005; Skeggs 2004; Stenning 2008; Strangleman 2008; Taylor 2007). Reviewing discussions of class is therefore informative because the apparent desirability of middle class-ness is rarely challenged and retains a degree of hegemony. Hegemony provides an alternative mode of conceptualising the production of identities and inequalities and has been primarily developed in the field of 'Masculinity Studies'. The following section expands upon this discussion and reviews literatures of masculinities.

2.3.3 Masculinities and Hegemony

Studies of masculinities developed in reaction to the proliferation of feminist and gay/LGBT movements and their parallel critiques of heterosexuality and patriarchy (Connell 1987; Donaldson 1993; Gilmore 1990; Jackson 1991; Kimmel 1987; 1994; Messner 1993; 1997). Although this appearance of a clear teleology is complicated by a legacy of feminist work that pre-empts later developments (see Hacker 1957; Hartley 1959; Komarovskiy 1946). Arguments which were replayed during the 1970's by advocates of 'men's liberation' such as Pleck (1974; 1976) and Brannon (1976), who argued that social constructions of masculinity were alienating and unhealthy,

and that men were disciplined into their positionalities through violence, fear and rejection of *the feminine*. However, the language and conceptualisations of sex role theory and the men's liberation movement are problematic. Positioning men as victims of sexism attempts to equate men's and women's differing experiences of marginalisation and oppression; by focusing solely on men's problems and the 'burdens of being on top' sex role theory and more recent 'masculinist' formations, efface men's complicity with the reproduction and maintenance of inequality (Kimmel 1987; Messner 2003). Subsequently more critical theories have developed to provide accounts of how masculinity disciplines and produces the performativities and identities of men within a broader understanding of power relations between men, women and gender.

Part of this critical reappraisal of masculinity was the application of Gramscian concept of *hegemony* by Connell (1995; 1996; 2000; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005) and his conception of hegemonic masculinity as an idealised and mythological form of masculinity against which all other performances of masculine gender identities are compared and evaluated. Connell argues that there are multiple forms of masculinity and that they are all positioned and valued through their relation and proximity to the imagined ideal. This allows for the exploration of differences in experience between men who might ostensibly occupy the same positionality and therefore explain how some men come to be excluded or marginalised within apparently homogeneous spaces (Klein 2006; McCormack 2011; McDowell 2001; 2002; Norman 2011; Richardson 2010; Talbot & Quayle 2010; Toerien & Durrheim 2001). Other theorists of masculinity have developed the concept to highlight the marginalisation of men who in some way fail to live up to that centred and privileged normativity (Bridges 2010; Connell 1987; 1989; Coston & Kimmel 2012; Heath 2003; Jackson 1991; Kimmel 1994; Massey 1995; Pascoe 2005; Robinson 2003; Weis 2006). In this way, while 'men' is considered as the primary category of analysis (a theoretical distinction only and no claim of ontological primacy) other factors act to distance the individual from the hegemonic ideal; normally associated with traits of whiteness, muscularity/fitness, employment, heterosexuality, 'hyper' or excessive masculinity, homophobia, a degree of misogyny, respectability, violence, procreation and virility, tall-ness, emotional reserve, strength, dominant or commanding, practical and able-bodied.

Masculinity is not merely a 'role' or individual behaviour that is adopted, but rather a situated and relational performativity, negotiated through the disciplining of men's behaviours and understandings of what is appropriate and desirable. While ideotypical representations of desire exist, such as films or advertisements and discourses of the 'real man', lived experience rarely approaches such caricatured examples. Instead, men's lives are governed within particular places and through specific

apparatuses of power that necessarily lead to the development of variation and multiplicity through and across space. A spatialisation of 'hegemonic masculinity' might retain reference to certain ideals of 'hardness' or other aspects, but also take account of the different ways in which privilege and marginalisation are manifest within particular contexts. Within different time-spaces the positionality of 'most privileged', i.e., *hegemonic*, masculinity will be different (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Hopkins & Noble 2009; Massey 1995; McCormack 2011; 2012; McDowell 1997; 2001; 2002; 2007; McPhillips *et al.* 2001; Noble 2009; Talbot 2010). Identification of these differences and their spatial co-production continues and provides opportunities for an increasing recognition of the proliferation in 'acceptable' forms and performativities of masculinity. McCormack (2010; 2011; 2012; McCormack & Anderson 2010) for example argues that homophobia, long considered a stable element of masculinity, is becoming rarer and even unacceptable to teenage British boys in the schools that he has studied. McCormack's work disrupts previous understandings of heteromascularity as predicated upon rejection of homosexuality and suggests that this intersection might be beginning to unravel, at least in some places (see Connell 1987; Kimmel 1994).

Critical examination of masculinities has not been an entirely uncontested process. While the development of 'new' forms of masculinity such as the 'metrosexual' have been discussed, the extent to which this reconfiguration represents a challenge to patriarchal manifestations of power and the privileging of male subjects has been questioned (Blomley 1996; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Visser 2008; Duster 1996; Heath 2003; Horschelmann 2005; Kimmel 2008; Rasmussen 2006; Talbot & Quayle 2010). Feminist authors have explored how men learning feminism act within the classroom to defend and maintain privilege and their identities from criticism (Alilunas 2011; Landreau 2011; Landreau & Murphy 2011; Pleasants 2011; Robinson 2003; Toerien & Durrheim 2001). Similarly, various men's movements have developed and are another way that identity politics can be used to defend and maintain access to privilege in reaction to perceived threat (Bliss 1995; Bly 1990; Faludi 1991; Gilmore 1990; Kimmel 1987; Kimmel & Kaufmann 1995; Messner 1993; 1997; Schwalbe 1996).

Masculinities research highlight how understandings and performances of masculinity are spatially differentiated and produced. Hegemony provides a model that complements understandings of intersectionality by focusing on a single category of identity and then exploring the myriad ways in which that category is divided and differentiated. This enables examination of the variety of difference within an ostensibly homogeneous positionality. Exploring this division and differentiation demonstrates that privilege cannot be fixed to apparently stable and uniform categories of identity such as masculinity. Instead, there are multiple ways in

which masculinity might be situated and performed and privilege does not necessarily manifest in the same ways for each of them. Together, intersectionality and hegemony provide complementary opportunities to explore the production of nuanced positionalities, and the processes through which identities come to be able to access privilege. Discussions of whiteness, class and masculinity each contribute to understandings of homonormativity because they are each implicated in the figure of the 'affluent gay white man' (Nast 2002). This chapter now concentrates on the development of geographies of sexuality and the concept of homonormativity.

2.3.4 Sexualities and Homonormativity

Studies of sexuality are not quite as established as those of race, class and gender that have tended to predominate in various fields of social research; although sexuality has not been entirely omitted, it has tended to play a lesser role (Bell 1991; Bell & Valentine *eds.* 1995; Peake 1993; Valentine 1993). More recently sexualities research has 'witnessed an explosion' have become increasingly influential (Browne *et al.* 2007, p1; see also Binnie 2004; Browne & Bakshi forthcoming; Dyer 2002; Johnston & Longhurst 2010). Early geographies of sexualities work was positioned amongst the studies of marginalisation explored earlier in this chapter. Following Foucaultian theorisations of power theorists of sexuality argued that there are no fixed and essential sexual identities but that sexual identity and practice is the product of power relations and therefore fluid, contested and subject to resistance (Butler 1990; Foucault 1976; 1980; 1986; Rubin 1984; Warner 1991). Homophobia, heterosexism and heteropatriarchy produce a phenomenon of silences, secrecy and shame described as 'the closet' which extend beyond the individual act of passing for straight, but rather operate to position and produce all subjects regardless of their sexual practices and identities (Allen 1993; Berger 1992; Brown 2000; Fuss 1992; Gross 1993; Johnson 2002; Renfrow 2004; Sedgwick 1990; Seidman 1993; Seidman *et al.* 1999). This section explores geographies of sexualities and their study of privilege, particularly through the concept of homonormativity.

Theorisations of queer developed as a destabilising project that seeks to challenge the formation of fixed identities, binaries and normativities. The term queer is variously understood and deployed, it has generally been used to suggest that political projects should look beyond 'merely' tolerance for minorities and seek to explode the apparatuses of power relations through which difference is produced and stabilised (Bell 1994; Bell *et al.* 1994; Binnie 1997; Brenkman 2002; Brown & Knopp 2003; Cohen 1997; Dyer 2002; Fuss 1992; Johnson 2002; Nardi 2000; Nast 2002; Seidman 1993; Sullivan 2003; Warner 1991; 1999). Queer theorisation exceeds easy definition because it aims to resist stability and categorisation, instead shifting and changing to present challenges to each newly erected formation of identity or knowledge. Despite this, it can at least be argued that queer is a form of politics and theorisation that

attempts to call into question normalised apparatuses of power relations. In addition, that this form of questioning developed as an attempt to articulate the pervasive effects of heteronormativity and interrogate the formation and reproduction of the privileges associated with heterosexuality (see Warner 1991). Subsequently queer has become much more, but this sense of the term as an attempt to interrogate and destabilise normativities, and of the intrinsic link between normativities and the manifestation of privilege is how I shall use the concept in this project.

Gay men and lesbians' spatial practices, through which they manage and negotiate homophobia and produce networks of communities and sociality, have been widely studied (Bell & Binnie 2004; Binnie & Valentine 1999; Brown 2001; Chauncey 1994; Herdt & Boxer 1992; Herek 1992; Kirby & Hary 1997; Kirkey & Forsyth 2001; Kitchin & Lysaght 2003; Knopp 1998; Levine 1998; Myslik 1996; Nardi 2000; Phelan 2001; Valentine 1993; 1995; Valentine & Skelton 2003; Visser 2003; Weston 1995). This work explores how gay and lesbian sexualities become marginalised and how marginalisation is materialised through the configuration of urban space (Bell 1991; 1994; Bell *et al.* 1994; Bell & Valentine *eds.* 1995; Browne *et al.* 2007; Eyre 1993; Fuss 1992; Grosz 1992; Knopp 1990; Lynch 1992; Peake 1993; Person 1980; Rich 1980; Valentine 1993a; 1993b). Homophobia, perception of risk and fear of crime play a key role in producing these spatial practices for those who experience exclusion (Herek 2004; Kimmel 1994; Linneman 2000; Moran *et al.* 2001; Moran *et al.* 2003; Pascoe 2005; Van Der Meer 2003). An enduring feature of geographies of sexualities is detailed case studies of urban scene spaces, their development and specific spatial histories including New York (Chauncey 1994); Toronto (Nash 2006; Giwa & Greensmith 2012); Manchester (Binnie & Skeggs 2004; Kitchen 2002); Soho (Andersson 2010); Birmingham (Bassi 2006); and Brighton & Hove (Browne & Bakshi forthcoming; Munt 1995). These geographies provide opportunities to explore the sexualisation of space and how boundaries of privilege and marginalisation are materialised in different urban contexts.

Mirroring the establishment of gay and lesbian spaces has been a growing recognition of gay and lesbian subjectivities and a variety of changes to the legal treatment of sexual dissidence (Weeks 2007). These changing legal and spatial contexts have led some authors to champion the growing 'normalcy' of gay and lesbian subjects (Bawar 1993; 1999; Sullivan 1995). Sullivan argues that:

'The family is prior to the state; the military is coincident with it. Heterosexuals would not conceive of such rights as things to be won, but as things that predate modern political discussion. But it says something about the unique status of homosexuals in our society that we now have to be political in order to be prepolitical. Our battle, after all, is not for political victory but for personal integrity... we have to embrace politics in order to be free of it.'

(Sullivan 1995, p186-187)

For Sullivan, the ultimate goal of 'homosexual' political organisation is to 'win' the right to serve in the military, to get married and raise a family within a classic, idealised model of monogamous domesticity; a 'mirror image of the happy heterosexuality I imagined around me' (Sullivan 1995, p192). Aside from Sullivan's apparently total ignorance of feminism, or indeed history, and the questionable quality of his analysis (see Duggan 2002), the suggestion that there is a single, clearly identifiable goal of all gay politics relies upon the privileged centrality of a particular conservative, neoliberal vision of the (non)relationship between individual, family, society and the State (see Duggan 2002; Duggan & Hunter 2006; Nast 2002; Warner 1991; 1999). His assertion that 'heterosexuals would not conceive of such rights as things to be won' aptly demonstrates the invisibility of privilege described by scholars of whiteness and which is a central principle of this thesis.

It is within this context of gay and lesbian's ability to access privilege and the proliferation of a renewed and virulent form of assimilationist politics¹¹ that Duggan (2002) argued we were witnessing the development of a 'new homonormativity' and Nast (2002) suggested the development of the 'queer patriarch'. Homonormativity addresses anxieties over the alleged 'de-politicisation' of gay culture 'anchored in domesticity and consumption' (Duggan 2002, p179). A privatised and demobilised constituency in which '[some] lesbians and gay men are now constituted as citizens worthy of inclusion', citizens who have achieved a level of acceptable visibility (Richardson 2005, p521). This visibility and inclusion is only accessible to a privileged few, yet it is increasingly used as a measure against which 'the democratic diversity of proliferating forms of sexual dissidence' are compared (Duggan 2002, p190). Similarly the language and features of gay politics are increasingly reconfigured around a premise of '*equality*' rather than '*liberation*'; a change which has allegedly 'narrowed' to focus upon 'formal access to a few conservatizing institutions' such as marriage and military service (Duggan 2002, p190).

Homonormativity explores the visible, normative and privileged figure of the affluent gay white man that no longer troubles discourses of racism and hetero-patriarchy (Brown 2008; 2009; Duggan 2002; El-Tayeb 2012; Elder 2002; Halperin 2003; Haritaworn 2007; Nast 2002; Oswin 2005; 2008; Richardson 2005; Seidman 2002; 2005; Sothorn 2004; Visser 2008). Gay and lesbian lives are increasingly represented in big budget and 'prime time' media, yet these portrayals rarely take account of the variety of spatial practices, embodiments and lived experiences of sexual dissidence (Nast 2002; Padva 2002; Peters 2003; 2011; Raimondo 2010). Indeed these representations are troubling in their portrayal of stereotyped, clichéd or marginalising images of gays and lesbians used to provide entertainment for the

¹¹ Warner (1991) provides a discussion of why such politics might be damaging and virulent, along with critique of the concept of 'assimilation' in describing '*The Trouble with Normal*'.

straight viewer, rather than positively representing the identities of LGBT subjects (Landau 2009; Linneman 2008; Roy 2012). It is 'certain EuroWhite-identified gay men – relatively youthful, of some means, and typically childless' that are most likely to be represented positively, and this representation operates to reinforce existing relations of inequality by normalising and privileging certain forms of white gay masculinities and their spatial practices (Nast 2002, 880).

Gay men have been the predominant subjects of sexualities research and theorisation, their spaces and practices, their needs and their politics are centred and privileged while lesbians and other sexual and gender dissidents are relegated to secondary roles (Bell 1991; 1994; Bell *et al.* 1994; Binnie & Valentine 1999; Cohen 1997; Johnston 2001; Seidman 1993; 2002; Skeggs 2000; Valentine 1993; 1995; Ward 2000). Given the stereotypical obsession with appearance often associated with gay men corporeality, body and muscle dysmorphia and satisfaction have been explored along with how different understandings of sexual attraction and physicality come to be accepted or rejected (Bergling 2007; Brown *et al.* 2005; Drummond 2005; 2006; 2010; Duncan 2010; Filiault & Drummond 2007; McArdle & Hill 2009; Padva 2002; Peters 2010; Reilly *et al.* 2008; Slevin & Linneman 2010; Whitesel 2007; Wood 2004). Further, there is little work which explores the intersections between sexuality and bodily disability or long-term health impairment (although Butler & Parr 1999; Shakespeare *et al.* 1996; Jeppesen 2010) and the homonormative body is silently assumed to be a homogeneously *healthy* body (Sothorn 2007).

Discussions of gay men's gendered identities and performativities are important because homonormativity is predicated upon the abilities of gay white men to access privilege and that 'men' is just as fluid and spatially produced as any other aspect of identity. While much has been written about gender transgression and practices of drag and camping as theoretically radical challenges to gender normativities (Browne 2007; Butler 1990; 1991; 1993; Dozier 2005; Eliot 2009; Halberstam 2005; Hines 2006; Kaufmann 2010; Linneman 2008; Namaste 2005; Prosser 1998; Stryker 2008) it is surprising that studies of gay masculinities pay relatively little attention to specifically camp gay masculinities. The everyday lives of men who perform camp or 'effeminate' masculinities, examination of how those practices might impact upon their abilities to use and occupy space and their position in relation to processes of privileging and marginalisation feature very rarely (although see Connell 1987; Dyer 1993; 2002; Levine 1998; Nardi 2000; Peel 2001; Pelias 2007; Schacht 2000).

Homonormativity suggests that the temporalities of queer lives are changing to more closely resemble those of 'respectable' middle class, hetero citizenships and practices (Bell & Binnie 2004; 2006; Boellstorff 2007; Dinshaw *et al.* 2007; Edelman 2004; Halberstam 2005; Taylor 2010). Heteronormative temporalities are a mix of regular patterns and linear progression. Days and weeks are marked by regular bed times,

school runs and 9-to-5 work schedules on weekdays with particular forms of leisure scheduled for weekends. All of which is encapsulated within a linear teleology of *development*; birth -> childhood -> adolescence -> early adulthood -> marriage -> reproduction -> child rearing -> retirement -> old age -> death (Edelman 2004). Each 'stage' is associated with particular spatial practices with its own norms of behaviour and to be situated within a predefined and linear temporality. Queer lives have historically been more varied in their long term temporalities, even their daily or weekly patterns take a broader range of forms. Long term there has been social and legal obstructions to accessing the heteronormative stages of progression such as marriage and child rearing. While the temporalities of 'coming out', their association with migration to a 'big city' and settling into new communities and practices of living formulate their own structure to queer lives (Halberstam 2005; McLean 2008; Ridge *et al.* 2006; Sedgwick 1990; Taylor 2010; Valentine & Skelton 2003; Weston 1995; Yeung *et al.* 2006). Queer temporalities are also marked by a variety of different spatial and temporal practices. Halberstam, in a discussion of queer time suggests that temporality, for her, is many nights spent in dark nightclubs watching drag performances at 2:00 am; a recurring activity that 'probably seems pointless to people stranded in hetero-temporalities' (Dinshaw *et al.* 2007, p181-182). Investing time in learning and accessing scene spaces and queer networks of association, along with time searching for sexual partners are some of the influences producing queer temporalities. Homonormativity, it is argued, threatens and reformulates those temporalities with an emphasis on 'reproductive futurism' and the centring of normative practices of sexual citizenship such as monogamy and the desire for marriage recognitions (Bonello & Cross 2010; Browne 2011; Clarke *et al.* 2004; Donovan 2004; Duggan 2002; Edelman 2004; Finlay *et al.* 2003; Hull 2006; Kitzinger & Wilkinson 2004; Lanutti 2005; 2007; Taylor 2011; Wilkinson 2010; Yep *et al.* 2003). Warner (1999) has described these developments as a division between identities and practices, so that the stigma attached to a gay identity is politically addressed and reformulated, while the shame associated with sexual acts and sexually lingers. Warner (1999, p45) suggests that without a critical 'politics of shame' which is able to address the messy and undignified, yet irrefutably *queer*, practices of sex the present 'sexual McCarthyism' and marginalisations experienced by those who do not or will not conform to de-sexualised and 'respectable' image of the gay identities, politics and organisation will continue to damage any attempted sexual politics.

Despite these criticisms, the everyday ability to get on with life should not be overlooked as a positive change for many people (Weeks 2007). Fuss warns against a

'misplaced nostalgia for or romanticisation of the outside as a privileged site of radicality... to endorse a position of perpetual or even strategic outsiderhood (a position of powerlessness, speechlessness, homelessness...) hardly seems

like a viable political program, especially when, for so many gay and lesbian subjects, it is less a question of political tactics than everyday lived experience.'

(Fuss 1992, p2)

Oswin (2005) similarly suggests that the debate surrounding homonormativity is reductive and she argues for a more nuanced and ambivalent understanding. One that does not seek to draw a simple distinction between white gay men, profoundly and totally complicit with practices of marginalisation, and those "other" gays and lesbians... [who] are implicitly portrayed anti- or at least non-capitalist in nature, as absolutely outside spaces of complicity, and therefore harkened to as the source of a rejuvenated queer politics' (Oswin 2005, p83). Instead, Oswin proposes a more ambiguous and difficult figure of the complicit queer, simultaneously engaged with practices that challenge existing power relations yet also a part of them.

Complicity is a vital concept for this project as it brings together an understanding of the subject as inseparable from power and privilege yet also able to operate in 'progressive' and potentially radical ways that challenge or reconfigure privilege. Oswin's (2005; 2008) formulation of complicity rejects representations of a pure place of innocence and radicalism in favour of recognition that all subjects are connected and associated with power, there are no innocents yet neither are there subjects which are perpetually condemned. In this spirit Brown has researched the quotidian differences and varieties of 'ordinary' gay experiences through examinations of diverse social, sexual, domestic and economic practices (Brown 2007; 2008; 2009). Focusing on the everyday lives of allegedly homonormative subjects challenges representations of spatial practices as dichotomous and homogenously either innocent or guilty, and explores where and how privilege and marginalisation come to be manifest and experienced; although this research is not yet clearly connected with understandings of privilege. This challenges monolithic representations of identity and is vital to showing how the materialities of inequalities and privilege come to be produced and maintained by the practices of 'ordinary' gays (Brown 2008; Browne & Bakshi forthcoming). As yet there have been relatively few empirical studies which engage with providing detailed explorations of the nuanced performance and manifestation of identities which are simultaneously privileged and marginalised within the context of discussions of homonormativity and it is here that this project will make its principle contributions (although see Robinson 2012).

Theorisations of homonormativity suggest that the some lesbian and gay subjects have access to privilege in ways that they did not previously (Stryker 2008) and that this access *necessarily* indicates a loss of radicalism, an acceptance of existing apparatuses of power relations and taking advantage of relations of inequality instead of working to challenge and reformulate them. However, I agree with Sothern

(2004) that theorisations of homonormativity are incomplete without detailed empirical explorations of the lived practices, spatialities and materialities of gay men and explorations of where and how privilege and marginalisation come to be manifest in their lives. I follow Oswin (2005) and Brown (2008) in attempting to reformulate homonormativity in ways that are less homogenising and more able to represent the nuanced and situated everyday performativities of gay white men.

This section has reviewed four fields of study as they relate to the production and experience of privilege. I have addressed understandings of subject formation as a multiple, fluid and situated process and argued that each of these fields hold common understandings of privilege. I have explored different ways of conceptualising multiplicity in the experience of identities, either as intersectionality or as hegemony, and suggested that these are complementary modes of understanding. Further, this review has explored each of the fields of power relations that are implicated in the representation of the homonormative subject as an affluent gay white man. Taken individually, each of these fields of study argues for the conceptualisation of identity as a complex and contingent process. As such, it is reductive to suggest that homonormativity or privilege more generally might be the preserve of particular stable and pre-existing identities.

These discussions and conclusions are formulated upon a theoretical framework that draws on Foucaultian theories of power, place and performativity. I use a combination of poststructuralist feminism and queer geographies that require articulation in order to fully develop the conceptualisation of privilege advanced by this project and this is done in the final section of this chapter.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The thesis attempts to 'challenge the transparent, ahistorical, aspatial character' that privilege grants to certain forms of subjectivity (Bonnett 1997, p198). It does this through examining identity as process of becoming; a spatially contingent, performed and produced fiction that is subsequently rendered invisible to examination and analysis. I shall argue that privilege is fluid and situated, the produced effect of strategic interactions and conflicts between apparatuses of power relations 'brought in to relation with one another... through a continuous and largely involuntary process of encounter' (Thrift 2006, p139). Indeed, all social relations and places are things which are continually (re)produced; they are never constituted *a priori* and are never static or stable. We can therefore explore the processes, activities, practices and rhythms of everyday life through which this (re)creation, (re)enactment and (re)citation occur. I shall focus on the fluidity and uncertainty of place and explore the contingencies and practices of maintenance and defence through which power relations come to appear stable. This section reviews understandings of power, place

and performativity; I draw on Foucaultian poststructuralist, queer, geographic and feminist thinking to develop an approach to privilege which is capable of addressing the aims of this project and able to synthesise the various literatures discussed.

2.4.1 Power

Foucault's re-conception of power develops from his rejection of what he describes in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* (1976) as 'the repressive hypothesis'; that the nature of power is purely to deny and repress certain actions and speech. In Foucault's (1976, p92) analysis power is not 'a group of institutions and mechanisms to ensure subservience... a mode of subjugation... given the form of the rule' nor is it 'a general system of domination exerted by one group over another... these are only the terminal forms that power takes'. These types of domination and subjugation are the effects of power, not their source. Power is instead understood as productive systems of relations through which discourses and subsequently knowledges are produced. Because of this Foucault makes no distinctions between 'power' and 'knowledge', instead using the neologism *power-knowledge* to emphasise that knowledge is an effect of systems of power relations which continually influence and reconfigure each other (Foucault 1976; 1980). In his histories of madness, prisons and sexuality the discourses of knowledge which are produced surrounding a particular locus (or 'local-centre') are an effect of power relations, yet those discourses have a reciprocal effect on the configuration of the power relations through which they are produced (Foucault 1976, p18). The more 'extensive and finer-grained knowledge' becomes the further it enables more pervasive extensions of power relations into new areas of life which in turn allows for more developed possibilities of inquiry and the production of new knowledges (Foucault 1976). Foucault describes six points, which structure his understanding of power:

- '(i) that power is co-extensive with the social body; there are no spaces of primal liberty between the meshes of its network...;
- (ii) that relations of power are interwoven with other kinds of relations (production, kinship, family, sexuality) for which they play at once a conditioning and a conditioned role...;
- (iii) that these relations don't take the sole form of prohibition or punishment, but are of multiple forms...;
- (iv) that their interconnections delineate general conditions of domination... that dispersed, heteromorphous, localised procedures of power are adapted, re-enforced and transformed... accompanied by numerous phenomena of inertia, displacement and resistance; hence one should not assume a massive and primal condition of domination, a binary structure... but rather a multiform production of relations of domination which are partially susceptible to integration...;
- (v) that power relations do indeed 'serve'... because they are capable of being utilised in strategies...;
- (vi) that there are no relations of power without resistances... resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real... hence, like power, resistance is multiple...'

These principles of Foucault's thought, establishing an understanding of power as immanent and pervasive to the social; relational in its coproduction of objects within networks of meaning and connection; multiple and diverse in its operation and manifestation; manifest and maintained locally and contingently; and that resistance is equally fluid, relational and multiple are well known and substantial material has been written engaging with and deploying them (Boyne 1994; Crampton & Elden 2007; Delanty 2003; Deleuze 1988; Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982; Hannah 1997; Hoy 1986; Jacobson 1998; Legg 2011; Lemke 2011; McNay 1992; 1994; Philo 1992; Rouse 2005; Taylor 1986).

Foucault conceived of all politics as 'war continued by other means', a metaphor which emphasises the difference between his own work and 'the great model of language and signs' associated with structuralism (Rouse 2005, p99). It is through this war that certain sets of relations become accepted and others rejected. Different understandings of the same object can sometimes co-exist, yet often they will come into conflict with one another, each apparatus of relations mobilising the various resources available to it in order to become predominant. It is in this sense that Foucault deploys the concept of *strategy* to refer to the effects of apparatuses; an apparatus (or *dispositif*) being here a specific group of power relations which cohere to a particular locus (local-centre). As different apparatuses compete to become accepted as 'truths', they are engaged in Foucault's war of politics. Strategy is therefore the performative effects that apparatuses have upon the networks of power relations in which they are themselves part. Strategies are as varied as the apparatuses of power relations that produce them; either 'developing in particular directions... blocking... stabilising... utilising etc' yet they are not the intentional actions of conscious agents (Foucault 1980, p90, 114). Rather strategy refers to the impacts and effects that those actions have upon the multitude of apparatuses that are each engaged in the production of any specific intersection of objects, identities and discourses. Apparatuses are a heterogeneous constructs, being 'both discursive and non-discursive' and bringing into alignment a wide variety of resources, abilities and interrelations (Foucault 1980, p114).

This conception of mobile and fluid apparatuses of power relations operating to stabilise certain objects through the deployment of various strategies within specific locations has many similarities to various theorisations of actor-networks (Latour 1988; 1996; Laurier 2003; Law 1992; 2007; Law & Mol 1994; Murdoch 1997; Thrift 1999); assemblage (see special issue '*Area*' eds. Anderson & Mcfarlane 2011); heterogeneous associations (Latour 1997; Marcus & Saka 2006; Murdoch 1997; 1998); non-representation (Colls 2011; Horton & Kraftl 2006; Lorimer 2008; McCormack 2002; Merriman 2011; Thrift 1996; 2004; 2007; Thrift & Dewsbury

2000); or the cyborg (Deleuze & Guatarri 1987; Harraway 1991; Latour 1988; Marcus & Sata 2006). Each of these various lines of inquiry might have provided opportunities to explore the manifestation of privilege, and while the conceptualisation of power and apparatus used in this thesis is influenced by readings of actor-network theory (particularly Law 1986; 1992; 1997; 2002; 2007; Law & Mol 1994)¹² my own understanding most closely follows that of Deleuze's (1988) reading of Foucault.

Agamben (2009, p14) argues that an apparatus is 'literally anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings'. In this respect I also agree with Tania Li (2007), who explicitly blurs any distinction between apparatuses as systems of governmentality and regulation with the more Deleuzian understanding of assemblages as systems of interrelations which might open up 'lines of flight'. In this sense, the purpose of an apparatus is irrelevant and all the conflicts and spatial organisations of the social can be understood as the product of the interactions between apparatuses of relations of differing sizes and degrees of stability, resilience and fluidity; even organisations of change and reconfiguration require some degree of governmentality and regulation (Tania Li 2007). By using this interpretation of Foucault's work, the project is able to integrate understandings of spatiality and performativity, developed shortly, and the variety of literatures drawn on in the development of this project, in ways that a more esoteric approach such as actor-network theory might not necessarily enable¹³.

This project uses an understanding of subject formation as a relational and contingent process, reliant upon the smooth association of heterogeneous material and discursive resources into diffuse but coherent and relatively stable apparatuses of power relations. This accumulation and maintenance of resources provides apparatuses with additional opportunities and abilities for action in a wider array of spaces. Identities, concepts, individuals, places, objects, institutions, race and gender, nations, customs or practices, fashions and legal systems are all examples of apparatuses, that is to say, everything is an apparatus and every apparatus is made up of other apparatuses in various combinations and arrangements. Boundaries are fluid and nothing has any innate essence that escapes interconnection. It follows therefore that different apparatuses will have access to different resources and that those various accesses and networks of associations will mean that apparatuses take

¹² Actor-network theory also tends to explore the structure of a single network at a time (long distance shipping, Law 1986; scallop farming, Callon 1986; pasteurisation, Latour 1988) which makes it inappropriate for the task of this thesis, although might be productive to explore a single facet of this corpus of data, such as the enactment of a single gay bar, at a later stage.

¹³ Although this does not preclude the development of alternative readings of the corpus of data collected during this project, and experimentation with other theoretical frameworks or interpretations.

various shapes and spatial distributions between one another (Agamben 2009; Bishop & Phillips 2006; Callon 1986; Deleuze 1988; Foucault 1976; 1980; 1984; Latour 1988; 1996; 2005; Law 1986; 1992; 2002; 2004; 2007; Law & Mol 1994; Legg 2011; Murdoch 1997; 1998). These material/discursive apparatuses of power-knowledge relations subsequently become recognised as objects, concepts, places and identities (Foucault 1972; 1976; 1977; 1980; 1983; 1984). Apparatuses are never universal or essential but exist only in specific times and places around specific local-centres. It has been argued therefore that Foucault's work might be understood as intrinsically spatial (Legg 2011; Philo 2012). As Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982, p55) argue 'the archaeologist only claims to be able to find the local, changing rules which at a given period in a particular discursive formation define what counts as an identical meaningful statement'. Philo (1992) extends Foucault's critique of 'total history', arguing that his contrasting formulation of 'general history' is also explicitly a spatial history that can be used to develop Foucaultian geographies (see Philo 2000; 2012).

The work of Foucault has had a varied impact upon the discipline of geography (Cadman 2010; Crampton & Elden 2007; Elden 2007; Kitchen 2002; Laurier & Philo; Philo 1992; 2000) as it is only in his later works that he turns explicitly towards an accounting of space (Foucault 1980; 1988; Foucault & Kiskowiec 1986). While the work of Foucault is profoundly spatial in its implications and some of its execution (for example *'Discipline and Punish'* 1977), I do not want to be accused of 'overplaying' the role of space in his work, as Soja (1996, p147) pointed out Foucault 'never developed his conceptualizations of space in great self-conscious detail' (see Merriman 2011). The following section builds on this re-conception of power to consider the production of space and place and the development of poststructuralist geographies.

2.4.2 Place

The (re)production, maintenance and control of space and spatial practices are critical processes through which power relations and privilege come to be inscribed and stabilised. The geographies of safety, value and morality, in short the geographies of privilege discussed in terms of gentrification, gated communities, the cleansing and policing of space can be supplemented through desires for place, boundary and belonging (Auge 1995; Harvey 1989; 1990; 1996; Soja 1996; Thrift 1996). This desire for discrete, knowable space is supplemented by the discursive representation and imagination of communities, regional or national supra-identities, nationalisms and various other tribalistic discourses through which groups are differentiated and located in mythological 'heres' or 'theres' (Anderson 1991; Billig 1995; Clayton 2009; Harvey 2005; Henry & Berg 2006; Hoelscher 2003; Jackson 1998; Kipfer 2007; Michael 1998; Oswin 2006; Sibley 1995; Simon 2009; Vanderbeck 2006; Wilton

1995). Part of this process is the active exclusion of bodies and identities coded as other through activities such as NIMBY campaigns and the widespread politicisation of local interests (Holloway 2005; 2007; Hubbard 1998; 2005; Massey 1991; 1993; Sayer 1991; Shome 1999; Wolsink 2006). These processes can be used in defence of privilege and the reproduction of marginalisation, but not always; they remain an important practice of resistance in some places for the defence of local resources in the face of imperialist interests (Castree 2004).

My discussion of space and place is framed primarily through Massey's writing because her work explicitly prioritises issues of bodily particularity and differentiation along with the power relations through which individuals and identities are positioned within interconnected networks of relationality. Massey's work provides opportunities to conceptualise privilege and marginalisation in more than dichotomous formulations and her critical engagement with other key authors makes a discussion of her work an excellent opportunity to present the understanding of space and place used in this thesis. Further, Massey's poststructuralist conceptualisation of space has much in common with the Foucaultian discussions of power and apparatus developed in the previous section and therefore provide opportunities for the kinds of synthetic theoretical framework used in this thesis.

'The difficulties of difference – perhaps, at its simplest, the fact of complexity – are simply erased by the steamroller of an analysis which insists that capital and labour... are all there is to it... if there is one thing to be taken on board by the political and social shifts of recent decades it is that, unfortunately maybe, things are just not that simple.'

(Massey 1991, p54)

It is in writing against undifferentiated theorisations of space, place and the body that Massey has developed what she describes as a 'progressive sense of space' and its component elements of 'power-geometry', 'space-time' and the 'thrown-togetherness' of place.

Power-geometry (Massey 1991; 1993) works to provide an alternative to grand narratives such as those of 'time-space compression' (Harvey 1989) or 'time-space distancing' (Giddens 1981) and 'post-modern geographies' (Soja 1989) by focussing attention on the differential positionalities, experiences and power relations of bodies, identities and groups in relation to various flows and interconnections. rather than merely their existence.

'This point concerns not merely the issues of who moves and who doesn't, although that is an important element of it; it is also about power in relation to the flows and the movement. Different groups have different relationships to this anyway-differentiated mobility: some are more in charge of it than others... it is not simply a question of unequal distribution that some people

move more than others, some have more control than others. It is that the mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people' (Massey 1993, p61-62)

Massey describes how power relations might operate differently between groups and have differing effects on the resources and abilities available to them, but also about the ways in which different groups' abilities of movement, production and occupation impact and constitute the abilities and movements of other groups. Massey (1991; 1993) emphasises that this is not just the effect of capital but a range of differential accesses to privilege, such as patriarchy and the privileging of masculinity. Power-geometries are never stable or singular, rather there are multiple power-geometries intersecting, coexisting and overlapping to produce complex topologies of privilegings and marginalisations at a particular place. These multiple operations of power and their interactions are the constitutive elements of space and place (2005).

To reach these conclusions Massey uses a conception of *time-space*¹⁴. Massey argues that there has been a tendency to separate considerations of time from those of space; with time being prioritised as the field of duration, activity, change and politics, while space is subtended as the field of stasis, structuration, representation and therefore devoid of politics (Massey 1992; 2001; 2005; 2006). This argument has been made by many others (Harvey 1990; Lefebvre 1991; Murdoch 1997; Philo 1992; Soja 1989; Thrift 1996; 2006), however Massey argues that space should be understood as the coming together of multiplicities of objects each with their own temporalities and spatialities; contemporaneous of one another yet neither simultaneous connection (the flash of a network of associations) nor compressed to a singular narrative. Massey argues for a conception of space that provides the theoretical 'room' for multiple coexisting objects with narratives that are spatially positioned and arranged and yet also necessarily interconnected with one another as they are co-produced (Henry & Massey 1995; Massey 1995; 1999). These positionings and interconnections are never fixed; they are continually becoming, morphing and developing through their interactions and effects upon one another. Spatiality and positioning is therefore a constitutive resource in the formation of apparatuses of power relations and their various abilities to impact and affect one another. Privilege is therefore a spatial process.

This intermingling of times and spaces produces any single place as open, incomplete and continually mobile; even the continents and mountains shift and change and Massey (2005, p138) asks 'if everything is moving, where is here?'

"Here' is where spatial narratives meet up or form configurations, conjunctures of trajectories which have their own temporalities... the layers of our meeting intersecting and affecting each other; weaving a process through space-time... 'Here' is an intertwining of histories in which the spatiality of

¹⁴ Or space-time the two are, for her, mutually interchangeable see Massey 2005 footnote 3, p197.

those histories (their then as well as their here) is inescapably tangled... (And yet, in its temporary constellation we (must) make something of it)

(Massey 2005, p131, 141)

Massey argues against the juxtaposition of space and place, suggesting that such a dichotomy acts to replicate the prioritised/subjugated structure of similar constructions (Massey 2002). For Massey, place is a fragile moment of articulation and configuration which is produced, not only through internal heterogeneity but also the myriad relations, trajectories and connections between what is present in the here/now and each corresponding there/then that are necessary for this alignment to occur (see Amin 2002; 2004). Such configurations are neither inevitable, nor entirely structured; there is a juxtaposition and 'thrown-togetherness' of different components, objects, encounters and movements which follow no singular or dominant pattern of power (Massey 2005). There are multiple power-geometries that produce, impact, enable or restrict the movement of different groups of people, of different formations of the built environment and of the various material/discursive, human/non-human elements that might constitute any particular time-space (Massey 2005).

Space is therefore *never* apolitical, its structuring, distances and distributions are the product of Foucault's war by another means. Massey offers a conception of place which moves away from ideas of fixity and essential identity; place can be understood as an apparatus of heterogeneous power relations in the same way as a human subjectivity or any other object. Place is performed through the ways in which it is used, represented, produced and constructed. Place making activities are understood as 'attempts to fix the meaning of places, to enclose and defend them' and attempt to produce boundaries between inside/outside (Massey 1994, p168); in doing so they produce a false homogeneity in relation to a proliferating and necessarily threatening, other. Amin (2002, p388) warns that this can lead to 'a politics of place in which relations within localities are cast as good and felt, separate from bad and remote external happenings'. Others are placed within fixed and bounded containers with no multiplicity or politics of their own which can lead to a replication of imperialist and exclusionary practices (Abbott 2003; Ashcroft *et al.* 1995; Darling 2009; Gilroy 2005; Minh-ha 1989; Said 1979; Smith 1999). This practice removes the relationality of space and effaces the relational production of apparatuses through complex networks of power. Relationality in this reading takes two forms, internal heterogeneity and external connectedness. Internal heterogeneity refers to the interconnections between the simultaneous apparatuses that produce place not as 'areas with boundaries around [but as] articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings' (Massey 1993, p66). Yet few, if any, apparatuses do not extend beyond their articulation as place, we must therefore also explore how 'relations...

run outwards from that identity'; an understanding of place that actively integrates external connectedness and the political implications that brings (Massey 2006, p93). Taking seriously this power-full and productive understanding, place identity is no longer derived from an internal and true source (Foucault 1980; Lemke 2011; Philo 1992; Sayer 1993; Taylor 1986). Instead places are produced through the networks in which they are a part, in which they occur, and just as places are produced from these intersections of relations so in turn they act to produce relations which simultaneously produce other places (Allen 2005; 2011; Amin 2004; Castree 2004; Darling 2009; Daya 2011; Jackson 2006; Jonathan 2009; Massey 2002; 2004; Thrift 1999; 2006).

'Places, also have lines that run out from them: trade routes, investments, political and cultural influences, the outward connections of the internal multiplicity itself; power relations of all sorts that run around the globe and that link the fate of other places to what is done... For each place this geography, this tentacular stretching of power relations, will be particular'
(Massey 2007, p7)

This requires us to consider the implications of our actions on those networks, the responsibilities that we have not just to those that are local to us, but also to those 'distant strangers' whom our actions may affect (Amin 2007; Castree 2004; Darling 2009; Jonathan 2009; Massey 2004; Valentine 2008). As both our personal identities and those of the places around us are constructed through the apparatuses of material/discursive relations which connect us to that endless variety of others. We are responsible to them, as they are to us, for the existence of our very selves (Whatmore 1997). Different places have different abilities to impact and affect the networks in which they take part. This differentiation allows for the production of geographies of inequality, which become an integral part of those networks in the future, as certain apparatuses are able to integrate and maintain more resources into themselves. Specific places are able to accumulate and maintain more resources and abilities and subsequently defend those acquisitions. In this way, apparatuses of place are performatively produced and maintained. The following section moves this discussion further by exploring the concept of performativity to show that the performativities of place apparatuses are no different from the performativities of personal identities.

2.4.3 Performativity

It should be clear that this thesis deploys an understanding of the self, the body and identity as produced through their spatial location, yet they might also be understood as being a distinct place, existing within an extensive field of relations which have their own geographies and histories; a particular moment of articulation at the intersection of multiplicity (Allen 1998; Massey 2005; Nash 2000; Nast & Pile 1998; Nelson 1999; Simonsen 2005; Thrift & Dewsbury 2000). Just as the body and the

subject come into formation at an intersection of different apparatuses of power, the citation and performance of discursive resources reinforces and (re)produces those apparatuses of power (Butler 1990; 1991; 1993; 2004; 2005). It is only through continual reproduction and performance that apparatuses are maintained and remain legible at all and it is only through the constant competition between conflicting apparatuses that some become invested with normativity and privilege while others are marginalised or become illegible entirely.

Butler's (1990; 1993) initial articulations of performativity focused on the sex/gender nexus. Her writing furthers critiques of the unitary subject in the work of Nietzsche and Foucault to argue that there is no essentially gendered or sexed identities beyond their enactment through apparatuses of power relations (Allen 1998; Digereser 1994; Gregson & Harrison 2000; Hood-Williams & Cealey Harrison 1998; Nash 2000; Nelson 1999; Salih 2002). Drawing on Nietzsche's claim that 'there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming; 'the doer' is merely a fiction added to the deed – the deed is everything' Butler produces a theory of becoming which she describes as performativity (Nietzsche 1969 cited Butler 1990, p34). Developing de Beauvoir's statement that 'one is not born, but becomes a woman' Butler argues that discourses produce the appearance of gender through the repetition and enactment of what Foucault would describe as the micro-practices of power-knowledge (de Beauvoir 1949, p281 cited Butler 1990, p45); and that the continual repetition of these practices 'congeal' in 'a process of materialisation that stabilises over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface that we call matter' (Butler 1990, p185). Subsequently Butler (1993, p9) argues that 'words, acts, gestures... produce the effect of an internal core or substance... such acts, gestures, enactments... are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means'. Gendered and sexed identities are an elaborately constructed social fabrication with no ontological reality of their own, a product of particular apparatuses of power-knowledge relations which only appear to be 'real' through the invisibility of the processes of their production.

There have been a variety of challenges and engagements with these understandings of subject formation, particularly in the perceived primacy of aspatial discourses over the materialities and specificities of the body and place (Gregson & Rose 2000; Hood-Williams & Cealey Harrison 1998; Namaste 2005; Nash 2000; Nelson 1999; Rose 1995; Salih 2002; Slocum 2008; Tauchert 2002; Thrift & Dewsbury 2000). For example, Foucault's work has been criticised as failing 'to offer an account of the body's historicity in which its very materiality plays an active role in the workings of power... [an] implicit re-inscription of matter's passivity' (Barad 2003, p809); materiality is reduced to an abstract and formless substance infinitely available to be

manipulated and reshaped by discursive currents. Similarly Butler's earliest understandings of performativity were criticised for their lack of spatiality and a relegation to the materiality of the body and place to only the produced effect of power rather than integral to the formulation of apparatuses of relations, as Thrift and Dewsbury (2000, p414) explain 'Butler makes very little room for space, period. The space within which performance occurs is implied, not implicated'. Although this critique should be extended to take account of how space and subjectivity are co-produced such that each is a performative part of the others (re)production. Performance does not occur within a static and pre-existing space, yet neither do the relations of spatiality pre-determine the possibilities for action and performance.

The materialities of place and the body are also neglected in Butler's early work, their role in constituting gendered subjects is a particular point of contention from trans* identities who must routinely experience and negotiate the material limits of identification and performativity through disjuncture and mis/recognitions (Browne 2006; Browne *et al.* 2010; Dozier 2005; Elliot 2009; Hines 2006; Namaste 2005; Nash 2010; Prosser 1998). Just as other non-normative expressions of identity might also become illegible through their embodied performances, for example 'female masculinities' or 'butches' (Browne 2007; Halberstam 1995; Skeggs 2001); emphasising that discourses never exist independently, and that identities are never constituted beyond the materialities of their manifestation (Grosz 1993; 1994).

Power, place and performativity each contribute to an anti-essentialist, spatial and processual understanding of privilege as a manifested effect of the relations through which certain apparatuses gain access to different resources and abilities while others are restricted. These processes are uncertain and contested; indeed resistance is only possible because of their instability as differing apparatuses come into conflict with one another. The heterogeneous constitution of each apparatus brings into association the materialities of bodies, walls, books, clothes, gestures, flesh, money, buildings and more with diverse discursive representations, productions and interpretations. It is only through the interrelation of these differing elements into meaningful apparatuses that the social comes to be constituted. This has consequences for the study of privilege, moving away from fixed and unitary understandings of 'the privileged subject' and towards nuanced and multiple understandings of selves and identities. There are no longer any clearly identifiable, uniform and universal 'privileged' identities. Instead saturating apparatuses of power relations appear to stabilise and produce certain identities with certain resources and abilities to act and impact upon others; processes which are subsequently naturalised and rendered invisible.

2.5 Conclusion

Recognition of privilege as a useful, indeed, vital method of exploring the processes through which inequalities are produced continues to proliferate in a wide range of fields (McIntosh 2012), this chapter has briefly reviewed four of them; race, class, gender and sexuality. I have argued that despite their differing loci of study, they share a relatively stable conceptualisation of privilege based around four key principles. First articulated by DuBois (1899; 1903; 1906; 1920) these are: 1) Power relations produce the experiences of all persons. Apparatuses of race, class, gender and sexuality produce all positionalities, not merely those who are marginalised by those relations. Thus, privilege is not only valid but a necessary field of study to understand the production of inequalities. 2) Privilege refers to a 'public and psychological wage' of benefits, advantages, resources and abilities. Inequalities are material, symbolic, social and psychological; privilege refers to existing differences between individuals' situated practices, opportunities, resources, abilities and experiences. 3) Privilege and marginalisation are often naturalised processes or attitudes that are invisible to privileged groups and individuals. Apparatuses of power relations function to appear stable, a process that naturalises patterns or interrelations and positionalities and renders their contingent spatial production invisible and taken for granted. 4) Despite its ubiquity, privilege is not a monolithic, uniform process. Power relations are intrinsically spatial, unstable processes, the appearance of uniformity, stability and homogeneity is merely another function of their naturalisation.

This conception of privilege is filtered and developed through a poststructuralist theoretical framework, influenced by various elements in black feminism, queer theory, critical geographies, a Foucaultian conception of power and understandings of spatiality and subjectivity as performative and fluid. The third section of this chapter presented a conceptualisation of power, place and performativity through which this thesis understands the situated performance of identities. This thesis uses an understanding of power as productive and fluid through which hybrid elements are brought into relation as apparatuses and that these apparatuses are performatively constituted to appear as stable objects by constant repetition and (re)citation. Within this framework, I propose that privilege can be conceptualised as a situated, performative effect, through which some apparatuses of power relations, become able to access, within specific times and places, resources and abilities that are denied to others within similar circumstances. These processes and effects are subsequently rendered invisible through their naturalisation, reiteration and recitation to appear stable and coherent, effacing their situated production.

The various literatures I have reviewed and classified as 'studies of privilege' share a pattern of development, starting by suggesting that all attempts to study and

conceptualise privilege must be predicated upon the recognition of inequalities and marginalisations. Without first recognising that inequalities are the result of spatial processes of organisation, distribution, positioning and interrelation, rather than some form of essential or predetermined naturalistic structures, there can be no real engagement with privilege as it is used and conceptualised in this thesis. While essentialist conceptualisations might be able to document and explore elements of distribution or characteristics, without an understanding of process and production they are limited to descriptive accounts of apparently static and unchanging relations. Recognition of the dynamic production of inequalities allows explorations of the processes through which spatial relations are produced and maintained. This starts with researching the spatial practices and processes through which some bodies and identities come to be marginalised. The beginning of this chapter briefly explored a variety of these processes as they were developed across multiple fields of study. Studies of marginalisation document the everyday lives and practices of negotiation through which individuals attempt to maintain some degree of agency, along with the processes through which differences are produced and congeal into particular spatial forms. I particularly explored fear of crime as a mechanism through which space comes to be experienced as marginalising and exclusionary, along with how different groups might also claim and produce spaces of resistance. However, within studies of marginalisation there have always also been subordinated knowledges of those who are marginalised; knowledges that they have produced about their own lives and experiences and knowledges that they have gained about those who have access to the resources and spaces that they are denied. hooks (1992, p31) describes these subordinated knowledges as 'looking back', the often silent and unrecognised knowledges that the victims or marginalisation develop about privileged groups and identities 'gleaned from close scrutiny of [privileged] people'.

At some stage, these knowledges begin to make their presence felt outside of the subordinated communities of their production. This has no fixed timescale; rather subordinated knowledges will often exist 'on the margins' of academic knowledges in specialist publications and as 'minor' fields of interest. Critical study of whiteness for example was almost exclusively published in specialist journals for most of the previous century before it became widely cited and in 'mainstream' (white) academia (Kobayashi & Peake 2000; Mahtani 2006; Mevorach 2007; Pulido 2002). The exception being amongst pathologising explorations of particular 'social problems', but these are concerned with the governance and management of inequalities rather than their critical study and reformulation. Eventually subordinated knowledges of privilege begin to gain recognition amongst the academic 'mainstream' and at that time there generally develops a particular areas of research devoted to the study of that particular apparatus of power relations and the marginalisations and

privilegings which are produced through it. It has been argued that this development represents an appropriation of critical knowledges and that the language of 'privilege' effaces the violence and terror of marginalisation and oppression (see hooks 1992; Leonardo 2002; 2004). Dyer (1997, p10) has gone so far as to characterise this development as a re-centring of privileged voices through a process of 'me-too-ism' which 'allows [privileged] people to write and talk about what in any case we have already talked about: ourselves'. Yet despite the dangers and difficulties, critical knowledges of privilege are essential to understanding and engaging with the continual maintenance and reproduction of inequalities.

Despite the commonalities, which I have identified in the development and conception of privilege, the concept has had only sporadic influence and remains only partially integrated and accepted. While the past five years in particular have seen a proliferation of engagements with the topic, privilege is still a relatively overlooked concept that needs a great deal more study. The diversity of fields in which privilege has been deployed can also operate to compartmentalise various developments that would be more productive if brought together and synthesised. In part, that is what this project has set out to begin to accomplish. While I have argued that the conception of privilege is generally quite stable, different examples display wildly different levels of sophistication or engage with only one or two of the principles identified. Often the result of such engagements is to produce essentialising, homogenising and universalising and conceptions that seek to define the existence and properties of a singular, aspatial 'privileged subject'. It is only recently that critical research has begun to engage with privilege as a situated process emerging from interrelationality and the 'thrown-togetherness' of the social.

By situating this discussion of privilege within the context of recent theorisations of homonormativity this thesis shall address the manifestation and experience of privilege at a specific intersection of identification and performance. Doing so will enable me provide new evidence of the processes through the gay white men in this study come to experience privilege and therefore advance existing discussions of homonormativity, gay masculinities and queer temporalities. Along with demonstrating that there is no homogeneously and uniformly privileged subject by exploring where these men's access to privilege is challenged and how they come to be marginalised through experiences of homophobia and heteronormativity. While self-reflective examinations of privilege are now quite common, these have yet to expand into examinations of homonormativity. This thesis combines this approach with interviews to explore a range of gay white men's experiences of privilege. Further, studies of privilege are often notably lacking in a sustained engagement with spatiality and this area of study is only recently becoming more developed, this thesis also explicitly foregrounds an examination of the geographies of privilege by focusing

on the ways in which space and place operate to produce these men's experiences of privilege. Overall, this project advances understandings of privilege, particularly discussions of gay white men's experiences and the concept of homonormativity and contributes towards the development of a nuanced, complex and explicitly spatial understanding of privilege in everyday life.

This poststructuralist approach to privilege informs the epistemological perspective of the project and presents a range of methodological challenges. The following chapter shall explore the research design process and some of the tensions with which the project grapples.

3 Methods and Methodology

Outline

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Methods

3.2.1 Autoethnography

3.2.2 Interviews

3.2.3 Analysis

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Sampling

3.3.2 Ethics

3.4 Conclusion

3.1 Introduction

Identities are slippery and contingent devices, yet by engaging with homonormativity, I am to some extent researching and writing about 'myself', along with people with whom I share common identifiers and, potentially, experiences. While the connections between bodies, identities, performances and experiences are not fixed, neither are they necessarily divergent from one another. Indeed, it is in exploring the similarities and connections as well as differences that social research gains much of its explanatory power. However, this theoretical desire for complexity, fluidity and contradiction (Chapter 2.4) presents particular challenges to understandings of research methods as formulaic, repeatable, rigorous and formalised (Browne & Nash 2010; Law 2004). Destabilising understandings of the unitary, countable, truthful subject makes finding, identifying and interrogating that subject and 'their experience' problematic.

The project used 15 semi-structured conversational interviews with self-identified gay white men who live in Brighton & Hove, and autoethnographic writing and reflection on my everyday experiences and practices to develop a 'thick' descriptive representation of the spatialities of homonormativity and privilege. This chapter starts by addressing the specific methods of research collection and analysis that were developed and used during the project. This introduction to the research activities broadens out in the second half of the chapter to address the tensions inherent to a methodology based upon a poststructuralist theoretical framework. This section discusses the problems of 'sampling' and the recruitment of research participants using fixed identifiers such as 'gay' 'white' and 'men' while retaining a commitment to performative understandings of identity. I also discuss the role of the researcher-as-participant and interviewing within a network of close acquaintances and lovers. Lastly, I address issues of ethical research practice with 'privileged' participants within feminist understandings of power in the researcher/researched relationship, including the decision of 5 of the original 20 interviewees to withdraw from participation.

3.2 Methods

The theoretical framework outlined in the previous chapter, and those like it, have been primarily associated with the development and spread of qualitative methods and methodologies (Berg 2009; Crang 2002; Davis & Dwyer 2007; Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Ellis *et al.* 2008; Guba & Lincoln 2005; Maclure 2011; Richardson 2000; Silverman 1997; 2005; Vidich & Lyman 2000), although this connection should not necessarily be taken for granted (Browne 2008; 2010). This section details the implementation of the autoethnographic and interview methods used during the project and the process of analysis through which I generated the material in this

thesis. While I continue to reflect and write about privilege and everyday social practice, the material included in the coding and analysis procedure for this project is drawn from a roughly 12 month period of more intensely focused research activity. The timeline below illustrates the timings of major moments in the research.



Fig. 4 Timeline of research activities

The development of interview schedules, recruitment of participants and overall direction of the project was shaped by a period of research, reading, observation, reflection and writing described as autoethnography. Indeed, without this reflection on how privilege was manifest in my life and how my everyday practices and understandings are indelibly the product of privilege and marginalisation this project simply could not have existed as it does now. I therefore start my discussion of methods by introducing autoethnography and detailing how I went about this style of research.

