BEING-DOING-BECOMING MANLY MEN:
A BOURDIEUSIAN EXPLORATION OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF
MASCULINE IDENTITIES AND SEXUAL PRACTICES OF YOUNG MEN

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of Public Health Sciences
University of Toronto

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2011

Abstract

Dominant discourses on youth sexual health construct young people as at-risk subjects who engage in risky behaviours due to ignorance or poor decision-making. This dissertation challenges the prevailing assumption embedded in these discourses that young people’s sexual behaviours are based on individual rational choices. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice and R. W. Connell’s notion of hegemonic masculinity, this dissertation uses an interpretive approach to analyze the narratives and resonant texts of 24 young men in Toronto. It explores how young men construct and perform their masculine identities in the context of their socio-spatial environment; it also examines the strategies that young men use to compete for cultural capital and dominant positions in the homosocial and (hetero)erotic fields. The analysis yields a number of findings. First, it shows that gender identity is a state of being-doing-becoming. Guided by their gender-class-race habituses, young men engage in an unceasing process of defining, affirming, declaring, and validating not only their sense of who they are (self-identity) and where they belong (collective identity), but also the boundary that
differentiates the ‘Self’ from the ‘Other’. Second, there is a dialectical relationship between the young men’s masculine habituses and their sexual practices. While all the young men engaged in hegemonic masculine practices to gain ‘respect’ from their peers, their practices varied according to their classes and ethnoracial backgrounds. At the same time, their (hetero)erotic practices are intricately intertwined with their homosocial practices, whereby the intra-group masculine expectations coupled with the broad hegemonic masculine discourses assert significant influences on their interactions with both young women and other young men. Finally, hetero-guy-talk constitutes an important everyday social interaction in which young men actively engage in the (re)production and/or resistance of hegemonic masculine discourses and practices. These results suggest that effective sexual health promotion (SHP) must go beyond the focus on individual sexual behaviours to address the historical, cultural, economic, and political contexts that shape the collective sexual health practices of young men. Furthermore, it may be useful to explore ‘hetero-guy-talk’ as an important ‘third’ space where young men are invited to interrogate and resist misogynist, masculinist, and homophobic practices and be supported to engage in humanizing sexual practices.
Dedications

In loving memory of
two women who inspired me:
my maternal grandmother,

朱陳玉
Chu, Chan Yuk
1903~2007

and

my mother,

黃朱瑞桃
Wong, Chu Shui-Too
1921 ~ 2005
Acknowledgements

**MY DEEPEST GRATITUDE GOES TO:**

The twenty-four young men, for their generosity in sharing their stories and perspectives

Dr. Blake Poland, for his unwavering support, critical guidance and affirming mentorship throughout the journey of my doctoral studies

Dr. Peggy McDonough, for her inspiring enthusiasm in Bourdieusian scholarship, patient instructions, and compassionate support that gave me the strength to face many challenges beyond the university walls

Dr. Caroline Fusco, for her detailed, insightful guidance, and thoughtful encouragement

Dr. Joy Johnson, and Dr. Jessica Polzer, for their constructive feedback, and insightful dialogue

Dr. Patricia Mckeever, Dr. Denise Castaldo, and Dr. Joan Eakin, for their tremendous influence on my intellectual growth in qualitative methodology

My father and siblings, for their lifelong teaching and cultivation

My chosen families and friends for their affection and affirmation

Jen and Ken, for their unequivocal acceptance, mindful love, and joyful optimism.

**FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This doctoral research was supported by a doctoral fellowship funded by the Institute of Gender and Health of the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR), and a doctoral fellowship with the Health Care, Technology and Place Strategic Research and Training Initiative, funded by CIHR.
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Chapter 1
Introduction: Background and Research Questions

1. Introduction

Contemporary identities are hybrid, made of many fragments of history and of social and personal experiences; they are heterogeneous, establishing many possible identifications across the boundaries of many potential differences. Yet they are personally knitted together into narratives which give coherence to individual lives, support and promote agency, and express certain values: values which we share with those with whom we identify, and which differentiate us from countless others with whom we do not, often cannot, identify. (Jeffrey Weeks, 2003, p. 123)

This thesis is an exploratory study on the construction of masculine identities and the sexual practices of young men from Toronto’s disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This chapter presents a brief overview of the personal and professional contexts of my interest in pursuing this research, and why this study is important in advancing critical public health.

1.1. Dominant Discourse: Youth as a ‘Risky’ Population and a Population ‘At Risk’

On February 12th of 2008, Canada’s Sexual and Reproductive Health Day, Federal Minister of Health Tony Clement sent a message to all the young people in Canada.

As Valentine’s Day approaches, the best gift you can give to your partner and to yourself is the gift of good health. Although you may not think that you’re at risk, the incidence of all reportable sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Canada is increasing, especially among young people. If left untreated, STIs can lead to devastating health outcomes, from infertility, to pregnancy complications, to genital cancers. . . . Statistics compiled within the past ten years show that chlamydia, syphilis and gonorrhea infections are on the rise in Canada, and that the majority of new infections are attributed to those between the ages of 15 and 24. Becoming infected with one STI puts you at a greater risk of contracting other STIs, including HIV. You can protect yourself. A mutually monogamous relationship between uninfected partners or abstaining from sexual activity will decrease your chances of acquiring an STI . . . (Health Canada, 2008, emphasis added)

The message from Minister Clement represents a dominant discourse in sexual health promotion in Canada and many other Western countries, that is, sex is risky for young people and abstinence is the answer to good sexual health. Similar messages can be found in online resources and print materials in Ontario, across Canada and internationally (American Social Health Association, n.d.; Department of Health and Aging, 2009; Health Canada, n.d.; Toronto Public Health, n.d.).
While there is some evidence to suggest that STI rates are on the rise among young people in Canada and other Western countries (PHAC, 2009), this picture is incomplete. Since Canada does not collect data on STI prevalence, that is, the total number of people with an STI at a designated time in the general population, it is difficult to gain a clear picture of STI prevalence and young people’s sexual health status. Comparative analysis conducted by the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that the increase in chlamydia rates likely reflects an increase in chlamydia screening, improved testing technology and improved reporting rather than a true increase (McKay & Barrett, 2008). In Canada, these plausible explanations are supported by the results of large-scale surveys of the Canadian in-school youth population. Compared to studies in previous decades, these surveys show that more young people have reported using a condom the last time they had sex, and the percentage of young people having multiple partners has remained the same or decreased (Boyce, Doherty, Fortin, & Mackinnon, 2003; The McCreary Centre Society, 2004).

Despite a lack of certainty in the explanation of the increase in the reported rate of STI, the dominant discourse on youth and STI continues to construct all young people between the ages of 15 to 24 as both a ‘risky’ population and a population ‘at risk.’ Furthermore, the dominant discourse constructs young people as autonomous individuals who are free to choose their sexual actions; as such, it prescribes mutual monogamy, abstinence, condom use, and STI testing as the ‘responsible’ solutions for young people to adopt.

1.2 Unequal Distribution of Negative Sexual Health Outcomes Among Young People

In comparing the sexual health and behaviours of Canadian youth over the past six decades, Eleanor Maticka-Tyndale (2008) argues that little has changed in the patterns of sexual behaviours among the general population of Canadian youth; behavioural indicators such as the age of first sexual intercourse and the number of lifetime sexual partners have remained almost the same. The only obvious change is associated with sexual communication through the use of advanced communication technologies such as mobile phones and the Internet. In fact, most Canadian young people are experiencing better sexual health outcomes, and more of them are engaging in safer sex practices.

However, Maticka-Tyndale (2008) emphasizes that not all young people enjoy this overall sexual health improvement. Young people who experience social and economic
marginalization (e.g., youth from low-income neighbourhoods; LGBTTTIQ--lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirited, transgendered, transsexual, intersexed, and queer youth; newcomer youth; street-involved youth, etc.) tend to have higher rates of STI/HIV infections (Maticka-Tyndale, 2008). Her observation of the unequal distribution of negative sexual health outcomes is supported by the results of other research studies, which find that socially and economically marginalized young women bear a disproportionate burden of STI and HIV infections (Hefferman, 2002; G. C. Miller, McDermott, McCulloch, Fairley, & Muller, 2003; Smith-Fawzi, et al., 2003). Other studies suggest that the collective historical and persisting experience of racism and forced assimilation contribute to problems such as addiction, violence and STI/HIV infections among the racialized minority youth subpopulations (Singera, et al., 2006; Steenbeek, Tyndall, Rothenberg, & Sheps, 2006).

Geographic mapping of sexual health surveillance data in Toronto and Calgary produces similar results--the incidence of unplanned pregnancy and STI was found to be higher in disadvantaged neighbourhoods defined by income, education, community resources, and minority status (Bush, Henderson, Dunn, Read, & Singh, 2008; Gournis & Achonu, 2005; Hardwick & Patychuk, 1999). Furthermore, studies that use a social network approach also show that differences in STI prevalence may be related to racial/ethnic segregation of sexual networks and the tendency of individuals to date people of similar socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds (De, Singh, Wong, Yacoub, & Jolly, 2004; Ellen, 2003; Jennings, Curriero, Celentano, & Ellen, 2005). These findings suggest that conventional risk factors such as condom use and number of concurrent sexual partners do not adequately account for the varying sexual health outcomes within and across the different subpopulations.

The unequal distribution of negative sexual health outcomes also raises questions about universal access to effective sexual health promotion and sex education for all young people. Although evaluation studies of pregnancy and HIV prevention programs have demonstrated some evidence of effectiveness in promoting safer sex and contraception practices among young people (Albrecht, 2000/1999; B. T. Johnson, Carey, Marsh, Levin, & Scott-Sheldon, 2003; SIECCAN, 2004), other studies point to a disjuncture between sex education and the sexual realities of young people. Dominant sexual health promotion programs, subsumed under public health and public education, have been criticized for their narrow focus on knowledge, attitude,
and behavioural risks while ignoring the meanings of sexual encounters in young people’s lives (Ashcraft, 2006; Hirst, 2004; Rogow & Haberland, 2005).

Furthermore, as the interventions are mostly female targeted and middle-class biased, they perpetuate the myths of male sexual prowess and the responsibility for women to enforce safer sex practices (Allen, 2005c; Hirst, 2004; Larkin, Andrews, & Mitchell, 2006); these interventions fail to reach young people of diverse and marginalized backgrounds (Daykin & Naidoo, 1995; Noguchi, Albarracin, Durantini, & Glasman, 2007; Taylor, 2007). The evidence of sexual health disparity points to the need for research that explores the contexts of sexual practices among the different youth subpopulations to generate knowledge that supports the development of effective and inclusive programs.

1.3. Gaps in Sexual Health Research

Feminist movements in the 1970s contributed to the establishment of social research on culture, power, and human sexualities (R. W. Connell & Dowsett, 1992; Rich, 1983; Ross & Rapp, 1983; Simon, 1996; J. Weeks, Holland, & Waites, 2003). However, the emergence of the AIDS epidemic in the early 1980s dramatically interrupted this new trend in research. The need for rapid responses and quick solutions led to “the resurgence of the biomedical approaches to sexuality through the repeated association of sexuality with disease” (Vance, 1991, p. 880). The return of these dominant approaches has taken a firm hold on sex education in the public health field, where the majority of research remains focused on the epidemiology of HIV/AIDS, STIs, teenage pregnancy, and individual risk factors such as age of first intercourse, knowledge, attitude/beliefs, safer sex intentions, and safer sex behaviours (for example, Abel & Brunton, 2005; Boyce, et al., 2003; Halpern, Cornell, Kropp, & Tschann, 2005; Upchurch, Mason, Kusunoki, & Kriechbaum, 2004). While these studies contribute to some understanding on the aggregated attitudes and behaviours of young people, this knowledge is incomplete in that they are not able to explain the different pathways or contexts associated with different sexual behaviours among young people.

Furthermore, the results of these studies are often sanctioned as ‘expert’ knowledge and generate discourses that define norms of ‘healthy’ sexual behaviours against which individuals

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1 APA Style (6th edition) requires the inclusion of the first author’s initials in all text citation when a reference list includes publications by two or more primary authors with the same surname.
and groups are constituted as risk-takers or at-risk subjects (Tulloch & Lupton, 2003). At the same time, these discourses intersect with other discourses of sexual morality to perpetuate adult anxiety toward youth sexuality, and function to justify institutionalized surveillance of young people (Hughes, Morrison, & Asada, 2005). They also reinforce racialized, classed, and gendered stereotypes of youth subpopulations who do not fit into the normative standards as being ‘ungovernable,’ ‘deviant,’ ‘delinquent,’ and ‘dangerous,’ and in need of reform and control (L. H. Smith, Guthrie, & Oakley, 2005). The effects of these discourses are demonstrated in historical practices such as the criminalization of homosexuality (P. Roberts, 1993) and the involuntary sterilization of “people deemed incompetent, sexually uncontrollable and genetically defective” (Park & Radford, 1998, p. 321). By focusing on individual risky behaviour, policy-makers are able to take attention away from the structural influences that mediate young people’s sexual health (Bissell, 2000; Bonell, 2004).

In the area of young men’s sexualities and sexual health, there is also a scarcity of sociological research. A literature review by Smith and her colleagues (2005) identifies 94 studies on young men’s sexual health. It shows that two-thirds of these studies are atheoretical; the rest are based on three theoretical assumptions—biological, cognitive, and socio-environmental. The biological explanations focus on pubertal changes, hormonal effects, and other taken-for-granted categories such as ‘race,’ age, and sexual orientation. The cognitive explanations focus on individual motivation, normative values, attitude, self-efficacy, and future intention. The socio-environmental explanations include proximal factors such as family structure and function, parental values and attitudes, peer influences, and distal factors such as ethnicity, neighbourhood characteristics, and socioeconomic status. While these studies identify a myriad of social and environmental determinants of young people’s sexual health (DiClemente, Salazar, Crosby, & Rosenthal, 2005; Frohlich, Corin, & Potvin, 2001; Kirby, 2002), they are less able to explain the contexts, mechanisms, or pathways that lead to young people’s sexual practices, or how social positions defined by constructs such as ‘class,’ ‘race,’ or ‘ethnicity’ influence these sexual practices.

1.4. Personal-professional Interests in Studying the Sexual Practices of Young Men

In completing this dissertation, I was frequently asked: “Why this topic?” My usual answer was: “Because I think something is missing in the way we go about studying sexual health and doing sexual health promotion.” That was the ‘safest’ and ‘simplest’ answer I could
give to anyone who asked. But what has sustained my motivation and efforts on this dissertation came from my personal-professional experience and interests. The following subsections provide selected examples of these experiences.

1.4.1. “How Come You Don’t Talk to The Guys?”

In 2005 when I was working part-time at a local health unit, the sexual health promotion team was preparing for a social marketing campaign to raise awareness of chlamydia infections among young women. I was asked to lead a small team to explore young women’s experiences in accessing sexual health care and their perceptions of an effective sexual health promotion campaign. We conducted five group interviews with 49 heterosexual young women from Toronto’s disadvantaged neighbourhoods. These young women spoke of many challenges that they faced in their (hetero)erotic\(^2\) relationships, including: maintaining positive sexual reputations; negotiating trust and relationship expectations; dealing with ‘cheating’ and ‘being cheated on;’ addressing sexually transmitted infections; and so on (Tangelder, Wong, Chan, Boi-Doku, & McWatt, 2006). At the end of each group interview, the young women always asked: “How come you don’t talk to the guys?” They urged us to reach out to young men and talk to them instead of only talking to young women. These young women’s observations and suggestions reflected the reality in sexual health promotion–most of the sexual health promotion programs tended to alienate young men and burden young women with all the sexual responsibilities.

1.4.2. “You Can’t Say ‘No’ to Girls. Everyone Will Think You Are Gay.”

In my work with young people at sexual health clinics and in community settings, I came across many stories that pointed to a need to interrogate ‘gender’ and gendered sexual practices among young men and women. For instance, during a discussion on the topic of sexual coercion among high school students, a 15-year-old young man recalled dancing with a girl from his class at the school dance; she was holding him very tight and caressing his buttocks in ways that made him feel very uncomfortable. When other students in the discussion group asked him what he did in response, he replied, “Nothing. You can’t say ‘no’ to girls. Everyone will think you are gay.”

\(^2\) I use the term (hetero)erotic throughout this dissertation. The prefix hetero is put in brackets to make visible the naturalized heteronormativity in our society. Since heterosexuality denotes the social relation between men and women (Jackson, 2005) beyond erotic sexuality, I use the term erotic instead of sexual to indicate relationships that arouse sexual excitement or erotic desire.
Although there is a wide acknowledgement that Western society has granted young men more permissive sexual attitudes and behaviours than girls (Lear, 1997; Deborah. L. Tolman, Striepe, & Harmon, 2003; Welles, 2005), young men’s sexual practices are constrained within heteronormative and hegemonic masculine expectations. However, with the exception of the work by Louisa Allen (Allen, 2003, 2007b) studies on the performance of masculine identities tend to focus on the non-sexual aspects of young men’s social practices: masculinities and sports (Adams, Anderson, & McCormack, 2010; Kreager, 2007; Laberge & Albert, 1999; Messner, 2001), masculinities and racial identities (Bannister, 2006; hooks, 2004; Lichtenstein, 2004), masculinities and violence (Miedzian, 1992), or masculinities and early socialization (Eliasson, Isaksson, & Laflamme, 2007; Jordan, 1995).

1.4.3. Racialized Discourses on Young People’s Sexuality

On another occasion, I attended a meeting where sexual health practitioners from across Ontario gathered to share resources, strategies, and observations about trends. Colleagues at the table were sharing their observations of an increased number of teenage pregnancies at their clinics. Some colleagues suggested that the economic recession and the changing social welfare policies were the plausible contributing factors. Then one colleague shared her perspective, “In my area, I think it’s those Black guys from [name of high school] who go around getting the Portuguese girls at [name of another high school] pregnant.” While not everyone around the table agreed with this statement, it was left unchallenged. Throughout the years, I have encountered many racialized discourses of youth sexuality in both professional and non-professional settings: young Black men as ‘hypersexual’ and ‘irresponsible’; poor young White women as ‘victims’ or ‘White trash’; young Black women as ‘oversexed’ or ‘subordinated’; and young Asian men as sexually ‘invisible’ or ‘effeminate.’ These discourses are perpetuated in popular culture and everyday social space (Estrada, 2008; Gadsden, 2005; Leonard, 2006; Newitz & Wray, 1997; Sandell, 1997).

Being a racialized minority woman, I also have to negotiate multiple identities in my everyday life. Doing an exploratory study on the ‘gendered,’ ‘classed,’ and ‘racialized’ practices of young people partly stems from my desire to gain a better understanding of the historical, social, and political contexts of these discourses, which may enable me to offer a rebuttal, rather than feeling stuck with an emotionally frustrated ‘muteness.’
1.5. Research Purpose and Questions

The primary purpose of this study is to address some of the gaps in social research on masculinities and the sexual practices of young men by exploring how young men make sense of their gendered worlds and perform their masculinities in their everyday socio-spatial environment. A secondary purpose of this study is to generate knowledge that can be used to guide the development of inclusive sexual health programs that reduce sexual health disparities among marginalized young men. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu’s notions of habitus, capital, and field, and Raewyn Connell’s work on hegemonic masculinity, this study uses a qualitative interpretive approach to explore how social relations of power based on ‘class,’ ‘gender,’ and ‘race’ are internalized, embodied and expressed as both individual and collective homosocial and (hetero)erotic practices among the young men. Specifically, it explores:

1. the participants’ experiences of growing up and/or living in their neighbourhoods;
2. how they made sense of and responded to the dominant discourses on masculinities and sexualities;
3. the strategies they used to construct and perform their masculinities and sexualities in the various contexts of their socio-spatial environment (e.g. at school, at parties, on the street corners, etc.);
4. how they competed for different forms of capital (economic, social, and cultural) to secure their social positioning in the homosocial and (hetero)erotic fields; and
5. how they actively engaged in reinforcing and/or disrupting hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity.

1.6. Organization of the Thesis

This dissertation consists of ten chapters. Chapter Two is divided into two parts. Part A provides a sketch of the prevailing culture within the field of sex education in Canada and the United States. It includes a brief review of the dominant sexual health messages produced and circulated by the health units across Ontario. Part B provides an overview of some key theoretical concepts and debates regarding the notions of sex, gender, and sexualities, which I

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3 Raewyn Connell was known as R. W. Connell or Bob Connell in her earlier publications.
4 In the context of this study, (hetero)erotic practices refer to practices that arouse sexual excitement or desire; they may include sexual activities but are not limited to sexual activities. Since desire is socially constructed and implicated in power and discourse (Foucault, 1978), what is perceived to be erotic varies across gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other cultural contexts.
use in combination with Bourdieu’s theory of practice to make sense of the young men’s narratives.

In Chapter Three, I present my reading of Bourdieu’s sociology of practice and its related concepts of habitus, capital, and field. I also draw on the feminist critique and feminist application of Bourdieu’s sociology to explore its existing and potential contribution to ‘gender’ and ‘race’ analysis.

Chapter Four describes the research paradigm and theoretical orientation of this study. It provides a detailed explanation of the study design and the strategies used in recruitment, data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, and writing. It also presents the ethical issues pertaining to this study.

Chapter Five provides a set of brief descriptions of the young men who took part in this study. The participants are grouped according to the neighbourhoods where they lived or ‘hung out.’ Although demographic categories and attributes of our social identities are socially constructed and value laden, these categories provide contextual information that helps make visible my personal and field-specific theoretical assumptions and biases.

Chapter Six to Chapter Nine present the results of the study. Chapter Six focuses on the socio-spatial environment of the neighbourhoods where the young men grew up or resided at the time of the study. I use a place-based analysis to show that it was in and through places that young men embodied their conditions of existence to develop their habitus as expressed in their perceptions, dispositions, aspirations, and tastes.

In Chapter Seven, I focus on the young men’s childhood experiences to elucidate how their primary (familial) and secondary (school and street) habituses were shaped by their social positions associated with ‘class,’ ‘gender,’ and ‘race.’ A critical understanding of the young men’s masculine habituses in relation to the fields they inhabited helps to illuminate their homosocial and (hetero)erotic practices, which are the key foci of this dissertation.

In Chapter Eight, I draw on the young men’s narratives in hetero-guy-talk to examine: (1) how structures of the (local and global) fields of masculinity authorized these young men’s ‘performative’ utterances in subject formation; (2) how these young men’s homosocial practice in hetero-guy-talk were related to their social positions, their position-taking, and their capacity
to improvise in meeting the demands of the fields they inhabited; and (3) how young men of similar conditions of existence embodied these conditions differently to produce unique individual habituses, making transformation in hetero-guy-talk possible.

In Chapter Nine, I continue to draw on Bourdieu’s notions of habitus, field, and capital to examine the logic of the young men’s (hetero)erotic and homosocial practices in the multiple contexts of their lives. I also return to the notion of place to examine the intersecting effects of local and global sexualized cultures, normative codes of homosocial practice, and power relations on the (hetero)erotic sexual practices of the young men in this study.

In Chapter Ten, I conclude this thesis by highlighting the theoretical and methodological contributions and possibilities for future research. Based on my findings, I present a set of practical recommendations for the development of effective and inclusive sexual health promotion strategies for young men of diverse social positions and backgrounds. I also provide a summary of the contributions and limitations of this study.
Chapter 2

Literature Review: Sex Education, Social Theories and Research on Gender and Sexuality

2. Introduction

Sexual values and practices are intricately tied to the social positions of individuals and groups. Not all members within a given society are granted the same freedom and autonomy to enjoy erotic pleasure or practice their sexualities. Rather, it is the power relations that produce hegemonic sexual norms that function to discipline and control sexual practices that do not fit with these prevailing norms (D. Richardson, 1996). Furthermore, the sexualities and sexual practices of young people — who occupy an ambiguous, socially constructed space between childhood and adulthood — are constantly being monitored, disciplined, and controlled through the discourse of risk (Ehrhardt, 1996).

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part A provides a sketch of the prevailing culture within the field of sex education in Canada and the US. It includes a brief review of the dominant sexual health messages produced and circulated by health units across Ontario. The findings in this section provide a backdrop against which we can assess the (lack of) alignment between sex education and the sexual practices of young men across different social backgrounds. Part B provides an overview of some key theoretical concepts and debates about the notions of sex, gender, and sexualities, which I use in combination with Bourdieu’s theory of practice to make sense of the young men’s narratives in this study.

2.1. Part A: Dominant Discourses in Sex Education

In the field of sexual health promotion, comprehensive definitions of sexuality and sexual health have been widely adopted on paper by many countries (ARSRC, 2005; Health Canada, 2003; SH&FPA, 2006). For instance, the revised Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education defines sexuality as:

a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values,
behaviour, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors. (PHAO & WHO, 2000)

The Canadian Guidelines also defines sexual health as “not merely the absence of disease” but also the “possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence” (PHAC, 2008, p. 5). It highlights the importance of integrating “the positive, life-enhancing and rewarding aspects of human sexuality” into sex education, while also identifying strategies “to reduce and prevent sexual health problems.” It also recommends that sex education be provided “within the context of the individual’s moral beliefs, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious backgrounds and other such characteristics” (PHAC, 2008, p. 11). However, in practice these all-encompassing guiding principles and values are seldom integrated into sexual health promotion or sex education.

In the US, the outcome indicators listed in numerous meta-analysis studies on the effectiveness of sex education programs for young people demonstrate that these programs continue to address only the negative aspects of sexual health such as unplanned pregnancy, STIs, HIV/AIDS, and sexual assault (Robin, et al., 2004; Silva, 2002; Song, Pruitt, McNamara, & Colwell, 2000). Positive aspects such as intimacy, pleasure, fantasy, and desire are seldom included in sex education (Allen, 2005c; Hirst, 2004). Furthermore, young people’s sexuality continues to be framed in biological and medicalized terms with an emphasis on physiological changes and responses (Deborah. L. Tolman, et al., 2003).

Despite research evidence that suggests broad-based comprehensive sex education addressing all aspects of sexuality is critical to the sexual well-being of young people (SIECCAN, 2004), sex education in Canada and the US, subsumed under public health and public education, continues to adopt a biomedical approach that privileges STI control and teen pregnancy prevention. The social, cultural, and structural contexts of sexuality and sexual practices remain invisible.

To a large extent, the biomedical approach towards sexual health promotion is also driven by the discourse of evidence-based practice in population health promotion. Although a large number of studies investigate the effectiveness of sex education programs in promoting condom and contraceptive use among some youth (Robin, et al., 2004; Silva, 2002; Young Song, Pruitt,
McNamara, & Colwell, 2000), very few studies evaluate whether these programs meet the learning needs of the young people or why they were effective for some youth but not others. A study of students and parents in four Canadian communities (CMEC, 1999) found that neither the school system nor the public health system asked parents or students if they were satisfied with the sexual health programs and services received by students. Students reported “frustration with the narrow scope of the sexuality education they received (anatomy, disease, and condom use)” and shared that they had little knowledge of where to go for sexual health care in their communities (CMEC, 1999, p. 6). Other studies also show that there is a mismatch between sex education and the sexual health learning needs identified by young people (Allen, 2005b; Fine & Weis, 2003; Ingham, 2005; Larkin, et al., 2006).

A brief review of the web-based sexual health information and e-resources, posted by the 36 health units in Ontario, shows that the social, economic, political, and environmental determinants of sexual health are rarely acknowledged or addressed. Furthermore, the limited information offered on youth sexual health is dominated by three intertwining discourses: (1) sex is risky and abstinence is advisable; (2) young people are emotionally unready for sex and abstinence is advisable; and (3) young people’s ability to discern between infatuation and love is questionable.

Building on the discourse of physiological risks associated with unprotected sex, public health sex education materials extend the association of sex to emotional risks. Abstinence is promoted not only as the most effective method to eliminate the risks of HIV/STIs and unplanned pregnancy (Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, 2003), but also as an effective way to prevent “being emotively hurt” (Eastern Ontario Health Unit, 2005) and as a demonstration of “real emotional maturity” (Grey Bruce Health Unit, 2007). These abstinence messages do not reflect the reality of many young Canadians. Results from a Canadian survey show that 40% of young men and 46% of young women in Grade 11 reported that they had engaged in sexual intercourse at least once (Boyce, et al., 2003). Furthermore, these messages undermine any

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5 I undertook a review of the web-based materials posted by all 36 health units in Ontario between January and April 2008. Materials posted under the web links to topics such as sexual health, youth health, lifestyle, abstinence, contraception, birth control, HIV/AIDS, STIs, puberty, relationship, decision-making, talking about sex, and links to external websites were reviewed for their content and discourses on youth sexuality. Web links to the Ontario health units are posted on the Association of Local Public Health Agency website at: http://www.alphaweb.org/ont_health_units.asp
possibility that some young people actually experience sexual pleasure and have positive sexual experiences.

Materials on sexual decision-making are also dominated by the theme that young people are ‘not ready’ for sex. Furthermore, these materials often provide contradictory messages: on one hand, statements such as “Only you can decide when you are ready” and “Remember, you always have the right to say NO to sex” portray young people as autonomous individuals with the ability to make ‘healthy’ choices; on the other hand, questions such as “Am I emotionally and physically ready for this? Why do I want to have sex now? Am I doing it because I think I am the only one who hasn't had sex yet?” (Durham Region Public Health Department, 2007; Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit, 2007) portray young people as immature, vulnerable, and confused individuals who are at risk of engaging in sex for all the ‘wrong’ reasons (Allen, 2007a).

The idea that young people are sexually vulnerable is further reinforced through the discourse of ‘infatuation vs. love.’ In the materials on relationships, love is idealized as the goal and evidence of a ‘healthy’ relationship (Peel Public Health, 2007). Other e-resources construct the norm that sex is “best when there's already love” and “not as a way to get love” (Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, 2007). The notion of love is used to reinforce the logic of abstinence and sexual morals; for instance, one of the e-resources promotes love as “one of the most important things in the world” and asserts that one can “have a boyfriend or girlfriend, be totally in love and not go all the way” (Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit, 2007). In other words, love is about self-control, especially on the part of young women. Furthermore, the message of ‘not going all the way’ implies that there is a final ‘destination’ in sexual interactions. Since this message is embedded within the discourses of condom use, unplanned pregnancy, and STI related risks, it implies that ‘penetrative’ vaginal sex is the norm and naturalizes heteronormativity.

Silence on sexual pleasure and the discourse of abstinence is counter-productive to sexuality education because they do not acknowledge that sexual experiences and practices are

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6 Heteronormativity refers to “the practice of organizing patterns of thought, basic awareness, and raw beliefs around the presumption of universal heterosexual desire,” whereby all other forms of desire are denied and considered deviant. Furthermore, heteronormativity is a practice that “extends beyond interpersonal relationships to imbue social institutions” and all areas of social life (Dennis, 2004, pp. 382-383).
two of the many ways for young people to achieve sexual fulfillment or actualize their sexual ‘self’ (Ehrhardt, 1996). Furthermore, these discourses are not merely statements or representations of young people’s social lives – they are performative utterances (Bourdieu, 1991) that shape our ideas about youth sexuality; they justify our institutionalized practices of surveillance and control of young people’s sexual practices (P. Kelly, 2003). As agents legitimated by the state, teachers and public health professionals are authorized to (re)construct youth sexualities and (re)produce dominant discourses about youth sexuality.

2.2. Part B: Social Theories and Research on Sex, Gender, and Sexuality

Despite the frequent usage of the notions of sex and gender in social research and everyday life, finding an agreement on the definitions or ontological assumptions of these terms remains difficult. The Oxford English Dictionary (2009) defines sex as: “either of the two main categories (male and female) into which humans and most other living things are divided on the basis of their reproductive functions” or “the fact of belonging to one of these categories.” It also refers to “sexual activity, specifically sexual intercourse.” Although these descriptions are often treated as facts, their underlying assumption of distinct differences between women and men based on biology is a recent and contestable invention. Historical accounts show that in antiquity two genders existed but only one sex. While Greco-Roman physicians, anatomists, and philosophers recognized the structural differences of the reproductive organs in men and women, these differences were not taken as evidence of two distinctive sexes. The male and female differences were considered “of degree and not of kind” (Laqueur, 1990, p. 25). Yet the Greco-Roman one-sex system did not mean that men and women were treated equally; it was still a system organized and measured on masculine principles (Bourdieu, 2001).

In the 1960s, second-wave feminists interrogated the essentialist insistence on the binary system of two sexes and the blurring of distinction between biology and social norms, whereby a woman’s actions are deemed to be “an expression of the ovum in her” (Moi, 1999, p. 20). They took up the categories of sex as the biological and gender as the cultural in order to critique men’s arbitrary domination over women and to resist the confinement of women to the private or domestic spheres. While the gender/sex dichotomy has proven to be politically useful in advancing the feminist agenda of achieving equal rights for women, its use has also reinforced the essentialist construction of biological sexual differences and the universalist body/mind
dichotomy, making it extremely difficult for feminists to extend their poststructuralist critique of binary logics to the sex/gender distinction (Haraway, 1991/2007). At the same time, the work of the French historian and philosopher, Michel Foucault (1975, 1978), has opened up the space for critical feminist scholars and queer theorists to interrogate sexuality as the effects of power relations rather than an innate quality of the body.

By the 1980s, the early orthodox formulation of sex as biological and gender as cultural was challenged and revised (Carver, Zalewski, Kinsella, & Carpenter, 2003; Prokhovnik, 1999). In her 1983 essay, *A Critique of the Sex/Gender Distinction*, Moira Gatens (1996) argues against the assumed existence of a neutral and passive anatomical body upon which the social and cultural are inscribed. She advocates for the acknowledgement of a live, situated body that exists only within a particular historical and social context. For Gatens, the sexed body is far from being *natural*. Her work buttresses Monique Wittig’s argument that *sex* is a political category and “the product of a heterosexual society in which men appropriate for themselves the reproduction and production of women and also their physical persons by means of a contract called the marriage contract” (Wittig, 1982, p. 67). In the following subsection, I summarize some of the key concepts and recent developments in social theories of gender and sexuality.

### 2.2.1. Foucault and the History of Sexuality

Foucault’s work on discourse and power-knowledge is influential in making visible the social construction of sex and sexuality. In *The History of Sexuality Volume I*, Foucault (1978) suggests that power in modern (capitalist) Western society has changed from being a sovereign force that decides on life and death to a form of bio-power “that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise control and comprehensive regulation” (p. 137). By the nineteenth century, the principle form of government was to maximize life by controlling and modifying life processes such as birth, death, sexual relations, sickness, diseases, bodily hygiene and so on (McHoul & Grace, 1993). The exercise of bio-power was supported by systems of expert knowledge produced by those in power – medicine, psychiatry, demography, pedagogy, criminology, psychology, and so on (Foucault, 1978). Furthermore, a number of disciplinary techniques are used in the exercise of bio-powers: (1) *surveillance* or *hierarchical observation* through a perpetual ‘gaze’ that is integrated in a network of relations from top to bottom (e.g., parent-child, doctor-patient, teacher-student); (2)
normalizing judgment that establishes standards or norms to compare, differentiate, and homogenize individuals so that those deemed abnormal are excluded (e.g., medicine, psychiatry, criminology); and (3) examination in which subjects are presented as objects for observation, classification and correction (Foucault, 1975).