3.2.1 Autoethnography

Autoethnography describes a range of practices, methods, and modes of representation that developed, aiming to explore new styles of research and knowledge production (Butz & Besio 2009; Ellis 2004). Ellis writes that:

‘David Hayano usually is credited as the originator of the term. Hayano limited the meaning to cultural level studies by anthropologists of their ‘own people’, in which the researcher is a full insider by virtue of being ‘native’, acquiring an intimate familiarity with the group, or achieving full membership in the group being studied’

(Ellis 2004, p38)

Hayano’s (1979) understanding of autoethnography, originally only proposed as a form of ‘full member’ ethnographic research has been expanded in the past thirty years with a variety of forms coming into use the most prominent being *analytic* autoethnography (Anderson 2006; Maydell 2010; Vryan 2006) and *evocative* autoethnography (Ellis 2004; Ellis & Bochner 2006; Kidd & Finlayson 2009; Mitra 2010; Ngunjiri *et al.* 2010; Pearce 2010; Spry 2001). Autoethnography is often associated with experimentation in form and the (re)presentation of research, with a broad range of poetic (Bruce 2010; Chatham-Carpenter 2010; Kaufmann 2011; Leavy 2009; Richardson 2002), performance (Waymer 2008; Weems *et al.* 2009), fiction (Davies 1992; Inkle 2010; Leavy 2012; Watson 20011), mixed media (Brogden 2008; Watson 2009), semi-fictional (Besio 2005; Boje & Tyler 2009; Haywood Rolling 2008;

Snyder-Young 2011) and layered or fragmentary texts (de Freitas & Paton 2009; Magnet 2006; Mizzi 2010; Moreira 2008; Owen *et al.* 2009; Pathak 2010; Ronai 1992; 1995; 2007; Wamsted 2011) being developed in a variety of disciplinary contexts and engaged with a wide range of theoretical and methodological issues (Butz & Besio 2009; Ellis 2006; 2007; Ellis & Bochner 2000; Gatson 2003; Hernandez *et al.* 2010; Mizzi & Stebbins 2010). Autoethnographic researchers and writers 'take on the dual identities of academic and personal selves to tell personal stories about some aspect of their experience in daily life' (Ellis & Bochner 2000, p740).

While attempts at typologies have been made, these inevitably obscure the situated production of individual pieces of writing as emergent texts, rather than as wholly prefigured and planned objects (Anderson 2006; Butz & Besio 2009; Crang 2005; Dillow 2009; Ellis 2004; Ellis & Bochner 2006; O'Byrne 2007). Ellis and Bochner suggest that autoethnography be understood as:

'Writing about the personal and its relationship to culture... a genre of writing that displays multiple layers of consciousness... Back and forth the autoethnographer's gaze: First they look through an ethnographic wide angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations.'

(Ellis and Bochner 2000, 739-749)

This interpretation of autoethnography argues that to write about the self is to write about social experience and the ways in which our personal experience is shaped by the social, cultural and physical world around us (Mykhalovskiy 1997). It tends to be characterised by; writing in the first person (Tedlock 1991); a focus on finding connections between the social and personal (Ronai 1992; 1995; Spry 2001); the text may also be presented as a story following conventions of plot, drama and characterisation (Bochner 2002; Bochner & Ellis 2003; Davies 1992; Leavy 2012).

As shown in the timeline above, for approximately 12 months I was engaged in a period of writing and reflecting upon the experience and manifestations of privilege in the everyday spatialities of my life. This research generated copious notes in a variety of formats and styles including vignette descriptions of events, reflections on the research experience or my own understandings of privilege, longer pieces of descriptive writing, and short research notes, memos or commentaries (see Ellis 2004; Humphreys 2005; Lather 1993; Latham & McCormack 2009; Lincoln 1995; Richardson 2000; Scheurich 1997; Schwandt 1996; 2000). Much of this note taking was done on an *ad hoc* basis using reporter pads or a mobile device and subsequently transcribed; it presently covers around 300 typed A4 sheets and was added to the interview transcripts for analysis (see 3.2.3). Generally, this material is in the form of short notes taken while I went about my usual daily and weekly routines and talking to people, I met about their views of inequalities and their experiences of space. Often I was able to stimulate these kinds of discussions by responding to questions about

my 'job' or what it was that I 'do these days'. This was facilitated by my history of working and volunteering in gay scene spaces and, at one time, being a well recognised face within those places. In this sense the research really has been a product of 'insider knowledge' or as Hayano (1979) described it being 'native' to the spaces of research (Hernandez *et al.* 2010; Mahoney 2007; Maydell 2010; Taylor 2011). This project was not a voyage into the unknown for me, indeed for many years I regarded the spaces of the commercial gay scene as an inclusive and safe community and it was subsequently quite unsettling to hear descriptions from some of the participants of scene spaces which differed from my personal experiences and understandings of those places (see Chapter 5). This disparity is one of the reasons why the interviews provided a useful opportunity to explore my own assumptions through exploring differing understandings and experiences of space. The following section addresses interviewing as a method in this research.

3.2.2 Interviews

The interview is a widely accepted method of social research and in one form or another is used in almost all forms of interpersonal research (Fontana & Frey 2005; Gubrium & Holstein 2002). Modernist and positivist conceptions of the interview understood the process as two, relatively passive subjects engaged within a structured and formal process of question and answers (Gubrium & Holstein 2002; Holstein & Gubrium 1995; Kvale 1996; Rubin & Rubin 1995; Tanggaard 2009; Warren 2002). Questions in this case being preformatted and assumed to simply extract answers from a respondent, the individual subjectivities of both the respondent and the interviewer were considered to be largely irrelevant to the process (Platt 2002). However, such understandings of passive subjects and the interview as a transparent process of information retrieval have been substantially challenged and reformulated (Berg 2009; Byrne 2003; Charmaz 2002; Ezzy 2010; Fontana & Frey 2005; Holstein & Gubrium 1995; Johnson 2002; Kvale 1996; Platt 2002; Rubin & Rubin 1995; Silverman 2005; Tanggaard 2009; Warren 2002). The interview participant has been repositioned as an active co-producer of the interview 'event' and the outcomes of that process (Berg 2009; Crang 2002; 2005; Davies & Dwyer 2007; Dwyer & Davies 2009; Falconer Al-Hindi & Kawabata 2002; Reinharz 1992; Rubin & Rubin 1995; Valentine 2002; Vidich & Lyman 2000).

During my autoethnographic writing and in carrying out the interviews, I struggled to remain aware that I was just as implicated in the reproduction of inequalities as the participants. I found that, having started to engage with the difficult process of recognising privilege, my engagements with the participants were framed by empathy which led me towards a more informal and collaborative interview process. This, coupled with understandings of identity as performative and situated indicate that structured forms of data collection, such as a survey would have been

inappropriate for this topic (Ezzy 2010; Fontana 2005). Drawing on these developments, I attempted to use a 'reflexive dyadic' style which focuses on the interview process as a dialogue of mutual learning and sharing of experience (Ellis and Berger 2002). As Ellis and Berger (2002, p851-854) write: 'In this interactive context, respondents become narrators who improvise stories in response to the questions, probes, and personal stories of the interviews' and is conducted 'more as a conversation between two equals than as a distinctly hierarchical... exchange'. This approach attempts to recognise the agency of the participant in the production of research (Domosh 2003). Interviews consisted of relatively few major areas of discussion, coupled with a variety of prompts and follow up questions (see Appendix 8.2). This follows a guided conversational style of interviewing characterised by Kvale (1996, p4) as the interviewer 'wandering... along with the local inhabitants, asks questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of the lived world'. Of course the implication of the researcher as external to the 'local' world of the interview participants is, in this case, false; yet this model of 'wandering along, together' demonstrates the conversational flow that I aimed to promote.

Despite this, my aspirations towards developing dual narrative or reflexive dyadic interviews which gave equal precedence to the interviewer and participant's voices and stories were unsuccessful. The participants of this study generally responded quite poorly to my attempts at comparing experiences or sharing my own stories. In comparison, a more 'question, answer, prompt' style tended to generate much more sustained and detailed responses from the participants (Holstein & Gubrium 1995; Johnson 2002; Kvale 1996; Rubin & Rubin 1995; Warren 2002). After attempting to follow my original plan in two pilot interviews (see Appendix 8.2), I changed my approach and developed a more traditional interview style to prioritise the quality of data that I could gather rather than methodological ingenuity.

I interviewed 20 participants¹⁵, these interviews averaged 1 hour 45 minutes of material and totalled approximately 250,000 words. Interviews were recorded using a standard digital device and the participants were offered the opportunity to read their interview transcripts, only one of which used this opportunity (who subsequently withdrew from participation). The interviews were conducted in a place of the participants choosing and the majority of the interviews took place in participants' homes with almost as many in scene spaces¹⁶. Although at the time I gave little thought to these choices, on reflection it seems significant that the participants chose either 'safer' spaces of the scene or that they used their home spaces as places of sociality (for discussion of the queer home as a social space see

¹⁵ Sampling and recruitment of these participants are discussed shortly see Chapter 3.3.1.

¹⁶ These interviews were conducted as follows; 2 in the university; 5 in scene spaces; 8 at participants' homes.

Chapter 4; Gorman-Murray 2006; 2007; 2008). Once transcribed these interviews were analysed alongside the autoethnographic material also being generated. This analysis process is discussed next.

3.2.3 Analysis

The suggestion that 'analysis' forms a discrete and bounded period of the project, distinct from 'writing' or 'researching' effaces the constant process of iteration through which this project developed. Throughout the duration of the 'research active' stages of the project I have been involved in annotating and reflecting on the various field notes, interview transcripts and autoethnographic writing that I had generated. Indeed, the interviews were developed and guided by the autoethnographic material, refining the topics of discussion and subsequently influencing later stages of research and analysis. The project generally moved from a process of *open* coding, developing and exploring a wide array of possible themes and points of interest, towards more *focused* coding activities as particular areas were selected in order to develop a coherent monograph (Charmaz 2002; 2006; Clarke 2003; Kvale 1996; Emerson *et al.* 1995; Silverman 2005). As shown in the timeline above, there were effectively four major stages of analysis and coding¹⁷.

Stage 1 was a line by line analysis of each individual interview transcript and a similar process for each piece of autoethnographic material, these were conducted separately. After were completed I spent two weeks working through this collection of notes and coding across them to produce an interim data collection report. This report was a preliminary review of the strengths and weaknesses of the data gathered to that point and possible areas for improvement. This led to several changes to the interview schedule, further refining the topics of interest and provided a useful opportunity to reflect on the development of the project. *Stage 2* involved conducting 10 more interviews and continuing to analyse and develop a thematic coding framework for this material. During this stage five of the participants exercised their right to withdraw from the project, an event which will be discussed in detail shortly. While this withdrawal caused me to lose some potentially useful data, overall it did not have a crippling effect on the coding process due to the amount of commonality and repetition that the interviews demonstrated. Reprinting and redeveloping the thematic coding framework constituted *stage 3*, this process was evidently not entirely new but the attempt enabled me to further refine the themes of the final project. This stage reassured me that there remained sufficient data to continue with the analysis of the project and demonstrated the level of thematic saturation which had been reached (Berg 2009; Bowen 2008; 2009; Bryman 1994; Charmaz 2002; 2006; Emerson *et al.* 1995; Lincoln 1995; Marshall & Rossman 2006;

¹⁷ Appendix 8.3 includes copies of these stages including one line-by-line example for reference as a qualitative audit trail of the analysis process see Bowen 2008; 2009.

Seale 1999; Silverman 2005). Finally *stage 4* involved refining the mass of codes and notes that I had generated down to 28 codes and concepts which could be used to address the thesis' aims.

This process of analysis was carried out alongside continued autoethnographic reflection and writing. As I read, annotated, re-read and coded the combined field notes and interview transcripts I would repeatedly take the stories and ideas that I was generating back 'out' with me to discuss them with people and attempt to gather additional evidence. In this way 'analysis work' and 'field work' continued to be an iterative process just as the interviews were guided by previous work. However it must be remembered that this work is the product of a situated process and that this analysis could have developed in a variety of different ways at various stages. An alternative reader, examining the same corpus of data but exploring different understandings or questions would likely produce a very different document. The second half of this chapter explores the methodology which underpinned the production and conduct of the methods and processes outline so far. I address understandings of reflexive research practices, the difficulties involved in recruitment and 'sampling' for the project and the imperative for ethical conduct as well as some of the complications which arose.

3.3 Methodology

There have been sustained critiques of the 'myth' of objectivity and arguing that previous understandings of the researcher as a neutral observer capable of producing unbiased 'Truth' about social life are inadequate. Most notably feminist theorists have argued that the researchers identities and positionality play a major role in constructing the research process and in the kind of knowledge which is eventually produced (Alcoff & Potter 1993; Digeser 1994; Dyer & Jones 2000; Gorelick 1991; Harding 1987; Harraway 1988; 1991a; Hill Collins 1990; hooks 2000; Hurtado 1996; Kelly 1979; Klein 1983; Kobayashi 1994; Mattingly & Falconer Al-Hindi 1995; McNay 1992; Minh-Ha 1989; Nash 2008; Pile 1991; Reinhartz 1992; Rose 1993; Spelman 1988; Stanley & Wise 1983; Sullivan & Tuana 2007). Rose (1997, p205) writes that she understands 'knowledge as situated – that is, as partial... because I share those feminist, postcolonial and post-Marxist critiques which argue that all knowledge is produced in specific circumstances and that those circumstances shape it in some way'.

In relation to these debates, McDowell (1992, p409) has argued that it should be considered good practice to 'recognise and take account of our own position, as well as that of our research participants'. In order to avoid the presentation of the researcher as an external and objective agent and the implication that the research is a neutral mapping of the field, an uncovering of fixed truths (Harraway 1991; Harding

1987; Stanley & Wise 1983). Thus avoiding the technique 'honed to perfection in the history of science... to distance the knowing subject from everybody and everything in the interests of unfettered power' because this 'view of infinite vision is an illusion, a god-trick' (Harraway 1991, p188-189). In opposition to the positivist principle of objectivity feminist authors argue for a detailed reflexivity in which researchers are encouraged to be aware of their positionality how the power relations produce the research experience (Bondi 1990; Bondi & Domosh 1992; Dyck 1993; Eyles 1993; Falconer Al-Hindi & Kawabata 2002; Gailey & Prohaska 2011; Gorelick 1991; Harding 1987; hooks 2000; Ludvig 2006; McDowell 1992; 1993; 1999; McNay 1992; Reinhartz 1992; Rose; 1993; 1997; Valentine 2002; Wright 2008; 2009; 2010).

I follow Rose's (1997, p206) understanding of reflexivity as 'a strategy for situating knowledges: that is, as a means of avoiding the false neutrality and universality of so much academic knowledge'. In order to minimise the effects of the unequal distribution of power within the research setting researchers are encouraged to 'make ones position *vis a vis* research known rather than invisible' (Mattingley & Falconer Al-Hindi 1995, p428) or to 'make visible our own critical positioning within the structure of power' (McDowell 1992, p413). Yet descriptions of positionality can be misleading as it suggests a fixed and predetermined spatiality between various identities, rather Valentine (2002, p120) argues that 'our positions in relation to our interviewees are never *a priori*, readily apparent or defined. Rather they emerge in the research encounter'. Further, Rose (1997, p311) argues that to assume researchers can effectively know everything about the research context, the participants, themselves and the relations between them, is to attempt a 'goddess-trick uncomfortably similar to the god-trick' because such total knowledge is impossible. Rose (1997, p311) continues by describing this conception of 'transparent reflexivity' as depending 'on certain notions of agency (as conscious) and power (as context), and assumes that both are knowable'.

In this sense reflexivity is interwoven with considerations of power in the production of knowledge. However this interaction is problematic and despite people wishing to share, understand and 'to learn from and about others... the fact of difference itself may distance them from one another, making such understanding difficult' (Falconer Al-Hindi 2002, p106). Sidaway (1992), for example, suggests some problems that this interaction has for powerful Western researchers working in Mozambique and points to the various ways in which this relation might influence the type of knowledge's that may be produced. Similarly Kobayashi (1994, p76) argues that the class privilege of academic women (and men) through access to luxuries 'such as education and professional status' which may not be available to their participants creates a power imbalance which can be problematic. Subsequently Madge (1993, p296) argues that the researcher must consider 'the role of the (multiple) "self", showing how a

researchers positionality (in terms of race, nationality, age, gender, social and economic status, sexuality) may influence the “data” collected’.

Considering my positioning as an allegedly homonormative subject, as a resident of Brighton, a regular consumer and minor producer of ‘the scene’¹⁸ it is clear that my positionality plays a constitutive role in this project. There are privileges which I am able to access, indeed which are productive elements of my identity, which will have influenced the production of this research. As a middle classed and educated person, with access to the university and the resources and knowledges available to me I have particular advantages which most of the participants are excluded from; it is indeed a privilege to teach about privilege (Messner 2011). My knowledge, experiences and understanding of the world are inextricably linked to my positionality, indeed I am entirely a product of positionality and apparatuses of power-knowledge (see Chapter 2). It is therefore difficult to ensure that the knowledge I produce through my research will not be haunted and infused with privilege; that it will not operate precisely to further exclude and marginalise rather than to challenge relations of inequality. Privileged individuals are able to collude in producing a ‘privilege-talk’ which reproduce of narratives that centre and prioritise their own experiences while avoiding topics which might implicate them (see hooks 1992). In this I draw on Butz and Berg’s (2002) discussion of ‘duppy feminism’ in which they propose an attempted resolution to the long running ‘men problem’ in feminist theory and practice¹⁹. They propose that researchers be conscious that the ‘duppy’ (ghost or malevolent spirit) of privilege:

‘Is within us. This duppy helps constitute our subjectivities in duplicitous, often intangible but ever-present ways... it is difficult for us consistence and continuously to concede fully to the fact of... privilege in our own lives... it is even more difficult to work systematically against our own... interests.’

(Butz & Berg 2002, p94-95)

Through recognition of the duppy, the ephemeral and powerful presence of privilege, we might be able to resist, or at the very least admit to, its influence and hope that this admission will alleviate some of its coercive effects. It is difficult for me to examine these interviews and see if that is the case, I can only make my own positionality explicit and hope that I have been able to deploy the sufficient degree of critical distance. Examining the transcripts it is certainly the case that the participants and I found it much easier to talk about ourselves as marginalised subjects rather than as privileged ones, and that the participants struggled to articulate themselves as raced and white subjects. The extent to which this represents a fatal collusion and failure of the project must be left to the reader to judge.

¹⁸Over 7 years of living in Brighton I have played a number of roles and capacities within the various networks and spaces that collectively constitute ‘the gay scene’ (or scenes) as a consumer, bar and club employee, charity volunteer, sexual health educator, fundraiser and event organiser.

¹⁹ For discussions of the ‘men problem’ in feminist theory and practice see Alilunas 2011; Klein 1983.

There are no clear distinctions between theory, methodology and analysis so the poststructuralist and feminist points drawn out in this section necessarily interconnect and build upon the understandings of power, place and performativity discussed in the previous chapter. Yet there is a substantial difference between theoretical discussions and the practical implementation of these arguments; a difference which is not always carried through to its full extent (Browne & Nash 2010, p1). There are two areas in which the implementation of queer arguments has been the most prominent in structuring the methodology of this project, these are sampling and ethics. Poststructuralist understandings of the subject render sampling a singular positionality a murky prospect, I therefore spend some time exploring how I recruited participants and the tension between deconstructivism and stability. I also discuss the ethical concerns and procedures that informed the conduct of my research and reflect on some of its challenges.

3.3.1 Sampling

During the autoethnographic fieldwork I developed a purposeful and non-random sampling strategy to recruit participants who self identified as 'gay white men' in order to be able to engage with discussions of homonormativity. I used a style of participant recruitment in which 'the interviewer seeks out respondents who seem likely to epitomise the analytic criteria [they] are interested in' and the sample is primarily recruited through my social network (Warren 2002, p87). This form of sampling aims to access participants based upon their 'fit' with the purposes of the research in order to generate knowledges about a specific group or identity. I recruited 20 interviewees, of which 15 contribute transcripts for the thesis. This section addresses some of the challenges of the recruitment process and how these challenges contributed to my understanding of privilege.

In order to explore the everyday manifestations of privilege for gay white men living in Brighton & Hove, I purposefully narrowed the sampling strategy to recruit a relatively 'similar' group of men. I did this by focusing on key aspects of identity used to describe allegedly homonormative subjects (see Chapter 2.3.4), namely that they identify as 'gay', 'white' and 'male' and had lived in Brighton & Hove for at least 6 months. One further aspect used to narrow the sample was by primarily aiming to approach 'younger' men. I did this to ensure that the sample was as narrow and ostensible similar to my own identity as possible. By narrowing the sample my research is able to explore the nuances of difference within an apparently homogenous category of identities, fracturing the appearance of sameness and developing understandings of the subtleties between individual spatial practices and experiences of privilege. All of the participants were between 23 and 35 (only 3 of the participants were 30+) at the time of interview and all of them described their gender

identities as either 'male', 'relaxed male', 'gay male' or 'masculine male' and described their sexual identities as being primarily or entirely involved with other men²⁰.

The search for the homonormative subject, as an allegedly unambiguous and uniform male identity becomes mired in the complexities of lived identity and experiences creating a tension between a theoretical desire for ambiguity and fluidity against a methodological need for stable subjects to interview (Browne 2010; Rooke 2009). This presents problems for attempting to recruit participants without resorting to an essentialist identification of individuals by phenotypic features. The sampling strategy I developed relied upon the assumption that I would be able to recognise 'gay white men', who might experience privileges associated with homonormativity. This seems problematically predicated on the assertion that there is a recognisable and stable 'gay white male' identity that can be claimed, understood or interrogated (see Chapter 2.4 (Allen 1998; Butler 1990; 1991; 1993; 2004; 2005; Massey 2005; Nash 2000; Nast & Pile 1998; Nelson 1999; Simonsen 2005; Thrift & Dewsbury 2000)). Attempting to narrow a sample based upon a priori understandings of fixed categories therefore presents a contradictory tension between identification and deconstruction. This tension runs throughout the project, influencing its development in a variety of ways and particularly the contributions that the thesis makes to ongoing debates regarding identity, homonormativity and privilege.

One option for navigating this tension circumvents the problem by emphasising that privilege is an integral part of the production of identities through association with particular apparatuses of, for example, masculinity and whiteness. While privilege is manifest through a variety of spatialities, practices and materialities, being *recognisable* as belonging and performing a particular identity is an important component of being accepted and gaining access to privilege. In contrast the ambiguous subject is rarely privileged and often causes confusion and misrecognition (Browne 2004; Noble 2009; Skeggs 2001; Steinbugler 2005). Therefore the manifestation of privileges associated with, for example, masculinity and maleness are likely (not always, not uniformly) to be in at least some correspondence with a subject which 'fits' those apparatuses, indeed performative identity and power relations are entangled and productive of one another. The coherent subject does not access a pre-existing discourse yet neither is discourse produced from an internal essentialism of the subject, they are inextricable from one another (Butler 1990; 1993; Gregson & Rose 2000; Nelson 1999; Rooke 2007; Salih 2002). A beneficiary of privilege through association with masculinity should theoretically, be recognisably masculine. Of course this is no guarantee as identity is spatially produced and the subject that is recognisably masculine in one place may not be so in another, but it

²⁰ See Appendix 8.1 for details of participants' self-identifications.

might provide a useful 'rule of thumb' provided an understanding of the limitations and contingencies are retained.

A second, slightly less theoretical working through of the problem comes from my long association with the places and people I was approaching. The majority of potential participants I contacted were already known to me through the years I have spent working in one of the larger gay bars in the city and socialising in scene spaces. While carrying on with my routine social life in Brighton & Hove I was able to come into contact with large numbers of potential participants, many of whom I already knew and was able to talk to about my research under the premise of 'catching up' and sharing news. As such, I was already mostly aware of the self identities of the people I was talking to and in the end it proved easiest to ensure that everyone I contacted was made aware of the kind of positionality that I was interested in speaking to. I framed my search by saying that "*I am looking for people who describe themselves as gay white men and who have lived in Brighton & Hove for at least 6 months*".

Subsequently each participant was given an opportunity to fill out a 'diversity monitoring' style short questionnaire with open questions to provide an opportunity for the participants to talk through issues of identification and reflect upon what, if any, connection they thought might exist between their identities and their experiences of privilege. Some of these responses were surprising to me as I discovered that my assumptions about participants' identities were not entirely accurate, in particular 4 of the participants described their sexual identities using some variant of '*not entirely gay*'. These men, while predominantly involved and desiring same-sex relationships and sexual activity either did not entirely rule out the possibility of straight sex in the future, had engaged in straight sex previously or were receptive to straight sexual encounters but remained primarily identified as 'gay' rather than 'bisexual'. This illustrates the problems of attempting to use stable understandings of identities to comprehend the messiness and fluidity of everyday lives.

Another problem during this stage of the project was the difficulty in introducing the concept of *privilege* and the purpose of the research in very short spaces of time. The concept of privilege can be explained to people in a variety of ways, and some of those ways are almost guaranteed (in my experience) to illicit hostile and defensive responses. Frankenberg (1993, p32-35) illustrates a similar problem when she discusses her problems recruiting white women to talk about whiteness, the subject simply does not make sense to people who are unused to thinking in those terms. As has been discussed by those interested in teaching praxis and privilege, initial exposure to the term is often met with confusion without a sophisticated framing process (Abrums *et al.* 2010; Bozalek 2011; Cabera 2012; Case 2007; Case & Stewart

2010; Kincheloe & Steinberg 1998; Leonardo 2002; Messner 2011; Montgomery & Stewart 2012; Pleasants 2011; Tatum 1994; Underiner 2000; Winans 2005). This is difficult to do in less than five minutes, especially in a busy bar with the combination of crowds, alcohol, sex and music competing for attention. This led to three outcomes. First, during my attempts to meet and talk to various potential participants, I managed to offend a great many people. My suggestions that white people (or men, or gay men) had some kind of 'special privilege' ran counter to understandings of 'normalcy' which operate to render privilege invisible and unquestioned (see Chapter 2.3). I encountered a range of responses from indifference to outright hostility, underlining the importance of recognising that potential participants have their own interpretations of their lives and might not appreciate what they see as being confronted over them (Domosh 2003).

Second, this process brought home the meaning and experience of *invisibility* and *normativity* in everyday lives and practices. Unlike discourses of discrimination, the concept privilege has yet to permeate most peoples' everyday language and understandings of inequalities. The term is largely unrecognisable to many without a careful process of framing and development. Writing and reading about privilege did very little to prepare me for the realities of encountering this incomprehension from some potential participants (see Chapter 4.2). A corollary of this is that I was forced to much more thoroughly examine the ways in which I might be similarly unaware of other manifestations of privilege. Third, being faced on a daily basis with attempting to explain what 'privilege' meant, why it was an interesting area of study and why my research did not represent an assault on the rights or lives of 'ordinary people', spurred me to refine my ability to explain the concept to a lay audience. I learnt how to phase an 'elevator pitch'²¹ which focused upon inequalities and in terms of "*the opposite of being discriminated against*" so as to avoid the term privilege until later in the process. This enabled me to talk to potential participants in terms they were familiar with and which they would be less likely to react defensively or with hostility. Although as the following section discussing ethical conduct of research demonstrates, this framing process did not entirely avert further problems between some of the participants and me.

3.3.2 Ethics

While the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2 has strongly influenced the practical development of this project, a commitment to ethical conduct is also central to the research process. The project was approved by the faculty research ethics and governance committee in September/2010 after I had demonstrated understanding

²¹ 'Elevator pitch' is a term used in highly competitive fields such as entrepreneurship, film making or publishing where there is a vast number of potential projects and only a limited number of gatekeepers. Hopefuls are advised to develop a 'pitch' which will stimulate interest in their project and can be delivered during an exceedingly short period of time, such as a brief ride in an 'elevator'.

of potential risks to the participants and developed management procedures²². These risks are primarily associated with the anonymity of the participants and their potential vulnerability, issues that surfaced in a variety of practical problems and events during the project which this section shall explore. In particular I shall discuss the decision of 5 participants to withdraw from the project and the impact this had on the project.

The commitment that has guided this research is to a more lived approach to ethical conduct, rather than reliance upon procedural conceptions of ethical practice (Bradley 2007; Christians 2005; Ronai 2007). While we are generally required to gain formal, signed consent from participants (Calvey 2008; Marzano; 2007; McKenzie 2009) our commitment to ethical research practice should not be limited to such formal moments, but extend throughout the project as sensitivity towards 'ethically important moments' (Guilleman & Gillam 2004). This means making use of a situated ethical decision making process which cannot be entirely predetermined, being sensitive to the scope of the research and the needs of the participant (Calvey 2008; Ellis 2006; Ipohfen 2011). This is particularly important in cases where the research involves close groups with friends and other intimate relationships (Ellis 2007; Rooke 2008; Taylor 2011). As Duncombe and Jessop (2002) discuss, researchers receive substantial training in how to 'do rapport', that is, how to negotiate and manage an appearance of open friendliness towards the participant in order to elicit responses. This has caused some authors to emphasise that methods which prioritise rapport and intimacy in the research encounter could be exploitative and dangerous (Alcoff & Potter; Domosh 2003; England 1994; Eyles 1993; Harding 1987; hooks 2000; Ludvig 2006; McDowell 1992; Moss 2002; Pateman 1989; Reinhartz 1992; Stacey 1988; Stanley & Wise 1983).

During the research I emphasised practices of negotiation and informed consent with the participants. While fully informed consent is an ideal that is effectively impossible the participants were encouraged to ask questions about the research and my own understandings of the topics under discussion. Each of the interview participants were given the opportunity to read through an information sheet prior to their interview and this was then discussed with them before beginning recording (see Appendix 8.4). Further, following Calvey's (2008) conception of 'situated ethics' there were moments during the interviews or during the ethnographic observation periods that I ceased recording and turned off the tape if I felt the issue was too private, if the participants looked too uncomfortable or if they requested it. This ensured that the participants were in control of the situation and the amount of information they shared. All of the participants were offered the opportunity to read the transcripts of their interviews but only one of them accepted this offer, although two other

²² See Appendices 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7 for copies of all relevant documentation.

participants subsequently requested that parts of the discussion be edited or redacted. During my autoethnographic work I also came into contact with a variety of people and talked to them about the project and their understandings of privilege and space. As already noted this provided me with an opportunity to recruit potential participants, although not entirely without its own problems, these casual participants were also offered information about the project and provided with my contact details should they have further questions.

Throughout this thesis quotes have been randomly assigned a variety of pseudonyms in order to maximise the protections of anonymity available to the participants. This has been done to limit the chances of any single participant's contributions to the project being traceable back to them. While I have often heard the participants discussing their experiences of the project and the issues of privilege addressed during their interviews. I sometimes join those discussions, but I do not discuss anything the participants have not put forward themselves and while I might refer to "*another participant*" I ensure that anything I do discuss is not linked with any particular individual. I have made every attempt to ensure that individually identifiable details are obscured in this text, it may be possible that participants will be able to recognise their own and others contributions to the project. Little can be done to guarantee confidentiality in this instance but participants are asked to respect each other's right to anonymity.

An important aspect of the conduct of this research has been the connections of intimacies within and between me, the interview participants and broader socio-sexual networks. These intimacies include friendships and existing romantic relationships between some of the participants, networks of lovers and ex-lovers and the fluid boundaries between such descriptions (where do the boundaries between friend/lover/partner/fuckbuddy/ex-lover/dating/on-night-stand-become-friend and others lie? Is it even useful to attempt to draw such boundaries?). Suffice to say that most of the participants were known to me prior to their participation in the project, and that some of these connections were sexual encounters and romantic relationships. Indeed I found out later that one participant volunteered for the project in order to spend more time with me and chat me up. This thesis does not overly concern itself with issues of 'pervy sex' or attempting to 'make straights squeamish' (Binnie 2004, p74), although there exists plenty of academic work to support the empirical study of 'sex-itself' and the geographies of sex and sexuality in saunas and bath houses, cruising in 'public' space and digital spaces of sexual encounter (Bain & Nash 2006; Bell 1997; 2006; Brown 2001; 2004; 2008; Brown *et al.* 2005; Haubrich *et al.* 2004; Hollister 1999; Holmes *et al.* 2010; Mowlabocus 2010; Nash & Bain 2007; Tattleman 1997; Turner 2003). I include this discussion in order to position myself in relation to these men who have shared their thoughts and some of their lives with me

during the research. I firmly believe that researching in this way, with these men, has enabled me to access participants who I would not have been able to as a 'stranger' and I agree with Bolton (1995, 149) that '[o]nce one has shared physical and emotional intimacy, sharing other knowledge about oneself seems easier' (see also Brown 2004; 2006; unpublished thesis 2007; 2008). The years I have spent getting to know some of these men, and the intimacies and trusts which have built up between us have provided me with the opportunity to interview and observe them in a way which another researcher would not have been able to (see also Maier & Monahan 2010; Perez-Y-Perez & Stanley 2011; Walby 2010). Consequently, my commitment to their protection and the production of a critical piece of work which fairly represents them is a vital consideration in the writing and conduct of this thesis.

Despite this commitment, these procedures and negotiations were not sufficient to prevent five of the interviewees withdrawing from participation in the project and requesting that I delete all copies and use of the data that they had contributed. This came about after some of the participants overheard me and some non-participant academic and activist friends discussing the concept of privilege at a large house party. The participants who withdrew came to believe that my research aimed to challenge what they perceived as the homogeneity and unity of the 'gay community' as a place of refuge and safety from homophobia, heteronormativity and as an important political institution. The suggestion that gay white men might be the perpetrators of racial, class, gender and other apparatuses of marginalisation and discrimination was seen as an unacceptable attack. Again this links to the invisibility of privilege, its normalisation within everyday life and the ways in which discussions of privilege are often met with hostility and defensiveness. Notably, these men did not especially disagree with my suggestion that gay spaces could be exclusionary or that gay white men were largely unaffected by the marginalisations faced by, for example, non-white, trans* or working class queers. Yet they, ideally, wanted their actions to damage or entirely derail the project in order to silence its potential criticisms of gay communities.

I discuss this event here because it had a range of implications and effects on the project. At first, my reactions were entirely visceral and negative. These men seriously considered my research to be a threat to the spaces and communities which have been such a vital, joyous and central part of my 8 years of living in Brighton & Hove. I questioned my abilities as a researcher, convinced that this demonstrated that I was unfit for the role. I questioned the aims and intentions of the project and wondered how we had so badly misinterpreted one another. Was I, in fact, guilty of what they accused me? As the months passed I eventually got over the immediate pain, possibly one which only another qualitative researcher might understand, of deleting 85,000 words of transcribed interview data. Over time I have been able to

gain some of the distance required to critically explore this event. This withdrawal, the subsequent work that had to go into checking and revising the analysis and thematic coding, along with the very real damage to my esteem and productivity collectively set back the completion of this research by three months. I needed to go through a great deal of my analysis process for a second time and explore the extent to which the loss of this data had left holes in my thematic coding framework. At length I decided the damage could be effectively covered by my already extensive ethnographic notes and the remaining interview transcripts and that I had therefore reached a degree of 'thematic saturation' in my research collection (Bowen 2008; 2009; Bryant 2002; Bryant & Charmaz 2007; Charmaz 2002; 2005; 2006; Clarke 2003; Wasserman *et al.* 2009).

This event demonstrates some of the elements of privilege which shall be drawn out and explored in the coming chapters. My research was seen as an 'attack' on the 'achievements' of a particular interpretation of the 'gay rights movement', 'gay community' and particular formations of 'gay scene spaces'. These men were able to utilise and deploy and understanding of *belonging* and inclusion in these formations. They viewed any attempt to critique or discuss these spaces as potentially exclusionary, or gay white men as anything other than a marginalised identity, as a dangerous assault on what they perceived to be a powerful political homogeneity and unity.

These understandings diverge from research which demonstrates commercial gay spaces to be highly exclusionary for many bodies/identities/groups and demonstrate the extent to which exclusion can be effectively normalised and invisible to those who are unaffected by it (see Chapter 2; Bell 1991; 1994; Bell *et al.* 1994; Binnie & Valentine 1999; Cohen 1997; Johnston 2001; Seidman 1993; 2002; Skeggs 2000; Valentine 1993a; 1995; Ward 2000). My research, by discussing and highlighting how gay white men benefit from and reproduce relations of patriarchy and racism brings this disjuncture and difficulty to light in uncomfortable ways. And these participants subsequently used the resources available to them to defend what they understood as '*their*' community from *external* assault. These themes of invisibility, belonging and defence play out strongly in the coming chapters so I shall leave further discussion of them until later, however this event demonstrates that the practices and processes demonstrated during the interview data presented here are only some examples of the potential possibilities for action available.

Finally, this event caused me to reflect on the researcher/participant relationship and the limitations of my own understanding of what dynamic, coproduced research events might entail in practice. Feminist research ethics admonish the researcher to be conscious of the participant as a *vulnerable* figure, open to potential exploitation, exposure and harm through the research process (England 1994; Falconer Al-Hindi &

Kawabata 2002; McDowell 1992; Moss 2002; Reinharz 1992; Valentine 2002). In contrast elite theory understands the 'powerful participant' as being empowered solely through their positioning within pre-existing and formalised institutional structures and thus able to exert control over the researcher's time and activities (Caletrio *et al.* 2012; Conti & O'Neil 2007; Desmond 2004; Howard 2010; Neal & McLaughlin 2009; Sabot 1999; Smith 2006). Domosh (2003) argues that feminist understandings of reflexivity and the complexity of the research event have not sufficiently engaged with the individualities of participants.

'What I want to suggest here, however, is that we have tended to emphasize only one side of that relationship – that of the researcher – and have left relatively unremarked the other side of that relationship – that of the researched'

(Domosh 2003, p108)

It is assumed that the answers provided by the participant will be relatively 'true', unmotivated by a particular agenda and, Domosh (2003) suggests, that this has denied participants' political subjectivities. This event forced me to take Domosh's comments very seriously as I was brought directly into contact with a demonstration that these men were active political agents with their own motivations and agendas which diverged from my own. Rarely do we hear stories of the stutterings and failings of research and while understandings of the interview as a contingent and contested site are prevalent, I for one, certainly did not really understand what that might mean until it was truly brought home to me.

3.4 Conclusion

Applying queer and poststructuralist understandings of situated identities to the demands of research methodology can be challenging. The development of this project spent a great deal of time coming to terms with the implications of the theoretical framework through which I understand subject formation and space and attempting to produce a methodology which could remain sensitive to complexity and fluidity while retaining enough of structure through which to be able to describe potential subjects and identities for research. This chapter has reviewed the processes through which the research was produced and interpreted. I have detailed the ethical procedures and the challenges presented by sampling and participant recruitment, conducting the interview and autoethnographic methods used in this project and the process of analysis through which this thesis was generated. This chapter has addressed some of the problems which emerged during the course of this research. The ability to control and influence the development of this thesis displayed by the participants, as some of them withdrew and the ever present concern that myself and the participants unintentionally collaborated to produce 'white talk' (or privilege-talk) to maintain and defend our identities renders the researcher/participant relationship complex. These events show that it is not just

recognisable 'elites' who can be troublesome to the power/powerless dichotomy theorised by feminist scholars. Rather, participants should be understood as active producers of the research event, with all the complexities, ambiguities and contradictions of motivation, intention and speech and action which that entail. I now turn directly to presenting and exploring the empirical material gathered for the project in three analysis chapters.

4 Producing and Defending Privilege

Outline

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Invisibility and Privilege
- 4.3 Practices of Normalisation
 - 4.3.1 Earned and Unearned Privilege
- 4.4 Creating the Other
- 4.5 Producing 'Normal' Gay Masculinities
- 4.6 Conclusion

4.1 Introduction

This first of three analysis chapters introduces the participants and how they understand themselves in relation to a variety of 'others' and privilege. This chapter addresses explores some of the materialities and manifestations of privilege in the participants' lives and how privilege is understood by the participants. Given the importance of *invisibility* in literatures of privilege it is imperative to address how the participants understand their positionalities. Invisibility suggests that the participants should have trouble identifying themselves as privileged subjects, talking about how they experience privilege and conceptualising the relations of inequalities through which they gain access to resources and benefits denied to others. However this chapter demonstrates that the participants' understandings of privilege are, at times, more sophisticated than expected.

Different participants showed different awarenesses of their access to privilege. This awareness varied depending on what aspect of their identities and which spaces were being discussed. Participants were more able to see and discuss issues of privilege when talking about places that were contested in some form, while the privileges experienced in places which were relatively homogeneous or uncontested, such as their homes or workspaces, remained naturalised and invisible. This contingency indicates that certain privileges, at certain times and in certain places *become* visible or invisible through specific practices, I describe some of these practices as; denial, reification and naturalisation. The chapter therefore moves on to discussing some of the practices through which this invisibility of privilege is produced, maintained and defended. In agreement with similar work exploring whiteness I show that the participants deploy a variety of discourses through which they legitimise their experiences and naturalise spatialities of inequalities. This research demonstrates that these practices are mobile and can be deployed in defence of a variety of privileges and positionalities, expanding their prior use in reference to the discursive production and defence of whiteness. I also develop upon understandings of privilege framed by a division between 'earned' and 'unearned' resources. This division is problematic because, using a poststructuralist framework, subject formation and positionality is understood to be performative, rather than singular subjects which are subsequently placed within a pre-existing field of power.

The second half of the chapter moves from exploring how the participants understand and represent themselves, to how they represent and interpret the identities and spatialities of others. The participants distance themselves from 'others' in order to emphasise the differences between them and further naturalise these differences, to efface the spatial production of inequalities. This develops upon Nast's (2002) assertion that gay white men are well placed to take advantage of relations of inequalities by contributing evidence of this process as it is practiced and

advances knowledge of the situated enactment of inequalities from the perspectives of those who are privileged. While sometimes the participants use a dichotomous understanding to position self/other this is not always the case and the final section fractures homogeneous representations of the homonormative gay white man. Corporealities of body size/shape and the material performance of gender are both more relevant to gay white men's experiences of privilege than existing literature has recognised. The participants produce two distinct understandings of masculine identities, hetero-masculinity and camp or effeminate gay masculinity. By distancing themselves from these equally undesirable positions the participants move beyond dichotomous models of identification to produce and occupy a 'normal' gay white masculinity. This suggests a need for more nuanced conceptualisations of homonormativity, able to take account of the differences between gay white men's bodily performances of masculinity and the power relations which 'internally' differentiate gay white men and their abilities to access privilege.

4.2 Invisibility and Privilege

The description of privilege as being invisible is common, so much so that in Chapter 2 I argued that it is one of the stable characteristics of most conceptions of the privilege and is often taken for granted (see Ahmed 1999; Bonnett 1997; Dyer 1997; Frankenberg 1993; Hurtado 1989; Kimmel 1994; Kimmel & Ferber 2003; McDermott & Samson 2005; McIntosh 1988; 2012; Rollock 2012; Sanders & Mahalingham 2012; Wildman 1996). Invisibility is used in a variety of ways; being invisible or unremarkable can be a privileging experience demonstrating that an identity has become normalised, or it can be marginalising as identities are silenced, unrepresented and ignored. In this thesis invisibility is primarily used to describe how spatial apparatuses of power relations are maintained and reproduced in ways which become naturalised and unquestioned. This section explores the extent to which the participants were able to conceive of themselves as privileged subjects, or whether the manifestation of privilege in their lives is 'normalised to the point of invisibility' (Frankenberg 1993, p179).

The participants' abilities to discuss privilege varied:

I: How do you think privilege might be relevant in your life?

[long pause] *'I don't know really, I think I've done alright for myself, is that what you are asking? ... I've got a good education and at a relatively young age and I'm on quite a good salary... I don't really know what you are looking for'*

Aaron

'I'm from a middle class background, I had two parents who didn't separate and who supported me through university... I'm pretty high up the ladder compared to other people... I've always had a roof over my head'

I: Would say that you are privileged then?

'Yes, absolutely'

Mathew

The question seems unintelligible to Aaron; Mathew is clear of his positionality. Aaron describes himself as having a *'decent education'* but is unable or unwilling to relate his experiences to the concept of privilege. Conversely Mathew identifies the same factors as markers of a privileged positionality. Aaron and Mathew, like all of the participants in this study, occupy ostensibly similar positionalities as 'gay white men', they are also two of the highest earning participants in the study; yet their conceptions of their positionalities differ. Therefore the invisibility of privilege is not something essential to their identification and positionalities as either 'gay', 'white', 'middle classed' or 'men'.

Few of the participants were quite so definitive.

I: You described yourself as being 'relatively' privileged just now; what do you think privilege is?

'I think privilege is the ability to do the things that make you happy without being constrained by things such as money or social influence, or time I suppose. So I would consider myself relatively privileged in that I can afford to do the things that I enjoy.'

Chris

Chris and the majority of the other participants were more tentative using (for example) *'in some ways'* (John) or *'relatively'* (Jacob) to qualify their positions. They produce a middle ground for themselves which, while privileged, is ultimately less privileged than some. This process allows for a dichotomous understanding of guilt/innocence to emerge; by arguing that they are not the *most* guilty therefore they must be somewhat innocent. Oswin (2005; 2008) identifies this process at work in her analysis of Nast (2002), Sothern (2004) and Elder (2002), and argues that producing a figurative guilty identity allows for the existence of a correlating position of innocence. While Chris and the other participants do not claim a position of innocence, by hedging their understandings of themselves as *'relatively'* privileged they are able to partially negate the implications of privilege in their lives.

Similarly Isaac attempts to identify what he understands to be *'the majority'* and therefore most privileged group.

I: So who would you describe as being privileged?

'Well I think that straight people have more privilege than gay people in that they don't necessarily face – obviously they may belong to other minority groups but y'know mainstream white heterosexual middle class, well paid – that's privilege to me'

Isaac

Isaac attempts to demonstrate that while he might have some access to privilege, there are others who have more privilege than him. Even as he attempts to describe such a position, he must take into account proliferating relations and possibilities, narrowing this idealised majority. In doing so, Isaac displays the fundamental instability in such apparatuses of relations, in that it must always refer to an organising yet absent ideal that can never be fully reached (Derrida 1978). Yet the

participants remain able to use the 'absent centre' of an ideal/hegemonic position to identify contingent peripheries of marked and therefore 'impure' identities using a dichotomous logic (Jay 1981). In referring to a theoretical place of pure or absolute guilt, the participants are able to implicitly defer their own complicity with relations of privilege and the (re)production of inequalities. Their own identities and positionalities become difficult to engage because they are constantly able to perform this deferral, normalising the manifestation of privilege in their lives. This normalisation also closes down my ability to explore these ideas during the interviews.

The participants retain some awareness of the resources they can access; even Aaron, who does not consider those resources associated with privilege, recognises that he possesses resources which others do not. However this recognition was not easy:

'It's been interesting, challenging, I don't like it when I'm posed questions that I can't answer'

I: Why do you think there's been such difficulty in answering?

'I think I touched on it before, the idea of privilege is assumptions that you don't question, because they are tied in very closely to the fundamental you it's very difficult to extract them to, to bring them to analysis'

Mark

In reflecting on his interview Mark says he has struggled to express himself because the unquestioned assumptions which produces privilege are tied 'to the fundamental you'. He finds it difficult to reflexively explore his identity because there are no reference points which exist external to the normalisation of power relations through which his identity is produced. He cannot step outside himself and his perspective. The participants were not the only ones who struggled to articulate their understandings of positionality as this excerpt from early in my field work shows.

Privilege is about having the ability and confidence to take up space. Physically. Audibly. Socially. Politically. To *impose* ourselves upon a space without or despite challenge.

Or is it?

How much of my present understanding of privilege as assertion, control and taking up of space is simple a part of my own masculinist understanding of what it is to perform a 'powerful' and imposing self?

Do I view taking up space as privilege because it is something that I have observed so far, or because it is something which is a part of the performativity of certain identities that I have learnt to interpret as commanding?

So are some performances which fail to be convincingly male and controlling the ones from which privilege is withheld?

Or is being privileged a part of the performance of certain identities (such as masculinity)?

How can I learn to tell the difference between what I am looking for, what I have read and what is a reflection of my own socialisation?

Ultimately, what is privilege and how am I to know the difference?

(Research Diary 5/4/10)

In this piece I am struggling to formulate an understanding of *'what privilege is'* in order to subsequently *'go out and find it'*. I spent a great deal of time tying myself and my writing in knots attempting to differentiate between my 'real self' and the power relations through which that 'self' became privileged or marginalised. I was attempting to fully and transparently understand my positionality, its relation to the 'social fabric' and consequently what privilege was within that framework. This problem of reflexivity has been extensively discussed and the problems with this approach should by now be clear (see Chapter 3.3; England 1994; Falconer Al-Hindi & Kawabata 2002; Gibson-Graham 1994; Harding; 1991; Nast 1998; Pile 1991; Rose 1993; 1997; Stanely & Wise 1983). Various authors have emphasised the difficulty of making 'one's position *vis a vis* research known rather than invisible' (Mattingly & Falconer Al-Hindi 1995, p428). The participants and I have just as much difficulty in thinking through positionalities, power relations and identities as do researchers.

This suggests that a lack of critical reflexivity or at least the difficulty of such reflexive practices might be the explanation for some of the silences, stuttering and ambiguity in these interviews. This point is expanded by Martin who says that:

'Well, complacency can sometimes go hand in hand with that, you kind of forget that there's a world outside your own, in terms of the world around you and for many people it's not like that and you have to be able to empathise with other peoples' struggles and don't assume that they've come from the same place you do which I think a lot of people fail to do'

Martin

While the practice of reflexivity is challenging for anyone (Rose 1997), being able to choose when and how to think about and engage with issues of positionality, subjectivity and consequently privilege is a significant privilege in its own right. Those who are subject to the marginalising effects of power relations are forced to be constantly aware of the borders produced by those inequalities, potential exposure or risk and the various management practices they have learnt in order to negotiate marginalisation. It is those who are subject to marginalisation who are most likely to be able to clearly 'see' and interpret the effects of inequalities and privilege (DuBois 1920; Fanon 1967; hooks 1992; 1998; Mohanty 1997). Conversely, those for whom privilege is manifest are rarely required to reflect upon their positionalities and are able to *'forget that there's a world outside'* of their own experience. Martin describes this as *'complacency'*, the ability to ignore those marginalisations to which one is not subject and to make assumptions about the lives and experiences of others. By being able to ignore inequalities, the privileges to which we have access become normalised rather than exceptional.

Writing this project has required repeated attempts to learn past this invisibility, to interrogate my own assumptions and try, not only to understand these experiences, but also how to represent them.

My main concern about using autoethnography as a method has become the drawing of boundaries, of inclusion and exclusion, of what to write and what to leave silent. I could write a detailed timetable of my activities for an entire day, week or a month:

9.00am – Leave home and walk into university

9.25am – arrive at my desk

9.30am – make coffee

And on and on it would go, but do these mundane (for me) spatial practices accurately portray my life? Would such a timetable yield insight into the ways that I experience privilege or marginalisation? Granted it would show some, or perhaps many things. I go shopping regularly; spend time on the beach, in pubs, at my home with friends. I have leisure time, do not work in a minimum wage position (any more²³) have opportunities unavailable to others through my association with the university. Yet, where is race, or gender, within these time sheets?

My ability to move relatively unhindered is certainly partly due to my gendered, classed and raced body, yet how much does this really tell us about what it is like to live this particular positionality. Indeed, even the existence for me of ‘the mundane’ silently illustrates the privileges which I take for granted in the rhythms of my everyday life, but how is it possible to make these aspects of my life visible through my writing, when I have difficulty envisioning them at all?

What other privileges are so engrained into my experience that I do not even notice them to consider their exclusion from this work? Even if I knew the answer to this question, how would I go about being able to approach such assumptions and privileges in such a way as to be able to include them? This thesis, these chapters, my own knowledge and indeed all knowledges are partial, paltry things in their attempts to pin down so ‘fugitive a subject’.

(Research Diary 12/11/2010)

It would be difficult if not impossible for me to provide a full accounting of the assumptions on which I rely and which collectively produce my everyday life. I would go so far as to say that there are inevitably going to be, places, interrelations and discussions which remain silent within my writing just as there are those which remain silent within the narratives of the participants. Further, the extent to which the interviews constituted a mutual ‘privilege-talk’ through which the participants and I collaborated in maintaining our own positionalities is difficult to ascertain (see Chapter 3.3 Butz & Berg 2002; hooks 1992; Simpson 1996).

‘I have trouble facing white privilege, and describing its results in my life... I repeatedly forgot each of the realizations on this list until I wrote it down. For me, white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject.’

(McIntosh 1988, p2-9)

Just like McIntosh and the participants, I have difficulties articulating the manifestations of privilege in my life. Being able to adopt and use the lexicon of

²³ Since writing this piece, this little aside has come to mean much more than I had previously anticipated. Now I can see it as a qualification just the same as those used by the participants, emphasising my classed identity in order to somewhat mitigate my positionality as a beneficiary of privilege. Developing from my own guilt I attempt to articulate my own ‘right’ to speak – I am privileged but not completely/always; look at how poor I used to be!

privilege, marginalisation and power is only an early step in being able to reflexively and critically examine their implications. My relatively unimpeded movement through and between various spaces of the city, and the taken-for-granted assumption that these mundane practices of movement are *uninteresting*, that they illustrate nothing (because they are 'normal' for me) shows some of the problems that invisibility presents for exploring privilege. For many of the participants, one example of a space which is routinely normalised and thus invisible is that of the home.

The majority of the participants have the ability to choose their living conditions with relatively few restrictions beyond their individual budgets and preferences²⁴. Homes are described as being relatively '*boring*' (Jonny), involving '*just sitting around*' (Alex) or '*hanging out*' (Liam) and it was difficult during the interviews to interest the participants in discussing their homes. These representations of the home as '*nothing really exciting to be mentioning*' (David) efface the work that goes into maintaining these spaces as stable and private domestic environments where the participants are largely able to retreat from social contact. Coupled with stable employment the majority of the participants have been able to provide themselves with domestic environments which suit their preferences and are relaxing for them. Access to such spaces is a key site for the production of identity (see Gorman-Murray 2006; 2007; 2008; Kentlyn 2008) particularly for the sometimes fragmentary and anxious identities of queer subjects for whom home making and home spaces can represent retreats from heteronormativity (although the home is by no means necessarily a 'safe' space, see Hillier & Harrison 2007; Johnston & Valentine 1995; Stanko 1987; Valentine 1993; Valentine *et al.* 2003).

For some of these men the home is not a purely 'private' space, but also a safe social space, as evidenced by many of the participants choosing to be interviewed at home (see Chapter 3.2.2). Homes can be a space in which to build and affirm friendship networks, often involving people of differing classed positionalities who may not be able to afford the bars of the scene²⁵.

'Money for me is short after the first week so I just have to keep my head down for the rest of the month; so if I go out it has to be either the first week or round to someone's house for a party. That happens quite a lot.'

Joel

Joel emphasises the important role that home spaces play for him in maintaining social connections at times when he cannot afford to go out to bars. The participants' classed positionalities and their access to financial resources play a significant role in not only maintaining their home spaces, but also in how they are used. Participants

²⁴ One of the participants owned his property and three participants relied on council housing or benefits services; the remaining eleven rented homes, often sharing properties with at most two other occupants.

²⁵ Delany (1999) makes an excellent case for the importance of nurturing and maintaining spaces for 'cross class' contact for producing robust communities.

with larger homes were more likely to arrange house parties in order for their friends with fewer financial resources to socialise. This follows findings by Gorman-Murray (2006; 2007; 2008) and others who have emphasised the role that home spaces play in providing a place for the continued development and maintenance of gay friendship networks (see also Kentlyn 2008; Kirkey & Forsyth 2001; Lynch 1992; Valentine 1993). For most of the participants, home was a place that can be relatively easily maintained, enabling home spaces to be 'boring', normalised places and effacing the relations of their production.

Invisibility refers to a variety of different aspects of identity and privilege, some of them have been introduced in this section and the concept will play a continuing role throughout the coming chapters. Regardless of the difficulties involved in reflexively examining privilege, its invisibility is not assured and essential to the positionalities and identities for which it is manifest. Invisibility is contextually produced through specific relations and practices. Therefore it is not unassailable and can be challenged. Indeed the very act of talking about privilege is part of the process through which we can begin to learn to see its effects in our lives.

'I'm not sure if this was intentional or not but I like how the line of questioning lead me round full circle. We started talking about my life, then gay issues and how they might relate to privilege, and then how the questions began to maybe nudge you into thinking a bit about how privilege unconsciously affects your own life without you even realising it. I suppose, if that was intentional it was very well done.'

Howard

Reflecting on his interview, Howard describes how the process has led to him thinking reflexively about privilege and its manifestation in his life. This demonstrates the importance in talking about privilege and the role that it can have in lifting some of the invisibility of those processes within individual lives (Abrums *et al.* 2010; Bozalek 2011; Cabera 2012; Case 2007; Case & Stewart 2010; Montgomery & Stewart 2012; Tatum 1994). By being asked to talk and think through these issues Howard begins to challenge normalisation and invisibility in his life; and therefore demonstrates that privilege is not essential to particular identities or positionalities. Normalisation through legitimation, silencing, denial and evasion, whether intentional or not, means that the development and maintenance of reflexivity and awareness towards our positionalities is challenging. But it can be done. By exploring where and how privilege is manifest and our personal reactions to the development of that knowledge we can learn to maintain and hone that awareness. Early on during the development of this project I wrote this vignette, struggling to understand privilege in my everyday life. Obviously my understanding has changed over time along with the depth of my reading on the field so this piece provides an illustration of the extent of that change. Not to mention some of the problems that I continue to

struggle with about the implications of this project; coming to terms with privilege as not only an abstract theory, but also beginning to be able to 'see' it in my own life caused a flood of anxiety and paranoia. Indeed such a response is common in learning about privilege wherever that learning might take place (see Chizhik & Chizhik 2005; Day 2006; Hartman 2008; Magnet 2006; Messner 2011; Peterson & Hamrick 2009; Pleasants 2011; Underiner 2000; Walls *et al.* 2009). Being able to conceptualise and 'see' relations of inequality and manifestations of privilege does not necessarily imbue one with the ability to effectively do anything about it, indeed such awareness can be hindering by fostering a paralysing guilt (Battersby 1997; Iyer *et al.* 2003; Swim & Miller 1999) and defensive reactions (Pleasants 2011; Rose & Paisely 2012; Walls *et al.* 2009). Conversely, shame and guilt may also provide impetus for further action and renewed efforts (Halberstam 2005; Munt 2007; Sedgwick 2003).

Yet if privilege is not *essentially* invisible and unquestioned, there must be processes through which relations of inequalities and access to privilege become normalised. Evidence of this process can be found in Ian's description of how his understandings of self and space have changed.

'Growing up in Hastings you don't admit you're gay, you just sort of follow along and say "no, I ain't fucking gay, I'm straight". There's a guy called Craig who's my new adopted nephew, not properly adopted but I took him under my wing, he lives in Hastings too. His mum hates the fact he's gay, she's told him on many occasions. He came out and it was the worst thing he ever did. He came out and he's got nothing but abuse from his own family and y'know, he said to me "You live in Brighton it must be amazing to walk around the street and do what you want" I'm like, "Yeah, suppose so" but from my point of view not so much because I'm used to it. But I suppose because I don't have lots of money to go on holidays and stuff I think of people that can do that as privileged'

Ian

Ian's experiences of moving to Brighton & Hove, contrast with those of his younger friend, Craig, to highlight the spatialities of privilege, and how it has become invisible to him. Ian suggests that being able to '*admit you're gay*' and feel relatively safe in street spaces is an experience that has become normalised for him living in Brighton & Hove, something that he does not notice on a daily basis (despite experiences of assault in the city, see Chapter 6). For Ian, the contrasting experience of Craig brings the manifestation of privilege into focus. Being able to conceptualise privilege is therefore a spatially contingent ability which is enabled or restricted based upon intersections with contrasting experiences and other spaces.

This section has shown that, for these participants, privilege is not *necessarily* invisible and some of the variations in the participants' abilities to articulate privilege and their positionalities. There must therefore, be a process or range of processes through which privilege is normalised within individual experience. The following section explores some of these processes as they are deployed by the participants.

4.3 Practices of Normalisation

Examinations of invisibility as a process of normalisation are relatively rare and to date have been demonstrated primarily in relation to the discursive defence and maintenance of white identities (see Bérubé 2003; Foster 2009; Frankenberg 1993; Nakayama & Krizek 1999; Reyes 2011; Steyn & Foster 2007; Whitehead & Lerner 2009). The participants of this study used a range of practices through which privilege is maintained, defended or effaced supporting these studies of whiteness. However I demonstrate that these practices are mobile and can be used in the maintenance and defence of privilege in relation to a range of apparatuses of identity and not only whiteness. I have collected these practices under four headings; *naturalisation*, the process of associating privilege directly with certain characteristics (for example white=wealthy); *denial*, refusal or silencing of an identity or positionality so as to render it unquestionable; and *reification*, whereby an attribute or characteristic comes to represent an essential and unchallengeable identification. The fourth practice, the discourse of earned and unearned privileges is examined shortly (see Chapter 4.3.1). This section explores these practices in order to highlight the normalisation of privilege as a situated and partial process, rather than a permeating and universal factor.

One way in which relations of inequality come to be normalised is through an acceptance of naturalised associations between particular kinds of bodies with specific positions or resources, for example between whiteness and wealth.

'I wouldn't say West Sussex was a completely white area but there are pockets of it that are; I remember going to a nearby village it's really posh, sort of superior, do you know what I mean? All white, very affluent, a very white area'

Brian

Brian links his understanding of this village being affluent with its racial profile to such an extent that to describe his impressions of the village as 'a very white area' he refers to it as being 'affluent'. Here affluence and whiteness are so closely connected that they are almost used interchangeably, Brian takes it for granted that an affluent place will be populated by predominantly white bodies. This association between whiteness and wealth operates to configure 'normal' white identities as wealthy, therefore reinforcing existing connections between race and class inequalities and effacing the social relations through which bodies with white skin accumulate disproportionate wealth and the ability to secure themselves in relatively homogenous rural spaces (Bunce 2003; Gill 1997; Holloway 2007; Hubbard 2005; Little 1999; Lowenthal 1991; Mathews *et al.* 2000; Neal 2002; Winders 2003). This essentialised association between whiteness and wealth in particular places, also operates to provide the illusion that the accumulation of wealth is somehow independent of the spatial relations of production.

Graham, for example suggests that:

I: Are there any specific examples from your day to day life where you think privilege might be relevant?

'It just comes down to money I think, if you've got those fundamentals in life if you've got yourself a decent education and you've managed to get yourself a good job then you're not going to struggle really'

George

Privilege, for George, *'just comes down to money'*; it is money that enables or disables opportunities and access in any individual's life. Money, and particularly the kinds of financial resources associated with wealth (and social class more generally), are evidently important factors in a variety of ways and play a key role in determining a wide range of abilities to access various spaces and services (see Chapter 2.3.2; Byrne; Dowling 1999; McDowell 2008; Russo & Linkon 2005; Sayer 2002; Seidman 2011; Skeggs 2004; Strangleman 2008; Taylor 2007). Indeed class operates far more broadly than simple access to finance. However, George's assertion cannot last a sentence before being expanded and developed, suggesting that while important, money alone is not the sole factor. Instead he suggests that money is one of a number of *'fundamentals'* which include education and work, both of which are stratified. The result being that it doesn't just come down to money at all but to an array of factors, such as the ability and resources to gain employment and education which are considered to be *'decent'* and *'good'*, factors which remain silent within George's description. The association of white=wealth=normal in particular spaces and the dislocated use of wealth as an apparently objective measure of achievement each operate to naturalise the processes and power relations through which wealth is differentially accumulated. George's quote is also illuminating for its silences as much as for what he says; there are no references to identity. This leads to a second process through which privilege is normalised and rendered invisible that of denial.

Naming, identification and articulation are potent in their abilities to produce and configure understandings of socio-spatial relations (Berg & Kearns 1996; Bondi & Domosh 1992; Collinson & Hearn 1994; Featherstone 2011; Foucault 1976; McDermott & Samson 2005; Richardson & Robinson 1994; Valentine 1998). Similarly, not naming and the use of silences are equally potent in normalising or effacing particular positionalities or relations from examination. By declaring that *'I'm not part of a racial minority'* Jonathon positions himself in an unmarked place, allegedly external to power. In this case rather than producing this absent centred position in order to dis-identify with it, as discussed in the previous section, Jonathon actively attempts to occupy that position. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p379), amongst others, note *'the race-tribe exists only at the level of an oppressed race... there is no dominant race; a race is defined not by its purity but rather by the impurity conferred upon it'* (see Chapter 2.3.1; Bonnett 1997; 2000; Delgado & Stefancic 1997; Dyer 1997; Garner 2007; Hill 1997; Roediger 2005; Rollock 2012). Denying the existence of identity produces an unmarked and normative positionality through which all

other positions are related and organised. Some of the participants do this by presenting a list of 'marked' identities as examples of those who are different; producing a discursive apparatus that centres the speaking individual at the expense of others. Phillip's discussion is typical:

I: Who would you describe as having privilege then?

'I can't think of a category other than financial privilege'

I: Conversely who doesn't have privilege?

'Racial minorities, sexual minorities, physically and mentally disabled people, handicapped people; you can be financially marginalised if you're from a poor background'

Phillip

Phillip's inability to 'think of a category' where privilege can be found reiterates the use of money as an apparently external measure, and combines with his ability to identify marked positionalities to produce a centre/periphery relationship between unspoken (unmarked) and spoken (marked) subjects. Phillip develops the discussion beyond the boundaries of race and whiteness and shows how these strategies operate in relation to multiple fields of power simultaneously and that they can also be used concurrently to support and reinforce one another (Hopkins & Noble 2009; Nash 2008; Valentine 2007; Yuval-Davis 2006). For Phillip, the centred positionality remains unspoken and therefore difficult to address directly, yet the named and marked peripheries are implicitly produced in relation to this absent centre which exists outside of the system of naming in which it is implicated (Derrida 1978; Jay 1981). Being able to remain the normative, universal or blank positionality against which all other experiences and identities are positioned is a potent ability. It naturalises the experiences of those bodies and, because these relationships are always hierarchical, the centre is not only unquestioned but it also becomes the most desirable position to occupy.

Silencing can take a variety of forms, such as a more direct refusal to label an identity, or an attempt to deny that an issue has any relevance or importance for discussion. Refusals challenge attempts to name and engage with an experience within particular terms.

'I don't know what I would say to describe my class status.'

I: How would you normally describe it?

'I wouldn't really'

Geoff

Geoff effectively shuts down my ability to discuss his classed identity. I am unable to further question him or suggest that class privilege may or may not be relevant in the production of his everyday experiences. Geoff effectively maintains a silence surrounding his classed identity, closing down the possibility for discussion. A further example of non-cooperation as a practice through which privilege can be maintained and defended, similar (if less extreme) to those participants who withdrew from the

study entirely (see Chapter 3.3.2). Other participants used this strategy to close off avenues of discussion or to deny that something was 'an issue' or 'a problem'.

I: Is there much ethnic diversity around Brighton?

'As far as ethnic diversity goes I would say not that much but as I said, I'm from Peterborough which is, not at all diverse really. As to Brighton, I have had people tell me that Brighton isn't that welcoming and outgoing, I can't say that I've experienced much of that myself... that's their experience, I've not found it too bad'

Simon

Simon questions the experiences of those who have not found Brighton & Hove to be welcoming and tolerant as being incongruent with his own understandings of the city. Such dismissals operate to normalise relations of inequality and differential experiences, which are then ignorable; Simon does not recognise the grievances of those others because their experiences differ from his own, which enables him to dismiss and ignore their claims (hooks 1992; 1998; Magnet 2006; Rains 1998; Willis & Lewis 1999).

Other participants deployed this dismissal in relation to their workplaces, where the ubiquity of white bodies is so normalised that they suggest that it is normal, that there is not a 'race' issue at hand. Individual identities and positionalities are described as being irrelevant during the ordinary operation of the work activity. However, this appearance is in itself a product of the particular location of the participants within the apparatuses through which these spaces are themselves produced. By being able to 'fit in' to the space the participants become inured to the processes through which these work spaces are produced and maintained, processes which are designed to privilege certain positionalities while excluding others.

'I remember working in a company where it was mentioned that everyone working there was white and that there was no diversity ethnically, racially. While there are a few people working there from other countries, everyone was white – and it was put up in private conversation once between two managers, that they had noticed that we were all white, but that wasn't something that they felt was wrong – they just felt like they might be judged for it whereas they were not racist or homophobic in any way, they were just open about it and just hadn't interviewed many black or Indian people or people from other places, they just didn't have someone working there, it wasn't a racist issue'

David

The homogenous presence of white bodies in this place is a naturalised experience for David and he declares that 'it wasn't a racist issue' for an entire company to be made up of 'white people'. In doing so he is protected from engaging with his experience as the product of privilege through his white identity, by arguing that race positionality is irrelevant. One of the ways he does this is to draw a connection between himself not experiencing homophobia and the lack of non-white work colleagues; effectively suggesting that his employers' lack of homophobia (towards him, in his experience) is sufficient evidence that there is a corresponding lack of racism and that, therefore,

the existing pattern of an all white workforce was not the product of racial inequality and privilege. These denials make it difficult if not impossible to explore the positionalities of the participants or the social production of the spaces of their everyday experience. These work spaces are, for some of them, merely 'ordinary'; they are not experienced as being exclusionary by virtue of their identities being included and privileged.

Even naming is not necessarily a key to visibility and the ability to critically articulate privilege. Naming can also be used as a practice of naturalisation through association with 'science' and its allegedly impartial system of naming and categorisation (such as various colonial race projects, anthropometry and biological determinism see Chapter 2.2). This process attempts to efface the contested and contingent production of identities and relations through appeals to the 'naturalness' and 'obviousness' of certain identities. Thus some participants' discussions of identity use a form of biological determinism that relies upon materialities of their bodies to explain their identities.

'Ethnic identity, I guess I would have to say white, because I clearly am'
I: What do you mean by that?
'Because of my skin'

Charlie

Charlie understands his raced identity to be derived unambiguously from his skin pigmentation. Similar arguments were given by some of the participants relating to their gendered and sexual identities with many of them describing themselves as 'male' (Stewart) or 'a gay man' (Joseph) in direct and apparently uncomplicated ways²⁶. In doing so, they deploy a naturalised understanding of essential bodily difference. Such biologically deterministic arguments reify particular aspects of physiology into categorising differences which are then incorporated into apparatuses of power relations as 'real' or 'obvious' categories of identity, denying the political content of those identifiers. This is an explicitly *spatial* process, as different identity performances are understood by the participants to 'normal' within particular places and therefore they become invisible and taken for granted (Allen 2008; Amin 2002; Butler 1990; 1993; 2004; Massey 1993; McCallum 2005). In denying the political and contingent production of identity these men narrow the possibilities for effective discussion of where and how their identities are produced and the manifestations of privilege through which those productions are possible. As

²⁶ Participants were more likely to describe a more nuanced understanding of sexual identity than any other; when asked to explain the reasoning behind their choice of descriptions race and gender were generally quite direct (as shown), while sexuality garnered 7 responses which varied between 'homoflexible', 'queer', 'gay with bisexual tendencies' or similar *spectrum* style descriptions. This variation indicates that the participants sexual identities are less stable and monolithic (for some of them) than others while their gendered and raced identities retain a degree of homogeneity and 'obviousness', often linked to genitalia or skin pigmentation (etc). These responses can be found in Appendix 8.1.

such, while overtly naming identities such as 'white' or 'man' this process reproduces the apparent 'normality' of those identities and renders the power relations and inequalities through which they are produced invisible to examination by the subject in similar ways to those processes of normalisation already discussed.

4.3.1 Earned and Unearned Privilege

A fourth, more complex, example of these practices of normalisation allows for the legitimisation of certain privileges and resources while appearing to accept the validity of at least some critiques by producing a distinction between 'earned' and 'unearned' privileges (McIntosh 1988; 2012). This allows for the appearance of critical engagement while simultaneously maintaining and defending what are described as the 'legitimate' resources that have been earned through 'hard work'.

'Privilege is something that is given to you it is something that you are born with, that you couldn't have done yourself, where as when you get to a stage in your life when it's your company that you set up, it's your career that you've carved out, it's your money that you've made it's not so much privilege as fair do's, you've earned that, you've worked for it'

Justin

Justin describes a distinction between privilege as something which is unearned or 'given to you' and the material successes of having achieved something for yourself. Justin's description is a perfect example of McIntosh's (1988, p1) understanding of privilege as 'an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day'. McIntosh's formula of attempting to explore the resources which are specifically unearned and gained through individual positionalities of whiteness or masculinity (for example), has been influential in promoting interest in the study of privilege (see Chapter 2). Although her work has been criticised for being heavily reliant upon an extensive history of black and black feminist scholarship, without properly engaging with, or citing, that material (see Leonardo 2004), McIntosh and the understanding of privilege as 'unearned' resources have been widely used and contributed to exploring privilege in a variety of contexts.

However, given the theoretical framework within which this thesis operates, this distinction between earned and unearned resources is problematic because it is predicated upon an ability to delineate the messy and complex lives of individuals into clearly identified privileges and abilities, and the assertion that these can subsequently be evaluated and categorised as being either earned or unearned. Given that (for example) being granted a promotion at work is likely to be a decision made through consideration of a broad range of factors, it is largely impossible in a lot of cases (outside of a minority of clear and distinct examples) to distinguish whether that might be unambiguously categorised as an earned or an unearned privilege. Approaches which use this distinction attempt to distinguish between the privileges one is granted based upon group belonging or identity, and those based upon

personal achievement. Yet even the concept of personal achievement becomes problematic given that the self is not a unitary pre-existing thing which is situated within a field of power but is produced through the interconnections of power relations within a specific place and therefore all achievements are partially the result of positionality.

Privilege, marginalisation and, fundamentally, power-relations, are the productive multiplicity through which personal experience occurs, not just at the moment of analysis and reflection but throughout the entire trajectory of an individual's life and all of the moments of interaction and connections which have produced that life. Each and every one of these moments, decisions and contexts is inescapably bound up and produced through power relations and inequalities. Any individual's entire life history is the product of their positionality and they have benefited from access to privileges and resources for that entire time. It is therefore impossible to distinguish between distinct elements of an individual life and unambiguously categorise each of those elements as either being purely the product of 'hard work', or having been gained solely as part of their positioning within relations of inequalities and privilege. There is no level playing field or place that exists outside of relations of privilege and inequalities from which to adjudicate between 'earned' and 'unearned' resources and abilities. Further, this narrative has been criticised as effacing the relationship between privilege and marginalisation by presenting an image of privilege as simply existing rather than being reliant upon the marginalisation and exclusion of others (see *Gillborn 2006*; *Leonardo 2004*).

Returning to the previous quote from Justin; he describes a successful career and financial stability, perhaps even wealth, as being disconnected from privilege; they are the rightfully earned rewards of having '*worked for it*'. In doing so the privileges and resources his hypothetically successful person has access to, through apparatuses of power relations which have produced every moment of their entire life and the lives of everyone around them, become invisible to examination. The rhetoric of earned and unearned and the belief that it is possible to draw such distinctions allows Justin to effectively reduce discussions of privilege to merely being '*something which is given to you it is something that you are born with, that you couldn't have done yourself*'. This definition closes down what could possibly be described as privilege and denies the manifestation and effects of privilege almost entirely. Privilege is reduced to an accident of birth or a singular, discrete event, rather than a complex and multiple description of the ways in which individuals are contingently able to take advantage of apparatuses of power relations to their own benefit and the (re)production of relations of inequality.

Further evidence of this process and its effects in legitimising privilege can be seen in the anxiety Miles experiences when placed in a position to doubt whether his own achievements have been earned or whether they are the product of favouritism.

'I was with another manager that everyone was quite scared of, and we seemed to have quite a good working relationship, I seemed to get along quite well with her and I was quite chuffed I thought she quite valued my work and stuff like that and it was only after a while people mentioned that she was a lesbian herself and she actually you know, whenever she was working with a gay person or a lesbian she would essentially favour them rather than other people and that actually shocked me... I thought it was my work that I was getting favour for but it wasn't. It was a very strange situation, I don't think I've come across that before, I didn't like it, I wasn't comfortable with it at all, that kind of positive discrimination thing so yeah, it kind of, that made me question my abilities and I didn't like it'

Miles

Notice here that it is only the suggestion that his position might be not entirely earned that produces this anxiety. Not only can this process be used to legitimise some achievement, but it can also be used to delegitimize the achievements or resources of others. By making a link between certain positions and their access to what are labelled as unearned resources the participants are able to use this strategy to produce some positions as other. Without a critical understanding of the manifestations of privilege and marginalisation and their effects in producing social relations and particularly (in this context) access to opportunities there is the appearance of a 'level playing field' on which affirmative action policies appear to provide 'unfair' advantages (Duster 1996; Harris 1993; Pierce 2003; Staples 1995; Swim 1999).

'Okay this sounds bizarre but I kind of think of people who have access to council houses and there's that kind of... I'm not like a high earner or anything and it is like having to handle the private rental market I always had to be very resentful of them'

Brian

In this way 'people who have access to council houses' have, for Brian, access to a form of unearned advantage, of which he is 'very resentful' (see Adams & Raisborough 2011; Stapleton 2007). This allows Brian to suggest that, even though he does not need social housing (in itself a manifestation of privilege), those who receive 'something for nothing' are 'privileged' because they have access to something that he does not. Other participants highlighted the same situation where those who receive some form of social benefits are in receipt of something which others are not and that this 'unearned' resource is then, in some fashion, a privilege. In doing so the participants are able to muddy the relationships between themselves, privilege and those marginalised others who receive state assistance.

Focusing on whether or not the individual has 'earned' their 'just rewards' or not is closely related to individualism, which acts to restrict the ability to contextualize

particular experiences and place them within a regime of power and inequality. By discursively removing the individual from their social position this process closes down opportunities to examine the spatial and contingent production of social positionality and manifestation of privilege. This abstraction attempts to remove the individual from the spatialities of their lives and efface the relations and interconnection through which those lives are produced, as demonstrated by Ryan.

'I think you get what you want out of life... I don't really want to support anyone else I want to be self involved... a fan of capitalism which might actually be a better way of phrasing it so if I want lots of money then I will work hard and get what I want that way, if I want equality and something I'm not getting that I should be getting then I'll take on the battle and I'll fight but... I've always been quite good at fighting my own corner and getting what I want'

Ryan

By determining the terms of the discussion as related to himself and his personal, individualised achievements, Ryan is able to present an understanding of his current position as being solely achieved through personal merit and his ability to 'fight' his own corner. In the process silencing any visible association with a wider social context in which he might have access to a variety of privileges through which those opportunities and achievements were made available to him and denied to others. This example shows the pernicious effects of discourses of 'individualisation' in their ability to efface the situated production of identity and power relations (Beck 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Brannen & Nilsen 2005; Giddens 1991). Ryan claims to be independent and disconnected from the spatial relations and interconnections through which his life is situated and produced. He claims that his achievements can be explained purely through reference to his own hard work, rather than through the resources that he has access to through apparatuses of power relations which privilege his identity at the expense of others. His experiences are rarely, if ever, hindered or restricted in ways that he notices as he moves through space. Instead his movements and desires are generally supported; an experience which is so naturalised for him that the processes themselves remain unnoticed or easily explained and legitimised through reference to having 'earned' the resources to which he has access.

This section has explored four processes; *naturalisation*, the process of associating privilege directly with certain characteristics (for example white=wealthy); *denial*, refusal or silencing of a particular identity or positionality so as to render it unquestionable; and *reification*, whereby an attribute or characteristic comes to represent an essential and unchallengeable identification, and the narrative of *unearned* privilege; through which the participants legitimised and defended their identities and the manifestation of privilege, normalising and effacing the apparatuses of power relations through which inequalities and privilege are produced and maintained. From this discussion it is possible to suggest that

manifestations of privilege are not necessarily invisible but rather are actively rendered invisible through the negotiation of these and similar practices and articulations which work to normalise particular experiences. The following section develops this argument by exploring how the participants normalise forms of difference. Producing and representing various positions and identities as 'other' allows for the dialectical production of both self and other, further legitimising and sedimenting existing relations of inequality.

4.4 Creating the Other

The identification of difference, the production of boundaries and their reification into particular forms of identity, produce dichotomies of self/other (Derrida 1978; Jay 1981). There are many examples of this dichotomous logic and this section works to elaborate some of the ways that participants perform this positioning during their interviews. Stereotypes, jokes and 'common sense' assumptions are examples of citational (re)productions of such categories and identities, situated and performative reinforcements of particular apparatuses of identity. Spatial practices of boundary production and policing along with the ability to define, occupy and use various places similarly act to reinforce existing patterns of relations. Through producing certain bodies, characteristics and identities as other to themselves participants are able to explain and validate inequality by associating different identities with being rightly or necessarily treated differently. Such othering processes are a major part of the process of identity formation for the participants, they are used not only to define the participants' own identities but also to legitimise and defend existing relations of power and the privileges that the participants experience. These abilities are examples of the participants actively using the privileges that they have available to them to represent, insult and position others. This section therefore contributes valuable material which demonstrates the reproduction and manifestation of privilege by gay white men. I will show some of the other(ed) identities produced by the participants and the ways in which these relations manifest in their spatial practices and routines.

I am sitting on a friend's sofa, a few drinks and a meal together on a quiet evening in. The four of us are playing console games and laughing over trashy old movies. Suddenly one exclaims

"Oh! I probably shouldn't say that" which, of course, prompts the response
"Say what?"

"Oh nothing" he replies; "Just something that popped into my head that I realised was probably quite racist; I probably shouldn't say it should I?"

What is it about this scenario, why does it keep happening, why do we continue to come up with racist jokes and why do we continue to, inevitably it seems, laugh at them?

"What do you call a black man flying a plane?"

“The pilot, you racist!”

I know the punch line already; I’ve heard this joke so many times before. Yet I say nothing, wine and take away pizza has left me feeling lethargic and complacent. I know that such ‘jokes’ are only made meaningful through their association with racial stereotypes and their continued prevalence, indeed the very fact that they remain intelligible at all is ample evidence that the apparatus of race is alive and well. I also know that this is an example of the iterative performance of racial difference; four gay white men in the privacy of a home can safely laugh at our own privilege to impose stereotypes upon the ‘rest of the world’. In the process we carefully reinscribe our own Whiteness as distinct from others and maintain the boundaries between us, actively reproducing relations of difference and through difference inequality.

I know all this, yet I say nothing.

(Research Diary 2/February/2011)

In this vignette, the hypothetical pilot’s skin is identified as being a significant difference, from a presumed normative whiteness, and the alleged incongruity of his being a pilot relies upon tropes of appropriate or expected racial employment, inequality and in this case, terrorism (Puar 2005; 2006; Puar & Rai 2002). Jokes, stereotypes and other such discursive citations operate to produce and reinforce difference. In doing so, phenotypical, behavioural, temporal, spatial or social differences between persons are reified into apparatuses of categorisation and identities which are subsequently naturalised so that the processes of their production come to be rendered invisible; these apparatuses ‘congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being’ (Butler 1990, p45). Speech acts and interactions, such as in this example, are *never just jokes* but rather operate to normalise the whiteness of those present and the privileges they access in being able to (re)cite and (re)enforce stereotypes and our own imaginings upon the others. This vignette is also an example of the reinforcement of a passive acceptance of whiteness and the reproduction of white space. My refusal/failure to challenge operates as a tacit endorsement of the apparatus of whiteness through which my friends and I regulate and maintain the space in which we live.

The production of borders and imaginaries of space is an essential practice of identity management and social regulation, producing diverse geographies of inclusion/exclusion and consequently of privilege and marginalisation (see Chapter 2.4.2; Allen 2004; Casey 1998; Crang 2000; Darling 2009; Harvey 1996; Jackson 1989; Massey 1993; 1994; 2005; McDowell 1999; Robert 1998; Soja 1989; 1996; Thrift 1996). It is not unsurprising that this process be used by the participants in order to normalise and reify identity and subsequently naturalise relations of inequalities. One way this is achieved is through a spatial essentialism as representations of identities are homogeneously produced within an identified static and containing place a process which attempts to efface the complexities and heterogeneity of space and place. This replicates colonial processes of imagining and representing the other as being a static location waiting to be ‘found’ and experienced by the imperial gaze (Abbott 2003;

Alexander & Mohanty 1997; Ashcroft *et al.* 1995; Madge 1992; Massey 1993; 2005; Minh-Ha 1989; Said 1978; Sibley 1995; Sidaway 1995). In the participants discussions it operates to produce spatial imaginations which locate the self in relation to a distant and different other, producing static and essentialist identities which are seen to 'naturally' belong to particular places.

I: What do you mean by caucasian?

'I mean it in the broadest sense of I come from northern Europe, I have no strict point of origin'

Jack

In this way not only is the identity 'caucasian' understood to be essential to the understanding of 'northern Europe' but this identity is understood to be one which is located in an unmarked, universal, place. Jack's describes his identity as having no 'point of origin' because he does not understand it having come from anywhere 'else' and is therefore in its natural location; a process which presents a naturalised and essentialist association between white bodies/identities and particular areas of the global North.

'I wouldn't say that they are automatically not privileged just because they live outside of the West; access to education has massive differences in Western countries as well as across the world and being intelligent enough to use those opportunities and maximise them, that's also not limited to the western world, but again I think if you were to take a person with equal intelligence and equal access to education born in an Indian village and in an English village I would think the English one would be more privileged'

Ricky

Here, geography, personal ability and access to resources are all considered to be separate and inter-related components which are collectively required to provide access to some forms of privilege. Access which Ricky identifies as being unequally distributed between these diverse locations but not necessarily essential to those locations, they are not 'automatic' yet there is clearly some process at work which ensures an unequal distribution of resources and privilege. Ricky deploys an imagination of the regional global north and south, and the relations between them (of wealth/poverty; urban/rural). While he does complicate that image, the use of such binaries sediments understandings of clearly identifiable, bounded spaces with relatively fixed properties and relations between them.

Stereotypes and alleged 'real' differences between bodies and identities can be found in a great variety of places and they do a great many things. One of the ways in which the participants used them was to legitimise and explain differences of access to space and resources in scene bars. One such stereotype was the perceived difference between gay men and lesbians who were more likely to be described in essentialist terms, a process which legitimises inequalities and renders their social production invisible.

'I think that gay men are probably more promiscuous than gay women, I don't know why, I've got no empirical evidence to back that up but I think that's the case; I think maybe for that reason the guys are out a lot more on the scene but I've no reason particularly for saying that'

Lee

Lee suggests that the prevalence of gay men in the scene spaces he frequents might be caused by their promiscuity and assumed need for such public spaces to meet potential partners and a corresponding lack of such a need for lesbians (for discussions of lesbian scene spaces and their production see Browne 2007; Podmore 2006; Taylor 2008; Valentine 1993). Drawing on stereotypes of male promiscuity and the chaste woman, he suggests this explanation despite apparently having '*no empirical evidence to back that up*', despite his own experiences of spending time in these places, he still '*thinks that's the case*' (stereotypes of the promiscuous gay man are widespread even amongst research by gay men, Bonello & Cross 2010). The disparity between men and women's abilities to access and occupy scene space is effectively explained away as the result of an essential difference between the two (uniform, homogenous) identities and thus closes down any need to explore and explain the production of inequalities and differing experiences of space. This creation of difference is deployed in a variety of ways by the participants.

I: So let's talk about the other kind of bars you mentioned, the places where..

'Where old gay men go to die'

I: Why do you say that?

'It's like an elephant graveyard in the savannah or something... gay men go there and await death they get into their own little world, they know everybody, they know the bar person... they're all so old. Talking about the old days and how it was different... they all tend to go cruising and there's a lot fewer young gay guys who go cruising compared to old guys because it's not really part of our gay culture it was part of their gay culture a couple of decades ago. We don't need to cruise anymore, we can do, for thrills, but there are a lot easier ways to get laid... they [older gay men] just don't feel at ease in the same way we are so they tend to separate themselves'

Lawrence

Lawrence argues that there is a difference between younger and older gay men, a difference based on his perceptions of the spatialities of their social and sexual practices. While '*old gay men*' are apparently 'stuck' in a culture of homoerotic cruising from '*a couple of decades ago*' younger gay men '*don't need to cruise*'²⁷. This difference, of not needing to search for sex using public cruising sites, produces a normative understanding of sexual practices for younger men, taking place in private spaces rather than public ones (see Chapter 5.5; Andersson 2010; Bell 1997; Binnie

²⁷ Lawrence's comment also associates these forms of sexual practice with death, perhaps an allusion to HIV/AIDS or more recent discussions of reproductive futurity which have been associated with homonormativity (see Edelman 2004) and reiterates an association between 'immoral' sexual identities, spatial practices and death see Andersson 2010; Raimondo 2010; Taylor 2011). These discussions are continued in Chapter 5.

2004; Brown 2004; 2008; Delaney 1999). For Lawrence, older gay men's 'need' to use public cruising spaces demonstrates that they have 'failed' to adapt to the changes in 'gay culture', a failure which results in older gay bodies being marginalised by Lawrence's use of a bounded 'we'. While these symbolic differences are important, Lawrence's explanation is also specifically talking about spatial practices, locations and attempting to account for the differential experiences of younger and older gay bodies. Lawrence believes that it is older men who 'separate themselves' into peripheral scene spaces, rather than a process of marginalisation which excludes them from the spaces of younger gay men as has been shown by previous research (Drummond 2010; Heaphy & Yip 2003; King & Cronin 2010; Lee 2008; Slevin & Linneman 2010; Vanderbeck 2007).

'Sometimes for a laugh we'll go down to the sauna, but not looking for sex just for the entertainment factor; laughing at the people who are there'

I: Why is it funny, going down to the sauna and laughing at the people there?

'It just seems a little bit kind of, seedy or it's just that it's a very unusual way of finding sex, it's akin to cruising... they generally tend to be an older crowd and they tend not to be very attractive; it's more of a social experiment. Watching social cues between people and how they interact, how a wink or a smile can turn into them disappearing into the dark room for 20 minutes [laughs]'

Jim

Even in a place designed to accommodate cruising and sex Jim and his friends feel able to enter and use it for their own titillation and amusement, ridiculing and laughing at the men who use the space for sexual contact. Situating them and their sex lives as a part of his 'social experiment' he overlays his understanding of these men as sexually unappealing (to him), older, and their cruising activities, describing them collectively as 'seedy' to emphasise the distance between him-self and these other(ed) men. This example demonstrates how place can be challenged and contested, yet not in any clear and uniform way. While Jim and his friends use the sauna as a spectacle of otherness and to reaffirm identity boundaries, it does not necessarily mean that the men who use the place for sex are perturbed, or even notice their presence. There is a coexistence of two (or potentially more) uses of the space which contradict one another, yet it would be difficult to suggest that one or the other was 'dominant'. Instead there are multiple accesses and privileges being enacted and performed in this space. There is Jim's narrative of 'old', 'ugly', 'seedy' bodies and their sex which cites normative bodily corporealities and practices, yet there might also be counter discourses which position Jim as an interloper and out of place. Similarly there is a disconnection between the spatial practices of sauna-as-cruising-location and sauna-as-amusement which do not necessarily invalidate one another. These kinds of contradictions surrounding spaces of/for sex can be found in similar discussions of circuit parties or the nudist beach (Androit 2010; Hurley & Prestage 2009; Tattleman 1997; Westhaver 2006). There is also a close parallel here to discussions of

'straight' bodies entering and occupying gay bars (Casey 2005; Johnston 2005; Matejskova 2007). Such a place of (increasingly) marginal practices being entered and occupied by a contesting group of bodies and practices and the negotiations between them could make for an interesting, if problematic, study (although see Brown 2004; 2008; Haubrich *et al.* 2004).

The participants also identified spaces which were heterosexed and working classed as locations of otherness and discomfort for them. For Xavier the cities central shopping precinct is one such place, exemplified, for him, in the presence of young parents:

'I associate people who have had children at a young age with people who maybe haven't been to university, maybe have dropped out of school and things like that; maybe living on council estates. Those are all the things that I associate with in my mind'

I: The shopping centre is somewhere that you would feel quite uncomfortable then?

'Yeah, I think, and the high street down there. I hate those shops because everything's cheap and if you want to get £1 socks then that's fine but it's filled up with people and I convince myself that they're all idiots and I don't have a good time'

Xavier

The association between the main shopping centre in Brighton & Hove and young families differs from other participants' understandings of the place as a gay cruising site. For Xavier the place is uncomfortable and he finds almost nothing there to feel connected to. He seems to outright reject everything associated with this presumed heteronormative idyll, opting instead to spend time in places where he can '*have a good time*'. In this instance he went on to talk about other shopping areas of the city such as the North Laine which is regarded as being more '*bohemian*' and has a more eclectic mix of independent shops (see Fig. 3, p20). Xavier uses his understanding of young parents as '*people who maybe haven't been to university... dropped out of school... maybe living on council estates*' to represent the shopping centre as a classed place which is deeply unpleasant for him. This representation relies heavily upon classed understandings and normativities of dress, consumption and temporalities (amongst others); it is the young hetero-family which Xavier uses to symbolise a feckless and poorly educated mass, tapping into an image of the hypersexed working classed (see Chapter 2.3.2; Haylett 2001; McDowell 2008; Nayak 2006; Russo & Linkon 2005; Stenning 2008; Strangleman 2008). Xavier distances himself from these bodies/identities and the spaces in which he understands them to be located. In doing so he actively insults and replicates a sense of superiority and centred-ness associated with privilege. His identity is the ordinary unmarked one, in contrast to these '*idiots*' who are preventing him from having '*a good time*'. Xavier deploys and understanding of space as naturally or normally accommodating him, where he can enjoy himself and it is the restriction and denial of that ability which seems to be part

of the source of his discomfort. This 'right to space' is a manifestation of a privileged positionality and outlook predicated upon the assumption that the subject will not be opposed or contested in its desires. It is only when that assumption is contested that these assumptions become visible through the participant's complaint that he is denied his 'usual' abilities.

Another place or 'type' of place, described by the participants in similar terms is that of the 'straight' chain pub. Certain venues around the city were mentioned every single participant as being somewhere they did not feel comfortable. The combination of city centre locations, cheap drinks and actively heterosexed spaces, produces a place which is described as dangerous, dirty, loud or just generally inhospitable.

I: Why is it you don't like chain pubs?

'I feel horrible for kind of like using the word but I'm going to use it anyway – it's so chavvy... I could be completely wrong as well because I've never been into the place, but it is kind of the worst in society, I've probably built up this fear of the place in my head, well not fear – it's more hatred. Just everything that's wrong with pubs; people like them because they're cheap but I think that it just attracts the dregs'

Bruce

Bruce describes these bars as places of working class heterosexuality, places that are so different to where he would usually spend time that he feels only fear or even 'hatred' towards them; for him they are 'the worst in society'. Again there is an intersection of heterosexuality and class for Bruce; he describes these places as 'cheap', 'chavvy' and attracting only 'the dregs'. This understanding of working classed places as being dangerous and violent is hardly unusual and the figure of the 'chav' is particularly potent here. Like other signifiers, 'chav' has no entirely fixed referent beyond an association with marginality and denigration, therefore it can be applied to discipline a variety of bodies, places, identities or objects, such as clothing, bodily movement, places or speech (Haylett 2001; Jones 2011; McDowell 2001; Nayak 2003; Skeggs 1997; Wray & Newitz 1997). Throughout the interviews it is one of the most overt instances of the participants applying their positionalities to insult and marginalise particular persons and spaces. This identifier illustrates the ability of privileged groups and individuals to use their position negatively label bodies and spaces.

I: What do you mean by 'chav'?

'Chav; Council Housed And Violent. Young, generally white, goes out to get pissed on a Saturday night, wears track suits, girls with hoop ear rings, the very stereotypical view that people have of chav's... goes out to get pissed on a Saturday night, works in manual labour, or probably doesn't work; it's a horrible stereotype because I grew up in that kind of place and know a lot of people who don't fit it'

Lee

I: What do you mean by 'chavvier people'?

'It's a problem because normally I don't have to think of a definition for this... they're more likely to be wearing tracky type clothing and shaved heads, they at least give the indication they're from lower income families

Phil

In these examples Lee and Phil produce a form of otherness which they attempt to reject and marginalise. Lee's quote recognises some of the difficulties with this process, recognition he attributes to having come from a working class family himself and having lived in *'that kind of a place'*. His previous proximity brings the difficulties of such stereotypes into visibility for him. In contrast Phil shares none of that proximity and is more distanced. Phil says that he is unused to needing to define what he means by *'chavvier people'*, this group is, for him, obvious in its constituents and providing an explanation is difficult. These classed representations integrate particular practices, bodily comportment and modes of dress as signifiers of otherness from a presumed normative middle class position. In marking out these shared imaginaries these participants identify particular bodies that they understand to be different and the spaces that these bodies occupy are bounded, identifiable and avoidable. Xavier, Bruce, Lee and Phil all draw on very similar understandings of a classed other, marking/making and marginalising these bodies and the spaces they produce as being undesirable and degenerate. Meanwhile, as shown in the previous section, their own centred and unmarked identities remain invisible and normalised while their spatial practices are represented as normal and desirable.

Walking home from the office around lunch time I pass a man on the street. He stays close to the edge of the path, occasionally reaching out to the wall for stability. Evidently drunk he staggers clutching a can of super strength bitter in one hand, barely managing to keep it upright.

I feel superior, disgusted and faintly embarrassed by my proximity to him; I speed my pace hoping to be away as soon as possible.

An instant later I feel guilty for my attitude, knowing full well that I have been far more inebriated than this man currently is and that the feeling of superiority is a deceptive one. I know that I have judged this man, perhaps prematurely. On the other hand I am in no hurry to find out more about him or to find out whether that is indeed the case.

(Research Diary 6/May/2011)

My reaction to the materialities of this man's body, his mode of dress and behaviour, his can of super-strength beer²⁸ and the spatiality of our encounter on my walk home for lunch is an enactment of this process of othering in a specific time-space. I quickly assess him and cite elements of difference between us through which I conceptually produce a relationality between our identities, one of 'superiority' on my behalf. All of which occurs almost automatically before my more critical understanding of identity engages and I examine my own response, an examination which prompts guilt and

²⁸ 'Super strength' beers are low quality, relatively low price with a high alcohol content, typically they are represented as being consumed only by the poorest individuals.

shame over that initial reaction. However this does not change my behaviour towards him, although it changes my perceptions of myself. Privilege is visibly manifest in this encounter. My othering of this man and my behaviour towards him is indicative of my understandings of appropriate practices within specific time-spaces and a distancing based on class boundaries and performativities.

Creating others is a difficult process and requires continual maintenance and iteration in order for these categories and relations to hold any appearance of substance lest, to paraphrase Said (1978), they simply blow away. This maintenance takes the form of an active policing of identity boundaries. A declaration of what is acceptable to wear, where to go and how to act when you are 'there', or the ways in which sexual practices are policed are all examples of this identity maintenance; actively producing spatialities of inclusion and exclusion. Attempting to maintain boundaries which can never be fully 'held' and that require continual reproduction. This process of marking and producing spatialities of difference and subsequently self/otherness becomes even more complicated when faced with multiple intersecting fields of power and identity. While the relations discussed so far in this chapter have focussed on relatively narrow distinctions, Liam's quote begins to develop some of the ways in which this process can become complex and require highly nuanced distinctions.

'I don't generally find black men that attractive... I'm generally attracted to blonde and preppy men; I don't like preppy black men though'

I: What do you mean by 'preppy'?

'Public schooled, I don't like the Chris Eubank type. I went to school with a couple of people like that and you go; 'Neither of your parents spoke like that, that's ridiculous, that's a completely put on accent.' You can understand when it's like Marmaduke III and mummy and daddy have owned a country pile in Surrey and grandpa owned it before that; then that accent is probably genuine, it's still ridiculous but it's not you trying to be anything that you're not... and, you get girls going to my school, white girls from really nice well to do families who would be all scrapped back hair in corn rows talking with really black street accents and it's not really who you are'

Liam

Liam highlights bodies which are attempting performances which he judges to be out of place. 'Well spoken' black men and white girls from nice rich families with 'black street accents' are here both equally policed in their behaviours which render them out of place. The alleged incongruence between skin colourations and performativities of speech displays Liam's understandings of 'normal' or expected behaviours which rely upon essentialist and stereotypical representations of 'white girls from really nice well to-do families' and black men who are 'trying to be anything that you're not'. Liam demonstrates an interconnection between normative understandings of gendered, raced and classed identities. Black men are understood to properly have a particular 'black street accent' and parents who also did not speak

with a public schooled accent; unspoken here is the assumptions of a working class or perhaps immigrant family. Liam uses the example of landed, presumably white, bodies to describe those who are expected to have money and particular kinds of speech. Similarly the 'white girls' in his example are judged because they fail to live up to the expected behaviour and appearance of women from 'nice' families. Liam demonstrates that identities are never simply one thing or another as he draws upon a compound or intersectional understanding of how two different identities should act; layering understandings of class/race/gender to illustrate and reinforce his conceptions of proper behaviour.

Liam goes on to discuss a mutual friend (who describes himself as mixed-race).

'Like Robert could be any bloody colour under the sun... so that he will go to Carnival and be particularly black and shaking his booty there and eating rice and peas and jerk chicken as stereotypically as you like on that day and having a wonderful time, and then other times we'll maybe go over to his mother's house and have dinner with her and he'll be completely different'

Liam

Robert's racial identity is understood by Liam as being fluid because of the different ways that Robert is perceived to be capable of acting. His identity is performative connecting place and bodily behaviour with 'appropriate' skin colouration. Robert's skin colour is itself mutable (it 'could be any bloody colour') depending on how and where his identity is being performed he will be understood differently, potentially eliding Robert's own understanding of his 'raced' identity. Liam's negotiation of situated raced and classed identities in these examples, illustrate the problematic assumptions of authenticity and identity, showing that this production of the other and its relation to unmarked selves is always a contingent process.

'I don't think they [bisexuals] have a community, I think they probably fence hop between the gay community and the straight community. I don't know but I think there's quite a few for whom this is just a half way hog; you don't want to come all the way out as gay. It's just a bit silly, I'm quite distrustful of the whole bi concept; I think you can be either straight or gay but you can be someone straight who every now and then enjoys having sex with guys or you can be gay but every now and then enjoy having sex with women. I don't think there is ever a 50/50 I think you're always more one than the other and if it is 50/50 I haven't found it yet; I don't quite believe in it, it's like a unicorn'

Frank

Here Frank talks about his understanding of bisexuality, an understanding that produces a difference between his 'authentic' gay identity and an 'inauthentic' (potentially non-existent) bisexual identity. Frank's discussion produces various sexual positionalities as other and therefore validating their differential experiences and treatment. Frank displays the difficulty involved in maintaining these divisions as he wavers between '50/50' bisexuality being 'like a unicorn' and allowing for the possible existence of complex and contradictory sexual behaviours in individual cases. Although regardless of the difficulties involved, the hubris of declaring that a

particular form of identity simply does not exist is a vivid example of how privilege can be used to marginalise and exclude. Frank's performance is an example of the anxious practices of boundary production and repetition and recitation that attempt to maintain *authentic* and stable relations between various bodies/identities/spaces and belies the contingency and instability of the apparatuses of power relations through which identities are produced (Minh-ha 1989; Oswin 2005).

The identification of particular differences in corporeality, identity or behaviour as being meaningful and indicative of essential characteristics or qualities is a powerful ability, especially when those understandings can be imposed upon or disseminated through everyday knowledges so that they become 'common sense' or taken for granted assumptions. These appearances are subsequently commandeered into projects of normalisation and that are then maintained and defended from examination as natural formations, rather than understood as fluid apparatuses of power relations produced through contingent and spatial processes of interrelation. This section has explored some of the 'others' produced and identified by the participants and shown how this process operates to reproduce and reify existing formations. The final section of this chapter continues to explore this process of positioning and identity production by emphasising the 'normal' and centred identities which the participants produce and occupy.

4.5 Producing 'Normal' Gay Masculinities

As the participants identified various marginal groups and spaces, distanced from their own practices and identities, they implicitly describe the positionality that they understand themselves to occupy; by pointing to variously distant 'theres' we can explore the often silent position of 'here'. In this section, I continue exploring the various others identified by the participants, in particular the participants' understandings and performances of various masculinities. I explore some of the ways that the participants position themselves in relation to multiple other(ed) performances of masculinity and male identity and through this process produce a normative gay masculinity. I start by demonstrating how the participants' differing bodily experiences operated to challenge some of their abilities to access privilege in some places.

Embodiment and corporeality impact the production and experience of privilege, for some participants their ability to appear and perform in stereotypically masculine ways produced a feeling of safety in heteronormative spaces (see Chapter 6.2). Conversely, for other participants their embodiment could be limiting. While performativity has been criticised as not sufficiently engaging with the materialities of the body (Butler 1993; McDowell 1995; Hood-Williams & Cealey Harrison 1998; Nast 1998), the understanding of identities as hybrid material/discursive

apparatuses foregrounds the interrelation of bodies/identities (see Grosz 1994; 1995). Grosz argues that examinations of bodily specificity can destabilise homogeneous representations of identities and drawing on her work I demonstrate that these participants' experiences challenge otherwise disembodied and uniform representations of the gay white man.

'Well there's the unrealistic body image that every gay man from the age of 15 upwards has to get ridiculously skinny these days; "do I look skinny?" is the same as "do I look sexy?" now and they are all ridiculously tiny and if you're larger... I felt intimidated by them because I was a chubbier kind of guy.'

Carl

Carl describes normativities of body size/shape and desirability which impact his experiences of scene spaces and construct his understandings of sexuality as these discourses impact the production of normative gay identities (Bergling 2007; Drummond 2005; 2006; 2010; Duncan 2010; Filiault & Drummond 2007; McArdle & Hill 2009; Reilly *et al.* 2008; Slevin & Linneman 2010; Whitesel 2007; Wood 2004). Access to privilege in some spaces is determinate not only on the participants' abilities to perform normative gay masculinities. Fat bodies in particular are often deemed unacceptable and for some participants 'size-ism' represented a significant marginalising factor in their lives; although these experiences were highly depending upon where the participants were describing as other spaces valued larger bodies.

There are other ways in which the body complicates our ability to theorise homonormativity. Most literature engaged with homonormativity has not yet engaged with corporeality and bodily specificity (see Sothorn 2007). Fat is one issue which needs further research, but another is the unspoken assumption that the homonormative body is a *healthy* body. As Elder (2002, p990) argues in response to Nast (2002), the lives of gay men 'have all been affected by the HIV/AIDS global pandemic' and that this omission demonstrates the flat and monolithic representation of gay white masculinity developed in her paper.

'Serophobia is everywhere, still... I mean the amount of guys that I've heard say "God if I found out I had it, I'd kill myself." Which is really like a backhand when you hear it. You're just like "Oh should I have? Sorry. Ok" they really just don't get it... I mean the first year after I found out I took it to heart the amount of people who rejected me because of it... and all I've heard since getting back to Brighton is be careful you'll get a reputation as being HIV positive.'

Owen

Andy's discussion of being HIV+ makes clear that being *known* to be HIV+ would have a greater effect upon his ability to access privilege than the actual materiality of his infection. It is the reactions of others that produce his experiences of marginalisation and in this respect the materiality of his bodily infection pays a relatively minor role. Other participants discussed their experiences of mental and physical illness or disability for at least one his physical conditions could extremely limit is mobility

which meant that his experiences of Brighton & Hove were shaped as much by his corporeality as his sexuality. This demonstrates that the ability to access privilege is limited or enabled in more diverse and subtle variations than made apparent by homogeneous representations of homonormative 'gay white men'. Another example is through class relations and the marginalisation of working classed gay identities.

'In the open out and proud LGBT community the lower classes are definitely represented, but nowhere near as much as middle or upper class where it's a little bit more accepted to be gay. I think the majority of lower class gay people end up cruising and possibly marrying a girl, having kids and having sex with men for the rest of their lives secretly. I mean if you go cruising the amount of scallies that you will find there in their hoodies and their Adidas tracksuits and their trainers, looking quite scared and stuff... and it's because they can't just go down to the scene and be seen in there by their mates because they're not out... I think it's really just the whole macho thing'

Nathan

Nathan illustrates his understanding of a normative gay identity by highlighting the ways in which he believes working class gay men deviate and fail to comply with the mandates of a visibly 'out and proud' gay identity through the use and consumption of scene spaces (Heaphy 2011; Taylor 2005; 2007; 2008; Skeggs 2000; 2004). Nathan suggests that the presumed homophobia of 'the lower classes' disciplines working class gay men into the closet and that their lives will subsequently be characterised by secrecy and furtive public sex²⁹. This explanation serves to normalise a classed position of being able to afford the scene bars, along with modes of dress, sexual behaviour and an essentialist connection between 'macho' identities with hegemonic, hetero-masculinity and working classed men. Conversely there is a consuming, middle class and not-'macho' gay masculinity which is implicitly produced as the normative and desirable position.

'Well I am tempted to describe myself as 'man' because to me there's a difference between 'male' and 'man', I associate 'man' generally as having more hyper-masculine traits, but because I lack a few of those traits... Most stereotypical men tend to be quite muscle bound, tend to work labour jobs, and tend to be quite aggressive... I mean due to my, health issues, I was unable to do any physical activity in school like sports; sports is one of the things that identifies someone as being a man'

Hector

Hector describes a particular form of masculinity, one performed by those that he identifies as 'men'. He identifies points at which his body and identity have been marginalised by these other men, an identification he associates here with sports, labour, aggression and musculature and which he feels symbolically and physically distanced from. Hector's feelings of marginalisation and distance play out into his

²⁹ This also repeats a production of normative sexual spaces and practices as seen in the previous section and gives further weight to suggestions that homonormativity is associated with the spread of ideals surrounding monogamous, non-public sex see Chapter 5.4.1; Bell 2004; Bell & Binnie 2004; 2006; Bonello & Cross 2010; Brown 2008; Duggan 2002; Hubbard 2001; Wilkinson 2010.

everyday spatial practices, in school because he is unable to take part in the activities of his peers, but later because he and other participants tend to avoid places that are coded as being hetero-masculine (or classed and sexed in particular ways)³⁰. Greg makes this spatialisation of masculinity more explicit:

'I've heard up north that it is terrible, places like Yorkshire where masculinity is rife and to be a man you're a man'

Greg

Greg locates a threatening hegemonic masculinity which excludes all other possibilities in the imagined space of 'up north', producing a place of homogeneity and hegemony (Connell 1995; 2000; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Hopkins & Noble; Van Hoven & Hörschelmann 2005). This threatening masculinity is ubiquitous for him in the other spaces which exist outside, figuratively and literally, the boundaries of Greg's 'southern' experience. This north/south divide reiterates the dichotomy of self/other and centre/margins; Greg's understanding of 'up north' as threatening is contrasted with a silent understanding of safety in the south. This reflects Moran *et al.*'s (2003) discussion of bounded gay space and unbounded, threatening straight space (see Chapter 6.3). Similar processes of boundary production were performed by the participants at smaller scales within Brighton & Hove as the participants coded certain places as hetero-masculine and therefore potentially threatening.

'Most of my gay friends would feel less threatened being surrounded by women than being surrounded by a group of straight men that they don't know. I think definitely more straight men than straight women that I've encountered are homophobic'

John

John describes straight men as being potentially threatening (his language emphasises this understanding; 'surrounded... by a group... that they don't know') and draws on an understanding which conflates hetero-masculinity and homophobia (Connell 1987; Kimmell 1994; 2008). He claims the ability to speak and represent 'most of my gay friends' and reproduces an understanding of straight men being dangerous and homophobic.

The need for nuanced understandings of space and privilege becomes more pressing when the participants turn their attentions to those who they felt performed a 'camp' or 'effeminate' masculinity. The participants spent a great deal of energy during their interviews distancing themselves from the camp performances of other gay men, a distancing which often took the form of disparagement, mockery and insults, marginalising the identity performances of those they labelled as 'scene queens'.

'My impression of scene queens is that that's all they've got going for them, that whole Friday and Saturday night culture; that they save up all week and spend all their money on that and that's all they do every week they don't really have

³⁰ The geographies of heteronormativity and homophobia experienced by the participants of this study are developed more fully in Chapter 6.

anything outside of that you know, they hate their job and they hate their life and they hate their flatmate and then they go out and be incredibly bitchy about somebody and get too drunk and go home and bitch about how they haven't got anybody to hug them at night and then they spend their entire 20's having one night stands and then wonder why, when they hit 35, nobody wants to date them... it's very clique-y and very catty and just succumbing to sort of every stereotype you've ever thought of gays on the clubbing scene... that's sort of the negative stereotype that they're these awful people who thrive on being awful about people'

John

John's negative image of a life devoid of companionship, supposedly characterised by anonymous sex, alcohol abuse, and negativity creates the acceptable gay as one which is committed to monogamy and distinct forms of homonormative performances of gendered and sexual identities (Brown 2011; Budgeon 2008; Clarke *et al.* 2004; Finlay *et al.* 2003; Folgero 2008; Wilkinson 2010). The promiscuous camp gay man is the figure through which gender and sexual dissidence is disciplined and excluded, indeed it is through a rejection of these elements of 'gay culture' that the men of this study identify themselves as having reached a new phase of their lives (see Chapter 5.4; Adams 2006; Bergling 2007; Casey 2007; Nardi 2000; Peters 2010; Seidman 2005; Visser 2008). These men actively discuss have 'grown out of' that phase of camp masculinity and promiscuity, a coming to maturity which in the process relegates all those who have failed to do so to a lesser position. They reject any radical political potential which these camp bodies and places may possess questioning such assertions by theorists in similar ways to those suggested by Schacht (2000) in his study of female impersonators and drag.

Butler (1990, p187), for example claims that drag 'implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as it's contingency' and camp as an abstraction of 'camping' and parody, such as in theoretical discussions of drag, certainly makes its mark in literatures of gay masculinity and queer practices (Binnie 1995; 1997; Dyer 1993; Probyn 1993), the lived experiences of camp or effeminate gay men have received less attention (although see Duncan 2010; Levine 1998; Linneman 2000; 2008; Schacht 2000). This absence is especially notable in discussions of homonormativity, where both Duggan (2002) and Nast (2002) present an understanding of the *privileged* 'gay white man' is presented a relatively unitary and homogeneous figure. A variety of critics have identified the problems with using such a stereotypical and homogeneous figure as a point of analysis (see Brown 2008; Elder 2002; Oswin 2005; Sothorn 2004). Even as Brown (2009) has begun to explore some of the 'diverse gay economies' which might successfully coexist, there has yet to be a sustained empirical examination of the fractures and differences within and between individual gay white men, the power relations or *power-geometries* between them, and the ways in which processes of homonormativity might affect them differently. The participants' discussions of camp men and 'scene queens' marginalise these

'other' bodies/identities, while simultaneously writing themselves into a position of normative gay masculinity and fracturing the image of the unitary 'gay white man'. In doing so the participants call into question not only the potential for camp bodies to produce a destabilisation of existing gender relations but also the suggestion that such destabilisations are even desired by 'sexual dissidents' (see Schacht 2000). Instead they reiterate a fixity which privileges certain manifestations of masculinities while marginalising others.

The camp men described by these participants are not only understood as failures for their inability to progress in the 'normal' (normative) way but through their flamboyance and prominence they threaten the identities of the participants themselves (Rosenfeld 2009; Stryker 2008). The threat here is through association, that the disciplining gaze might somehow associate campness with the participants' own sexualities, thus disrupting their performance of a normative gay masculinity which is able to 'fit in' and pass unchallenged in heteronormative spaces (see Chapter 6.4). Therefore this campness is not only an individual failure but also a threat which must be excluded.