The new systems of knowledge and disciplinary techniques produced a new form of social control that was at once totalizing (population) and individualizing (Turner, 1995). Power became both inhibitive and generative, as Foucault (1984b) explains:

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (p. 61)

Foucault (1978) argues that in the nineteenth century power was exercised through the deployment of sexuality. He argues that sex and sexuality are not innate or preexisting phenomena but the effects of power. He challenges the hypothesis that power was exercised through sexual repression in the Victorian era. He asserts that sexuality was invented “as the self-affirmation” of the bourgeois class, but it was eventually extended to the proletariat classes “as a means of social control and political subjugation” (p.123), whereby individuals were incited to confess about sex everywhere – at home, at school, at work, at clinics, in prisons, in asylums, and so on. This incitement to speak produced a multiplicity of discourses of sex, which were taken up by those in power to produce a regime of ‘truth’ about sex.

The notion of “sex” made it possible to group together in an artificial unity, anatomical elements, biological functions, conducts, sensations, and pleasures, and it enabled one to make use of this fictitious unity as a causal principle, an omnipresent meaning, a secret to be discovered everywhere: sex was thus able to function as a unique signifier and a universal signified. Further, by presenting itself in a unitary fashion, as anatomy and lack, as function and latency, as instinct and meaning, it was able to mark the line between a knowledge of human sexuality and the biological sciences of reproduction . . . but by virtue of this proximity, some of the biology and physiology were able to serve as a principle of normality for human sexuality. (Foucault, 1978, pp. 154-155)

Drawing on the Victorian deployment of sexuality, Foucault (1978) identifies four ways that power was exercised on the body to produce sexual subjects: the sexualization of children

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7 McLaren (2002) observes that some people interpret Foucault’s use of discourse as primarily related to words, or text. She argues that Foucault’s use of discourse refers to multitude of institutions and practice as well as disciplinary knowledge from medicine, psychology, and other disciplines.
through health campaigns targeting the family; the hysterization of women through medicalization of their bodies and sexualities; the normalization of the procreative married couple; and the psychiatrization of perversion. Under the regime of truth constructed by those in power, “the sexual conduct of the population was taken both as an object of analysis and as a target of intervention” (p. 26). Furthermore, this regime of truth - in the guise of scientific knowledge and formulated through an artificial unity - functioned to produce sexual subjects based on the natural/unnatural and normal/abnormal binaries (e.g., the masturbating child, the hysterical woman, the procreative married couple, and the perverse adult).

Furthermore, Foucault (1984a) emphasizes that subjects are not merely produced through the process of objectification; individuals become subjects when they internalize the norms and ideals that are embedded in the regime of truth.

But let there be no misunderstanding: it is not that a real man, the object of knowledge, philosophical reflection, or technical intervention, has been substituted for the soul, the illusion of the theologians. The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself. A “soul” inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercise over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body. (p. 177)

For Foucault (1978), the power of subjection is efficient in the deployment of sexuality because the notion of sex makes it possible for domination (through normalization) to remain concealed and perceived only as prohibition and taboo.

On the contrary, sex is the most speculative, most ideal, and most internal element in a deployment of sexuality organized by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensation and pleasures. . . . It is through sex . . . that each individual has to pass in order to have access to his intelligibility (seeing that it is both the hidden aspect and the generative principle of meaning), to the whole of his body (since it is a real and threatened part of it, while symbolically constituting the whole), to his identity (since it joins the force of a drive to the singularity of a history). (p. 156)

Foucault concludes in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* that it was through the deployment of sexuality that ‘sex’ was created as something innate, desirable, and worth dying for. He suggests that it is through saying ‘yes’ to sex or desiring the ‘truth’ of sex that we become imprisoned. Thus, to resist against social domination exercised in the deployment of sexuality, we must resist sexual identification and classification to reclaim our bodies and pleasures.
A detailed exploration of Foucault’s work on sexuality is beyond the scope of this literature review. However, his work on the social construction of sex and sexuality and biopower is influential in feminist and queer scholarships, particularly in the areas of: gender and sex (Butler, 2004); sexualities and pleasures (McWhorter, 1999); reproductive technology (Sawicki, 1991); sociology of the body (Annandale, 1998; Duncan, 1994); bodies in place (Fusco, 2006); and sex education practices (Helén & Yesilova, 2006; Shoveller & Johnson, 2006). Furthermore, Foucault’s thesis of the deployment of sexuality as a technology of social control and subjugation of the working classes has contributed to the critique of public health practices in working with marginalized groups (Gastaldo, Holmes, Lombardo, & O’Byrn, 2009; Saleh & Operario, 2009).

2.2.2. Gender, Subjectivity and The Situated Body

By the 1980s, feminist debates had gone beyond the sex/gender dichotomy to interrogate heterosexuality as the hegemonic sexuality and an institution that oppresses not only women but also men. However, there remains the debate of what gender is. In the field of social sciences, gender is often conceptualized as: social ideologies that shape agents’ sense of self and their actions (MacInnes, 1998); a position within a materialist structure of class or an abstract structure of symbolic meaning (McNay, 2004); or a structure of social relations that shape individual subjectivity, social interactions and resource distribution (R. Connell, 2009; Risman, 2004).

For Erving Goffman, gender has little to do with the biological differences between the sexes; rather it is a display of social rituals and conventions that structure our life.

What the human nature of males and females really consists of, then, is a capacity to learn to provide and to read depictions of masculinity and femininity and a willingness to adhere to a schedule for presenting these pictures, and this capacity they have by virtue of being persons, not females or males. One might just as well say there is no gender identity. There is only a schedule for the portrayal of gender. (Goffman, 1997, p. 224)

Goffman suggests that gender is the enactment of rules and expectations that we internalize as children within family and authority relationships. Drawing on the work of Goffman and others, West and Zimmerman (1987) conceptualize gender as a situational accomplishment whereby we ‘do’ gender in “the virtual or real presence of others who are presumed to be oriented to its
production” (p. 126). Thus, gender is not an innate biological property of individuals but the 
product of power relations that legitimate social division and differentiation.

In her book, *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir (1952) argues that “man is not a 
natural species: he is a historical idea. Woman is not a complete reality, but rather a becoming . . .” She goes on to say that “the body is not a thing, it is a situation . . . it is the instrument of our 
grasp upon the world . . .” (p. 34, emphasis in original). Playing with Beauvoir’s idea of the body 
as a situation and drawing on the poststructuralist understanding of the subject, Judith Butler 
also challenges the account of gender as the cultural articulation of a biological sex and a neutral 
body.

The body as situation has at least a twofold meaning. As a locus of cultural interpretation, the 
body is a material reality that has already been located and defined within a social context. 
The body is also the situation of having to take up and interpret that set of received 
interpretations. (Butler, 1987/2004, p. 27)

If we accept that the body is a cultural situation, Butler argues, then gender can be read as “a way 
of existing one’s body” and therefore a form of doing (p. 29). In emphasizing the power of 
compulsory heterosexuality and phallogocentrism embedded in the symbolic order and language, 
she asserts that gender is indeed the very apparatus that constructs sex as a “politically neutral 
surface on which culture acts” (Butler, 1990/1999, p. 11).

In other words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, 
but produce this on the surface of the body . . . [they] 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. That the gendered body is 
performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which 
constitute its reality. (Butler, 1990/1999, p. 173)

For Butler, gender is a *performative* performance in which there is no pre-existing self with a 
core identity. Sex is the effect of gender, and it is through the repetitive acts of doing gender in 
“socially approved” and “politically regulated” styles that one’s gendered subjectivity or gender 
identity is accomplished (Jagger, 2008, p. 27). Thus, both the categories of gender and sex are

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8 Challenging the modernist notion of a stable, unified, autonomous subject with free will, poststructuralist theorists 
consider the human subject as an effect of power, a product of the material and symbolic structures, language, and 
the hidden forces of the unconscious, and is therefore unstable (Wojciechowski, 1995).

9 Butler’s notion of performative performance of gender is often misinterpreted to mean performance in a theatrical 
sense. In actuality, Butler is concerned with the constitution of gendered subjectivity through ritualized and 
repetitious practices that are regulated by the regime of power/knowledge and compulsory heterosexuality (Jagger, 
2008).
Butler’s formulation of performativity and gender subversion was influential; it opened up the space for resistance against gender normativity and compulsory heterosexuality. However, its poststructuralist argument of the body as a material effect of power without its own ontological status was critiqued for treating the material body as a generic “abstract epistemological object” like a chair or a table (Moi, 1999, p. 49). The poststructuralist interpretation of the sexed body as an effect of power, Moril Moi argues, misses de Beauvoir’s existentialist understanding of the situated body:

My body is a situation, but it is a fundamental kind of situation, in that it founds my experience of myself and the world. This is a situation that always enters my lived experience. This is why my body can never be brute matter to me. . . . In many ways ‘lived experience’ designates the whole of a person’s subjectivity, . . . my lived experience is not wholly determined by the various situations I may be a part of. Rather lived experience is, as it were, sedimented over time through my interactions with the world, and thus itself becomes part of my situatedness. (Moi, 1999, p. 63)

For Moi, human experience is always incarnated and “sexual differences are neither essences nor simple signifiers, neither a matter of realism nor of nominalism, but a matter of social practice” (p. 287, emphasis in original). We cannot simply remove sexual differences or social identities through deconstruction; transformation requires changes in social relations and the structure of power distribution to give new meaning to the existing categories of social division and differentiation (Bourdieu, 2001; Jackson, 2005).

Recent critical feminist scholarship has demonstrated that the notions of sex, gender, and the body are all intertwined. A detailed discussion on the theorization of the body and embodiment is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is worth noting that despite some differences in the ontological perspectives of the gendered/sexed body, most critical feminist theorists agree that the gendered/sexed body is not a fixed biological entity; it is always transforming and becoming in both its corporeal and symbolic aspects (Shildrick & Price, 1999).

2.2.3. Contesting Compulsory Heterosexuality

The 1960s and 1970s made up a period of social upheaval in many Western societies. Social marginalization, poverty resulting from inequitable distribution of wealth, the war in Vietnam, Western imperialism, and other social injustices became the impetus for the Civil
Rights Movement. Racial minorities, feminists, lesbian and gay activists, workers, and students joined forces to demand social reform (R. Parker & Aggleton, 2007). At the same time, advances in contraceptive technology, wider availability of contraception, libertarian politics, and permissive legislation on sexual issues led to the ‘sexual freedom’ movement in the West (Scott & Jackson, 1996). It was within the context of these pronounced societal changes that new ways of theorizing human sexuality emerged in the social sciences.

While feminist scholars and activists engaged in challenging patriarchy and gender oppression, they did so in what Chrys Ingraham (2006) calls ‘thinking straight,’ which:

conceals the operation of heterosexuality in structuring gender and closes off any critical analysis of heterosexuality as an organizing institution. The effect of this depiction of reality is that heterosexuality circulates as taken for granted, naturally occurring, and unquestioned, while gender is understood as socially constructed and central to the organization of everyday life. (p. 311)

By focusing solely on gender inequality, early feminist scholars lost sight of how sex/gender and heterosexuality functioned as an interlocking system of power relations, perpetuating the subordination of women and marginalizing other forms of sexuality.

In 1980, critical feminist writer, Adrienne Rich, published her landmark essay *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence* (Rich, 1983). Her work brought the tension between feminism and lesbianism to the fore. By explicitly naming ‘heterosexuality’ as the object of analysis, Rich succeeded in challenging the taken-for-granted heterosexist assumptions embedded in feminist thought at the time. She asserts that compulsory heterosexuality for women is “a means of assuring male right of physical, economic, and emotional access” (p. 220) and feminism is rendered ineffective unless it recognizes lesbian existence and works towards acquiring the collective power for women “to determine the meaning and place of sexuality in their lives” (p. 228).

Rich’s notion of compulsory heterosexuality has opened up the space for critical interrogation of the naturalized status of heterosexuality and its intricate relationship with the social categories of sex and gender. By the 1990s, critical feminists had joined queer theorists in problematicizing the naturalization of heterosexuality.

Heterosexuality is institutionalized as a particular form of practice and relationships, of family structure, and identity. It is constructed as a coherent, natural, fixed and stable category; as
universal and monolithic. . . . Heterosexuality is a category divided by gender and which also depends for its meaning on gender divisions. (D. Richardson, 1996, p. 2)

In a similar vein, Judith Butler (1990/1999) contends that our bodies are always interpreted through the “heterosexual matrix” in which “a stable sex [is] expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality” (P. 194). However, it is also within this matrix that we can find the crevices for transgression and subversion.

As an institutionalized practice, heterosexuality is ubiquitous but at the same time it escapes notice as a sexual marker. Whereas LGBTTTIQ are defined primarily in terms of their sexuality rendering all of their other social identities as secondary, heterosexual individuals are mostly defined through normative identities derived from heterosexual family relations such as mother/father, wife/husband, or girlfriend/boyfriend (Richardson, 1996).

Hence, heterosexuality is named by straights only when it is felt to be under threat. "Homosexuality" (or its more pejorative synonyms) is often mentioned in everyday straight talk, whereas the term heterosexuality is sometimes not even understood. Heterosexuals often do not know what they are; they do not need a name for themselves—they are simply "normal." (Jackson, 2005, p. 23)

In other words, the existence of heterosexual hegemony relies on the visibility of the marginalized non-heterosexual ‘Other’ (i.e., LGBTTTIQ) and the social regulation of the heterosexual transgressors such as men who cross-dress or wear makeup; women who smoke cigars; and women who engage in physical fights, etc. (Nielson, Walden, & Kunkel, 2000).

Stevi Jackson (2005) emphasizes that *heterosexual sexuality* is only one of the many aspects of heterosexuality. The non-sexual heterosexual aspects (e.g. institutions, law, family, kinship, etc.) function to order gender relations, which in turn reinforce heterosexual hegemony. Drawing on a materialist feminist perspective, she contends that heterosexuality intersects with gender to organize not only our “sexual lives” but also to structure “domestic and extradomestic division of labor and resources” (p. 26). At the same time, the multiplicity of heterosexuality – a system of institutions, ideology, social identity, practice, and experience – makes the interrogation of its arbitrary hegemony difficult. Thus, for Jackson, heterosexuality needs to be analyzed and explicated at multiple levels: structural, cultural, and subjective.
At the structural level, the goal of a feminist critique of the heterosexual imaginary is to explicate how the system of social institutions shapes our worldview, sense of identity, and conditions of existence (i.e., what Bourdieu calls habitus, which I will discuss in the next chapter). For instance, within a heterosexist and heteronormative society, children come in contact with myriad sexual and non-sexual heterosexual discourses in their everyday lives; these encounters are underpinned by the taken-for-granted and naturalized institutions of marriage, family, kinship, religion, and division of labour, etc. (Jackson, 2005). The ‘invisible’ yet ubiquitous effects of these discourses and practices shape how children perceive their ‘realities’ and interact with others. Institutionalized heterosexuality also translates into material and symbolic consequences in the form of tax benefits, housing, social benefits and social status (Ingraham, 1996). Whereas compulsory heterosexuality was historically guaranteed through the division of labour and women’s economic dependence on men, present day heterosexuality relies on the notions of love and romance to sustain its hegemony as women (particularly middle-class women) increasingly gain economic independence through their participation in the paid labour market (Ingraham, 2005).

In her analysis of Disney animation films, Carrie Cokely (2005) illustrates how Disney, a multinational and multi-billion dollar cultural industry, effectively uses the notions of love and romance to construct heteronormative and heterosexualized images that shape the subjectivity of adults and children alike. These images promote gender specific discourses: heterosexuality yields happiness; homosexuality is deviant; and gender differences are natural and complementary. These dominant discourses are marketed as ‘healthy’ and ‘wholesome’ family entertainment in North America and around the world. These images perpetuate the reproduction of heterosexuality and masculine domination; they are propagated through the culture of consumption fueled by late capitalism in the globalized market.

Nicole J. Beger (2004) contends that the discourse of love derives its power to solidify heterosexuality from its association with kinship and family relations, which are often framed as basic human needs and fundamental to the survival of the human species.

The sentence ‘love makes a family – nothing more and nothing less’ is a well-known political assertion employed in kinship debates . . . Love in this sentence functions as self-validating; it seems to be beyond ideology, beyond mediation, beyond contestation. It seems to dissolve contradiction and dissent about what constitutes a real family into a basic, but also higher, truth. Love . . . is often relegated so far into the intimate sphere that it becomes virtually
Love validates human beings as human morally and emotionally. (Beger, 2004, p. 193)

Love, as a sanctified notion tied to the institution of the biological family, carries with it the power to legitimate certain relationships but not others. Steven Seidman (2005) analyzed Hollywood commercials produced between 1960 and 2000 to trace the changing patterns of normative heterosexuality in the US. He found that the notions of love and family worked as a normalizing logic that classifies “good” versus “bad” sexual citizens. As society becomes more open to gay and lesbian relationships in the cultural and symbolic realm, love and family is used as the benchmark of integration. Normalized gay and lesbian characters who abide by the heterosexual “romantic, intimate, familial norms” (p. 60) and do not threaten the normative status of heterosexuality are presented as good sexual citizens. Heterosexual and homosexual characters that transgress from these norms are classified as bad sexual citizens.

Johnson (2005) argues that the notion of love is critical in the interrogation of heterosexuality. In his study of twenty-four heterosexual men and women of diverse ages, he finds that it is through the discourse of love that these individuals accomplish their heterosexual identity and practice their sexuality.

Love is . . . not a 'natural' process which takes place in a socially constructed set of heterosexual relations. On the contrary, love is a carrier of heterosexuality, a vehicle of gender production, and a mechanism for transferring heteronormative social relations into enduring subjectivities and identifications. It is not what love 'gives' to the self, nor what it 'takes away', but how it produces a way of being through which these effects are experienced. (P. Johnson, 2005, p. 101)

Although love is a socially constructed notion, individuals understand and experience ‘love’ through their bodily sensations (tingling, butterflies, pounding heart). Johnson argues that the biological accounts of bodily chemicals as an explanation of love fortifies the idea that love is innate and natural, thus making it hard for sociologists to explicate the relationship between subjectivity and the discursive constructions of love.

### 2.2.4. Masculinities and Hegemonic Masculinity

In the 1980s, Raewyn Connell formulated the notion of “hegemonic masculinity” out of her critique of sex role theory, which dominated sociology from the 1950s to the 1970s. For Connell, sex role theory was problematic because of its uncritical reliance on biological determinism and its complicity in naturalizing men’s social domination over women. Drawing
on feminist scholarship regarding gender hierarchy, and research on gay men’s experiences of oppression, Connell (2005) applied Anthony Gramsci’s concept of hegemony and defined hegemonic masculinity as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (p. 77). This configuration of masculine practice also functions to subordinate gay masculinities and marginalize working-class and racialized masculinities through institutional oppression (e.g. massive unemployment, poverty, and racial profiling), which in turn shapes the marginalized masculinities. Although few men meet the normative standards of hegemonic masculinity, most men are complicit with the hegemonic project because they benefit from the “patriarchal dividend” derived from men’s domination over women without having to be one of the “frontline troops of patriarchy” (Connell, 2005, p. 79).

Hegemonic masculinity as a relational concept has been useful in elucidating the circular power dynamics within and between gender relations – that is, the ways in which institutionalized patriarchal practices produce and reproduce hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity\(^\text{10}\), which in turn function to guarantee the continued existence of patriarchy (Demetriou, 2001). However, it also bears a number of significant weaknesses: (1) its early formulation overemphasizes the global dominance of men over women and overlooks the complex power relations associated with the interplay between gender, class, and race (Steve Hall, 2002); (2) the popular interpretation of masculinity as a collection of traits has led to the reification of hegemonic masculinity as a fixed configuration of attributes rather than dynamic practices (R. W. Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Steve Hall, 2002; Jefferson, 2002); (3) the emphasis on hegemony within a hierarchy of masculinities poses a danger of researchers using the concept as a typology, which undermines masculine practices that do not fit into the typology (Moller, 2007); (4) its dualistic distinction between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities departs from Gramsci’s notion of hegemony\(^\text{11}\) and negates the agency of subordinated and

\(^{10}\) In her earlier work, Connell uses the term ‘hegemonic femininity’ to represent a configuration of gender practices by women in compliance with patriarchal domination; the term was later revised to acknowledge the subordinated position of all femininities within a patriarchal social order (R. W. Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

\(^{11}\) Demetriou (2001) points out that Connell’s application of hegemony differs from Gramsci’s original formulation despite both of them addressing internal and external hegemony. “Whereas for Gramsci the process is essentially a dialectical one that involves reciprocity and mutual interaction between the class that is leading and the groups that are led, Connell understands the process in a more elitist way where subordinate and marginalized masculinities have no effect on the construction of the hegemonic model” (p. 345).
marginalized groups in negotiating power (Demetriou, 2001); and (5) it is not able to transcend the agency-structure dichotomy or capture the local context where masculine practices take place (Lusher & Robins, 2009).

Drawing on Stuart Hall’s notion of ‘historical bloc’ and Homi K. Bhabha’s notion of ‘hybridization,’ Demetriou proposes the notion of a ‘hegemonic masculine bloc’ in order to transcend the dualistic division between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinity and to critically interrogate how patriarchy operates.

Whereas for Connell the existence of non-White or non-heterosexual elements in hegemonic masculinity is a sign of contradiction and weakness, for me it is precisely its internally diversified and hybrid nature that makes the hegemonic bloc dynamic and flexible. It is its constant hybridization, its constant appropriation of diverse elements from various masculinities that makes the hegemonic bloc capable of reconfiguring itself and adapting to the specificities of new historical conjunctures. (Demetriou, 2001, p. 348)

Furthermore, he argues that the efficiency of the hegemonic bloc is associated with its ability to adapt to social change.

The hegemonic bloc changes in a very deceptive and unrecognizable way. It changes through negotiation, appropriation, and translation, through the transformation of what appears counter-hegemonic and progressive into an instrument of backwardness and patriarchal reproduction. (Demetriou, 2001, p. 355)

Demetriou cites different examples of hybridized strategies of masculine domination: the adoption of combined traits of ‘sensitivity’ and ‘toughness’ among members of the Promise Keepers movements to reproduce new forms of male authority; the selective appropriation of gay male images into middle-class pop culture and fashion; and the adoption of working-class macho styles in gay subcultures. He argues that hybridization has opened up a “third space” where ongoing negotiation, appropriation, and translation give rise to new hegemonic strategies.

However, while the hybridization of the domain of symbolic representation and everyday gender practices “makes the masculine bloc appear less oppressive and more egalitarian,” it does not necessarily contribute to the emancipation of women. Demetriou cautions that “what appears counter-hegemonic and progressive” can be a deceptive strategy of patriarchal reproduction.

The strength of Connell’s notion of hegemonic masculinity (original and revised as suggested by Demetriou) lies in its definition of masculinity not as attributes or traits but as gender relations. It also brings into the open the hierarchy of gendered relationships not only between men and women but also among men. Along a similar line of arguments, Arthur Brittan
(2001) emphasizes that masculinity is always an expression of how men perceive themselves in relation to women. These perceptions are often contradictory and ambivalent; as such, masculine expressions are always “local and subject to change” (p. 52). However, Brittan points to the need for interrogating gender relations beyond the use of masculinities and femininities because, despite the ephemeral and forever changing expressions of masculinities (e.g. men as caregivers, metrosexual lifestyles, etc), what has persisted throughout history is the exalted power granted to masculinity. He uses the notion of ‘masculinism’ to highlight the “ideology that justifies and naturalizes male domination . . . sanctions the political and dominant role of men in public and private spheres . . . is not subject to the vagaries of fashion – it tends to be relatively resistant to change” (p. 53).

Drawing on the work of Brittan, Stephen M. Whitehead (2002) agrees that the notion of ‘masculinism’ is useful in explicating the processes in which “dominant forms of masculinity and heterosexuality meet ideological dynamics, and in the process become reified and legitimized as privileged, unquestioned accounts of gender difference and reality” (p.97). Furthermore, he contends that the notion of hegemonic masculinity overemphasizes the ideological and structural dynamic of masculine domination, rendering the masculine subject invisible. Unlike Brittan who defines masculinism as an ideology, Whitehead re-conceptualizes masculinism as a discursive practice whereby the discursive subject is “both subjected to masculinity and endorsed as an individual by masculinity” (p. 111), but what Whitehead emphasizes is the active role the masculine subject takes in submitting, reinforcing, subverting, or resisting the masculinist discourses.

2.2.5. Homosocial Solidarity: Men’s Friendship with Men

Jean Lipman-Blumen (1976) uses the notion of “homosociality” to explore how gender-based segregation of social institutions reinforces men’s domination over women. She defines homosociality as “the seeking, enjoyment, and/or preference for the company of the same sex” that does not necessitate “an explicitly erotic sexual interaction between members of the same sex” (p. 16). She argues that girls and women experience homosociality differently than boys and men. Since social ordering is based on the control of political, social, economic, and symbolic power and resources, women are forced to seek resources from men and in turn become subordinated. Furthermore, women become the sexual and symbolic resources that most men can
use “to further their own eminence in the homosocial world of men” (p. 17). Thus, men’s relationships with women are intricately connected to men’s relationships with other men.

In *Between Men*, feminist and queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985) analyzes intense friendship among men as represented in the 19th century English and American literature. She uses the notion of ‘homosocial desire’ to denote the paradoxical structure of homosocial relationships within heteronormative patriarchal societies.

"Homosocial desire," to begin with, is a kind of oxymoron. "Homosocial" is a word occasionally used in history and the social sciences, where it describes social bonds between persons of the same sex; it is a neologism, obviously formed by analog with "homosexual," and just as obviously meant to be distinguished from "homosexual." In fact, it is applied to such activities as "male bonding," which may, as in our society, be characterized by intense homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality. To draw the "homosocial" back into the orbit of "desire," of the potentially erotic, then, is to hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual—a continuum whose visibility, for men, in our society, is radically disrupted. (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 1)

Whereas female homosocial bonds have historically been more widely accepted and practiced as a continuum (Rich, 1983), male homosociality has been dichotomously defined as opposite to homosexuality. Drawing on the work of Gayle Rubin (1975) and others, Sedgwick (1985) suggests that homosociality has been used by men of privileged classes since the 17th century as a patriarchal strategy to subordinate and exclude women from the social, political, economic, and spiritual domains of public life. With the ‘triangular’ (male-male-female) homosocial relationships, women are commodities ‘trafficked’ between men as a means to fulfill the homosocial desire and strengthen the homosocial bonds. As such, homophobia (in the form of homosocial panic and homoerotic repression) and misogyny are the regulatory mechanisms necessary to ensure the survival of patriarchy and masculine domination.

Recent masculinity studies suggest that the structure of homosocial desire, as defined by Sedgwick, continues to exist in diverse forms. In seeking male approval, boys and men tend to perform differently in front of their male friends versus their female friends. They are more likely to engage in behaviours like ‘catcalls’ and ‘wolf-whistles’ in the company of other males than when they are alone. Their masculinist performances suggest that they are often “more eager to please other men than women” (Schwyzer, 2008, p. 70). In a study of male friendship among 389 men of diverse ages, Greif (2009) finds that the meanings of male friendship and the homosocial interactions are fluid and differ according to the men’s ages and life stages.
However, most of the men reported forming friendship through activities that are considered to be ‘masculine’: 80% of the men reported relating to male friends through participation in sports or sport-related activities such as attending or watching sports games together; over 50% identified talking and communication as a way of bonding; and 45% of them reported drinking, hitting the bar, or partying as common homosocial activities.

Similarly, Curry (2001) finds that men bond with each other through sports. However, since sports are highly competitive and one’s homosocial status within the team is precariously based on one’s performance, the men in the study were constantly under pressure to conform to the demands of other forms of hegemonic masculinity. To demonstrate their loyalty toward the fraternal bond, these men engaged in homophobic or misogynist ‘locker room’ talk whereby heteronormativity was reinforced and women were either portrayed as objects of subordination or as sexual conquests. Kimmel (2005) suggests that homophobia is associated with shame and “fear that other men will unmask us, emasculate us, reveal to us and the world that we do not measure up, that we are not real men” (p.35).

Although Sedgwick’s work on homosociality has made a significant contribution in linking feminism to anti-homophobic discourse, it has also been critiqued for its inattention to women’s agency and lesbian relationships (Wiegman, 2002). Michael Meuser (2004) contends that it is imperative to recognize that homosocial solidarity is constituted not only through the physical presence of boys and men in physical space but symbolically through the dominance of masculine values and attitudes. Thus, the physical absence of women in the congregation of a group of men does not necessarily constitute a homosocial sphere, particularly when feminist attitudes, values, and ethics “are (omni-)present on a symbolic level,” as in the case of critical profeminist men’s gatherings that focus on the liberation of men and women from hegemonic masculine oppression (p. 396). Likewise, misogynist and masculinist values and ideologies can be perpetuated by women in the physical absence of men. Meuser’s reminder is helpful in the exploration of possibilities for resistance against misogyny and masculine domination.

2.3. Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the findings of a review of existing web-based sexual health promotion information in Ontario. I also identified the gaps in research on the sexual health of young men and explored some ongoing debates in the theorizing of gender, sex, and
(hetero)sexuality. While critical feminists and queer theorists have achieved tremendous theoretical advancement in deconstructing the naturalized and dichotomous pairing of the notions of sex/gender, male/female, masculinity/femininity and homosexuality/heterosexuality, many ontological disagreements persist (e.g., cultural feminist vs. materialist feminist conceptualization of sex/gender). What remains critical is how the power embedded in these dichotomous divisions continues to operate and perpetuate social inequalities that contribute to health disparities.
Chapter 3

Theoretical Perspectives: Pierre Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice

3. Introduction

This study draws on the work of Pierre Bourdieu to explore the construction of masculine identities and the sexual practices of young men living in Toronto’s disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In developing this research, I have explored the use of other social theories, such as symbolic interactionism and poststructuralism, to study identity construction and social practices. In this introduction, I provide a simplified description of these two social theories to explain why I chose Bourdieu’s work in the end.

Symbolic interactionism is not a unifying homogenous theory; the central concepts have evolved over time (Plummer, 1996). Overall, symbolic interactionists emphasize that human actions are based on the meanings that actors attach to persons, objects, or places; these meanings are produced through social interaction and evolve through ongoing mutual interpretations among actors (Blumer, 1969). Furthermore, as Erving Goffman suggests, people engage in dramaturgy or impression management based on the demands of the situational interactions, which are imbued with established meanings that order oneself and others (Allan, 2006; Goffman, 1959). While symbolic interactionism, particularly the work of Goffman, is useful in explicating how actors construct their multiple identities and how domination is exercised through the interaction order, its explanation of the relationship between social structure and human interactions is less explicit (Collins, 1993).

Poststructuralism, as exemplified in the work of Michel Foucault, offers a different understanding of social relations, culture, and the world. Poststructuralists challenge the modernist meta-narrative of universal truth. They emphasize the inextricable network of diffused power/knowledge that is implicated in the construction of subjectivity through biopolitics and discourse (Foucault, 1978, 1982, 1984b). They also dispute the notion of an essential self and binary oppositions (Butler, 1990/1999). While poststructuralists have made significant contributions to the deconstruction of the modernist metanarratives of race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and so on, some feminist critics are concerned that the poststructuralist focus on
abstract discussions of language and symbols sometimes takes attention away from the materialist analysis of systemic social and economic oppression (Jackson, 2001).

Symbolic interactionism and poststructuralism have brought significant contributions and some pitfalls to the study of identity and social practices. Recognizing this, I chose to draw on Bourdieu’s theory of practice, not because it is a theory without pitfalls, but because its related concepts of habitus, capital, and field allow for the analysis of social practice at both the subjective and objective levels. I will further expand on this in the following subsections.

3.1. Bourdieu’s sociology

Since the 1970s, Bourdieu’s work has become enormously influential in the diverse fields of social sciences and humanities. Bourdieu was a prolific theorist who could not be placed in any one specific theoretical tradition. In fact, he was critical of many intellectual canons in the academic field, such as: structuralism for its negation of subjectivity; ethnomethodology for its overemphasis of subjectivity; postmodernism for its unscientific relativism; economics for its adoption of rational action, sociology for its objectivist survey methods; and philosophy for its indifference towards empirical research (Reed-Danahay, 2005). However, Bourdieu did not abandon these traditions entirely. Instead he critiqued, extended, and drew from a wide range of sources12 to formulate his cultural theories with the aim to transcend the dichotomies of body/mind, material/ideal, being/becoming, agency/structure, and subjectivism/objectivism – all of which have troubled sociology since its beginning (Swartz, 1997).

Bourdieu’s writings are wide-ranging, complex, and innovative. They engage followers and critics alike from diverse interests and disciplines: language, action, epistemology, ethics, body and embodiment, political theory, aesthetics, art, and so forth. Since Bourdieu places equal weight on theorizing and empirical research, his work is relevant for philosophers and researchers alike (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Shusterman, 1999).

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12 Bourdieu draws on a wide range of sources, including: “sociologists such as Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Norbert Elias, and Marcel Mauss… from anthropology (Clifford Geertz, Claude Levi-Strauss), art history (Erwin Panofsky), the history of science (Gaston Bachelard, Georges Canguilhem), linguistics (J.L. Austin, Emile Benveniste), phenomenology (Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty), philosophy (Martin Heidegger, Immanuel Kant), political economy (M. Polanyi), psychology (Sigmund Freud), social anthropology (Harold Garfinkle, Erving Goffman),” and others (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002, p. 6).
The following sections present my understanding of Bourdieu’s sociology of practice. In particular, I highlight Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, capital, field, and social space, which are particularly useful in the exploration of classed and gendered sexual practices among young men of diverse backgrounds, as they allow for the explication of the dialectical relationship between human agency and social structure. They also help to explain the logic of the young men’s social practices in the contexts of their physical and social environments, their social positions, and the power relations embedded in their everyday life. Since Bourdieu’s sociology of practice is not merely a neutral framework to understand social life but a critique of social inequalities, it is relevant to the study of marginalized youth.