I don't necessarily judge people because they're camp but, it's not exactly the sort of atmosphere that I'd like to be in... I went to a catholic school with a very kind of alpha male year group so I always felt on the fringe; that I was in their perception, less of a man. I think that there's a lot of issues in that gay men aren't perceived to be 'real' men and gay men are instantly, trivialised we're instantly presumed to be effeminate'

Isaac

Campness and/or 'effeminacy' (the two are often used interchangeably by the participants) threaten the hegemonic formulation of masculinity, produced through a joint rejection of homosexuality and femininity (Blomley 1996; Donaldson 1993; Eyre 1993; Herek 1992; Jackson 1991; 2011; Jeyasingham 2010; Kimmel 1994; McDowell 2002; Norman 2011; Richardson 2010; Toerien & Durrheim 2001; Van Der Meer 2003; Ward & Schneider 2009). While the non-camp gay man is able to efface his homosexuality through performing a *passing* form of masculinity and therefore negotiating his own visibility, camp men are described as threatening this performance and are therefore avoided (passing is discussed at length later, see Chapter 6.4.1). Isaac works to distance himself being seen as '*less of a man*' in part by avoiding the '*sort of atmosphere*', it is not only his own bodily performativities which must be policed but also his spatial practices. Where he chooses to spend his time and his money is influenced by his desire to avoid being associated with effeminacy as much as his own bodily comportment. In avoiding places with the wrong '*sort of atmosphere*' Isaac contributes to the marginalisation of places which cater towards or tolerate camp masculinity, a power geometry through which his not-camp identity is further normalised by the decreasing number of places which welcome and promote difference and diversity (Massey 1993). This finding reproduces similar research

recently published exploring the effects of homonormativity on Dutch LGBT communities and individuals which concludes that processes of 'assimilation' and increasing access to privilege for some LGBT persons has the effect of reproducing marginalisations experienced by less normalised individuals(see Robinson 2012). However, my research expands on this by exploring these processes specifically within the context of gay white men, the alleged 'homonormative' group, and the ways in which they act to maintain and (re)produce these effects.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter explores the participants' understandings of themselves, their abilities to interpret their lives through the idea of privilege, how they conceive of their situated positionalities in relation to a variety of raced, classed, gendered and sexual 'others' and the processes through which they produce and maintain those understandings. In doing so I address the first two aims set out at the start of this project and develop critical understandings into the production and maintenance of privilege within the lives of gay white men and how they understand and interpret those experiences. In particular this chapter has furthered understandings of the processes through which privilege becomes naturalised, denied, reified or otherwise rendered invisible and taken for granted. While each of these practices has been identified before, previous research explores them only in relation to a single category of identification at a time, primarily whiteness. This section builds upon this work by demonstrating the participants' use of them in relation to multiple positioned subjects.

The concept of *invisibility* is an integral part of understandings of privilege (see Chapter 2; Dyer 1997; Frankenberg 1993; Kimmel & Ferber 2003; McIntosh 1988; 2012). This research brings together a relatively minor number of studies which have examined these practices with geographic insights into the situated performativity of identities to demonstrate that this is a situated process. Understandings of what is 'normal' are spatially produced as demonstrated through the participants' situated discussions of identities. This means that multiple practices are deployed, with varying degrees of success in order to maintain the appearance of a stable identity and defend the access to privilege which might be available. Further, these practices can be challenged and reconfigured as the participants move between different places or are asked to consider their previously taken for granted assumptions of 'normalcy'. By doing so, the apparatuses of power relations through which experiences of space and privilege are produced become visible and the work of learning to act in new ways, which are less likely to reproduce and maintain inequalities, can begin. This chapter has challenged understandings of privilege which centre on 'unearned advantages' because of the theoretical limitations of this device and the ways it can be

used to defer or otherwise efface the importance of privilege in producing an individual's current circumstances. The suggestion that positionality might be 'earned' and the product of *hard work* attempts to grant legitimacy through a discourse of individualism which disconnects the self from the spatial relations of its production, therefore effacing whatever privileges or marginalisations that may have impacted upon the individual.

Practices of othering and exclusion were also widely deployed by the participants to reproduce their own positionalities and understandings of themselves and to reinforce the marginalisation of others. The second half of this chapter provides evidence of how gay white men are able to use the privileges to which they have access. I demonstrated that one of the ways they use privilege is to marginalise and discriminate against various classed, aged and sexualised others and their spatial practices just as they are described as doing in discussions of homonormativity (Chapter 2; Duggan 2002; Nast 2002). Some of the participants use privilege to reproduce essentialist understandings of race and gender which further naturalise relations of inequalities as being innate or unavoidable. Collectively these practices of illustrate some of the ways that privilege can be used to produce and maintain geographies of exclusion and marginalisation, from the perspective of those who are partially responsible. Such research is rare (although see Condor 2000; Feagin 2000; Foster 2009; Franklin 1998; Josey 2007; Maxwell & Aggleton 2010; Srivastava 2005; van Dijk 1992) and this chapter provides a range of empirical evidence of how marginalisation is not only produced but also legitimised. They particularly reject and insult those they describe as 'chavs'. An intersection of raced/classed/sexualised identities and practices and the spaces associated with them. While part of this rejection might be explained by the participants' lingering fears and associations of straight violence (see Chapter 6), the behaviour demonstrated in this section provides clear examples of the deployment of their own classed privileges to marginalise and exclude.

This chapter also furthers understandings of homonormativity through exploring some of the ways in which the identity of 'gay white man' is internally fractured and divided, exploring the power relations between different gay white men and particularly the distancing of *camp* or *effeminate* gay masculinities. The participants produce the separate identities of *hetero-masculinity* and *camp gay masculinity* and distance themselves from both of these positions in order to produce a silent, normative position. This process demonstrates that understandings of the 'homonormative' gay white man do not yet take sufficient account of the ways in which that identity might be internally fractured and nuanced (see Brown 2009). In particular while sexual identities are interpreted as fluid and changing, masculinity tends to be represented as remaining relatively stable and homogeneous. The

participants' marginalisation of *camp* indicates that there are more complex power-geometries to be explored within and between gay white men. Indeed the lives and spatial practices of camp gay men and their relation to homonormativity and privilege remains relatively unexplored (Schacht 2000).

Taking a step back from the details of who said what it is possible to see a broad pattern emerging from this chapter through which certain forms of identities are privileged in various ways while others become marginalised. Processes which operate to reproduce and maintain existing relations of inequalities and the marginalisations and abuse that they create. These effects are not necessarily intentional and despite the harshness of language deployed by some of the participants, I believe few if any of them would intend for their actions to be implicated in the production of inequalities. This is why an understanding of privilege as a situated performance is essential to further exploration of how inequalities are produced and maintained. This chapter demonstrates some examples of how privilege operates as a Foucaultian strategy, the local effects that apparatuses of power relations have, 'developing in particular directions... blocking... stabilising... utilising etc' in ways which extend beyond the actions and intentions of individuals (Foucault 1980, p90, 114). While any single action might have only a negligible effect itself, it is a citation of an apparatus of power relations and simultaneous constitutive those relations. Yet, as this chapter has also shown, these apparatuses can be challenged and reconfigured. One of the ways this happens is through the accumulation of experiences as the participants move through the spatialities of their lives. The participants' describe their lives using a temporal narrative of progression and development. The following chapter addresses this movement, arguing that it is an explicitly spatial trajectory through which the participants are able to access privilege in different places at different 'stages' of their life courses.

5 Trajectories through Scene Spaces

Outline

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Brighton; the 'Gay Capital'
- 5.3 Producing Gay Space; Producing Gay Subjects
 - 5.3.1 'The Brighton Effect'
- 5.4 'Growing out' of the Scene
- 5.5 Depoliticised Futures?
- 5.6 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The participants' understandings of Brighton & Hove and the spatialities of the city were primarily framed through a narrative of movement through various 'stages of life'. They described four major stages; a move to Brighton, encounter and participation in the scene, 'growing out' of using scene spaces and their imagined futures. Part of this trajectory is a corollary of 13 participants actively choosing to relocate to the city at some stage of their lives, with a large proportion of these relocations forming part of a 'coming out' process. I demonstrate that for these participants, this temporality is an explicitly spatial series of movements and their narratives are framed primarily through discussions of the different spaces that they occupy at each 'stage' of their lives. The chapter demonstrates that the positionalities and identities of the participants have changed and in the process so have the ways they use space. I show that as these changes occur, so do the participants' abilities to access privilege, developing further evidence of privilege as an explicitly spatial process.

The chapter starts by discussing the participants' relocations to Brighton & Hove and its reputation and representation as 'the gay capital of the UK' (see Chapter 1; Browne & Bakshi 2011; forthcoming). I show that the participants' represent Brighton & Hove as a place of 'liberal' acceptance and tolerance of sexual dissidence and that these understandings of the city are often extended to produce a dichotomy between a safe and bounded space of Brighton & Hove (the '*Brighton bubble*') and an unbounded and threatening elsewhere. Often these other places are the places that the participants relocated from, sometimes their home cities or a series of previously inhabited places which are each, retrospectively interpreted as being less safe and less 'tolerant' than Brighton & Hove. The abilities to feel safe and fit in to Brighton, and particularly to the gay scene in Brighton, are privileges which are taken for granted by some and unavailable to others. Being able to access the privileges of belonging is not an essential product of their identities and I demonstrate some of the process through which the participants learn the codes of behaviour, practices and performativities of scene spaces (see Ridge *et al.* 2006; Valentine & Skelton 2003).

The participants also identify a further 'stage' in their trajectories, generally described as their present experiences. This 'stage' is characterised by the participants' descriptions of themselves as both aging and '*growing out*' of their use of scene spaces. The participants suggest that they no longer feel that they are dependent on the use of scene spaces for their social lives and instead describe themselves as beginning to occupy 'normal' spaces. These 'normal' spaces mirror their articulation of 'normal gay masculinities' in that they are positioned between and in opposition to both straight spaces and the gay spaces of the scene. Rather than explicitly describing these 'normal' spaces, the participants distance themselves from

their previous use of scene spaces, again mirroring the silence which surrounds their 'normal gay masculinities'. These silences render their positionalities and spatialities invisible, a replication of the silent A and marked Not-A construction but also exceeding it through negotiating three different positions (Jay 1981). The final section of this chapter addresses what comes next in the participants' trajectories. Part of the discussion of homonormativity has the assertion that with access to privilege, gay white men cease to be politically active and instead replicate a private domesticity. I show that rather like Sullivan's (1995, p192) 'mirror image of the happy heterosexuality I imagined around me' the participants do not consider their sexualities to be restricting factors in the choices and opportunities available to them in later life. However, this does not necessarily mean that they desire the same 'happy heterosexuality' as Sullivan. Rather that their imaginary futures are believed to be unrestricted and therefore can take a broad range of forms. The evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates the flexibility that having access to privilege is able to grant to some individuals, flexibility which can better be understood and explored through an understanding of the complexities and complicities of everyday lives.

5.2 Moving to 'the Gay Capital'

Migration has previously been identified as a prominent feature in the lives of gay men with access to the resources to do so, particularly described as a movement from 'rural' places towards the 'urban' places of certain 'major' cities which are represented as ideal spaces for the development of particular forms of gay identities and lives (Bell 2000; Bell & Binnie 2004; Brown 2008; Gorman-Murray 2009; Halberstam 2005a; Kirkey & Forsyth 2001; Knopp 1990; 1998; Levine 1998; Lynch 1995; McLean 2008; Phillips *et al.* 2000; Waitt & Gorman-Murray 2011; Weston 1995). 13 out of 15 of the participants chose to relocate to the city (an experience I also share), some moved only a few miles from the nearby town of Hastings while others relocated from places further away such as Liverpool and rural Wales. These relocations are overwhelmingly described as being associated with the participants' understandings of Brighton & Hove as a 'safe' place.

'I do feel Brighton is quite a safe place; I do feel that it's quite a haven'

Thomas

Thomas's description of a 'haven' produces an understanding of Brighton & Hove as a place to which one can run to, retreat or in which one is safe from harm. Other participants describe Brighton & Hove as being 'tolerant' (Lewis), 'liberal' (Karl), 'open minded' (Aaron) or 'ahead of itself' (Matt); they feel that they 'fit in' (John) here to one extent or another. This fitting in is an important feeling, providing a basis for the kind of 'ontological security' which is vital to the development of identities and, subsequently, access to privilege (Johnston & Valentine 1995, p102).

'There is a peculiar thing about Brighton in that there is its' own little bubble and people are more tolerating of anything here than other places'

Alex

This 'bubble' is seen to protect Brighton, to enable the existence of a place which is understood as being radically different from where the participants moved from. Brighton & Hove is represented as being the tolerant or liberal centre placed against a threatening, dangerous and unruly other. A dichotomy which the participants produce through the creation of a barrier between Brighton & Hove and all that is not-Brighton & Hove. This replicates Moran *et al.*'s (2003, p161) assertion that gay spaces offer a place of safety in relation to a 'danger which is always elsewhere' and complicates it by extending that place of safety to cover the entire city and rendering invisible the spatial specificities which exist within the city. This representation of Brighton & Hove as a place which is bounded and 'special' is, in a large part a product of the highly visible scene spaces in the city and the assumption that tolerance for sexual dissidence is relatively widespread, especially in comparison to the places that the participants moved from.

'I grew up in a very rural Welsh village; miles from anywhere... it was kind of backwards attitudes where I was growing up [and] I think things have generally progressed... there's a proper gay community here [in Brighton] and I think that's probably because Brighton's quite liberal as a place and to be honest with you it's more liberal than surrounding areas.'

Brian

Brian makes this dichotomous conflation between 'Brighton' = 'liberal' and 'rural Welsh village' = 'backwards' and narrates a movement from one to the other. Brian emphasises the importance of the 'proper gay community' in Brighton & Hove as an indicator of how 'liberal' the city is. While this displays the importance of visible gay spaces in producing understandings of Brighton, it also shows that some kinds of gay spaces are more recognised than others. Brian discusses a 'proper' gay community, normalising a particular expression of gay identities and gay lives in terms of public expression, visibility and certain kinds of spatialities which are produced and supportive of those normative forms of gay identity (Nast 2002).

Six of the participants moved to the city when they relocated to begin their university studies and marked a conscious choice to move to a city known to be 'LGBT-friendly'. This movement is used as part of a narrative which maps the spatial process of migration onto the story of 'coming out' (a period of silence and closeting radically disrupted by a singular event of confession and subsequent period of outness and openness) into an urban setting and equates the movement from an 'unsafe' rurality to 'safe' urbanism with a symbolic movement from a 'closeted' to an 'out' gay identity (see Halberstam 2005; Weston 1995). While being able to distance yourself from the spaces of your youth and the people that know you in those spaces provides individuals with an opportunity to perform a different identity with potentially fewer

challenges, 'coming out' is not a single momentary event and is more complex than this narrative allows for. Halberstam (2005) argues that this relatively simplistic narrative effaces the sexualities of ruralities and reinforces an image of 'the urban' as the only place of tolerance and visibility (see also Bell 2000; Bell & Binnie 2004; Binnie 2001; 2004). My own story of 'coming out' and relocation to Brighton & Hove to begin my university career demonstrates the complexity of this process and the ways in which 'coming out' can be a highly spatially contingent series of events rather than a linear temporality.

I find it difficult to say when I first came out or where I did it. Certainly I was having sex while I was still in school, a great deal of it illegally, well before the equalisation of the age of consent in 2003. Does that count?

When I had my first girlfriend, aged 16, we both considered ourselves to be bisexual; although monogamous, we would point out bodies of all genders which we found attractive and discussed our previous gay encounters with one another. Does that count?

I missed sleeping with men so, aged 18, I began to do so once more, surreptitiously and in secrecy from my girlfriend. In time we broke up and I started a relationship with another man, in the process meeting many of his friends and being introduced to new people as his boyfriend. But I concealed these activities from my family and other friends. Does that count?

Aged 19 I moved to university in Brighton & Hove. In doing so I broke up with my boyfriend and got a job in a scene gay bar. I became involved with (and eventually led) the University of Brighton & Hove LGBT society; I attended Pride festivals and took part in charity fundraising and volunteer work. I had boyfriends and one night stands, public sex and romantic dinners. But I concealed all of this from my family for a further three years. Does that count?

Eventually, aged 22, I told my family that I was gay despite my growing unease with that label and interest in queer theory. They said that they 'had discussed the possibility' and asked why I hadn't felt able to talk to them about it earlier. I couldn't answer but their support and love is unilateral and steadfast. I did it in the family home, far from the allegedly liberal and tolerant city I had moved away to. Does that count?

(Research Diary 12/September/2011)

The apparent ease of mapping an allegedly linear process of 'coming out' onto the, also allegedly, linear spatial process of relocating to the tolerant urban place masks the lived complexity of these processes and movements. Moving to Brighton & Hove to attend university and subsequently coming out in an uncomplicated and binary imaginary elides the sexualities of the participants and myself before we relocated and the extent to which our embodied sexualities may have experienced complex negotiations of 'out-ness', closeting and passing in their previous locations. These negotiations do not stop with a singular moment of confession, but rather continue in a great variety of ways and forms throughout our lives. Further, some of the older participants did not relocate to Brighton & Hove until later in their lives having already spent extended periods of being out and visible in other cities. These experiences do not easily map onto the 'metronormative' trajectories and

temporalities which have been associated with the life courses of gay white men (Bell 2000; Bell & Binnie 2004; Binnie 2001; 2004; Brown 2008; Edelman 2004; Halberstam 2005).

The experience of Brighton & Hove as a tolerant and welcoming place is one which is firmly grounded in access to privilege. It is not one which is homogenous and available to all, even amongst the participants of this study there is a variety of experiences of marginalisation, intolerance and violence.

'The people in Brighton are typically more open minded I suppose – in that y'know they'll accept anyone of any colour as long as they're fabulous.'

Connor

Connor qualifies his statement by asserting that anyone is welcome in Brighton, flippantly suggesting *'as long as they're fabulous'*, in doing so he strategically positions himself (and all those who feel welcome in Brighton) in a normative position while those who do not feel accepted are blamed for their own exclusion because they are *'fabulous'* enough. In emphasising this experience of fitting in, experiences which contradict the narrative of *Brighton-as-tolerant* are excluded from these discussions. It is not that these experiences do not exist (see Chapter 6), but rather that the participants deploy a narrative of 'gay Brighton' which limits the impact that experiences of homophobia and exclusion have on the lives of these participants³¹. This narrative of tolerance is used by the participants to reinforce their presence in this place. It is a narrative through which the participants legitimise their experience of Brighton & Hove and their abilities to move and occupy space within it even if that legitimating talk is only to and for them-selves. The representation and understanding of the city as a place tolerant of sexual dissidents and diversity is a vital part of how the participants construct their experiences of living in the city even as it simultaneously excludes the experiences of those who experience marginalisation in the city (Browne & Bakshi 2011). Some of the participants illustrate their understandings of Brighton & Hove with the use of 'extreme examples' which allegedly display the extent to which Brighton & Hove is 'different' from other places.

'You know you can pretty much get away with anything in St James's Street and nobody bats an eyelid, I mean if you're a transvestite you can go up to Morrison's and it would be completely normal'

Liam

Through highlighting bodies which are highly visible and the, apparent, tolerance of these bodies Liam attempts to emphasise his understandings of Brighton & Hove. Yet the visibility of these bodies and the way they are co-opted by Liam into a story to illustrate his own experiences of space is highly problematic. Liam draws upon a

³¹ The 'Count Me In Too' project provides a wealth of quantitative material which explores the experiences of homophobic assault, abuse and 'hate crime' by LGBTQ residents of Brighton and Hove see Brown & Lim 2008; Browne *et al.* 2011.

normalising discourse which states that such bodies *should* ordinarily be marginalised; it is the perceived lack of this marginalisation which apparently sets Brighton & Hove apart. Yet Liam is not speaking about the experiences of these trans* individuals, rather he uses them in order to emphasise his own experience of tolerance within a particular place; because if even those visible dissidents can '*get away with anything*' then so can he. It is notable that what the hypothetical person is 'getting away with' is food shopping, an activity which likely passes unmarked and un-remarked upon for most. A process which directly contrasts with the invisible position of the participant within these stories and that raises troubling contrasts in the application of power and privilege. The use of trans* bodies in this way emphasises their marginal positioning within the predominantly (cis)gendered normative discourse used by the participants throughout these chapters (and reproduces the marginalisation of trans* bodies/identities more broadly see Brown & Lim 2010; Kaufmann 2010; Nash 2010; 2011). The *Brighton-as-tolerant* narrative remains prevalent because it enables the participants to reinforce their sense of place within, and experience of, Brighton & Hove and effaces the impact of homophobia on their lives. The participants elevate representations of 'gay Brighton' to an almost mythic status, which can subsequently be disappointing (Binnie 2004; Browne & Bakshi forthcoming). The following section examines the place of 'the scene' in Brighton & Hove and the participants' experiences of the various bars and venues which they describe as collectively producing the 'gay community'.

5.3 Producing Gay Space; Producing Gay Subjects

Studies of sexuality and urban space are well established, particularly focusing on the development of gay and lesbian orientated bars and the 'gay ghettos' that they have tended to produce through a territorialisation of certain urban areas (Bassi 2008; Bell 1991; Bell & Valentine *eds.* 1995; Binnie 2004; Binni & Skeggs 2004; Browne & Bakshi 2011; Browne *et al.* 2007b; Knopp 1990; 1998; Nash 2006; Ridge *et al.* 2006; Valentine 1993a; Valentine & Skelton 2003; Visser 2003; Weston 1995). However what constitutes 'the scene' is different for different people encompassing various combinations of spaces, places, commercial businesses such as bars, cafes, restaurants, shops, festivals and 'community' groups such as support services, youth groups, walking groups, performances and charities, all of which might overlap and intertwine in various ways. These might not necessarily occur within spaces exclusively or even predominantly coded and marketed as gay and/or lesbian including private homes, parks, the beach and others (Browne & Bakshi 2011; Gorman-Murray 2008; Visser 2008). This section explores some of the participants' understandings of what, for them, constitutes 'the scene' and 'the community' and how they produce understandings and experiences of Brighton & Hove.

'The scene in Brighton just seems to be very well established like it's, I think it's just a massive part of the city as in you couldn't imagine anyone ever trying to get rid of it.'

Simon

The scene plays an important role in the experience of Brighton & Hove for the participants of this study; it's presence a visible reminder of *Brighton-as-tolerant*, reinforcing the participants' understandings of themselves as being able to perform out gay identities with reasonable safety. As Simon describes, the scene for him feels like an established and vital part of the city as a whole as the city itself has become re-imagined through the visible presence of these gay venues.

I: What is the scene then?

'Well the scene is cafes and bars that are either LGBT owned or LGBT friendly in a particular part of town. I particularly think of the Scene as being around St James' Street and that would be the gay scene. The bars and cafe's on St James' Street, so you've got a Starbucks up there so y'know it's not just gay owned and run, but there are, that area of business seems to be particularly focussed around LGBT lives so you've got all the gay bars in the one area of town. I mean I can only think of three or four gay bars that aren't in that area of town'

Josh

Josh describes the scene in Brighton & Hove as centred on a particular area of the city, known as '*St James's Street*' for the road around which it is based, in which gay marketed commercial spaces are highly visible (see Fig. 2 & 2, p20-22). This is not to say that all of the 'gay' businesses are located there, or that it is only gay bars and businesses which are located there. The area is the location for the three largest gay bars and clubs along with at least fifteen others which are explicitly marketed and understood to as being gay (see Binnie & Skeggs 2004; Moran *et al.* 2001; 2003). This, coupled with the prominent position of the popular adult shops, charity shops in support of local HIV/AIDS organisations and the large number of commercial properties which prominently feature rainbow flags, act as material markers and producers of the area as a particular kind of gay space. However this is not the only area in which gay venues and businesses can be found and the participants' experiences of the Brighton & Hove being generally characterised by tolerance in most places suggests that the 'ghetto' or 'village' model of a bounded gay space does not apply to Brighton & Hove (Browne & Bakshi 2011; forthcoming). However the area is prominent in the participants' discussions of the city.

I: What is it about St James's Street?

'It just feels owned doesn't it, it just feels owned by the gay community I think... yeah you just feel that you fit in down there, which is really nice'

Frank

Frank goes so far as to describe the area as being 'owned' by an apparently unambiguous and welcoming gay community; the visibility of gay bodies providing him with a feeling of fitting in and of being safe. These gay bodies and an apparent community into which he can '*feel that you fit in*' show the extent to which Frank is

able to recognise the predominantly white gay male bodies who frequent commercial gay space as similar to him (Badgett 2003; Browne 2007; 2009; Duncan 2010; Nast 2002; Taylor 2007; Valentine 1995). He is able to access the privileges of a visible normative gay male identity and the sense of a community in a particular place, a place which he feels is implicitly safe and welcoming for him. This contrasts with evidence to suggest that gay men are more likely to experience homophobia and hetero-violence in or around such highly visible gay spaces (Moran *et al.* 2001); although the narrative of *Brighton-as-tolerant* has already been shown to efface contradictory experiences of homophobia which may explain this difference. Discussions of 'the community' play a key role in positioning the participants within Brighton & Hove and the scene more broadly. Frank is able to feel that he is a part of something which owns space and therefore provides safety and a sense of 'community'. Yet being able to access the narrative of 'community' and the feelings of belonging it generates is a significant privilege as gay scene spaces are widely experienced as exclusionary and marginalising places for many subjects (see Chapter 2.3.4; Bassi 2006; Browne 2007; Casey 2007; El-Tayeb 2012; Giwa & Greensmith 2012; Nash 2010; Nast 2002; Podmore 2006; Sineka 2008; Skeggs 2000; Sothern 2007; Taylor 2007; Valentine 1993; 1995).

Claiming space is an important part of the production of an experience of belonging in the city for these men. While discussing the ways in which space is experienced as sexualised in different ways, the participants remain silent on the other ways in which space is produced and experienced, for example there is no mention of the ways in which they experience space as raced. Even though their sexed identities and the ways in which space privileges or marginalises those identities are highly visible to the participants, their raced identities remain invisible because their whiteness is centred and 'being privileged' in nearly if not all of the spaces they experience. Therefore, when not being directly asked about them, the participants' raced identities disappear completely from discussion (Bérubé 2003; Dwyer & Jones 2000; Dyer 1997; Frankenberg 1993; Garner 2007; Housel 2009; Hurtado 1999; Nelson 2008; Rollock 2012; Whitehead & Lerner 2009). This enables them to produce the appearance of a homogeneous white gay community and efface the experiences of non-white bodies and identities (Beckett & Macey 2001; Casey 2007; Cohen 1997; Haritaworn 2007; Peake 1993; Puar 2006; Silverstein 1998).

For other participants the concept of a 'gay community' is more complex and there is more recognition of the term as a political tool, rather than a description of a singular and homogeneous gay public.

'I remain unconvinced that there is any such thing in Brighton & Hove... [But] it's a very convenient term; it's a very useful term, 'community'. If you are able to say

the LGBT community thinks A B C and D, that's a very powerful thing to be able to say in terms of getting stuff that's good for LGBT people'

Paul

As Paul describes the rhetoric of 'community' is a powerful one which can play a significant political role. However, as I have discussed, it can also over simplify, generalise and silence the experiences of various bodies and identities which it purports to represent. In the process becoming the 'voice' of certain privileged identities and sectors of the population at the expense of others, this is effectively part of the crux of Nast (2002) and Duggan's (2002) arguments regarding homonormativity. Representations of the 'gay community', in Brighton & Hove especially, are strongly influenced by a network of gay media outlets and gay business owners which are overwhelmingly white men (Browne & Bakshi forthcoming). Paul suggests that there is a balance to be drawn between the political efficacy of the term 'community' and its potentially marginalising effects; he recognises its practical complexity and difficulty. Yet Paul brings this section to a close by pointing towards the contradictory and overall rather queer state of politics, community and identity in relation to homonormativity. The rhetoric of community and indeed the kinds of community organising which commercial gay spaces can be instrumental in promoting and fostering can open up avenues of political action (Herdt 1992; Knopp 1990; 1998; Levine 1998; Myslik 1996; Nash 2006; Valentine & Skelton 2003; Weston 1995). But the ability to claim membership of the 'community' is not automatic and requires a process of initiation and learning through which they gained familiarity with the scene and its 'community' (Ridge *et al.* 2006). The following section explores the process through which some of the participants learn to access these spatialities and the spatial practices which enable access to privilege through them.

5.3.1 'The Brighton Effect'

The process of learning to perform identities which are able to access privilege within scene spaces was described by many of the participants as '*the Brighton effect*', generally a period shortly after their relocation to Brighton & Hove in which they energetically participated in the night time economy of the scene and its cultures of alcohol and sex.

'There's this thing called, the Brighton effect; it's case of when you first move to Brighton, it's generally going to be so different to what you're used to and what you've come from, you go a bit mad and go sleeping with everything that moves, you're out every night and you're drinking all the time. Literally, just going full whack'

Charlie

This '*Brighton effect*' describes a transitional period in young gay men's lives as they experiment with their identities and 'learn' the discourses, performances and codes through which the scene and its particular forms of 'gay' identity are produced (Ridge *et al.* 2006; Valentine & Skelton 2003). Ridge *et al.* (2006, p503) argue that the

experiences of these 'men as they encounter the commercialized scene are recast as transitions, rituals and rites of passage' through which they learn the practices and cultures of these scene spaces. In this understanding the activities Charlie discusses represent an acclimatisation and ritualistic initiation through spending time in the various bars, drinking and dancing in the clubs and '*sleeping with everything that moves*'. His description of this period as going '*a bit mad*' is particularly apt as in any transition there is a disruption of the perceived stability of self and, inevitably, there are elements which are 'lost' or at least adapted. This period lasts longer for some than for others and for one of the participants led to dropping out of his degree entirely. It is not always a risk free process. During this time that the participants spoke of learning the codes and behaviours of the scene and a particular form of 'gay culture' through which they are able to feel connected or belonging to the 'gay community' of Brighton;

'I don't know I have a strange relationship with it [the gay scene] – I think it formed a large part of my identity when I was growing up – but I identified very much with people on the Scene and was very different from how I am now – I think when I was very young I perceived that as "That's gay, that's how to be gay."

Harry

'There seems to be kind of a gay family thing going on that I've never really been able to get into... I'm just like, how do they know each other, how does this work, I don't understand... I don't think I grew up with learning the social skills of how to interact with the gay Scene'

Lee

When Harry was younger he strongly identified with forms of gay identities which circulate and replicate within these scene spaces and sought to learn how to perform them himself. Lee in contrast went to university in a small northern city and did not relocate to Brighton & Hove until his late 20's, he feels that there is a form of sociality and identity performance which he did not adequately learn how to perform and without which he feels distanced and disconnected within these spaces. For some men, the scene represents a space of playfulness and safety in which to develop and experiment with their identities; indeed they are able to 'be' themselves in ways which other heteronormative spaces might not allow (Holt & Griffin 2003). However this experience is highly contingent on the participants' abilities to access and make use of these spaces. These spaces are designed to enable experiences of exuberant pleasures associated with dancing, alcohol and sex which provide potent feelings of 'freedom' from 'ordinary' constraints (Malbon 1999; Muanoz-Laboy *et al.* 2007; Peterson 2011). Being able to participate and feel valued within different places relies upon the individuals abilities to learn and perform various codes of behaviour through which to occupy places successfully. Different places privilege different identities, bodies and performances in different ways. Being a gay white man might well provide significant privileges, yet there is a great deal of variety within this

ostensibly homogeneous identity, between different performativities of masculinities (as discussed in Chapter 4) and between different embodiments, ages and classed positionalities.

My friends and I are out late one evening, a long sun drenched day on the beach followed by dinner and drinks in bars around town. It is now well past midnight and we are dancing in The Basement Club of Legends. Darkness, sweat and music surround us. Swirling disco lights and the comfortable buzz of a few too many vodkas give the whole experience a slightly surreal edge as we move, frantically and almost in rhythm with the thumping beat. Two men lean against one wall, bodies pushing up against one another, they could be complete strangers or long term lovers; I lose sight of them in a swirl of the crowd. A heavy smell soaks into everything in this tight, cramped space. A man stands alone near the entrance to the toilets, wearing only a thin pair of swimming briefs and trainers. His skin glows beneath the neon lights – tanned and taut across is tight muscles. His body looks like something straight out of an advertisement for Abercrombie & Fitch or Calvin Klein.

As he slowly moves around the club eyes follow him and people move to be out of his way – broad shoulders and a strong jaw line moving through the crowd. He could probably pick up just about anyone he chose, certainly wherever he moves people are quick try and strike up a conversation or offer him a drink; anything to be able to get talking and entertain the possibility that he might choose them.

He is magnificent. Right now he is undisputed master of this place.

(Research Diary 25/June/2011)

'When you're in somewhere, like Charles St for example, everyone that is there is having an amazing time and everyone's dancing round and everyone's young and beautiful and can have sex with whoever they want'

Paul

Paul conveys something of the intensive and intoxicating experience that the scene can provide (Hurley & Prestage 2009; Jayne *et al.* 2010; 2011). It is an experience which is restricted or enabled in various ways and produced through multiple apparatuses of power operating within the space. For Paul, these bodies were explicitly '*young*', '*beautiful*', sexually available and desirable for him (and thus implicitly male), he suggests that '*everyone that is there is having an amazing time*' and silences the experiences of those who are marginalised in scene spaces for various reasons. Similarly the musculature of the man I describe, along with his audacious, but not especially uncommon, decision to wear only a small pair of briefs while out at a nightclub positions him as an epitome of the gay 'hegemonic aesthetic' (Filiaut & Drummond 2007 see also, Olivardia 2007; Wood 2004). The participants' understand these spaces to privilege certain bodies/identities and youth is one of the key descriptors common to these understandings. Craig suggests that:

'It's an old adage that when a gay man gets to 30 he dies'

Craig

Craig is not unusual in this assertion, and such understandings mean that terms such as 'young' and 'old' become more complex than they first appear. 'Older' bodies in this instance can often refer to those approaching or passing 30 years, while beyond that men can find themselves described as '*waiting to die*' by younger men (such as by

Lawrence, earlier, Chapter 4.4). Indeed most of the participants (aged 25-30) described themselves as 'getting old' in some form or another. The centring of a particular kind of youth therefore is believed to marginalise older men and even exclude them altogether, as David describes:

'I wouldn't think it would be wrong for an older person to be in a bar with younger people, but I get the sense sometimes from people my age or younger than me, of being more critical about people who are older, being around them or near them in venues that they are – like "What is grandpa doing here?" I've heard that before'

David

Older bodies are marked to such an extent that David suggests out that he does not think it would be 'wrong' for older and younger bodies to mix within a single space. Indeed he is able to point to specific instances where others did make that assertion, attempting to exclude those older bodies through marginalising discursive acts of boundary production and place making (Drummond 2006; Heaphy & Yip 2003; Slevin & Linneman 2010). Age plays a strong role in positioning gay men and determining their abilities to occupy scene spaces and older men are likely to be subject to marginalisation in certain venues.

Other exclusions may also be produced through biased entry policies and the creation of men-only spaces, indeed many of the participants identified biased or discriminatory door policies as being one of the key ways in which these spaces produce and maintain themselves.

'Revenge used to deny women access to the club I'm not sure how much that's still the case, I'm going back about four years ago or so for this... they would just stop people at the door and turn the lesbians away, or turn the women away, part of it was to turn the straight women away who would be screechy and overly excited to have gay men around them, for no clear reason. But it was, very awkward when a fair few of my friends at the time were women'

Simon

While ostensibly criticising these exclusionary door policies, Simon reproduces an understanding of women (and particularly straight women) as being outsiders within gay space (Casey 2004; Ward 2000). Women are marked out by negative traits such as being 'screechy and overly excited' which are used to justify their exclusion. Their presence is seen as an unwelcome intrusion which impacted the men's abilities to enjoy themselves. These gay venues and their populations are imagined by some of the participants as being a pure space for 'gay people' a pre-existing gay public which these men feel entitled to; a public which exists for them and people like them and that any other bodies contaminate and dilute that space (Browne 2007; Casey 2007; Podmore 2006; Valentine 1993; 1995). Other bodies and identities are also excluded from scene spaces because of the sometimes prohibitive financial costs associated with their use.

'If I went out [on the scene] and I met someone... you've got to do the whole dating thing – going out for dinner, going out for drinks; socialising – and I can't afford to do it at the moment'

Hugo

Hugo's lack of disposable income means that he is unable to spend time in the bars of the scene 'socialising' and that curtails his confidence and ability to meet potential dates. Class positioning plays a strong role in determining who has the time and money to devote to acquiring the gym physique, designer clothes and other materialities associated with forms of gay masculinities and access to privilege within these spaces (Skeggs 2000; Taylor 2007; 2008; 2011; Nast 2002).

Despite the appearance of uniformity in some of the participants' discussions, most of the acknowledged that 'the scene' is not a unity and homogeneous space but rather a series of different places which are used by different groups. They were often able to provide quite detailed taxonomies of who 'fit' into which places, or who each of the different bars were 'supposed' to be used by.

I: So give me some examples of these places then

'Ok well I'd say R-Bar is for lesbians, the lesbian venue of choice and there's The Marlborough as well. Manly places let's see The Bulldog and The Camelford Arms; places where gay men go to die would probably be The Bulldog as well but also the Queens Arms and the Kings Arms. Queeny places probably be VaVoom, Revenge, Charles Street, and Legends is sort of a hybrid of old and queeny'

Roger

The sheer number of Brighton's primarily gay venues is part of the reason for its reputation for tolerance of sexual dissidence and 'diversity' (see Fig. 3, Chapter 1.5). As Roger understands it, each of these different types of space are coded in different ways with different 'types' of gay men 'choosing' where to go based on their individual identification with these stereotypes and imaginaries; although these 'choices' must be recognised as the product of spatial relations and the abilities of different bodies/identities to be included or excluded by particular places. His descriptions of these different spaces are derogatory and display a privileged ability to judge others for their perceived and constructed differences (see Chapter 4.4). Roger demonstrates how spaces come to be identified by as undesirable for use by those who have access to 'better' options as a deployment of the privilege to choose where to go and where to avoid (Hubbard *et al.* 2002). This ability is part of the process through which the spatialities of privilege become entrenched, as different places gain reputations and identities of particular kinds, for being more accessible or exclusionary to particular persons. But these identities and belongings are not stable, over time they can change and shift, particularly with the importance that age plays in determining gay men's 'place' within scene spaces. This section has shown how they learn how to belong to scene spaces, yet as they age, the participants describe themselves as 'growing out' of the scene. This process is examined in the following section.

5.4 'Growing out' of the Scene

Participation in scene spaces and *'the Brighton effect'* can be understood as a kind of adolescence, a period of intensive learning and engagement with new experiences and spaces through which the participants become able to access a feeling of community and 'fitting in' (Ridge *et al.* 2006). At some point they gradually begin spending less time in these spaces instead opting to spend more of their social time in what they describe as 'normal' places, that they code as neither 'straight' nor 'gay'. The participants describe this process as one of 'growing out' of using, specifically their *need* to use, gay spaces. The participants link this process with their 'ageing' and an increased prioritisation of work and their home lives in an apparently straightforward process of domesticity, self 'improvement', individualisation and consequently depoliticisation as predicted by queer critiques of temporality and homonormativity (Binnie 2004; Duggan 2002; Duggan & Hunter 2006; Edelman 2004; Nast 2002). However the participants present a more complex, non-linear temporality as they contingently move between 'domestic' and 'scene' spaces and trouble assertions that the development of 'homonormativity' necessarily indicates a loss of politicisation (Brown 2009; Oswin 2005).

'I feel like I've done it [the scene] – that's the main thing – that was me 10 years ago and now that doesn't interest me'

Isaac

'I think you sort of... grow out of phases so I came here and everything was fabulous and new and going out dancing half naked on the podium in Revenge was absolutely amazing, drag shows were just fabulous and really camp and after a while you've just, done it all. I think you indulge yourself too much, you start to get pissed off and you start to get bored of it and after a while you start to despise it a little bit and the last thing you actually want to do is to get involved in it'

Jason

For these participants the spaces of the scene are no longer a necessary and central part of their social lives, they identify themselves as different from their 'younger' selves who delighted in the pleasures available to them and instead emphasise a distance and disinterest in those practices. Note that Jason is, at the time of interview, 25 years old while Isaac is 28 yet the ritual practices of the scene, such as *'dancing half naked on the podium'* and attending late night drag cabaret performances, no longer hold the same fascination for them as they did. These practices and events, integral to their experiences when first encountering and 'learning' the scene, become less fascinating as they find themselves less dependent on explicitly gay marketed spaces. This ability to 'grow out' of the scene relies on their being able to readily access other spaces without experiencing significant opposition.

Detaching from the intensities of the scene is not necessarily an easy process and the participants work to differentiate their present, older, more experienced, 'better' selves from their younger, enthusiastic participation in the camp excesses of the

scene. They do this by, as we have already seen, working to position themselves into a 'new' normative gay masculinity (see Chapter 4.5) and in doing so othering the camp masculinity of men who have 'failed' to progress along the same trajectory as themselves at the same pace.

'It's [the scene] all full of screaming young queens, and I know I was one once, but I'm not anymore. People who have just come out and are really getting into the Scene hardcore with their drinking of alco-pops and screaming very very loudly and very very campy about everything in their life'

I: Right, and that's not something you associate with anymore?

'No. I used to be one of those horrible little queens, but I'm not longer'

Paul

For Paul, the 'scene queen' is a figure which struggles to live and experience a normative everyday life; instead they are restricted to being dependent upon scene spaces in order to gain any kind of meaningful interactions. While these 'young' men might be expected to be privileged by the valorisation of youth, beauty and perceptions of sexual promiscuity (Filiaut & Drummond 2007; Padva 2002; Wood 2004), for the participants these camp masculinities are strongly derided (see Chapter 4.5). Paul emphasises what he sees as the differences between himself and the camp, 'screaming young queens' of the scene to illustrate how far he has developed since that period of his life, this is a strategy of producing a 'normal' through positioning the other. This common narrative has acquired a normative role in producing understandings of certain white gay men's lives and it is used to interpret the behaviour, positionalities and spatial practices of other men as either 'failed' or 'normal' (like them). Just as in the previous chapter this supports and understanding of homonormativity as enabling and privileging certain bodies while marginalising and excluding others. Robinson (2012) has recently described how camp gay men, through their visibility and inability/unwillingness to 'fit in' with normative masculinities, might come to be marginalised along with other more visible dissident such as trans* persons and butch lesbian women. My research supports this observation in the context of Brighton & Hove and demonstrates how these exclusions are understood and practiced by the men who participated in this project. All of the participants, despite deploying this narrative of moving beyond scene spaces, continue use of them at various times and for various reasons. Although how they use scene spaces and their experiences and treatment by others while within those places might have changed they continued to socialise and make use of scene spaces.

'I'm going through this phase where it'd be nice to wake up and have someone in the bed with you sort of thing and just like, curl up on the sofa and watch a bit of TV and y'know, have a chat about stuff and all of that. Then I, like, couple of months, couple of weeks down the line I'll be like "I don't want a boyfriend, I just want to fuck about" I change a lot... but either way you've got to do the scene

thing, getting out and meeting people, bringing them back to yours. All that stuff.'

Karl

Despite having ostensibly 'grown out' of his use of scene space Karl's desire for companionship and sex forces him to use various means of looking for sex, particularly he highlights needing to use scene spaces to meet people. Karl's example illustrates that the participants' lives are not necessarily lived in sequential ways, with one period directly giving way to the next. Rather he moves from one 'phase' to another and back and is comfortable with the ambiguity and complexity of those transitions. This shows the danger in discussions of homonormative temporalities which rely too heavily upon linearity and developmental frames of reference, as they can occlude the complexities and contradictions of everyday lives in favour of a linear 'progression' (see Duggan 2002; Edelman 2004; Warner 1999). Such linear narratives struggle to provide sufficient account of the ways in which the life course is a not necessarily experienced as a simple trajectory of development (Bailey 2009; Elder *et al.* 2004; Gorman-Murray 2009; Hopkins & Pain 2007; see special issue 'Area'; ed. Horschemann 2011). Despite this discourse being deployed by the participants in order to position themselves when questioned further they all identified times when they continued to use scene spaces, both to look for sex and as social space. The participants' use of this narrative is a retrospective one, naturalising their experience, lending it the appearance of simplicity and inevitability in the process effacing the power relations through which their personal histories are produced, enabled and lived (Bailey 2009; Daniels & Nash 2004).

This movement away from scene spaces does not mean that the participants understand themselves to have moved into using 'straight spaces'. Rather, they produce a normative 'middle space' for themselves to occupy. In this case the social venues in which they spend now spend more of their time are represented as being neither 'gay spaces' nor 'straight spaces'.

'I wouldn't call them straight anymore to be honest, they're just venues now... where I'm from they'd be straight venues, but in Brighton the only straight venues you get is West Street. The majority of other places you go tend to be for whoever walks through the door really'

Jonny

Given that their use and occupancy of both the 'straight' venues of West Street and the 'gay' venues and scene of Kemptown can both be subject to certain challenges, rejections and tensions the participants identify and make use of 'other places' which they understand available '*for whoever walks through the door*'. These places are allegedly open and inclusive to all bodies/identities and are represented as being places free from power relations. Yet space is never empty of power and cannot be so because its manifestation is the product of power relations. Thus Jonny's experiences of '*just venues*' is the product of his positioning and being able to access privileges

within those spaces. Lewis describes these places as feeling less excluding for him than some scene spaces which privilege particular forms of embodiment.

'They're quite nonjudgmental, I don't think I've ever really been judged as I would in say a twinkie gay bar when I've been in one of those venues, because people are just going there to have a drink'

Lewis

The participants represent these spaces as being 'neutral', rather than actively produced and maintained as either heteronormative or homonormative; the implicit assumption being that this is what all space is like prior to being sexed, gendered, raced or classed. However, these 'normal' spaces are just as rife with power as any others; it is simply that these spaces extend access to privilege to the participants, while others continue to be marginalised and excluded. Accesses and exclusions which are subsequently normalised and rendered invisible through the participants descriptions of them as being between spaces which are neither 'straight' or 'gay' and therefore allegedly accepting to all. These understandings contest representations of spaces as being self-evidently hetero- or homo-normative and continue to open up possibilities for understanding space as being multiply and simultaneously produced (Browne & Bakshi 2011; Browne *et al.* 2011; Visser 2008). However these understandings also efface the production of space and the ways in which apparatuses of power operate by further normalising the experiences of subjects with access to privilege (see Chapter 4.3). Participants normalise their own identities through their bodily performativities and the practices and places through which those performances take place, similarly where those performances take place affects the production of the performance itself.

5.5 Depoliticised Futures?

One of the key characteristics of Duggan's (2002) homonormativity thesis is her argument that access to the institutions and privileges previously reserved for heterosexuality will necessarily lead to a depoliticisation of gay subjects (see also Warner 1999). Similarly, Nast's (2002) queer patriarchs take advantage of their positionalities without contesting or resisting the spatial relations and inequalities on which their experiences are predicated. As the participants 'grow out' of using scene spaces they also produce imaginations of their futures which, to some extent correspond to Duggan's pessimistic predictions but also complicate them with the messiness of 'ordinary lives' (Brown 2008). These aspirations, like everything else are the product of the participants situated positionalities, the ways in which they understand themselves and the opportunities available to them. Kyle is able to discuss his access to privilege and opportunities in a relatively direct way he has little trouble with the invisibility discussed earlier, yet there are some points of resistance.

'I would say that as a fairly middle class gay white male, well not gay but as a white male I'm entitled, well, I experience a lot of privilege, relatively. I've had

quite a good education, never been for want of money, not that I've been spoilt, but we've never experienced anything that might be considered hard times financially. My parents helped me through university, pretty much anything I've wanted to do, it was pretty much assumed that all of my brothers and sisters were going to uni when we left school and went through sixth form as well; it was just the standard plan... When I've wanted to move house or had to go to job interviews I got a lot of support, so I got a fairly easy time of it I suppose'

Kyle

While his family have never experienced any financial hardship, Kyle argues that this has not 'spoilt' him. In doing so Kyle creates a position which is simultaneously privileged and yet not too privileged, replicating the kinds of qualifications seen earlier used to defend positionalities of privilege. He identifies a 'standard plan' which included university, presumably followed by well paid career, that he was able to envision for himself and smoothly develop. The normativity of this assumed life course represents, in itself, a whole series of privileges related to who is able to aspire to certain goals, belief in being able to achieve, assumption that there will be few barriers beyond personal achievement and more (Byrne 2006; Lawler 1999; Maxwell & Aggleton 2010; McDowell 2006; 2007; 2008; Reay 2007; Russo & Linkon 2005; Skeggs 2004; Walkerdine 2001; 2003). While he is aware of some of the privileges which he is able to take advantage of, these assumptions and the apparatuses of relations through which they are made possible and meaningful to him are less clear. Kyle summarises by suggesting that he had a 'fairly easy time of it' but there are a variety of elements which are excluded from this discussion, his whiteness and gender identities both make a brief appearance but their potential effects remain subsumed within the narrative. Similarly the complication of his sexual identity is quickly effaced as being irrelevant to his discussion of privilege. In the process, the specificities of Kyle's embodied history as a situated subject are effectively erased or reduced to a consideration of money instead of being a critical element in the production of his experiences and his current positionality as a graduate with well paid professional employment.

The participants discuss themselves moving beyond the scene, into the 'normal' places and positionalities and beyond them into various aspirational imagined futures. This connects the participants' understandings of their own histories with what they understand as 'normal' lives. For some of them normality, and consequently privilege, is located in an imagined yet desirable and potentially attainable 'elsewhere'.

'Well when I do feel privileged it will be sometime when I've finally got a masters, passed my driving license, got a car, got a house of my own, propose to a guy, maybe adopted kids, be comfortable, if I want to just go on holiday I actually can, if I want to buy a new TV I actually can. Then I would be privileged'

Andy

This imagined future filled with the trappings and commodities of middle class white British straight adulthood represents the figurative end-point for Andy in his 'upward' trajectory as he transitions out of the scene and towards something else. He imagines a normative domesticity which reproduces the heteronormative spatialities of home and family (Duggan 2002; Edelman 2004; Warner 1991; 1999). For Andy, privilege is something which is always located elsewhere, a perpetual striving for a point of completion and satisfaction measured in material consumption and the trappings of heteronormativity similar to that desired by Sullivan (1995). Part of this process is a commitment to monogamy and the perceived legitimacies of marriage and family, a rejection of sex 'couched in the language of morality... [a] kind of sexual McCarthyism that has come to mark... the gay movement' (Warner 1999, p45). For Andy, privilege cannot be *achieved* until the excesses of sex and sexuality have been disciplined within the boundaries of legitimacy until that point he is irredeemably marked as abject. Other participants were more direct in rejecting sex as can be seen in some of the previous discussions of public sex, cruising, saunas and older gay men's sex practices (see Chapter 4.4). One night stands and explicitly looking for sex were similarly vilified by some of the participants.

I: Have you ever used the gay scene bars to look for sex?

'Not really that would make me some kind of slapper.'

William

'I think gay clubbing tends to be primarily about looking for sex and one night stands, not looking for somebody to date, just about finding somebody you fancy and taking them home and shagging them.'

I: You seem quite dismissive

'I'm not dismissive of them; I don't think having one night stands all the time is necessarily bad. But I don't think you can have one night stands all the time for like 10 years and then suddenly want to date people because you won't be able to, you've already shagged everyone in Brighton, so that would make relationships difficult. I think it's possible unhealthy because it's devaluing sex. If sex changes from something you do with someone you have feelings for to something that you do just to get your rocks off, it becomes more a serving physical needs, which would mess you up a bit emotionally.'

Malcolm

William and Malcolm both distance themselves from the practice of looking for 'one night stands' and sex in scene spaces. They argue that regular sex with different partners is an immoral and shameful act, the act of a 'slapper', or that it might 'mess you up a bit emotionally'. Underlying both of these is a normative understanding that dating and couple-dom is what they should be aspiring to, and that otherwise sex is meaningless and devalued by only 'serving physical needs'. To follow Warner's (1999) discussion of stigma and shame, in these participants' discussions it is not a gay identity itself that becomes stigmatised but rather visible and prolific sexual activity is marked by the spoiled identity, of 'slapper' or slut (see Goffman 1963). Those who choose or who appear to choose not to cohere to ideals of monogamy and 'dating',

who are thought to serve only their '*physical needs*'³² are rejected and marginalised (see Chapter 4.4). There is little room here for sexual difference;

'for the queers who have sex in public toilets, who don't "come out" as happily gay, the sex workers, the lesbians who are too vocal about a taste for didos or S/M, the boys who flaunt it as pansies or as leathermen, the androgynies, the trannies of transgendered whose gender deviance makes them unassimilable to the menu of sexual orientations, the close in the so-called gay ghetto, the fist-fuckers and popper-snorters, the ones who actually like pornography – all these flaming creatures are told in an earnestness that betrays no glimmer of its own grotesque comedy, that their great moment of liberation and acceptance will come later.'

(Warner 1999 p66)

I am not attempting to argue against monogamy or same-sex marriage, neither am I suggesting that widespread acceptance of queers fucking in public would represent a political panacea. This discussion is concerned with the ways in which certain spatial practices, identities and performativities become centred and able to access the privileges of normativity, while others are subjected to othering and marginalisation. It is this normalisation of sexual politics and an apparent abandonment of the commitments to difference that has been a key marker of discussions of homonormativity (Duggan 2002; Duggan & Hunter 2004; Nast 2002; Robinson 2012; Seidman 2005; Warner 1999).

Duggan (2002) has argued that the drive for 'gay marriage' represents a privatisation and domestication of queer politics, while Edelman (2004) has suggested that heteronormative temporalities of development and 'futurism' operate to close down the possibilities for queer embodiment and performance. The trajectory described in this chapter seems to support these discussions and relies heavily on classed privileges and normativities through which the individual is exhorted to improve them-selves (Lawler 1999; Skeggs 1997; Walkerdine 2003). Yet the positionalities of most of the participants and the privileges that they experience, provide them with an outlook on the world as enabling and full of possibilities. Indeed these men were largely positive and do not consider their sexual identities as something which might impede their choices. These ambitions also return to an understanding of the individual being independent of apparatuses of power relations, emphasising personal abilities, desires and achievement while effacing the social relations of privilege and inequality through which opportunities are only available to some subjects (Beck 1992; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Giddens 1991).

I kind of wouldn't want to get married really. But I wouldn't mind having that kind of level of commitment with somebody if that makes sense? But I don't

³² Notice an association between corporeality and dirt or devaluation, these perverse '*physical needs*' are to be disciplined and restricted in favour of proper performances of emotional or romantic dating distinct from the fleshy materialities of embodiment see Grosz 1994; 1995; Longhurst 1997; 2001.

really see the need to do that but it's nice that the option's there, even if I don't choose to take it up'

Brian

Brian is relatively ambivalent about his future, arguing that although he finds it 'nice that the option's there' he does not feel any particularly strong need to 'get married' (see Weeks *et al.* 2001). While some participants produced relatively normative measures and imaginaries of their futures, others held very different understandings of what their futures might look like; suggesting that while the participants emphasise 'progress' and 'development', the sort of 'reproductive futurity' written about by Edelman (2004), this does not *necessarily* mean that their lives will follow heteronormative patterns and spatialities.

While some participants rejected ideas of marriage, child rearing and monogamous partnerships others accepted them; still others suggested that:

'I think you get what you want out of life yourself, I think more sort of, I don't really want to support anyone else I want to be self involved. Self involved is a terrible way to be, a fan of capitalism which might actually be a better way of phrasing it so if I want lots of money then I will work hard at work and get what I want that way, if I want equality and something I'm not getting that I should be getting then I'll take on the battle and I'll fight but because I've never really come across any form of injustice myself, I've always been quite good at fighting my own corner and getting what I want, I haven't felt any need to join a particular group to fight for a particular right or for equality. I don't want to get married I've no interest in getting married, I have no interest in adopting children as a gay man and so these things that motivate other people don't interest me'

Ryan

Ryan is not just deploying a narrative of individualisation to legitimate his experiences and positionality (see Chapter 4.3.1). He simultaneously produces a position which is distinct from the 'normative' desires discussed in much of the literature of homonormativity; a position which has clear access to privilege but which does so in a radically different way to that desired by Sullivan and Bawer or critiqued by Warner or Duggan (see Chapter 2.3.4; Bawer 1999; Duggan 2002; Sullivan 1995; Warner 1991). While Ryan could be described as a neoliberal consumer (a 'fan of capitalism' as he puts it) he does not use this position to fight the kinds of institutional access to marriage described by Duggan (2002), but rather develops a different form of identity which uses its access to privilege in other ways, challenging such homogeneous and universalising narratives. Ryan understands his future to be relatively unrestricted or determined by the norms or traditions of either heteronormative or homonormative 'models'. Like most of the participants, he emphasises that he is in control of his future. He does not appear to be the kind of radical lauded by Duggan or Warner and yet he uses the privileges to which he has access to resist the vision of domesticity proposed by Sullivan (1995) and Bawer (1999). Ryan's position is more complex than either of these dichotomous and universalising projects can account for and he highlights opportunities to move

beyond this political stalemate through exploring everyday manifestations of complicity, nuance and contradiction (see Oswin 2005; Brown 2008). Other participants developed a different approach to understandings which also challenge critiques of attempts to gain access to existing institutions.

'I think we need to build our own traditions up... you have to have new traditions and new rituals and I don't think we've worked those out as yet'

Darren

While Darren is talking about the rituals and traditions which surround marriage and civil partnership services this represents a form of politics which does not necessarily need to be adversarial, but one which can explore, adapt and coexist. Duggan (2002, p189-190) suggests that with access to civil partnerships, homonormative gay men are 'administered a kind of political sedative... in favour of recognition of a domesticated, depoliticised privacy'. She proposes that legal recognition of partnerships will necessarily lead to stagnation and withdrawal from political activity and that the apparent homonormative desire for a 'normal' lifecourse is a failure in the potential of queer politics (Binnie 1997; Brenkman 2002; Brown & Knopp 2003; Browne 2006; Cohen 1997; Edelman 2004; Folgero 2008; Halberstam 2005; Halperin 2003; Knopp & Brown 2003; Munt 2007; Warner 1991; 1999). While these are the stated goals of the authors she critiques such as Sullivan (1995) and Bawer (1993; 1999), there is a problem in assuming that these predictions of domesticated bliss (or doom) will necessarily play out as expected. Indeed, for some of the participants at least, this period of growing out of the scene and the accompanying transition into more domesticated forms of life do not necessarily coincide with a lessening of political awareness: *'being your self... and kissing in same sex couples, I think that can be a form of activism'* (Liam). Similarly queer domestic lives and spaces can represent highly political places of community building, personal support and identity maintenance (Gorman-Murray 2006; 2007; 2008). Darren's suggestion of building *'new traditions'* is, if anything, a particularly queer approach which could also provide useful understandings of homonormativity and access to privilege in ways which do not purely operate to reproduce exclusions. Traditions imply and are predicated upon stability, cohesion and normativities. Yet Darren proposes that sexual dissidents might be able to develop new traditions which reflect and celebrate their own lives and identities; opening up the possibility for forms of temporality which do not necessarily correspond to existing formulations of heteronormativity.

The participants' lives and experiences do not follow any single narrative of either depoliticisation or radical political action. Rather they are produced from spatially contingent practices of action and inaction, complacency and dissent, through a position of complicity (Oswin 2005).

'A lot of people say "the gay scenes hideous" or y'know "I wouldn't be caught dead out on the scene"... or who take pride in the fact that they're straight acting which I find really kind of offensive self closeting terminology'

I: Why don't you like "straight acting"?

'It's almost like people take pride in the fact that they're not noticeably gay – and you hear people say things like "no one really knows to look at me that I'm gay" or y'know "I still get chatted up by girls" and you still think well, why is that some kind of trophy... I think there's no shame in being recognised as gay... And I think that straight acting, just the term itself, you're pretending not to be gay. Why are you hiding that element of yourself?'

Will

Will contests the image of the homonormative subject who presents no challenge to heteronormativity and the prevailing temporalities and performativities of allegedly straight space. He argues that the desire to be 'straight acting' is 'self closeting' and implies a rejection of gay lives and experiences by actively attempting to perform an apparently hetero-masculine identity. In contrast to William's rejection of 'straight acting' is the development of various normative gay masculinities, such as rejecting camp or flamboyance, by some of the other participants (see Chapter 4.5). These differences point to potential fractures in the participants' individual understandings of appropriate gay performativities and further call into question homogeneous representations of the homonormative subject.

Following Sothorn's (2004, p189) call for 'a fuller examination of the complexity of the production and potentialities of the practices' of gay men in order to explore the possibility that queer politics might already be happening precisely at the site of these normative tendencies. These examples attempt to look beyond 'facile geometries of heroes and hegemony' and examining the lived complexities of privilege in order to explore where and how it is manifest in the lives of certain subjects at certain times and not others (Oswin 2008, p97). While some of the participants in this project whole heartedly accept and desire the normative institutions of marriage, monogamy and domesticity, others imagine their futures developing in very different directions. However, imagining and planning for radical alternatives to normativity is not an easy process no matter how much we might desire it to be.

'Since you're young you've always been told that eventually what you should be doing is getting a career, getting married, buying your own house... [but] why should we get married? Maybe the reason we're pushing for gay marriage is because the straights are always going on about marriage... because we don't know anything different I think the gay community has just taken the straight archetype and forced ourselves into it and tried to fit into it and I think the youth of today even straights are trying to fit this archetype and it's just not the right fit and we've just not come to realise that yet because anyone who is 50 and making up all the rules they do fit it and it works fine for them... it's difficult to even think of an alternative because we've never even experienced it'

Owen

Owen suggests that the embedded normativity of legal partnership is what has driven same-sex couples to try and access it, that they are drawn to the privileges which accrue to this institution. He suggests that the entire edifice has become relatively archaic yet is maintained through its normative status and the various apparatuses of power relations which support and interconnect with it. Further, he argues that our attempts to enunciate an alternative are restricted by normative understandings of temporalities and 'appropriate' futures; that even to articulate an alternative is difficult and prohibited by the existence of these normativities (Foucault 1972). Warner describes it as a 'grotesque comedy' that the desires and rights of those who are most able to access privilege are those who are able to control the agenda and gain political representation, reinforcing and reproducing the normativity of those forms of identities. Yet Weeks (2007; 2008) has argued that the legislative changes over the past few decades represent a relatively rapid pace of change and some of the participants argued that these changes did not have to stop but rather might incrementally begin to be able to incorporate more radical or widespread actions.

'I can see the reasoning, little old women in Kent are going to accept us much easier if we do have the husband, the two children, the picket fence and the Jack Russell Terrier around our feet with pipe and slippers, because that's the image these people want of a family, and y'know these people vote so we need to appease them, but I don't have to like that.'

Max

Max suggests that this political prioritisation represents a pragmatic course of action. Although his own desires and goals were not widely represented by the political drive for 'gay marriage' and normative domesticity, he felt that an incremental approach would eventually be effective because these gains could only be achieved through national political legitimacy.

The participants' understandings and imaginations of their futures represent the final stage in their trajectories so far. While for some of them framed their discussed firmly in terms of domesticity and monogamy others were less enamoured of such goals. Regardless of their individual preferences and the recitation and reproduction of exclusionary normativities or a queerer form of desire and aspiration, all of them framed their discussions in terms of personal choice and few regarded their futures as being overly determined or restricted based upon the sexual, gendered, sexed, classed or raced identities.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter explores a normative trajectory described by the participants as they move to Brighton & Hove, encounter and learn how to navigate scene spaces, subsequently 'growing out' of the scene, their imagined futures and the ways in which these experiences are produced by, reliant upon and maintain and resources and abilities of privilege in various ways. Scene spaces in Brighton & Hove are diffuse and

do not follow models of the 'gay ghetto'; instead the city as a whole is interpreted through the visibility of spaces for sexual dissidence as a place of tolerance and acceptance (Browne & Bakshi 2011; forthcoming; Munt 1995). Although the participants are able to identify a particular area of the city which is generally described as 'the scene', this space is primarily the location of highly visible bars and nightclubs and does not account for the many other forms of scenes and spaces in the city (Brown & Bakshi forthcoming). These representations of the city played a formative role in the participants' decisions to live there, to such an extent that Brighton & Hove is positioned as somehow 'special' or 'protected' within a 'bubble'. This 'bubble' is used to explain what the participants see as a distinct difference between Brighton's space of tolerance and the perceived spaces of comparative intolerance that exist everywhere else. This replicates Moran *et al.*'s (2003) findings of a bounded and discrete space of safety, placed against an always-already space of danger by drawing on a 'metronormative' narrative of urban tolerance and acceptance in relation to intolerant ruralities (see Brown 2000). The participants used a narrative I describe as *Brighton-as-tolerant* to reinforce their perceptions of themselves as belonging and safe in the city. However, while this narrative is experienced as empowering by the participants, it effectively effaces the experiences of those who do not, or cannot, describe themselves as 'fitting in' and tolerated in the city, or who experience marginalisation through raced, classed, gendered or other apparatuses of power relations.

The rigors of relocation, acclimatisation and developing 'new' forms of identity, performativity and sociality through 'coming out' and the sheer amount of time required to be invested in scene spaces in order to learn their codes of practices means that the temporalities of queer lives can significantly differ from those of heteronormativity (Dinshaw *et al.* 2007; Halberstam 2005; Taylor 2010). Discussion of homonormativity has been, to a large extent, concerned with the perceived normalisation of queer temporalities (Duggan 2002; Edelman 2004). Six of the participants incorporated their relocation to Brighton & Hove and spatial imaginary of tolerance/intolerance into their narratives of 'coming out', following a pattern of gay men relocating to cities for their perceived spaces of anonymity and safety (Weston 1995). Yet to overemphasise this practice risks effacing the experiences and sexualities which exist in various ruralities and I demonstrated the complexity and spatial contingency of 'coming out' through my own experiences (see Halberstam 2005; Valentine 1993). 'Coming out' and the subsequent time of adjustment, learning new practices and performativities of identities in order to be able to successfully 'fit in' and access the privileges and networks of scene spaces was described by the participants as '*the Brighton effect*'. They use this term to describe a period of intensity and excess which seems typical of gay men's experiences once they relocate

to Brighton & Hove and begin exploring scene spaces. This period of learning and acclimatising to new spatialities, and the practices and performativities associated with them, is crucial in enabling the participants to subsequently identify with scene space and be able to feel 'comfortable' and included within those spaces (Ridge *et al.* 2006; Valentine & Skelton 2003). This experience is not one which is available to all and is a function of privilege, the participants' experiences of scene spaces contrast with previous research demonstrating the variety of exclusions and marginalisations which can be associated with these places (see Chapter 4.4; Bassi 2006; Bérubé 2003; Browne 2007; Browne & Lim 2010; Drummond 2010; El-Tayeb 2012; Heaphy & Yip 2003; King & Cronin 2010; Lee 2008; Podmore 2006; Puar 2006; Slevin & Linneman 2010; Taylor 2008; Valentine 1993; Vanderbeck 2007).

For most of the participants their intensive association and participation in scene spaces was in decline; they no longer spend as much time in scene spaces, using and understanding these spaces differently. The participants describe themselves as feeling that scene spaces were a part of their past and that they had grown out of them in a kind of replication of heteronormative temporalities of adolescence and adulthood. This 'growing out' of scene spaces formed an important part of the trajectory described by the participants and was used to demonstrate the extent to which they had distanced themselves and 'developed' away from the younger, camper gay masculinities discussed earlier (see Chapter 4.5). This 'development' and changing spatial practices emerges alongside the participant's discussions of normal gay masculinities as a materialisation of the participants' understandings of their socio-spatial positionalities. They identify spatialities that are the locations for equally undesirable stereotyped representations of 'straight' and 'gay' identities in order to produce and occupy a silent, 'normal' space. Partly this practice operates to maintain a degree of invisibility regarding the participants' own positionalities, so that their identities and the privileges available to them remain unexamined and unspoken. Yet the description of this trajectory also operates to produce a normative temporality through which the participants interpret the identities of those around them. Bodies and performativities which differ from this normative understanding are understood as having *failed* and are marginalised because of their difference. Examples of this marginalisation are found throughout these chapters, camp gay masculinities and older gay bodies were discussed in the previous chapter, while this chapter addressed some participants' rejection of cruising and one night stands. This period of 'growing out' of the scene was accompanied by discussions of *getting old* and consequently *settling down*, a prioritisation of the spaces of home and work at expense of the social space of the scene and, for some of the participants, a desire for monogamous domesticity. Identification of this trend advances understandings of the

everyday spatial practices of gay white men and the ways in which this category is fractured by different relations of privilege.

The ability to access and make use of these allegedly 'normal spaces' is a key marker for the participants of Brighton & Hove as a space of tolerance and further challenges singular understandings of space as naturally heteronormative. During their interviews these processes were bound up with one another such that these identities and spaces emerged alongside one another as a materialisation of how the participants understood their social positioning. For the participants, these 'normal' spaces were not experienced as being 'straight' not 'gay' spaces; they are possibly both or neither (see Visser 2008). This work contributes towards a destabilisation of binary understandings of space 'as already hetero/homo-normative awaiting queer transgressions' (Browne & Bakshi 2011, p180). From these findings it might be possible to suggest the formation of a form of normative spatiality in which *some* forms of sexual dissidences have become unremarkable similar to *some* forms of heterosexualities³³. This indicates that the ability to access privilege through normativity in some places transgresses beyond binary understandings of straight or gay enabling a nuanced exploration of the diverse practices and intersections of power relations through which spaces are enacted and experienced as inclusive and privileging or exclusionary and marginalising. Such a finding, alongside similar work by Visser (2008) and Browne & Bakshi (2011), challenges predeterminations of which bodies/identities will be able to access privilege in particular spaces and normative alignments between bodies/identities/spaces which produce homogenising and stereotyped representations of spatial practices and experiences.

This development applies only to a relatively small number of spaces and does not preclude experiences of homophobia and exclusion in others (see Chapter 6). It is also possible that the narrative of *Brighton-as-tolerant* has the effect of over stating their experiences of 'normal space' by effacing experiences of marginalisation. Similarly, not all of the participants were able to access this experience in as many spaces as others, while this discussion does not attempt to account for a wide range of other marginalisations and exclusions produced through these spaces, or those which are deployed by the participants themselves (see Chapter 4). Further, the temporality of development discussed in this chapter was not a purely linear experience and the participants were also able to move between using scene spaces or not as they desired. This non-linearity challenges attempts to equate their experiences with the heteronormative temporalities and the participants' imaginations of their futures differed dramatically from one another. Some of the participants desired the domesticities marked by monogamy, marriage and home ownership, along with a

³³ Heterosexualities are highly varied and many of them are most certainly not unremarkable and normalised in the kinds of pub and bar spaces being discussed by these participants (Hubbard 2008)

strong narrative of 'development' and normative valuation of these markers while simultaneously marginalising the desires and experiences of others. Yet, for other participant, their access to privilege enabled them to imagine their lives taking a variety of forms that differed from normative domesticities. While discussions of the political goals of 'the gay movement' and the campaign for same-sex marriage, amongst others, are important, this chapter demonstrates that the participants feel able to choose and construct their plans and desires for themselves. Regardless of their desires, they largely feel that they will not be significantly restricted, denied or obstructed in achieving those desires. This confidence and ontological security is a significant privilege and reinforces the material resources and abilities the participants are able to access and draw upon to accomplish those visions.

These two chapters develop an understanding of where and how the participants are able to access privilege, how they experience and understand those experiences, some of the ways in which they are able use privilege to defend and maintain their positionalities or marginalise others' and how their experiences have changed over the course of their lives in Brighton & Hove. The participants were not uniformly and universally privileged, but rather these experiences are spatially contingent and performatively enacted. The last of these three analysis chapters engages with the participants experiences of homophobia and heteronormativity in order to further complicate my discussion of the everyday lives and spatial practices of allegedly homonormative gay white men.

6 Geographies of Heteronormativity

Outline

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Spaces of Homophobia

6.3 Places of Fear

6.3.1 West Street

6.3.2 Whitehawk

6.4 Heteronormativity Spatialities

6.4.1 Passing

6.5 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The participants' abilities to access privilege at various places and times, the processes through which that access is maintained and some of the benefits that they gain from that access are well established. Yet these experiences are not universal, I have shown that they are spatially situated and produced. This chapter continues to develop understandings of the participants' experiences and the spatialities of privilege by exploring the places in which the participants become subject to processes of marginalisation, exclusion and discrimination associated with their sexual identities. Their experiences of homophobia and heteronormativity are also spatially produced and this chapter explores some of the experiences of violence and fear of violence described by the participants. I demonstrate that their experiences have close parallels with similar feminist discussions of fear of crime, but that the places that are likely to be feared are different as are the markers of danger. The evidence in this section supports Moran *et al.*'s (2001; 2003) discussions of fear of crime amongst gay subjects, particularly in and around 'safer spaces'. Despite experiences of violent assault and homophobia, the participants still deploy a narrative of *Brighton-as-tolerant*.

This chapter augments Moran *et al.*'s (2001; 2003) work by showing that rather than a bounded and safe gay space, the participants identify particular spaces as being dangerous but locate those spaces within a largely tolerant and safe background of *Brighton-as-tolerant*. I discuss two of the places described by the participants, the commercial entertainment area of West Street, and the housing estate of Whitehawk (shown on Fig. 2, see Chapter 1.5). These two places are specifically described as dangerous and threatening by most of the participants. They are also associated with a particular intersection of straight, white, working classed bodies and identities that the participants interpret as 'chav'. For the participants the figure of the 'chav' is a threatening one, but also one that is the legitimate subject of ridicule and disdain. The participants deploy a contradiction of privileging and marginalising understandings; they feel threatened and marginalised by their perceptions of a straight and homophobic working class, and they make use of their considerable class privileges to represent and insult the objects of their fear, but also to avoid the spaces in which they are presumed to be located. Most of the participants are able to comfortably choose to live and socialise in places where they feel comfortable. Indeed they are generally able to avoid spending much, if any, time in these places where they locate their fear. Describing this relationship as purely one of marginalisation is therefore problematic and yet the fear of crime violence is a marginalising and exclusionary process.

This complexity continues to develop through a broader discussion of heteronormativity and passing. I show some of the ways in which the participants are

marginalised by the apparatuses of heteronormativity which operates to privilege the practices and spatialities of heterosexuality while marginalising those of other sexual identities. Compared with their ability to 'see' and articulate their own experiences of privilege the participants are extremely cognisant and aware of the ways in which they experience marginalisation or are denied the privileges granted to heterosexuality. This further demonstrates the 'epistemic privilege' of those who are marginalised by power relations to be able to comprehend the processes of their marginalisation (Mohanty 1997). This chapter therefore contributes further evidence towards understandings of how gay white men experience marginalisation and the processes through which their behaviours are disciplined into at least some of the time appearing to be heterosexual in a practice described as passing (Berger 1992; Johnson 2002; Renfrow 2004; Medina 2011). While some of the participants experience passing as an empowering practice to control their experiences of space, this is not the case for all of them and for some the experience is painful and exclusionary. Indeed, for some of the participants the experience and necessity of passing, at least in some places, has changed relatively little from those described in early geographies of sexualities work regardless of whatever effects that homonormativity may have had. Work places in particular are discussed in relation to a discourse of *professionalism* which operates to silence the participants' abilities to perform a sexual identity. Overall this chapter demonstrates that the participants' experiences are complex and often contradictory, challenging representations of the homonormative gay white man as universally and uniformly privileged.

6.2 Spaces of Homophobia

Despite the privileges which the participants experience, all of them discussed their everyday spatial practices within a context of homophobia, exclusion and the potential for abuse. The most obvious manifestation of homophobia which the participants are faced with is the threat of violent physical assault. Only two of the participants provided examples of such violent assaults occurring, however as I shall discuss later, the threat of such assault has an important role in producing the participants experiences of place. Recent research found that in Brighton & Hove 73% of respondents reported having experienced some form of abuse in the past 5 years as a result of their sexual and gender identities, of those respondents 11% had been the victim of physical assault (Browne *et al.* 2011). This section explores some of the instances of physical and verbal abuse experienced by the participants, their understandings of these events as instances of homophobia and a more pervasive fear of crime associated with heteronormativity and 'dangerous' spaces.

Theorisations of homonormativity suggest that gay white men are 'well positioned to take advantage of key avenues of exploitation and profiteering in postindustrial world orders' (Nast 2002, p880), a description which does not sufficiently take into

account the ways in which they may also be simultaneously affected and produced through other avenues of marginalisation.

'So, yeah... one time I was closing up the pub I worked in and had sent everybody home – because I was assistant manager at the time - and a group of guys came in wanting to play pool, it was about half 11... I was like "sorry guys, we're closed – can't do anything" and they were saying "Well, can we not just have a drink?" and I'm like "No, you can't" they went to leave and then turned around "Oi! You're that faggot aren't you" and I'm like "What?" "You're that faggot aren't you". "No. No I'm not" and they was all like "Fuck off you twat. Fucking gay – who the fuck does he think he's talking to us like that". Yeah, there was about 3 of them. They grabbed me, tied me onto the pool table and started putting cigarettes out on my skin'

Stuart

Despite the severity of this attack Brighton & Hove continues to be understood and represented by Stuart and the other participants as a place which is largely tolerant of difference and particularly sexual diversity. As discussed earlier, the participants' experiences of abuse, violence or fear can be effaced from their general discussions of Brighton & Hove and their experience of living here in favour of a narrative of safety and diversity (see Chapter 5.2). The representation of *Brighton-as-tolerant* means that the experiences of those who do not 'succeed' in fitting in are rendered problematic. It is 'known' and taken for granted by these participants that Brighton & Hove is a tolerant place and experiences of exclusion are blamed on the individual, because anything else would challenge the feelings of safety and community which are so important to homonormative experiences of the city (see Browne & Bakshi forthcoming). Stuart's story, and others like it, brought back to me the force of my own experiences of violent assault and the continuing effects that those experiences have in my life, as discussed in the vignette below.

Damn.

I just got back from my interview with Stuart and I can't stop shaking. I'm so angry yet at the same time so full of sadness for him. So few of my participants had stories of violence comparable to some of my own I was somehow completely unprepared to be faced with some that are worse. The sadism explicit in his attackers' actions chills me to the bone and even thinking about being tied down and powerless in his position makes me feel sick.

But worse still is the fear.

The fear that it might happen again.

* * *

"I don't think that there is any lasting damage. Nothing is properly broken, although you are going to be pretty sore in the morning" the nurse stops for a moment as I struggle to laugh, wincing with the pain in my ribs.

“Sore in the morning? Well I hate to tell you but I’m pretty sore already so I think your diagnostic might be a little off.” As I struggle to smile the graze on my face starts to leak a trace of blood down my face, I feel it collect on the edge of my jaw and then slowly drip onto the clean bandages bound around my chest.

“At least they didn’t manage to do a good job of it, useless bastards can’t even beat someone up well” I’m joking because I’m still afraid. Afraid of the pain that I know is going to come when the pills that I’ve been given wear off, afraid of going back to my job, of being seen in public. Afraid of the guys that attacked me and terrified that I might not be able to see them again without this fear.

“Would you like to talk to the police officer now?” asks the nurse, I haven’t been able to read her name badge because my glasses got lost somewhere, broken or knocked from my face I don’t know, but she reminds me of my aunt, the same kindness laid over steel foundations.

“Sure.” It’s got to happen sooner or later and I’d rather do it when I’m high, it might dull my memories; maybe that’s what I want for a little while.

A few minutes later and we are sitting in another little room; I am perched on one of those high beds you find in every hospital, the officer in a chair opposite me. The yellow and black of his uniform contrasts dramatically with the off-white of everything else, the fluorescent lights gleaming from the rubber of his utility belt, shoes and the peak of his hat. I briefly panic that he will ask me about everything I have ever done wrong. I feel like I am back at school about to be reprimanded for fighting again - of course it is always me involved, sir! They come looking for me! They didn’t come looking for me this time; they waited outside the pub that I work at. They waited while I cleaned ashtrays and wiped down tables; re-arranged furniture and collected glasses, the big glass windows at the front of the building providing anyone outside with a clear view of the well-lit interior. They waited at the bus stop outside for over an hour. I try to describe what happened to the police officer but my mind struggles to convey the situation. I get hung up on the little details like the way it took me longer than expected to finish collecting all the glasses from the empty bar, the particular sound a piece of wood makes when it strikes a metal bus stop – clarion like a bell.

“How many people attacked you?” this nice young man wants to know. I forget about the uniform he is wearing for a moment and wonder what he drinks when he’s not working, barman’s curiosity – I secretly wager with myself that he drinks lager, Foster’s maybe.

“There were seven people at the bus stop; I don’t know how many of them got involved. Only two of them had sticks, I think. After one of them hit my knee... this one, on this side... he hit my knee while I was trying to kick someone else...”

“What happened after he hit your knee?” Strictly the facts please

“Well... after that I didn’t have any feet on the ground for a moment, because my other one was kicking someone else... I guess I fell down, I don’t really remember why. He hit my knee, and then I fell down”

(Research Diary 30/1/2012)

This is an event, from before I moved to Brighton & Hove, yet it is one that continues to cling to me in memory and affects my experience of place. Although my spatial and temporal distance from the event go some way towards insulating me from the pain and fear of that night the memory of it will continue to affect my behaviour and influence my understanding space. This fear is not unique and was expressed by two of the other participants who discussed their experiences of violent interpersonal

attack. As Jack describes below, the fear of violent assault becomes a continuing presence in the experience of the individual.

'Back in school a friend was a little bit loose lipped about my sexuality after I came out to them and... I ended up getting beaten up'

I: Did this happen often?

'Yeah. Particularly towards the end [of school] by then it had gotten to the point that I had started bunking off lessons quite a bit and my coursework was suffering terribly... [I was] avoiding what was happening in the corridors... They were being quite open saying that it's [the abuse] because I was a poof, a woolly woofter a backside artist, I was bent... I think my fear of violence now still stems back to the trouble that I had at school'

Phil

Phil's fear of violence was a continual presence during our interview and played a strong role in his everyday representation, use and experience of space. Indeed both of the participants who had experienced violent assault placed a much greater emphasis on safety and their perceptions of certain places as being dangerous. Recent research by McCormack (2010; 2011; 2012) suggests that gay youths are less likely to experience homophobia and abuse in their school spaces, from the evidence in this chapter it could be suggested that they will consequently be less likely to experience the same levels of fear of crime in their later lives. A comparative or longer term study exploring these differences and their effects in the spatial practices of gay men might provide a productive opportunity to explore these ideas further. However, for these participants, this ongoing fear of crime actively restricts their understandings of where in the city is safe for them to go, either causing them to avoid particular places or to severely impact their experience if required to enter somewhere they perceive to be dangerous. This complicates the suggestion that there are clearly and easily identifiable positions of privilege and reminds us that apparatuses of power relations are never complete or static. None of the participants can ever be *privileged*; rather they are produced in relation to homonormativity and privilege which are manifest within their lives in various ways. Similarly these examples offer a clear illustration of how privilege operates to produce experiences of space as other participants' spatial practices are less influenced by these considerations of safety and danger.

The three of us, Stuart, Phil and I were the only ones who discussed having been attacked at some stage in their lives. This relatively low level of assault might be taken to represent the beginnings of acceptance as 'full' citizens (McDermott 2011; Weeks 2007). However, Moran *et al.* (2003, p173) write that 'the fear of crime is for many more important than direct experience of criminal acts in the generation of experiences of danger and safety' (see also Day 2006; England 2010; Hale 1996; Holmes 2009; Koskela 1999; Pain 1991; 1997; 2000; 2008; Stanko 1987; 2000; Vrij 1991). This fear of crime is reinforced for some of the participants by being aware of homophobic violence occurring in their vicinity or to people within their extended social circles.

'Because I live right in the centre of town, one night I heard two drunken, straight jobs shouting at someone in the street like "Oi you, poofter!" Then hearing someone shout back "Yeah, whatever" in kind of quite a camp voice and then the next thing you hear is like a "Get him!" Then the sound of running down the street and that was like at 4am in the morning and it was like - What do I do now?'

Martin

'Yes, a couple of years ago I was aware of at least 2 homophobic attacks happening to friends of mine – both late at night, and at least one of them, maybe both of them were involved with the police at some stage – and these were both kind of physical attacks on guys who were being overt with their sexuality as it were'

Chris

These participants are forced into awareness of the existence of homophobic assault through peripheral experience. In this way, while they were not the direct victims of these attacks their vicarious experiences affect them just the same, instilling an awareness and fear of the violence that could potentially happen to them. This provides a stark contrast to the participants' representations of Brighton & Hove as a place of safety and homonormative acceptance (Browne & Bakshi 2011; forthcoming; Munt 1995). Fear of violence and crime plays a key role in the reproduction of relations of exclusion and inequality acting to restrict the abilities and mobilities of bodies in spaces which are understood as being potentially dangerous for them. This fear is differentially experienced by participants.

'I think there definitely is some homophobia still around, I think you can get complacent living somewhere like Brighton'

Jason

'No, not really. I'm not sure I've really – don't think I've experienced homophobia in Brighton, and I know it goes on, I just think that I've been fortunate'

Isaac

These participants, when presented with a question about the existence of homophobia have a very different response from the previous examples. Eschewing fear or wariness they instead re-iterate the narrative of *Brighton-as-tolerant* and minimise the possibility of abuse. In this way the participants' responses echo Browne's suggestion that 'although homophobia is a common term known to the [men] in this study, they do not associate it with their daily experiences and lives' (Browne 2007, p1002). The participants' lack of fear in this instance is evidenced through their description of Brighton & Hove as a tolerant place to live. Their particular choice of words is interesting as well; Jason describes a feeling of complacency which indicates a relaxing or drop in defensiveness that is perhaps inadvisable; while Isaac describes himself as 'fortunate'. Neither of these speaks strongly of a secure position of privilege but is rather cognizant of the potential threat and the contingency of perceived successes, even in 'tolerant' Brighton & Hove. Not being discriminated against or assaulted is not something which should be a

'fortunate' occurrence. This indicates that practices of naming homophobia and identification are more complex than they at first appear.

The 'hailing' (see Butler 1990) of identity even through abuse is a paradoxical act in that it is a strategic conflict between competing apparatuses of power relations, competitions which cannot be settled with recourse to some external and essential 'truth' (Foucault 1980; Scheurich 1997). These are competing understandings and productions of the social that contradict one another to such an extent that they cannot both become manifest in any single experience (although they may exist simultaneously in multiple experiences of the same interaction). The ways in which the participants experience their identities and their production is affected by the ways in which these conflicts play out and resolve themselves within everyday spaces. In being named gay (or more usually queer, faggot, poof) the subject is produced and recognised as being (and belonging) within the 'matrix of intelligibility' (Butler 1990, p74). He is called into existence through the very act of his denigration. Despite the subordinate position their identity is given within heteronormative space the subject is still provided the privilege of having a coherent and recognisable identity. Using the understanding of privilege developed in this thesis as abilities or resources available to some subjects but not others, manifested differently in different places then, the subject of the homophobic act can be interpreted as being privileged through recognition. Recognition and intelligibility as a subject is itself a form of privilege experienced by only some subjects (Butler 2004). It bears remembering that not all subjects and bodies are extended the same privilege and misrecognition, or the appearance of misrecognition, remain potent practices in the disciplining of bodies and behaviours (Browne 2007; Halberstam 1998; Skeggs 2001; Valentine 1998). The ability to maintain a coherent social identity is vital, even if an act aims to marginalize an identity it simultaneously reinforces the experience of the individual as *belonging* to that identity; a paradoxical experience of being privileged through marginalisation.

The ability of these men to name certain acts as being 'homophobia' and subsequently abuse is in itself a particular manifestation of privilege. In calling attention to the specific act the subject challenges the legitimacy of that act and making it visible. Naming in this way produces the act as being unacceptable, aberrant and out of place. The subject declares that such a thing should not occur and applies a particular understanding of normativity similar to the 'common sense' discussed by Browne (2007), but in this case it does so in defence of a gay identity rather than in order to police a hetero-sexed space. The subject effectively attempts to enforce a different interpretation of space, one which legitimises the subjects' presence within, and use of, a particular place. The interplay of the privilege to name and create the other is at work, attempting to enforce and maintain identity boundaries within a particular

moment (see Chapter 4.4). The act is in itself an attempt to 'other' the gay subject yet, through an attempt to name that act as being 'homophobic' the gay subject attempts to produce the act itself as 'other' instead, and therefore out of place. In effect this is a contest to enforce different normativities within a specific space. Of course this naming and production is not always successful in its challenge to the act.

Alternatively both practices of naming may 'succeed' from the perspective of the individuals involved as the interaction is potentially very short. Either way their competing attempts to produce the social are a clear engagement in the 'war by another means' of discourse (see Chapter 2.4.1; Foucault 1980).

Just as the decision to name homophobia can be a paradoxical one, imbued with a contest between apparatuses of power relations, the converse decision not to name homophobia is also a possible response.

'I was walking through town with my boyfriend at the time holding hands and we got spat on, and we didn't really do anything about it because we couldn't really be bothered'

Chris

'You get a few gangs of kids, hanging around the shops, asking you to buy booze for them and they might make a few sly comments and, take the piss a bit but I'm big enough to deal with that'

Josh

These men actively negate the relevance and severity of their experience through not naming them as homophobic incidents. It has been well established that homophobia and abuse are everyday experiences for LGBT persons and that these experiences vary greatly in their form and the impact that they have upon the lives of those persons (Browne *et al.* 2011; Moran & Sharpe 2004; Moran *et al.* 2003; O'Brien 2008). Further, actively "ignoring" abuse can be an important self-preservation tactic for dealing with its persistent and everyday nature... Not defining or naming abuse can be used as a strategy for self-preservation in the face of daily experiences that negate your identity or overtly ridicule your sexual and/or gender identities' (Browne *et al.* 2011, p10). In playing down the significance of these events, the participants actively manage the emotional and psychological impact that they might have, although they evidently retain enough force as to have been remembered and judged worthy of comment. Josh in particular associates this lack of importance with his being 'big enough to deal with that' reiterating findings by Browne & Lim (2008, p9) that non-naming is associated with 'emotional toughness'. This emotional toughness is contrasted with those who may be especially vulnerable to such abuse and intimidation and highlights that homophobic abuse is differentially experienced by individuals and that while these participants are able to downplay its effects, others might not be so capable. Possession of such toughness might subsequently be considered characteristic of the privileged subject such that he might be the victim of homophobic abuse but he has the capability to consider that abuse as being

inconsequential. Leaving homophobia unnamed can therefore be understood as one of a number of attempts to actively manage the impact that such experiences have upon the participants' lives. The following section takes a more focused examination of two places which were identified by the participants as being 'dangerous' or at least perceived to be 'unsafe' to further explore the spatialisation of fear.

6.3 Places of Fear

The participants' understandings of *Brighton-as-tolerant* highlight the ways in which privilege is geographically produced and experienced. This spatial differentiation extends beyond the scope of differences between nations, regions and cities and into scales of streets and neighbourhoods, such that experiences of homonormativity and the privileges it brings vary across Brighton & Hove (O'Brien 2008; Pain & Smith 2008). The spatial and temporal variation in the fear of crime is well established and this section focuses on the ways in which these variations are experienced by the participants of this study and the effects that it has on their lives (Gold & Revill 2000; Hale 1996; Pain 1991; 2000; Stanko 1997; 2000).

'I don't feel like I'm going to get hit or anything but I do feel that kind of, kind of anxiousness when we are walking down the street sometimes'

Greg

Greg clearly locates his fear of crime within public spaces of the city. This replicates previous work on women's fear of crime which reproduces the public/private dichotomy with private, domestic spaces understood and safe, contained and controlled while public space is understood as being unruly and threatening. These understandings continue despite contradictory evidence which shows that domestic spaces are as or more likely to be the site of interpersonal violence for women (Hale 1996; Painter 1992; Stanko 1987; 1997; 2000). Public spaces in the city were the most likely to be identified by the participants as being threatening, however this was not the case for all of the participants. In contrast two of the participants made explicit references to the home as a place where fear and a lack of safety can be experienced. Jack for example says that:

'While I was seventeen years old I essentially ran away from home to get to Brighton, because I felt it was a more privileged area'

Jack

Jack's childhood home was a threatening and abusive place which he felt the need to escape, which presents a very different experience and understanding of home in comparison to those of safety and control discussed earlier (see Chapter 4.2; Gorman-Murray 2006; Johnston & Valentine 1995; Kitchin & Lysaght 2003; Valentine *et al.* 2003)³⁴. For Jack and some of the others who relocated to Brighton & Hove, their hometowns were experienced as being intolerant and dangerous while

³⁴ Similarly intimate partner violence can challenge representations of the home as a 'safe' place see Holmes 2009; Kelly *et al.* 2011; Messinger 2011; Murray & Mobley 2009; Stanko 1987.

Brighton's place marketing as the 'gay capital' represent it as a '*more privileged area*', a place of safety (see Chapter 5.2).

The majority of the participants specifically locate their fears of violence and harassment within street spaces or commercial bars and shops, in doing so they replicate the public/private dichotomy found in examinations of women's fear of violence, however with one notable difference. While previous work emphasizes women's fear as being focussed on 'dark, lonely, unattractive or uncared-for places' the participants in this study focus more on crowded public leisure places and the consumption of alcohol (Vrij & Winkel 1991, p369). Specifically the participants tend to replicate Moran *et al.*'s (2003) findings which focus on the presence of straights as being the key marker of danger. The high visibility and perception of straights in certain areas of the city for the participants, and more particularly in areas with large numbers of straight bars, is the most common reason for the participants to identify a place as being dangerous or threatening to them. This is clearest in their discussions of West Street and the surrounding area where there is a concentration of large chain night clubs and bars, understood and coded by the participants as being extremely straight and therefore threatening venues.

6.3.1 West Street

'Yeah West Street... it's a very scary place to be because there's a lot of people there who are very aggressive and quite often very drunk and quite often affected by other substances shall we say. There's quite often a heavy police presence there which I think that is quite often caused by the fact that there is a lot of trouble in the area'

Chris

I: Where in the city do you feel most uncomfortable?

'I'd say West St... It has quite a rough atmosphere... it's always full of police vans and people out on the street and it seems to have the worst kind of drunks... I find it sort of an aggressive atmosphere and I don't like it. And again it's got a reputation within the gay community and we used to call it Straight St and you just don't go there - and that's somewhere I don't really feel comfortable'

Isaac

Isaac demonstrates the sexualisation of this area of the city and the connection between straight and danger for the participants. The concentration of alcohol and aggression is understood as producing a hostile space which is read through particular indicators such as the continual presence of police and the '*worst kind of drunks*'. Notice also that this experience is also generalised by the participant to the entire gay community which he explicitly places himself within and in opposition to those who frequent '*Straight Street*'. Belonging in this instance to a self evident community provides him with the ability to denote an area of the city which is off limits and that despite his lack of comfort in the place he is able to position this location as other. Membership of the community is, for the participant, a given yet this is again a function of privilege (see Chapter 5.3). Perhaps tellingly, while the

presence of police officers is seen as a marker of the potential for danger, but the police themselves are not the sources of this danger. While the participants of this study talk of their fear of crime in certain places, they are not subject to the fear of State and police persecution. This contrasts dramatically with the continuing policing of other forms of sexual dissidence such as sex workers (Hubbard 2004; 2009), with the experiences of some LGBT subjects may have been in the past (Chauncey 1994; Moran & Sharpe 2004; Seidman 2002), and that non-white or working classed bodies continue to be in some places (Dwyer & Bressy 2008; England & Simon 2010; McDowell 2007). This reflects the changing legal context and treatment of some forms of sexual dissidence and the creation of the legitimate gay citizen as a figure which might rightfully rely on the protection offered by the police in street spaces (Bell & Binnie 2004; 2006; Weeks 2007). Moran *et al.* (2003, p184 my emphasis) argue that their participants produce one particular enclosed area of the city (Manchester) as safe and therefore the 'gay Village connotes straights as elsewhere, in another place. Thereby the Village is a place of safety positioned against a danger which *is always already elsewhere*'. In contrast to this bounded safety and unbounded danger which is understood as everywhere else, the participants in my study clearly identify a bounded space which is understood as dangerous and straight³⁵. This production of bounded straight space provides interesting challenges to previous literature which argued that most or all public spaces are produced and experienced as heteronormative (Bell *et al.* 1994; Bell & Valentine *eds.* 1995; Browne *et al.* 2007b; Johnston & Longhurst 2010; McDowell 1995).

West Street is also represented by the participants as a working classed place. Skeggs (2000; 2004) highlights the ways in which straight is often used with unspoken class connotations, that is those places identified as 'straight' are also represented and described as 'working classed' or at higher risk of deprivation, or in the case of West Street a place of leisure for working class persons. Some of these descriptions are also specifically gendered in their associations of straight and violent; for John these are 'laddish' spaces. Spaces are marked as being potentially dangerous because of the presence of these classed and gendered bodies.

'It's very much a sort of laddish culture around there, I've picked up the impression that all the straight people go clubbing there and all the straight people who end up in fights go clubbing there... whenever I'm there I don't want to stay there very much. Even if I'm passing through it's a bit of an unpleasant experience; you see people arguing on the street over chips or something it's like "oh god, all these people are fucking idiots"'

John

I: What do you mean by chav?

³⁵ As explored earlier they also identify a separate bounded space which is understood as safe and gay, for them at least, see Chapter 5.

'Chav, young, generally white, goes out to get pissed on a Saturday night; wears track suits, girls with hoop ear rings... I've never been out on the chavvy scene in Brighton; I've never been down West Street'

Josh

The naming of 'chav' and its use as an othering narrative and the ways in which privilege is used to create certain bodies as other to the subject and in doing so legitimize their differential treatment (see Chapter 4.4). These two participants clearly produce these places as classed as well as sexed; a production which they use to distance themselves from that place and the people they associate with it. Their position in relation to this place is one that is either outside it or just passing through, effectively spatialising their difference from the working class straights there. The participants produce a stable geography of difference between themselves and the statically located other. Access to such othering narratives is once again a function of their privilege as they position themselves as 'normal' and therefore, middle classed (see Chapter 4.5; Jackson 2011; Nayak 2006; Sleggs 2005).

West Street is a place of fear for the majority of the participants and they make little or no attempt at nuance in their representations of the place or the dangerous others that are located there. Despite this, some participants did have some different reactions when discussing West Street.

'If we want to be integrated as a collective group then we need to be going to all the venues that everybody else goes to; we need to infiltrate the chavs on West Street'

Paul

Paul reverses the narrative of straight invasion and threat discussed by Moran *et al.* (2003) by suggesting that in the interests of gay assimilation into mainstream society it is imperative that LGBT bodies infiltrate spaces of heteronormativity. Paul is confident in claiming membership to a form of community or at least 'collective group' which he feels able to speak for, a privilege in its self which is denied to others (see Chapter 5.3). This group is perceived (by him) to have a coherent identity which is somehow different and to some extent excluded, but which desires to be 'integrated' with 'everybody else'. Paul suggests that in order to achieve these 'goals', the gay community must change itself by entering and the spaces of working class heteronormativity, particularly he identifies West Street as the place that must be infiltrated.

In comparison to all other participants, Luke was relatively unfazed when discussing West Street.

'I'm often told to avoid West Street like at night I can't say I do it consciously; well I mean I don't know what's there. I've been to a pub there once for a music night but that was it.'

Luke

Luke, while having only rarely visited this area does not feel any strong aversion and does not regard it as a threat. Luke is able to avoid the fear of crime experienced by other participants while occupying the same places as them. This lack of fear extends the places in which he is able to operate and, presumably, access privilege. Further, despite the impressions of aggression presented in this section, these men have not discussed being attacked there. These experiences of fear/danger vary not only geographically but also between the participants and not simply through any easily identifiable categories of class or gender which might be understood as effecting the production of their identities. While there are certainly connections between the describable elements of their identity, these do not necessarily account for all of the differences between their experiences. The following section continues to examine these places of fear by turning attention towards the estates identified by the participants as being similarly threatening.

6.3.2 Whitehawk

The 'estates' on the edges of Brighton & Hove such as Whitehawk are considered to be relatively 'poor' and 'dangerous' in comparison to more wealthy areas by most of the participants. While the city is not especially large these estates are built outside the main centre where the major concentration of shops and bars are located along the Regency sea front. This produces for some of the participants a connection between the distance from this central area and increased danger associated with remoteness. In doing so the participants reproduce the findings of Kern (2003) in her study of Toronto based women who choose to live in the city centre as opposed to the suburbs. Kern (2003, p363-364) writes that 'the women interviewed here stated that they felt safer in the city... the wide range of resources available greatly increased [their] comfort level'.

I: Okay so where is it that you feel uncomfortable?

'Probably the more kind of chavy areas, so places like the very depths of Whitehawk I wouldn't feel comfortable, more recently very studenty areas I don't feel very comfortable as well, so places like Viaduct Road'

I: What do you mean by chavy areas?

'Places where there are people who are less well off – people who I would normally consider to be more racist and homophobic and aggressive in their personalities towards strangers'

Peter

Peter here situates his discomfort in these estates as being at a distance from the spaces he would normally occupy, in this way his discomfort is mapped onto the physical distances that he would have to travel in order to reach 'safety'. These reactions to the supposed 'isolation' of the estate areas contrast with the fear of crowds on West Street and mirror earlier findings which locate women's fear of violence in isolated and poorly lit areas (Painter 1992; Vrij & Winkel 1991). These areas are specifically classed, sexed and raced through their association with people

who are 'chavy' and, for the participant, therefore racist, homophobic and aggressive towards strangers. Peter's distance from these places is emphasised in the description of himself as a stranger there and therefore the target of aggression which he understands as being located in these places.

'I'd be less comfortable living in those sorts of places'

I: Why is that then?

'Just because I've got a perception of them that they're full of hooligans running about and smashing things up really'

I: What do you mean by hooligans?

'Just kids, because I've dropped people off before and sort of gangs of kids messing about in the street at 2 o'clock in the morning looking like they are causing trouble and I've got a perception that they're probably the people who, if you were going to experience some discrimination that's the sort of quarters it would come from'

Graham

Here Graham reiterates this connection between class and the expectation of discrimination, similarly he uses a narrative of 'gangs' and 'hooligans' to emphasise the way he understands the behaviour he witnesses as being 'deviant' as he passes through the area. Graham says that he would be less comfortable living in these estates, a decision which illustrates a key element of privilege identified by McIntosh (1988); that he has the ability to choose to live elsewhere (see Chapter 4.2). These areas of social deprivation are not places that the participants would choose to live and indeed most of them live elsewhere. Most of the participants only experience these areas as they are passing through them; for Graham he is passing through in his car, insulated from the environment around him. In emphasising their presence as only passing through these places the participants once more reiterate their own positional distance from (and superiority to) the 'abject' subjects who live there (Haylett 2001; Wray & Newitz 1997). These narratives from the Peter and Graham also emphasise these places as crowded or '*full of hooligans*', a marked difference from their representation as 'isolated' and distant. It is the classed bodies located unambiguously in these places (as if they never leave or travel around the city) which are threatening not attributes of distance and isolation, these merely operate to efface the 'real reasons' the participants avoid these places. Both Peter and Graham also take their ability to avoid the Whitehawk relatively for granted. Their ability to secure residences in places where they feel safe is a significant privilege which is denied to a great many others, particularly those who live in council assisted circumstances and are often subject to zoning practices (Ellis *et al.* 2004; Housel 2009; Nelson 2008).

The participants described their fear of Whitehawk as being specifically related to other men that they might encounter while travelling through the area. However for some of the participants this meant that they felt able to rely on their own performativities of masculinity to provide them with some measure of safety.

'I'm not the kind of guy I think who would ever get started on because I'm quite big and I'm not obviously gay when I'm walking along and I know how to react... But certain of the estates I wouldn't want to walk around. Well I can walk through Whitehawk by myself absolutely fine but walking through Whitehawk with a twinkie friend, no I would never do that... While I would obviously do whatever I can to look after them but I would be, I would think there would be more of a chance that something would happen if there were obviously gay people in those areas... I don't think they should ever hide that they were gay but if they want to avoid problems then they shouldn't really go there'

Andy

The heteronormativity of these places has been established by the participants in their expectations of homophobia or discrimination; however Andy is relatively unconcerned about this aspect because of his apparent hetero-masculinity as displayed by being '*not obviously gay*' and his being '*quite big*'. Andy believes that he is understood as both straight (looking) and able to defend himself in order to invalidate himself as a potential target. The hierarchy of masculinities (Connell 2000), contextual as they may be, ensures that even another straight man is a potentially valid target if he is unable to defend himself and therefore failing in his performance to some degree. For Andy therefore, his understanding of safety is tied to his performance as a masculine subject. Further, Andy suggests that those who are unable to perform this identity sufficiently should avoid this place if they do not want to be the victim of aggression and abuse. Effectively this reproduces the shift in responsibility for the prevention of violence from the social to the individual and labels those who are fail to take proper precautions as deserving victims (O'Malley 1992; Stanko 1996).

Some of the participants suggested that they outright avoid these straight spaces, both West Street and the estates such as Whitehawk. Many of them have a distinct advantage in this regard in that the estates lie on the outskirts of the city and few of them have reason to go there, if indeed they have ever actually been themselves. They are able to completely avoid interaction with these places that they fear and choose to spend their time elsewhere.

'I don't want to go anywhere that I'm going to be stared at or expect that I'm going to encounter some trouble'

Jason

Avoidance is therefore seen by some of the participants as preferable to the risk of confrontation and potential danger. However there is a disjuncture between perceptions of danger and experiences for some of the men in this study. For example, none of Charles' stories of homophobic attacks occurred in places which he identified as being notably threatening (his workplace and St James Street).

I: Do you think there's still much homophobia around?

'Yeah, I got bashed the other week.... So it got to about [2.30am]... I was like 'aw crap I don't have any cigarettes, got to go down the road to get some now', and

that's all I remember. So then I woke up in hospital, looked at the clock and it was like half 4 in the morning I was like "How did I get here?" they were like "Well you walked in, said 'Oh, I've been attacked and then collapsed.'" I remember some guy putting his arm round my neck saying "Give me all your money you fucking faggot" – I was like "I don't have any money" cos I had left everything at home, apart from my £6 to get some cigarettes, and my iPod, and my phone in case anyone called me; I remember that and then nothing else afterwards, except waking up in hospital... I couldn't feel half of my face for a good couple of weeks, my leg was buggered, and my shoulder was like black across there, from when they jumped on me, apparently – I don't remember it. Still don't remember it now – but I think, because I would have been aiming for [a local late night shop] at the top of James' St to get fags, so it would have happened somewhere around there'

Charles

Chapter 5 showed that the St James' Street area of the city is often considered by the participants to be 'owned' by the gay 'community' and is represented as a safe and gay area which contrasts with the areas discussed above. Charles himself discusses this area of the city as being a safe zone in which he feels comfortable and can '*be himself*', yet it is here that he recently experienced a violent attack, an experience which does not seem to have changed his understanding of the place. This repeats Moran *et al.*'s (2001) findings which highlight the apparently paradoxical occurrences of hetero-violence in 'safer spaces', indeed such violence is often more common than in other spaces which are not coded as 'LGBT' or understood to be 'safer spaces'. Yet these men clearly feel safer in some areas of the city than they do others, they believe themselves to be safer and therefore do not talk of experiencing fear and threat of danger that they do in other places. Scene spaces and their surrounding streets are experienced as spaces of safety and resistance from threatening heteronormativities, regardless of the realities of violence (Myslisk 1996). Yet these experiences of danger and safety are not uniform, different participants experience the spatialities of Brighton & Hove very differently to others.

'People say don't go through Moulsecoomb at night or don't go through Whitehawk at night but because I live right beside Moulsecoomb I have to walk through it regularly, that doesn't bother me; I walk through Whitehawk quite regularly at night and that never bothers me'

Luke

In contrast with some of the other participants Luke does not see these areas as threatening (similar to Andy who does not see these areas as threatening to him) and therefore does use any kind of avoidance or management strategies to minimize his sense of danger. Luke's experiences of these places differ quite dramatically from the warnings he has been given about the perceived danger present and, similar to his understanding of West Street, these estates are not places where he feels threatened or in danger. This difference, amongst other things, displays the limitations of focusing solely on fear of crime when attempting to explore experiences of

marginalisation. While fear of crime and the spatialities produced by that fear is an important factor, the participants also spoke about the more subtle and pervasive forms of marginalisation that they experienced. These marginalisations continued to be primarily associated with their sexual identities and are described as heteronormativity.

6.4 Heteronormative Spatialities

'There is a kind of underlying homophobia ingrained in how people think. Certain parts of society consider it to be a negative thing that you are homosexual and I think a lot of people who hold that opinion don't hold it for any rational logic really they just hold it because that's the opinion their father's and their mothers and so forth had. That's just sort of the status quo for them... it effects how people go about their day to day lives... I think that it's underlying in the sense that it's part of society's way of thinking. It's just kind of something that is without ever having to think about it... it's just one of those things; like the sky is blue and gravity exists.'

Lewis

Heteronormativity is the process through which heterosexual identities, performativities and practices come to be privileged within particular places while other sexual identities are marginalised (Bell & Valentine eds. 1995; Binnie & Valentine 1999; Browne 2007d; Browne *et al.* 2007a; Eyre 1993; Herek 2004; Hubbard 2000; 2008; Jackson 1999; Johnson 2002; Kitchin & Lysaght 2003; Peel 2001; Valentine 1993a; 1993b; Valocchi 2005; Ward & Schneider 2009). The participants were highly conscious of a variety of ways in which they were subject to marginalisation and denied the privileges of heteronormativity, many of which extended beyond the violent forms of homophobia already discussed in this chapter. Lewis demonstrates this understanding and the extent to which he perceives heteronormativity as permeating his everyday experience of space, suggesting that it is *'something that is without ever having to think about it'*. His explanation of heteronormativity follows the usual definition of privilege as invisible and, by being able to clearly articulate the privileges that are denied to him, Lewis shows the differences between his experiences of marginalisation and those of privilege. Lewis, and indeed very few of the participants, could describe their own experiences of privilege clearly; it is only their experiences of marginalisation which are thoroughly understood and articulable. This is an example of 'epistemic privilege' (Mohanty 1997), the knowledge gained by marginalised groups about the processes and apparatuses through which they are marginalised and excluded. As hooks (1995, p31) describes it, 'knowledge of [privilege] gleaned from close scrutiny of [privileged] people... its purpose was to help [marginalised] folks cope and survive'.

Heteronormativity takes many forms and its effects on the participants were varied, as varied as their own abilities to access privilege in other aspects of their identities.

The following vignette describes a moment in which I became aware of my own privileges through their being challenged in a particular place.

It is a mild October evening, although as I was walking a very fine mist was beginning to drift across the town. I am walking home alone from the Theatre Royal where I have enjoyed an evening out with a friend. As I cross the road I am startled to hear “Get out of the road, you homo!” shouted at me from somewhere. A car streams past and I have the briefest glimpse of leering faces through a rolled down window before the glare of the lights make me turn my head; when I look back the car is gone. My hands tighten under the sleeves of my jacket as I try to look around. I don’t think I’m looking particularly gay this evening, black jacket and blue jeans. I’m not even sure that the boys who yelled at me even assume that I am gay. This is probably another instance of ‘gay’, ‘homo’ and ‘queer’ being used as an insult without any assumptions beyond an expression of disdain.

And suddenly this street that I had felt so comfortable in, so confident and so safe is just a little darker. Intending to or not my assumption of being able to walk these, so very familiar, streets safely has been challenged. I am once more made aware that the privilege I take for granted; to walk alone at night relatively without fear, can be contested. I continue walking unharmed, I am even still fairly confident that I am not in danger.

(Research Diary 18/October/2010)

I am made aware of privilege in this vignette through actions which act to contest access to that privilege; my normal assumptions of being able to walk home untroubled are brought into question by a moment of fear. I am subsequently aware of the role in which I am produced as being one which is potentially threatened. I am hailed into the identity of ‘homo’, created as other in this now heteronormative space. Yet very little has happened to force me into this awareness and positionality. This was not a space where I felt threatened until this moment, indeed I did not really feel threatened even as it happened, beyond a brief flash of adrenaline. However, that call from a passing vehicle inescapably reminded me of the potential for danger and the ways in which my identity could be disciplined.

‘I have heard guys saying things about you when you’re walking past them on the street, like I was saying goodbye to someone once we hugged and the guy muttered something on the way past that wasn’t very nice, and we kind of ignored it but I think we both heard... and then the other week when my boyfriend and I were walking down there and past one of the cafes and a bunch of guys were shouting, trying to get our attention by calling us faggots’

John

Such daily experiences of ‘minor’ incivilities are identified by the participants as being an integral part in their experience of everyday space being regulated through heteronormativity. In effect they function ‘as a metonym: where the part (minor violence) stands for the whole (heralding major violence)’ so that these silencing and moments of contestation come to stand for the larger apparatus of disciplinary regulation and marginalisation experienced by the participants (Moran *et al.* 2003, p183).

'Even in schools you get kids going "Oh my God it's so gay" or "Oh my God you're so gay" and it's meant as an insult... I was just having this conversation with my nephew the other day, he's 12... and y'know even he uses that phrase, he's like "Oh my god, it's so gay" I was like "what?" he's like "that song". I don't understand it, it's meant in a bad word, like saying something is bad but I mean he's 12 years old but he's completely fine with me, and he's said to his friends like "yeah my uncles gay" and it doesn't bother him, but he still uses the phrase'

Charles

In this example, the rhetoric of otherness can become mobile and disassociated from its original normativities and targets. As Charles describes, the meaning of otherness can sometimes remain; reiterating his own experience of marginalisation even when it is unintended. Pascoe describes this as 'fag discourse' and explores the ways in which it has come to be deployed within school environments as a technique of discipline which extends into the regulation of all masculine identities (Pascoe 2005). In this way Pascoe's work and Charles's example illustrate the ways in which normativities (in this case hetero-masculinity) operate to regulate identities in a variety of ways, simultaneously regulating heterosexual men's behaviour and reinforcing the other(ed) positioning of gay identities (Seidman 2002; 2005). These processes are not simple or direct in their effects, resistance, negotiation and contestation are also always a part of the process. Just as the participants are positioned through multiple apparatuses of power relations and their experiences of privilege and marginalisation overlap and complicate one another.

The constant regulation and disciplining of identity operates to produce identities in particular ways and formulate experiences of space. Martin discusses how he experienced this subtle regulation and the effects that it had upon his understanding of 'acceptable' behaviours.

'I think because there is a pressure to conform and if you don't conform there is a confidence in the ones that are conforming to challenge and threaten and to be violent if it comes to that... I think I felt an internal pressure, not necessarily forced on me consciously by anyone, I was feeling it myself but I witnessed it around me where people were being talked about or were being threatened because they were being open for want of a better word, they were being blatant, that was the word that was used quite a lot, shoving it down our throats... so yes it's definitely implied but it's also enforced if you step out of sync.'