3.1.1. Bourdieu’s Sociology of Practice

In developing his sociology of practice, Bourdieu aims to make visible the invisible structures of our social worlds and the mechanisms that reproduce or transform them. He formulates a “social praxeology” that integrates both a structuralist and a constructivist approach to investigate the double reality of the social worlds, which are: (1) the distribution and appropriation of “socially efficient resources” that constrain social interactions and representations; and (2) the lived experience that shapes the agents’ perceptions and dispositions, which in turn structure their thoughts and actions from within (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 11). However, he takes great care to define his use of structuralism and constructivism.

By structuralism or structuralist, I mean that there exist, in the social world itself, and not merely in symbolic systems, language, myth, etc., objective structures which are independent of the consciousness and desires of agents and are capable of guiding or constraining their practices or their representations. By constructivism, I mean that there is a social genesis on the one hand of the patterns of perception, thought and action which are constitutive of what I call the habitus, and on the other hand of social structures, and in particular of what I call fields and groups, especially of what are usually called social classes. (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 123)

As such, Bourdieu’s sociology attends to the dynamics and interactions in the social space between the state, institutions, and the embodied practice of social agents. Bourdieu rejects the explanation of a social life based on deterministic social structures operating behind the backs of social actors; he also rejects rational action theory, which negates the historical and social conditioning of human actions and conceptualizes human actions as rational responses and intentional choices. For him, social actors and the social world are one and the same, without any
“sharp demarcation between the internal and the external, the conscious and the unconscious, the bodily and the discursive” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 20).

3.1.2. Habitus: The Nexus of Agency and Structure

To transcend the artificial division of agency and structure, and overcome the economist concept of rationality, Bourdieu formulates the notion of habitus\(^{13}\), a socialized subjectivity associated with a particular set of conditions of existence and manifested in the form of

systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 53)

In this concise and yet extremely complex description, Bourdieu outlines the analytical properties of habitus, a product of history that guides individual and collective practices through a set of schemata that ensures “the active presence of past experiences” (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 54).

More specifically, habitus is manifested as systems of dispositions acquired through early socialization (in family, at school and other settings) and gradual inculcation throughout people’s lives. These dispositions are inscribed into the bodies of social agents and operate at an “unconscious” level (Bourdieu, 1991). This unconsciousness differs from the Freudian concept of repression. It is the result of a “history turned into nature” or a historical amnesia, in which the objective structures defining the social conditions that produce the habitus become naturalized and accepted as the-way-life-is (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 78).

An agent’s habitus is durable in that it is “an active residue or sediment of his past that functions within his present shaping his perception, thought, and action and thereby molding social practice in a regular way” (Crossley, 2001a, p. 83). Endowed with a generative schema of dispositions and bodily hexis\(^{14}\), the agent perceives his own actions as a matter of free choices when they are in fact inclinations shaped by past experiences. As such, the agent tends to favour

\(^{13}\) Habitus is a notion that has been used by other theorists before Bourdieu, “from Hegel's ethos, to Husserl's Habitualitat, to Mauss's hexis.” However, Bourdieu uses the term habitus (not habit) to emphasize the generative capacity of habitus as a system of disposition to maintain “a mechanistic vision of a notion constructed against mechanism” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 121-122).

\(^{14}\) In Outline of a Theory of Practice, Bourdieu (1977) uses the notion of bodily hexis to describe the socialized subjectivity and the embodiment of social structures in agents: “Bodily hexis is political mythology realized, embodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking, and thereby of feeling and thinking” (P. 93-4).
his early experiences and avoid exposure to information that calls into question the logic of his practice. In other words, habitus has a tendency to maintain its constancy and resist change (Bourdieu, 1990b). Yet, habitus is not deterministic – “it is an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to new experiences, and therefore affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133, emphasis in original).

Habitus can also be understood as structured structures, or schemata of dispositions, perceptions, appreciations, and aspirations, which are produced through the embodiment of the fundamental conditions of existence that individuals have lived in since birth. As such, they are “[o]bjectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor” (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 53). In other words, these schemata also function as structuring structure to provide individuals with a sense of practical know-how that orients their actions and inclinations without determining them (Thompson, 1991). As such, individuals of similar conditions of existence tend to have similar (predictable) perceptions, aspirations, practices, and tastes, as illustrated by the differences in career ‘choice’ among young people of similar and different class backgrounds. For instance, Jennifer Johnson’s study on working-class women shows that young working-class women seldom ‘dream’ about going to college or university because they ‘know’ they must work; on the other hand, middle-class young women are expected by their families to attend college or university and this expectation becomes their reality (J. Johnson, 2002). However, since individuals are unique with non-identical social trajectories and different life histories, it is safe to assume that there are no identical habituses. In Johnson’s study, some of the young women from working-class immigrant families pursued higher education because of their families’ expectations for upward social mobility and a better life in their new country.

Finally, habitus is transposable. It has a certain level of plasticity that enables individuals to improvise in “unforeseen and ever-changing situations” by integrating their previous experiences into “a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions” so that at any given moment, they are able to achieve “infinitely diversified tasks” within specific situations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 18). However, these improvisations are not free from all constraints. They are limited by the structures and conditions that produce the habitus in the first place (Bourdieu, 2000). Furthermore, habitus is not a set of free-floating systems or structures; it
is always situated in a field, which I will further expand in the following sections. Social relations come alive when habitus encounters a field which can be defined as a set of “objective, historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital)” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 16).

3.1.3. Beyond Economism: Multiple Forms of capital

Bourdieu rejects modern economism, which reduces the notion of economy to a narrow form of financial interest based on capitalist maximization of profit and material exchange. According to Bourdieu, this narrow definition of economy leaves no room for the analysis of non-economic interests in the forms of symbolic power, which are ‘misrecognized’ as acts of ‘disinterest’ represented in the form of honour, distinction, and cultural production (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986). For example, the cultural production of heteronormativity in social institutions (the mass media, religion, family, school, etc.) makes invisible social domination based on arbitrary divisions to perpetuate discrimination and violence towards sexual minority individuals and communities. To explicate the transmission of social privileges and the reinforcement of social order, Bourdieu introduces the notion of capital in its multiple forms into the analysis of social life.

Bourdieu defines capital as “accumulated labor,” which exists in its “objectified or embodied form”; it is capable of producing profits or reproducing itself in an identical or converted form (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241). He distinguishes four types of capital: economic capital (money, property), cultural capital (cultural goods, educational qualifications), social capital (social obligations, networks, group membership), and symbolic capital (recognition, prestige, legitimation), which are all inter-convertible (Bourdieu, 1986, 1991). While economic capital is well acknowledged as the key condition of existence in capitalist societies, Bourdieu (1986) argues that it is the non-economic forms of capital that naturalize and reinforce the social order. To reveal the hidden mechanism of social domination and the uneven distribution of life chances, he further explicates the three forms of cultural capital and their transmission.

First, the embodied state of cultural capital, in the form of durable dispositions and perceptions, is acquired through early socialization and inculcation; it is the product of the investment of time and resources afforded by the parents or other members in the family (Bourdieu, 1986). Unlike economic capital that can be transmitted instantaneously, embodied
capital is passed on through a gradual process of cultivation specific to a social agent’s conditions of existence in the form of acquired tastes for food, mannerisms, music appreciation, body postures, career aspirations, and so on.

Second, the *objectified* state of cultural capital, in the form of cultural goods such as fashion, art, technical instruments, books, and so forth, is *consumed* only by agents who have been socialized to acquired the tastes and appreciation for them (Bourdieu, 1986). In other words, one’s consumption of objectified cultural capital is contingent on one’s embodied cultural capital and is again specific to one’s habitus.

Third, the *institutionalized* state of cultural capital, in the form of academic qualification or certification of competence, is the product of economic investment in the education system. Once the social agents acquire a certain volume of institutionalized cultural capital, they can convert it into economic capital in the labour market (Bourdieu, 1986).

In addition to cultural capital, Bourdieu conceptualizes social capital as a resource that social agents draw on in their position taking in social space. Social capital is a *relational* capital; it is “the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). The volume of social capital possessed by actors can be measured by the extent of their connections to specific networks and their ability to mobilize these connections as resources within a particular field.

Thus, social capital is not an independent entity that can be exchanged or used on its own. It is produced and reproduced through ongoing efforts of sociability and exchanges, as exemplified by the Canadian Yacht Club’s advertisement for youth membership which states the following benefit: “Long lasting friendships develop over the years as young sailors spend their summer days discovering life on the water” (Royal Canadian Yacht Club, 2008). These durable social ties affirm and reaffirm mutual recognition conceivable only by agents with a similar habitus; they also reinforce the collective existence and persistence of social groups (Bourdieu, 1986). For instance, youth patrons of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club are unlikely to have mutual

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15 Bourdieu’s notion of social capital differs from the integrationist and rationalist concept of social capital (for example, the work of Robert Putman, James Coleman and Francis Fukuyama), which is understood as the collective benefits generated through social networks, kinship, and voluntarism manifested in the forms of shared norms, trust, and cooperation to counter social deficits (Adkins, 2005; Fahmy, 2006).
recognition or form social ties with patrons of a social club in a low-cost housing project in Toronto.

Bourdieu (1986) argues that the significance of the different forms of capital in explaining social relations lies in their modes of transmission, reproduction, and conversion. The transmission of cultural and social capital is aided by economic capital, but it requires an investment of labour in the form of time expenditure, attention, instruction, engagement, sociability, and so on. This investment presupposes an understanding of its worth, which is produced by the agent’s habitus. Furthermore, social agents endowed with a large volume of cultural, social, and economic capital tend to profit and acquire even more social capital as they are often “sought after” for their distinction (p. 250). As such, the transmission and reproduction of cultural and social capital often escape the notice of most people.

Bourdieu uses the notion of symbolic capital to illustrate the intricate relationship between habitus, field, and capital. According to Bourdieu, symbolic capital (distinction, honour, brilliance) is “not a particular kind of capital but what every kind of capital becomes when it is misrecognized as capital, that is, as force, a power or capacity for (actual or potential) exploitation, and therefore recognized as legitimate” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 242). In other words, symbolic capital functions as a form of capital to legitimate social differences, but it is not recognized as a form of capital.

Recognition and misrecognition are complex notions that Bourdieu uses to explain the accomplishment of social domination through the complicity of the dominated. He defines misrecognition as a combination of “subjective non-recognition (blindness) with objective recognition (legitimation)” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 566). In other words, misrecognition occurs when social domination, in the form of distinction or differences, is not recognized as arbitrary relations of power but accepted as legitimate even by the dominated. This naturalization of social domination is the product of the prereflexive assumptions of social agents who see, feel, and interact with the world through the cognitive structure that has been structured by the social world they live in (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). It is this shared sense of a self-evident world that enhances the conversion of symbolic capital into symbolic power, which is then used by the dominant groups to secure a monopoly and legitimize their principles of differentiation “to make and unmake groups” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 221).
The efficacy of symbolic power is reflected in its ability to act over distance in response to “collective expectations” and “socially inculcated beliefs,” to command obedience, and to exhort submission without any visible sign of effort (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 102). Bourdieu calls this misrecognition of domination and complicit submission symbolic violence,

the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity. . . . social agents are knowing agents who, even when they are subjected to determinisms, contribute to producing the efficacy of that which determines them insofar as they structure what determines them. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 167-8)

The efficacy of symbolic violence is derived from the tacit agreement between the dominant and the dominated, who consent to its legitimacy, recognize its worth, and misrecognize the interests embedded in it (Swartz, 1997).

3.1.4. Social Space: Fields, Interests and the Struggle for Power

Bourdieu uses the notions of social space or field to explain the relations of power in the social world. He defines social space as a multidimensional social topology in which agents and groups occupy relative positions based on the overall volumes of capital they possess, and the relative weight of the different types of capital within their total volumes of capital (Bourdieu, 1998). In other words, the social space is “the structure of distribution” that is “both the basis of antagonistic position-takings on that space . . . and a stake in struggles and confrontation between the points of view . . . to impose principles of vision and division . . . to make groups exist” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 184).

Within the configuration of social space, agents and groups are divided along two axes: first, along the vertical axis whereby agents and classes holding large volumes of economic or cultural capital (the dominant classes) are positioned against those holding lesser volumes capital (the dominated classes); and second, along the horizontal axis whereby agents in dominant positions struggle against each other for power and legitimacy (Wacquant, 2000).

Bourdieu is critical of the unidimensional understanding of the dominant or ruling class, in which power is conceptualized as a static entity possessed by a unified group of powerful elites. He argues that this essentialist notion of domination fails to explain how diverse forms of power are exercised in differentiated societies. Instead, he uses the notion of the field of power to elucidate the circular mechanisms under which social structures produce and reinforce the
conditions that are necessary for the production and reproduction of the dominant classes, who in turn use their capital and social positions to reinforce the structures that grant them the legitimacy and power to dominate (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1993).

By field of power, I mean the relations of force that obtain between the social positions which guarantee their occupants a quantum of social force, or of capital, such that they are able to enter into the struggles over the monopoly of power, of which struggles over the definition of the legitimate form of power are a crucial dimension . . . (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 229-230)

Thus, for Bourdieu, the field of power refers to the dominant sectors in social space. One of these dominant sectors is the state, which determines the exchange rate of all forms of capital: it is the “reserve bank of consecration” with the monopoly to grant degrees, certification of credentials, citizenship, and licenses to practice, and the authority to define what a person has to be (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 112n).

A field, in analytical terms, may be defined as a structured social space in which power relations operate. It functions according to its own specific logic and rules but is influenced by the field of power (Moi, 1999). The positions of agents and groups within a particular field are objectively determined by the interplay between their habituses, the volumes and types of capital they possess, and the structure of distribution of the types of capital (or power) specific to this field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Bourdieu uses the metaphor of a game to illustrate how a field operates. However, he also emphasizes the critical difference between a game and a field. While a game is a deliberate construction with explicit codified rules, a field follows a set of regularities structured by the tacit rules of the field and produced by the struggles and competitions among its players (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Furthermore, we can choose to stop playing a game at any time, but we cannot exist outside of a field. We enter into specific social fields either by birth or after a long period of apprenticeship. The moment we step out of one field, we are already in another field (Bourdieu, 1990b; Hoy, 2004).

A field comes alive only when players invested with interests or illusio in the game take up positions in its space. Bourdieu’s notion of interest (illusio) differs from the utilitarian notion of individual goal-oriented interests; it is objectively defined by an agent’s habitus and the structure of the field. It is manifested as a tacit recognition of the stakes of the game, a practical
knowledge of its rules and the motivation to pursue the objectives and profits offered by the field (Bourdieu, 1990a).

Furthermore, every field is institutionalized by a specific set of worldviews, or what Bourdieu calls “doxa”, that are imposed by agents in dominant positions, legitimated by the meta-field, and perceived by all agents as universal and self-evident (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 57). Illusio functions as the entrance fee into a field: agents who are unable to see the value in taking part in the competition within a specific field are indifferent and therefore do not enter the field; and agents who enter the field engage in pre-reflexive “doxic submission” to the established order within the field (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 177). Thus, each field operates in a relatively autonomous manner based on its own logic of competition that is irreducible to those of other fields.

Staying with the analogy of a game, Bourdieu emphasizes the dynamic nature of a field, which is defined by “the state of the relations of forces between players” at any given moment (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 98). Thus, for Bourdieu, the notion of field includes both a spatial and a temporal dimension. Within the social space, certain forms of capital function as trump cards, that is, they are valid in all fields, but like other forms of capital, their force and values change over time within the same game or vary across the different fields. Thus, the relative force of an agent in a field is determined by the overall volumes and the forms of capital she holds and her habitus that orients the way she plays in the game.

Under the influence of the field of power, all fields exhibit a range of “structural and functional homologies” (resemblances among differences) in the forms of domination, usurpation, reproduction, and so on (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 105); agents who find themselves in dominated positions in one field tend to occupy subordinated positions in other fields (Swartz, 1997). Furthermore, since the field of power is organized as a chiasmatic structure and the distribution of economic capital is inversely symmetrical to the distribution of cultural capital, its players must engage in ongoing struggles to maintain or improve their positions. They must also compete against each other to appropriate the statist power which authorizes the reproduction and conversion of all forms of capital into the symbolic power and legitimation in their respective fields (Bourdieu, 2000; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1993).
While these homologies illustrate the presence of structural constraints in human actions and field dynamics, they do not have to be interpreted as a sign of determinism. What happens in each social field is not determined by the field of power in a unidirectional manner; rather there is “a mutual process of influence and ongoing co-construction” (Thomson, 2008, p. 71). Thus, fields are open social microcosms shaped by agents and their competitions.

3.1.5. Bourdieu’s Fuzzy Logic of Practice

In his book *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu uses the formula: “[habitus (capital)] + field = practice” (p. 101) to emphasize that human actions are neither mechanical obedience to rules nor conscious choices based on freewill, but the outcomes of an “ontological complicity between habitus and the social field” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 194), or the mutual possession shared between the agent and the social world (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Our inculcation of the social structures inclines us to enter into a social field to play the game, which is mediated by the availability or scarcity of resources available to us and the structured conditions within the field (Crossley, 2001b). Our engagement in the game generates forces and dynamics within the field, which in turn puts us under its ‘spell’ to solicit our ongoing commitment to the game. In other words, social actions are the perpetual response to the solicitation of the social field, which is constantly shaped and reshaped by our social practice (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1999).

For Bourdieu, “practice has a logic which is not that of logic” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 109). It is a *fuzzy* logic of practical sense that has been incorporated into our body as we go about in our everyday life.

The world encompasses me, comprehends me as a thing among things, but I, as a thing for which there are things, comprehend this world. . . . it is through this material inclusion . . . the incorporation of social structures in the form of dispositional structures, of objective chances in the form of expectations or anticipations, that I acquire a practical knowledge and control of the encompassing space . . . (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 130)

Thus, for Bourdieu, social practice carries a temporal dimension; it is guided by habitus – the active sediment of our past that functions in the present shaping our dispositions, perceptions, aspirations in the form of thought, feeling and action. As such, habitus and field are intertwined in a circular relationship of mutual construction (Crossley, 2001a).

According to Bourdieu, social actions are practical strategies, but his notion of strategy differs from rational action theory’s concept of goal-oriented conscious calculation of risks and
benefits. Instead, Bourdieu defines strategy as a practical “feel for the game” which enables the agent to make an infinite number of moves in response to “the infinite number of possible situations which no rule, however complex, can foresee” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 9). At the same time, this feel for the game is a bodily knowledge, manifested in the form of emotion or visceral sensation of being in place or out of place, and in behaviours of avoidance or active adjustment to the situation (Bourdieu, 2000). It is this bodily knowledge that guides the agent’s practical mastery over the game: a tacit awareness of the history of the game and an anticipation of the future direction of the game (Bourdieu, 1998). A successful player is an agent who has embodied the practical knowledge of the immanent tendencies of the game. This happens when the agent’s “habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product” such that like a “fish in water”: it does not feel the weight of water, and it takes the world about itself for granted (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127).

It is worth noting that an agent’s practical strategy and actions are regular without being regulated; they carry a certain level of predictability but also variability and indeterminacy. This indeterminacy is the result of the irreducible biographical differences between agents and the different historical contexts in which social practice takes place (J. Parker, 2000). In other words, social agents are not cultural robots programmed to carry out the unchanged rules of a game. Habitus, as Bourdieu exclaims, is “durable but not eternal” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133). It is structured by history, but it is an open system that is continuously reinforced or modified by the agent’s being-in-the-world.

Opportunities for social change emerge when there is a rupture between the structure of a field and its corresponding habitus. For example, the disproportionate number of HIV related death among ‘young’ gay men in the 1990s and the lack of responsiveness from public health officials disrupted the collective habitus of gay men such that their collective frustration, anger and grief related to their ‘unprecedented’ loss (death of their peers and their own illnesses) turned into transformative activism (AIDS Committee of Toronto, nd). However, the durable nature of habitus often creates a hysteresis effect, or a lag between structural changes in the field and the agents’ ability to appreciate or grasp these changes. Hysteresis leads to the missed opportunities for most of the agents in the field; only players with habitus that predisposes them to recognize the new opportunities in the field as it changes will occupy new positions in the field (Bourdieu, 1977, 2000; Hardy, 2008).
3.2. Appropriating Bourdieu: Understanding Social Domination and Inequality

Although Bourdieu’s sociology of practice is most recognized for its analysis on class and culture, many argue that it allows for theorizing other forms of social division and domination (T. Bennett, et al., 2009; Chancer & Watkins, 2006; Grenfell & James, 1998). In the following sections, I follow Toril Moi’s (1999) idea of appropriating theory\textsuperscript{16} to look at how Bourdieu’s analysis of social class contributes to our understanding and the possibilities of using his theory to study the intersecting dynamics of classed, gendered, raced, and other social relations.

3.2.1. Bourdieu’s Theory of Class and Culture

Bourdieu’s conception of class differs from those of Marx and Weber. Whereas Marx theorizes that class divisions are based on the internal logic of the capitalist mode of production, Weber conceptualizes class as a set of social relations defined by the market (Brubaker, 1985). However, for Weber, class is only one aspect of social stratification; people are also divided based on their social statuses associated with prestige and honour (Bottero, 2005); individuals and groups derive power from “conventionally or juridically guaranteed status distinctions . . . to monopolize particular material or ideal goods or opportunities” (Brubaker, 1985, p. 761). In the same vein, Bourdieu has developed a theory of class that goes beyond material interests to account for how the complex interaction between habitus and capital contribute to the making of class.

Bourdieu’s class analysis offers a number of significant contributions to the study of social stratification and inequality. First, Bourdieu rejects the naïve realist interpretation of a theoretical social class as a ‘real’ class. In \textit{Practical Reason}, Bourdieu states: “Social classes do not exist . . . What exists is a social space, a space of differences, in which classes exist in some sense in a state of virtuality, not as something given but as \textit{something to be done}” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 12). A \textit{theoretical} class exists only as “the product of an explanatory classification” that

\textsuperscript{16} In \textit{What is a woman? And other essays}, Toril Moi (1999) disagrees with the assertion by some feminist intellectuals that male-centered theory (e.g., Freud, Marx, Foucault) does not offer any value to feminist goals. She argues that feminists can benefit tremendously from Freud and Bourdieu’s work by appropriating them to answer feminist questions first before assessing and deciding on their values. She further argues that if feminist intellectuals are skeptical about appropriating non-feminist theories, then feminists have to abandon almost “the whole of the Western intellectual heritage” (p. 255).
allows us to explain and predict social practices (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 231). Thus, for Bourdieu, *real* social classes exist only insofar as they are *made* and *not given*.

However, this does not mean that *social differentiation* does not exist. Agents occupying class positions (on paper) in close proximity to each other in the different fields within the social space share similar objective conditions of existence and *classed* habitus (dispositions, perceptions and tastes). They are inclined to come together as a “realized” class achieved through community mobilization and oriented towards a common stake or struggle (Bourdieu, 1990a, 1998, p. 11). By distinguishing between classes-on-paper and classes-in-reality, Bourdieu’s theory enables us to study social differences without succumbing to essentialism (fixed identity) or relativism (subjective differences).

Second, Bourdieu’s theory of practice demonstrates that class identity and classed practices are the products of collective histories and objective structures. Without conscious awareness, the dominated classes tend to see themselves through the eyes of the dominant classes. Since they lack the capital and symbolic power to repudiate or redefine the dominant taxonomy of social differentiation, they have only two options: “loyalty to oneself and the group (always liable to relapse into shame), or the individual effort to assimilate the dominant ideal” which works against their collective goal of emancipation (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 384). Thus, agents of “similar conditions and conditionings” tend to look to their peers’ conduct as “the ratification and legitimation” of their own conduct that in return ratify and rectify the conduct of others. As such, what are often mistaken to be individual lifestyles are in fact “roughly attuned” cultural practices produced by their objective collective conditions (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 145).

Third, Bourdieu’s class analysis transcends the dichotomy of agency/structure. Using a cultural approach, Bourdieu explicates how our everyday mundane practices are intricately enmeshed with the structures of power that make and unmake groups, as Bourdieu (1984) writes: “Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier” (p.6). For most people, *taste* is perceived and accepted as a personal choice or as someone’s natural inclination. However, Bourdieu’s *science of taste* elucidates that tastes are the products of our conditions of existence; therefore the “tastes of freedom” of the dominant classes exist only in relation to the “tastes of necessity” of the dominated classes (p. 56).
Taste, as a form of cultural capital, transmutes “things into distinct and distinctive signs,” that is, it transforms physical differences into symbolic distinctions (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 175).

When tastes are naturalized into the level of aesthetics, they become misrecognized categories of vision and division (tasteful/vulgar, polite/rude, refined/coarse) that sustains the class divisions. Furthermore, tastes are also embodied capital that cannot be disentangled from one’s disposition, perception and physicality. Since most people pre-reflexively experience and express their tastes as natural, their recognition of tastes is first and foremost based on “distastes, disgusts provoked by horror or visceral intolerance” (p. 56). Bourdieu’s notion of taste as embodied capital helps to explain the persistence of social prejudice and the doxic submission of the dominated. When the arbitrariness of tastes and distinction is exposed and de-naturalized, social domination is also revealed.

Last, Bourdieu’s notion of habitus draws our attention to how class positions and classed practices are reproduced and passed on from one generation to the next. Parents in dominant classes who are equipped with financial and cultural capital are able to transmit to their children not only economic wealth but also cultural and social capital that can be converted into credentials, power, and privilege (T. Bennett, et al., 2009). By the same token, parents in dominated classes who lack the economic and cultural capital to navigate successfully through the educational and political systems tend to pass onto their children a socially constructed hereditary destiny that keeps them in dominated positions. For Bourdieu, the very few disadvantaged children who succeed in the educational system are the miraculous exceptions and their success only reinforces the doxa of equal opportunity based on meritocracy (Moi, 1999).

3.2.2. Beyond Class Analysis: Appropriating Bourdieu’s Sociology for the Study of Gender and Race

Although Bourdieu’s work has been immensely influential among intellectuals of diverse disciplines, it has also been criticized for being deterministic (Butler, 1999; R. Jenkins, 1992) and for centering on class at the expense of gender, race, and sexuality analyses (Lovell, 2000; Reed-Danahay, 2005). For instance, Bourdieu’s work on gender analysis has been critiqued for presenting women as “capital-bearing objects” to be traded amongst men but not as “capital-accumulating subjects” with the agency to compete in their own social fields (Lovell, 2000, pp. 20, italic in original). It does not acknowledge the complex and evolving gender relations in contemporary Western societies, nor women’s agency in their struggles to lay claim to certain
cultural productions, as demonstrated by female writers of popular and middlebrow genre in the eighteenth century. The female writers actually fared better than their male counterparts in the same field (Fowler, 2003). Furthermore, Bourdieu’s *Masculine Domination* (2001) negates the critical scholarships that feminists have produced throughout the century; and his gender analysis is not given the same level of theorizing and analysis as his work on class, culture, and education (McNay, 1999a; Moi, 1999; Beverley Skeggs, 2004b).

However, despite these limitations, many feminist scholars recognize that Bourdieu’s sociology has its merits for feminist theorizing and research. Moi (1999) suggests that Bourdieu’s firm anti-essentialist stance in his gender analysis is critical to feminist scholarship because it reminds us that

> if women are socially constructed as women, that means that they are women. . . . sexual differences are neither essences nor simple signifiers, neither a matter of realism nor of nominalism, but a matter of social practice. Sexual differences or sexual identities, then, cannot simply be deconstructed away: real social change is required to empty these categories of current meanings. (Moi, 1999, p. 284, emphasis in original)

Thus, Bourdieu’s sociology puts the body and embodiment back into social practice, and offers an alternative to some poststructuralist feminist theorizing that tends to conceptualize gender identity as the discursive product of ideology or the mind (Adkins, 2004). Furthermore, whereas Gramsci has provided us with a general theory of hegemony to investigate power, as Moi (1999) points out, Bourdieu has provided us with “a *microtheory* of social power” to reveal how social domination operates in our everyday interactions without losing sight of the structural influences (p. 268, emphasis in original).

Other feminist scholars acknowledge that Bourdieu's negation of feminist scholarship in his work is reflective of the gendered habitus of male intellectuals of his time. They argue that this shortcoming should not preclude a critical and meaningful engagement with Bourdieu’s work because his notions of habitus, capital, and fields offer many possibilities for feminist theorizing, particularly in the areas of embodiment, gender identity, and symbolic violence (Adkins, 2004; Fowler, 2003; McRobbie, 2004).

> In the theorization of social action as always embodied (of the social as incorporated into the body), of power as subtly inculcated through the body, of social action as generative, and in his emphasis on the politics of cultural authorization, recognition and social position taking, Bourdieu’s social theory offers numerous points of connection to contemporary feminist theory. (Adkins, 2004, p. 5)
Indeed, a number of feminist scholars have critically appropriated Bourdieu’s sociology in studying and theorizing some of the contemporary issues: embodiment and gender identities (McNay, 1999a), sexuality and leisure space (Skeggs, 1999), gender and social capital (Adkins, 2005), mothering and emotional capital (Reay, 2004a), gender habitus and symbolic violence (Powell, 2008; Warin, Turner, Moore, & Davies, 2008), habitus and the practice of public service (McDonough, 2006), and so forth. Furthermore, Bourdieu’s work has also been taken up in the study of masculinities and sexualities: masculine identity and embodiment (Gill, Henwood, & Mclean, 2005; O'Donoghue, 2005), social organization of erotic desire (A. I. Green, 2008), masculinities and gay subcultures (Hennen, 2005; Westhaver, 2006), sports and hegemonic masculinity (Light & Kirk, 2000), Black masculinities and sexualities (Skeggs, 1993), and so on.

To appropriate Bourdieu’s work critically for use with gender analysis in this dissertation, the notion of performativity deserves some attention. As noted in Chapter 2, gender is a situational accomplishment and the product of social structures and power relations. The early use of the term ‘performatives’ was associated with the work of linguistic philosopher, J. L. Austin. For Austin (2004), an utterance is not a statement that describes an already-existing condition; rather, an utterance performs an act. Numerous scholars, including Judith Butler and Pierre Bourdieu, have taken up Austin’s notion of performative utterances to theorize performative agency with differing perspectives. Both Bourdieu and Butler draw on Austin’s work to explicate how social relations of power are exercised through speech acts. They share similar concerns of the use of language as social praxis and its association with possible social change. However, their use of the notion of performativity also differs.

Butler (1990/1999) uses the notion of performativity to challenge the commonsense definitions of gender and sex. Unlike acts of performance, performativity produces effects through the practice of constant and continuous iteration, citation, and repetition of stylized gendered rituals, which are not limited to linguistic expressions but include other symbolic representations (e.g., gestures, body decorations, speech style, etc.).

Significantly, if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment. . . . Gender is also a norm that can never be fully internalized; "the internal" is a surface signification, and gender norms are finally phantasmatic, impossible to embody. If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time and not a
Since sex and gender are socially constructed configurations, transformation is possible through subversive performative performances: disruption of heteronormative stylization, “de-formity” and “parodic” repetitions (Butler, 1990/1999).

Bourdieu also uses the notion of performativity to challenge the arbitrariness of the social world. He contends that every speech act or utterance is potentially an act of power, especially when it takes place among agents “who occupy asymmetric positions in the distribution of the relevant capital” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 145). Unlike Butler who suggests that repetitious acts of transgression can be taken up by all agents to transform social identities, Bourdieu argues that not all performative utterances or performative devices command equal effects; instead these devices carry powers that are derived from the interplay between the orator’s linguistic habitus, that is, her dispositions and situational competence, and the linguistic market that determines the value of the utterances based on a system of sanctions and censorships (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

The question of performative utterances becomes clearer if one sees it as a particular case of the effects of symbolic domination, . . . the weight of different agents depends on their symbolic capital, i.e. on the recognition, institutionalized or not, that they receive from a group. Symbolic imposition- that kind of magical efficacy which not only the command and the password, but also ritual discourse or a simple injunction, or even threats or insults, purport to exercise- can function only if there is a convergence of social conditions which are altogether distinct from the strictly linguistic logic of discourse. (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 72)

Thus, Bourdieu’s notion of performativity is a form of social practice that needs to be understood in the context of the notions of capital and field.

Both formulations of performativity by Bourdieu and Butler have received endorsement and critique. Butler (1997) critiques Bourdieu for over-privileging symbolic violence and the official authority of social institutions, rendering little human agency for resistance and transformation. She insists that the symbolic force of language is contextual and the autonomy of language allows the possibility of subversion (Butler, 1999). Bourdieu (2000) on the other hand argues against the post-structuralist “linguistic fetishism” that narrowly focuses on “performative social construction” while ignoring the objective structure of institutionalized material and power inequalities (p. 108). He contends that gender dualisms are deeply rooted in the social structures
and inscribed in bodies, and cannot be “abolished by an act of performative magic” (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 102).

McNay (2004) suggests that the differences between Bourdieu and Butler on performativity is not so much in material versus symbolic determinism but in how they conceptualize agency in performativity. She suggests that Butler’s accounts of the performative construction of the subject and the embedded psyche in the social have advanced our understanding of the ambiguities and indeterminancy of subject formation. However, she argues that Butler tends to focus on a model of ‘negative’ action, that is, to displace the dominant symbolic gender and sexual norms; this focus misses the way creative agency operates within different social structures to stimulate or impede change (McNay, 1999b). On the other hand, Bourdieu’s tendency to reduce “symbolic relations to pre-given social relations” underestimates the extent that language can be used as a means to subvert domination (McNay, 2004). However, his work on habitus and field enable us to examine the socialized subject in the context of symbolic and material structures.

Other feminist scholars suggest that the work of both Butler and Bourdieu are useful in advancing the theorizing on gender and performativity.

Habitus may provide a powerful conceptual antidote to postmodern voluntaristic politics, insofar as it permits us to focus on the social conditions of existence of resistance, and conversely, Butler’s understanding of the necessary ‘leakiness’ of all social power, social convention, habitus, heads off the Bourdieuan slippage into political pessimism. (Lovell, 2000, p. 34)

I concur with Lovell that both Butler and Bourdieu have made significant contributions to the theorizing of gender and other social identities; their differences serves as an important reminder for the need to transcend the dualism of agency and structure in the analysis of social relations.

3.3. Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, I return to another debate on Bourdieu’s sociology. Some critics assert that Bourdieu’s theory of class is inadequate because it is too general and broad (Calhoun, 1993; R. Jenkins, 1992). Brubaker (1985) argue that Bourdieu treats class as a “universal explanatory principle” (p. 762, emphasis in original) by strategically locating it “at the intersection of shared external conditions of existence and shared internalized dispositions, shared configurations of power and shared style of life” such that his notion of class “ceases to designate (as it does in
Marx or Weber) a particular mode of social grouping but becomes a metaphor for the total set of social determinants” (p. 769). Similarly, Moi (1999) argues that the strength of Bourdieu’s class analysis lays in his refusal to narrowly define class in economic terms. His notions of habitus, field and capital enable us to study culture, identity, and power relations without falling into the trap of essentialism, or “an unresolved vacillation between determinism, on the one hand, and voluntarism, on the other” (McNay, 1999a, p. 96). As such, Bourdieu’s sociology offers an innovative solution to the long standing challenges for social scientists to adequately address the intersecting dynamics of classed, gendered, and raced relations.
Chapter 4:
Methodology

4. Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological approach, research design, and methods that were used for data collection procedures, data management, data analysis, and interpretation in this study. It aims to explain the logic and justify the design and implementation of this study.

4.1. Research Paradigm and Theoretical Orientation

This study is informed by a critical social science paradigm\(^{17}\). It draws on the critical realist philosophy, and Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice. Critical realism is not a social theory per se but a philosophy of social science with ontological and epistemological assumptions that are useful in the exploration of social life. It proposes that reality or the nature of our world is shaped by social, cultural, and political values that crystallize over time (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Critical realists assert that there exists a world independent of our knowledge about it. This knowledge about the world is always mediated by language and discourses, and therefore it is socially constructed and fallible. However, critical realists also argue that not all knowledge is equally fallible and that facts are theory-dependent but not theory determined (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 1997). As such, critical realism as a paradigm is compatible with many research approaches that are concerned with subjective meanings, contexts and objective conditions of existence.

Critical realism proposes a ‘stratified’ ontology, which distinguishes between the real, the actual, and the empirical. The real refers to all things that exist in both the natural and the social worlds regardless whether they are observable or not. These objects have structures and power, which are capable of ‘causing’ change when activated. The actual refers to the events and outcomes when power is activated; and the empirical refers to the domain of experience and perception (Sayer, 2000).

\(^{17}\) A paradigm refers to a set of general assumptions about the nature of the world and reality (ontology) and how we can know or understand it (epistemology). As such, a coherent research paradigm must consist of methodological strategies that are reflective of these assumptions (Maxwell, 2005).
As critical realists assert, the social world is more than patterns of regular events; it is an open system in which

the same mechanism can produce different outcomes according to context, or more precisely, according to its spatio-temporal relations with other objects, having their own causal powers and liabilities, which may trigger, block or modify its action. . . . What actors do at a given time is likely to be affected by depositions which were ‘sedimented’ at some earlier stage, often in different places. (Sayer, 2000, p. 16)

Thus, critical realists seek to ask questions about necessity and not regularity; they are concerned with unpacking the contexts, causal mechanisms, and effects of everyday interactions in order to identify the possibility and the potentiality for social change (Fairclough, 2003; Jones, 2004). They assume that individuals have the free will to act but only within the structural constraints of a society (Porter, 2002); this perspective is aligned with Bourdieus’s theory of social practice that aims to explicate the complex relationships between habitus, capital, and field.

This study also draws on critical ethnography to acknowledge that reality is co-created when agents encounter the world, and research is one type of social encounter (Heron & Reason, 1997). It presupposes that young people are active agents capable of thinking critically of the world they live in (Frymer, 2005). The critical ethnographic approach differs from the participatory action approach in that participants do not have control over the research design but they actively take part in the negotiation of meaning throughout the research process and contribute to shaping the analysis (K. E. Cook, 2005). It promotes dialogue as a reflective process in which we come to understand how we participate in the production and reproduction of social relations in our everyday interactions (Cassell & Johnson, 2006). It also offers opportunities for the participants and the researcher to reflect on their own characterization, stories, and the voices of others; this process contributes to a new understanding of oneself, which is also open to future and alternative interpretations (Sullivan & McCarthy, 2004). In congruence with critical realism, critical ethnography is concerned with explicating the effects of social structure and power relations embedded in cultural practices with the goal of using knowledge for emancipation and social change (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Thomas, 1993).
4.2. Study Design and Methods

This study uses a qualitative interpretive approach to explore how social relations of power are embodied and expressed as both heterogeneous and ‘collective’ sexual practices among young men in the context of their social environments. The study began in June 2007 upon approval from the University of Toronto Ethics Review Office. Recruitment and data collection continued until December 2007. Details of the study design and methods are described in the following subsection.

4.2.1. Sampling Strategy

This study set out to recruit 20 to 25 sexually active young men, aged 16 to 19 and of diverse backgrounds from two of Toronto’s disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The age criterion was determined based on the 2003 Canadian Youth, Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Study (Boyce, et al., 2003), which shows that 40% of grade 11 male students reported experiences of sexual intercourse. Furthermore, public health data indicate that young people between the age of 16 to 24 have the highest reported rates of chlamydia and other sexually transmitted infections (PHAC, 2009). The age range of 16 to 19 was chosen to be inclusive of both young men who were relatively experienced in sexual interactions and those who might have initiated sex at a later age because of their cultural or religious beliefs (Howell & Huebner, 2003; Steinman & Zimmerman, 2004). At the same time, the limited age range was intended to enhance positive group dynamics associated with age-proximity. The target sample of 20 to 25 participants was appropriate for this study as it aimed to obtain rich descriptions in order to explore specific contextualized phenomena about young men’s sexual practices rather than produce broad data or generalized ‘truths’ (Crouch & Mckenzie, 2006; Sayer, 2000).

The study also used purposive sampling, which allowed me to focus on the topic of interest and the population specific to this study (Silverman, 2005). The sampling criteria were informed by existing sexual health data (as indicated above) and other demographic data, which showed that sexually transmitted infections and other sexual health outcomes were distributed unequally across different neighbourhoods in Toronto. Neighbourhoods with the highest rates of chlamydia shared some common characteristics, including: a high percentage of youth under the age of 19; a high percentage of individuals with less than high school education; a high
percentage of low income families; a high percentage of immigrant families; a high percentage of racial ‘minority’ groups; and fewer available health services (Gournis & Achonu, 2005; Toronto Community Health Profiles Partnership, 2005).

Based on the above findings, I consulted with a number of public health colleagues to identify 3 to 5 potential neighbourhoods in which to carry out this study. Special considerations in choosing these neighbourhoods included: (1) presence or absence of research fatigue among young men associated with existing or ongoing research; and (2) potential support of local stakeholders for the study. After exploring a total of five potential neighbourhoods through meetings with local stakeholders, undertaking neighbourhood walks, and researching background information about the neighbourhoods, I decided to carry out this study in two neighbourhoods - Troikaville and Macee Grove (pseudonyms).

4.2.2. Recruitment Processes

A number of strategies were developed for use with this study to ensure that young men who were and were not connected with local education, health and social services were included in the recruitment. Recruitment materials consisted of an information letter (Appendix 1) for community stakeholders and recruitment flyers for youth with a description of the criteria for participation and contact information (Appendix 2). This study found that the effectiveness of the different strategies was specific to the contexts of the neighbourhoods, which I describe in more detail in the following subsections.

4.2.2.1. Recruitment through community service providers/gatekeepers

In community-based research, successful recruitment is influenced by our ability to network with and gain the trust of community stakeholders and gatekeepers, especially when we are conducting research in marginalized communities (Dancy, Wilbur, Talashek, Bonner, & Barnesboyd, 2004; J. Green & Thorogood, 2004). Making connections with service providers/gatekeepers at Macee Grove, where I did not have any prior community connections, had proved to be a lengthy and tedious process. My initial attempts to contact service providers at the local agencies through knocking on doors, leaving information packages about the study, and making telephone calls were unsuccessful. I was not able to establish any linkages with the
key stakeholders and gatekeepers. Subsequently, I turned to former public health colleagues to seek their assistance.

Since Macee Grove was a housing project within the Macee Grove Priority Investment Neighbourhood, I was referred to two community-liaison officers who worked closely with some of the stakeholders in Macee Grove. They helped me to get in touch with the manager of a local community recreation centre, and a health promotion staff member at the Macee Grove community health centre. After many email correspondences, telephone calls, and face-to-face meetings with these key stakeholders and their colleagues, I was able to gain their endorsement for the study and subsequently I was given permission to post the recruitment flyers at the two local centres. This recruitment strategy was critical at Macee Grove, as I explain in the next subsection.

Establishing connections with service providers and gatekeepers at Troikaville was comparatively easier because of my previous working relationships with a number of key community agencies serving young people. I was able to meet with the executive director of the St. Vincent Park Community Centre (pseudonym) and gained his immediate support for the study. I was given permission to post the flyers and offered the use of space in which to conduct the group interviews. I also successfully connected with a coalition of service providers working with young people through an e-distribution list and received their support in posting and distributing the study at their agencies.

4.2.2.2. Recruitment through posting flyers in the study neighbourhoods

During the second week of June 2007, while I was in the process of making connections with the various community service providers and gatekeepers at Macee Grove, I posted flyers on all the neighbourhood notice boards. Despite posting more than 40 flyers, I did not receive one phone call or email of enquiry regarding the study. When I walked around the housing project in the subsequent week, I noticed that all the flyers were there, but few tear-offs at the bottom of the flyers had been taken. At the same time, I noticed that the tear-offs on flyers advertising summer jobs for young people (posted next to mine) had all been taken (see Figure 4.1, the name of neighbourhood was removed). This indicated that local residents did use the
notice boards for gathering information, but other mechanisms were needed for my study flyers to work.

**Figure 4.1 – Flyer posted at Macee Grove**

**Figure 4.2 – Flyer posted at Troikaville**

At Troikaville, my experience of posting flyers on the street as a recruitment strategy was drastically different from that of Macee Grove. To ensure that potential participants were recruited beyond the St. Vincent Park Community Centre I contracted two high school students to post 200 flyers throughout Troikaville. Interestingly, most of the participants from Troikaville found out about the study through these, only a small number of them were recruited through the postings at the local service agencies or through the research assistant (Dan). In Troikaville, I found that many of the flyers posted at the major intersections had been covered over by other advertisements within 24 hours. However, the flyers posted along the local streets remained in place with the tear-offs removed; this indicated that they did reach many potential participants (see figure 4.2; real name of neighbourhood removed). The effectiveness of using posted flyers on the street to recruit potential participants was confirmed by the enquiries I received about the study; there were a total of 5 email messages and 27 phone calls, all from Troikaville. I did not receive any enquiries from Macee Grove.

4.2.2.3. Recruitment using youth-to-youth outreach

In addition to using flyers as an outreach strategy, I contracted Dan, a young black man in his early 20s, who worked as a part-time community peer outreach worker at one of the downtown community agencies, to help with recruitment at Troikaville. Other studies have
suggested that using youth-to-youth outreach is an effective recruitment strategy. For example, the *Smoke, in My Eyes* research project (Hospital for Sick Children) has successfully contracted a young woman to recruit young smokers from diverse places. The researcher of this project reported that the proximity in age between the recruiter and the participants helped to facilitate a sense of comfort and ease, making the initial contacts effective. ¹⁸

Prior to any recruitment activities, I met with Dan to go over the study protocol and ethical guidelines in recruitment. To avoid any potential conflict of interest, and to ensure that no actual or perceived coercion was involved in the recruitment, we established that Dan would refrain from approaching any clients who were accessing services at the community agency where he was working. Since he lived in Troikaville, he did his outreach at community centres and other youth friendly places where he ‘hung out’ with his friends. As a result, Dan recruited five young men at the Cassandra Drop-In Centre (pseudonym).

### 4.2.2.4. Recruitment through neighbourhood outreach using handbills

In addition to the above strategies, I also walked around Troikaville and Macee Grove and passed out handbills about the study in places where young men congregated (for example, outside the community centres, at local parks, at the skateboarding ramp, etc.). At Macee Grove, I was invited to follow one of the outreach workers from the local health centre to meet young men who were hanging out at different parts of the housing project and a nearby mall. I spoke to the young men about the study and provided them with the study handbills.

### 4.2.2.5. Screening of potential participants

Since the recruitment materials asked the young men interested in this study to contact me directly either via telephone or email, I had the first contact with all the potential participants, who were screened for inclusion using five criteria based on the purpose of the study. They included: (1) self-identified as being ‘a guy’; (2) between the age of 16-19; (3) living in Troikaville or Macee Grove; (4) had made out or had sex in the twelve months prior to the study; and (5) being available to take part in group or individual interviews. The first three characters of

¹⁸ Personal communication with Rebecca Haines, PhD (ABD), University of Toronto, on December 6, 2006.
the potential participants’ postal codes were used to determine their eligibility based on the
neighbourhoods in which they lived. At the end of the screening process, a total of 24 young men
were accepted into the study.

4.2.2.6. **Lessons learned on sampling, recruitment and screening**

As I reported above, the effectiveness of a recruitment strategy is specific to the contexts
of the different communities that we attempt to reach during research. My previous working
relationships with community agencies in Troikaville functioned as a form of social capital that
enabled me to gain endorsement and support for my doctoral study (Bourdieu, 1986). Ironically,
as Troikaville was a diverse neighbourhood (see detailed discussion in Chapter 6) that functioned
like an open system, posting flyers in the neighbourhood turned out to be the most effective
strategy. While the endorsement from the St. Vincent Community Centre provided me with the
space to conduct group interviews (which was extremely useful), it did not contribute further to
the study recruitment.

At Macee Grove, the situation was different. My lack of a previous working relationship
with the neighbourhood presented challenges during my initial attempts to gain support for the
study. As Macee Grove was a relatively small community with a tightly knit social network (see
detailed discussion in Chapter 6), my presence as a stranger and outsider was accentuated.
Although I had free ‘access’ to post the study flyers around Macee Grove, these flyers were
ineffective because I was not ‘authorized’ to speak to the potential participants through the flyers
(Bourdieu, 1991). It was after I met with the key stakeholders at the community centre and the
health centre that my study flyers were endowed with a form of social capital. I was able to
recruit 7 young men during my face-to-face outreach in the neighbourhood. Despite the initial
challenges in gaining access to research participants at Macee Grove, the social capital that I had
accrued through my 18 years of work in public health did enable me to make connections with
community liaison officers who then referred me to the stakeholders and gatekeepers at Macee
Grove.

Another lesson that I learned in the recruitment and screening processes was that research
at the grassroots level seldom works out as we plan in the study proposal. Even though all
participants were screened according to the criteria stated above, it was impossible for me to
ensure that they all strictly met the criteria because the data were self-reported. At Troikaville, four of the young men stated that they were within the age range of 16 to 19 during the telephone screening. However, these young men disclosed at the end of the individual interviews or during their follow-up interviews that they were actually in their early 20s. I decided to include them in the study because: (1) their newly disclosed age was between 22 to 24, which still fell within the age categories of youth ‘at risk’ of negative sexual health outcomes; (2) the initial age limit was set at 16 to 19 based on the assumption that age-proximity might enhance group dynamics; in actuality, age differences did not interfere with the group process but did provide interesting insights about group dynamics; (3) they met the other four criteria of the study; and (4) within the context of this study, expanding the age range to include young men in their early 20s did not interfere with the purpose and integrity of the study, as indicated by the results discussed in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

4.2.3. Data Collection

This study used a combination of group interviews and individual interviews to explore the gendered, classed and raced sexual practices of young men in the context of their socio-spatial environment. In addition, participants were invited to take part in a follow-up interview with a neighbourhood walk or a follow-up interview with ‘resonance text’ or ‘creative art’. The number of participants who engaged in each category of the data collection activities is presented in Table 4.1 on page 62.

Group interviews as a data collection method offer many advantages in qualitative research: (1) they allow the researchers to observe firsthand the ‘horizontal’ interactions among the participants; (2) the presence of multiple participants enhances shared power and limits the control of the researcher; (3) the presence of multiple perspectives often stimulates dialogue and reflections among the participants (Madriz, 2000). On the other hand, the emergence of dominant perspectives may interfere with individual expression, resulting in ‘groupthink’ (Fontana & Frey, 2008).

In the context of this study, the use of group interviews enabled me to observe firsthand how the participants interacted with each other to construct their masculine identities. At the same time, the use of follow-up individual interviews helped to address the issue of ‘groupthink’
and provided the participants opportunities to share their perspectives and ideas, especially on the more personal and sensitive topics such as sexual practices, or substance use, in a private and safe setting.

Before the group or individual interview, I invited each participant to fill out a pre-discussion survey (Appendix 3), which contained questions about the participant’s demographics, sexual practices, hobbies, and cultural tastes. The use of the pre-discussion survey allowed the participants to provide sensitive information (e.g. sexual activities; number of sexual partners, parents’ occupation, etc.) in private. The information collected in this survey helped to further contextualize the participants’ narratives in terms of their backgrounds and habitus (e.g. cultural tastes related to class habitus). All interviews were audiotaped with consent from the participants.

4.2.3.1. Group Interviews

A total of three group interviews took place at the local community centres: (1) St. Vincent Community Centre in Troikaville (n=6); (2) Macee Grove Community Centre (n=7); and Cassandra Drop-In (n=5). The interviews lasted between 1.5 to 2 hours. I co-facilitated these group interviews with Dan, a research assistant. Dan was a young black man in his early 20s with experience in sexual health education. His key role was to co-facilitate the group interviews with me and help with taking notes. Before Dan took part in co-facilitating these group interviews, I had provided him with training on the research purpose, research ethics, and conducting group interviews; he had also signed an agreement of confidentiality (Appendix 4).

The rationale for using a research assistant (RA) was twofold: (1) the presence of a male peer as a co-facilitator may increase the comfort level for some participants; (2) the presence of a co-facilitator provides an important safety mechanism in group interviews that explore sensitive topics; in the event that a participant experiences emotional distress and requires ‘immediate’ emotional support, or needs to talk with someone outside of the group setting immediately. Having two facilitators on site allows one person to attend to this individual’s need while the other person continues with the group interactions.
The group interviews were semi-structured in nature (see interview guide, Appendix 5). As sexuality and sexual practices can be a sensitive topic, I used a number of popular statements and a case scenario to elicit responses from the young men (Colucci, 2007). Throughout the interviews, open-ended probes were used to encourage discussion.

4.2.3.2. Individual Interviews

All participants in the group interviews were invited to return for an individual interview. It was expected that not all participants from the group interviews would choose to return to take part in an individual interview. Thus, additional young men were recruited from the same neighbourhood to participate in this portion of the study. As the study aimed to explore the habitus and sexual practices of young men, these interviews were guided by a life history approach, in which participants were invited to tell stories about their lives as they understood them (Tierney, 2000). These narratives allowed me to gain insights into the participants’ perspectives of their growing up experience and their everyday lives (R. W. Connell, 2005).

The individual interviews were semi-structured (Appendix 6) and lasted about 1 to 1.5 hours. At the end of the first individual interview, each participant was invited to return for a follow-up interview; those who agreed to continue with the study were asked to choose one of the two follow-up options: a neighbourhood walk or submitting either a resonance text or a piece of creative art (see instructions, Appendix 7).

4.2.3.3. The ‘Go-Along’ Neighbourhood Walks

As indicated above, in addition to ‘sit-down’ interviews, I also offered the option for the participants to take me on a guided walk of their neighbourhoods. Margarethe Kusenbach (2003) calls this type of walking and talking interview the ‘go-along’ method or street phenomenology. She argues that both ‘naturalistic’ observations and sit-down interviews have their limitations. In naturalistic observations, the researcher sees the participants’ world through her lens of interpretation and has very little access to how the participants make sense of their social worlds, events, and interactions. On the other hand, sit-down interviews take participants away from their everyday ‘real-life’ environment and privilege narrativity as the centre of research interactions. As such, the participants’ responses and narratives are static and limited to the guiding questions
posed by the researcher. The go-along method brings additional advantages to ethnographic and interpretive studies because the researchers are “able to observe their informants’ spatial practices in situ while accessing their experiences and interpretations at the same time” (p. 463).

Although the use of group interviews allowed me to access a certain degree of in situ interactions among the young men, I included the go-along method because it enabled me to gain a further understanding about the place-based contexts of the participants’ growing-up and current everyday experiences. For instance, it allowed me to gain a sense of the relational context of Macee Grove as a social housing project within the larger officially defined Macee Grove Priority Neighbourhood and how these young men perceive, process, and navigate their environments (Carpiano, 2009).

Nine out of the 24 participants chose the option of taking me on a neighbourhood walk during the follow-up interview, which was booked within one to two weeks after the first individual interview. Most of the young men paired up to take me on the go-along, possibly because being with a friend made them feel less awkward while walking around with a middle-age semi-stranger. Before the walk, I reminded the young men that they might meet their peers and other people they knew in the neighbourhood and it was important for them to consider ahead of time how they would like to respond to others and how they would like me to respond in these situations.

Since it was a go-along method we were undertaking, I invited the young men to decide on the routes and places they would like to show me within their neighbourhoods. The interview was open-ended with little directions from me. The nearby environmental features (schools, baseball diamonds, stores, etc.) and activities on the street became the focal points that brought forth comments and discussions. The go-along interview was audiotaped with consent of the participants. I turned off the audio recorder whenever the young men encountered someone they knew and stopped for an exchange.

A small number of digital photographs were taken during the neighbourhood walk at the suggestion of the participants. Since Macee Grove was a small and tightly knit community, I abandoned the original plan to include photographs of people living within the housing project in order to protect the anonymity of the participants. Instead, I only photographed local landscapes
and neighbourhood features that were linked to the young men’s narratives. At the end of the neighbourhood walk, which lasted 45 minutes to an hour, we either returned to the local community centre or sat in the park, where I shared with the participants my preliminary interpretation of their narratives from their previous interviews and invited their reactions. The goal was to dialogue with the young men to co-create a reflexive text.

4.2.3.4. Resonant Texts

For participants who were not comfortable or interested in taking part in the go-along method, I invited them to bring with them a resonant text19 to the follow-up interview. The idea of using resonant texts in this study came from my previous experience of doing research with immigrant and refugee women. The participants were invited to use drawings, play-doh, or other materials to express their experiences, in addition to narrative interviews (Y. R. Wong, Wong, Fung, & Chung, 2003).

To some extent, the exploratory use of resonant texts as a data collection method in this study resembles an arts-based research. Arts-based inquiry emerged in the 1990s in response to the quest for a new paradigm of human research that addresses the ‘crisis of representation’ in writing about the ‘Other’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) and promotes socially engaged research practices (Finley, 2003). The use of arts-based research (including resonant texts) disrupts the conventional data collection method in which the participants’ narratives are guided or limited by the questions we pose. It opens up a space for self-expression beyond the sole use of written or spoken language (Butler-Kisber, 2002). This is particularly important when working with marginalized individuals who may lack the cultural and symbolic capital of formal education or official languages, as Francisco S. Cavalcante Jr. (2005, June) points out:

> The history of humanity reveals to us a variety of feelings and readings impressed on the universal masterpieces, originating from hands, mouths and gestures of common people. These people are owners of vast popular wisdom even though they are often represented in a rustic form. But they are expressive, full of intuition and imagination (Freyre in Lopes, 1994). Unfortunately, except for artists, schooled people and scholars, there are few who find space to communicate their aesthetic responses to the world in which they live, representing ideas and feelings through their multiple forms of composition of meaning.

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19 In the context of this study, a resonant text is a piece of work that represents the participant’s expression of being a young man; it could be a song, a picture, a photo, a collage, a painting or drawing, a sculpture, or any kind of artwork or expression.
Thus, the use of different mediums in data collection enabled us to hear different stories that originated from the participants’ different ways of knowing.

Heron and Reason (1997) identify four intertwined ways of knowing: (1) *experiential knowing* is gained through the direct encounter with the world in the forms of persons, places, entities, processes, and so on; (2) *presentational knowing* emerges from our experiential knowing and is manifested in “an intuitive grasp” of how we see and resonate with the world; it is expressed in multiple forms of imagery and “aesthetic creation” that are not limited to language (p. 281); (3) *propositional knowing* is the knowledge of the world or something articulated in statements, concepts and theories; and (4) *practical knowing* is having the knowledge to do something; it is a form of knowing that presupposes all the other kinds of knowing and brings them to fruition in purposive action. In the context of qualitative research, the use of resonant texts enables us to gain access to the participants’ presentational knowing. Furthermore, when the participants in this study elaborated on their resonant texts, we gained further insights about their other forms of knowing, their perspectives, and lived experiences.

In this study, the use of resonant texts provided an opportunity for the young men to reflect on our previous interviews and to express what resonated with them. During the follow-up interview, the resonant texts became a tool used by the young men to engage in a dialogue, not only with me, but also with their characterization and storytelling. It also provided me with an opportunity to further explore the young men’s perspectives on gender and sexuality. After the young men shared their resonant texts, I shared with them my preliminary interpretation of their narratives from their previous interviews and invited their reactions. The goal was to dialogue with the young men to co-create a reflexive text.

**4.2.3.5. Telephone interviews**

Although telephone interviews were not one of the original planned methods of data collection, I used it with one young man (Anthony) who expressed the desire to join the study but did not feel comfortable or safe to take part in the group interview or to meet me for a face-to-face interview. The decision to include Anthony in this study was based on my ethics review protocol, in which I stated that this study aimed to be inclusive of all youth who self-identified as ‘guys’ and that sexual minority youth would be offered alternative ways of participating. As
such, Anthony chose to be interviewed on the telephone and we completed a total of 3
terviews; each interview lasted about 45 minutes. Interview dates and times were pre-booked;
Anthony called in to the study phone line and each interview began with verbal consent that was
audiotaped.

4.2.3.6. Summary of Study Participation

Table 4.1 summarizes the number of young men who participated in each category
of data collection activities. A total of 18 young men took part in 3 focus groups (one at
Macee Grove and two at Troikaville). Of these 18 young men, 15 of them took part in an
individual interview. In addition, 14 of these 15 young men took part in a follow-up
individual interview; 6 of these 14 young men chose to bring a resonant text for this follow-
up interview, and the other 9 young men chose to take me on a neighbourhood walk.

This study also recruited 6 young men who were not available or preferred not to
take part in a group interview; 5 of these 6 young men returned for a follow-up interview;
all of them brought a resonant text with them, and one of them took me on neighbourhood
walk.

Table 4.1. Summary of study participation in each category of data collection activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhoods</th>
<th>Group Interview n=18</th>
<th>Individual Interview n=21</th>
<th>Follow-up Interview (Resonance Texts, n=9)</th>
<th>Follow-up Interview (Neighbourhood Go-Along, n=10)</th>
<th>Total Number of Participants n=24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macee Grove 1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Macee Grove 2</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Troikaville 1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Troikaville 2</td>
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<td>Troikaville 3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.3.7. Field Notes and Memo notes

Field notes and memo notes are important data in qualitative research. Because the field observations are filtered through the eyes of the researcher, field notes are not merely descriptions of settings, or records of events or interactions; they constitute the beginning of qualitative analysis and capture our analytical insights (M. Q. Patton, 2002). Furthermore, detailed field notes and memo notes enable us to establish an audit trail that demonstrates the quality and trustworthiness of the study (Yin, 2003).

Throughout this study, I used field notes, concept maps, and memo notes to record my observations, reflections, and contact summaries in the field. These notes captured: (1) my first impression of Macee Grove and Troikaville, subsequent observations and reflections; (2) the interactions of people in places within the two neighbourhoods; (3) the interactions among participants during group interviews; (4) my immediate reactions and reflection after my contact with community informants, gatekeepers and participants; (5) my overall impression of each interview; and (6) my emerging questions and reflections throughout the different stages of the study. These memos and notes became an integral component and process in my journey of data analysis and interpretation.

4.3. Ethical Issues and Concerns

The following subsections address the ethical issues and concerns related to doing research with young men from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. These issues are associated with power relations, not only within the researcher-participant relationship, but also at the structural level.

4.3.1. Obtaining consent

Prior to any data collection activities, I obtained informed consent from each participant. I informed each participant that he would receive an honorarium of $25 and two TTC tokens for taking part in the group interview, and $20 and two TTC tokens for taking part in each individual interview. I also stated clearly to each participant that they had the right to withdraw from the interview any time they wished and they would still receive the honorarium.
To ensure that all participants, regardless of their literacy levels, received adequate information before they consented to participate in this study, I read the consent form (Appendices 8, 9 and 10) out loud and invited all participants to ask questions. With the permission of the participants, the group interviews were audiotaped, and notes were taken during and after the interviews. Since each group interview involved a number of participants and total confidentiality could not be guaranteed, I encouraged the young men to critically reflect and decide for themselves what they felt safe to share in the group. I also informed them that there would be follow-up individual interviews in which they could share their perspectives on more private matters. Furthermore, all the participants were asked to sign an agreement to confidentiality, which was part of the consent form (see Appendix 8).

4.3.2. Engaging Young Men in ‘Small’ Communities

Macee Grove was a small tightly knit community with about 1200 units of subsidized housing and a total of 3700 residents. During the go-along, I learned that many residents knew each other very well because their families had been living there for a long time. To protect the anonymity of the participants within a small community like Macee Grove, I had decided to use a pseudonym. This resulted in some challenges in data analysis and the writing up of this study because I was not able to reference many of the documents (newspaper articles, official reports, neighbourhood revitalizing plans, etc.) that I had gathered to make sense of the neighbourhood and the conditions of existence within Macee Grove.

I was faced with similar challenges at Troikaville. Although Troikaville was a much bigger neighbourhood with a diverse population, the participants who joined one of the focus groups were all members of a small subpopulation within the neighbourhood, that is, street-involved youth. Since these young men were frequent users of a small number of specialized social agencies (shelters, soup kitchens and drop-ins) along the main stretch of this neighbourhood, I had also decided to use a pseudonym for this neighbourhood in order to protect the participants’ anonymity. This was particularly important as street-involved youth experience disproportionate violence and conflicts in their living environment (Stephen W Baron, Forde, & Kennedy, 2007; I. Martin, et al., 2008).
4.3.3. Power relations and Reflexivity in Research Practice

The issue of participant-researcher social differences and representations is a central concern in qualitative methodology. Indeed, as Stuart Hall suggests, “without relations of difference, no representation could occur” (Stuart Hall, 1990, p. 229). Implicit in these differences are the relations of power (based on age, gender, race, class, sexuality and citizenship, and so on) that exist both outside of and within the research processes (A. Bennett, 2003; Kanuha, 2000).

In the field of gender studies, social difference in research relationships has often been formulated into a debate on the status of the researchers as insiders or outsiders based on their gender. However, recent studies argue that neither same-sex nor cross-sex interviews constitute a better data collection method. What seems to matter is the recognition of how gender is practiced and performed by all actors in the contexts of research interactions (McKeganey & Bloor, 1991; C. L. Williams & Heikes, 1993). As such, ‘absolute’ insiders and outsiders do not really exist because the power dynamics between the researcher and the participants changes with each research situation (Griffin, 1996; Howarth, 2002; J. M. Roberts & Sanders, 2005).

Nevertheless, as power is implicated in research, critical reflection on how the researchers’ own social and historical positions, worldviews, and practices affect the way they engage in research and knowledge production is a now a universal expectation in the field of social research (Mauthneer & Doucet, 1998). Yet, reflexivity based on an autobiographical declaration is inadequate. At best, it makes explicit the power relation between the researcher and the participant so that others are able to evaluate the researcher’s own doxic assumptions and knowledge claims; at worst, it can lead to what Maton (2003) calls ‘hermeneutic narcissism’, whereby the researcher’s autobiographical reflection becomes so dominant that everything else is lost through ‘authorship denial’, whereby the researcher claims to take a neutral stance in giving voice to others (p. 54).

Epistemic reflexivity, as Bourdieu puts it, requires us to go beyond a superficial analysis of the researcher’s social position to include the objectification of the object of knowledge, that is, the analysis of three forms of biases that are associated with: (1) the social origin of the researcher; (2) the position occupied by the researcher within the academic field; and (3) the
collective embodiment of intellectual biases within the academic field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Furthermore, since the choice made by the scientific ‘subject’ is neither ‘free’ nor ‘disinterested’, reflexive analysis needs to go beyond an individualistic effort in questioning one’s own assumptions to analyzing the relationships between the objective structures of the academic field and the habitus of the players in it (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 119).

In the context of this study, Bourdieu’s notion of epistemic reflexivity has been useful in guiding me to go beyond an autobiographic declaration (a middle-aged, Chinese-Canadian female student researcher of working class immigrant background) to critically reflect on how my novice position in the academic field, my intellectual habitus, and the intellectual biases and power struggles within the field of public health research influence how I read and write about the world. However, I also recognize that my ability to enact Bourdieu’s notion of epistemic reflexivity or participant objectivation is limited because it requires a collective effort supported by a structure that makes visible the interactions among the different players within the academic field for critique and analysis (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). As Karl Maton (2003) argues, without a structure of objectification on the academic field itself, a researcher tends to reflect and analyze from a social position; the objectification of knowledge production is therefore limited to an analysis of the social relations between the researcher and the knowledge claim rather than the knowledge claim and its object. As such, reflexivity remains individualistic rather than collective as Bourdieu has intended.

Working within the above constraints, I drew on Breda Gray’s notion of emotionally mediated apprehension of the object of study as one way to enact reflexivity. Gray (2008) argues that emotional reactions, being part of our everyday experience, are always present in the research situation. For Bourdieu, emotions constitute an integral part of our dispositions. They are structured by our habitus and are linked to our tastes, which operate as unconscious boundaries of social division. Transgressions of tastes can provoke visceral reactions of horror, disgust, and fury (Reed-Danahay, 2005). My visceral reactions to specific persons, events and narratives during the research process roused in me a sense of (dis)identification, which enabled me to question my “unthought categories of thought” and what was predetermined as thinkable (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 178). They also enabled me to identify the habitus discordance between the young men and me and to use it as a point of analysis.
4.4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis is a complex process in qualitative research. Data analysis and interpretation are not confined to any one particular moment but occur throughout the research process. As Stake (1995) poignantly puts it, “Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to the first impressions as well as to final compilations” (p.71). It involves disaggregating the original (or raw) data into small decontextualized units, which are then reaggregated and recontextualized to produce a meaningful and coherent re-presentation of the phenomena being studied (Stake, 1995; Tesch, 1990).