Martin

The participants are evidently quite literate in reading the ways in which their bodies and identities are regulated in their performative expression, the limits which are imposed. This imposition is very clearly one which is located elsewhere for these men, it is something which is witnessed by Martin and then internalised as a way of acting which was not 'blatant' (Butler 1990; 1993; Foucault 1976; 1977; 1979; 1980). This self disciplining corresponds well with the Foucaultian understanding of power and subject formation explored earlier through which the self is the product of interrelated and coproductive apparatuses of relations. Martin's description

resonates as an example of the processual production and maintenance of these congealed relations of power. This regulation produces the actions of certain bodies as invisible and unremarkable, while others are unusual and highly visible as they rupture the presumed homogeneity of 'straight space' (Bell & Valentine eds. 1995; Binnie & Valentine 1999; Browne 2007d; Browne *et al.* 2007a; Eyre 1993; Herek 2004; Hubbard 2000; 2008; Jackson 1999; Johnson 2002; Kitchin & Lysaght 2003; Peel 2001; Robinson 2012; Valentine 1993a; 1993b; Ward & Schneider 2009). In doing so the actions of these bodies draw attention to that which is ruptured itself; momentarily rendering the invisible, visible to those who might be paying attention. The source of the rupture is produced as different and outside, in doing so allowing the putative inside to return to an un-ruptured state.

'Straight people in general can walk down the street, holding hands, sucking face in public. If I went down the street like that, I'd still get funny looks or comments from people. Or y'know, I can't stand outside a train station getting off with a guy without people looking at me or commenting; whereas straight people can, it's like;
"Oh, isn't that sweet, they're saying goodbye to one another" if its two guys they're like;
"Oohh, 2 guys getting off!"

Charles

Charles describes active, physical events which perform the rupture of normativities which are produced through certain spaces. They are walkings, dancings, kisses and hand holding; material performances of bodies in specific places at specific times made comprehensible through the existence of discursive apparatuses of power relations which produce events as in or out of place, worthy or wretched (Bell & Valentine eds. 1995; Cresswell 1999; Gregory & Walford 1989; Harvey 1996; Herbert 2008; 2009; Hubbard 1997; Jackson 1989; Laurier 2003; Roberts 2006; Sibley 1990; 1995; 1998). Similarly the actions which are used to regulate and enforce these normativities are also material and situated in their deployment and effects (Foucault 1977; 1986). These apparatuses of relations, through continual enactment and repetition, produce the appearance of stability and homogeneity; specifically they produce space as appearing to be always and already heteronormative (Bell & Valentine eds. 1995; Browne *et al.* 2007; Hubbard 2001; Valentine 1993). Without the existence of ruptures and slippages this apparent stability can become ordinary and unremarked upon, in effect subjects become inured to its existence (Allen 2004; Atkinson & Laurier 1998; Delaney 1999; Elden 2007; Ellis *et al.* 2004; Fenster 1999; Fiscer & Poland 1998; Hannah 1997; Hubbard 1998; 2002; Hubbard *et al.* 2009; Michael 1998; Reyes 2011). This leads to the reiteration of these relations which act to deny the access of certain identities to privileges which may be available to others and marginalise them further.

'Even though my friends are not what you would call homophobic in that they're perfectly fine with the fact that I'm gay they are not always very comfortable when I'm talking about my relationship with a man'

I: How is that discomfort displayed?

'I've noticed a silence sometimes that when you talking about it you get this kind of silence for a moment and then you think "maybe they're not very keen to talk about this". I've had people change the subject before; I've had people tell me they're not very comfortable about it before'

Luke

Luke discusses a different form of disciplining, while the previous examples relied upon the observation and regulation of rupturing acts. The potential for his same-sex relationship to rupture and disrupt the performance of heteronormativity within these contexts is denied by his talking being silenced. Luke recognizes the discomfort that such rupturing could cause/is causing to his heterosexual friends and is therefore made to feel as if he is the source of that discomfort and silenced as a disruptive element. Luke must decide whether to remain silent or to become the 'killjoy'; as Ahmed explains:

'In speaking up or speaking out, you upset the situation. That you have described what was said by another as a problem means you have created a problem. You become the problem you create.'

(Ahmed 2010)

If Luke speaks out and addresses the problem of his friends' discomfort he becomes the problem that he has created. Yet in remaining silent heteronormativity is reinforced while enforcing the marginalisation and silencing of other potential identities which could be produced. Being able to publicly discuss sex and intimacy are privileges here that are denied to Luke by the silence and discomfort of his friends.

The canteen is heaving today, bustling bodies are everywhere, eating and drinking, talking and moving around the relatively small spaces between tables. Spotting a seat I settle myself into it – making sure to leave a polite gap between myself and the two guys sat next to me. I take out my eBook to read a brief few pages of fiction (H.G. Wells' *A Modern Utopia*) while I take a break from the office.

'Empedocles found no significance in life whatever except as an unsteady play of love and hate, of attraction and repulsion, of assimilation and the assertion of difference...'

"So, it's like when she's gone out or whatever and I'm lying there at 5 am and I can't get to sleep because when I get really worried it makes me throw up – like actually be sick." One of the guys sat a space down the table from me seems indifferent to the idea that you don't need to shout your conversations across the table. I try to continue my reading:

'Shopenhauer carried out Aristotle in the vein of his own bitterness and with the trust of images...'

"And then because she's out and my mind starts running so I'm like what if she's having fun with someone else, or doing something that I don't like"

'... when he likened human society to hedgehogs clustering for warmth...'

I'm desperately trying to ignore this conversation now, reminding myself that it is really not my place to intrude or at least that I don't know anything about their relationship beyond what he is telling his friend.

"Sometimes I listen to myself, like now when I'm telling you this and think 'Shit that sounds really gay.' Like who gets so worried about stuff that it makes them throw up – sounds really fucking queer, proper bender like"

'... unhappy when either too closely packed...'

My breathing is rapid and shallow, I'm not sure if I'm angry or just in shock at what I'm hearing but whichever it is I'm pretty sure that my gut reaction to smash a plate of pasta salad on this guy's head isn't going to go down well.

I finish my food and leave as quickly as possible, knowing that I'm too angry to make any kind of coherent point were I to speak up about everything I objected too in that short space of time; also knowing that my failure to challenge this speech implicitly reinforces his ability to continue in the same fashion.

The incident leaves me feeling dissatisfied and restless.

'...or when too far away from one another.'

(Research Diary 5/May/2011)

My experience in the canteen is a complex one and similar events where individuals must choose to either challenge such 'minor' marginalizing acts or not (for various reasons) are prevalent for the participants and myself. Perhaps I should have spoken up and challenged this fellow student over his homophobia, misogyny and able-ist speech and the privilege he takes advantage of in order speak in such a way. On the other hand there is a distinctive class relationship at work in the way that I have presented this piece (not to mention my ability to write and deconstruct such a story in this way at all) which speaks much about my own privileges and perhaps arrogance as a researcher/observer in this situation. I was incredibly angry at the time and if anything my own, pragmatic, decision to leave the situation unchallenged rankles, yet was possibly the right one given the circumstances. I do not know what would have been the 'correct' thing to do (or even if there is such a thing). The incident provides an example of the contradictory ways in which privilege and normativity can play out in the spaces of everyday life. There is clearly a hetero-masculine normativity being maintained through this dialogue, one based around anxiety about a potential failure on the part of the speaker to fully perform this identity. Those performances rely upon creating a category through which the speaker can distance himself from their 'true' failure and in doing so reinforce his own position. Similarly my position is contradictory, marginalised and silenced through the heteronormative speech of those around me, while being privileged though my classed identity. This example demonstrates the complex intermingling of privileging and marginalising processes and interpretations of who holds the 'privileged' position become difficult or impossible to pin down. My decision to remain silent in this example means that I refrain from rupturing the presumed

heterosexuality of subjects in that space, in effect, *I pass* (Rich 1980; Valentine 1993a).

6.4.1 Passing

Decisions about when, if and how to challenge the various kinds of casual homophobia and heteronormative speech which queer subjects are likely to be exposed to on a daily basis are constant negotiations between pragmatism, fear and indifference (amongst other motivating factors). Given the 'pervasive' framing of gay life in terms of 'the closet and coming out' the participants are continually faced with situations in which heteronormativity operates to silence or marginalise their identities and they are forced to make decisions about how to react (Seidman *et al.* 1999, p12). In response to the prevalence and impact that fear of violence has upon the lives and experiences of marginalised groups and identities there has been a strong interest in the ways in which those risks and vulnerabilities are managed on a daily basis. 'Passing', for example, is a practice through which individuals attempt to be judged as belonging in particular places which they might otherwise be excluded from or at least experience discrimination or marginalisation (Edwards 1996; Medina 2011; Renfrow 2004; Yoshino 2002). The practice of passing has been studied for a variety of reasons, notably during the segregationist periods of American history and the 'one-drop rule' and the Jim Crow era (Burma 1946; Hoelscher 2003; Khanna & Johnson 2010; Stonequist 1935). Passing is an active form of attempting to minimise the experience of marginalisation, although it can be a very isolating experience for both people of colour (Ahmed 1999; Barreto *et al.* 2006; Delaney 2002; Mahtani 2002) and lesbians and gay men (Berger 1992; Brown 2009; Johnson 2002; Rosenfeld 2009; Westhaver 2006). Although for some, for example trans* people, passing for the desired sex/gender might also be experienced as a positive and affirming practice (Dozier 2005; Elliot 2009; Halberstam 2005; Hines 2006; Kaufmann 2010; Namaste 2005; Nash 2011; Prosser 1998; Stryker 2008; Tauchert 2002).

Passing can be particularly isolating and marginalising experience when it is an encompassing configuration which extends from a situated practice of identity management into an individual's entire social and psychological life, a formulation which has been described by gay and lesbian theorists as 'the closet'. This distinction between passing and the closet is murky at best, although I would argue that while most if not all sexual dissidents will have individuals 'personally or economically or institutionally important to them' who are unaware of their sexual identities, this does not necessarily constitute them being 'in the closet' (Sedgwick 1990, p68). That said, this should not detract from the continuing prevalence and influence of the closet (Allen 1993; Bell 2006; Brown 2000; Gross 1993; La Pastina 2006; Sedgwick 1990; Seidman 2002; Seidman *et al.* 1999). In particular the assumption of

heterosexuality as a product of discourses of heteronormativity continues to marginalise and exclude the experiences of sexual dissidents in a variety of ways (Bell *et al.* 1994; Browne 2007; Eyre 1993; Garcia 2009; Jeyasingham 2010; Kirby & Hay 1997; Land & Kitzinger 2005; Pascoe 2005; Peel 2001; Rich 1980; Richardson 2010; Ward & Schneider 2009). For some of the participants there is a conscious preparation and marshalling of resources in order to perform a successfully 'passing' identity when they are required to spend time in, for example a 'straight bar'.

'If I go to West St or somewhere like that, then I change I'm not me anymore, I'm the bloke that I used to be, so... It's a case of if you find me in a straight bar then I'm going to act a bit straighter... The girls came down recently, all dressed up in Burlesque for my friend Joanna's birthday and I was her 'boyfriend', and these guys came over to me, and kept saying "All those girls you're with, you're well lucky", and I was like "Yeah I know, it's well good innit" and they're like "Yeah you're lucky you've got all these girls, which one's yours?" and I was like "Well, that one" "Fit! Fit mate" and I'm like "Yeah, I know!" And just, I don't know, I just don't feel comfortable being me, there'

Ryan

For Ryan spending time in a 'straight bar' is an uncomfortable experience, one in which he feels it is important to pass as straight. To do so he makes arrangements with one of his female friends to pretend to be his girlfriend and makes efforts to discipline his bodily comportment and mannerisms, to '*act a bit straighter*'. These preparations and policing of behaviour in order to pass demonstrates the extent which, for some people in some places, the experience of the closet and passing remain largely unchanged. Indeed Ryan's description would not look especially out of place in any text discussing the practices of passing, time-space management, compartmentalisation and the closet from almost any point in the history of geographies of sexualities (see Berger 1992; Bhugra 1997; Johnson 2002; Lynch 1992; Sedgwick 1990; Rich 1980; Valentine 1993; 1995). Other participants emphasised that passing was less about their avoidance of danger than about a relatively empowering management and self control of their identity performances and how they are read and responded to.

'Not outright threatened but sort of, more on my guard'

I: What does on your guard look like?

'Well obviously censor myself a bit about things I say so that I don't make any references to my sex life or my sexuality... [laughs] I just remembered one time I was taking a taxi to my friend's house and the taxi driver just started talking and he was very blokey, he was just trying to be friendly and he said; "Oh yeah you're going to go get some birds then" and I was like "Oh yeah hur hur hur" and then he started talking to me about cricket and for some stupid reason I pretended that I liked cricket. I have no idea why, I just didn't want to put myself in an awkward situation where I was like

“No I don’t like cricket, I’m gay, and I’m going to shag boys at this party, enjoy the rest of your journey Mr Taximan”

Simon

There is a clear difference between Simon and Ryan’s understandings of the spaces in which they are located and consequently the impact that the decision to pass within those spaces have for them. While Ryan feels threatened and uncomfortable in what he understands to be straight bars, Simon is more comfortable in emphasising his personal agency in situations where he must make these decisions. Their experiences do not correspond to clearly ‘privileged’ and ‘marginalised’ positionalities. Being able to be read as belonging to, being or having a normative identity can be understood to be a privilege and a privileging moment. Regardless of the development of homonormativity and its privileging effects, heteronormativity is still likely to be prevalent. Yet the participants experiences are neither wholly marginalised nor privileged, rather they are both, or neither, depending upon the ever changing and performative spaces in which they are located and their interactions with those around them.

Work places were particularly prominent in discussions of passing, particularly in the importance given to *professionalism* by some participants. Previous research has demonstrated that professionalism is not a neutral discourse, but rather reflects and privileges hetero-patriarchal values and performativities which discipline and marginalise the bodies and identities of various sexed, gendered, raced and sexual others (Deveral 2001; Mizzi 2012; Rumens & Kerfoot 2009). Although this was not the case for all of the participants and some discussed their sexualities and sexual practices with their work colleagues, for some of them performing in ways which were understood as ‘professional’ meant passing.

‘I am out at work, but there are certain things I would choose not to say when I’m in the office, or certain things that don’t spring to mind as a way of behaving... you wouldn’t walk around the office taking about your sexual exploits, you wouldn’t walk around the office talking about certain outlandish political opinions.’

Kevin

‘When it comes to the workplace my sexuality is not something that you bring up in work typically, like you don’t put it on your CV it’s nobody’s business who you have sex with but the longer you spend at work eventually you are going to have to tell someone, or well, you don’t have to tell them but you either have to tell them or start lying about things or just not talk about that ever’

Jamie

For both Kevin and Jamie, work is a space where their sexual identities are subdued, they both attempt to perform in ways which silences their sexual identities or at least downplays their significance. Kevin emphasises that he does not talk about sex in the office even though he describes himself as being ‘*out at work*’. While Jamie’s sexuality is effaced entirely when he first starts work until it is potentially mentioned at a much later stage. Both of these practices are predicated on a particular understanding of

normative behaviour within work spaces; either being entirely non-sexual in Jamie's example or separating a gay identity from the practices and activities of sex in Kevin's (a replication of the distancing between identity and practice discussed earlier see Chapter 5.5; Robinson 2012; Warner 1999). In either case, their sexual identities are muted in and brought into line with a particular understanding of professionalism that is markedly different from the ways in which they would behave in other non-work spaces and highlights a spatiality of passing as an example of practical decision making for 'succeeding' in spite of heteronormativity (Rosenfeld 2009). Individuals selectively appropriate and perform different practices, mannerisms and bodily behaviours in an effort to control and the interpretation of their identities within particular contexts; in effect, choosing when and how to play it straight in order to ease their experiences of space and minimise their exposure to homophobia.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter acts to further complicate the representation of the participants as privileged subjects through exploring their experiences of fear of crime, exclusion, silencing and abuse. The men in this study are able to access and deploy privilege in a variety of ways, some of which have been explored in the preceding chapters. Yet they remain vulnerable to the marginalising effects of homophobia. This work further challenges the representation of a homogeneously and uniformly privileged homonormative subject and advances these debates by highlighting the importance of understandings which are nuanced and able to recognise these simultaneous processes (Brown 2008; 2009; Duggan 2002; Elder 2002; Oswin 2005; Nast 2002; Sothorn 2004). To some extent these men's experiences of homophobia and heteronormativity have not significantly changed from the practices of passing, compartmentalisation, time-space strategies identified by early geographies of sexualities (Bell 1994; Bell & Valentine *eds.* 1995; Binnie & Valentine 1999; Berger 1992; Eyre 1993; Myslik 1996; Peake 1993; Rich 1980; Valentine 1993; 1995). Gay white men's experiences cannot be summarised as simply being privileged, rather discussions of their lives and spatial practices must simultaneously account for the effects of privilege and marginalisation in producing their everyday experiences.

Spatiality plays a crucial role in the production the participants' experiences of homophobia and the city. Despite their use of a narrative of tolerance when discussing Brighton & Hove the participants are very clearly able to identify places in the city where they feel threatened or at risk. Their ability to do so demonstrates that they are clearly able to 'see' where and how feel threatened or marginalised by normative relations, in contrast to the difficulties they had in perceiving their experiences of privilege and how privilege could be rendered invisible to the participants. This demonstrates how power relations and privilege can be visible and understood by those who are excluded and shows why it is important to pay careful

attention to the knowledges of those who are subject to marginalisation in order to understand the production of inequalities (hooks 1992; 2000; Mohanty 1997). Equally, as the previous chapters and this chapter aim to demonstrate, understandings of inequalities are incomplete without exploring the experiences and spatial practices of those who are privileged.

The participants locate these fears in bounded and specific places; particularly places which were marked by the presence of bodies which were assumed to be straight and working class, with crowds and alcohol consumption. This contrasts with research exploring women's fear of crime (England 2010; Hale 1996; Kern 2003; Pain 1991; 1997; 2000; Vrij & Winkle 1991) which finds that dark and isolated places with few resources like open shops or regular traffic were more likely to be described as threatening and supports Moran *et al.*'s (2003) findings. Although the participants' discussions of Whitehawk as remote and isolated appear to contradict this suggestion, it is the representation of the space as straight and working class which play the most important role in producing it as a threatening location a point demonstrated by the lack of a corresponding fear of the equally distant but middle classed space of Hove.

A key finding of this chapter is the contrast with previous literature which has suggested that it is gay coded 'safer' spaces which are bounded in relation to an unbounded and threatening straight space (Moran *et al.* 2001; 2004). This means that for some of the participants at least, most spaces of the city are not experienced as being straight and therefore threatening, instead they are able to identify specific bounded spaces similar to the equally bounded gay spaces of the scene. This highlights 'straight' space as actively produced and contributes to destabilising understandings of space as normatively heterosexual before becoming *queered* and safely accessible to the participants (Brown 2009; Browne & Bakshi 2011; Johnston 2005; Oswin 2008; Visser 2003; 2008). The majority of the city becomes, for some of the participants, neither straight nor gay. Or both straight and gay simultaneously as different subjects each interpret the space in their own ways with neither of those interpretations contradicting one another. This chapter therefore follows through on the arguments and findings of Chapter 5 and its discussion of 'normal' spaces and advances understandings of how gay white men's relation to homonormativity and heteronormativity intersect and complicate one another.

The immediate fear of crime is not the only way heteronormativity operates to marginalise the participants, while the participants' experiences are diverse even 'minor' incivilities might operate metonymically to reproduce and reinforce their marginalisation (Moran *et al.* 2003). One way in which these experiences diverged from one another was in the participants' perceptions of their own vulnerability based upon their gendered performativities, those who felt they performed in

stereotypically 'masculine' ways were likely to see themselves as less vulnerable than other, particularly camp gay men. This difference is possibly linked to their abilities to perform passing identities in attempts to minimise their potential exposure to homophobia. This chapter demonstrates that passing remains a significant practice in the lives of these participants, although it can be used as a practical tool for negotiating heteronormative space and is therefore not always a marginalising experience (Rosenfeld 2009). Workplaces in particular were the site of a downplaying or silencing of their sexual identities as some participants attempt to perform in ways which conform to a normative 'professionalism'. Mizzi (2012) has recently described professionalism as a discourse which regulates the performativity of identities in ways which are significantly marginalising to gay men and this research supports his discussion.

Added to these complexities is the intersection between relations of class and sexuality in the participants' discussions threatening spaces. The participants' classed positionalities mean that, for the most part, they are able to avoid these places that they fear by choosing homes which are located elsewhere, by rarely needing to enter them and by being able to pass through these working classed neighbourhoods and places. Further, the use of marginalising terms such as 'chav' illustrates that while these places are understood as threatening, they are also undesirable and valid targets for denigration and abuse. Working classed bodies are subject to abuse from the participants (see Chapter 4.4). This means that while the participants might feel threatened and afraid of these places and the bodies which are understood to inhabit them (an assumed straight white working class which is fixed and positioned in the participants' spatial imaginations) which is a significantly marginalising and exclusionary experience, the participants are simultaneously able to operate in ways denied to those working classed bodies and deploy privileges which are available to them. This work therefore continues to challenge representations of stable and homogeneous experiences of privilege or marginalisation and demonstrate the need for nuanced understandings of spatial practices and identities.

7 Conclusion

Outline

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Discussion

7.2.1 Experiences of Privilege

7.2.2 Fracturing Homonormativity

7.2.3 Complicity and Contradiction

7.3 Reflections

7.4 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

Privilege is rapidly growing in recognition as a critical concept, prompting McIntosh (2012, p195) to 'anticipate a gradual development of Privilege Studies in the academic world that parallels the development of Black Studies in the 1960s and then Women's Studies in the 1970s'. While I am wary of such a development (see Dyer 1997) it is undeniable that privilege is increasingly prevalent in a variety of fields. I have argued that many of these fields share an understanding of privilege, yet this commonality has received little attention (see Kimmel & Ferber *eds.* 2003). This project has advanced understandings of privilege using a poststructuralist approach to explore privilege as a situated accomplishment, a contingent practice and a nuanced, contradictory experience. I have done this through exploring the manifestation of privilege in the everyday spatial practices of gay white men and the extent to which homonormativity is a meaningful concept with which explain their spatial practices. Recent discussions of homonormativity have described the figure of the gay white man as a visible manifestation of the allegedly changing positionality of some sexual dissidents who no longer trouble normative formations of power (Brown 2009; Duggan 2002; El-Tayeb 2012; Elder 2002; Haritaworn 2007; Nast 2002; Oswin 2005; Robinson 2012; Sothorn 2004).

This thesis has developed evidence of the lives of gay white men to expand understandings of homonormativity and the processes through which gay white men become able to access and experience privilege in different places. For the men in this study, the spaces they use are intrinsically productive of their self-identities. I argue that these spatialities and performativities are constituted through privilege, and that existing literatures do not sufficiently account for the ways that privilege produces their everyday lives or the spatially situated and performative nature of privilege. My research uses a combination of critical autoethnographic reflection and interviews with 15 gay white men living in Brighton & Hove to develop detailed and 'thick' accounts of the participants' experiences and spatial practices. This final chapter summarises the literature and then identifies three major themes developed in this thesis. First, I address the participants' experiences of privilege (Chapter 7.2.1) and develop my key contributions to a reformulation of this concept. Second, I explore the fracturing of homonormativity (Chapter 7.2.2) and explore the power-geometries and boundaries that challenge homogeneous representations of gay white men. Third, I explore the complexities in the participants experiences (Chapter 7.2.3) using the concept of complicity to argue that privilege and marginalisation are fluid and often contradictory. I close by reflecting on the work developed in this thesis and consider some priorities for the further development of studies of privilege, geographies engagement with privilege and the further study of gay white men's experiences of privilege.

7.2 Discussion

At the beginning of this thesis I set out four aims for the project which would make key contributions to existing literatures of privilege, homonormativity and the spatial practices of gay white men, these were:

- First; to produce empirical evidence of where privilege is manifest in the everyday lives of gay white men, what forms privilege takes and how their spatial practices are shaped through privilege.
- Second; to investigate how privilege is subjectively experienced and how relations of inequalities are naturalised and becomes invisible.
- Third; to examine how privilege is implicated in the production and alleged normalisation of homonormative temporalities.
- Fourth; to develop a spatial and performative approach to the study of privilege as a series of contingent and situated practices.

While some chapters prioritised these aims differently, they have been addressed throughout each of them. Individuals do not pre-exist their relation to power but rather are constituted through it, thus the material manifestations of privilege cannot easily be separated out from the spatialities of their production or how they are experienced. This section will summarise these aims, how they contribute to existing literatures and briefly discuss the methods used to produce this research.

The experiences and spatial practices of gay white men have been a prominent interest for geographies of sexualities, exploring marginalisation and homophobia through a proliferating engagement with various topics such as urbanism, ruralities, citizenship, sex and globalisation (Binnie & Valentine 1999; Brown 2001; Herdt & Boxer 1992; Herek 1992; Kirby & Hary 1997; Kirkey & Forsyth 2001; Knopp 1998; Levine 1998; Myslik 1996; Nardi 2000; Phelan 2001; Valentine 1993; 1995; Weston 1995). There has also been a later exploration of the alleged challenges posed by privilege, such as a loss of political radicalism and a reinforcement of other forms of marginalisation. This discussion attempts to describe a normalisation of queer politics, practices and temporalities, primarily represented by the figure of 'the queer patriarch... the commodity cowboy... the affluent gay white man' (Nast 2002) and has been dubbed 'the *new* homonormativity' (Duggan 2002). Homonormativity suggests that gay white men, and some other sexual dissidents, benefit from the privileges of their raced and gendered identities, and that they have consequently abandoned a commitment to a politics of liberation in favour of a privatised domesticity that no longer contests heteronormative values and institutions. Despite calls for empirical evidence and 'a fuller examination of the complexity of the production and potentialities of the practices' of gay white men this discussion has remained primarily theoretical (Sothorn 2004, p189; see Brown 2008; 2009). It is only recently that such empirical work has begun to be developed (see Robinson 2012; Visser 2008) and addressing the first aim of this thesis provides an opportunity to provide new understandings of the everyday experiences of privilege and explore the extent

to which theoretical understandings of homonormativity are meaningful in relation to the lives of gay white men situated in the global North. The thesis has challenged the homogeneity and universality of these discussions by exploring the power-geometries between gay white men and the spatial performance of their experiences of privilege.

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that homonormativity is related to a broader critical discussion of privilege, yet there have been few attempts to connect this debate with other literatures of privilege. Indeed the critical study of privilege is fragmentary and distributed across a variety of different fields of study. Despite this diversity, I have identified four key principles that have remained relatively stable since their development in the work of DuBois (1899; 1903; 1906; 1920) and throughout the subsequent proliferation of studies of privilege:

- 1) Power relations produce the experiences of all persons, regardless of individual positionalities
- 2) Privilege refers to a 'public and psychological wage' of benefits, advantages and resources
- 3) Privilege and marginalisation are often naturalised processes or attitudes that are invisible to privileged groups and individuals
- 4) Despite its ubiquity, privilege is not a monolithic uniform process.

Points 1 and 2 relate to the existence of privilege, namely that apparatuses of power relations, such as race or gender, permeate the constitution of all subjects and produce different positionalities, boundaries and access to resources so that some identities become marginalised and others become privileged in various ways. Addressing the manifestation and production of these inequalities is the first aim of this thesis. The second aim of the project is to explore how the participants subjectively experience privilege and how their experiences of inequalities and positionalities in relation to a variety of others become naturalised, legitimised, deferred, denied or reified. The *invisibility* of privilege has played a key role in introductory explanations of the concept such as 'the invisible knapsack' (McIntosh 1988; 2012) or 'tailwinds' (Kimmel 2003) and remains central to explaining the apparent inability of subjects to interrogate how privilege produces their experiences (Bonnett 1997; Dyer 1997; Frankenberg 1993; Kimmel 1994; McDermott & Samson 2005; Rollock 2012; Sanders & Mahalingham 2012; Wildman 1996). This invisibility contrasts with the epistemic privilege of those who are subject marginalisation to articulate the conditions that produce their positionalities (DuBois 1920; Fanon 1967; hooks 1992; 1998; Mohanty 1997). Exploring how the participants conceptualise their positionalities in relation to privilege and marginalisation offers an opportunity to explore where and how different apparatuses of power relations and conditions become visible or invisible in their discussions and contribute to understandings of privilege and invisibility.

The final two aims of the project together explore the fourth and most critical of the key principles of privilege I have described. DuBois (1903, p92) emphasised that privilege is not a homogeneous experience, and that 'even the attitude of the Southern whites towards blacks is not, as so many assume, in all cases the same'. He argues that privilege can be contested and spatially differentiated, even in the places where it is presumed to be most entrenched. However, subsequent literatures of privilege, such as homonormativity, have yet to fully engage with this aspect and have produced homogenising, stereotyped and static understandings of 'the privileged subject'. One way this project has addressed these non-uniformities is by exploring the participants' discussions of their personal histories, and how their understandings of space have changed. This discussion of temporalities connects with homonormativity as a process of 'de-politicisation' and a normalisation of gay white men's life courses and desires to more closely resemble the linear development of heteronormativity and its association with long term monogamous relationships, domesticity and child rearing (Dinshaw *et al.* 2007; Duggan 2002; Edelman 2004; Halberstam 2005). The third aim of this project has therefore provided opportunities to explore how the participants' abilities to access privilege changes and contributes evidence of the diversity of experiences and desires.

This thesis explores the experiences and practices of gay white men in order to build towards the fourth aim and integrate poststructuralist conceptions of power, place and performativity to develop a conception of privilege as spatial, processual, inessential, fluid, contingent and performative. It is my contention that existing conceptions of privilege do not adequately take account of spatiality and performativity. I argue that without these elements understandings of privilege lack the theoretical depth that they require to engage with broader literatures of marginalisation in which these developments are already established. There have been a small, but growing, number of studies that explore the geographies and spatialities of privilege (Housel 2009; Hubbard 2005; Inwood & Martin 2008; Kern 2003; Nelson 2008). This project joins them in contributing new evidence of the spatial manifestation of privilege, however work which engages with privilege as a performative enactment of power relations is even rarer, generally restricted to studies that explore practices and discourses that operate to maintain and defend whiteness (Bérubé 2003; Foster 2009; Frankenberg 1993; Nakayama & Krizek 1999; Reyes 2011; Whitehead & Lerner 2009). Combining these approaches, alongside previous work exploring marginalisation, intersectionalities, hegemony and normativities represents an attempt to synthesise and develop a new approach to the study of privilege.

This thesis works with a poststructuralist understanding of identities as performative and situated, emergent from the simultaneous enactment of multiple apparatuses of

power-relations that are heterogeneous associations of material/discursive resources with various strategic effects and local abilities. The methods used to address the aims of this thesis were therefore selected to be able to explore and represent the emergent interpretations, meanings, performances, understandings, practices and narratives through which the participants represented their everyday experiences during their interviews. Similarly, my own personal and theoretical closeness to the topic of the thesis and its location in the gay scene spaces and networks of Brighton & Hove, along with the established difficulties involved in critically reflecting on privilege and positionality meant that autoethnography offered a useful approach to this research. Autoethnography, as I have used it, attempts to make visible connections between personal experiences and socio-spatial phenomena (Ellis 2006; Ellis & Bochner 2000; Mykhalovskiy 1997). Without being able to interrogate how privilege is manifest in the production and experience of my own life there is little chance that I would have been able to explore these experiences in the lives of the participants. In contrast, the participants' interviews and the various challenges I encountered during the project helped to make me aware of things that I had taken for granted in my own experience. Together these two methods interweave and interconnect with one another to refine my understandings of privilege and homonormativity and enable me to draw out specific contributions to these literatures. I discuss these contributions under the following three headings; *experiencing privilege*, where and how the participants experienced privilege in relatively uncontested ways and their understandings of those experiences; *fracturing homonormativity*, the power-geometries that emerged through which the participants developed a normative gay white masculinity; *complicity and contradiction*, the complexities and multiplicities of co-existing and overlapping experiences of privilege and marginalisation.

7.2.1 Experiencing Privilege

The men in this study experience privilege. They do so in a variety of places and a myriad of ways; the full extent of which this project cannot hope to describe, not least because I understand privilege as a situated and fluid accomplishment. Despite this partiality, the project contributes evidence of where and how privilege is manifest in the lives of gay white men, how those manifestations are experienced and how privilege comes to be normalised and reproduced in everyday spatial practices. This material points towards a reconfiguration of understandings of privilege and develops a nuanced representation of the lives of gay white men.

Space, boundary production, distancing and positionality are vital to the manifestation and experience of privilege. Some spaces such as the home were relatively easy for most of the participants to maintain, although this was only the case for some participants while others had more difficulty in securing and

maintaining these spaces. Similarly, some participants argued that positionality played no role in producing their experiences of work. They did so despite recognition that those places were populated by predominantly or entirely 'white' bodies. These places are not discussed at length in this thesis, yet should not be overlooked. Their apparent *lack* of power relations highlights the extent to which most of the participants occupy a relatively centred positionality with access to privileges that enable them to find/create positive experiences of home and work spaces. Without this foundation of stability, described as ontological security, some participants had more difficulty feeling in control of their everyday lives (Johnston & Valentine 1995). The security and confidence that one is *in place* and *belongs* is hard to represent and explain yet this feeling of being comfortable in some spaces permeates the participants' interviews and particularly their discussions of Brighton & Hove. Describing *Brighton-as-tolerant*, a place that is accepting of diversity, reinforces an experience of ontological security. They did this through a relation with 'other' places that the participants had moved from to create a dichotomous centre/margin³⁶ and reproduces Moran *et al.*'s (2001) findings of bounded safe queer space in opposition to an unbounded and threatening straight elsewhere. This narrative presents an image of the city as uniformly safe and tolerant and continues to be used even despite previous experiences of abuse and exclusion. Another example would be the ability to access a discourse of 'the gay community', which is seen as self evidently inclusive, an experience that is not shared by all subjects. Perhaps most strikingly, regardless of their personal ambitions, the participants did not seem to believe that they would face obstructions or restrictions to the development and pursuit of their desires because of their personal identities.

Being able to access discourses of 'normal' and 'ordinary' citizenship is a significant privilege (Bell & Binnie 2006), indeed it could be said that explore who is considered 'normal', the processes of that production and their geographical specificity, is the foundation of what it means to study privilege. Warner (1993, pxxi) writes that 'so much privilege lies in heterosexual culture's exclusive ability to interpret itself as society' and this articulation is just one example, in one field of study and with reference to one apparatus of power relations. Being accepted and treated as 'normal' is a powerful motivating factor for many forms of identity politics and makes a huge difference to peoples' everyday abilities to live their lives (Fuss 1992; Weeks 2007). Yet in utilising this narrative and being able to access this discourse, the reproduction and maintenance of other marginalisations and exclusions is seemingly inevitable because *normal* only ever gains meaning in relation to *abnormal* (Derrida 1979; Foucault 1976; 1977; Warner 1999). This unstable interrelation requires constant maintenance, and this thesis has explored a wide range of practices used by the

³⁶ Often between south/north or urban/rural spaces, see Brown 2000.

participants in order to define and delimit the boundaries between various kinds of 'us' and 'them'. My research supports previous material exploring how white subjects discursively defend, deny and maintain their positionalities in order to naturalise the privileges that they have access to, the existence of inequalities and the differential treatment of various subjects. This thesis demonstrates that these practices are mobile and not limited to the defence and maintenance of whiteness, but can be deployed in a variety of contexts to reinforce and reproduce inequalities and the experience of privilege.

One of these practices, the narrative of 'earned' and 'unearned' privilege which develops from McIntosh's work (1988; 2012), is commonly used as a method of teaching and introducing the concept of privilege (Case & Stewart 2010; Gedro 2010; Messner 2011). Yet this distinction is problematic. Theoretically, the suggestion that the abilities and resources available to any specific subject can be easily distinguished as the result of individual actions rather than the situated product of power relations does not sufficiently engage with the Foucaultian conception of power used in this thesis. I am not suggesting that an individual's actions are irrelevant to the production of their experience only that in this understanding it is difficult if not impossible to make such a distinction. Further, the attempt to do so risks an individualism that disconnects the subject from its situated and relational production. The participants used this narrative to do precisely that; explaining their positionalities as the product of their own 'hard work' and ignoring the diverse processes of privilege which have supported and assisted their accomplishments. Others have argued that McIntosh's approach effaces the connection between privilege and marginalisation and effaces an examination of the processes through which inequalities are produced in favour of a static description of their existence, a useful project but one which is politically limited (Leonardo 2004; Gillborn 2006). This is why alongside the description of the participants' experiences of privilege; this thesis has also been dedicated to exploring the processes of production and the relations between privilege and marginalisation.

An integral part of the participants' experiences of privilege are their abilities to produce boundaries between self and others. Representations of the other have little or nothing to do with the realities of other's lives but are about maintaining boundaries, defending privilege and creating value for certain positionalities (Said 1978; Skeggs 2004). Descriptions of homonormativity describe gay white men as being well placed to take advantage of apparatuses of patriarchy and racism (Nast 2002). However raced and gendered others were not the only identities that were represented and marginalised by the participants. Working classed identities in particular were the target of these distancing practices through discourses of the 'chav', dirtiness and violence. These identities were described as being always-

straight and potential sources of homophobic violence, effacing the existence of working class queerness in favour of a dichotomy that centred the experiences of middle class gays in opposition to working class straights. However even these practices of representing the other were spatially contingent as different bodies/identities were problematised during the participants descriptions of different spaces, such as women in scene spaces. This thesis contributes a detailed examination of where and how the participants deploy their privileges of representation in order to marginalise others. Demonstrating that while gay white men are able to take advantage of the apparatuses of power relations in which they are situated, this is not stable or universal.

Different forms of marginalisation and privileging are manifest in different times and places and this project attempted to work with an intersectional understanding of identities. Even with this approach, there are times throughout the thesis that the discussion becomes limited to discussions of a single apparatus of power relations, identification or process of privileging and marginalisation. Places where discussions of whiteness do not explicitly take into account the intersection of masculinity and sexuality and where different parts of these categorisations and identities disappear from view entirely. This is partly a product of working with literatures of privilege that have only recently started to attempt to engage with more than one field of power relations at a time and largely remain mired in singular studies of identities. However, I wonder how much this is also a part of the naturalisation of privilege as the participants and I collaborate in the defence of our positionalities by avoiding difficult areas of discussion or by *not* asking the other question (see Butz & Berg 2002; hooks 1992; Matsuda 1991). Even during my discussions of how privilege becomes invisible, the difficulties that the participants encountered in examining their own positionalities and their constitution through privilege slip into singular modes of discussion. While my research has demonstrated these practices in ways which advance existing knowledges of the production and experience of privilege, I wonder if this singularity might not live up to the potential of a commitment to intersectional analysis. It must be remembered that the examples and discussions committed to this text have been selected for individual clarity and that many of these practices were used concurrently to support and reinforce one another. My concern here is that my work might operate to reproduce the very processes that it seeks to challenge, the invisibility of privilege, the legitimisation of inequalities and the naturalisation of apparatuses of power relations. Despite this concern, this thesis has offered a reformulation of invisibility as it relates to the study of privilege. I have done this by examining the practices and processes through which the participants understandings of themselves, their positionalities and the situated relations between them and others are denied, reified, naturalised or otherwise effaced. This is what has

generally been understood as the invisibility of privilege and my research has challenged its representation as a static characteristic.

In developing this argument, I have also demonstrated how the participants learn to access privilege as they move through different spaces. They identify a process of acclimatisation which some of them went through in order to learn the spatial practices and normativities of scene spaces through which to be able to utilise those spaces comfortably, in effect to access privilege there. This supports existing studies of this process (Ridge *et al.* 2006; Valentine & Skelton 2003) and is a parallel argument to Rooke's (2009) understanding of the 'lesbian habitus'. I argue that the necessity this process of learning, demonstrated by the lack of such confidence in these spaces experienced by those who did not go through the same process, shows that privilege is a situated and performative accomplishment. It is only because the process of learning to access privilege is most often a permeating experience of positionality and socialisation and therefore difficult to clearly identify before it becomes naturalised, unquestioned and invisible. Another way I have demonstrated this destabilisation and reconfiguration of understandings of privilege as invisible is through demonstrating that, not only is privilege not always invisible to the participants but over the course of their interviews, some of them became more aware of privilege in their lives. Invisibility can be challenged through teaching people to recognise privilege in their everyday experiences (Abrums *et al.* 2012; Messner 2011; Tatum 1994; Walls *et al.* 2009). Again, this supports existing literatures that explore students' reactions to learning about privilege in classroom environments but my research demonstrates that this can be done through more informal conversation and provocation to reflexively examine one's positionality.

Taken together this material demonstrates that the participants experience privilege in a variety of places, that those experiences can take a variety of forms and that privilege can become normalised and invisible in their experiences so that their positionalities within relations of inequalities become taken for granted. I have described a range of ways that the participants experience privilege. However, my research and analysis has not remained a solely descriptive project. Although descriptions are useful for making visible the existence and formation of privilege, critical understanding of the processes of production develop that knowledge into viable political tools. Most importantly, my research contributes towards an understanding of privilege that is not uniform or stable. Rather, I conceptualise privilege as the situated and performative effect of apparatuses of material/discursive power relations through which certain situated subjects become able to access resources and abilities that are denied to others. This understanding of privilege is relativistic and does not intrinsically moralise about the existence of privilege because all subjects are constituted through power relations and

apparatuses of race, gender, class, sexuality produce and regulate all performativities of identities. To my knowledge there have yet to be any other projects that have articulated privilege in this way, although my work draws together and synthesises its understandings from an array of similar literatures that engage with marginalisation. I argue that for studies of privilege to continue to develop and proliferate, the theoretical approach to privilege needs to move beyond existing understandings that have yet to fully engage with conceptual understandings of spatiality and performativity. This research has explored the extent to which theoretical descriptions of homonormativity are meaningful explanations of the everyday lives of the participants. However as I have argued, the experience of privilege is not uniform and this project has explored how the participants challenge the representation of 'gay white men' as a singular and homogeneous positionality.

7.2.2 Fracturing Homonormativity

Homonormativity relates to the abilities of some sexual dissidents to access privilege in ways that have not previously been available to them and the alleged changes this has on the constitution, priorities and conduct of a broadly conceived 'gay politics'. Discussion of homonormativity has centred on the experiences and spatial practices of the 'affluent gay white man' (Duggan 2002; Nast 2002). Such homogeneous and universal identifications are problematic at best and the everyday identifications and spatial practices of gay white men are more diverse than this representation is able to account for (Brown 2009; Elder 2002; Sothorn 2004). This research answers calls for more nuanced and situated accounts of gay white men's experiences (Oswin 2005). My work demonstrates a variety of ways that power relations fracture identity and argues for the conception of a power-geometry (Massey 1993) through which some forms of gay white masculinity gain access to some forms of privilege while others become subject to marginalisations. This discussion does not yet take into account the impact of heteronormativity and homophobia in differentiating gay white men's experiences. Rather, I explore how the participants' understandings and performances of their identities operate to produce a normative gay white masculinity and to defend that positionality. In doing so they fracture homogeneous representations of gay white men's lives, I argue that rather than discarding the concept of homonormativity, this evidence offers an opportunity to reconsider who and what it purports to discuss. The participants used their positionalities to imagine and perform a variety of different possible identities, not all of which align with the 'very distinct sides' that have 'emerged' in discussions of homonormativity (Oswin 2005, p80). This research therefore contributes evidence that advances an anti-essentialist, nuanced queer knowledges of privilege oriented in explorations of situated practices, rather than static identities.

Scene spaces can be marginalising and exclusionary for a wide array of different identities and the participants in part replicate and support previous research which demonstrates the exclusions experienced by women, non-white sexualities, trans* and bisexual persons, dis/abled or differently abled bodies, working class queers and older gay bodies. This research offers further evidence of these processes, from the perspective of those who are privileged by those relations and evidence of how gay white men act to centre and reinforce their own experiences of space while marginalising others. Such evidence is vital to a more robust understanding of the situated production of inequalities, yet the majority of this work explores experiences of marginalisation without being able to speak for and engage with the experiences of privilege. Without such evidence our understandings will remain incomplete and in the process reinforce the silences and invisibilities which pervade experiences of privilege, reproducing them as monolithic and unchallengeable (Bonnet 1997; 2000; Brown 2009; Connell 1995; 2000; Delgado & Stefancic 1997; Dyer 1997 Jackson 1999; Kimmel 1994).

Fat bodies, their spatial practices and the marginalisations that they experience in some spaces have received little attention (Longhurst 2005). Although the production of the ideal gay body has been examined, this has rarely occurred in relation to inequalities (Drummond 2005; 2006; 2010; Filiault & Drummond 2007; Slevin & Linneman 2010). For some of the participants, the discourses and understandings of fat bodies as undesirable and as valid targets for marginalisation and abuse operated to make them feel threatened, uncomfortable or unwelcome in scene and other spaces. Similarly, one of the participants described his experiences of rejection and exclusion after being diagnosed as HIV+. I argue that, theorisations of homonormativity presently remain distanced from issues of embodiment and corporeality and that these experiences demonstrate that the participants' bodily specificity is implicated in the production of their spatial practices and abilities to access privilege in different places. Identities and bodies cannot be separated from the spatialities of their enactment and therefore to suggest that gay white men experience privilege without taking into account the local enactment of identity effaces the importance of space. Enactments are as much composed of flesh, movement, gesture, bodily size and formation, fat and muscle, body hair, grooming, fluids, pheromones and the capricious emotions of desire and attraction as they are of discursive identities and a robust examination of privilege will need to be able to engage with this heterogeneity.

This understanding of the importance of embodiment to the experience of privilege challenges existing literatures that focus attention on the discursive production and representation of identities. The participants' discussions of different formations and performances of masculinity offers further insight into how the ability to access

privilege is a situated and performative process. The participants identify two allegedly polar forms of masculinity, 'macho' hetero-masculinity and camp or 'effeminate' gay masculinity, and then work to distance themselves and occupy an unspoken and silent third positionality of the 'normal gay man'. I will follow up discussions of the participants' understandings and representations of working classed, hetero-masculinities as 'macho' and threatening in the following section. Here I want to focus on the production of 'camp gay masculinities' as different from the participants' self identities and the subsequent abuse targeting these persons. Discussions of homonormativity do not yet fully account for the ways in which individual performativities are differentiated from one another and the participants' gendered exclusions of camp men demonstrate that embodiment and performance are more important for the manifestation and access of privilege than has been recognised (see El-Tayeb 2012; Haritaworn 2007; Robinson 2012). Existing discussions of masculinities do account for hegemonic forms of masculinity being arranged in relation to the rejection of femininity *and* homosexuality (Connell 1987; Donaldson 1993; Gilmore 1990; Kimmel 1994). Yet this research disentangles these two markers to demonstrate that while homosexuality might be normalised, effeminacy and gender dissidence continues to be denigrated and marginalised (see McCormack 2012). These marginalisations are not being produced by straights in relation to heteronormative understandings of masculinity. It is gay men who are working to normalise certain forms of gender performance while reproducing the marginalisation of gender dissidents.

In addition to these identifications and corporealities that fractured the apparent homogeneity of the participants' positionality, they also described a trajectory through scene spaces that produced their experiences of Brighton & Hove. I have argued that this is a process through which the participants learn to access privilege (Ridge *et al.* 2006; Valentine & Skelton 2003). Yet their descriptions of 'growing out' of participation in scene spaces and the spatial practices of their 'youth' problematise homonormativity. Despite scene spaces being ostensibly 'for' certain forms of gay, white, cisgendered, middle class, thin, able bodied men these participants describe themselves as no longer using those spaces. Similarly the spaces of public sex, cruising and gay saunas that have been associated with gay masculinities are also rejected by the participants. Instead, the participants develop a 'normal' gay masculinity. An identity that is predicated upon exclusion of non-normative performativities such as camp-ness and gender dissidents, slut shaming (which become generalised to non-normative sexualities and desires), corporeality and working classed sexualities. This is homonormativity at work and it does not solely relate to the identity 'gay white man' but rather the development of normative practices, embodiments, spatial practices and desires (see Brown 2009; Warner

1999). The stigma associated with a gay identity has seemingly diminished, but the shame of queer sex, non-normative behaviours and desires and the inability to 'develop' and 'grow up' appropriately lingers and is demonstrated in the participants' preferences for spaces and bodies which are not marked as queer (Warner 1999).

These processes are significantly more sophisticated, and represent a distinct break, from the dichotomous logics critiqued by poststructuralist feminist and queer writing. While also not developing into the kinds of equitable pluralities which the breakdown of dichotomy is expected to produce. Instead, the participants develop a form of hegemonic gay positionality similar to that identified by critical literatures of hetero-masculinities. From the identification of this process, it could be argued that relations of privilege are likely to be more resilient than previous expected and that the proliferation of identities beyond dichotomous forms will not necessarily result in increasing accesses to privilege for those previously marginalised bodies. The abilities of some gay white men to access privilege does not necessarily mean that all gay white men have the same abilities and accesses or have them in the same spaces. However, even the men in this study, with their various accesses to privilege, are not homogeneously and universally privileged. Neither does their participation in reproducing existing forms of marginalisation and the development of a kind of hegemonic gay white masculinity indicate that they somehow exist in a pure space of domination and guilt.

This section has pointed towards a fracturing of understandings of homonormativity and a reconfiguration of the term to focus on the development and enactment of specific situated practices of privileging and marginalisation. This connects to the understanding of privilege that this thesis is developing. Despite some of the participants' use of their abilities to access privilege to reproduce marginalisation, I do not believe that this indicates that access to privilege *necessarily* operates in this way. Nor that their individual actions were motivated by discrimination. It should not be overlooked that this process represents a significant disruption of homophobia and exclusion in everyday experience (Fuss 1992; Weeks 2007). The final section of this discussion reintroduces the idea of complicity and argues that this concept provides a relevant and useful mode of interpreting the participants' multiple and contradictory experiences of privilege.

7.2.3 Complicity and Contradiction

I argue throughout this thesis that the concept of homonormativity represents an engagement with privilege, and that the two concepts have much to gain from being explicitly connected to one another. Recognition that homonormativity refers to the abilities of certain sexual dissidents to access privilege will enable engagement with a range of theoretical tools without needing to replicate prior work. As I have shown,

these fields of study have much in common with one another and the core principles of privilege apply to conceptions of homonormativity. I am confident that using this framework will advance this discussion and make it easier to develop understandings of how homonormativity interacts with other discussions of masculinities, hegemony, intersectionality, whiteness, class and other fields of study. Yet homonormativity offers an interest in queerness, complicity and contradiction which would benefit existing conceptions of privilege. Although there are exceptions, existing studies of privilege overwhelmingly engage with singular fields of identity and the interaction between dichotomous 'privileged' and 'marginalised' positions, for example the centrality of white bodies and identities in relation to non-whites. Homonormativity is different because it offers the opportunity to explore a positionality that is simultaneously situated at an intersection privilege and marginalisation. Despite the development of a normative gay white masculinity, the participants' experiences cannot be extracted from their simultaneous positioning in relation to heteronormativity and experiences of homophobia.

The participants experience a variety of marginalisations concurrently with their experiences of privilege. Other gay white men propagate some of these marginalisations, and these experiences are spatially contingent and performative. Despite these variations between them, all of the participants discussed their experiences in relation to a pervasive, marginalising experience of heteronormativity and homophobia in various forms. Some participants felt their sexual identities to be silenced or excluded while others experienced various degrees of aggression, abuse and violence. Many of these experiences and the management practices of compartmentalisation, time-space strategies, avoidance and passing remain relatively unchanged from early examinations of geographies of sexualities and the study of gay and lesbian experiences of heteronormativity (see Berger 1992; Bhugra 1997; Johnson 2002; Lynch 1992; Sedgwick 1990; Rich 1980; Valentine 1993; 1995). This work, along with similar recent material (Browne & Bakshi 2011; Visser 2008), begins to put empirical flesh on Oswin's (2005) theoretical proposal for a more ambiguous and difficult understanding of positionality.

Complicity proposes to engage with the more-than-dichotomous positionalities of everyday lives and explore simultaneous and often contradictory processes and practices of privilege and marginalisation manifest. The understanding of privilege used in this thesis develops from the premise that all subjects are coproduced and interconnected through power (Foucault 1976; 1977; 1980). Consequently, even the 'most radical' positionality imaginable is implicated and produced in relation to marginalisations and oppressions. We cannot escape our interconnections with marginalising, exclusionary and discriminatory apparatuses of power relations because we are all interconnected and coproduced through the thrown-togetherness

of place and identity (Massey 1993; 1995; 2005). Attempting to occupy a disconnected space of innocence attempts to disassociate the self from the spatialities of its production. Particularly damaging are the ways in which this practice consequently leads to an effacement of the impacts and effects of privilege in the allegedly innocent subjects own life. I argue that such an attempt to produce dichotomous spaces of innocence and guilt, as identified by Oswin (2005) in some discussions of homonormativity, is little different from the practices of deferral used by the participants in this study to obfuscate their own positionalities. In comparison, a more humble recognition that all selves and positionalities are (to varying extents) implicated in the replication and recitation of power relations and consequently relations of privilege, offers a method of working which draws on feminist understandings of reflexivity (England 1994; Rose 1997) to explore privilege with a sensitivity to nuance, without resorting to 'facile geometries of heroes and hegemony' (Oswin 2008, p97). I believe that such an approach would foster the kinds of empathy, born from understandings of our shared complicity yet shared commitments, that might further promote the kinds of political coalitions and working across differences advocated by black feminists such as Hurtado (1999, p226) when she writes of 'understanding how we are all involved in the dirty process of racialising and gendering others, limiting who they are and who they can become' (hooks 1981; 2000; Hurtado 1989; 1996; Lorde 1984; Matsuda 1991).

Styker (2008) has warned against suggestions that gay white men (and other sexual dissidents) have only 'recently' become able to access privilege and charts an alternative history of *homo-normativity* as a cisgendered practice of excluding trans* bodies and identities from 'the gay movement'. Similarly, a recent collection of essays published in *Sexualities* (Taylor ed. 2011) prompts a re-examination of the intersection between class and sexuality and reiterates that classed privilege has long been a feature of 'mainstream' gay movements. Questions regarding trans* persons and politics were largely avoided by the participants and the issue of their cisgendered-ness almost never arose. This silence demonstrates that their cisgendered identities were thoroughly normalised for them and their discussions of gender predominantly circulated masculinities as I have already discussed. In contrast classed bodies, class politics and class privilege were woven throughout the participants' discussions. Yet these experiences are contradictory, overlaid with discussions of homophobia, spatiality, mobility, class privilege and heteronormativity. Narratives of the abject working classed body, the 'chav', dirty and undesirable places, the inability to perform properly '*out and proud*' gay identities or a presumed universal violent hetero-masculinity were common in the participants' discussions. They exhibit a privileged ability to represent and mock a stereotypical otherness and working classed bodies and spaces more than any other were the targets of derision

and abuse by the participants. I believe that at least part of this hostility is predicated upon the participants' fear of crime; I do not think it is a coincidence that the places in which they located their fears of violence were working classed places. This is a recognisable recitation of the privileged fear of the marginalised other, the fear of the threatening unknown. Yet this discourse is situated alongside a marginalising experience of fear of violence and heteronormative aggression experienced by the participants in a wide range of manifestations. I argue that it would be reductive to attempt to separate these two conflicting processes and that instead they should be examined for what they are, simultaneous manifestations of multiplicity and contradiction. Neither the participants, nor the hypothetical working class targets/abusers that they create in these interviews can be interpellated into a binary of privilege and marginalisation. Rather, both figures occupy both positions simultaneously making it impossible to render singular judgments over their actions.

This discussion of multiplicity, complicity and transgression of binaries extends into the participants' production of 'normal spaces' as spaces which exceed categorisation as dichotomously either straight or gay. Emerging alongside their discussions of normative gay masculinities, as 'third' positions which exist outside of a presumed binary between 'macho' hetero-masculinity and camp gay masculinities, the participants describe these 'normal' spaces as everywhere which is not explicitly coded (by them) as being either the 'straight spaces' of West Street bars or working classed housing and the 'gay spaces' of the scene. This is likely a product of Brighton & Hove's representation as a place of tolerance and acceptance of diversity (Browne & Bakshi 2011) and the participants' understanding of the *'Brighton bubble'*. This produces a boundary between the 'safe' space of Brighton & Hove in relation to the always-already straight and threatening spaces of elsewhere (Moran *et al.* 2003). The participants' understandings of Brighton & Hove as a place of safety, in which they belong, enables the development of these 'normal' spaces which they interpret as being neither straight nor gay. This understanding is predicated on the ease with which they are able to access and make use of these spaces, a lack of noticeable obstructions to their presence. Or at least, their experiences of aggression or homophobia in these spaces might be explained away, ignored or effaced. The decision and ability to ignore some forms of abuse can be an empowering experience and a product of access to the kinds of ontological security through which the event can be interpreted as meaningless or 'just something you have to ignore' (Browne *et al.* 2011).