In this study, I drew on narrative (Andrews, Scalater, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2004; Chase, 2008; Pamphilon, 1999; Riessman, 1993) and discourse analysis (Atkinson & Delamont, 2008; Fairclough, 2003; Gobo, 2004) to guide my data analysis and interpretation. I have summarized the analytical processes below, but each process will be explained in more detail in the subsequent sections (see Sections 4.5.1. to 4.5.4).

a. **Data familiarity**: After each individual or group interview, I listened to the audio recording to gain a broad perspective and become familiar with the nuances of the data. I made notes on my impressions of the data in terms of the content, the interview interactions, and my own emotionally mediated apprehension (as discussed above). During this process, I made comparisons with the notes I had taken during the interviews. I also began to construct a preliminary list of potential codes.

b. **Transcription**: All of the individual and group interviews were transcribed ‘verbatim’ with special attention given to the dynamics and contexts of the interviews (silences, intonation, etc); I reviewed each transcript in detail against the audio recording to check for accuracy (see Subsection 4.5.1. below for more details).

c. **Data management**: I used the computerized software, NVivo-7 to manage all the transcribed data and field notes. I also kept a set of hand written journals to record field notes, relevant concepts and theories, and my own analytical reflections.

d. **Coding**: After gaining a broad perspective on the data, I began to construct a list of categories for use with coding. I first identified some key categories from the research questions. I then
used both inductive and deductive thinking to manually look for broad categories that were indigenous (articulated by the participants) and sensitizing (drawn from pre-existing theories) in the transcripts (M. Q. Patton, 2002). These categories were then constructed into tree-nodes with sub-nodes (see Appendix 11) that are entered into NVivo-7, a computer program that supports easy retrieval of qualitative data.

e. **Analysis & interpretation:** During the process of data analysis, I applied both inductive and deductive thinking as I moved constantly back and forth between the different clusters of data organized under specific nodes. Being cautious about the ways electronic coding could fragment and de-contextualize the young men’s narratives, I constantly returned to the original transcripts and re-listened to the audio recording of the interviews. I also used cognitive and concept maps (see appendix 12) to express the relationships and linkages between the different phenomena (Clarke, 2005; Ryan & Bernard, 2000). In addition, I drew on the multi-level analytical method (Pamphilon, 1999) to interrogate the data at the macro-, the meso-, the micro-, and the interactional levels.

f. **Writing:** In writing this dissertation, I chose to present the narration and other study data alongside the analysis to avoid the pitfall of constructing the participants’ accounts as “somehow innocent or pre-analytic” and seduce the readers into thinking that these accounts are the more authentic and true (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1989, p. 222).

The following subsections describe in detail the process of and critical issues I encountered in performing data management, analysis and interpretation, and writing in this study.

### 4.4.1. Data Transcription

Interview transcription is increasingly recognized as an important methodological issue in qualitative research. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) remind us that an interview is “a live social interaction where. . . the bodily expressions are immediately available to the participants in the face-to-face conversation, but they are not accessible to the out-of-context reader of the of the transcript” (p. 178). Thus, the first level of abstraction occurs when the interview is audio recorded and the spatial and temporal dimensions of the interviews are no longer accessible to the listeners. The second abstraction occurs when the intonation and audible expressions are lost.
in the process of transcription. As such, transcription is not merely a technical procedure of turning spoken words into a written text; it is a process of abstraction, representation, and interpretation that requires closer and more reflexive examination (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999; B. D. Poland, 1995, 2003; J. P. Wong & Poon, 2010).

Funding support from a CIHR doctoral fellowship enabled me to contract research assistants to transcribe all individual, group, and go-along interviews throughout the data collection stage. This process turned out to be quite frustrating. As it was too expensive to hire a seasoned professional transcriptionist, I had to contract a number of research assistants to do the transcription. However because most of them were university students, they were not able to commit to doing a large number of audio interviews. For the group interviews, I contracted a graduate student who was interested in qualitative research, especially about young people. Her understanding of the importance of transcription quality was critical since I was interested in analyzing the group dynamics and ‘performative’ performances of the young men. Before the research assistants began the transcription, I provided them with the transcription notation table developed by Blake Poland (2003, p. 277). We went over the connotations together and I explained to them the level of detail that was required for the purpose of this study (Tilley, 2003).

Upon receiving the transcripts, I examined them in detail against the audio recordings of the interviews to check for ‘accuracy’. In the context of this study, ‘accuracy’ did not refer to the positivist notion of capturing the ‘absolute truth’ on paper; I recognized that the transcripts were constructed texts based on the transcriptionist’s interpretation of the “conversation-in-context” co-produced by the participants and myself during an interview (B. D. Poland, 2003, p. 274). I reviewed the transcripts to identify and insert words and phrases that were missed through the transcription process; I also used my field notes taken during the interviews to help identify and correct any misrepresentation of the participants’ words related to the quality of the recording, the narrators’ accents, or the mishearing of the transcriber.

Furthermore, as Poland (2003) points out, people usually speak in run-on sentences or quote others within their narratives. Thus, during the review, I listened and re-listened to the audio recording to determine how to best transcribe the participants’ narratives into written texts.
and remain ‘faithful’ to their original expressions within the context of the interview. To enhance the quality of the transcripts as an interpretive text, I adapted the work of Poland (2003) and Silverman (2006) to construct a notation table to meet the needs of this study (see Appendix 13). However, during the process of writing, some of the direct quotes of narratives were further revised to remove the dysfluencies and false starts to enhance ease of reading and reduce any potential stigmatization of the participants (Kvale, 1996; Lapadat, 2000).

4.4.2. Manual and Computer-assisted Data Disaggregation and Reaggregation

Qualitative data analysis involves the disaggregation of interview transcripts into decontextualized categories or nodes, which are then reaggregated into meaningful and coherent re-presentation of the phenomena being studied (Stake, 1995; Tesch, 1990). In the early stage of textual analysis of the data, I compiled a list of categories from the research questions. I also engaged in the close reading of the transcripts while I listened and re-listened to the interview recording. During this process, I used both inductive and deductive thinking and manually looked for broad categories that were indigenous (articulated by the participants) and sensitizing (drawn from pre-existing theories) in the transcripts (M. Q. Patton, 2002).

Since this study used multiple data collection methods, which generated a substantial volume of data, managing these data solely through a manual method was challenging and inefficient. Thus, I also used a computer software, NVivo-7, to store and manage my data. NVivo-7 was useful in that it allowed me to: construct thematic and conceptual categories (in the form of tree-nodes and sub-nodes); perform coding electronically; retrieve the disaggregated data with relative ease; make data linkages between categories and clusters; and insert memos to facilitate different levels of analysis (Weitzman, 2000).

However, I did not rely entirely on the use of NVivo-7 for data analysis in this study. My previous experience in using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) was not entirely satisfactory; I found that I sometimes fell into a ‘coding trap’ whereby my efforts in constructing detailed tree nodes with multi-level sub-nodes became mechanical and restrictive, resulting in an unintended emphasis on the contents and diminished attention to the contexts of the participants’ narratives (Gilbert, 2002). Thus, in this study, I made the decision during the
early stages of data analysis to develop a broad set of bucket nodes\textsuperscript{20} based on the research questions, Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts, and ‘emerging’ notions from the participants’ narratives (see Appendix 11). Furthermore, to reconstruct the disaggregated data into meaningful and re-contextualized texts, I used cognitive and concept maps to explore the linkages and relationships between the clusters of phenomena.

4.4.3. Analytical Strategies: Making Sense of the Data

As stated earlier, data analysis and interpretation are ongoing research processes that are not limited to a distinct stage; rather, they are woven into all aspects of the research methodology (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). For instance, during the research interviews, I engaged actively in varying degrees of data analysis and interpretation as I co-constructed the participants’ stories through what I asked, emphasized, and made visible (Pamphilon, 1999). At the same time, the participants also actively engaged in analyzing and interpreting their positions within our interviewer-interviewee relationships to construct their narratives and identities accordingly (Baker, 2002).

In addition to the interview process, qualitative researchers spend a significant amount of time in textual analysis and interpretation. In this study, I used an interpretive approach that drew on narrative and discourse analysis to interrogate and interpret the research data. Both approaches recognize that textual analysis is inevitably selective, and the knowledge we generate is partial, contingent and fluid (Fairclough, 2003; Riessman, 1993). A narrative may be oral or written; it may be a short story about a specific event or person, or it may be an extensive life story (Chase, 2008). The use of narrative analysis is congruent with the theoretical orientation of this study because storytelling is not merely a presentation of facts but a “narrative practice” in which the narrators draw on their experiences and tell stories under the auspices of regulating institutions and social norms (J. F. Gubrium & Holstein, 1998, p. 164). In the context of this study, most of the young men engaged in storytelling during individual interviews or dyad follow-up interviews. I drew on narrative analysis to explore the young men’s verbal action, that is, how they used storytelling to make sense of their experience, construct their social identities and present their social ‘self’ (Chase, 2008).

\textsuperscript{20} A bucket node represents a broad area of interests in the study (Tagg, 2002).
Similarly, discourse analysis recognizes that language (semiosis), as an integral part of the social realm, constitutes social practices through three dialectical ways: action (ways of acting); representation (ways of representing); and identification (ways of being) (Fairclough, 2003). In other words, discourse as acts of representation influences our subjectivity, actions, and social relations, which in turn (re)produce representations or discourse. Discourse analysis enables us to explicate the *performative* performance of narratives and texts (Atkinson & Delamont, 2008).

As researchers, we do not have access to the participants’ actual or lived experience; we only have access to their interpretations and representations of their experience and their social worlds. As such, narration is an object of analysis. Thus, during data analysis, I was interested not only in ‘what’ the young men in this study told me, but also ‘why’ they chose to tell me certain stories and not others, and ‘how’ they ordered different events to present congruent stories (Riessman, 1993). I was also interested in using the ‘when’ and ‘where’ questions to explicate the distinct context and patterns of everyday events within and across social settings (Holstein & Gubrium, 2007). These analytical questions allowed me to examine not only individual lives but also the broader social processes that shape the young men’s conditions of existence and influence how they construct their social identities (Andrews, et al., 2004)

I also used the ‘zoom model’ to guide my data analysis. The zoom model was introduced by Barbara Pamphilon (1999), who uses the metaphor of a zoom lens from the field of photography to illustrate the importance of engaging in multiple levels of analysis. This model enabled me to see the intricate and intrinsic connections between agency and structure by focusing on four levels of data analysis: (1) at the macro-zoom level, I looked for how the young men drew on the dominant discourse, and how their narration related to the societal culture and their habitus; this fits with what Holstein and Gubrium (2007) calls an analysis of the broad social context of the participants’ experience from the top; (2) at the meso-zoom level, I focused on each young man’s narrative process; for example, what he chose to keep or leave out in the story, or how he engaged in ‘Othering’; (3) at the micro-zoom level, I paid attention to the young men’s oral accounts, body language, and emotionality; and (4) at the interactional-zoom level, I looked at the transactional relationships that took place during the research process, and the context that emerged from the in situ interactions (Holstein & Gubrium, 2007).
4.4.4. Analyzing the Resonant Texts

In this study, 9 of the 24 young men created a resonant text which they brought to the follow-up interviews. Their resonant texts included: songs accompanied by guitar (n=2), drawings (n=2), poems (n=3), and short reflections (n=2). Most of these resonant texts were augmented by stories or perspectives narrated by the young men who created them. The additional narratives became ‘tangible’ or ‘conventional’ data that enabled me to make sense of the young men’s resonant texts and further understand their perspectives about ‘being guys’. However, the resonant texts, especially those in the form of songs, drawings, and poetry, were irreducible to the augmenting narratives because they were context-specific and time-specific expressions of the young men.

In analyzing the resonant texts, I adhered to the ontological and epistemological assumptions outlined at the beginning of this chapter, that is, our knowledge about the world is partial, fallible, and contextual. I treated all resonant texts as one of the many mediums of expression by the young men. These texts were not treated as more or less true about the young men realities; neither were they considered to be more or less authentic. As Patricia Leavy (2009) emphasizes, “Visual imagery does not represent a window onto the world, but rather a created perspective” (p.215). However, I recognize that visual images and poetry may evoke specific types of emotional and visceral responses from their readers or viewers, which interview transcripts and my writing are not able to evoke. Thus, they may open up a space of dialogue that blurs the boundaries among researchers, participants, and the audience as they engage in reading, questioning, and re-reading the ‘text’ (Finley, 2008).

Furthermore, I frequently referred to the research questions as I analyzed, interpreted, and integrated the resonant texts into this dissertation. I also used a number of pragmatic strategies: (1) I reviewed all the resonant texts independent of the narrations of the young men and made notes of my own cognitive and visceral responses; (2) I reviewed the resonant texts against the field notes I had taken at the time the young men presented them; (3) I reviewed the resonant texts against the young men’s own narrations about them; and (4) I constructed memos that listed the linkages between the resonant texts and themes identified in the analysis of the interview data. By moving back and forth between the resonant texts and the interview data, I was able to
identify hybrid spaces in the dissertation where the two types of data spoke together. However, it is important to note that the way in which I used the resonant texts throughout the different chapters is contextual to the specific construction of this dissertation. The way I use the same resonant texts in future knowledge translation and exchange practices will likely be different.

4.4.5. Writing and Re-presenting Others

Writing is an integral component of research. It is through writing that we recontextualize and reaggregate the processed data into the meaningful and coherent phenomena being studied (Stake, 1995; Tesch, 1990). Since language functions as a force to constitute meaning and construct a picture of social reality, researchers are inevitably narrators who “develop their own voice(s) as they construct others’ voices and realities” (Chase, 2008, p. 66). Furthermore, writing is not an independent act of individuality. Writing is an embodied act and a product of our primary and secondary habitus. It is shaped not only by our subjectivity and social identities but also by the forces within our profession and ethical fields, whereby our writing is entered into systems of competition and converted into symbolic capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Thus, regardless of our social positions in relation to the participants or within our professional field, in ‘speaking for’ others and having the final ‘voice’ in the act of writing, we are implicated in the (re)production or transformation of the structure of material, cultural and ideological power. Our writing has the potential to contribute to social in/justice (Griffin, 1996; Lather, 1991).

In writing this dissertation, I was faced with a number of challenges and dilemmas. First, the practice of reflexivity was not easily achieved. While I was committed to interrogate the influence of my own subjectivity on how I wrote about the young men, I had to be mindful and avoid falling into the trap of practicing navel-gazing reflexivity that could lead to endless deconstruction-of-deconstruction; I had to acknowledge that my reflexive practice would always be partial, tentative, and provisional (Finlay, 2002).

Second, although I recognized that my own subjectivity and subjective knowledge could be used creatively as a resource for substantive analysis, the process was complex and challenging (Eakin & Mykhalovskiy, 2003). As Carla Rice (2009) puts it, “When emotion, perception, imagination and other dimensions of the bodily self are the main instruments of data
creation, dilemmas of researchers’ embodied subjectivities are not resolved but become central ethical considerations in research” (p. 246). Thus, reflexivity requires that I interrogate my own subjectivity, including my self-hood and emotions, which are intertwined. However, analyzing or writing about our emotions is not part of the academic habitus (Nilan, 2002). Although I did experience many moments of intense emotion throughout the study, I was at loss about what to do with emotionality in research. I was hesitant to write about emotions in this dissertation for the fear that it would be deemed ‘feminine’ and therefore ‘irrational’, unscientific, and non-rigorous. My own inner tension reflected the hegemony of scientific positivism within the field of public health, and even within the field of social sciences (Campbell, 2002).

Finally, there was the challenge of writing about sensitive issues and representing marginalized individuals and groups who occupy ‘situational’ positions as being both the dominator and the dominated. Since our social identities and locations are multiple and contingent, the boundaries between social actors in any given situation are always precarious and contingent. Within the interview situation, the young men and I actively engaged in making borders that were constantly shifting and re-negotiated based on our interests (in the Bourdieusian sense), intersubjectivity, and assumed roles. As the researcher, I held the power to control the interview situation, but the young men were not passive respondents without agency; they were actively negotiating their boundaries to establish camaraderie or to compete with me or the other young men for power and control (E. Gubrium & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005; Luff, 1999). Thus, there were moments when some of the young men’s stories resonated with me based on what I perceived to be our collective narratives as immigrants and the racialized Other; but there were also moments when I experienced shock, resentment, and anger towards some of their misogynist discourses and struggled to maintain composure and rapport in order to perform my role as a ‘good’ and ‘objective’ researcher.

However, it was in the act of writing ‘differences’ that I found myself faced with the greatest challenge or dilemma in border crossing. As a ‘novice’ researcher, I was under pressure to produce ‘uncharted’ knowledge that could be converted into cultural capital in academia. As a racialized minority immigrant woman of working class background, I was interested in challenging patriarchy, masculine domination, racism, and classism. I found myself caught between a rock and a hard place as I tried to find writing strategies that allowed me to challenge
the masculinist practices among these young men, but at the same time did not perpetuate or reify racist and classist stereotypes of them (Carmody, 2001; Luff, 1999). This tension disposed me towards a kind of silence or censorship that was associated with my fear of reification and negative judgment towards the young men (B. D. Poland & Pederson, 1998).

To address the above challenges and dilemmas in writing about the young men and their lives, I took up Bourdieu’s invitation for social science researchers to put Spinoza’s precept into practice: “Do not deplore, do not laugh, do not hate – understand” (Bourdieu, 1999b, p. 1). To do so, I turned to notion of the dialogism, which emphasizes the potential of human transformation and the interconnectedness of human agents (Cornish, 2004; A. Frank, 2005). Arthur Frank, following Bakhtin, emphasizes that no one person’s voice exists independent of other voices; each voice “resists and contests some voices, and embraces others” (A. Frank, 2005, p. 968). In the context of research, ‘dialogue’ provides opportunities for both the young men and me to reflect on our own characterization and stories, and the voices of others. This process contributes to the new understanding of the ‘self’, which is “never final but always open to alternative interpretations in the future” (Sullivan & McCarthy, 2004, p. 296). Thus, as Arthur Frank (2005) emphasizes, I must not unreflexively ‘finalize’ my participants by claiming that my writing represents ‘all’ that they are and that there is nothing else in them or nothing more to say about them. To be an ethical researcher-author, following Bakhtin, I am answerable and responsible to the need of the participants to grow in the compassionate consciousness of another. In other words, both the young men in this study and I “need the other to give a value to the self” (Sullivan & McCarthy, 2005, p. 626, italic in original).

Thus, in this dissertation I presented the young men’s voices alongside multiple levels of critical analysis and theorizing in order to avoid reifying and marginalizing them as the ‘Other’ (McRobbie, 2002; Vitellome, 2004). The use of the dialogical approach and critical analysis enabled me to embrace ambiguity and dilemmatic choices in constructing my research relationships with the young men, not to treat the dilemmas as problems to be avoided, but as a polyphony, as Bahktin puts it, whereby the presence of the young men’s conflicting voices and tones functioned to guide me against “a monological imposition on the other” (Sullivan & McCarthy, 2004, p. 300).
4.4.6. Rigor and Trustworthiness

As stated earlier, this study used a qualitative, interpretive approach to explore the perspectives, lived experiences, and the gendered practices of young men from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Toronto. Clive Seale (2004) identifies three key areas to evaluate the quality of qualitative research: the relevancy of the research topic; the plausibility of the claims we make; and evidence to support our research claims. As qualitative interpretive research emphasizes the multiple ways of knowing, the depth and richness of data rather than the breadth of data as preferred in quantitative methods, appraisal of qualitative research is concerned with the reliability and trustworthiness rather than validity of the results (J. F. Gubrium & Holstein, 2000; Hammersley, 1995; Silverman, 2005).

In developing and conducting this study, I used the assessment criteria developed by David Silverman (2006) to enhance my ability to establish credibility and trustworthiness of this study, including: (1) the appropriateness of the method in relation to the research questions; (2) its clear connection to an existing body of theory; (3) its clear account of criteria used for sampling, data collection, and analysis; (4) the quality and extent of systematic record keeping; (5) explicit demonstration of how themes, concepts and categories are derived in data analysis and interpretation; and (6) clear distinction between the data and their interpretation.

Furthermore, in writing this dissertation, I recognized that this writing would never be complete or final; its completeness would transpire only through its encounters with the readers. As such, my accountability as a researcher was to adopt the substantive approach to provide the contexts of the different aspects of the study to enhance the readers’ capacity to dialogue with the multiple voices and come to their own conclusion about the realities of the young men’s realities (Eakin & Mykhalovskiy, 2003).

4.5. Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the methodological approach and the research processes of this study. I have identified the strengths and possibilities in using a combination of qualitative methods (individual and group interviews, place-based go-along method) in exploring social
phenomena at specific settings. I have also outlined some of the challenges, dilemmas, and critical issues in studying and writing about young men in marginalized communities.

In conclusion, I draw on Laurel Richardson’s notions of ‘crystallization’ and ‘becoming’ to summarize the methodological approach of this study (L. Richardson & St. Pierre, 2008):

... the central imaginary for “validity” for postmodernist texts is not the triangle—a rigid, fixed, two-dimensionnal object. Rather, the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substance, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, and are altered, but they are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, and arrays casting off in different direction. What we see depends on our angle of repose—not triangulation but rather crystallization. (p. 478)
Chapter 5
The Guys from Macee Grove, Troikaville, and Other Neighbourhoods

5. Introduction

This chapter provides a set of brief descriptions of the young men who took part in this study. The descriptions are organized in two ways: (1) in a set of tables to facilitate a quick comparison of selected social demographic and other attributes of the participants; and (2) through a short description of each participant. The names of the young men have been changed to ensure their anonymity. Furthermore, their family compositions have been slightly altered to further protect their identities. The participants are grouped according to the neighbourhoods where they lived or ‘hung out’.

Tables 5.1 to 5.4 report on the results of the pre-interview surveys (Appendix 3) completed by the young men in this study. They contain the social demographics (age, place of birth, self-identified ethnicity, self-identified faith) and selected attributes that describe the participants’ class backgrounds (education, employment, housing types, parent’s education and occupations), career aspiration, sexual practices, and tastes / consumption practices.

5.1. Social Demographics and Other Attributes of Participants (Tables 5.1 to 5.4)

A total of 24 young men took part in this study. Their ages ranged from 16 to 24 (median age = 19). Over two-thirds of the young men were born in Canada (n = 17) while almost one-third of them were born outside of Canada (n = 7). The self-identified ethnicities of the young men include: Jamaican (n = 6), African (n = 3), East Indian/South Asian (n = 2), White/Caucasian (n = 4), Columbian (n = 1), Korean (n = 1), First Nations (n = 1), Moroccan (n = 1), and bi-cultural/bi-racial (n = 5; Trinidad-Jamaica, White-Filipino, Irish-Scottish-East Indian, Colombian-Irish, Filipino-Chinese).

Based on the educational levels, occupations, and housing types of the young men’s parents, I have loosely categorized the young men into the middle-class (n = 6) and working-

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21 Following Bourdieu, I acknowledge that class is a socially constructed and contested concept; how the boundaries of specific classes are defined is itself a stake in symbolic struggles within academia (Crossley, 2008). Thus, this study defines ‘class’ loosely based on the volume and composition of economic and cultural capital held by the participants and their parents, that is, the education levels and occupations of the young men’s parents, and their housing types.
class (n = 18). Four of the six middle-class young men lived independently away from home, either because they were attending universities or they were working downtown; one lived in shelters; and one split his time between his mother and his father who were divorced. The living arrangements of the 18 working-class young men included: living in social housing with their mother (n = 5); living in social housing with both their mother and father (n = 4); living with extended family members or siblings (n = 3); living in a shelter or on the street (n = 4); and living independently (n = 2).

In terms of sexual practices, the age of first sexual activity among the working class young men ranged from 12 to 16 (median age = 13.5), and 12 to 18 among the middle-class young men (median age = 16). The majority of the young men reported having more than one sexual partner in the last 12 months: five or more sexual partners (n = 9), two to four sexual partners (n = 13), and one sexual partner (n = 2). For most of the young men, the place of their first sexual experience was either in their own home or in their partner’s home, with the exception of three young men who reported that they had their first sexual experience in the locker (storage) room of an apartment building, a laundry room, or a strip club.

As Bourdieu (1984) suggests, our tastes and consumption practices are shaped by our conditions of existence associated with our social positions. This was reflected in the young men’s choice of favourite restaurants and taste in music. Two of the young men with no fixed address named Hooters as their favourite restaurant. Whereas the young men from the ’hoods identified fast food franchises (McDonalds, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken) or buffets as their favourite restaurants, the middle-class young men identified casual dining (East Side Mario, Vegetarian Haven, El Sol, Korean Grill) as their favourite. Furthermore, the results of the pre-interview surveys show that the young men’s practices were shaped not only by their class habituses but also by their ethnoracial habituses. Most the young men of colour (Black, African, and Asian) in this study identified Black (hip-pop or rhythms and blues) artists as their favourite singers, whereas almost all the young White men and the bi-racial White-Asian young men identified White (hard rock, punk, or metal) artists as their favourite.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Patrick</th>
<th>Tyler</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
<th>Mawuli</th>
<th>Shawn</th>
<th>Jeremiah</th>
<th>Brandon</th>
<th>Zahid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth place</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (self-identified)</td>
<td>Trinidad Jamaican</td>
<td>Jamaican</td>
<td>Jamaican</td>
<td>African</td>
<td>Jamaican</td>
<td>Jamaican</td>
<td>Jamaican</td>
<td>East Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith/religion (self-identified)</td>
<td>7-Day Adventist</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing of Family</td>
<td>Rent (MG)</td>
<td>Owned apartment</td>
<td>Rent (MG)</td>
<td>Rent (MG)</td>
<td>Recently owned house</td>
<td>Rent (MG)</td>
<td>Rent (MG)</td>
<td>Owned Apartment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults at home</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>Uncle &amp; Aunt</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Mother+Father</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Mother+Fathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent(s) - education</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>- College</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent(s) - occupation</td>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Father -self employed</td>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>- Retail</td>
<td>- Factory</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed HS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Summer job</td>
<td>Summer job</td>
<td>Summer job</td>
<td>Summer job</td>
<td>Summer job</td>
<td>Summer job</td>
<td>Summer job</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career goal</td>
<td>Plumber</td>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>Own business</td>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>Auto-mechani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of 1st sex.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place – 1st sex</td>
<td>Locker room</td>
<td>Laundry room</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>My bedroom</td>
<td>My house</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>Her house</td>
<td>Her house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of sex partner(s)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current # steady sex partner(s)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current # casual sex partner(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex partner(s) last 12 months</td>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>2 to 4</td>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>2 to 4</td>
<td>2 to 4</td>
<td>5 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourite Restaurant</td>
<td>McDonalds</td>
<td>McDonalds</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>McDonalds</td>
<td>Burger King</td>
<td>Swiss Chalet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourite Singer</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>Lil Wayne</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Michael Jackson</td>
<td>Avant, JOE</td>
<td>NAS</td>
<td>Ne-Yo</td>
<td>D-Block</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(-) indicates that participant did not provide an answer.
**Table 5.2 Demographics and Other Attributes of Participants at Troikaville – “The guys with no fixed address”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Kyle</th>
<th>Marcus</th>
<th>Nadir</th>
<th>David</th>
<th>Paul</th>
<th>Jamie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth place</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (self-identified)</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>First Nations</td>
<td>Moroccan</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Brown (White-Filipino)</td>
<td>Irish-Scottish-East Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith/religion (self-identified)</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>Agnostic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing of Family</td>
<td>Owned house</td>
<td>On Reserve</td>
<td>Not in Canada</td>
<td>Rented (social housing)</td>
<td>Rented (social housing)</td>
<td>Rented (social housing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>No fixed address</td>
<td>No fixed address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults at home</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Mother+Father</td>
<td>Mother+Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent(s) - education</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Gd. 10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>F-High school M-Gd.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent(s) - occupation</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Shipping/receiving</td>
<td>Supervisor-factory</td>
<td>Construction, secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed HS</td>
<td>No - GED</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career goal</td>
<td>Veterinarian</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Model / Porn Star</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>Musician</td>
<td>Recording artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of 1st sex.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place – 1st sex</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Girl’s house</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of sex partner(s)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current # steady sex partner(s)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current # casual sex partner(s)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex partner(s) last 12 months</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourite Restaurant</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Hooters</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>All you can eat</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Hooters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourite Singer</td>
<td>Kurt Coban</td>
<td>Kurt Coban</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Systems of a Down</td>
<td>Tim Armstrong</td>
<td>Henry Rollins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5.3 Demographics and Other Attributes of Participants at Troikaville - Cassandra Youth Drop-In Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jason</th>
<th>Dolan</th>
<th>Joseph</th>
<th>Danny</th>
<th>Yusuf</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Birth place</strong></td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Colombian-Irish</td>
<td>African</td>
<td>Jamaican</td>
<td>East African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faith/religion</strong></td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>Five Percent(^1)</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing of Family</strong></td>
<td>Owned House</td>
<td>Rental + Owned House</td>
<td>Rental (Social Housing)</td>
<td>Rental (Social Housing)</td>
<td>Rental (Social Housing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adults at home</strong></td>
<td>N/A – lives on his own</td>
<td>2 homes – shared custody</td>
<td>Mother &amp; Step-father</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Mother + Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent(s) - education</strong></td>
<td>Mother - University</td>
<td>Both parents: College</td>
<td>Step-Father: attending college</td>
<td>Gd. 10/11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent(s) - occupation</strong></td>
<td>Mother - Health practitioner</td>
<td>F-Art Director; M-Business</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Father- Carpenter</td>
<td>Mother: nurse Father: driving instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completed HS</strong></td>
<td>Yes, university</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career goal</strong></td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mechanics or youth worker</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>Own business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age of 1(^{st}) sex.</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place – 1(^{st}) sex</strong></td>
<td>Friend’s house</td>
<td>My house</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender of sex partner(s)</strong></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current # steady sex partner(s)</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current # casual sex partner(s)</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex partner(s) last 12 months</strong></td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favourite Restaurant</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Local Asian</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Local BBQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favourite Singer</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Jeru the Damaja</td>
<td>Sizzla</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Sizzla, Akon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) “The doctrine holds that 85% of the people are presumed to be chumps, spending their life deluded and ripped off. 10% do the ripping off, are in the scams of entertainment, sports, politics, religion, business, etc., and live as fat cats but in sin. Only 5% have the knowledge and moral standing to be the world’s teachers (Five Percent., 1999-2009).”
Table 5.4 Demographics of Participants at Troikaville - The Guys in Off-Campus and Other Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Anthony</th>
<th>Colin</th>
<th>Mihir</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Andreo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth place</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>City 1 hr. from Toronto</td>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>The Philippines</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (self-identified)</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>South Asian</td>
<td>Filipino-Chinese</td>
<td>Colombian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith/religion (self-identified)</td>
<td>Non-practicing Catholic</td>
<td>Manifestation</td>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults at home</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>Older sisters</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing of Family</td>
<td>Owned House</td>
<td>Owned House</td>
<td>Owned House</td>
<td>Rent apartment</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Owned Condo</td>
<td>Student Housing</td>
<td>Student Housing</td>
<td>Rent – low income</td>
<td>Student Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent(s) - education</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent(s) - occupation</td>
<td>Father - Doctor; Mother- accountant</td>
<td>Father - Engineer; Mother-health Practitioner</td>
<td>Father – International Designer</td>
<td>Father-unemployed</td>
<td>Father – sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother - home</td>
<td>Mother - secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed HS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, in university</td>
<td>Yes, in university</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, in college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career goal</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Auto-mechanics</td>
<td>Marketing: sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of 1st sex.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place – 1st sex</td>
<td>Strip club</td>
<td>My house</td>
<td>Her house</td>
<td>Her place</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of sex partner(s)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M and F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current # steady sex partner(s)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current # casual sex partner(s)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex partner(s) last 12 months</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourite Restaurant</td>
<td>Korean Grill</td>
<td>Vegetarian Haven, El Sol</td>
<td>East Side Mario</td>
<td>KFC</td>
<td>Chinese, Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourite Singer</td>
<td>Jello Biafra</td>
<td>Hillary Duff</td>
<td>Usher</td>
<td>Hip Hop</td>
<td>Maroon Five</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These 4 participants lived independently away from their parents or families.
5.2. Participants from Macee Grove

A total of eight young men from Macee Grove and Macee Grove Priority Investment Neighbourhood (MG-PIN) took part in this study. They all self identified to be heterosexual. Seven of these young men ‘hung out’ at the Macee Grove Community Centre and the courts within the housing project every day. They grew up together and most of them attended the same primary school and middle school, but they attended different high schools. Interestingly, during their individual interviews and neighbourhood walks in pairs, they all named similar games and recreational activities that they took part in while they were growing up in Macee Grove: chilling at different courts, neighbourhood barbeques, house parties, afterschool programs and weekend camps organized by a Christian charitable organization, snack programs at school, basketball and baseball games inside Macee Grove, and so on. One of the young men (Zahid) used to hang out at Macee Grove to play basketball at the community centre. However, at the time of the interview, he had to keep himself out of Macee Grove for fear of gang related retaliation.

5.2.1. Patrick

Patrick was 18, born in Toronto, and self-identified as Trinidad-Jamaican. He wore his hair short and always looked well groomed. He came across as polite, cheerful and confident. He had lived at Macee Grove all his life. His family belonged to a Christian evangelical church. Among the entire group of young men, Patrick was the only who had completed high school. He lives with his mother, and a young sister. His older brother was in jail for robbery. Patrick went to a high school outside of the MG-PIN. His memories of fun times growing up at Macee Grove include the after school programs organized by a Christian charitable organization, house parties, sports, and just hanging out with the guys. At the time of the interview, he did not want to have any steady sexual relationship. For him, establishing a career was the most important thing in his life. His aspiration was to become a plumber and he was seeking an apprenticeship placement.

5.2.2. Tyler

Tyler was 20, born in Toronto and self identified as Jamaican. He wore his shoulder length hair in braids under his baseball cap. He came across as athletic, outgoing, and open in sharing his ideas. He grew up living with his grandparents on a main street about five minutes away from Macee Grove. His mother and his four siblings used to live in another low-income neighbourhood west of the MG-PIN, but the family had moved to Bloomfield, a new suburb
about 20 kilometers north of Toronto. He usually visited them on the weekend. When he was 12, his father was deported. His two stepsisters, with whom he was on good terms, remained in Toronto. His memories of fun included being carefree, having few responsibilities or worries, hanging out with friends and playing sports at the courts. He had not completed high school. He aspired to become an actor but felt that a high school education would not contribute to his life goals. For him, sexual and intimate relationships were important; he stated that he was someone who could not live without sex.

5.2.3. Joshua

Joshua was 19, born in Toronto and self-identified as Jamaican. He was slim, small built, quiet and reserved, but he cracked a joke every so often to tease his friends. He wore his hair in braids; his dark baggy pants and oversize shirt made him look even smaller. His mother had moved away to pursue a career in another city; Joshua was her only child. His father had six other children from his previous and current marriage. After his father remarried, Joshua moved to Macee Grove to live with his uncle and aunt. He shared that he felt more accepted at Macee Grove than at his father’s neighbourhood. He spent most of his time hanging out at the community centre. He had not completed high school. He lost his course credits for the entire semester when he got expelled from school just before school ended for something he did not want to talk about. However, he intended to go to another school to complete his final four high school credits. He aspired to go to Alberta to find a job in construction. Like Patrick, Joshua considered getting into a trade and finding a decent paying job as his highest priority.

5.2.4. Mawuli

Mawuli was 20, born in Kenya; he immigrated to Canada with his family at age four. He was average size and wore his hair short. He had a sad look on his face and came across as slightly depressed. Although he ‘hung out’ with the rest of the guys, he did not totally fit in. He had two younger sisters and a younger brother at home. His older siblings immigrated to Canada a few years ago, but they lived on their own. When he was seven, his father left the family; he lived with another woman, with whom he had more children. Mawuli resented his father for abandoning them and refused to communicate with him. He recognized that his mother had to work very hard doing shift work to “put food in the fridge”. He did well at school until Grade 7 at which point he started to skip classes to hang out with friends. He needed eight more credits to
complete high school. He considered himself smart but could not find the motivation to catch up at school. His younger sister had started college. He did not know what he wanted to do in terms of a career.

5.2.5. Shawn

Shawn was 18, born in Toronto, and self-identified as Jamaican. He wore his hair short and sculpted in a fashionable way. He was athletic, outgoing, confident, and popular among his guy friends and with young women. He had a carefree attitude, not yielding to every social code among his peers. He lived with his mother and two younger sisters. His parents had an on-and-off relationship for years and finally they broke up when he was in Grade 5. Since his father lived in Toronto, they still communicate with each other but to Shawn, his mother was the only “hero” in his life. He recalled how hard his mother struggled, between going to work, attending school, and picking the children up from day care. Shawn’s mother was an entrepreneur. Recognizing that there was no corner store in Macee Grove but that the service needs were there, she saved to purchase a freezer, bought popsicles, candies, juices, and pop in bulk, and started an ‘unofficial’ corner store at home, which was operated by Shawn and later by his younger sisters. Although her home-based corner store did not make the family rich, it had provided spending money for her children and inspired Shawn to become an entrepreneur. At age 18, Shawn owned an old car, and sold shirts, track pants, candies, and other popular items out of it at Macee Grove. He had not finished high school; his dream was to open his own clothing store. A few months prior to our interviews, Shawn and his family had moved to Chestnut Hill. His mother who now worked in the health care sector had purchased a house there, but Shawn returned to Macee Grove almost everyday, working at the community centre and hanging out with his friends. For him, Macee Grove was the place where he felt a sense of belonging.

5.2.6. Jeremiah

Jeremiah was 18, born in Jamaica and immigrated with his family to Canada when he was 4. He was tall, athletic, well groomed, polite, and focused. He lived with his parents and two younger brothers in Macee Grove. He identified himself as Jamaican and Christian. He did not attend church regularly but whenever there was a shooting in Macee Grove, he would go to church to pray for the families involved and to see how he could help. Like the other guys in his tight circle, his fond memories of growing up at Macee Grove include chilling with friends in the
courts, going to overnight camps away from Toronto, and playing sports. When he was in primary school, he played hockey and did very well, but he stopped playing after Grade 3 because the equipment was too expensive. He changed to play basketball instead, as explained in his own words, “Because all you need is a ball.” Jeremiah spoke fondly of his grandparents who were living in Jamaica. His family managed to visit the grandparents every few years. His face lit up with a big smile when he described all the food his grandma prepared for them and the funny stories they told of his early childhood. He needed one more credit to graduate from high school and he intended to go to college to pick up a trade. For him, establishing a career was the most important goal at this point of his life.

5.2.7. Brandon

Brandon was 18, born in Toronto, and self-identified as Jamaican. He was tall, cheerful and had a baby-face. He wore his hair in braids. Unlike the other guys, he did not wear any sports jerseys. Instead he wore ordinary oversized T-shirts and baggy jeans. He did not look athletic, but I learned that he was one of the best basketball players at Macee Grove, and I saw many young women flirting with him at the community centre. He lived with his mother, two younger sisters and a younger brother. He had an older brother who was in jail. He shared that his mother had worked hard to bail his brother out but he often ended up in jail again. Brandon was determined to keep out of trouble because he did not want to hurt his mother. He spoke fondly of her; she had a reputation of being humorous, open minded, and cool among his friends. He had not completed his high school and he did not have any career aspirations. At the time of the interview, he just wanted to ‘be’.

5.2.8. Zahid

Zahid was 16, born in Indian and immigrated to Canada with his family when he was 4. He was slim, small built and came across as friendly and polite. He lived with his parents, an older sister, and three younger brothers in a high-rise apartment a few minutes away from Macee Grove. When he was younger, he ‘hung out’ at the Macee Grove community centre to play basketball, but now he ‘hung out’ in other social housing projects and low-income neighbourhoods further north and west of Macee Grove. His parents did not speak much English and when Zahid first started school, he could not speak English either. He recalled being called “Paki” and beaten by other boys frequently throughout primary school. The bullying stopped when he befriended
another immigrant youth from Somalia and the two of them started to fight back physically. Zahid did not get along with his father who used corporal punishment on his sons. He ran away from home many times and got involved with street gangs. He had been in and out of juvenile jails, where he had consolidated his relationships with different youth gangs. We met downtown for all the interviews because he could not show his face in Macee Grove, as he put in his own words, “If I got on the Florence Drive bus, someone would shoot me.”

5.3. Participants from Troikaville

A total of sixteen young men at Troikaville took part in this study. All of them were recruited through the posting of flyers on lampposts and at community agencies serving youth. The first group of participants consisted of street involved youth; the second group of participants consisted of youth involved at a local community centre; and the remaining youth were individuals living in Troikaville.

5.3.1. The Guys with No Fixed Address

I conducted the first group interview at the St. Vincent Community Centre. A total of nine participants were recruited through flyers posted in Troikaville, but three of the young men who lived in the nearby Jacobson housing project did not show up. The six young men at the group interview identified themselves as guys with no fixed address. The three younger guys (David, Jamie and Paul) came from two other priority investment neighbourhoods in the northwest and west end of Toronto; they knew each other from the street and ‘hung out’ together. Kyle and Marcus met each other in jail and had become drinking buddies. Nadir was a loner who did not know anyone at the group interview.

5.3.1.1. Kyle

Kyle was 24, born in Toronto, and self identified as White and of Christian faith. He was tall, wore his hair short and dressed in a clean T-shirt and jeans. He grew up in a small city about 45 minutes north of Toronto. He lived with his parents and a younger sister. He shared that his parents were wealthy and he was a bit spoiled when he was growing up. He remembered doing fun things like biking, skiing, snowboarding, and going to the cottage with his family. But at 15, he started using drugs and alcohol; he stole money from his parents and others to support his drug habits. His parents tried to help him by enrolling him in private rehabilitation programs but
he dropped out. He was in and out of jail so many times that he did not finish high school. His parents did not want him to return home until his addiction problem was resolved, so he moved to Toronto. He shared that there was a period of three years when he had stayed ‘clean’ from drug use; he passed his General Education Development (GED) tests and was able to hold down a job that paid $17 an hour. But when he started using cocaine and ‘crystal meth’ again, he lost his job, his apartment, and everything else. He spent his time between being in jails, shelters, or on the street. During our 40-minute interview at St. Vincent Park, he drank three cans of beer and during our neighbourhood walk, he stopped at a drop-in centre to snort some “crank” (crystal meth) before we continued. Although he had lived on the street for a while, his command of middle-class mannerism had remained intact; this distinguished him from some of the other street-involved youth with working class habitus and it might explain his remarkable success in ‘panhandling’ at Troikaville.

5.3.1.2. Marcus

Marcus was 23, born in British Columbia and self-identified as First Nations. He was tall, stout and wore his hair long. He came across as a cheerful person. He had five brothers and three sisters. At the age of 6, Marcus and his siblings were all sent to foster care because his parents were struggling with alcohol addiction. In a period of nine years, he and two siblings went through three different foster families of White Christian background. His memory of the first foster home was negative: “The money they got from us, they spent it on themselves… they sent us to mental camp school and treated us like we were slow or something.” The subsequent two sets of foster parents were strict but kind. At age 15, he was allowed to return to the reserve to live with his grandparents. After staying in the reserve for four years, he decided to leave. He wanted to go live with his father on another reserve, but he never got there. When he was travelling through Kelowna, he started using street drugs. At 21, he moved to Red Deer where he met his “baby’s mama” and worked in construction. According to Marcus, their life together started out good, but then they argued and fought a lot. The relationship deteriorated when his partner started doing cocaine and he was drinking heavily. One night, they got into a physical fight; he was charged with assault and sent to jail. When he got out of jail, he worked to save up some money to come to Toronto. During his first twelve months in Toronto, he had spent his time between being in jails, shelters, and on the streets. It was in jail that he met Kyle and they became street buddies. During our first two interviews, Marcus was high on alcohol or drugs, but
one afternoon when I walked pass the drop-in centre along the main stretch of Troikaville, I saw him in the back alley playing a guitar. I went up to see him and found out that he was just released from the hospital after being treated for liver cirrhosis. His mind was clear and we went to a nearby park to do another interview. His aspiration at the time was to stay clear from jails and alcohol because he did not want to die yet; he wanted to travel to the East Coast and then return home to his family in British Columbia.

5.3.1.3. Nadir

Nadir was 23, born in Canada, and self-identified as Canadian. He was tall, tanned and underweight. He was so thin that his eyes were slightly protruding. Throughout the focus group and two follow-up interviews, Nadir seemed to be under the influence of drugs. At times, his eyes kept rolling back and his speech was unclear. His scant and scattered narratives suggested that his parents were from Morocco. He had two younger brothers and a younger sister but he had not seen them for a long time because his parents and siblings had all returned to live in Morocco. Nadir shared that when he was growing up in Toronto, his parents were very busy. His mother was an executive in the fashion business. He spent his childhood feeling very lonely. His aspiration was to be a fashion model. He also claimed to be a sex addict and he spent most of his times at parties.

5.3.1.4. David

David was 18, born in Toronto, and self-identified as White. He was medium height, slim with brown short curly hair. He grew up in Ashdale, one of the 13 priority investment neighbourhoods in northwest Toronto. He lived with his mother and two sisters in a social housing project. When he turned 18, he got into a fight with his mother and was “kicked out”. He came to downtown Toronto and stayed at one of the shelters in Troikaville. He had a girlfriend who lived in the Jacobson social housing project in Troikaville. During the day he spent most of his time hanging out on the street or at his girlfriend’s home. Both he and his girlfriend did drugs including ‘Special K’ (ketamine), ‘E’ (Ecstasy), and acid. They also smoked weed regularly. He had not completed high school. His aspiration was to pass the GED tests and attend university.
5.3.1.5. Jamie

Jamie was 16, born in Toronto and self-identified as multiracial and agonistic. He was slim with a small build. His father was of Irish-Scottish background and his mother was of East Indian background. He used to live with his parents in a social housing project in the Kestrel-Mason area, another priority investment neighbourhood in northwest Toronto. When he was small he witnessed his father being drunk and beating up his mother. It stopped after his father was charged with assault and jailed. Since then, his father had stopped drinking and his parents stayed together. When he was 15, he and his best friend (Paul) went downtown and spent many evenings and nights there. When he turned 16, he left home to stay in Troikaville. They earned money through ‘busking,’ ‘panhandling,’ and playing in a band at local concerts. He met his current girlfriend (Chloe) at a downtown concert. Chloe had run away from a group home and ‘hung out’ with another teenage girl (Elisa). Jamie, Paul, Chloe, and Elisa had made a pact to stay together. At the first individual interview, Jamie shared that his older sister had just died from an alcohol related aspiration; he smoked marijuana and drank alcohol to deal with his stress. Jamie wanted to complete his high school education at one of the downtown alternative schools. He aspired to become a recording artist.

5.3.1.6. Paul

Paul was 16, born in Alberta and self-identified as brown and agnostic. He was medium height, slim and well tanned. His family moved to Ontario when he was 3. His father was White and his mother was Filipino. He had an older brother, an older sister and a younger brother. He also grew up in the Kestrel-Mason neighbourhood. His older brother dropped out of Grade 9 and ended up dealing drugs on the street. Paul used cocaine heavily until his brother was arrested by the police. He did not like his local high school; he found it academically too easy and boring. He and Jamie had been best friends since primary school. When he turned 16, he left home to stay at Troikaville with Jamie. He smoked marijuana, used alcohol, and did street drugs including acid and ecstasy. He intended to finish high school and aspired to be a musician. He did busking on the street and he occasionally sang in a local band with Jamie.
5.3.2. The Guys at the Cassandra Youth Drop-In Centre

The Cassandra Youth Drop-In Centre was located in the north central area of Troikaville. It offered many drop-in programs for young people throughout the year. In the summer, it offered specific leadership programs for youth. Dan, the research assistant, ‘hung out’ with some of the guys at the centre; five of them decided to take part in a small group discussion on the last day of their leadership program. Three of them had another summer job lined up at the CNE the next day and did not take part in the follow-up interviews. Since they met each other at a five-week summer program, their friendship and connections were not strong like those of the young men at Macee Grove, but they were at ease with each other.

5.3.2.1. Jason

Jason was 22, born in Toronto and self-identified as Caucasian. He was tall, slim, soft-spoken, wore his hair short, and dressed tidily. He grew up with two older brothers, and two younger sisters in Grandview, a middle-class neighbourhood in Toronto. His mother did home schooling with the children when they were young. Both of his parents had a university education. His mother was an independent health practitioner and his father worked in the technology field. When he was 12, his parents split up. He and his siblings stayed with their mother. He looked up to his mother for being a woman of strength. At the time of the interview, he had just completed university and moved out to live with one of his older brothers. His aspiration was to become a manager in community services.

5.3.2.2. Dolan

Dolan was 16, born in Toronto and self identified as Columbian-Irish. He was medium height, with brown curly hair. He spoke both English and Spanish at home. His parents had completed college and worked in the business and art fields. His parents had separated and they shared custody of him. Dolan spent half of his time in Troikaville and half of his time at Midfield, another diverse low- to middle-income downtown neighbourhood. He was still in high school. In his pre-discussion survey, he put down “mom” as his heroine, and “who the fuck knows” as his career goal. Dolan did not take part in any individual follow-up interviews.
5.3.2.3. Joseph

Joseph was 17, born in Chad and self-identified as African and Christian. He was medium height, slightly stout, and wore his hair short. He came to Canada with his family when he was seven. He spoke English and French at home. He lived with his mother, his stepfather whom he called ‘Uncle’, and a baby brother in a social housing project in the east end of downtown Toronto. Since he argued with his mother a lot, he spent most of his time sleeping over at his cousins, who lived in another social housing project in the west end of Toronto. Once in awhile he would go home and help take care of his baby brother. He shared that he had a lot of respect for his stepfather who was attending college to improve his career chances. He also appreciated the way his stepfather encouraged him to work hard at school and to stay out of trouble. Joseph had a part-time job since he was 12; he spent a lot of time helping his friends to stay at school. He aspired to go to college to become an auto mechanic or a youth worker. Although he had been in Canada for 10 years, he seemed to be at loss about the cultural expectations on ‘dating’ in Canada.

5.3.2.4. Danny

Danny was 20, born in Toronto and self identified as Jamaican. He was medium height, slim, and wore his hair short. He has lived with his parents and siblings in the Jacobson housing project near St. Vincent Park for the last 10 years. His father did not complete high school and worked as a carpenter. Danny’s aspiration was to become a carpenter like his father. Danny did not take part in any individual follow-up interviews.

5.3.2.5. Yusuf

Yusuf was 20, born in Saudi Arabia, and self-identified as East African and of Islam faith. He was tall, slim and wore his hair short. He immigrated with his family to Canada when he was 4. He spoke English and Arabic at home. He also lived with his parents and siblings at the Jacobson housing project. His mother worked in the health care sector and his father worked as a driver. He aspired to run his own business. Yusuf did not take part in any individual follow-up interviews.
5.3.3. The Guys in Off-Campus and Other Housing

Four other young men were recruited into the study through the posting of flyers in Troikaville. One of them did not want to join the group discussion because he felt too shy to meet anyone in person. I completed three telephone interviews with him based on his request. The other three young men joined the study but could not take part in the group interview due to scheduling conflicts. All these four young men were individuals with no preexisting relationship with anyone else within the study.

5.3.3.1. Anthony

Anthony took part in the study through three telephone interviews. He did not want to do any face-to-face interviews; he stated that he felt too ‘shy’ but he ‘really’ wanted to join the study. He was 19, born in Toronto and self-identified as Korean and Catholic; but he clarified that he was not a practicing Catholic. He grew up living with his parents, an older brother and a younger sister in North Toronto. He came from an affluent family; his father was a lawyer and his mother was an accountant. When he was young, he was tormented at school because of a medical condition and his racial background. He was frequently called ‘Chink’ and teased by other students. He did not have many friends and he had no confidence in asking young women out. While in high school he fantasized about one of his female teachers. After high school, he did not attend university or college; he stated that this was because of his fear of public speaking. He also shared that when he was older, his parents would set him up with a business. At the time of the interview, he worked at a shipping business and lived in a condominium in Troikaville. He had developed different sexual fetishes over the years; he watched a lot of pornography and went to strip clubs for sex. He expressed that he was torn between accepting his sexual practices and feeling abnormal.

5.3.3.2. Colin

Colin was 19, born in a city that was about 110 km west of Toronto, and self-identified as Caucasian. He was medium height, slim, and had short curly light brown hair. He put down ‘manifestation’ as his faith. He was the only self-identified bisexual youth in the study. He was cheerful and enjoyed talking. He grew up living with his parents and a younger sister. The family moved to Pearlbank, a middle-class neighbourhood in the east end of Toronto. Both of his parents had received a university education. His father worked as an engineer and his mother was
a health consultant. He moved to Troikaville because he was attending one of the downtown universities. He visited his parents every weekend and continued to ‘jam’ (make music) with his old friends in his parents’ neighbourhood. They sometimes performed in downtown concerts and earned up to $1000 per night. He started out in a fine arts program but planned to switch to an engineering program instead.

5.3.3.2. Mihir

Mihir was 19, born in Vancouver and self-identified as South Asian and of Islam faith. He was medium height, slim but muscular. He came across as slightly stoic. He grew up living with his parents and a younger sister. His father had a university education and his mother had completed college. When he was young, the family had lived in different cities in Europe and Canada because of his father’s work as a commercial interior designer. His family now lived in Abbey Hill, a city just outside of Toronto. He moved to Troikaville to attend one of the downtown universities. He kept in touch with some of his childhood friends in other cities through the Internet. He shared that he survived the clique culture in high school because he played rugby and other contact sports.

5.3.3.3. Matthew

Matthew was 20, born in the Philippines and self-identified as Filipino-Chinese and Catholic. He immigrated to Canada with his parents and two older sisters when he was 3. He was tall, slim, cheerful, and easygoing. His father had completed university in the Philippines but was underemployed in Canada. His mother was unemployed. Matthew ‘hung out’ at one of the community agency serving East and Southeast Asians in Troikaville. He lived with his two older sisters in a rental apartment in Lamarside, one of the high-density low-income neighbourhoods in the downtown area. He rejected his father for being the ‘bookish’ type. He ‘hung out’ with the older Filipino guys (who were in their 20s) in his ‘hood’ and learned from them. He experimented with street drugs, but decided to quit when he ‘hit bottom’. He fell in love with a Filipino-Chinese young woman whom he met at college preparation classes. They became engaged recently after they found out that she was pregnant. He admired his future father-in-law who was an auto mechanic; he planned to go to college to learn the same trade.
5.3.3.4. **Andreo**

Andreo was 23, born in Colombia and self-identified as Hispanic and Catholic. He was tall, tanned and slim. He grew up living with his parents and seven siblings. He immigrated to Canada with his cousins when he was 16. His family was still in Columbia. He lived on his own in Troikaville. He stated that he enjoyed playing music and sports in high school. His dream was to form a band with his friends and play music in clubs; however, most of his high school friends had moved on to other interests and he now was in touch with only a few of them. He shared that he had one friend who took him to clubs and bars to meet women, but he felt that women often rejected him because of his Columbian background. He was attending college and aspired to be a marketing representative.
6. Introduction

Intimacy between persons does not require knowing the details of each other’s life; it glows in moments of true awareness and exchange. Each intimate exchange has a locale which partakes in the quality of the human encounter. There are as many intimate places as there are occasions when human beings truly connect. What are those places like? They are elusive and personal. They may be etched in the deep recesses of memory and yield intense satisfaction with each recall, but they are not recorded like snapshots in the family album. ... One can no more design such places than one can plan, with any guarantee of success, the occasions of genuine human exchange. (Tuan, 1977, p. 141)

I began this study with the aid of maps, which described the social, economic and health profiles of the residents of different Toronto neighbourhoods (Gournis & Achonu, 2005; Toronto Community Health Profiles Partnership, 2005; United Way of Greater Toronto, 2004). These maps constitute an important tool for analyzing structural relations, resource distribution, and health equity; they are useful for health planning at local and citywide levels. However, they are less adequate in describing the social interactions or lived experiences that take ‘place’ in these neighbourhoods.

This chapter focuses on the places where the young men in this study lived or ‘hung out.’ It draws on the field notes taken during my initial visits to the two chosen neighbourhoods and throughout the data collection period. It also draws upon the narratives of the young men, particularly the stories shared during the go-along neighbourhood walks. Although these young men were recruited from two defined neighbourhoods – Macee Grove and Troikaville (pseudonyms) – their lived experiences were not neatly contained within these two areas.

The chapter begins with a brief description of some relevant concepts on place and health. It then presents a place-based analysis of the young men’s experiences in Macee Grove, Troikaville, and other neighbourhoods. Since the subpopulations within each of these neighbourhoods are quite small, I have replaced the names of all the streets and locations with pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the participants.
Human existence is always located in time/space. Because we are always ‘in’ place (even when we feel out of place), we often take our situatedness for granted (Bourdieu, 1999a). Places are not just spaces with fixed ordinates, stable boundaries, and specific attributes as they are often represented on maps; neither are they physical space randomly distributed in a confined area. Places are “the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at all spatial scales, from the most local level to the most global” (Massey, 1993, p. 153). It is through the notion of place that we organize the world of meaning, including our identity and our sense of belonging (Tuan, 1977).

Similarly, Edward Casey (2001) suggests that self and place are mutually constitutive: “there is no place without self and no self without place” (p. 684, emphasis in original). However, Casey also emphasizes that even though self and place are enmeshed, they are not fused. We are always emplaced, but our bodies, identities, and places are fluid and transformable. The notion of emplacement extends beyond embodiment, or the body-mind integration, to emphasize the relationship of the intertwined “body-mind-environment” (Howes, 2005, p. 7).

Whether we are emplaced in solitude or in active engagement with the world, we are inevitably implicated in making places – sanctuary, home, neighbourhood – through physical constructions, sentimental connections, or symbolic representations. Place-making is an ongoing process that constructs not only places but also “relationships among people in places” (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995, pp. 1, italic in original). In making places, we create social identities and boundaries that promote a sense of belonging for some and exclude others. Thus, a place is “not just locale (setting), but a location in broader systems of material production and distribution, political authority and control, social differentiation and exclusion” (B. Poland, Lehoux, Holmes, & Andrews, 2005, p. 172).

Wilbert M. Gesler (1992) uses the notion of therapeutic landscapes to explore the dialectic relationship between places and healing. He emphasizes that therapeutic landscapes are shaped by human intentions and actions in the context of their physical, social, political and spiritual environments. Therapeutic landscapes are not merely physical places or locales, but also
manifestations of the mind, meanings and symbols, emotions, security, politics, sacredness, and so on (Gesler, 1992, 1998; A. Williams, 1998). People often develop a strong sense of belonging, identity and security through their long-standing and ongoing relationships with specific places; in offering this psychological rootedness, places are transformed into therapeutic landscapes. Furthermore, since places are always accorded with meanings, they are often read and interpreted like a text (A. Williams, 1998).

Leonard D. Baer and Wilbert M. Gesler (2004) caution against the reification of therapeutic landscapes. They argue that some places are simultaneously landscapes of healing and landscapes of despair. Thus, landscapes are not static; they are filled with ambiguity and possibilities. In recent years, many researchers and authors have used the notion of therapeutic landscape to explore issues on healing, illness recovery and beyond; for example: home as an everyday therapeutic landscape in formal and informal homecare (A. Williams, 2002); body, home, community, and nature as landscapes of emotional healing for breast cancer survivors (English, Wilson, & Keller-Olaman, 2008); landscapes of the mind as a framework to explore migration and subjectivities in and of place (Gastaldo, Andrews, & Khanlou, 2004); and transformation of health-denying landscapes to health-affirming landscapes through alternative narratives (A. Willis, 2009).

Within the discussion of emplacement and displacement, the notions of a sense of place and a sense of belonging are pervasive but difficult to define. Some compare it to the five human senses; others define it as a cognitive awareness of a place (DeMiglio & Williams, 2008). Steven Feld (2005) describes the circular relationship between our sensual presence and place: “place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place” (p. 179). He argues that emplacement involves a body-in-place that is fully sensual; we perceive and experience the world through our five senses; we also simultaneously internalize the sounds, sights, smells, tastes and tactile sensations that we experience as bodily knowledge or what Bourdieu (1977) calls everyday body hexis.

Bourdieu’s work is useful in the theorizing of place and place-making. In his essay Site Effect, Bourdieu (1999a) highlights the intricate relationship between physical space and social space. An agent’s “localization” in physical space is determined by her position and the various
forms of capital she possesses in social space; her “profits” of localization – access to health, educational and cultural resources, and her accumulation of symbolic capital in the form or prestige – are determined by the locale or place she occupies (p. 124). Thus, place-making is also about constructing boundaries, distinction and differences to define the insider/outsider, establishing rules for the game of struggles in the different fields and ultimately naturalizing the constructed differences to justify the unequal distribution of power and resources (Bourdieu, 1998).

Finally, as places and landscapes are constantly (re)produced and transformed through interlocking social, economic, political, and spiritual processes (even though these processes often escape notice), the understanding of place requires the use of analytical concepts that enable us to focus and explicate these processes. For the purpose of this study, I draw on the concept of scale in exploring place and place-making.

Scale is an active progenitor of specific social processes. In a literal as much as metaphorical way, scale both contains social activity and at the same time provides an already partitioned geography within which social activity takes place. Scale demarcates the sites of social contest, the object as well as the resolution of contest... It is geographical scale that defines the boundaries and bounds the identities around which control is exerted and contested. (N. Smith, 1993, p. 101)

Thus, scale is useful for examining the production and contestation of physical and symbolic spatial boundaries of places, ranging from local to global, including body, room, home, school, club, park, street corner, community, region, nation, the world, and so on (N. Smith, 1993). Furthermore, since power relations operating through place are not confined to any one single spatial configuration, the concept of scale is useful in explicating how power operates simultaneously at different levels to produce intertwining and varying effects (McDowell, 1999).

6.2. Macee Grove: The Housing Project

Macee Grove is an inner suburb located in one of the 140 neighbourhoods that make up the amalgamated City of Toronto. It is one of the thirteen priority investment neighbourhoods

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22 Neighbourhood boundaries are determined by combining adjacent census tracts to make up a population of at least 7,000 to 10,000 people (City of Toronto, 2009b).

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identified to be in need of *infrastructure investment*\(^{23}\) based on a number socioeconomic and environmental indicators: higher proportion of recent immigrants, visible minorities, low income and sole parent families; and less access to social, health and recreational resources and services (City of Toronto, 2005, 2008). It should be noted that various stakeholders use different scales to define Macee Grove for different purposes. For instance, in the official documents and plans of neighbourhood investment initiatives, Macee Grove is defined by a combination of census tracts and *dissemination areas*\(^{24}\) in close proximity covering numerous suburban blocks that extend over 2400 acres (9.7 sq. km) of land. At this specific scale, the Macee Grove Priority Investment Neighbourhood (MG-PIN) consists of numerous social housing projects managed by the Toronto Community Housing (TCH), pockets of low income high-rise rental properties, and sub-neighbourhoods of single houses with sale prices that range from $300,000 to $1.7 million (The Canadian Real Estate Association, 2009).

However, the local residents define Macee Grove on a very different scale. For them, it consists mainly of the social housing project located in the middle of the priority investment neighbourhood described above. When the media reports on Macee Grove, it also refers only to the housing project where many incidents of gun violence have taken place over the last few years. Within the context of this study, a distinction between the Macee Grove housing project and the entire priority investment neighbourhood (which I refer to as MG-PIN throughout this dissertation) is critical because: (1) the MG-PIN is a ‘virtual’ neighbourhood constructed on paper based on specific bureaucratic formulations, political rationales, and city planning logistics; (2) the eight young men who took part in this study lived and/or ‘hung out’ in the Macee Grove housing project, but they did not consider any of the surrounding areas to be a part of the Macee Grove neighbourhood; and (3) within the MG-PIN, the social demographics of the

\(^{23}\) Community infrastructure refers to a complex system of facilities, services, programs, and social networks that contributes to the quality of life within a defined community. The Family Service Association of Toronto (2004) identifies a six-pronged typology of community infrastructure, “as follows: (1) Quality of physical life; (2) Human development; (3) Services designated for specific populations; (4) Rights and advocacy; (5) Local economy; and (6) Physical environment” (p.3).

\(^{24}\) The ‘dissemination area’ is a unit of geographic measurement used by Statistics Canada to disseminate census data since 2001. It is a “small area composed of one or more neighbouring blocks, with a population of 400 to 700 persons. All of Canada is divided into dissemination areas” (Statistics Canada, 2003, p. 251).
residents living inside Macee Grove differ significantly from those of the residents living outside of the housing projects.  

6.2.1. Macee Grove and the MG-PIN: Two Segregated Worlds

Like many other social housing projects that were built during the 1950s and 1960s, the streets and housing units in Macee Grove were deliberately designed to be self-contained. The entire housing project is separated from other houses in the nearby street by chain-link fences. These fences function not only as a physical barrier but also a symbolic representation of difference. Connections to the world outside of Macee Grove are facilitated by a number of small pathways with distinct artifacts to mark the entrance: the graffiti on the ground (e.g., one says “Welcome to The Grove”), the eye catching metal gates (to outsiders), and the chain-link fences (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2). In other words, Macee Grove is built and organized in a specific pattern to separate its residents from those living outside and to implicitly discourage any integration.

Figure 6.1
Laneway leading into Macee Grove

Figure 6.2
On the other side of the fence of Macee Grove

Immediately beyond the chain-link fences of Macee Grove are streets with large detached homes. Although there is a primary school, a middle school, a community centre, and a

A comparison of demographic characteristics of residents living in MG-PIN and Macee Grove shows that whereas the average annual income of all residents in MG-PIN was $56,000, the average annual income of residents inside Macee Grove was <$15,000. Furthermore, the population of visible minority of the entire MG-PIN was <50%, the proportion of visible minority inside Macee Grove was estimated to be >75%, and the youth population (aged 15-24) within Macee Grove is >50% (City of Toronto, 2009a)
health centre within Macee Grove, the young men in this study shared that the affluent families living on the other side of the fence never enter the housing project; their children attend private (elitist) schools outside of the MG-PIN in north Toronto and these families use community recreational facilities that are further away.

**BRANDON:** They don’t even come to the school and the school is right here.
**MAWULI:** Yeah, they don’t really come outside.
**BRANDON:** And when they see us, they just stare at us.
**JW:** Oh really?
**BRANDON:** Yeah, they think we are going to do something to them so (...)
**MAWULI:** All the time, they see us and if their bikes are outside, then they’d bring the bikes inside (laughing).
**BRANDON:** Yeah they think we are going to steal it or something, but we don’t care.
**JW:** So, how does that make you guys feel growing up here and having to constantly deal with this?
**BRANDON:** It doesn’t really bother me, cause-
**MAWULI:** //We are used to it so.

The social segregation between the residents living inside the Grove and those living outside the ‘fence’ is evident and strong. Their co-existence is grounded in distrust but expressed in civility.

Like a club founded on the active exclusion of undesirable people, the fashionable neighborhood symbolically consecrates its inhabitants by allowing each one to partake of the capital accumulated by the inhabitant as a whole. Likewise, the stigmatized area symbolically degrades its inhabitants, who, in return, symbolically degrade it. (Bourdieu, 1999a, p. 129)

The young men were clearly aware of the social and economic differences between the families within and outside of Macee Grove. Their narratives reflected a strong sense of *them* and *us*, and resentment towards their affluent neighbours’ *demoralizing gaze*. They were also aware that by virtue of their age and socioeconomic status, they were not in a position to change the power dynamics in the neighbourhood. Some of the young men were resigned to the common utterances of ‘we don’t care,’ or ‘that’s the way things are’; other young men resisted by constructing their own set of evaluations on the ‘snobbishness,’ ‘pretention,’ or ‘cowardice’ of their affluent neighbours and resisted constructing their own subjectivity through the lens of the dominant classes (Beverly Skeggs, 2004).

During an individual follow-up interview, I asked Patrick, the only young man from Macee Grove to complete high school, the same question that Zahid had asked me a few days earlier.

**JW:** So what are your thoughts about- why there are so many Black families living in housing projects?
Patrick seemed to be surprised by my question about why so many Black families live in social housing projects. This was likely because the question was a sensitive one that people seldom asked directly except during a political debate. It was a question that was taken up in both racist and anti-racist discourses (Galabuzi, 2006).

Patrick was well aware of the stigma and racist assumptions that were imposed on the residents of Macee Grove and other social housing projects. Not knowing where I stood ideologically, he drew on another dominant discourse – *individual meritocracy* – to explain the racialized pattern of social housing. It is plausible that he perceived it to be suited to the perspectives of a middle-class outsider like myself.

When I pushed him to comment on the structural influences on the housing patterns in Toronto, he focused minimally on the *present*; he shifted between two temporal dimensions: the past and the future, or the old generation and the new generation. His facial expression projected a mix of emotions: frustration, shame, and pride. Sayer (2005) suggests that shame is the most *social* of all human emotions; it is implicated in the process of social ordering whereby individuals react to external judgments and yield to the prevailing norms. In other words, they see and evaluate themselves through the lens of the dominant classes. Shame is evoked when one fails to live up to the values and expectations (social and material) of oneself and others (Bourdieu, 1984).

Patrick’s response reflected the ambiguous social position he occupied as a marginalized young Black man in Canadian society. As Bourdieu (1984) suggests, the subordinated
individuals and groups have only two options: “loyalty to self and the group (always liable to relapse into shame), or the individual effort to assimilate to the dominant ideal” (p. 348). Thus, Patrick could either see no value in the game of the neoliberal moral citizenship and refused to play it, or he could present himself as a self-disciplined, self-motivated, diligent and moral young man. His deservingness of respect premised not only on his individual efforts and merits but also his ability to demonstrate that he was different from those deemed ‘lazy’ and ‘deficient’ within his own community (Byrne, 2003). In playing the game, Patrick would have to misrecognize the symbolic violence imposed on the socially and economically marginalized people. However, during the aforementioned moment of mixed emotions, Patrick asserted his voice of protest and appeal: “Do not judge us now; we will succeed someday.” It is apparent that Patrick refuses to have his characterization and future finalized by an outsider like myself.