That the participants are able to experience a wide array of spaces as being 'normal', boring and uncontested is evidence of the privileges to which they have access and the normalisation of their performative identities within those spaces. Homes, work, most streets and parks in the city and a large number of its bars, clubs and

restaurants are all open to the participants to make use of as they see fit and this experience is ordinary for them. It is only certain marked spaces of danger and fear in which they might take extra precautions. This poses a problem for attempting to interpret their experiences through terms such as hetero or homo normativities. From the various materials collected in this thesis it is evident that the participants routinely make use of passing as a practice of managing their exposure to risk but also as a form of performance in order to ease their passage within everyday spaces (Rosenfeld 2009). They also produce this understanding of 'normal' spaces in which they do not feel marginalised, subject to heteronormativity and subsequently do not feel that they are being required to pass. I suggest that this evidence, alongside recent work by Visser (2008) and Browne & Bakshi (2011, p180) contributes towards understandings of spaces which are not 'already hetero/homo-normative awaiting queer transgressions'. Instead this research points towards an understanding of space and privilege as performative such that a range of different bodies/identities might be able to access privileges and become normal through them in ways which are not prefigured and restricted to binary understandings of sexualisation and who 'should' be able to 'fit in' to which spaces.

The participants of this study and myself experience privilege, it is manifest in our lives in a wide range of situated processes, performativities and practices many of which are naturalised over time to become invisible to our self understandings. Yet power relations and processes of privilege and marginalisation are not a zero-sum game so that each of these different practices can be assigned some kind of plus or minus value and arrive at a 'final' interpretation of our experiences as quantifiably 'privileged' or 'marginalised' and measurably *this much more* privileged than another positionality or identity. To do so is to engage in the kind of 'oppression olympics' which are inherently damaging to the goals of coalition and working across difference to which this thesis is dedicated (Hancock 2011; Yuval-Davis 2012). Instead I contribute towards an understanding of privilege which is rooted in situated practices and everyday experiences. This thesis and the theoretical approach to privilege that I have developed remain open to the possibilities and complexities of contradictory experiences and complicity. Developing upon Oswin's (2005; 2008) proposals of a more ambiguous and troublesome understanding of privilege and marginalisation I have demonstrated that the participants cannot be conceptualised as monolithically or uniformly privileged subjects. Rather privilege and marginalisation are situated processes that overlap and complicate their experiences in ways that work with poststructuralist geographic conceptions of intersectionality such as those proposed by Nash (2008) and Valentine (2007).

The participants' identities exceed dichotomous representation as being solely either privileged or marginalised, as such so do their experiences of some spaces. Further,

their imaginations of their futures and the narrative of temporal development they described do not always easily fit into such binaries. Duggan's (2002) image of a homonormativity predicated in privatised domesticity and de-politicisation, not only presents a limited understanding of what might constitute politics but also produces a false dichotomy through which all experiences must be categorised as either neoliberal conservatism *or* queer radicalism. Such a limited demarcation of what might be constituted as politics seems to efface recognition that for subjects who experience marginalisation, self-care can be 'an act of political warfare' (Lorde 1987, p131). Similarly, Fuss (1992, p2) warns against a 'misplaced nostalgia for or romanticisation of the outside as a privileged site of radicality... to endorse a position of perpetual or even strategic outsiderhood (a position of powerlessness, speechlessness, homelessness...) hardly seems like a viable political program, especially when, for so many gay and lesbian subjects, it is less a question of political tactics than everyday lived experience'. The attempt to reduce the everyday political lives, spatial practices and desires of gay white men to a dichotomy of innocent radicalism or guilty conservatism effaces the nuanced and contradictions of their everyday lives (Brown 2009). This research also demonstrated that for some of the participants their decisions were not limited to a correlation between neoliberal domesticity and some of the men in this study emphasised that they understood their positionalities to be enabling them to live their lives in a variety of different ways or sought to redefine and reformulate traditions and practices to better fit with their own desires and lives. These understandings are the product of their abilities to access privilege and the confidence that their lives are their own and not restricted or constrained. However their desire to use those positionalities to perform in ways which transgress and exceed dichotomous representations and naturalised, predetermined associations between bodies/identities/spaces/politics offers an opportunity to explore the manifestation of privilege and homonormativity as situated, contingent and performative practices. In doing so we might be able to further explore the slippages, misrecognitions, complexities, complicities, nuances and instabilities of the power relations through which identities, bodies, privilege, marginalisation and politics are produced.

7.3 Reflections

Reflecting on this project my most pressing consideration is the possibility that I might have inadvertently fallen directly in the trap that Dyer (1997, p10) warns against when he describes the problems of 'me-too-ism' and the 'green light problem... to write and talk about what in any case we have always talked about: ourselves'. Butz and Berg (2002) describe 'the duppy' of privilege, a haunting complicity with the reproduction of power relations and defence of privilege, while hooks (1992; 1995; 1998) is more direct when she describes 'white-talk' through

which the recipients of privilege collude in self congratulatory and narcissistic dialogue which does nothing to address marginalisation. Evidence of such collusion might be found in the ways certain lines of questioning are avoided or cut short and a failure to 'ask the other question' (Matsuda 1991). I was also struck by how much easier I found it to write about my own and the participants' experiences of homophobia and heteronormativity in comparison with our experiences of privilege. Part of this was no doubt associated with the difficulties involved in 'seeing', conceptualising and making sense of privilege. Although these difficulties have diminished for me over the course of the project, I remain cautious about the possibility that my work might operate to efface and defend privilege in ways that are presently unclear to me.

Despite this risk, I am committed to the argument that an extensive, critical study of the operation, manifestation, defence and reproduction of privilege is essential to the ongoing development of knowledges that seek to reconfigure and transform relations of inequalities and the deleterious effects that inequality has on the lives of everyone. While I have reservations about the work of McIntosh, I agree whole-heartedly when she writes: 'I am convinced that studies of oppression will not go anywhere toward ending oppression unless they are accompanied by understanding of the systems of privilege' (McIntosh 2012, p204). I believe that reflexivity and a critical attention to positionality, as argued by many feminists in critiques of 'objectivist' research, offer vital tools for at least ensuring that we are honest about the potential effects of privilege in our lives and in the production of our work (see Chapter 3; (Bondi 1990; Bondi & Domosh 1992; Eyles 1993; Gorelick 1991; Harding 1987; Reinharz 1992; Rose; 1993; 1997). Additionally I think that these criticisms of 're-centring privileged voices' and the potential for defensiveness in the critical work of 'privileged' authors draws on the dichotomous understanding of innocence/guilt described by Oswin (2005). I do not dispute that these are possibilities that must be guarded against and there are plenty of examples of *intentionally* defensive and reactionary work that provide ample reasons for caution. Yet recognition of the messiness of everyday lives and of each of our complicities with power relations might continue to challenge the boundaries of us and them, between the innocent and the guilty and instead leave us conscious of multiplicities. Such sentiments are not original, they are clearly articulated in previous work addressing privilege and politics such as Hurtado (1989; 1996; 1999), whom I draw on extensively, or as Warner writes:

'Were we to recognise... diversity of [everyday spatial practices and identities]... the result would not be separatism, and could not be, because it would give us no view of who "we" are apart from the fact that there are a lot of non-normativities in the world... [this is] the antithesis of identity politics.'

(Warner 1999, p75)

Moving forward with the work developed in this thesis I anticipate three priorities; a further engagement between privilege and geography; exploration of fractured homonormativities; and consideration of wider applications.

As mentioned earlier, this thesis does not spend a great deal of time prioritising discussions *within* the discipline of geography. Despite this, the work developed is inextricably engaged with space and place in the production of everyday experiences and is, I believe, a thorough geographical project. There has yet to be a widespread engagement with privilege within geography, although as I have demonstrated much of the work discussed by geography has a great deal of relevance to the developing study and conceptualisation of privilege. The first priority developing out of this project is therefore to develop this relevance into a clear and unambiguous engagement with privilege within geography and to ensure that the importance of the spatial conceptualisation of privilege developed in this thesis becomes recognised. The majority of work engaged with privilege has, to date, been done within specific fields of study and while I disagree with McIntosh about the desirability of a dedicated 'Studies of Privilege' the concept and its importance should be more widely recognised. A sustained poststructuralist geographical engagement with privilege offers the opportunity to develop productive, challenging and nuanced understandings through which to continue developing understandings of the everyday practices and manifestation of inequalities.

I also anticipate the discussions of homonormativity developed in this thesis to contribute towards ongoing debates regarding gay white men's abilities to access privilege. While initially the findings of this project advance those discussions they also point towards interesting avenues for developing projects. Specific priorities would include an examination of the spatial practices and experiences of camp gay men in this world that we have allegedly won. The men in this study reproduce the marginalisation of gender dissidents and I believe it should be a priority to develop these findings by exploring how camp gay men's experiences of privilege and how their lives and spatial practices differ from the men in this study. I wonder how they relate to the spaces described as 'normal' by the participants in this study and how they interpret their lives in relation to the temporalities of 'growing out' of scene spaces.

Another priority should be further study of gay men's practices of sex, looking for sex and the spatialities of sex. If rejecting visible displays of sex and sexuality are part of homonormativities I would be very interested to explore where and how the men in this study had sex and how their actual sex practices differed from the idealised representations of their lives developed in these interviews. Emerging studies of digital sex practices and digital cruising through programs and apps suggest that far from refraining in *having sex*, it is merely a change in the visibility and spatialities of

having sex; doing so at home and finding partners through the internet rather than more traditional cruising grounds and bars. Alongside this examination of those who have abandoned public sex, I would be interested in further explorations of saunas, sex parties and clubs and the continuing popularity of naked club nights and fetish bars in London and elsewhere. To explore whether these spaces are restricted to those 'other queers' who reject normalisation, or whether there are more nuanced and contradictory practices at work.

Equally, the men in this study are, on average, well educated and employed but they certainly do not represent the kinds of men that might be found in an exploration of gay financiers or perhaps gay members of the Conservative party. Alongside exploring those subjects who *fail* at normalisation, I would be very interested to explore the spatial practices, reflexive understanding and manifestations of privilege in the lives of richer and more conservative men. If homonormativity is associated with a neoliberal politics and a belief in the small State then exploring the lives and self-understanding of gay men who specifically aspire to similar politics would be a productive development on the knowledges developed in this study.

The third priority would be to explore the extent to which this understanding of privilege is useful in making sense of the lives and experiences of differently positioned persons and of persons located in other cities, ruralites and nations. While I have been arguing for a reconfiguration of the concept of privilege as it is presently used in most contexts and literatures that I have explored, this work is only the beginning of that project. I do believe that understandings of privilege require integration of an appreciation of space and performativity, yet such a development will require a great deal more work than has been done in this thesis. Further, the work developed in this thesis is specifically a theoretical and academic treatment and exploration of the field. If the concept of privilege is to continue to be developed and refined then it must be useful to more than just academics.

In many ways, I believe that some activist organisations and resources engaging with privilege are far in advance of academic knowledges, particularly in reference to the everyday manifestation and use of privilege in order to defend and maintain positionalities. There is a wide variety of resources available online which engage with the concept and explore the kinds of practices I have described in this thesis, derailingfordummies.com for example lists 37 distinct discursive practices used in deferring critique that the anonymous author has identified. Wider recognition and developing understandings of privilege are essential to its growth and development as a concept. Part of that development is answering the question which has haunted me throughout this project; now what do I do? It is one, challenging, thing to recognise that privilege exists and that your experiences, achievements and understandings of the world are predicated upon inequalities and the manifestation

of privilege. However, what do you do about it? Even recognising that I am the beneficiary of the privileges of being recognisably cisgendered and white (for example), and my dedication towards challenging inequalities, does not necessarily imbue me with the ability to do much about those privileges in my everyday life. It is difficult to demand that society treats you *worse* than it already does, not only because none of us really want to be treated badly but also because it would be difficult to be taken seriously. We are well acquainted with the demand for equality being made by those who experience marginalisation, and even by those who experience privilege; but I do not even know what the demand to not be granted privilege, to be treated badly, would look like or how it would be done.

7.4 Conclusion

The work developed in this thesis attempts to engage with a range of literatures and offer a reconceptualisation of privilege through discussing the lives and spatial practises of gay white men. I argue that existing understandings of privilege do not yet sufficiently engage with spatiality and performativity and I have explored how poststructuralist conceptions of power, place and performativity provide critical opportunities to advance understandings of privilege, to bring them more into line with understandings of marginalisation. I have also argued that while privilege has been explored in a range of fields there has been little contact between them. Yet they share common elements in their understandings of privilege that can be traced back to the work of DuBois. I believe that critical geography has much to offer the study of privilege, through an emphasis on the local and situated production and performance of selves, this discipline offers an opportunity to explore the diversity of experiences and spatial practises through which privilege and inequalities are produced without developing homogenising and reductive knowledges. Using this understanding of privilege, I have explored the manifestation of privilege in the everyday lives of gay white men living in Brighton & Hove, along with my own experiences and understandings of privilege in my own life. I have argued that existing understandings of homonormativity do not yet sufficiently account for the ways that gay white men's lives continue to be subject to marginalisation, despite their ability to access privilege. I have shown that their experiences of privilege and marginalisation are spatially produced and performatively enacted, but that this production is sometimes contradictory as multiple apparatuses of power relations overlay one another simultaneously. The understanding of privilege that I use offers opportunities to produce nuanced representations and understandings of these experiences. I argue that the concept of complicity offers a critical understanding of the ways in which all subjects are implicated and produced through power relations, which is crucial for the ongoing development of critical understandings of privilege.

8 Appendices

Outline

- 8.1 Demographic Survey Responses
- 8.2 Interview Schedules
- 8.3 Thematic Analysis Process
- 8.4 Example Participant Information Sheet
- 8.5 Example Consent Form
- 8.6 Example Demographic Survey
- 8.7 Ethical Approval Documentation

8.1 Demographic Survey Responses

All descriptions and terms are those used by the participants themselves to describe their identities while answering the demographic information sheet (see Appendix 8.6).

Question 1

Ages of Participants	23-24	25-26	27-28	29-30	31-32	33-34	35-36
	4	6	2			1	2

Question 2

Gender Identities	Male	Gay Male	Relaxed Male	Masculine Male
	10	3	1	1

Question 3

Sexualities	Gay	Gay Male	Homosexual	Homoflexible	Mostly Gay/Bisexual Tendancies
	6	2	3	1	3

Question 4

Ethnicity or Race	White	White Caucasian	Caucasian	White European	Celtic	White/Romany
	5	2	4	2	1	1

Question 5

Participants' Work Status	Full Time	Part Time	Unemployed	Student	Vocational Study
	7	2	3	2	1

Question 6

Housing Circumstances	Renting	Owner	Living with Family	Council Property
	12	1	1	1

Question 7

Class Identity	Lower Working	Working	Aspirational Working	Middle	Upper Middle	No answer
	1	4	3	4	1	2

Question 8

Educational Background	GSCE	A-Level	Diploma	Degree	Masters	PhD
	1	1	3	5	3	2

Question 9

Participants' 'Body Type'	Slim	Fat	Average	Defined	Bear	Beautiful
	6	2	3	1	2	1

Question 10

Disability	No	Mental	Physical
	10	3	2

Question 11

The participants were given an opportunity to provide any further descriptions or terms that they felt were particularly important for defining or describing their self-identities. Eight of them used this opportunity and their answers are given here along with responses from those who chose to provide details of their disabilities or health impairments.

- Polyamorous, fetishist, activist
- Fat
- Scientist, geek
- Dyslexic
- Short sighted, asthmatic
- HIV+, judgemental, apologetic, opinionated, left wing, dreamer, geek, animal lover
- Cardiac congenital abnormality, Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome
- I have lived in the UK and specifically Brighton since I was 17. Having moved here from Greece right after finishing school I have not lived any of my adult life elsewhere and while I cannot identify as a British national officially, I feel like ethnically I am more British than anything else.

8.2 Interview Schedule Development

Interview Schedules – Draft 1

Notes

Mind mapping for each participant – Big sheet of paper and 2 pens so that both participants can scribble links and new ideas onto the sheet. Also acts as an aid for follow up interviews etc.

Schedule

When you first heard about the project and with the material that you have had access to so far what do you think about the idea of ‘privilege’?

What do you think it is, or isn’t?

What does privilege do?

How does privilege affect you?

How does privilege affect others that you know

(Follow any examples given)

Examples

Who/what/where/when/why? **Details!**

Complicate them – Look for the silences – Look for the complexities

How did & do you feel?

Intersectionality – what is being privileged and what isn’t?

Share a story of my own – (discrimination first?)

What do you think about this?

Would you have acted differently?

Do you understand what happened differently?

Why/How?

Do you have similar stories? (of discrimination)

Follow up example – detail etc.

Share a story of my own – (unambiguous privilege)

What do you think about this?

Would you have acted differently?

Do you understand what happened differently?

Why/How?

Do you have similar stories? - (unambiguous privilege)

Follow up examples – detail etc

Share a story of my own – (complex/ambiguous)

How do you interpret this story?

How is it different from the previous two?

Is this important/interesting?

What could be happening or not happening?

Think about similar events and let’s talk about those for a while

Where are these happening in your everyday life, the minor details?

What do you think about them?

Why?

Do you have any stories like this to share?

Reflexivity

What do you think about these issues and has your perspective changed because of thinking about them?

Is privilege even important?

How do you feel about this interview and talking about these ideas

Should we be trying to change these things?

Why/Not?_How?

Interview Schedules – Draft 2

Notes

Mind mapping for each participant – Big sheet of paper and 2 pens so that both the participant and I can scribble links and new ideas onto the sheet. Also acts as an aid for follow up interviews etc.

Photos – spread them out on a table and reference them often

Schedule

Everyday Life
Work/Study
What, where, when, why, who - etc
History
(background)
Locations
Aspirations
Now/Earlier – Have they changed?
Why?
Home
Family
Relationships
Household
Leisure
Hobbies
Favourite places
Activities
Pleasures
Mobilities
Travel
Holidays
Routines
Habits
Feelings/Emotion – Key points
Comfort
Safety
Fitting in
Normal
One of the crowd
Standing out
Uncomfortable
Dangerous
Desirable
Ugly
Strange
Weird
Out of Place
Conflict
Aggression
Violence

How do they link with the places, routines and experiences of your normal life?

What do you do when you encounter these sorts of situations?

Where and when are these sorts of sensations encountered?

What patterns are starting to emerge?
How might privilege be relevant to your normal life?
What sorts of things happen to you where you feel privileged?
What sorts of things happen to you where you feel marginalised?

When you first heard about the project and with the material that you have had access to so far what do you think about the idea of 'privilege'?
What do you think it is, or isn't?
What does privilege do?
How does privilege affect you?
How does privilege affect others that you know
(Follow any examples given)
Examples
Who/what/where/when/why?

Details!

Complicate them – Look for the silences
– Look for the complexities
How did & do you feel?
Intersectionality – what/who is being privileged and what/who isn't?

Share a story of my own –
(discrimination first?)
What do you think about this?
Would you have acted differently?
Do you understand what happened differently?
Why/How?

Do you have similar stories? (of discrimination)
Follow up example – detail etc.

Share a story of my own –
(unambiguous privilege)
What do you think about this?
Would you have acted differently?
Do you understand what happened differently?
Why/How?

Do you have similar stories? -
(unambiguous privilege)

Follow up examples – detail etc

Share a story of my own –
(complex/ambiguous)
How do you interpret this story?
How is it different from the previous two?
Is this important/interesting?
What could be happening or not happening?

Think about similar events and let's talk about those for a while
Where are these happening in your everyday life, the minor details?
What do you think about them?
Why?
Do you have any stories like this to share?
Reflexivity
What do you think about these issues and has your perspective changed because of thinking about them?
Is privilege even important?
How do you feel about this interview and talking about these ideas
Should we be trying to change these things?
Why/Not?
How?

Interview Schedule – Draft 3

Tell me about what you have been doing this week?

Where were you?

Who else was there?

Where do you feel most comfortable?

Why

Where do you feel most uncomfortable?

Why

Where would you normally choose to spend your evenings?

With who

What do you do there

Tell me about where you work

(What/ where/ when/ why/ who)

History (background)

Now/Earlier – Have they changed?

Why?

Tell me about your education

(What/ where/ when/ why/ who)

Tell me about where you live

Family

Relationships

Household

What do these things mean to you?

How do they feel?

Mobilities

Travel

Holidays

Routines

Habits

How might privilege be relevant to your life?

Who is privileged

Who isn't

Interview Schedule – Draft 4

**Tell me about what you have
been doing this week?**

Immigrants

Where were you?

Older people

Who else was there?

Trans

**Where do you feel most
comfortable?**

Bisexuals

Why

Would you go out with one?

**Where do you feel most
uncomfortable?**

**Would you be sexually attracted
to them?**

Why

What do you find attractive?

**Where would you normally
choose to spend your time?**

Where would you never go?

With who

Why?

What do you do there

**Are there places you would be
afraid to go?**

**What do you think about the
Scene?**

**How might privilege be relevant
to your life?**

Do you fit in there?

Who is privileged

What do you think about Pride?

Who isn't

Do you fit in there?

Who shouldn't be there?

**How would you describe other
gay's as a group?**

**How would you describe, what
do you think about -**

Lesbians

Interview Schedule – Draft 5

EXAMPLES

Tell me about what you have been doing this week?

Where were you?

Who else was there?

Where do you feel most comfortable?

Why

Where do you feel most uncomfortable?

Why

Where would you normally choose to spend your time?

With who

What do you do there

What do you think about the Scene?

Do you fit in there?

What do you think about Pride?

Do you fit in there?

Who shouldn't be there?

How would you describe other gay's as a group?

Civil Partnerships?

How would you describe, what do you think about –

Homophobia?

Lesbian community?

Racism?

Bisexual community?

What do you find attractive?

Where would you never go?

Why?

Are there places you would be afraid to go?

Do you think you're lucky?

How might privilege be relevant to your life?

Who is privileged

Who isn't

Final Interview Schedule

Where and How is Privilege Manifest?

What have you been doing over the past two weeks?

Where were you?

Who else was there?

Work / Social / Home

Where do you feel comfortable?

During the day

At night

Where do you feel uncomfortable?

Unsafe?

What it is that makes you feel these things?

Examples

Where would you normally choose to spend time?

Or avoid?

What do you think about the scene?

'Wider' LGBT community?

Do you fit in there?

Who do you think might be excluded?

How?

What about Pride?

What are the 'politics' of the gay community now?

What do you think about civil partnerships and relationships?

Do you think there is much homophobia still?

Have you ever experienced it, what happened?

Do you think there is much racism?

Is there much of a lesbian community in Brighton?

What do you think of them?

Do you know many lesbians?

Is there much of a bisexual community in Brighton?

What do you think of them?

Do you know many bisexuals?

Are there any clear sub-groups within the gay community?

What are they/What distinguishes them?

What types of men would you generally find attractive?

Unattractive?

Why?

How do you think other people might describe you?

What do you think privilege is?

Who is/ who isn't privileged?

How might privilege would be relevant in your life?

What would it take for you to feel privileged?

8.3 Thematic Analysis Process Development

Example of Phase 1 Interview Key

1. Employed (healthcare)
2. Career progression – competency and respect within workplace?
3. Part-time study to qualify for new position – has access to funding through workplace providing with certain advantages
4. Impression of some level of financial stability
5. Details of work – clearly understands the work environment very well, is this remotely relevant?
6. Mostly female workplace – does this have much of an effect?
7. General activities – emphasises pubs rather than clubbing
8. Explicitly codes these venues as *straight*
9. *Slightly independent* – what does this mean, to be slightly independent, not quite mainstream? Some kind of credibility issue?
10. CAMRA & real ale – distinguishes these venues from others as being recognised to be ‘good’ at beer
11. List of venues – not all of which fit into the above description – quite a clear distinction between those (straight) venues that do and those (gay) venues that don’t
12. Surprising for him to go to R-Bar it is *twinky* – description of ‘twinky’ which emphasises youth and *screaming*: twink ‘little nutritional value, sweet to the taste and creme-filled’
13. Again youth as a bad thing, implying lack of experience and poor taste (alcopops) and loud/extrovert (poor?) behaviour
14. Distances self from prior behaviour, clearly feeling superior in this regard
15. Camp (again screaming) as being negative clearly some kind of denominator which distinguishes the participant from those he is describing – not necessarily regarding camp as in theatre/extravagance but rather effeminate behaviour
16. Again extremely judgemental and derogatory to *horrible little queens* and emphasis of distance *used to be... not any longer*
17. Use of classifications (twink) and bear to form groups and stereotypes which are then associated with particular places
18. Price of drinks as a motivator – lower income worker
19. Again age
20. *Accepting* not necessarily linked to age but enough that they are mentioned together
21. A lot of **places** *tend to be size-ist* discriminatory based upon body size and shape, interesting that it is the place which generates the association rather than the people within them
22. Participant feels more accepted being his size within certain venues and not others *bear bars* – more than accepted but even *appreciated*
23. Importance of the *look* (gaze) for him – some people looking = bad, others looking = good and so far the only associations these looks have is the place in which they occur
24. He enjoys being appreciated, enjoys the feeling that more people are going to be attracted to him – importance of feeling attractive/being the object of attraction
25. Age again also important in distinguishing from *screaming queens* – change in language from twink to queen which emphasises the effeminate rather than the youth aspect – is this some kind of discrimination or manifestation of privilege being more masculine = ability to judge and exclude? Even though it seems that it is the participant who excludes himself from the spaces where those whom he finds distasteful might be, so who is being excluded here? The participant for his size or the queens for their ‘inferior’ masculinity – is that even what’s happening..
26. Is this preference for sitting actually an indicator of his physical capabilities?
27. Re-iterates being admired – sexual attraction and admiration as boosting self esteem **Contrasts with P1**
28. Doesn’t see space within particular venues as strongly coded in any way – is therefore able to successfully use and occupy nominally straight venues – do we interpret this as a weakening of ‘straight’ control over space or an incursion of ‘gay’ into the space? A negotiation would only make sense if there was some kind of mediation of behaviour on the behalf of one or more parties
 29. Should have followed up with **Do you act any differently in these venues?**
30. CAMRA pubs would generally be considered ‘old man pubs’ or most certainly straight pubs in many other places particularly *up north* as the participant describes – contrast is drawn between the liberal Brighton and illiberal ‘north’
31. Highlights West Street as being where the **only** straight venues in Brighton are, before suggesting that all other venues in the city tend not to consider sexuality as an issue (not sure to what extent this is true but that is the perception of the participant) – interesting that it is *the other places you go* implies that there are yet other places that are not chosen
32. To what degree are they open for ‘*whoever*’ walks through the door? Is it more that they are willing to accept those who might not be obviously out of place? How far does this attitude stretch? Further, what

- about the patrons of these bars, regardless of the attitude of the staff/management it is the other customers who will determine the experience of the venue at any given time
33. Highlights the above point in that it is the participant who has never had any trouble in other venues for being gay – remembering also that the participant is well over 6’ tall and describes himself as fat and/or large etc how often do people of that stature really run into many problems?
 34. Interesting comment about CAMRA – I’ve never heard anything of the like, especially with their association primarily with real ale pubs
 35. Is all space normatively classified as straight? Even in Brighton still? *I guess they probably are* as defined by who? Who decides whether a venue is gay/straight etc
 36. Again general to the individual – although the logic is actually reverse, I haven’t been judged therefore they are not very judgemental – but what about other people (again)?
 37. Compares to *twinky gay bar* as a more judgemental place/ somewhere he feels less comfortable
 38. Importance of how the space is used – sitting and drinking real ale rather than alcopops in order to *get pissed ... a quiet drink* is used to distinguish the activity of drinking into legitimate and illegitimate uses of space – however these activities are also identified by the types of people that are doing them here it is specifically twinkie guys who are identified as being those that might be just trying to *get pissed* – ignoring how others who drink beer, even real ale, may also be doing it for the same reasons
 39. So if you get everyone from 22 upwards and that’s normal why is it that age has featured so often
 40. This reads as slightly derogatory – is there an upper limit then? Why are these people referred to differently, as being *regulars* and linking it to their age?
 41. Alternative to what? - why is there a distinction between how these others *be* and *think they are*? Is this again some level of superiority implying that they are not as *alternative* as they desire to be but that the participant can see through them? Does the participant therefore claim the position of being
 42. Normality – specifically normal in relation to the participant, interesting this phrase doesn’t seem to claim membership these are not ‘people like me’ but they are ‘normal to me’ – why this distinction?
 43. *Classify* – identifiers, stereotypes, in/out groups, does everyone do this? to what extent might we consider the formation of these kind of classificatory typologies and systems as implicitly associated with the formation of class/race (and other) hierarchies? While I respect that there are many material inequalities, discursive constructions of particular bodies as external/inferior are reciprocally produced.
 44. *Chav* – nearly always a derogatory term
 45. *Alternative* is now positioned in opposition to *chav* – implicitly therefore participant is external to this norm but he already considers these *slightly alternative* to be a group which he normally associates with (but might not be a member of?) probably therefore a minority group – What’s with the *slightly alternative*? Where is the boundary from slightly to really alternative? And who judges it?
 46. *I see* – subjective judgement, is this indicative of a performative approach to identity? *As the norm* emphasises that there is some kind of hierarchy present and that *chav* represents the majority
 47. Interesting collection of details which make up the markers for ‘*chav*’ certainly implies a behaviour based understanding of identity
 48. *Generally white* – I’m worried about whether this was thrown in for my benefit if not then it certainly represents a common image for *chav*, namely that they are the white working class
 49. Again drinking is described pejoratively as *get pissed* for certain people and not others, this is interesting but possibly tangential
 50. Clothes are a strong marker of identities – these ones being negative
 51. *Pissed* – again, I wonder why?
 52. Link *chav* into class for the first time – are there really that many manual labour jobs left around that aren’t actually quite well paid? Interested by *or probably doesn’t work* clearly referencing benefits etc (it’s the *probably*) but tracksuits can be bloody expensive, so how are these consolidated?
 53. Not a *horrible stereotype* because it is rude or derogatory, but because it might be inaccurate – further he *knows a lot of people who don’t fit it* what does this mean? By definition not everyone will fit a stereotype – is it that he feels guilty for potentially insulting those people he knows?
 54. Geographic sensibility, an imagination of place which is distinct and separate from the current and used to provide difference (differáncé?) and juxtapose experience
 55. *Everybody* – really? In his area/school/community? Who is *everybody* and who managed to get ignored and left out of that general category? Were there groups/individuals who did not fit this category and we’re made invisible?
 56. Again clothes and accessories are emphasised rather than behaviour or individual/group traits – but have clothes been singled out due to the relative homogeneity (in his eyes) of this group, or even that they form the major difference between *chav* and the participant
 57. Emphatic, renunciation of his previous geography and history
 58. Personal experience/anecdotal
 59. Again emphasises *the North* as a space of difference and exclusion for the participant
 60. Is this homophobia linked to not being *chav*? The participant makes littler indication that he was not *chav* in his hometown, just that *everyone* was and that the *crowd* was *very homophobic* – why does the participant feel excluded?
 61. *Back of my mind* – learnt reactions/behaviours, this makes me think of discourse and the geographic imagination that has been produced and transferred to these other places

62. *Tested it* – definitely the imaginary/emotional geographies, there are places which are associated with these feelings and this produces the participants behaviour and interactions with space
63. *Chavvy scene* – where is this? is it just venues that *chavs* go to/hang out in, is it fixed around certain bars/locations?
64. Explicitly *West Street* that is highlighted as an area of concern for the participant, however he says that he has no experience of this place or the venues there
65. Again importance of the imaginary, emphasised by his alleged lack of knowledge on which to base these judgements (although everyone has gone past/walked up/down/across West Street at all times of day or night, it is unavoidable in the city so there much have been some degree of contact). This place therefore has become a black spot, somewhere avoided because of the emotional connotations and potential for exclusion
66. Acknowledgement that the street is a central part of the city
67. Compared to what? Why is it really odd?
68. The imaginary – geographic/sociological etc
69. 'just' normal
70. Importance of numerical, or perceived, numerical advantage/superiority, those who outnumber are perceived to be able to control space
71. Council housed and violent – where I'm from
72. *Depends who I'm with* – no other apparent limits mentioned aside from the company he might be with
73. Gay groups go to '*the scene*' – is this segregation? Do they go there because they feel safer or because they choose to associate with other gays.
74. Straights able to go *somewhere else* – fewer restrictions placed upon them so able to go where ever they like
75. Real ale again – is there a certain something of privilege in having enough money to discover a taste for a particular type of alcohol and then to be able to choose to go to places where it is served?
76. Again the difference between getting a drink you enjoy and *getting drunk* for the sake of it
77. How *occasionally* exactly? Where do we draw the line between getting drunk of the sake of it and ending up drunk all the same?
78. The Bulldog as a cheap bar, somewhere to go when you don't have any money
79. Real ale drinkers are implied to therefore have more money
80. Again gay bars for gay boys
81. Separate circles of friends straights/gays – does this mean anything?
82. What constrains opportunities for these groups of people to meet? Money presumably, but perhaps also a differentiation which maintains those boundaries – is age a factor? Is sexuality, or at least expressions of sexuality?
83. First time that work friends are mentioned, easy way out I think
84. Work friends don't have anything else in common with you, why do you meet up with them outside of work then?
85. Again opportunities to meet are constrained
86. Gays all know each other from a particular social networking site so they have a common point of reference around which to organise social events and make conversation – this apparently causes them to potentially exclude others, to the extent that they are not invited along. This is probably an example of the *cliqueness* mentioned by so many of the participants yet what would be a way of addressing this?
87. Most comfortable at work – explanation based upon having a fixed *place* and *role* in which to fit and to fulfil, understanding of position and function, structured and organised; probably more to do with the participants psychology than anything else – desire for the comfort of control etc
88. Is indifference the same thing as acceptance? Arguable what we want is for sexuality to be ignored, but in the meantime does being too busy to care about something amount to the same as a progressive politics or is this more likely to lead to ignorance and two-sided opinions? Surely this is more likely to lead to 'colour-blind' homophobias/racisms?
89. Surely you are not really *being who you want to be* while treating patients – more that your individual identity is subsumed under a work identity of 'nurse', 'doctor' etc
90. DO feel comfortable, but there are times when I DON'T – which is the more prevalent? Why is The Camelford Arms pointed out here?
91. Ployamory – liked to times that he doesn't feel comfortable
92. Specifically in gay spaces
93. *Social suicide* – something that you do to yourself, not something that is done **to you**, implies that exclusion is the fault of the excluded, common underlying logic accepted and replicated
94. *See you* - Others interpretations/constructions of the identity, made through **sight**
95. *Cheating, scheming little slut* – strong language, where does this come from, why is it so vitriolic?
96. Says who, why would one need to be; *embracing* – reclaiming, empowering?
97. Drawing of distinctions between *slut* and *poly* – is one a 'good slut' and one a 'bad slut'?
98. Integration with straight community is achieved through producing a normative identity/community; integration as something that *gays want* something that is desired – why?; marriage as a *straight institution* automatically links to procreation/child rearing; its a *look* that is *portrayed* by the community, an attempt at homogeneity

99. *Ohh they're just like us it's fine!* – inclusion is based upon normativity – this is the 'goal' of the community in this narrative
100. Internal exclusion predicated upon differentiation from the normative because it endangers the appearance of normality and thus acceptance
101. *As a whole* – produces a monolithic an homogenous **scene** which acts uniformly
102. Sexual dissidence is not restricted to homo/queer sexuality but extends in many ways through straights as well
103. *Everybody* = charities + people on the scene – is that it?
104. *Scene* = cafe's + bars (owned or 'friendly') in a certain area of town
105. Most particularly the St James' street area
106. There's more than that but they are obviously less well known
107. *Starbucks* – so not just gay owned/friendly – all of this *scene* is defined by consumerism, that is what is focused upon LGBT lives, very little of the community/charity base is run from there
108. *Becomes a scene* – production of space
109. *Or a ghetto* – are scenes/ghetto's the same thing? What is the distinction and why use one instead of the other?
110. Again separation is done rather than enforced – it is the gay scene that separates itself into this space
111. Integration is placed as opposite to separation – there seems no conceptual room for co-existence
112. *We all* – who?
113. Is that the only reason why? Surely there is some element of needing support/community is especially as a younger gay – now you are established and confident in your sexuality, enough to start complicating it as being not the *whole being* which allows for more options/experiences, confidence to exist in hetero-coded spaces, ability to stand outside of *scene* and even to criticise it
114. Non-essential understanding of identity
115. Essential identity narrative – contradicts previous one because his opinion and ability to act/identify has changed since then; Do we use **more** essentialist language when we feel **more threatened**? Is this an example of '**Strategic Essentialism**'?
116. Separation again is opposite to integration and also *not helpful* – helpful to who? Who are the *us/ourselves* that are referred to here?
117. *We* – again formation of some kind of homogeneous group with the same goals, but whose goals are these?
118. **Integrated** – into what? With whom?
119. So why use it? I don't like using it but I shall, because...
120. Nobody does, really – everyone wants to think of themselves as a bright and unique little snowflake... Important difference drawn between Self I and *everyone else* emphasising sameness vs uniqueness
121. This *judgement* is something that is being made **about** the participant, not one that he is making about/for himself – we are only different or the same if we are judged to be... **Performativity/Recognition!**
122. *We want* – again... also **if** – uncertainty and an unwillingness to state the point in absolutes
123. Integrated again...
124. Difference in the ways in which his identity is being described between these three sections. Initially in describing his sexuality it is a fixed and internal aspect of himself, defined only by him yet as only a part of the whole of his identity – that is identity is complex and faceted and yet fundamentally stable. Then he moves on to discuss integrating into some kind of larger ground and in doing so his own identity is subsumed by that group, he struggles with being defined by others, perhaps in ways that he might personally dislike
125. Being able to occupy space is described as being a key measure of integration and acceptance... such occupation is described in directly adversarial roles as an attempt to *infiltrate* space, and not just space but *infiltrate the chavs on West Street* - there is very definitely a specific group and place which are considered to be the target/adversaries. Producing a dichotomy between straight/gay and also middle/working class – these two are both bound up together in this narrative
126. Explicitly distances himself from the *straight scene*
127. *Assimilation/integration* – what 'we' want
128. Who is this *community* that seems to want stuff?
129. Not saying its a good idea, but if thats what is wanted then it is? Is it a good idea or not, and in what contexts??
130. **Safe Spaces** – I think this is the only one of my participants that talked explicitly about safe spaces – continues to be an interesting idea, that LGBT spaces are 'safe' in some respect... we must ask practically: Safe for whom? Safe from what?
131. The scene is bad at safe spaces – so what are gay bars then if they are not safe spaces? This is probably in answer to the questions about, the difference between ideal and actual places
132. One or two 'safe spaces' which are here thought of as 'LGBT bars' (do we have any of those?) but distinct from a gay ghetto of the scene
133. Interesting to drop this in here – can see the link but it stands out all the same... where don't you feel safe then?
134. Scene is discriminatory against difference – 'fitting in' is vital for being able to feel comfortable using a particular place; these places are not considered to be safe spaces, or at least not safe spaces for everyone...

- obviously some people are using the place and it is they who are considered to exclude others who do not fit in
135. R-Bar – exclusions based upon appearance, active and direct actions which force a feeling of discrimination against the participant within that place
 136. **Belonging** – what do we belong to, that participant clearly feels that he does belong, in some respects to ‘the community’ but he feels rejected by this scene and therefore actively rejects the idea that he might want to belong to that environment. *Gay card* – generally only used during periods of aggression – I think the participant is feeling very angry during this section about his exclusion from these spaces
 137. Emphasises the embodied micro-actions of exclusion, people turning to look at you and the inferred content of those gazes
 138. *As if to say* – contradicts earlier statement, do people actually talk or is it all inferred? Are the effects any different?
 139. Relationality? The participant feels forced to get involved and respond to others perceived actions
 140. Again angry
 141. *What would you say to them?* – Avoids the question and emphasises his own prowess in dating attractive men
 142. Personal esteem = ability to pull; promiscuity, sexual ability etc
 143. Charity work – public private dichotomy, privilege as the ability to avoid engagement and benefit at the same time...
 144. Normalisation in larger organisations – need for acceptance has a normalising tendency, they need to be able to interact and function at a ‘professional’ level which means being able to be taken seriously
 145. Again normalising tendencies – direct action in order to enforce/patrol the borders of what is considered acceptable
 146. *Not the right image* – difference is being directly excluded from the image of the ‘gay scene’
 147. Promoting LGBT lives – except those ones which are different from what they ‘should’ be – particularly for the professional image of the charity
 148. **Homonormativity... privilege... assumptions about self/other – being equal and acting the same... I** seriously can’t believe that I got a line which so directly illustrates what I’m trying to talk about...
 149. Interesting that it is little old women in Kent from whom we need acceptance
 150. *That’s the image these people want of a family* – or is it the image that you have of a family? Incredibly normative ideals
 151. Understand the reasoning for normalisation – being able to fit in easier but not appreciating the urge to curb and rein in
 152. *Fit in... stand out* – in relation to chavs... Sexuality actually isn’t mentioned here, he is talking about class, but sexuality definitely still underpins this issue
- It’s really interesting how often class and sexuality are woven together in this discussion, so that straight and working class are **together** presented in opposition to gay and middle class. This is often used particularly to produce a disparaging or marginalising discourse of ‘chavs’ who are placed as being less than but also in the majority and therefore threatening. They are threatening to the participant but at the same time he presents himself as being superior to them. Commonly done in the history of discrimination, particularly of the working class, very interesting to see it replicated here
153. Structuring of space – but it is very much emphasised that it is the participants choice to avoid this place
 154. *Twinky gay bars* – here he brings sexuality into it but only as a way of reinforcing the comment about twinks
 155. Not especially comfortable in these gay bars
 156. Embodied enforcement of norms of body shape/size – the ‘corporeality of corpulence’
 157. Emphasises fat discrimination an awful lot... is this race to innocence?
 158. *Campness* – equated with sexuality
 159. Fear of homophobia and violence is a part of what constructs space
 160. Again Brighton – other places
 161. Fear of violence again linked with particular places
 162. Temporal element to this construction of the place – *it’s quite nice during the day*
 163. Uses a productive understanding of space, it is not something essential to the space but rather something produced by the material/discursive apparatus through which it is made
 164. *Drink culture* – not homophobia? Is this displacement?
 165. Again using stereotypes, particularly stereotypes of chavs... but do chavs actually use West Street all that much? Is it just chavs? These things are irrelevant to the participants understanding of the place but certainly displays the ways in which he imagines the place
 166. Downplays fear of violence based upon his size
 167. Imaginations of place
 168. *Cosmopolitan city* – I wonder how often this gets used
 169. Again links to alcohol
 170. Able to feel relatively comfortable and safe anywhere in the city – masculinity/whiteness etc... he very rarely actually experiences any kind of situation which threatens him or makes him feel uncomfortable and those that do happen he generally ascribes to has weight rather than any other field of power... despite living in Whitehawk which he describes as being particularly violent, for Brighton

171. Supposed to be/actually is – participant seems to think that it is a particularly insightful point to suggest that there is discrimination on the scene
172. It is 'best' for *young, thin, white gay men with money*
173. *Dominate* – able to rigorously control space
174. Identifies that majority groups have a tendency to control and reinforce their control over specific places through the marginalisation of others – but the group identified isn't always one that would be conventionally described as being privileged all the time... although the money will obviously help that point
175. **Importance of place!**
176. Is it really?
177. Again fantastic that it is an *awakening* to discover that he is not uniformly accepted and comfortable
178. Long list of people who apparently don't fit in to the scene – is this actually very helpful to just list every group that might possibly be marginalised... how does he develop this understanding?
179. Marginalised groups are marginalised...
180. *These people are unique enough that...* BLACKS?! LESBIANS?! A little bit of selective vision
181. The scene does marginalise people – he emphasises lesbians, bi and trans particularly linking it to service provision
182. Common prejudice against bi
183. There isn't a massive straight scene? What is every other pub in the world then?
184. **Passing** for straight, particularly for bisexuals being 'able' to have an opposite sex relationship
185. Talking so much about stereotypes earlier – it seems that it is ok to stereotype those others who you dislike but not those that you do? Particularly when called so directly on it
186. Even in recognising his earlier discrimination he uses the opportunity to mock them by laughing at the suggestion that he might have done a disservice
187. Its an incorrect stereotype but one that he can easily roll out all the same
188. This was a really interesting observation, I guess the opposite holds true for gay men as well – portrayed as **everything that is negative about what they are not but are perhaps assumed to be trying to be**. So lesbians are described as being aggressive and violent, gay men as being slutty and shrill... its an interesting idea and it would be a good idea to follow this up at some point...
189. Thats not quite what stereotyping is, it doesn't necessarily always have to follow the negative – but these are certainly prevalent stereotypes
190. Awareness of trans issues and the exclusions that they face, along with perhaps some of the reasons for it
191. Political apathy amongst the community – the idea that we've got it all sorted – The world we have won? Leading to a lack of engagement, particularly around getting involved with issues to support other minorities
192. Difference between legal and social equality – do we really want equality/assimilation? Or something else – he seems to shift between the two positions but definitely highlighting that there is more work to be done still
193. Commercialism in Pride and the scene culture – doesn't really highlight how this reproduces exclusions but certainly aware that it might not be the best idea
194. I like the idea of celebrating Pride where you live
195. I'm not entirely sure I agree – I think large swathes of the gay community does just want it to be for gay people
196. I think this might be what he means... but generalises that to the rest of the community
197. Alcohol links to commercialism again
198. Yes! That is what Pride should be about
199. I still don't know about this... is it an issue? Is it not an issue?
200. Privilege is linked to being in the majority and the *feeling of power* derived from that – emphasises privilege as being socially constituted and relational, relating to **power** and therefore about the abilities which one gains from having privilege such as being able to occupy and control space
201. Links together race and religion, joins it to *middle aged, middle income* and focuses very much on these people as being in the majority – doesn't really seem to make allowances for the privilege minority such as those with great wealth, he is talking specifically about a certain social and cultural normativity through which privilege is derived
202. Understands this as emphasised and reinforced through '*the media*' – which he gives examples of being popular TV – so, within his understanding this is not entirely 'natural' but requires maintenance and reproduction
203. *Thats what to be normal is* – bam! Money shot!
204. Re-introduces sexuality into the discussion for the first time *straight white people*
205. *Money is privilege, money is power, power is privilege* – is this just an oratorical flourish? It reads incredibly well
206. No real mention of gender particularly – is this just invisible to him?
207. Immigration – raises the idea of race without particularly mentioning it but certainly present, a few common tropes on immigration which he argues against
208. Sedimentation of existing power-knowledge relations
209. Highlights how race/immigration is often compounded within popular discourse when this is not remotely the case

210. Finally links privilege explicitly and directly with **Difference** rather than particular categories... excellent stuff – not sure about describing it as being shunned but certainly important for marginalisation etc
211. Cisgendered – does this term reproduce an understanding of gender as fixed? I'm not entirely sure about the politics of the term especially need to **Follow Up**
212. Oops – colonialism of the British Isles...
213. Returns to a fixed understanding of race – despite previously arguing against it for people of colour
214. *Aspirations of being middle class* – love that so many people have put this, working class with aspirations, what does that mean?
215. Interesting little image you've got there...
216. Dichotomy – *anybody who can e seen as different is treated **without** privilege* very clearly a black and white model being used here to outline these definitions
217. Real material effects of disability which produce inequalities, but those inequalities are more than just material, or rather produced by more than just the material, didn't really discuss what direct points those others who are without privilege might experience – should I read too much into this?
218. Difference again
219. Maintenance of normativity
220. Relational understanding of privilege

Interim Data Report: 14/1/11

Sample

Some general thoughts on the sample so far, please also see attached file 'Raw Sample Data'

- **Education** – while this would generally correlate well with current employment status and subsequently personal understanding of class, this is not always the case.
 - Some participants have an understanding of their class status which is not reflected by their current level of wealth/employment etc
 - Similarly one participant surprised me by having virtually no qualifications despite a very extensive knowledge base – I had assumed he was at least college educated
 - Sample has a much higher number of Masters degree's then would be expected in wider population – this was unintentional but not especially surprising
 - Would assume that a sample with a higher average age would have a lower number of Masters present
- I think it is particularly interesting that while all of these men have, relatively closely, matched the gay white man archetype I was looking for, few of them easily fit Nast's description of the 'commodity cowboy'
 - Is this because the sample so far has focussed on relatively well educated men?
 - None of them have been 'stereotypically gay' for various reasons, there are no trolley dollies, AMEX queens or hair dressers here. **Should there be?**
 - Similarly, while they may be relatively well educated, very few of them have been especially *wealthy* – except for those doing something involving computers. **Should there be?**
 - Further, key to Nast's argument (and subsequent engagements with the homonormative) is the gay white man as capitalist, neoliberal consumer. This aspect of the debate has yet to be engaged with in anyway by the project, something that should be rectified. Although I ask about whether the participants enjoy shopping, this seems to lead to either a yes or no response so a new approach should be developed.
- I was surprised by how many discussed bisexuality in their own lives/histories or identities in some respect. This was then compounded by how few had *any* knowledge of any kind of bisexual community in Brighton.
- If we can consider community participation, or public participation to be in opposition to a depoliticised domesticity then the level and types of volunteering, charity donations, etc that participants are involved in become quite interesting. **This needs to be increased in future**
 - Most participants talked about how important 'the community' was in some respects to their experience of living in Brighton, yet few actively took part in it except to attend Pride and the bars
 - But, to what extent could using the scene bars be described as participating in/supporting the community simply by supporting businesses and congregating therefore increasing visibility?
- Home town seems to be completely irrelevant except where it is used as a comparison to Brighton, usually unfavourably as being *less than*
- Current relationship states have been relatively evenly divided between monogamous partners and being *single* – however this basic information does not tell me enough about what types of relationships individual might desire, or at least be interested in exploring in future/if given the opportunity. Considering that monogamy plays a large role in the model of domesticity associated with homonormativity this should be expanded. Particularly with a more active attempt to find participants who have civil partnerships.
 - Further there has been little definitive information retrieved on other options in attaining sexual relations such as one night stands, using gaydar/grindr, cruising, saunas, cottaging, sex venues and other options which may exist.
 - The importance of easily available sex has been central in a number of debates surrounding the 'homonormative gay' as well as the 'liberationist queer' – this is subsequently another area which should be explored further.
- Age was mentioned with a much greater regularity than I had anticipated, so far being one of the primary ways in which participants would distinguish not only particular stereotypes or groups of people but also how they would categorise and describe various places that they would use.
 - Part of this could be, I think, due to the general homogeneity of the other users of those spaces, so that age becomes one of the primary distinguishing characteristics – most others will be assumed unless stated otherwise.
 - As such a much greater distribution of ages should be found to explore whether the experience of privilege is similar or different for men at different stages of their life course. I think it might be particularly interesting to see how factors such as youth (as an object of desire through physical fitness and fetishisation) and wealth might play off against each other in determining where and how privilege is manifest for particular individuals.
- One participant also discussed how he felt marginalised when he talked about his faith in public – particularly on the gay scene. This doesn't especially surprise me, however it made me wonder what

other ways individuals might be marginalised in various places which sharing predominantly the same positionality as those who enact that marginalisation. Ways that I have yet to think of or expect, how do I go about exploring these, how do I ask and talk about them?

- How the participants discussed gender was also quite interesting but I don't think I was approaching the problem for them particularly well. While many of them automatically translated gender into biological sex which although interesting in a way is also rather limiting, some did not. Some began to approach the concept of a variety of possible masculine identities from which they could assemble, or reproduce their own personal behaviour which they subsequently characterised in a variety of fashions.
 - Rather than asking for participants to discuss a gender identity as part of the demographic information sheet I think a much more direct approach might be to ask them how they would describe their own behaviour, in context of other forms of male behaviour that they might have mentioned up until that point in the interview.
- Discussions of participant's race/ethnicity seem annoyingly unproductive and I don't know why. Responses seem broken in to two groups each relying on a particular logic and understanding of 'race' and/or 'ethnicity':
 - White – When asked why they put white, participants will generally run through some kind of a response which focuses on physical manifestations of 'race' such as pale skin, particular bone structures, facial features etc. These responses seem entirely based within a biological determinist logic of race
 - Caucasian – these responses will tend to draw upon a more culturally and geographically sensitive understanding which incorporates a racial logic along with understandings of cultural or ethnic groups. These will often limit the scope of their affiliation to a north west European group which is considered to be largely homogenous
 - These responses seem indicative of the participants views racial identity formation, yet I seem to be struggling to progress the discussion far beyond that, or to find away to show how these concepts might be applied in daily life

Sample Development

Based on this information, recruitment of the next phase of the sample should aim to address the following concerns:

- Age range needs to be increased to explore a wider variety of positions and possible manifestations of privilege, as previously mentioned I think it might be particularly interesting to see how relatively 'younger' and relatively 'older' participants discuss each other. Already there have been a number of participants under 30 who have talked about *young twinks* – I'm interested to see where this might develop
 - There are a number of practical issues to be considered, initially while my snowball recruitment strategy can certainly access participants who are older than my initial age range, I'm worried that even this will eventually 'cap' itself at around 40-45. How much further should the age range extend? Certainly, this level might be considered the upper limit before age becomes a more directly marginalising field, so perhaps there is a legitimate argument in not seeking participants from beyond this kind of range.
 - Sample proportions will need to be thought about with some more depth particularly if I will be looking to compare responses from participants of different ages, as I do not want any single range to be over represented. Similarly, while this has been a relatively unexpected development I do not want it to become too much of an overriding focus of the project.
 - Finally on this point, although age may be another good indicator of further career development etc, this has not always been the case so far and I have no anticipation of that changing.
- Relationship styles along with sexual activity should be much more fully explored, including an attempt to include some participants who have entered a civil partnership if possible. This will, hopefully enable me to more fully engage with literatures of homonormativity that emphasise the domesticity of queer sex into the home, and perhaps begin to explore some of the ways in which privilege is manifested within these fields.
 - Again sample proportions may have to be considered, however 'balance' in this respect may be difficult to achieve if there are simply more participants who choose a particular relationship style. Adding this to the selection criteria for finding participants may make the process of finding additional participants more complex than it necessarily needs to be.
- Possession of capital should also be considered as a primary indicator of wealth and subsequently certain forms of privilege, this would most obviously regard home ownership but could also extend to business ownership.
 - However, I am concerned that the cumulative impact of these changes to that sampling criteria might have a detrimental effect on the study as a whole. Namely that one of the primary focuses of the study has been on an autoethnographic sample which might allow for the examination of power relations from a similar positionality. If the sample extends to cover monogamous, civilly partnered, home owning older men (for example) to what extent can the sample still be considered to be autoethnographic?
 - This was always going to be an issue – the extent to which individuals can be said to share any particular positionality is a complex idea that will be very interesting to discuss in the write up. How much is it a very practical concern though for sampling strategy at this stage in the study?

- As such I am unsure as to whether or not to include property ownership as a factor, while I already have one participant who part owns his own home, this seemed to make little difference to some of his other responses. While it could make for an interesting additional element to the study, I think it might also be a step too far and begin to confuse some of the other issues

Expected but absent so far

- Systemic perspectives have been noticeably lacking in participants responses so far. There has been a noticeable absence surrounding particularly issues of race and class, while I was not expecting detailed systemic analysis from the participants I was surprised in just how difficult many of them found to even articulate how they viewed their own positionality within these fields, or even that they had one.
 - This is perhaps indicative of the invisibility of these aspects of their identities which have remained unchallenged, where as their masculinities have, for some of them peripherally at least been engaged with through their 'different' sexualities.
 - Further, participants seem to have had difficulty in transferring their experiences of homophobia, both direct and indirect into any kind of empathic understanding of others' experiences of racism or classism. Although this inability is often acknowledged and the lack of experience is often cited as an explanation. This line of questioning should probably be extended with perhaps a more detailed example in the hopes that it might elicit some kind of response.
- Direct discrimination – I have been genuinely surprised by the general lack of examples of direct discrimination experienced by participants. Considering how often this kind of thing seems to happen to me I was expecting to receive at least a few examples from each participant but so far there have been relatively few.
 - One explanation for this is that participants simply do not remember these instances, or do not want to talk about them, for whatever reason. One participant did give me an example in which he was out with one of the other participants, when asked if he could remember anything happening to him recently the second participant said no.
- There was also much less emphasis placed upon the nightclub culture of the gay scene than I had expected, with most participants preferring bars or late license pub venues.
 - I'm not as yet sure if this might be explained by the age issues which have come up, or perhaps simply length of time lived in Brighton.
 - It does seem to be the case that the longer someone has lived here the more likely they are to spend time away from the scene bars and nightclubs and even to avoid going to Revenge/Charles St/Legends in general.
- Daylight activities also seem almost absent entirely from the interviews so far, while participants are happy to talk about their work, their night lives it seems more difficult for them to discuss the day-to-day-ness of their lives. Even when I have asked about what might be termed leisure activities such as clothes shopping etc these have been lacking.
 - Some of this is I think due to the generally relatively masculine sample so far, in a couple of cases due to lack of ready cash and the others I can only put down to interview blindness. That is, these activities are so routine that they are ignored in the interview, even when asked about them directly.
- Stories/experiences – it has also been surprisingly difficult to elicit detailed examples of particular events from some participants. This difficulty was unexpected, but perhaps shouldn't be as it is notoriously difficult to think of an example of something when asked directly for it. I have been hoping that by lingering around topics the participants might fill in the gaps, so to speak, eventually and this has been the case in some instances but still it has been surprising.

Unexpected themes

- As previously discussed age is mentioned by nearly all participants as one of the primary indicators that they use to describe, classify and subsequently judge particular individuals, group and venues. While I was aware that it might come up in some role or another I have been completely taken aback by quite how much emphasis has been placed upon it by the participants. Particularly by how rude some of them have been about particular age groups or stereotypes of age groups which they have used to explain their opinions to me at various times.
 - Age is also often linked to sexual compatibility and attraction which seems to have emerged as being the first measurement of how enjoyable a particular place is, how comfortable the participants feel there and likely to stay. Either because they find other users attractive or because other users find them attractive, however mismatched examples of this often leads to being very uncomfortable (such as not being attracted to people who are attracted to you).
- Religion has only been mentioned by one participant, so I do not expect it to play much of a role in the study, but it was interesting enough all the same. Particularly the participants feelings of needing to keep his faith a secret, to hide it from public view and then only to reveal it (come out?) to particular individuals for fear of being judged and 'shunned'.
- Cliques are often used as one of the main ways in which the participants express their dislike for a place. However the language used is always very explicitly about the participant not wanting to use a space that is occupied by these cliques, or somewhere that is supportive of them (the venue is often described as being 'cliquey') rather than a language of being excluded or not fitting in. The linguistic turn isn't especially

surprising as it is repeated across a number of spaces/topics however for some reason I found the repeated use of this same description of the cliques to be quite surprising (and even a little amusing). I'm not sure as yet why and I'm going to be thinking and writing about it more.

- As an extension of this point on language, it has been interesting to see when and how languages of choice, freedom, flexibility have been used and when other languages of fixity or the natural have been used. This point needs further analysis as I work through the remaining transcripts and being second order analysis.
- Finally I have been shocked by the exceptionally bad logic employed by many participants, contradicting themselves often in the same sentences or if not then later in the interviews, making strange and sweeping generalisations from their personal experience. Reading some of them have left me unsure of what the participant actually thinks at all due to the lack of any kind of coherent position on some issues. Maybe I should not have expected anything else and this is one that needs to be put to experience, but I honestly thought that people thought more clearly than this.

Areas which need development

- As previously mentioned while some participants have begun to discuss masculinity as a more fluid construct, few have been able to put that into the context of their own behaviour beyond brief descriptions or terms. This is an area which I think could be improved by asking specifically about their behaviour rather than about their gender as 'gender' seems to be a term which is causing some distraction and confusion.
- Questions around current relationships should also be replaced with attitudes towards various relationship styles, particularly the kinds of lifestyles that the participants aspire towards, what they consider 'making it' as one put. This will give a more detailed exploration of how participants might position themselves within current debates surrounding (simplistically) assimilation with civil partnerships and marriage, or liberation with experimental or alternative relationship styles.
- Further to the above, some participants should be found who have already entered into civil partnership in order to explore how this might incorporate, supersede or interact with manifestations of identity and privilege in their lives.
- Minor other points have also been made throughout this report, about areas which need to be considered for further development or additional questioning.

Summary

- Obviously there is going to need to be changes made to the interview schedule before I carry forwards with the remaining interviews, I will have a draft of the next version of the schedule with me on Tuesday
- Recruitment is also going to be a major challenge which will, I fear put me further behind schedule, particularly with the prospective changes being made to the strategy.
- I'm not sure if all of these ideas are fully worth exploring
- I'm really not sure if I should be changing the sample so drastically, especially with so much time gone already
- On the other hand there is a lot of material here and although I haven't the faintest idea what it's going to look like when I am done, I'm feeling relatively confident about the project as a whole again.
- I'm particularly pleased with refocusing the project onto the homonormativity debates which I think has given me more of a clear position with fewer distractions, I hope

Phase 2 Coding

These codes were generated through a close, line by line, reading of the existing annotations to interview transcripts, memos and field note commentaries. The letters shown with them are the next stage of grouping these codes into common themes and concepts.

Pressure to pull HWX	Earned advantages AT	Political apathy QDKJ
Fag hags FXLNTBD	More integrated = less on the scene LT	Money = privilege A
Enforcement of gay space XMBA	Deflection B	Sedimentation A
Urban gays ACH	Talk to anyone/meeting new people IDL	Dirty, wooden fixtures = Good WUT // = Bad I£
Charities RQJSX	Taking part BKRX	Homogeneity on the scene WQXR
Posters - homomasculine images TWBGX	Being gay is normal now/here T	Sounding/feeling old O
Party with politics QBADHKLMXRTU	Gay is mainstream now/here T	Dislike the music on the scene
Blending LABCHIJKO	Pride is mainstream TDK	Body size
Ambushed by drag queens ULHV	Expecting to be excluded GM	Classism
Our own traditions RLMTTC	Racist jokes F	Does gay community exist?
Underestimate homophobia DGHL	Taking a stand K	Do we ask too much of private business?
People don't like to talk about homophobia DG	Challenging racism K	Access to resources
Men don't hold hands VH	Individual prosperity JST	Choice
Serophobia Y	Education A	Assumptions
In straights' faces/talk about being gay GK	Butch masculinity V	Representation
Casually gay HVJD	Actively sexual/flirting Z	Politics of identity
Design of places codes them ABDXG	Brighton effect C	LGBT community
Big night out SWH	Attitude UFGH	Shared experiences
Shallow UXF	Bitchiness/catty UFGH	Straight friends
Assumption of preference BXJD	Pressure to conform WG	Others need support (not us)
Tolerance makes you confident HD	Pressure to be GAY! WG	Others are more privileged (than us)
Dip in and out HC	Indifference/acceptance SLI£PEDT	Others are victims (unlike us)
Move beyond HC	Good slut, bad slut JLMZW (Y?)	Different gay cultures
Grown out of HC	Integration/assimilation LJDH	HIV/AIDS
Misogyny F	What gays want ZCKJWP	Changing normative bodies
Straights invading our spaces FB	Marriage is a straight institution M	Changing practices
Occupying space B	Civil partnerships & marriage	Changing desires
Knowing the rules BG	NOT the same thing = Bad JKLHS	Gratitude towards political predecessors
Internet for sex Z	// = Good MS	Cruising/saunas
Casual homophobia GBQ	Inclusion based on similarity SKPDH	Intimacy
Locker room chat/ Banter being excluding ABF	Appearance of normality HLW	Home as a social space
Locker room chat/ Banter being including ABG	Scene/ghetto XLMIJ	Heterosexual exclusive places
Faking it £GL	Separation L	Beards = concealment
Being on guard £GL	Liberation M	Predatory places
Gays & women X%	Essentialist language (when threatened?) B	Looking to pick up = seedy
Having to correct people %KGE (T?)	Separation good & bad (who is 'us?') PS	Out on the pull
Awkwardness/Killjoy GE	Integrated with who? LM	Just meeting people
Avoiding straight bars GM	Performance/recognition O	Aspirations
Must get coupled %LTWQJ	Conflict G	Bear pubs
Succumbing to stereotypes %F	Safe spaces GX	Lesbian bars
Sex = emotional Z	Fitting in WHLD	Old gay men go to die
People I don't like = different from me = young families PG%	Standing out MG	Atmosphere
Trendy = not homophobic %AIT	Being unnoticed HDL	Relaxed
Normal Pubs ITS	Belonging HDLX	Diversity of gays
Unearned advantages AT	Dirty looks/comments GO	Silence on race
	Practices of exclusion OG	Race isn't an issue
	Family J	Price of drinks
	Raising Children J	Students = diversity
	Passing HLO	Hard to say No to sex
		Getting respect = professionalism = acting normal

Trust
 Betrayal
 Screaming queens
 Scene is sized
 Stability of scene
 Bad youth
 Public/private
 Ambivalence towards scene
 Privatization of personal interests
 Loss of collective identity
 Antipathy towards camp
 Men get bad women traits
 Women get bad men traits
 Excluding selv
 Inferior masculinity
 Sexual attractiveness builds confidence
 Weakening 'straight' space by being gay there
 Open to 'whoever' (finds out)
 I haven't been judged therefore they are tolerant
 Alternative/indy
 I see *them* as normal
 Masculinity = homophobia
 Working class = homophobia
 CHAV = homophobia
 Outnumber = control of space
 Gay boys go to gay bars
 Creating distinctions/groups
 Separating self from groups
 Others = not like me
 Bullying in school
 Bisexual tendencies – sexuality not just 'gay'
 Past relations with women
 Being myself/ being the real me
 Past impacts on the present
 Lack of sexual choice
 Anxiety
 Being sexy/desirable is important

Straight scene is dangerous
 Correspondence between straight/gay spaces and having a 'normal space' between them
 Osissy
 Pigeon holes
 Selectively concealing/covering sexuality
 'youth culture'
 CHAVS
 Drinking to get drunk
 Rough/rowdy
 Links between categories – white man// gay man
 Stereotypes
 Our places
 Out and Outrageous
 Tone it down
 Lack of friction in movement
 Comfortable
 Lack of concern
 Relaxed/easy going
 Being on display
 Man VS male identities
 Muscles = masculine
 Aggression = masculine
 Caucasion = Science
 Socialization
 Opportunities
 Weird old men
 Owning space
 Gay space
 General & particular statements = Other/self
 Tight labels
 Extremes
 Grey areas
 Backwards
 Overt homophobia
 Sublte homophobia
 De-masculine
 Location/distance from important things

BDSM
 Laughing at/mockng others
 Older cruising = dirty // Young cruising = exciting
 'the community' = abstract idea
 Pride is too commercial
 Pride is now dead
 Experiences of Pride
 Volunteering
 Equal Rights
 Brighton = better than other places
 Brighton bubble
 Visibility
 Tolerance
 Diversity
 Settling down & monogamy
 Looking for sex
 Sleeping around / slut
 Civil partnerships
 Sleazy = old men
 Twinks & chickens
 Being young = being desired
 Grooming
 Gender dichotomy
 Drag
 Trashy/glitter/camp
 Shopping
 Whiteness
 Silence
 Invisibility
 Marginalisation
 Teleology
 Indifference
 WE're almost there / no need for politics
 Fixed identities
 Flexible identities
 Changing identities over time
 Self censorship
 Honesty

Phase 3 Coding

These themes were generated through searching for commonalities and points of particular interest from either the literature reviews or the empirical materials. The numbers refer to the first stage of structuring and planning the final chapter layout.

A = Materialities – money, opportunities
6789

B = Maintenance – defensiveness,
distancing, deflection 78

C = Trajectories – assumptions,
aspirations, life course 9

D = Invisibility – to themselves 78

E = Silence – about others 7

F = Discrimination – against others 7

G = Marginalisation – of themselves, fear
of violence 6

H = Being normal 8

I = ‘Normal’ spaces 8

J = Domesticity – Individualism 89

K = Equality- confronting/challenging
discrimination 89

L = Assimilation 89 (with/from what?)

M = Liberation 89 (with/from what?)

N = Distancing 7

O = Performance – recognition 8

P = Generalisation 8

Q = Political Apathy 89

R = LGBT Community 9

S = Life is easy 9

T = Gay is mainstream 89

U = Aversion to camp 67

V = Celebration of butch masculinity 67

W = Expectations – peer pressure 678

X = Gay Scene 6789

Y = Serophobia & HIV/AIDS 6

Z = Sex 6789

£ = Concealment – passing 8

% = Stereotypes 6789

Phase 4 Coding

The first attempt at structuring the analysis/findings chapters by placing common themes and areas of discussion. This was accompanied by a systematic re-reading of all empirical material and organising them according to relevant material in each chapter, copying and pasting potentially usable material into a large scrapbook style file.

Chapter 6 – Marginalisation of themselves

6.1 Introduction

Why is marginalisation important during a discussion of privilege?

6.2 Experiences of Homophobia

Homophobia is a continuing force of marginalisation, one that these men live with

6.2.1 Direct Events

Violence and Pain

6.2.2 Indirect Discrimination

Do we have any stories of this?

6.3 Effects of homophobia

Effects of homophobia for the participants and how they manage these situations, past experience INCREASE fear of future violence which effects participants actions

6.3.2 In the Street

Avoiding certain places, being on guard, fear of violence constructs experiences of place

6.3.3 Closed Encounters

Self censorship, toning it down, dual identities, performativity of acting straight, fitting in and 'being normal'

6.3.3.1 Coming Out, Again and Again

Correcting assumptions or playing along, when/why do we out ourselves

6.4 Other Marginalisations

Homophobia is important, but by no means the only or most prevalent discussion

6.4.2 Marginalised on 'The Scene'

'Cliques' and feeling left out for no good reason, Peer pressure, being on display/perving, dirty old men, homogenous and dull

6.4.3 Class and Wealth

Material resources structure marginalisation across contexts

6.4.4 Body Shape, Size and Attractiveness

Twink bars, dirty looks, being fat, getting laid

6.4.5 HIV

Less of an issue for this generation than others

6.5 Conclusion

Marginalisation contextualises Privilege, for many participants they could only talk about their experiences in relation to marginalisations that they experienced.

Chapter 7 – Discriminating against others

7.1 Introduction

Participants are not victims, they are also part of networks of marginalisation

7.2 Overt discrimination against 'Other' groups

Classism, misogyny, race(?)

7.3 Indirect Marginalisation

Assumptions, stereotypes and categories – what do these do?

7.3.1 Silence and the absence of exclusion

Participants are often silent on issues of exclusion, they cannot see the persecution of Others – silence reinforces those relations

7.3.2 Defending 'gay' space (defensive language?)

Creating gay space, Gay Pride for Gays, defence and deflection, feeling at home – Owning place

7.3.2.1 Straight invasions – Women

7.3.2.2 Biphobia?

Fence sitting and invisibility, leaving me for a girl

7.3.2.3 Lesbians are invisible

7.3.3 Validating exclusion

Class discrimination validated through 'fear of homophobia', class + masculinity = violence, disdain – education, stereotypes

7.4 Marginalising other gay men

Exclusions are also produced 'within', my participants are some of the more privileged examples – marginalising those who fail to follow the trajectory, producing marginal spaces

7.4.1 Marginalising and rejecting Camp

Camp masculinity is firmly rejected and its prevalence cited as a prime reason for abandoning the gay public

7.4.2 Age and Exclusion on the Scene

Dirty old men, sleaze, public sex, youth, HIV

7.4.3 Looking for sex (good slut/bad slut) – (ab)'normal' sex lives

7.5 Challenging exclusion

Very few discussed this, it might be possible to assume that it doesn't happen very often? Racist jokes

7.6 Conclusion

Privilege/Marginalisation work simultaneously and multiply, this is how my participants talked about these experiences. However privilege is much more than just these

Chapter 8 – Being Normal, performing privilege

8.1 Introduction

Privilege is the ability to be normal, unremarked upon and ignored, amongst other things

8.2 Appealing to Normality

Rhetoric of 'normal' has continuing power, participants use it to validate their own experiences and generalise to Others, 'Normality' hides the structures of power which support their privilege

8.2.1 Producing Straight Space

8.2.2 Producing Gay Space

8.2.3 Producing Non-coded Space

Participants develop gay/straight space as polar opposites with other places being 'normal' or ordinary where they are able to pass

8.2.4 Personal Choice

Choice, feeling comfortable and fitting in become the main factor for deciding on where to go and what to do – this is a function of privilege, lack of friction in movement

8.3 Masculinity and acting normal

Primary way that this 'normality' is discussed is through being able to 'fit in' in straight world, and rejecting camp, embodying normality, acting straight

8.3.1 Fitting in

8.3.2 Rejecting Camp

8.4 Invisibility

*Privilege being invisible is one of its central points – this is totally true! Deflection, I'm not privileged - *they* are*

8.5 Conclusion

Privilege renders itself invisible leaving participants unaware of how their lives are produced through these relations

Chapter 9 – Trajectories of privilege

9.1 Introduction

Individual lives connect to and reflect larger structures of power

9.2 Privileged life-courses

Narrative of moving through and beyond the gay scene, the privilege which supports this movement is invisible leading to the marginalisation of those who fail

9.2.1 Brighton > Other places

Participants typically talk of moving to Brighton & Hove from other places which are used to contrast the lives that they live now

9.2.2 The Brighton Effect

Arriving in Brighton & Hove people typically have a 'mad' 6-18 months of sleeping around and drinking on the scene

9.2.3 Growing out of the Scene

They then typically feel they have outgrown then scene SEX

9.2.4 Sounding old

Participants subsequently talk about their 'growing out of' and retrospect using qualifications to stop themselves from sounding 'boring' or 'old' SEX

9.2.5 Implications

This narrative leads to and sets up the participants' positions within larger networks of power

9.3 Domesticity and individualism

Lack of connection to the scene and gay public life leads to an increased privatisation and domesticity of interests

9.3.1 Equality and Integration , Formal Equality VS 'hearts and minds'

Legal equality becomes viewed as the main goal of LGBT politics, few refer to more complex issues of equality, We're almost there, gay politics is over, gays want integration, being 'the same' = same treatment, Matachine society

9.3.2 Public/Private activity

One of the ways this can be seen is through the amount and division of public/private activities,

Volunteering/charity work (lack thereof), political apathy

9.3.3 Producing or consuming 'Community' and 'The Scene'

Using the community, taking advantage of the opportunities, giving nothing in return, representing the community

9.3.4 Monogamy and marriage

Marriage VS civil partnership issues, new traditions, monogamous desires, SEX

9.4 Assimilating the future

Where are their lives going? Lack of radical politics, assimilationist ambitions

9.5 Conclusion

Relying on these structures of power to continue as they expect

8.4 Example Participant Information

Thank you for taking the time to find out more about my research. Please take as much time as you need to read this information and to decide whether or not you want to take part in the study.

If you have any questions please ask at any time.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is an attempt to better understand the ways that young gay white men experience privilege in different times and places during their everyday lives.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been asked to take part because at some point over the past few months I have talked to you about these ideas and my project. During that conversation you expressed an interest in the project and contacted me about further participation.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in the study is entirely **voluntary**.

If you do decide to take part you will be asked to **sign a consent form**. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without any adverse effects or consequences. I will then immediately and safely destroy all records of your participation and contributions to the project.

Please note: if any of my work is eventually published I will not be able remove anything from those publications. You can still ask to withdraw and I will stop using your contributions in any later work.

What is expected of me?

If you agree to take part in the study you will be asked to participate in an interview at a time and place that are convenient for you. These interviews may be expected to take up to an hour or more.

I will be recording these interviews.

After the interview there are 3 ways in which you could choose to continue taking part in the study. You could **read a copy of your interview transcript**. This will give you the opportunity to change sections that you don't like, or provide more details if you remember them and want to.

What are the possible risks of my involvement?

Initially the only disadvantage is the time that you have to give up to be a part of the project; however one of the things that I have found while I was thinking about my own experiences of these issues is that it can be quite hard, especially to tell someone else about them. Some of these events may have been very emotional.

Some of what we talk about in the interview may be distressing at times. Remember that you can **take a break** at any time or **stop** the interview altogether. If at the end of the interview you wish to contact a third party for any reason then details will be provided the local LGBT Switchboard support and information service.

How will you protect me and my information?

I will be the only person who has access to your name and contact information. All of the information that you give me will be stored in a securely location, accessible only by me or my supervisor.

Some or all of this material may be used to produce my final thesis and subsequently published as part of my academic work. If this is the case I will make sure that your identity is as protected as possible by using pseudonyms.

Because this is a big project that I might continue to write about and use in future I may keep some material for anything up to ten years.

There is a chance because of the amount of information that I am gathering that you may be **recognisable** even without your name. However during the interview we can talk about any identifying details and discuss ways to obscure them to better protect your anonymity.

The only time that I will breach your confidentiality is if, during the interview, you disclose information which suggests that either yourself, or others, may be at **significant and direct risk of harm** to either yourself or to someone else. Please remember that I will talk to you about it before I take any such action.

What if I don't want to carry on with the project?

Remember you can **withdraw from the research** process at any time, without needing to give a reason for your decision and without any adverse effects or consequences. If you decide to stop all you have to do is contact either me or my direct supervisor using the information below

Thank you for taking the time to read this document and find out about my research. I hope that this has answered all of your questions. If you have any problems or have any further questions about the project please contact me. If you have any complaints about me or my project please contact my supervisor using the information below.

Signed

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8.5 Example Consent Form

I _____ agree to be involved in this research project and have fully read and understood the participant information sheet.

I am aware that my part in this study will consist of this **interview** and that any further participation will be my decision at the end of this session.

I am aware that during the interview I will be asked to talk about **private aspects** of my life, share stories of things that have happened to me and my thoughts and feelings about them and that **the interview will be recorded**.

I confirm that my participation in this study is **entirely voluntary**.

I understand that I can **withdraw** from the research process at any time, without needing to give a reason for my decision and without any adverse effects or consequences. I understand that my data will subsequently be removed from the project and destroyed.

I understand that my personal information will be **kept confidential**. I further understand that Glen will make every effort to ensure that information that I share during the research process is **anonymous** and that it will be kept in a **secure location** separate from my personal details.

I understand that if I disclose information which suggests that either myself, or others, may be at significant risk of harm it may be necessary for Glen to **breach this confidentiality** and inform relevant services.

I understand that my contributions to this research study are a part of Glen's thesis and that this material might be used in other publications, presentations and other research outputs in the future.

I understand that this written information will be stored securely, accessible only to Glen and his supervisory team, and destroyed after no more than ten years.

I confirm that I have read and understood this agreement and that I am ready to begin participation in the study

Name _____ Signed _____ Date _____

8.6 Example Demographic Survey

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this interview research.

This sheet aims to record some basic information about your identities.

- **This information is anonymous just like any information you share during the interview.**
- **There are 10 questions – you can choose whether to answer any question. Please ignore any questions you do not want to answer or which you feel are irrelevant.**
- **Most questions simply ask you to describe a particular aspect of your identity. Use any words or phrases that you feel most comfortable with.**

Q1. What is your age? _____

Q2. How would you describe your gender identity?

Q3. How would you describe your sexuality?

Q4. How would you describe your ethnic or race identity?

Q5. Are you presently employed full or part time?

Q6. Do you currently own your property or rent?

Q7. How would you describe your class status?

Q8. How would you describe your educational background?

Q9. Ho would you describe your 'body type'?

Q10. Would you consider yourself as having a long-term health impairment or disability?

Yes (Please give details below)

No (Go to question 10)

Q11. Please use the space below to add anything else that is important to your identity

8.7 Ethical Approval Documentation

UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON
SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND TECHNOLOGY
ETHICS APPROVAL FORM MPhil/PhD and STAFF RESEARCH PROJECTS

This form is to be used by MPhil/PhD students and staff seeking ethical approval for their research from the School of Environment and Technology Research Ethics and Governance Committee.

All of those completing this form and must receive approval from an appropriate ethics committee (usually the School of Environment and Technology Research Ethics and Governance Committee) prior to commencing their research.

Please read the University Guidance on Good Practice in Research Ethics and Governance before completing this form. This form should be checked carefully for typographical and grammatical errors before submission. Incomplete or badly presented forms will be returned. Supervisors of student projects have a responsibility to ensure that the guidelines are followed and that applications are properly presented.

If after considering this form the School Research Ethics and Governance Committee consider Tier Two approval is required, the Principal Investigator / Research student will be notified and this form automatically passed to the Chair of the Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee for consideration.

Please attach the SET Research Ethics Checklist you have already completed to this form.

Section A – Key details

1. Name of student/Principal Investigator Glen Noble

2. Name of supervisors K. Browne; R.J. Elmhirst; A. Church

3. Title of project (no more than 20 words) The Spaces of Privilege

4. Aims of the study

Please summarise your aims in one or two sentences. Write no more than 100 words.

The aims of my thesis are:

- To explore the spatialities of privilege for young gay white men
- To enhance understandings of how privilege is experienced by young gay white men
- To contribute to the developing literatures of privilege
- To contribute to the development of autoethnographic theory and research methods
- To contribute to the development of reflexive interview techniques

5. Research context

A brief summary should be provided discussing the relevant published literature so that the Committee can understand the context to your research. In addition, please supply four or five up-to-date references to the relevant published literature. You may supply up to 800 words.

My proposed thesis starts with the understanding that if there are people who at different times, in different places and for different reasons are marginalised by particular social relations; the corollary of this is that there are some who, in different places, times and for different reasons, are privileged (Frankenberg 1993; Hurtado 1996; McIntosh 1988). Further, that privilege and marginalisation are complex processes, only manifest through the spatially performative iteration of power relations. This understanding of privilege as contingent and negotiated develops upon previous work which tended to reify privilege as a universal property of certain identities and positions, built upon a model of power as restrictive and fixed rather than constructive and fluid (Hill: 1997; Kern: 2003).

The study of privilege stretches across a number of foci and disciplines, although issues of race and gender have tended to predominate (Inwood & Martin 2008). This diffuse field has been strongly influenced by the development of critical race theory, whiteness studies and feminist theories of identity and is originally grounded in analyses of artistic, linguistic and cultural representations (Delgado & Stefancic 1997; Dyer 1997; McDowell 1999; Nayak 2006). Geographers have contributed by offering historical and spatial understandings of the construction of privileged identities and the formation of racialised, gendered and sexualised landscapes, along with exploring how privilege varies across spaces and between various places for different people (Bonnett 2000; Day 2006; Ignatiev 1995; Inwood & Martin 2008; Nast 2002). More recently there has been a growth in empirical studies which emphasise the ways that people experience privilege and its effects of their lives (Kern 2003; Walls *et al.* 2009; Weis 2006).

My proposal also draws on contemporary critical understandings from geographers who warn against simplistic understandings of privilege as universal and constant. As Housel describes '*privilege, then, is not just about who you are, but is about where you are*' (Housel 2009, p134). Such critiques argue that there are always degrees of

complicity and multiplicity and that theorists should engage with these complexities in order to challenge hegemonic binaries (Brown 2009; Hubbard 2008; Oswin 2005). My thesis aims to contribute to the contemporary development of this corpus of literature and research by exploring young gay white men's experiences of privilege, particularly focusing on how these experiences manifest and are spatially produced. I have chosen this particular focus on young gay white men in order to understand this complex and uncertain intersection of identity better. White gay men are often considered to maintain a particularly privileged identity in relation to other sexual dissidents such as queers of colour and lesbians (Nast: 2002). Yet this group remains to some extent marginalised, particularly for younger people who may not possess the affluence of their older counterparts. As such, young gay white men perform a series of interestingly contested and uncertain positions as they move between different places. I hope that by exploring how experiences of privilege and marginalisation shift for those who occupy this position that I will be able to further develop understandings of privilege. It is important to note that I am not suggesting that young gay white men are universally privileged, but rather that processes of privilege and marginalisation complicate with one another, producing uncertain subjects that may be simultaneously privileged and marginalised.

6. Research design

Please provide no more than 800 words and ensure that you discuss your sampling strategy (if appropriate), data collection methods and strategy for data analysis.

Law argues that there is a growing dissatisfaction with the boundaries of traditional methodological rules and that there is a growing acceptance of methods which 'no longer seek the definite, the repeatable, the more or less stable' but rather imagine the world as 'vague, diffuse or unspecific, slippery, emotional, ephemeral, elusive or indistinct' (Law 2004, p2-6). I engage with Law's search of new methodological possibilities through contributing to an existing literature of methodological innovation that focuses on privilege. I suggest that the study of privilege, as a contingent, relational, situated and invisible process could benefit from such a conceptualisation and an approach to method which does not attempt to produce typologies, hierarchies or patterns; but is instead a method as 'unruly, dangerous, vulnerable, rebellious and creative' as privilege itself (Ellis & Bochner 2006, p433). One area of methodological experimentation which has been recently developing has been the application of autoethnographic theory and practice to examine the researchers' personal experiences of privilege and the ways these experiences may connect with, or reflect, social relations of privilege and marginalisation (Lee 2008; Magnet 2006; Moreira 2008; Myers 2008; Waymer 2008).

Autoethnography originates from Hayano's coining the term as a cultural level ethnographic study of the researchers 'own people' or a field in which s/he has 'full membership by virtue of being a native' (Hayano 1979, p99). The initial phase of the research draws upon contemporary understandings of autoethnographic theory that emphasise the deeply personal experiences of the researcher and reflections on the connections between these experiences and their social world (Ellis 2004; Ellis & Flaherty 1992; Ellis & Bochner 2006). This interpretation of autoethnography argues that to write about the self is to write about social experience and the ways in which our personal experience is shaped by the social, cultural and physical world around us (Mykhalovskiy 1997). Autoethnographic research tends to be characterised by the following features; writing in the first person (Tedlock 1991); a focus on finding connections between the social and personal (Spry 2001); the text is often presented as a story following conventions of plot, drama and characterisation (Bochner 2002; Ellis 2004). As such, autoethnographic data collection is conducted through the collection of extensive field notes and reflexive research diary writing. Recording and collecting stories about experiences of everyday manifestations of privilege and reflecting critically upon how these often subtle, unmarked events illuminate relations of privilege and the performance of identities. This ethnographic writing is carried out on a regular basis and analysed through repeated critical and thematic readings and reflections. This element of the research will form phase 1 of the empirical work.

The second phase of data collection will consist of approximately 10-20 semi-structured interviews, with the option for follow up interviews, which focus on exploring and comparing experiences of privilege. These interviews will use a 'reflexive dyadic' style of interviewing which focuses on the interview process as a dialogue of mutual learning and sharing of experience (Ellis & Berger 2002). This is an approach which emphasises the interview as a learning experience for both participants and researcher and aims to include both of their perspectives and reflections upon the interview (Mahoney 2007). I have chosen this particular style of interview as an attempt to provide a non-hierarchical process that will enable both participants to share their experiences of privilege. Interview schedules will be developed using some of the early autoethnographic material to provide stimuli and starting points for the discussions. This second phase of the study will also include the possibility for participants to provide photographs that they feel capture and express some of the ideas that they have discussed during their interview. These photographs aim to provide an additional layer and texture to the research, integrating visual representations of the participant's experiences of privilege, with images that illustrate the places and ideas that they have discussed in the interview. I am interested, not only in illustrating the points that they have already made, but also in how participants frame and represent their experiences of privilege through these photographs; in almost being able to see things from their perspective through interpreting their content (Holbrook: 2010; Knowles: 2006; Watson: 2009). The participants photographs will be included with my own which will focus on capturing my own experiences of privilege along with attempting to picture the experiences described to me by participants who do not want to take part in this secondary element of the study. Participants who choose to take part in this secondary element along with those who wish to provide feedback on their interview transcripts or have elected to take part in a follow up interview will be asked to return. These follow up sessions will, presumably, be shorter than the initial interviews and focussed much more upon the participants

reflections on their experiences of the study and providing an opportunity for reflexivity normally reserved for researchers alone (Domosh: 2003).

Participants for interviews will be selected through a non-random snowball sampling technique. Recruitment shall be through word of mouth during phase 1 of the research along with advertisement for volunteers through a distribution of my contact details and research interests in local networks. These networks are a combination of formal and informal connections that I am already a part of and through which my contact information is already commonly available. As such, potential participants are most likely to be recommended to the project by existing mutual contacts within these networks and earlier participants in the project. Should this initial strategy require additional impetus then I will distribute a standard advertisement for the project including an abridged version of the participant information sheet and a request for additional participants for the project (attached).

Finally, I expect that data analysis will be an ongoing part of the project as themes begin to emerge from the interviews, experiences shared and particular places identified as being most interesting for the project. This framework will develop into the organising principles for writing and analysing the data once collection has finished. However, autoethnography is a particularly contested genre of work, because of this ambiguity recent autoethnographic research tends to make use of a radical hybridity, often following Ronai in the use of layered texts (Dillow 2009; Kidd & Finlayson 2009; Ronai 1992; 1995). Such an approach disrupts the projection of a coherent and omniscient researcher as the text performatively produces a layering of voices and perspectives and is similar to Denzin and Lincoln's proposition of research as '*bricolage*' an approach that '*stitches, edits and puts slices of reality together. This process creates and brings... unity to an interpretive experience*' (Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Richardson 2002). My thesis, like much autoethnographic research, will not be able to make traditional claims as to the validity or generalisability of its data. Instead such research seeks verisimilitude, a creative rendering of experience in order to promote understanding or evocation of experiences as '*lifelike, believable and possible*' (Ellis 2004, p124). Similarly I aim for a transgressive model of generalisability, as the layering of texts aim to evoke a response in the reader; a transference of meaning and understanding of the experience (Angrossino & De Perez 2000; Richardson 1997).

7. Provide details of financial sponsorship and any ethical issues this may raise

N/A

8. If the project involves funding from a Research Council or other organisation with an ethics policy (e.g. a charity) please confirm that the organisation's ethical procedures have been considered and outline any actions taken.

N/A

Please use the SET Research Ethics Checklist to decide which additional section(s) of this form to complete and complete appropriately

If you ticked yes to Question 1 in the checklist (Negative Environmental impacts) complete Section B

If you ticked yes to any of Questions 2-9 (Human Participant Issues) complete Section C

If you ticked yes to Question 10 (Indirect Involvement of the Public) complete Section D

If you ticked yes to Question 11 (Secondary Data Sources) complete Section E

The project student and the supervisor or the principal investigator in the case of staff research must sign the form in Section F

Section B - Potential Risk to the Environment

The aim of this section is to check whether you have taken the necessary steps to ensure your research will avoid causing significant negative impact on the environment.

9. If the research is likely to have significant negative impacts on the environment provide details of these impacts.

N/A

10. Please describe how you will mitigate against significant environmental harm and manage risks.

N/A

Section C - Potential Risk to Human Participants directly working with the researcher

The aim of this section is to check whether you have taken the necessary steps to ensure your research will avoid causing physical or emotional harm, pain, discomfort or stress to human participants.

11. If human participants are directly involved provide brief details regarding the participants and how they will be contacted.

Interview participants will number approximately 10-20 and will be aged roughly between 18 and 28 years old. They will be male identified and predominately identifying as white/'*Caucasian*', further I expect participants to predominantly identify as gay, homosexual or perhaps queer. I expect most of them will be living at least part time in the Brighton and Hove area and will contact them through word of mouth as part of a snowballing sampling strategy. Brighton and Hove provides an interesting area in which to base this study because of the ways in which various spaces around the city are very visibly coded as privileging particular identities, such as the well known 'gay village' based around the St James street area. Similarly, Brighton and Hove has a collection of large social spaces that play a prominent role in the social life of the city, including the beach and park areas. This open and often almost communal atmosphere make the city uniquely suited to observation based research. Similarly, the juxtaposition of a city renowned for its tolerance of difference and sexual diversity in an area of below average racial variation indicates that there may be interesting relations of privilege across the city.

While self identification will be used primarily out of respect for the participants, there may be some complications considering that the project is primarily looking to compare experiences with those who perform a similar intersection of identities as me. As such, while participants will be recruited with an understanding of my project as primarily focusing upon young gay white men's experiences of privilege these categories of identity are understood to be socially defined and constructed; and therefore flexible holding no true ontological existence beyond their social performance (Nayak: 2006). Similarly these identities are often a matter of self definition as much as social proscription and I do not want to ever attempt to impose my understanding of a person's identity upon their own, for example some persons may appear as being 'white' while maintaining a mixed parentage identity or even have different understandings and experiences of white identity based upon national or cultural identities such as Irish. As such if I should encounter persons who have interesting and valuable stories to tell, which relate to the central focus on young gay white men's experiences of privilege then I do not intend to exclude these stories from the project.

12. If human participants are directly involved provide details of any participants who might be considered vulnerable due to age or to a social, psychological or medical condition. Examples include children, people with learning disabilities or mental health problems but participants who may be vulnerable are not confined to these groups.

It would be most appropriate considering the depth of discussion about issues of social inequality and personal identity with participants who experience an intersection of privileges and marginalisations to assume that all participants may be vulnerable at some stage of the research process. Whether through the raising of complex social problems, the provocation of feelings of guilt which often accompany discussions of personal and social privilege, or other unforeseen circumstances. This is particularly true given the reflexive nature of the interview style, which positions the researcher as an equal participant in the interview process and the emphasis on empathy, and the sharing of experiences between the participants.

13. If human participants are directly involved provide details of any risks participants are likely to face that would not be considered minimal risks. If risks are only minimal please describe the risks and explain why you believe they are only minimal.

During the interview portion of the research, there are potentially some risks to participants and researcher alike due to the depth of discussion relating to sensitive topics. While the exact nature of discussions and responses will vary, it can be expected that most will feature at least a surface engagement with issues including, but not limited to; personal and political behaviour; beliefs; potentially experiences of violence and painful memories; gender, sexuality and ethnic identities and the effects these have upon participants lives; discussions of violence or discriminatory behaviour by the participants; and the negotiation of social marginalisation and privilege by participants. As such, there is certainly a risk of emotional distress in the engagement with and discussion of these issues. Further participants are all likely to be drawn from populations with some degree of social inequality and potential vulnerability; this may have the consequence of increasing the risks of distress for participants. There is also risk regarding the principle of confidentiality and anonymity of participants as, due to the snowball sampling procedure, at least some participants of the study are likely to know each other to some degree. Consequently, while every attempt shall be made to ensure that individually identifiable details are obscured during the writing process, it may be possible that participants will be able to recognise their own and others contributions to the project. Little can be done to guarantee confidentiality in this instance, however participants will be asked to respect each other's right to anonymity in this study. Similarly while I hope that my snowball sampling strategy will bring me in to contact with interested people willing to contribute their time and energy to the project freely, I cannot guarantee that there will be no pressures exerted upon my participants by others, for example pressure to reveal what they said during their interviews or even pressure to become involved or uninvolved in the project entirely. It is my hope that participants and potential participants will act in an ethical manner both within the project and in their interactions with one another regarding the project. I will make sure that any such issues are discussed with the participants while talking them through the participant information sheet and consent forms.

14. Describe the procedures that will be put in place to ensure safe and ethical direct involvement of human participants.

The direct involvement of human participants in the project is limited to the interview phase of the research proposal and it is only the issues particular to this phase that shall be addressed here.

Reducing harm

The primary purpose for ethical research practice is to ensure that the potential harm to participants is minimised, all other concerns discussed below are linked in some form to this core concern. The particular interview technique, 'reflexive dyadic interviewing', has been selected because such an interviewing style emphasises the interview as a collaborative and active relationship between two participants (Ellis & Berger: 2002). As such, the reflexive dyadic interview is a mutual process of sharing and learning about the issues under discussion between the two participants, making this style of interviewing particularly non-hierarchical as the interviewer reciprocally discloses information of their own experiences of the topic. This approach is particularly effective for topics which are often difficult to discuss, for example in the instance of this proposal, privilege is often unmarked and unnoticed by those who experience it, and therefore it is often difficult to discuss (McIntosh: 1992). This approach also aims to reduce potential harm to participants by dissolving the image of the researcher as impartial and therefore above reproach through sharing the researcher's personal experiences of privilege (Bergen: 1993). I hope that this will enable participants to discuss their experiences while minimising feelings of blame or guilt that may be felt during these discussions. Further, reflexive interviews are innately polyvocal in representation, shifting between dialogue and reflection, switching between speakers and layering perspectives (Mahoney: 2007); this approach provides space for both participants to reflect upon the interview process and further shares the power inherent to interview situations (Gubrium & Holstein: 1997).

This method of interviewing is, however, particularly open to the possibility for harm to participants, as Stacey warns '*I now perceive that [the feminist] ethnographic method exposes subjects to far greater danger and exploitation... the greater the intimacy, the apparent mutuality of the researcher/researched relationship, the greater is the danger*' (Stacey: 1988, 21). As Duncombe and Jessop discuss, researchers, and particularly those undertaking feminist inspired interviews, receive substantial training in how to '*do rapport*', that is, how to negotiate and manage an appearance of open friendliness towards the participant in order to elicit responses (Duncombe & Jessop: 2002). These issues have little concrete resolution as without interview skills it becomes impossible to conduct interview research. However, ethical procedures to reduce harm and an awareness of the power relationships that proliferate in the interview setting are integral to the design of safe research.

Informed Consent

One of the keys to the reduction of potential harm to the research participant is the principle of informed consent. While I am aware that fully informed consent is an ideal that is effectively impossible, every effort shall be made to ensure that participants are as informed as possible about the nature of the research, their contributions and the potential effects that participation may have upon their lives. However, despite our best attempts it is often impossible to entirely inform a participant about what to expect from the project in advance, thus I consider the principle of informed consent to be a process (Miller & Bell: 2002; Etherington: 2007). The process of informed consent for this proposal is laid out in the following section.

Self-selection: Participants for the project will be recruited through a word of mouth snowball sampling strategy. Those wishing to take part in the research will have to express some level of interest in the project, whether while I am talking to them, or by hearing about it and contacting me directly. Participants are initially providing a certain implicit consent to be involved in the study, even if that consent is subsequently withdrawn upon the provision of more information.

Information: The second stage of this process involves the provision with a participant information sheet which shall review; the purpose of the study; potential risks and benefits for the participants; and information regarding confidentiality, withdrawal, feedback, expectations. This shall be as comprehensive as possible and written clearly for a non-academic audience. The potential participant will have as much time as they need to read and ask questions about the information provided and I will verbally guide them through and explain the information sheet to ensure as much understanding as possible. At this stage, an interview date will be set, leaving the participant with an acceptable amount of time to read and understand the information sheet and make a decision as to whether to take part in the project. Participants will also be able to contact me with any further questions or queries they might have about the project or the information they have been given.

Formal Consent: On the interview date, the participant will be asked to sign a formal consent to begin form, indicating that they are ready and willing to take part in the project. This shall occur before the interview takes place.

Ethically Important Moments: As Guilleman and Gillam describe interviews are often punctuated with particularly difficult or unexpected moments. Moments which raise their own ethical issues or which are particularly problematic for either the researcher or the participant (Guilleman & Gillam: 2004). While some of these may only require a break from the interview, a pause from recording etc. (see Distress, below). Others, such as the confession of abuse they use as an example, may require special procedures (see Confidentiality, below). Further, the management of intimacy and 'faking friendship' outlined by Duncombe and Jessop raises the issue of participants sharing or discussing points which they, in retrospect, would have preferred not to. All of these ethically important moments should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, as they are highly specific to the interview situation and participant. However, in general should any of these moments occur in the interviews they will be discussed with the participants at the time.

Formal Consent post hoc: At the end of each interview, the participant will be asked to reflect upon their contributions to the interview dialogue, potentially revisiting any particular areas of discussion they felt require addition, or any ethically important moments that arose. Finally, the participant will be asked to sign a formal consent form indicating that they are happy for the interview material to be used for the project and that they understand what will happen with their material.

Feedback and Negotiated Consent: Similarly, after the interview the participants will be asked as to whether they will be interested in a second interview that will focus on any feedback they have on their interview transcripts, and reflections on the interview process. During this feedback, stage participants may feel it necessary to negotiate their transcripts and consent if they have subsequently decided that they would prefer not to have discussed a particular issue. This follow up stage may also involve photographs of the particular places the participant has discussed in their interviews or photographs by the participants that they feel particularly illustrate points that they wish to make.

Withdrawal: Participants will be fully notified, in advance, as part of the information and consent forms of their option to withdraw at any point in the research process. Participants will also be informed of their rights to withdraw their contributions from further use at any point prior to publication of materials relating to the study. Should participants wish to withdraw from the project they merely have to contact either my direct supervisor or myself and inform us of their decision. I will then immediately and safely destroy all records of the participants' participation and their contributions to the project.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

In general, efforts will be made to ensure that participants will remain anonymous and that their contributions to the project are kept confidential through the adoption of pseudonyms for participants. However, due to the importance of specific places and the differences in manifestations of privilege, place names shall not be masked in this way. This may, potentially, lead to the inadvertent accumulation of details through which participants may be identified. Participants will be notified of this risk as part of the information sheet and disclosure by them of specific place names will be discussed as part of the negotiated consent procedure. Similarly efforts will be made to ensure that consent is gained from those featured in any photographic materials taken by either myself or the participants, although my own photo's will endeavour to avoid featuring recognisable others there is a proliferation at the moment of public photography which may lead to participants recording images which are inappropriate for use in the project. In this case such material may be used either to inform the research without subsequent reprinting, those featured maybe contacted to gain some form of negotiated consent, or where this is impractical due to the large or public nature of the place then efforts will be made to make sure that those photographed are anonymous such as through erasing identifying features using image editing software. In this way all efforts possible to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of both direct participants and indirect participants that maybe featured in such material will be taken.

It should be noted that in the case of certain ethically important moments, such as confessions of danger or abuse to the participant or to others, there might be the need to breach confidentiality and contact outside agencies such as the police or social services. This possibility will be highlighted by the information and consent forms and discussed with the participant in the event of such a disclosure.

Distress

It shall be emphasised to the participants that they have the option to pause or stop the interview process at any time and for any reason that they wish. I shall ensure that they are aware while they are in the interview room as to whether the recording device is active at any given time and that they can stop the recording whenever they feel the need. Further participants will have the option of discontinuing their participation in the interview, or withdrawing from the research project altogether at any time. Should for any reason participants begin to experience any emotional distress during the interview process and feel that, after the interview they need to contact a third party for any reason then details will be provided the local LGBT Switchboard support and information service.

15. If covert or other controversial research methods are to be used or if the research procedures contravene conventional ethical protocols, justify the use of such methods and procedures here and outline the measures that will be put into place to mitigate against potential harm. If no controversial techniques will be used and the research will follow normal ethical protocols, please write 'normal ethical protocols' in the box below.

See section D

16. If human participants are to receive financial reimbursement for their provide details and a short justification.

N/A

17. Describe in 50-100 words how you will ensure data collection is confidential and anonymous, how data will be stored and who will have access to the data. If the data will not be confidential or anonymous outline the justification for this decision here and procedures for mitigating against potential harm. In particular, please outline consent and data protection procedures for the use of participants' images if photographic or video recordings are to be made in the course of the research.

All data should be stored securely. Documentation should be kept in a locked cabinet or desk, and electronic data should preferably be kept on a removable disk or data stick which can be locked away, or if this is not possible on a password protected computer.

Interviews will take place in a private room, at a time and place convenient for the participant, where they feel comfortable, and where they cannot be overheard. All tapes; transcripts; and electronic data shall be held in a

locked cabinet with copies being available only to the individual participant for feedback. Participants photographs will be made anonymous as far as practicable, if not then consent shall be sought from as many recognisable persons featured as possible. These images will be held electronically on a removable disk, locked in a cabinet with the rest of the data. Finally, names of participants shall be made anonymous using pseudonyms, although subject to exceptions detailed above. All computers used for storage or processing of data will remain secured using passwords and portable memory sticks will be stored with in a locked cabinet.

Section D - Potential risk to members of the public indirectly involved in the research without their knowledge at the time

The aim of this section is to check whether you have addressed any ethical issues arising from activities such as covert observation of people in non-public places and the use of methods that will affect privacy.

18. If the public are indirectly involved in the research without their knowledge at the time please provide brief details.

Involvement will generally be limited to non-invasive observation of behaviour that I experience through my daily life in locations around the city of Brighton and Hove. At times, this observation will also involve my interactions with the public, including events that I consider significant and of interest for the project. Such interactions may potentially vary and include; brief conversations; confrontations; or longer, more detailed interactions; or simply fleeting moments which barely count as interactions at all. As such, it is impossible to predict the range of persons with whom I may come into contact, or the scope of their various involvements over the course of the project. However where possible or necessary, such as for longer, more detailed interactions and conversations my details will be provided in order to give those I speak to the opportunity to find out more information about the project such as opportunities for further participation, feedback etc.

19. Provide details of any negative impacts members of the public will be likely to face and that would not be considered minimal impacts. If risks are only minimal, please describe the risks and explain why you believe they are only minimal.

As my observation will merely be a continual part of my personal behaviour, taking place wherever I happen to be as part of my general activities, I do not anticipate that there will be any additional risk to the public. There are many opportunities around the city for me to discretely and acceptably observe everything that is happening around me, even to make my field notes, without intruding or impacting upon others beyond the effect that my presence would have anyway in that place. I am not attempting to mitigate my effect upon others in any way, as the purpose of this phase of the project is to observe how my personal life and experience connects with the social and cultural life of those around me and the relationships between them. However, while I personally do not consider that my research activities will have much of an effect upon the public or have much of an impact upon others it is important not to rule out the possibility. Therefore I shall remain sensitive to the potential effects which my dual, and covert, use of the places in which I am present may have upon others and ensure that I have available material for the procedures described below.

An interesting aspect of the project is that it is likely to be the places where my presence is least acceptable, those where I may experience marginalisation rather than privilege, that my research activities may most impact upon others present. Similarly, it is the places where I may most experience privilege, manifested through the ability to occupy space and act freely, that my research activities are least likely to be considered a problem for others. Alternatively, perhaps those others may not feel able to challenge my activities because of the privilege I may be manifesting through such actions. This is, at best, a particularly grey area for the project and one that I cannot see a simple answer to. I believe that I will simply have to remain sensitive to the effects my actions may be having upon those around me, although this may just be good advice in general.

In order to minimise the potential impacts of my research in these many places which I may visit a certain amount of discretion will be utilised to determine exactly what I will be doing in different places. There are many places where it is entirely practical and acceptable to spend long periods of time writing in a long format and in this case I may well utilise those opportunities to try and capture as much detail directly as possible. However, this will not always be the case. It is much more likely that I will eventually utilise a variety methods to capture as much detail in my field notes as possible while minimising my impact upon the place, others and experience in which I am immersed. With the advent of compact mobile devices and the general social acceptability of their use, I do not think it will be a particularly difficult task to find time and space to record sufficient field notes which can later be written up in more detail. Similarly, I generally carry a diary and pen around with me anyway and find that there is little difficulty in making sufficient brief notes about an idea or experience that can be subsequently written up in full.

20. Describe any procedures that will be put in place to ensure safe and ethical indirect involvement of members of the public.

In the event of my research activities being considered inappropriate in a particular place or by a particular individual, I will ensure that I have access to some formal information regarding the project and my activities; or at the very least provide individuals with my contact information at the university so that they will be able to follow up their concerns. However, I consider this a minimal risk considering that I will be acting in areas where it is already acceptable for me to be as a private individual and in places where I might regularly attend as part of my everyday life.

Individuals with whom I have longer interactions with, such as those who may be engaged in conversation about a relevant topic, will be given the opportunity to find out more about the project. As I expect this to be one of the primary ways in which participants are recruited for the interview phase of the project this has multiple advantages. Primarily it provides me with an opportunity to seek oral consent from those whose involvement has moved beyond simple observation, or who centrally feature in a scene that I will want to write for the project. Additionally I will be able to provide members of the public who have become involved, at least superficially, in my project with my contact details and additional information regarding the project, along with the opportunity to express their desire not to be involved or written about if that is their choice. This additional information will be provided orally in most initial contacts. However should the individual wish to learn more about the project, such as if they are considering becoming an interview participant, then I will ensure that they have contact details for me at the university so that I can provide them with a full information sheet. This will also serve as an additional source of feedback for the project and me.

21. If covert or other controversial research methods are to be used or if the research procedures contravene conventional ethical protocols, justify the use of such methods or procedures here and outline the measures that will be put into place to mitigate against potential harm. If no controversial techniques will be used and the research will follow normal ethical protocols, please write 'normal ethical protocols' in the box below.

Within the existing literature on privilege, it is well established that privilege is, for the most part, obscured or invisible for those for whom it is manifested (Frankenburg: 1993; Hurtado: 1996; McIntosh: 1992). Further, even under sustained critical study there is a tendency for individuals to try to negate privilege that they experience and '*race to innocence*' (Fellows & Razack 1998; Magnet: 2006). Yet it is only through understanding how people simultaneously inhabit spaces of privilege and marginalisation, and the ways that these intersections interfere with each other that we will be able to understand how privilege becomes manifest through these instabilities. Researching these often unspoken experiences of privilege through conventional methods becomes problematic because of these invisible and unstable relationships. As such I believe that through researching my personal experiences of privilege, through observing how the everyday course of my life is affected and made possible through the manifestation of privilege at various times to be a particularly powerful and useful tool. However in keeping regular field notes, detailing the mundane details of my life, and a regular diary reflecting on the connections that my personal experience may have with the ways the privilege is manifest in specific places and at specific times, I am necessarily engaged in a degree of covert observation. There are a number of particular points and procedures that I hope will enable me to manage and mitigate any risk or harm which could potentially develop from this project as explained below.

Reducing Harm

Again reducing the potential for harm to participants, in this case either the general public or specific individuals about whom I write is the core element of an ethical approach to research practice. Ellis advises that autoethnographic writers ask themselves '*do we need to know?*' To ensure that we only write stories that should be told and minimise the exposure that we place upon others, particularly those who may be close to us (Ellis: 2007; 2008). Similarly, ethnographers have a keen understanding of the real world complexities and blurriness between overt and covert practices in research (McKenzie: 2009). It is in answer to these problems that Calvey argues for a situated ethics in the field, an understanding that it is almost impossible to predict or prepare for the variety of situations that the researcher may encounter in practice (Calvey: 2008). Again, Guilleman and Gillam's identification of ethically important moments is also useful here (Guilleman & Gillam: 2004). What these authors hold in common is an understanding that the ethical undertaking of research is best served through awareness and sensitisation towards ethical problems, rather than a purely formulaic approach. It is my hope that the following discussion will adequately display my own understanding of the potential issues relevant to this phase of the project.

Informed Consent

The majority of my autoethnographic work will be based upon covert observation of my personal everyday life. As such, it will certainly involve observations of my interactions with other people in a variety of situations, times and places. However, it is impractical for me to attempt to gather informed consent from every single person who should ever come into contact with me at every point of my life, particularly because I shall not eventually be writing about every single thing that happens to me. Neither do I think that this is a particular problem for the project as my observations shall be of places and situations in which my presence is already legitimate, such as shared public spaces, spaces where all persons are under surveillance and observation by others at all times anyway. However there will be times when my observation of certain events, such as conversations or those that necessitate detailed description of participants, may cross into a form of participant observation, or that my observations may require clarification, or simply that I feel I have become somewhat too intrusive for some reason. In these situations, I will follow procedures similar to those outlined above and ensure that I make individuals who are present aware of my research activity. At this stage, I will endeavour to provide information regarding the project, my contact details for more information and seek verbal consent from those present that I may write about the particular points that have interested me.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Generally, it will be possible for me to ensure that individuals are entirely anonymous and that their contributions to the project are kept confidential, as outlined below. However, again due to the importance of specific places to

the project, I will not be concealing the names of specific places in which my observations take place. Therefore, it is possible, although unlikely, that individual's anonymity may be compromised through the accumulation of details. I do not anticipate that this shall be a problem because, being aware of it, I can ensure that any specific identities which recur in my observations are sufficiently obfuscated in the final writing. The primary exception to my decision not to conceal place names is where the writing may potentially harm a business, such as a licensed venue. In this instance then I shall attempt to find a compromise between fidelity to the place and the effects that it may have on the manifestations of privilege I am attempting to write about and avoiding harm to the business in question.

Feedback

Again, considering that the majority of my project will be observation of public spaces it is impractical to attempt to offer feedback opportunities for everyone who could eventually become a part of the narrative through my writing. However I am particularly interested in feedback from individuals who have become interested in the project, either through talking to me about it, or who I have talked to as an attempt to clarify or gain more information from about specific events; such as those referred to above. As always, I shall ensure that, my contact details at the university are readily available to any who are interested in becoming more involved in the project, including the opportunity for them to provide feedback to me about the project or subsequent experiences which maybe relevant. Similarly, anyone who wishes to be kept informed about the project will have the opportunity to do so by providing me with his or her contact details. Feedback will only be provided regarding either the project in general, or an individual's personal involvement.

22. Describe in 50-100 words how you will ensure data collection is confidential and anonymous, how data will be stored and who will have access to the data. If the data will not be confidential or anonymous, outline the justification for this decision here and procedures for mitigating against potential harm.

All data should be stored securely. Documentation should be kept in a locked cabinet or desk, and electronic data should preferably be kept on a removable disk or data stick which can be locked away, or if this is not possible on a password protected computer. For undergraduate projects normally only the student and supervisor will have access to the data.

All notes, transcripts, and electronic data shall be held in a locked cabinet with copies being available only to the individual participant for feedback. Participants and photographs will be made anonymous as far as practicable; if not then consent shall be sought from as many recognisable persons featured as possible. These images will be held electronically on a removable disk, locked in a cabinet with the rest of the data. All such data shall only be accessible to my supervisory team and me. Autoethnography characteristically makes use of a number of writing techniques often found in creative and fictional writing; techniques such as dramatic representation through plot, development of characters, description, evocation and narration. As such it is possible and acceptable for the identities of characters featured within the writing to be made anonymous through the adoption of pseudonyms, creating composite characters or even fictionalising particular scenes or events in order to protect the identities of recognisable persons (Ellis: 2004; Kidd: 2009).

Section E - Secondary Data

Secondary data refers to any data you plan to use that you will not collect yourself. Examples of sensitive secondary data include datasets held by organisations, patient records, confidential minutes of meetings, and personal diary entries (these are only examples and are not an exhaustive list)

23. Please provide details regarding any secondary data to be used that may carry sensitive personal or sensitive organisational information.

N/A

24. If secondary data sets containing sensitive personal or sensitive organisational information are to be used outline how such use will be ethically managed

N/A

Section F – Further Details, Accompanying Documentation and Signature

25. Please add anything relating to ethical issues that should be considered when assessing this project that has not been addressed elsewhere on this form. Continue on another sheet if necessary.

N/A

26. Indicate which of the following are attached to this form.

The Research Ethics Checklist should be attached for all projects; you only need to provide the other documents if they are applicable to your project

Attached

SET research Ethics Checklist (please remember to attach)

☐

Participant information sheet	☐
Materials to be used to advertise the project	☐
Participant consent form (or introduction to be used on questionnaire, see below)	☐

Please note that projects that use questionnaires to be completed by respondents do not need a separate consent form, as consent is inferred if the questionnaire is completed; however, the opening statement on the questionnaire should indicate that this will be the case. All those completing a questionnaire should be offered an information sheet providing further details of the project and contact details of the University. When questionnaires are conducted by the researcher as part of an interview then a consent form should be signed.

27. Please sign this form.

Student / Principal researcher's name

Glen Noble

Signed

Date

**28. This form must be checked and approved by your supervisor (for MPhil / PhD students)
Any further Comments from supervisor:**

Supervisor name

Signed

Date

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