6.2.2. Macee Grove: The Physical Landscape

In this subsection, I will provide a brief description of the physical space of Macee Grove based on the young men’s narratives, my field notes and the pictures I took during my initial visits and the go-along walks. This brief description will contextualize the young men’s narratives and illustrate how Macee Grove can simultaneously be a therapeutic landscape and a landscape of despair (Baer & Gesler, 2004). It will also demonstrate how Macee Grove can be read as multiple texts depending on the social positions and the locales occupied by the readers.

During my first visit to Macee Grove, I was taken aback by the amount of bustle and traffic on the streets leading to the housing project – how could children and seniors safely navigate these busy roads? Yet, Macee Grove itself exuded a contrasting calm as the sound of birds dominated the silence. Unlike other social housing projects in Toronto, Macee Grove contains ample green space. Wider streets contain clusters of low-rise apartment buildings, while townhouses line small cul-de-sacs. In the centre of these cul-de-sacs, there is a small parking lot known to residents as the court. Youth use this common area as a playground, while the adults often host barbeques in the evenings and on weekends (see Figure 6.3).

Small laneways create a labyrinth, linking the various courts throughout the neighbourhood, and leading to fields and parkettes that are otherwise inaccessible. The circular
pattern of these laneways and the lack of distinctive landmarks makes navigating Macee Grove a challenge for outsiders such as myself.

Figure 6.3 – A typical ‘court’ at Macee Grove

Compared to other social housing projects I have visited, Macee Grove comes across as being extraordinarily clean. Other than the odd abandoned (or parked) shopping cart (see Figure 6.4), there is no sign of littering or dumping. Instead, there are a few well-tended community gardens. It is obvious that efforts have been made to beautify the area as baskets of flowers hang off the lampposts along the main street, and youth in a local summer employment project have painted the lampposts along the main bus route (see Figure 6.5). ‘Respect’ seems to be a significant theme for the young men at Macee Grove, as I will discuss in Chapter 7.

Figure 6.4 – Shopping cart on lawn

Figure 6.5 – Youth artwork
However, Macee Grove’s pleasant exterior does not accurately represent the substandard living conditions of the housing units. Years of under-maintenance have led to chronic drainage problems and deterioration inside the housing units. The conditions are so bad that housing officials declared the buildings beyond repair (Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, 2007, September 17).

**JEREMIAH:** Like the buildings are old. A couple months back on the other side of The Grove, in one of the buildings, they had the whole bottom floor flooded, so like, they needed new pipes. People lost their homes, all their possessions.

**JW:** That’s awful.

**JEREMIAH:** Every, like everyone is always needing a new kitchen, and that kind of stuff, like the walls are tearing, and the pipes are leaking. So, then they just got fed up, and they don’t like coming in and cleaning and fixing everything, so they are just going to tear it down, basically.

Macee Grove is on the list of the city’s neighbourhood revitalization plan. Similar to the plan for Regent Park and other housing projects, the goal is to demolish the aging housing units and redesign the streets to integrate a mix of housing “to draw in new residents with a wider range of incomes, professions, skills, relationships and backgrounds . . . to improve both the neighbourhood and the opportunities for the people who live there” (Toronto Community Housing, 2007, p. 1).

**6.2.3. Macee Grove: A Landscape of Resiliency**

My visits to Macee Grove mainly took place during the day and in the early evenings. Those were the only periods of time when the local community workers and the young men could meet with me. To my surprise, the community centre, the health centre, a primary school, a middle school, and the TCH office make up the only facilities within Macee Grove.

I was hoping to find a corner store to get a bottle of water or a popsicle, but there wasn't any. **NO CORNER STORE. I could not believe that. My 35 years in Toronto – there were always corner stores, Beckers, Max Milk, Seven-Eleven...** (Field-notes, 26 June 2007, Macee Grove)

Much later, during one of the go-along walks, I learned about the disappearance of corner stores in Macee Grove. One used to be located on Florence Drive, but it went out of business due to frequent robberies. The storeowner was forced out of business; the building was torn down and a local health centre was built in its place. The young men shared this information with me in a
matter-of-fact manner, but for days I could not stop thinking about how these frequent crimes affected the collective identity and psyche of the residents in Macee Grove.

Bourdieu (1999) suggests that nothing demonstrates our collective abandonment of certain groups of people better than the ghettos, which are “fundamentally defined by an absence” of community resources (p. 123). For me, the lack of corner stores was not merely an absence; it was the presence of a social disorder that did not originate in nor was confined to Macee Grove; it reflected the social consequences of increased social and economic disparities that had taken place in Toronto for more than two decades (Ornstein, 2006; United Way of Greater Toronto, 2004).

The community centre seemed to be the heart of activity in Macee Grove, especially for children and young people. In the late afternoons and evenings, young men frequently ‘hung out’ in front of the centre, sitting on the picnic tables, or leaning on a friend’s car. Once in a while, small groups of young women came in and out of the centre; they stopped to chat with the guys, but most of the time the guys ‘hung out’ on their own. In the centre’s front lobby, a big sign advertised: “Freezie: Large 25 cents. Small 10 cents.” This seemed to be one of the solutions to the lack of corner stores inside Macee Grove. On the weekends, the centre held a farmers’ market, and community barbeques took place over the summer. The young men expressed positive sentiment and a sense of community as they talked about these events and activities.

During a go-along neighbourhood walk, Patrick and Tyler revealed that Macee Mall was the big ‘corner store’ for the entire neighbourhood. In actuality, it does not really qualify as being a ‘corner’ store since residents in the east end of Macee Grove would have to travel anywhere between 1.0 to 1.4 kilometer to get there.

**JW:** What about the little kids? Where would they go to get candies and stuff?
**PATRICK:** The mall. That’s the reason the why they have the mall there.
**JW:** But isn’t it pretty scary for the little ones to go to the mall, it’s so far and the traffic (..)
**TYLER:** No, people grow up quick around here.
**JW:** Oh.
**PATRICK:** Like little kids, they can go to the mall by themselves (...)
**TYLER:** They have like their own clique of people that they chill with and they (..)
**PATRICK:** Yeah that’s pretty much all you do. You’re like, find your clique, whatever you do, you do it together (trails off).
It appeared that the meaning we attach to the concepts of age and distance was relative for individuals living inside and outside of Macee Grove. Finding and staying with one’s clique seemed to be a common way of being for children and youth at Macee Grove.

JW: So, it wasn’t a big problem for you guys to go to the mall because you were older or bigger then?
JOSHUA: Yeah, bigger then, and then the next person had a store.
SHAWN: Yeah, like before I had my store, when I was younger, the knife lady had her store.
JOSHUA: She sold fried chicken and stuff.
JW: That’s actually a good idea. When did you start your little store business?
SHAWN: When I was like maybe grade seven, my mom let me start.
JW: And then you do it until?
SHAWN: Yeah, until I was probably like grade eleven. Like I got older, so I kind of gave it to my sister.
JW: Yeah, cause you don’t want to be home all day?
SHAWN: It’s not even that, it’s just like I was making money other places.
JW: Yeah?
SHAWN: So, I was like, I’d let my sister get a little pocket change.

The lack of corner stores within the housing project provides an opportunity for entrepreneurship for some of the local residents. A number of women operate small eateries out of their homes; these small home businesses are only visible and known to the local residents. With the help of his mother, Shawn established a little store at home to sell candy, popsicles, juice and pop. Later on, when Shawn got a part-time job at the recreation centre, his little sister inherited the business. At the time of the interview, he had bought a used car, which he used as a mini-mobile store selling sports shirts and pants to other young men at Macee Grove. He aspires to own his own store one day. Shawn’s business success has made him a popular guy among his peers and young women. His cultural capital of popularity and social capital allowed him to challenge some of the local sexual norms, which I address in Chapter 7.

Thus, despite being a place of social and economic marginality, Macee Grove is also a landscape of creativity and resiliency for many. This resiliency is not limited to entrepreneurship. Despite having limited access to economic and community resources, many children and young people find innovative ways to have fun inside Macee Grove. Near the end of a go-along walk with Patrick and Tyler, we passed the school yard again; several children around seven or eight years old were trying to toboggan down a small hill holding onto a big piece of cardboard. They were laughing with excitement and we heard lots of screaming as a couple of them tumbled off the cardboard.

JW: Oh, so they can do that in the summer.
PATRICK: Yeah they’re just ghetto. (Laughter).
TYLER: //Ghetto tobogganing.
(We paused to watch.)
JW: Do you think it'll work?
PATRICK: These kids, man. (Shaking his head and laughing.)
JW: Well, they are having fun. Oh, whoa, I just hope that they don't get scraped.
TYLER: You learn to walk it off and get back up and do it again; it’s like riding a bike.

The ‘ghetto tobogganing’ on a hot summer day is one of the many ways that children have fun together. During the go-along walks, the young men shared the different ways they had fun. When they were younger, the only outdoor basketball courts in Macee Grove were located in the schoolyards. The school principals often removed the basketball hoops as a disciplinary measure. In response, the children and youth developed alternative solutions such as cutting out the bottom of milk crates and nailing them to trees. At one of these courts, Shawn stopped to show us the trees that they had once used for their makeshift basketball hoops (see Figure 6.6). Interestingly, when we walked by the school, we noticed that the basketball rims had been removed for the summer (see Figures 6.7).

Figure 6.6 – Basketball tree
Figure 6.7 – Basketball hoop still removed

At another court, Shawn pointed out the house he used to live in. His family had recently moved to Chestnut Hill, a fast growing middle-income city 20 kilometers north of Toronto. Shawn explained that he continues to return to Macee Grove almost every day.

SHAWN: When I was growing up, this was the spot, now it is not like that anymore. Like at this time [[around 6 pm]], there would be kids everywhere, we would be playing, like in my yard. Like I lived in that house over there at the end. My yard would be full of kids.
(We walked by and exchanged greetings with an elderly man who was sitting in one of the backyards.)
JW: So, do the elderly people in the community like- talk to you guys?
SHAWN: Yeah, well, like – we knew all of them, like- we could walk by and like, “Hi, how are you doing, Mr. George?” They’d say, “How are you doing? How’s your mom?” Stuff like that.

JW: Do they ever feed you guys?

SHAWN: Yeah if we were hungry, or if they had food to give us, they would. Like now, where I lived now [[Chestnut Hill]], I don’t even know my next-door neighbours. I say “hi” and “bye” to them.

JW: You don’t know your neighbours?

SHAWN: I know them, but I don’t know them, you know. Like here [[in Macee Grove]] I would go over for dinner, they would come over for dinner, I would borrow some sugar. But I wouldn’t go to my next-door neighbour right now [[in Chestnut Hill]] and ask them for sugar. I would just do without it and buy it the next day. (...) It’s not the same. Like here [[in Macee Grove]], you see people outside doing whatever they do, like my next-door neighbour could see me over here, or somebody from this community could see me over here doing something bad, and when I get home my mom would know about it.

JW: Your mom would know? (Laughing). That sounds like a pretty good system for parents.

SHAWN: Like my mom would know, but that would never happen where I am now.

Shawn’s family represents one of the Macee Grove’s ‘success’ stories. When Shawn and his sister were young, their mother was sole parenting. In addition to holding down a job, she attended college. Eventually she got a job as a health care worker and saved enough money to purchase a house in Chestnut Hill. But Shawn had not developed a sense of belonging in Chestnut Hill. His working class and ’hood habitus made him feel out of place in his new neighbourhood; he perceived his middle-class neighbours as fake and pretentious (Beverly Skeggs, 2004).

SHAWN: Like, I’m glad that my mom bought a house and everything, it’s like- it’s a ghetto here, I just come here and when I go home, it makes my whole mind set changes. I meet different people. People that like-have different goals and stuff, so I’m happy I moved, but sometimes something keeps you like – (...) up there is too fake. Like it doesn’t seem real to me. Back here I feel at home. I feel like I don’t fit in over there.

JW: Because your friends?

SHAWN: Yeah, it’s not even my friends, cause I have friends out there. Like I have a lot of friends out there.

JW: Mhmm, so what is different?

SHAWN: It’s more like when I’m up there I feel, like- I think the kids out there treat me like, I’m not going to say god, but they look up to me more. It’s, like, weird, it’s weird to me.

JW: (Laughed.) Yeah?

SHAWN: Like -you know, there’re all those calls from one guy. He wants me to play basketball with him.

JW: Is he about your age?

SHAWN: Yeah, he’s my age. He calls me everyday and he’s like, “Do you want to do something?” I don’t know. I don’t understand. I figured it’d be because of where I’m from, you know. Cause they think that I was-

JW: //A cool guy-

SHAWN: //Yeah, they think- you know, they want to live their life like us for some reason. So coming back here, there’s no one. It’s not that I don’t know if anyone looks up to me but they don’t act like they look up to me. They’re not like, you know, they don’t following me around.
Like maybe they do look up to me, but I wouldn’t know that. But there you can tell it’s like-everyone, everywhere you look.

For Shawn, Macee Grove was a landscape of sentiment and attachment. At Chestnut Hill, his identity as the guy from the ‘ghetto’ had converted into a form of ‘exotic’ capital of ‘coolness’ among other middle-class young Black men. However, his embodied habitus from Macee Grove made him feel displaced; his visceral sense of belonging (Tuan, 1977) brought him back to Macee Grove almost everyday. Following Bourdieu, Jon Cook (2000) argues, “We enjoy what we enjoy not despite class but because it expresses our classed difference from others. The exercise of taste is constantly drawing and redrawing the boundaries between and within classes, it is a continuous and sublimated form of class struggle” (p. 100).

The interests of the middle-class young Black men in the ’hood culture reflect the complexities involved in the struggles of social positioning within the field of masculinity, whereby young men of a racial minority position must simultaneously contend with hegemonic domination based on class differentiation and racialization (R. W. Connell, 2005). For many middle-class young Black men the ’hood culture, popularized through basketball, gangsta rap, and hip-hop music, represents Black authenticity and offers a cool pose that can be converted into cultural capital within the field of youth masculinity. Like the young White men who engage in hip-hop culture without having to give up their Whiteness, middle-class young Black men can adopt the ’hood culture as a lifestyle and a public performance without having to give up their middle-class privileges (Kitwana, 2005).

6.2.4. Macee Grove: A Landscape of Vulnerabilities

Life at the Grove is not always filled with fun and games. Many of the young men spoke of the incidences of gang related violence and shootings inside Macee Grove.

**JW:** So what is special about your neighbourhood?
**BRANDON:** It’s been through a lot. Like, there’s a lot of stuff that happened, like shootings and –
**MAWULI:** //Murders.
**JW:** Oh right, in that court? Like why did that happen?
**BRANDON:** I don’t know. I was just there but I ran. I heard it but like it was scary so I just ran, I made sure that I wasn’t a part of it. I made sure that I got away safely.
**JW:** Were you there?
**MAWULI:** I heard it from my house.
**BRANDON:** Yep, but a lot of people went to jail or yeah, or moved for a lot of reasons.
In addition to gun violence, residents in Macee Grove also experience the collective traumas associated with police raids. Both Brandon and Mawuli recalled one early morning when troops of police arrived and raided houses at one of the courts. They felt angry and frustrated about these raids but also felt a lack of power to do anything about them.

**MAWULI:** At first, like when we were younger, they [[police raids]] were like hard to take cause we were young, but as we grow up, you get more used to it.

**BRANDON:** You just have to be prepared for the worst.

**JW:** Like what?

**BRANDON:** Like anything, like just know that, don’t act like nothing is going to happen to you, cause – (....)

**JW:** So are you guys worried?

**MAWULI:** We don’t always worry but we just have to be cautious.

**BRANDON:** Cause we are young and we are Black. That’s the main target, young Black men.

Brandon and Mawuli were acutely aware that safety and security are not an individual affair. Their collective Black identity operates as a double-edged sword; it gives them a sense of belonging and support, but at the same time it imposes the burden of racial profiling and being stereotyped as ghetto gangsters and criminals.

**BRANDON:** This is the infamous court. A lot of stuff goes down here. I know people, my friends live around here in this court. And when they go inside, they get harassed by the cops, just for going inside.

**JW:** To their own home?

**BRANDON:** Yeah, they are going into their own home and the cops stop them, yeah.

**MAWULI:** And they are like, “Where are you just coming from?”

**JW:** I thought they do community policing so that they get to know the people.

**MAWULI:** The community police are just here to give tickets to us, that is all they do.

For many residents at Macee Grove, their rights to privacy, peace and security within their own homes and neighbourhood are precarious; they are faced with the stressors brought on by the local street violence and the collective trauma associated with the police raids. Furthermore, they must also deal with the aftermath of sensational reporting in the media (Olivo, Cotter, & Bromwich, 2007).

**JW:** What are the challenges of growing up here?

**JEREMIAH:** The challenges growing up around here are like, there’s like all this violence. There’s always shootings sometimes. There’s always some kind of controversy going on so

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26 Racial profiling refers to law enforcement practices in which individuals of subordinated social status associated with race, ethnicity, place of origin, ancestry or religion are subject to heightened scrutiny by the police and law enforcement agents in the forms of stop-and-searches on the street, or customs searches at airports or border crossings (Wortley & Tanner, 2008).
like, making it a lot harder for you to live, cause like every now and then you’ll see your
neighbourhood on the news and some people might think that this is a bad area, but like they
don’t really know the people inside, to really make that judgment.

JW: Mhmm.

JEREMIAH: Then, when you like, when you travel to other areas, they’ll be like, “Oh, where’re
you from?” Like, “Macee Grove.” “Oh you actually live down there? How is it? Isn’t it hard to
survive down there?” Honestly it’s not like that at all.

JW: So then, as an insider, how would you describe Macee Grove?

JEREMIAH: Oh, as an insider, I think it’s, like- one of the best communities there is in Toronto,
cause like- they really care. Like, there might be the little shootings around here, but the
shootings don’t outweigh what people do good for the community. Like, every now and then,
there’s always a community barbecue, they have like sports events for the children. [[...]]
The news only shows what’s bad in the neighbourhood. They don’t show like, “Yea, we have a
community”.

Throughout the interviews, the young men who grew up in Macee Grove referred to the shady
characters, bullies, and criminals as outsiders who came into their neighbourhood to make
trouble. When I asked Brandon what could be done about violence and crime at Macee Grove, he
replied:

We can't really do anything about it, cause these are people that we don’t even know, they
come around, they do their stupidness and then they just leave. They don’t even live around
the area, but they jeopardize our community and then they just go back to wherever they
live. If the police come looking for them and they don’t live around here, they don’t really care.

Unlike their middle-class and upper-middle-class counterparts, the young men in Macee Grove
do not have the economic, social, or political resources to pick and choose where they live.
Macee Grove is not only a place of shelter for them; it is their home. It is their landscape of
belonging through which they construct their identities and sense of rootedness, despite its
imperfections, physical deterioration, and social troubles (Massey, 1994). Furthermore, unlike
the middle-class young Black men who desired to take up the ‘hood culture as masculine capital,
the young men at Macee Grove are actively building a counter-narrative against the racist and
classist discourse that links Blackness to crime (Abdel-Shehid, 2005).

6.3. The Troikaville Neighbourhood

Troikaville is located in the downtown area of the City of Toronto. It consists of two
large city blocks covering 381 acres (1.54 sq. km.) of land. Unlike Macee Grove, it is a highly
mixed neighbourhood with commercial and residential uses. It contains numerous ethnic
enclaves, a stretch of retail fashion and specialty stores, restaurants of diverse prices and tastes, a
variety of community services, a public library, two parks and numerous parkettes, and a range
of housing including: three shelters, five social housing projects, a housing cooperative, privately owned rooming houses, high rise condominiums, townhouses, and detached homes. Over 70% of the housing in Troikaville are rental properties (City of Toronto, 2009b). This may be due to the fact that the ethnic enclaves in Troikaville attract the newly arrived immigrants of similar backgrounds, and Troikaville meets the off-campus housing demands of the three downtown universities. Prices of the privately owned homes ranged from $250,000 to $999,000 (The Canadian Real Estate Association, 2009). Figures 6.8 to 6.11 provide a glimpse of diversity within Troikaville.

Figure 6.8 – Private Rental Properties

Figure 6.9 – New Condominium

Figure 6.10 – Jacobson Housing Project

Figure 6.11 – Graffiti: Local signatures
6.3.1. Troikaville: A Landscape of Circadian Rhythms

Troikaville is a complex and vibrant neighbourhood. Along the main streets, there are restaurants, fashion boutiques, art galleries, and specialty stores. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a detailed description of all the social and cultural aspects of Troikaville. However, its temporal landscape, that is, how the space in Troikaville is perceived and used differently throughout the everyday circadian cycle suggests that places are products of social relations.

To some extent, the term “temporal landscape” is redundant because “all time has a spatial dimension, and all space has a temporal dimension” (R. B. Brown, 2005, p. 454). Since we often take temporality for granted except when there is a discrepancy between our subjective anticipation and objective chances (Bourdieu, 2000), it is useful to highlight the temporal dimension in the way the young men in this study engaged in making places in different neighbourhoods. Furthermore, there are multiple ways to understand the time-space connection. In most societies, time is conceptualized based on the circadian cycle of 24 hours; this is evident when we look at the schedules of international flights around the world. However, the way everyday activities and interactions are organized throughout these 24 hours varies from place to place.

At different times of the day and night, the urban environment is perceived and used differently... its changing rhythms and pulses – now busy, now quiet – and the different people using the space – more women at times, more men at others. (Carmona, Heath, Oc, & Tiesdell, 2003, pp. 193-194)

For the young men with no fixed address, being able to recognize and follow the tempo of the social life in Troikaville is important because their right to occupy public and private space in Troikaville is precarious.

During the day, the diverse mix of commercial and residential use of land in Troikaville opens up different possibilities for these young men to take part in place making. They are ‘clients’ of the drop-in centres; they can hang out, rest, busk, or ask for money on the street. At night when all the businesses are closed, Troikaville turns into a different kind of place with different place-making rules and activities for street-involved people.

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27 The term ‘busk’ means to perform music or entertainment on the street for money (Busk, nd).
JAMIE: It is dirty as hell. You don’t notice it in the day, but then at night you see it, you feel the grit and you know it’s there, and you watch the dust blowers blowing it on. [Um hmm.] And there’s just mad crack heads running around, and there’s just like crazy sketchy street deals going around. Like food, let’s say there are the outreach people and they bring in food and they give it away for free, and then, like, I’ll eat it and I’ll be, like, full, but I will still have some, and I will see some crack head down the street that I know is homeless. I will just be like, “Yo man, have a sandwich.” [[…]] Like, everything gets used on the main stretch, it’s just, like, this crazy whirlwind of people that trade, and just shit falling from the sky sometimes, like, seriously you just don’t know where the shit came from. Like, man this, this is a good example actually, (paused to take a metal box out of his pocket) see this? JW: Oh, what’s that? JAMIE: I am going to be honest with you, it’s a buster for marijuana. It breaks up pot. [[…]] In a store, that grinder specifically, I think I saw it for like $26.99. You want to know where I got that grinder? The main stretch, for five bucks.

The Main Stretch becomes the resting place for many, as Jamie explained, “Shelters are just dangerous. I honestly feel safer sleeping on the street than I do in a shelter, or a group home or anything like that.” For safety and companionship, Jamie lived on the street with his chosen family – his girlfriend, her best friend, and his street brother, Paul. They went everywhere together and look out for each other. Since the shelter system made it impossible for them to stay together as a chosen family28, they slept on the Main Stretch. “We sleep right on the side of the Main Stretch.” Jamie shared, “The thing is we get less shit from the police when we sleep right on the sidewalk than we do in a park.”

Although the young men are able to engage more freely in street activities and occupy the public space without feeling out-of-place at night, they also encounter more violence, personal danger and competition with other occupants of the street. One specific landscape in Troikaville is St. Vincent Park, which is located in the west end of the neighbourhood. It is a big park with mature trees, benches, and playgrounds. There is a community centre with swimming pools and other sports facilities nearby. In some of the green space, there are a number of community gardens.

I visited St. Vincent Park in the summer and early fall. Daytime in the summer sees the park buzzing with socially accepted activities. Near the community centre, many children between the ages of 4 and 12 take part in outdoor activities under the supervision of teenage summer camp leaders. By nine or ten o’clock at night, St. Vincent Park becomes a very different

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28 Within the shelter system, women and men are placed into gender-specific shelters; Jamie and his chosen family were not qualified for family shelter. Furthermore, since Jamie’s girlfriend was 15 and had run away from foster care, it was impossible for her to enter the shelter system.
place; it is quiet with few people in sight. Despite the well-lit paths meandering throughout the
park, activities in the park become invisible to the outsiders of its ‘nocturnal’ communities. Paul
and Jamie considered St. Vincent Park and the nearby streets an unsafe part of Troikaville at
night.

   Jamie: Yeah like, I don’t know, I don’t want to look like a crack head. [...] Over there, you
have the drop-in, where there’s all the crack heads, and native drunks, and then you have St.
Vincent Park, full of crazy punks going drinking.

Kyle, another participant, also revealed some of the less visible after-dark activities. When I
interviewed him at St. Vincent Park one afternoon, he showed me his raw knuckles; he shared
that he was in a physical fight the night before.

   KYLE: Yeah, sometimes if I get too drunk, I use my knuckles.
   JW: Yeah? Oh gosh, what did you do?
   KYLE: I beat up some guy in this park, but he started with me first, I beat him up, right over there
actually.

In addition to St. Vincent Park, there are a number of small parkettes in Troikaville. The young
men called them sketch parks, where sketchy activities like drug deals take place. Kyle and
Marcus took me to tour one of these parkettes. Invisible from the street, it was tucked behind the
stores and cafés along the Main Stretch.

   When we arrived at lunch hour, the parkette was filled with people from different walks
of life. At the back, a few street-involved young men were sharing a smoke and chatting. Along
the side and the front, men and women in business attire sat on the benches eating their lunch.
There was a constant flow of customers from the nearby take-out restaurants. The tempo and
rhythm of the activities at the front and the back of the parkette seemed contrasting. Similar to
Macee Grove, there was a sense of segregation but at a different scale. While everyone occupied
a spot in the parkette, there was no interaction between the street-involved youth and the other
users. It appeared that nightlife in this parkette might be quite unimaginable for some of its non-
street involved daytime users.

   KYLE: This is the legendary Sketch Park.
   JW: Have you been here before?
   MARCUS: Yes, I have gotten high right over there behind that garbage can, and a big huge crack hit,
and that was it.
   KYLE: And that was it! (Laughing.)
   MARCUS: Sat there for like fucking twenty minutes sketching out, thinking that I was being
surrounded by cops. You’ll get where you’re going quick with that stuff.
When businesses on the Main Stretch close at night, the local park and parkettes in Troikaville become the temporary resting and trading place for people with no fixed address. Their invisibility from the main stretch makes them ‘suitable’ for drug deals, street hustles, and physical fights. They also become a place with a different set of social codes for their nocturnal occupants.

The transformation of place through the circadian cycle is not limited to Troikaville. Feminist campaigns to ‘take back the night’ reflect the social reality that many places become a masculine domain at night. This gendering of space was reflected in Matthew’s account of how his group successfully protected their ’hood from a group of ‘intruders’ who were there to ‘make trouble’ late at night.

MATTHEW: Yeah, there was one incident, it was late at night, when there’s no one around except the teens hanging out. Yeah, so there were these random guys, the crew was called The Fallen, they’re Bloods, they wear red. They came in our ’hood, there’s like probably twelve of them. They came, like they’re all wearing red bandanas and then they’re walking in our neighborhood looking around. And then this guy saw them, Edgardo, one of my friends, he’s the Filipino group and he’s like, “What’s going on? What are these guys after?” So, he called the older guys, and someone else called, and ALL the guys came out, there’s so many. And then I came and I saw these Kuyas big brothers and this other guy. I was like, “What the hell, what’s happening?” And I saw these guys in their red all stuck in the cubicle, like you know the bus shelter, and I’m like “Yo, what happened?” And my other friends were holding the samurai [[swords]]. It was like four of them.

JW: So what happened, like why did everybody show up?

MATTHEW: Cause they’re walking in our area and wearing those kind of clothing. Like they’re there as a group, those guys came as a group, they’re looking for something, so we all came together, we escorted them out of Lamarside. They didn’t do anything, we’re just like staring them down cause there’s enough of us, and then they just left, they were so scared.

(Laughing.) We escorted them on, (..) we’re like, “You guys want to fight, we, we’re here.” We’re just, you know, we defend our area.

JW: So then they left?

MATTHEW: Yeah, they left peacefully.

Unlike owners of legally entitled property, Matthew and his friends could only occupy and make claims on their ’hood late at night. Furthermore, their claimed space had to be constantly watched and guarded, as guys from other ’hoods might come in and try to stake a claim.

It would be misleading to think that there is something magical about nighttime that transforms places (as in the mythology of full moon and werewolves). While solar time does exist and is expressed in what we call seasons or day/night, how we experience time in the social world is intricately tied to our social practice.
Far from being a condition *a priori* and transcendent to historicity, time is what practical activity produces in the very act whereby it produces itself. Because practice is the product of a habitus that is itself the product of the embodiment of the immanent regularities and tendencies of the world, it contains within itself an anticipation of these tendencies and regularities, that is, a nonthetic reference to a future inscribed in the immediacy of the present. Time is engendered in the actualization of the act, or the thought, which is by definition presentification and de-presentification, that is, the "passing" of time according to common sense. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 138)

Thus, time neither exists as a reality independent of the human agent nor as a mere consciousness. Recognizing time as the product of social practice and power relations enables us to make sense of the logic behind the temporal organization of place. The notion of temporality is also critical to our understanding of habitus, field and reflexivity (Binkley, 2009), which I discuss in more detail in the subsequent chapters.

### 6.3.2. Troikaville: A Landscape of Alienation and Opportunities

During the day the core area of Troikaville is full of street vendors, bike couriers, shoppers, tourists, workers, and local residents. It is constantly buzzing with noise from the busy traffic. To the passers-by, the Main Stretch is vibrant and prosperous, but for Jamie, who busked there during the day and slept on the sidewalk at night, it was a landscape of human alienation in the Marxian sense (Jonathan Martin, 2008).

*Jamie:* Sometimes, man, the Main Stretch feels like a sardine can, it's like there're too many people and (...) it's like, man, I saw that guy four times but I know it's not the same guy. Sometimes, you think he's got clones or something. (Laughing.) It's like, sometimes, people are just so ridiculously alike because pop media culture just brainwashes you into thinking really dumb shit, honestly. And, like, you just get really unoriginal people walking down the street. And they kind of look like these, you kind of just get, like, a mass of faces that are all just the same.

Perhaps, it is not so much the homogeneous attire or the outer appearances of the passers-by that made them look like clones to Jamie. Rather, it is a sense of human disconnection amidst the busy downtown core, where people might rub shoulder with one another as they hurry along the narrow sidewalks without acknowledging each other’s humanness, especially the humanness of those who are stigmatized for being homeless or living on the street (Snow & Anderson, 1993).

Yet, street life on the Main Stretch is by no means only alienating for the young men with no fixed address. It is a space that contains multiple social worlds that sometimes collide but at other times just float alongside each other. For example, Jamie befriended some of the local
artists and vendors who occasionally gave him a free shirt and conversed with him. Similarly, during one of the neighbourhood tours, Marcus stopped by to check on a friend who was sleeping on the sidewalk. He exchanged hugs and shared a couple gulps of beer with another friend. Thus, despite the constant attempts by the dominant segments of our society to deny the existence and the social legitimacy of the homeless and under-housed people, the streets constitute a community of belonging for many.

Troikaville’s economic vibrancy makes it a landscape of economic opportunity for some of the young men in this study. The Main Stretch is a place where the street involved young men can earn some money through busking or asking the passers-by for pocket change; there are also drop-in services where they can take a rest or get a meal.

JW: So, what brings you back down here?
KYLE: Just because, uh, I lost my apartment, and uh, there’s so much down here, so much opportunities, the people and everything.
JW: What kind of opportunity?
KYLE: Opportunities to panhandle. I ask people, “If you could help me, would you help me out? I give them a story – I am trying to get back on the train or whatever fucking story. I get 50, 60 bucks in an hour sometimes, but now certain places I have been at so many times, so people stop giving me money at certain places. Certain people I see are like, “I gave you money yesterday to go home, why are you still here? I can’t give out 20 bucks, 10 bucks, all the time.”

Based on his success in asking passers-by for money, Kyle considered people in downtown Toronto nice and generous. Marcus had a different perspective, as he argued, “Generous, that’s different from like – caring about people.” Marcus contended that we live in a society of alienation in which many people do not care about others.

6.4. Beyond Macee Grove and Troikaville: Other Neighbourhoods of Significance

Although all the young men in this study were recruited either from Macee Grove or Troikaville, their everyday lives were connected to other neighbourhoods. One may consider these social connections obvious in any social life. However, when these neighbourhoods are separated into ‘hoods and non-‘hoods, a special pattern emerges. With the exception of Shawn and Kyle, all the young men who grew up in the ‘hoods tended to make connections with peers

29 Although the term ‘hood derives from the term ‘neighbourhood,’ it refers to a ghetto or a stigmatized, disadvantaged neighbourhood associated with social and economic marginalization. For instance, it is unlikely that people residing inside or outside upscale neighbourhoods (e.g., Rosedale or the Bridal Path) in Toronto will ever call these neighbourhoods the ‘hoods’.
from other ’hoods, and the young men who grew up in the non-’hoods remained connected to peers from their middle-class neighbourhoods.

In this section, I use two tables (Tables 6.1 and 6.2) to highlight the social connections that these young men had established with other neighbourhoods (’hoods and non-’hoods). These connections are further discussed in Subsections 6.3.1 to 6.3.3 to illustrate how the young men’s masculine habituses were structured in and through places.

**Table 6.1 - Examples of participants’ connections to other non-’hoods**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Study neighbourhood</th>
<th>Connections to other non-’hoods</th>
<th>Contexts of connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shawn</td>
<td>Macee Grove (social housing)</td>
<td>Chestnut Hill – small middle income city north of Toronto</td>
<td>Grew up at Macee Grove; mother recently bought a house in Chestnut Hill; he returned to Macee Grove daily to hang out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle</td>
<td>Troikaville (no fixed address)</td>
<td>Copperfield – a middle income small town 40 min north of Toronto</td>
<td>Grew up in Copperfield; parents still lived in Copperfield but Kyle was asked not to return until he resolved his drug addiction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolan</td>
<td>Troikaville (rental housing)</td>
<td>Midfield – a diverse low to middle income neighbourhood</td>
<td>Grew up in Troikaville, parents were separated with joint custody; he spent half of his time with his dad at Midfield.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>Troikaville (rental housing)</td>
<td>Grandview – a middle to upper middle income neighbourhood</td>
<td>Grew up in Grandview; now living in an apartment with older brother in Troikaville; he visited his mother in north Toronto frequently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin</td>
<td>Troikaville (student rental housing)</td>
<td>Pearlbank – a middle to upper middle income neighbourhood in east Toronto</td>
<td>Grew up in Pearlbank; parents still lived there, he visited parents once a week &amp; ‘hung out’ with childhood friends to jam and chat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mihir</td>
<td>Troikaville (student rental housing)</td>
<td>Abbey Hill – a middle income neighbourhood 30 min. west of Toronto</td>
<td>Family living in Abbey Hill; he visited family frequently.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.2 – Examples of participants’ connections to other ’hoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Study neighbourhood</th>
<th>Connections to other ’hoods</th>
<th>Contexts of connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young men - Macee Grove</td>
<td>Macee Grove (social housing)</td>
<td>Visit other ’hoods to attend parties</td>
<td>Most of the young men preferred to go out with women from other ’hoods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zahid</td>
<td>Macee Grove (private housing)</td>
<td>Kestrel-Mason &amp; Ashdale – low income with social housing</td>
<td>Made friends while he was in jail; most friends lived in the Kestrel-Mason and Ashdale ’hoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Troikaville (no fixed address)</td>
<td>Ashdale – low income with social housing</td>
<td>Grew up in Ashdale; mother and sister still lived there; no friends up there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul &amp; Jamie</td>
<td>Troikaville (no fixed address)</td>
<td>Kestrel-Mason – low income with social housing</td>
<td>Grew up at Kestrel-Mason, parents still lived there; visited family monthly, few friends up there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Troikaville (worked &amp; ‘hung out’)</td>
<td>Green Oaks &amp; Ashdale – low income with social housing</td>
<td>Parents lived at Green Oaks; he lived with his cousins at Ashdale to avoid fights with his mother; girlfriend lived at Green Oaks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Troikaville (worked &amp; ‘hung out’)</td>
<td>Lamarside – low income, mix of private &amp; social housing</td>
<td>Spent his teenage years at Lamarside; still lived at Lamarside with sisters; girlfriend lived at Kestrel-Mason</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although I did not visit any of the other neighbourhoods listed in the above tables, the narratives of the young men provided a picture of the everyday social and economic dynamics within these neighbourhoods that further illuminate how place matters. These narratives helped to illuminate the logic of masculine identity construction Chapters 7 to 9).

6.4.1. Kestrel-Mason and Ashdale: A Landscape of Struggles and Impossibilities

Although Troikaville and Macee Grove appear to be two vastly different social worlds, the young men who lived in these two neighbourhoods shared some similar lived experiences. For instance, Paul and Jamie grew up in the Kestrel-Mason area, which is also an impoverished neighbourhood.

JAMIE: Well I grew up in the Kestrel and Mason area (...) all my life. It was- I got robbed at gunpoint a few times. It’s a pretty bad area. And, like, I had a lot of screwed up family stuff happened to me at a really young age. But, uh, uh, when I got older, like, everything seemed to, like, pan out. (...) Basically we did without a lot, but we didn’t do without like food or shelter kind of thing. We were always fed and, like, clothed and sheltered and stuff, but it was hard. Sometimes clothes were, like, hand-me-downs and shelter was a shitty apartment and
the food was, like, Chef Boyardee kind of thing. Yeah, and a lot of stress was with my sister, she was disabled from the waist down since birth.

JW: So, it was pretty rough growing up in the Kestrel and Mason area, right?
JAMIE: It wasn’t, like, horrible childhood the whole time. It was, like, I didn’t have that bad of a childhood, it was just some bad shit happened.

JW: Like?
JAMIE: You had to be cautious about a lot of shit, like getting robbed and stuff like that. Like, one time, it was just me, Paul, and his brother, and our buddy. We were walking down the street a block away from our middle school, it was, like, in grade eight or seven or something, and four guys came up to me, put us in the alley and told us to give them all our stuff. They go in my pocket and throw out my knife. “I’m not going for the knife. Yep, here’s my cell phone. Don’t shoot me.” (Laughing.)

JW: So, what did they get away with?
JAMIE: My cell phone, that’s all we had.

JW: And are those kids from the neighbourhood or?
JAMIE: I don’t know, some Criptys.

In telling the story of being robbed, Jamie painted the Kestral-Mason ’hood as a landscape of struggles with violence and crime. Yet, he was also quite clear in stating that growing up poor did not equate to having a bad childhood. Like the young men in Macee Grove, he spoke of his childhood in the matter-of-fact tone of ‘that’s just how life is.’

David, who met Paul and Jamie at one of the drop-in centres in Troikaville, grew up in Ashdale – another ’hood south of the Kestrel-Mason area. His narratives of his experience growing up in the ’hood were similar to those of Paul, Jamie, and the young men in Macee Grove.

DAVID: I was sitting across the street, okay. I was playing video games with a friend of mine, we called him Little Sam because there was another Sam, one older, one younger, right? So, all of a sudden, there’s this white van that pulled up. Thirty seconds go by and all you heard was: “Get on the ground, get on the ground.” There’s, like, cops holding auto-shotties to people’s heads and shit like that, cause they were raiding houses and shit like that. Cause of all the gangsters that had shit somebody, like, at the Elmwood Mall one year ago were in that one house itself. Besides that, somebody at my house got robbed, out front of my house at gunpoint, and, like, they made him strip down naked and run across the street to his house after they pistol-whipped him a few times. Like, I am so happy my mom didn’t walk out that door, because if she had walked out that door, she probably would’ve got shot or something. It’s just shit like that.

JW: Is that a common occurrence or?
DAVID: Yeah. Once a week.

JW: No, seriously? So how do children cope with all these?
DAVID: You get to know the people who are doing the shit, so you don’t get it done to you basically. Or you just keep to yourself and no one will really bug you.

However, unlike the young men at Macee Grove, Paul, Jamie, and David did not express a sense of connection or belonging in their ’hoods. They asserted that living on the street or staying at a
shelter in Troikaville was better than being stuck in their 'hoods of origin, where they felt a strong sense of ‘impossibility’, as David recalled, “Growing up in Ashdale, you’ll think – like, you will never succeed in life.”

Perhaps, David and his friends took up the dominant discourse of the violent 'hood to justify their migration to downtown Toronto. It is also possible that their sense of alienation came from being the minority within the predominantly Black neighbourhoods, as Jamie commented,

We were the only White kids in the whole school. Like honestly, you count all the White kids including, like, the Spanish ones who looked White. There was probably, like, me, Paul, five other guys and like four or five other girls.”

Although Paul and Jamie were of bi-racial Asian and White ancestry, they considered themselves White within the context of their 'hoods. Their subjective feeling of being out-of-place within their own 'hoods differed significantly from Zahid, who self-identified as South Asian and had a strong sense of belonging to Kestrel-Mason and other 'hoods, or Matthew, who self-identified as Filipino Chinese and lived in Lamarside – another 'hood in central Toronto. The issue of racialization and habitus is further elaborated on in Chapter 7.

6.4.2. Lamarside: A Landscape of Diversity and Coexistence

Unlike the aforementioned 'hoods, Lamarside is a high-density, low-income neighbourhood. Its residents are of diverse ethnoracial backgrounds including Black, African, Caribbean, Chilean, Filipino, Russian, Tamil, and others. There is a mix of high-rise social housing apartments and privately owned, poorly maintained high-rise apartments. Less than 2 kilometers south of Lamarside is the Green Oaks Housing Project. Matthew has lived in Lamarside since he was thirteen; he expressed a fairly strong sense of community belonging.

Matthew: Well, what I think about Lamarside is, like, it's good cause you know we're not those types of people that, like, beat up small little kids and like, tell them, “Get out of here.” Cause they're part of the neighborhood so we accept them as a part of it, and we don't smoke weed in front of their faces or, like, teach them anything bad. Like, you know, it was, like, a neighborhood where there's Filipinos, they're doing their own thing, and it's just yeah, it's all like a community.

For Matthew, the co-existence of the different groups of guys chilling in Lamarside was nothing out of the ordinary. “I see some regulars guys,” he explained, “it’s just the area like-
cause we shared that place, man. Like, Daisy Avenue, we shared it with the Tamils and the Russians.” In the summer, each group occupied its own picnic table, playing card games and drinking; each group seemed to know their boundaries. However, this peaceful co-existence only occurred when the implicit codes within the ’hood were followed; for example, the street economy, territorial claims and interactions at Lamarside were organized according to the differences in group identities.

**JW:** Are there drug deals at Lamarside?

**MATTHEW:** Yeah. Black guys have the crack. They deal crack. The Filipino guys or the Asian guys, they deal, uh, crystal meth and that’s like a boundary where they don’t pass. It’s kind of like an invisible line where they know automatically.

**JW:** Do the different groups ever get into fights?

**MATTHEW:** Yeah, sometimes. (…) Like, one time, they got into a fight with like some White guys walking down, there was a bunch of Filipino guys, and a bunch of White guys who were trying to make fun of the Filipino guys because they’re small and so the Filipino guy got mad and then they fought. It’s crazy, I don’t know.

**JW:** Was it serious, a serious fight or?

**MATTHEW:** Yeah, those guys, most of those older guys I chill with went to jail.

**JW:** Oh. For what?

**MATTHEW:** One went for attempted murder, like for jumping on the guy’s head and he never baited anybody on, like he never really said, “Yeah, this guy was with me, this guy was…” He just took it in and went to jail and he came back now. He was in jail, like, when he was sixteen, now he is twenty-three.

Matthew’s narratives of Lamarside provided another glimpse into the social relations in low-income social housing neighbourhoods. Unlike the young men at Macee Grove whose sense of belonging was closely linked to the community centre and neighbouring families, Matthew’s sense of belonging was linked to his social networks on the streets in Lamarside. This sense of collective belonging sometimes gave rise to a kind of ’hood protectionism and potential violence (for example, the episode of night time intruders discussed in Subsection 6.2.1. above). It also functioned to construct their situational identities, as Matthew explained,

**JW:** So, where did those guys come from? Were they part of that red or Blood group?

**MATTHEW:** They’re the red, they wore red and they were like Black-washed and like-?

**JW:** What do you mean “Black-washed”?

**MATTHEW:** Well, like, I don’t know, for me it’s like (…) people that dress Black just for fun and, like, okay me (…) like before, I used to dress Black even though I didn’t have any Black friends, but then I didn’t really listen to (…) hip hop. Like, I didn’t listen to rap or anything, it’s just the culture of the streets that made me dress like that (…) so that’s kind of different, but them (…) they’re just like hip hop, they want to dress Black. I don’t know, they’re the fakes, that’s what I think.

**JW:** So these guy, they themselves are not Black people.

**MATTHEW:** Exactly. Like they’re all Filipinos, young guys.
For Matthew, the young intruders were ‘fakes’ not only because they did not belong to Lamarside, but also because they did not demonstrate any pride in their distinct ethnic identities. While he recognized that dressing Black was part of the street culture, he held on to his Filipino identity and disapproved of the young men for being ‘Black-washed’. For Matthew, living on the street in Lamarside entails a balance of common street culture and social distinction.

6.4.3. The Non-’hoods: A Landscape of Connections and Social Capital

Compared to the young men who grew up in the ’hoods, the study participants who grew up in middle-income neighbourhoods described having some vastly different experiences. For instance, Kyle, who grew up in Copperfield, had lived a very different lifestyle since his family was financially resourceful.

**JW:** What did you do when you were small?
**KYLE:** We’d go to the rivers and we’d frigging try to catch fish with like our hands.
**JW:** Well, that sounds pretty fun.
**KYLE:** Yeah it was fun, I caught two at once, one time, cause you know minnows, cause you’d see minnows and you’d stick your hands in and try to get it.
**JW:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.
**KYLE:** We played catch up with our bikes, you’d ride around and we called it catch up, you rubbed the bike, and who ever was there, they had to rub their tire on your back tire, so unless you rub your tire then you’re it, you then you got to chase people on your bike and run.

When we were kids we had a great time.
**JW:** What else did you do?
**KYLE:** Well, uh, friends, cousins, family, we’d always go to the cottage, I used to ski every weekend, every weekend we would go to Blue Mountain. We got season passes, so every weekend we would try to do skiing, and then I started snowboarding. During the summer, every weekend we went to the cottage. I also went to summer camp.

Despite his family’s economic resources, Kyle experienced challenges related to addiction that took him to the streets of Toronto. He shared that his family had given up on him after he dropped out of numerous private drug rehabilitation programs paid for by his parents. Kyle’s experience illustrates that habitus is not fate (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Although his primary habitus endowed him with a substantial volume of social capital, his drug addiction (shaped by his secondary habitus) had contributed to his loss of this social capital.

However, Kyle seemed to be able to retain his embodied cultural capital; his bodily capital and middle-class mannerisms enabled him to pass easily as someone ‘genuinely’ in need of a bus ticket to go home. This might explain his success in getting generous amounts of money from the passers-by on the street (refer to Subsection 6.2.1.). Furthermore, his narratives on his
causal relationship with women suggest that his bodily capital might also play a part in his frequent success hooking up with women, who would take him home and let him stay until he got drunk and turned violent on them. Without his own awareness, he was able to convert his bodily and cultural capital into economic capital on the street; this lack of awareness explains his perception that passers-by in Toronto are ‘generous’.

Similarly, the narratives of Colin, who grew up at Pearlbank, a middle- and upper middle-class neighbourhood in the east end of Toronto, did not contain any images of danger, violence, or economic hardship.

JW: So what do you remember about growing up in that neighborhood?

COLIN: Um, it was really safe and reasonably quiet. We had a ravine on, uh, either side of our street so it made it really quiet. Um (..) and I always felt safe walking home. Once, um, like some stupid teenagers tried to rob me but it was like a joke – it was just ridiculous. (Laughing.) They were unsuccessful. But yeah, really safe, really supportive, there was a good sense of community around, uh, the local school which was about five minutes from our house, you know, everybody lived around there. There were a lot of kids my age on my street that I hung out with, you know. As we got a little older we kind of went in different directions, yeah uh, I still go back to that neighborhood really regularly because there’s a lot of people within like fifteen minutes walk of my parent’s house, some good friends of mine.

JW: Mhmm, so how often do you visit your parents?

COLIN: Probably about once a week.

JW: So what do you remember most (..) in terms of the fun things that you did in your neighborhood?

COLIN: Um, riding bikes and jamming with guitars and stuff, cause some of the guys on my street, their bedroom was an apartment under their house, so it didn’t share a wall with anything. It didn’t have a basement below it so it was just totally amazing and like (…) there were two brothers, one of them play guitar, one of them play drums, so I played guitar so we would just jam there all the time.

JW: And how old were you then?

COLIN: Um, I guess we started doing that when I was about eleven– and then (...) even now I still play guitar with my friends all the time.

Unlike the young men from the ’hoods, Colin has the ‘luxury’ to traverse between Troikaville and Pearlbank. His childhood neighbourhood was not merely a place of fond memories in the distant past; it represented his acquired and ongoing accumulative social capital that was accessible to him at any time.

6.5. Discussion: Making Sense of Place

The study results presented in this chapter show that scale is a useful analytical concept for making sense of place. Scale defines boundaries (albeit fluid and contestable) and demarcates
places; it is useful for analyzing social relations and identity construction within and across places. For instance, when interpreted at the scale of the entire city, the narratives of the young men from the different 'hoods illustrate the similar conditions of existence in their habitus, which were not a result of their physical proximity to each other but their proximity in social space (Bourdieu, 1998). Although Jamie, Paul and David from Troikaville had never met Brandon or the other guys from Macee Grove, their lived experience of neighbourhood violence, stigma, and economic marginalization converged. However, the lived experiences of Jamie and his street brothers differed significantly from those of the guys at Macee Grove when examined at the scale of their immediate environments, that is, within the housing projects. Whereas the guys at Macee Grove had a strong sense of belonging and a collective identity, Jamie and his street brothers felt out-of-place in their 'hoods of origin. In fact, they left their 'hoods in hope of finding a landscape of belonging in Troikaville.

Paradoxically, the racialization of poverty30 in Toronto has led to a high concentration of Black Caribbean and African families in a number of social housing projects and low-income neighbourhoods. Growing up at Macee Grove, the young Black men in this study internalized their objective classed, gendered, and racialized conditions of existence and expressed them in subjective tastes and lifestyles (e.g., basketball, rhythm and blues, hip-hop, 'hood attire, etc.) that were typical of urban Black youth subculture. Their habitus transformed their everyday “necessities into strategies, constraints into preference” and presented them as taste and lifestyle choices (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 175). They played basketball and not hockey because they could not afford the equipment, as Jeremiah commented, “To play basketball, all you need is a ball.” The regularity of these collective practices are often taken up in the system of social division and used to construct an essentialist conceptualization of young Black men as being physical, exotic, dangerous, uneducated, and so on, to justify social domination and injustice (Jackson II, 2006).

Being the product of the Macee Grove habitat, the habitus of these young men enabled them to go about their 'hood at ease, taking it for granted, like “a fish in water” without feeling “the weight of water” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127). Zahid, who was of East Indian

30 Analysis of the 1971-2001 socioeconomic profiles of ethnoracial groups in Toronto shows economic disparity across and within groups. The incidence of poverty for different groups: European ethnoracial groups (10%), Aboriginal, South Asian, East Asian, Caribbean and South and Central American groups (20%), Arab and West Asian groups (30%), African groups (40%), Somali and Bangladeshi groups (>50%) (Ornstein, 2006).
background, was able to integrate successfully into certain segments of the ’hood at Ashdale and Kestrel-Mason because he had acquired a substantial volume of social capital while he was in jail. His engagement in physical fights and street hustling helped him acquire street capital and respect, which in turn enabled him to integrate into the street gangs in these ’hoods.

On the other hand, the high concentration of Black and African families in low-income neighbourhoods put the working class White young men within the ’hoods into an ambiguous position. For instance, David, who self-identified as White, and Paul and Jamie, who self-identified as bi-racial, Asian and White, were acutely aware that their bodies were out-of-place inside their inner suburban ’hoods. Although ‘race’ is a socially constructed notion, the processes of racialization are internalized to produce racial habituses (Reay, 1995), which are expressed in specific racialized tastes, dispositions, and a naturalized vision of racial divisions and racial domination.

For David, Paul, and Jamie, attempts to integrate into their local ’hood culture would mean that they had to give up their White privileges granted by institutionalized racism and cultural hegemony found in Canadian society. As Matthew commented, non-Black and non-African young men could become Black-washed by adopting the ’hood attire and hip-hop culture, but they would always be at risk of being identified as fake; their bodily capital would be deemed less valuable or even be considered counterfeit.

As social agents who actively (although pre-reflectively) engaged in the struggles for distinction to secure favourable positions in the field of masculinity, Jamie and Paul developed their own strategies to make the best out of their constrained objective conditions of existence. Their quests for distinction from the local Black youth within their ’hood steered them towards a taste for heavy metal music and punk culture. They spent two years making frequent visits to Troikaville, where their bodily capital of being White and non-Black/non-African had a higher conversion value (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006). They made friends and social connections at punk concerts and through other street scenes. By relocating to Troikaville, they were able to construct their punk identity and convert their cultural capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) of jamming into economic capital at local concerts or by busking on the street. Their bodily and cultural capital would have been of little or no value in the inner suburban
’hoods where the residents did not have the economic resources to support any busking or local concert outlets. At the other end of the city, Matthew had a different kind of ’hood experience in Lamarside. The co-existence of diverse ethnocultural groups within this high-density, low-income neighbourhood enabled him to connect with other Filipino young men to develop a collective identity and a strong sense of belonging. He was able to find a place within the Lamarside ’hood without feeling out-of-place. These young men’s different experiences suggest that the accumulation and conversion of cultural capital were situational and place-specific.

Scale is also a useful analytical tool in understanding the construction of social divisions on paper (in public policies and official plans) and how these divisions take place in everyday life. For instance, the construction of the Macee Grove Priority Investment Neighbourhood (MG-PIN) in the City of Toronto’s official plan in relation to the Macee Grove Housing Project illustrates how the use of different scales to define a neighbourhood produces different boundaries, symbolic representations, social relations, and material consequences. The appropriation of the name Macee Grove and the names of other stigmatized neighbourhoods for use in the official neighbourhood revitalization plans and documents (City of Toronto, 2005; Family Service Association of Toronto, 2004; GHK, 2005; Toronto Community Housing, 2007; United Way of Greater Toronto, 2005) served a number of political and economic purposes for the different stakeholders. For the municipal government officials and politicians, using the names Macee Grove or Ashdale was strategic and critical in their negotiation for funding support from the provincial and federal government.

Urban Development Agreements (UDAs) are mechanisms for bringing together Canada’s three levels of government to address problems posed by urban development (e.g. social inequalities, social exclusion, crime, health issues, physical regeneration, etc.). Called tri-partite agreements, they create formal partnerships, structures and funding arrangements with the goal of alleviating some or many of the problems mentioned above in geographically specific contexts. (GHK, 2005, p. 4)

In framing urban development as a government and civic responsibility, the names and characteristics of the impoverished neighbourhoods were converted into economic capital. The success of this type of conversion was illustrated in the 2004 Tri-partite Canada-Manitoba-Winnipeg Agreement for urban renewal.

... the third agreement ($75 million in tri-partite funding) brought in a further $77 million of private sector funding and $49 million from other government sources. Bringing together
interested stakeholders in a formal long-term partnership has been key in terms of coordinating actions and pooling funding. (GHK, 2005, p. 7)

Furthermore, this appropriation and re-presentation of social suffering could also be used by the public officials and politicians to acquire political capital among their left-leaning constituents since these plans demonstrated that the government and those in power were taking action to remedy social inequality (Hume, 2009, June 20; Monsebraaten & Vincent, 2007, April 11).

On the other hand, the inclusion of a large spatial area outside of the Macee Grove Housing Project and the “public-private” investment strategy in the official plans and documents appeased the right-leaning constituents because it appeared that all constituents had ‘equal’ access to claiming a stake in the revitalization plan. What seemed to escape notice was the privatization of previously publicly owned land, and the relatively unchallenged acceptance of the popular policy of ‘gentrification’ in the name of ‘mixed-income housing’ presented as the answer to end social and economic marginalization. Despite some expressed concerns among residents in the different housing projects, the revitalization plans forged ahead with timelines, public meetings, and other kinds of processes taking place in different neighbourhoods (Vincent, 2007, May 11).

Large scale evaluation studies in the US, the UK, and the Netherlands have found little evidence to support the policy assumption that mixed-income housing improves social well-being or reduces poverty. In some places, it has deepened social polarization, segregation, and inter-group conflicts. There is also evidence of displacement of the most vulnerable low-income families, who were unable to secure any type of housing as the social housing units were replaced by market units (E. Graham, Manley, Hiscock, Boyle, & Doherty, 2009; Popkin, Buron, Levy, & Cunningham, 2000; A. Smith, 2002). These findings are not surprising because ghettos are produced through social and economic marginalization. Moving people physically without the support of policy change will unlikely relieve poverty. Some critics suggest that gentrification actually conceals and reinforces social and economic inequities (Lees, 2008).

While Canadians do not experience the same extent of racialized economic and social segregation as the Americans do, the high concentration of low-rent housing in certain areas and the increased economic marginalization among new immigrants are shaping the racialized patterns of neighbourhood poverty in Canada (City of Toronto, 2009b; Ornstein, 2006; Walks &
Without addressing poverty through equitable income redistribution and access to gainful employment, patterns of concentrated poverty will persist and revitalization through the gentrification of disadvantaged neighbourhoods will remain ineffective. Indeed, Bourdieu (1999a) clearly rejects the idea of gentrification as a solution for social marginalization.

If the habitat shapes the habitus, the habitus also shapes the habitat, through the more or less adequate social usages that it tends to make of it. This certainly throws doubt on the belief that bringing together in the same physical space agents who are far apart in social space might, in itself, bring them closer socially: in fact, socially distanced people find nothing more intolerable than physical proximity (experienced as promiscuity). (p.128)

The social segregation between the residents of Macee Grove and the residents on the other side of the fence attest to the improbability of habitus hybridization through physical proximity. The middle- and upper middle-income families on the other side of the fence embodied a different class habitus such that everything the residents of Macee Grove did would come across as distasteful. Although they lived side-by-side, it is highly improbable that they would participate in the same everyday activities in the same kitchen, the same school, the same car, or the same gymnasium.

The above discussion does not suggest that all urban redevelopment plans are negative. Impoverished and deteriorated conditions of disadvantaged neighbourhoods require improvement and correction. Strategies that strengthen community infrastructure and infuse equitable health and social care are critical (United Way of Greater Toronto, 2009). The narratives of the young men from different neighbourhoods in this study suggested that access to employment, health, and social care was critical to their wellbeing. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive analysis of the MG-PIN or other neighbourhood revitalization plans. The inclusion of this brief analysis aims to illustrate how power operates through relations that traverse across places simultaneously at multiple scales. Furthermore, the neighbourhood revitalization was part of the social reality of the young men at Macee Grove; it had brought anxiety and uncertainty to some of these young men and their families.

6.6. Chapter Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have identified a number of key themes based on my impression of Macee Grove and Troikaville, and my interpretation of the young men’s narratives. First,
individuals and groups actively engage in place-making through discourse and social practices resulting from their power relations. Self-defined and imposed identities of neighbourhoods are constantly (re)constructed through our engagement with these places in multiple contexts. Thus, a place can be simultaneously a landscape of despair and hope, stigma and pride, marginalization and resiliency.

Second, place is an integral part of our habitus. It is in and through places that we embody our conditions of existence to develop our perceptions, dispositions, aspirations and taste. It is the sense of belonging that makes us feel at ease in specific places and out-of-place in others. For instance, Shawn returned to Macee Grove almost everyday despite his mother’s success in buying a house in Chestnut Hill and moving the family out of the housing project.

Third, as Bourdieu (1998) argues, social class exists on paper and in social space, but it is realized as classes-in-reality through a common stake in specific struggles. The intricate connection between classes-on-paper (official documents, media reports, academic literature) and classes-in-reality (everyday interactions) was illustrated by the social segregation of Macee Grove from its affluent neighbours, and the similar lived experience of the young men from the different ’hoods – Macee Grove, Ashdale, Kestral-Mason, and Lamarside.

Fourth, scale is an analytical concept that is useful in examining the production and contestation of physical and symbolic spatial boundaries of places; for instance, the official boundary of the Macee Grove-Priority Investment Neighbourhood versus the social boundary of Macee Grove (the housing project). Furthermore, scale enables us to analyze power relations and the material consequences of these relations expressed at varying levels, including within one’s home, school, street, neighbourhood, city, region, nation, and so on. For instance, the concept of scale enables me to make the analytical connections between Troikaville as a landscape of opportunity for some of the street-involved young men who grew up in the inner suburban ’hoods and the different ways the young men in these neighbourhoods experienced the racialization of poverty.

Finally, the study results presented in this chapter show that place matters in our understanding of health and social practices. They also illustrate that the go-along neighbourhood walk is a useful method in exploring the emplaced experiences of individuals and
groups. Place-based analysis enables us to gain access to the participants’ spatial practices *in situ* and their interpretation of these practices at the same time. The analysis presented in this chapter helps to contextualize how these young men embodied the objective structures of the multiple fields they inhabited and how they co-constructed their masculine identities in different places. This will be discussed in more detail in the next three chapters.
Chapter 7
Being-Doing-Becoming ‘Manly’ Men: Masculine Habitus

7. Introduction

There is no natural thought on which a young man more prides himself than that of being considered manly—one of the keenest insults you can offer a young man is to say that he is unmanly; but there is a great deal of misconception of what manliness really is. [[…]]

Physical strength is often considered to be manly, but a man may have physical strength and yet be anything but a manly man […] True manliness is shown, then, not in physical strength, not even in endurance—not only in pluck, but in self-control, in moral courage, in self-denial, and in consideration of others. (Dowsett, 1883, pp. 3, 9-8)

The above excerpt from Quit You Like Men, a book of moral instructions written for young men in England over a century ago, illustrates the durable effects of social ordering. Today, becoming a ‘manly’ man is still a common quest for most young men even though previous hegemonic masculine ideals of Christian morals and asceticism have been replaced with diverse hegemonic images, symbols, and representations that are increasingly besieged by advanced capitalism. While Dowsett’s writing may be out-dated for present-day young men, it remains instructional for a critical feminist analysis of masculine identity construction. First, his use of the qualifier ‘manly’ to describe the ideal or real man testifies to the precarious and socially constructed ‘nature’ of gender categories. Second, the notion of the ‘manly man’ acknowledges the existence of multiple masculinities (R. W. Connell, 2005). Lastly, Dowsett’s dismissal of mere physical strength (often associated with the working class) as a manly quality reflects an internal hierarchy of positioning associated with social status within the arena of masculinity.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, critical feminist scholars and pro-feminist theorists share the common understanding that gender and other social identities are the outcomes of ongoing negotiations and struggles in social relations. Dorothy Holland and her colleagues (1998) argue that identities are “the imaginings of self in the worlds of action” (p. 5). As such, identity entails human agency and generative capacities embedded in our everyday mundane activities. It is a state of being-doing-becoming, whereby our socialized subjectivity (habitus), expressed in an embodied system of dispositions and perceptions and an internalized structure of differentiation, engages in the unceasing process of defining not only our sense of who we are (self identity) and where we belong (collective identities), but also the boundary that differentiates between the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’ (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984). Furthermore, as a state
of being-doing-becoming, gender identity is fluid, contingent, and never complete; it requires constant affirmation, confirmation, declaration, and validation.

In this chapter, I focus on the young men’s experiences growing up. I draw on their narratives to explore the dialectical relationship between their conditions of existence and their habituses. In particular, this chapter seeks to elucidate how the young men’s primary (familial) and secondary (school and street) habituses were shaped by their social positions associated with ‘class,’ ‘gender,’ and ‘race.’ A critical understanding of the young men’s masculine habituses in relation to the fields they inhabited illuminates their homosocial and (hetero)erotic practices, which are the key foci of this dissertation.

7.1. Masculine Habitus: Ontological Complicity and Complexity

In Masculine Domination, Bourdieu (2001) suggests that domination is achieved and sustained when socially constructed differences and gender divisions are naturalized and incorporated into all aspects of everyday existence – that is, in both the objectified state and the embodied state. The acceptance of this social division as normal and inevitable is reinforced by the ontological complicity between habitus and the social world that produces it (Bourdieu, 1990a; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In other words, when the demands of the field (taste, dispositions, and action) resemble the agents’ socialization (family upbringing, education, cultural background), the agents go about the world with a practical mastery that does not require deliberate thinking. It is only when there is a habitus-field mismatch that the taken-for-granted vision of the world becomes visible and questionable, giving rise to the possibility of resistance and change (Swartz, 1997).

Bourdieu’s notion of ontological complicity between habitus and its field is useful for the study of social relations not only in terms of class division, but also through other social differentiation based on gender, race, and ethnicity (Behnke & Meuser, 2001; Puwar, 2004). While Bourdieu recognizes gender as a core dimension of habitus, he rarely refers to a gender-habitus. Instead, he sees women as the dominated fraction of the different classes; he associates the notion of feminine habitus with subjection (Lovell, 2004). Behnke and Meuser (2001) argue that the notion of gender-habitus is critical to our understanding of gendered subjectivities and gendered practices because social agents ‘do’ gender based on their gender-habituses, which in turn are (re)produced by their social action.
Since habitus is simultaneously shaped by an interlocking system of power relations based on gender, class, racial, ethnic, and other divisions, variations in how agents embody their objective conditions of existence within and across different social divisions are expected. Thus, it is useful to think of habitus as “a multi-layered concept, with more general notions of habitus at the level of society and more complex, differentiated notions at the level of the individual” (Reay, 2004b, p. 434), but delineating these multiple levels of analysis to explicate the relationships between collective and individual habituses can be challenging.

Extending Bourdieu’s work, Lois McNay (1999a) asserts that increased differentiation in late modern society makes it possible for limitless distinct fields to emerge in response to the changing social contexts. As agents move across distinct fields, they either feel at-home or out-of-place (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Dissonance between habitus and field leads to the displacement of agents and heightens their need for reflexive responses, which in turn intensifies the instabilities of socially constructed categories such as gender, race, class, or sexuality (McNay, 1999a).

7.2. Masculine Habitus: Family Matters

Family, a social institution guaranteed by the state and naturalized through endless cycles of representations and actions, is an important site of cultural reproduction (Bourdieu, 1998). However, dominant (romanticized) discourses on family and home tend to prevent us from noticing the power relations exercised within family (patriarchy, adult authority) and imposed on the family (surveillance, stigmatization, heteronormativity) (McDowell & Sharp, 1999). It is through the taken-for-granted social relations within the field of family that agents embody their classed, gendered, and cultured habituses.

During the individual interviews, I invited the young men to recall their experiences growing-up as guys and the messages about gender they received from their families. While all of them recalled certain global masculine expectations such as being strong, competitive, independent, and in control (Shuttleworth, 2007), their narratives suggested that the similarities and differences were associated with their socially varied habituses.

Mihir, who came from a middle-class South Asian immigrant family, did not recall any particular messages from his parents about being a guy. However, he did remember that his parents had different rules and expectations for him and his sister.
Yeah, like um-m, I mean (..) my parents have been strict, I guess, with my sister. They would let me go out a little bit later than usual or (..) uh, I wouldn't have to tell them that I'm going out necessarily. (..) I mean I wouldn't have to be as detailed with them (..) as my sister did, so I had a bit more freedom. Um-m-m, and you know I was usually looked at – like my parents looked to me to look after her or to sort of you know, be responsible and that, yeah.

In restricting the movements of their daughter while granting more freedom to their son, Mihir’s parents gave the children a strong message about gender differences – that is, women were presented as the weaker (physical and moral) sex, requiring men’s protection and family surveillance. However, it is important to recognize that this type of gender-differential parenting practice is not limited to Mihir’s family; it is a common (collective) practice within the South Asian and other communities (Dumka, Gonzales, Bonds, & Millsap, 2009; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000). More importantly, it needs to be understood in the context of a reconfiguration of local and transnational patriarchal hegemonies that are enmeshed in the racialized social and economic hierarchies within the Canadian society31 (Ahmad, Driver, McNally, & Stewart, 2009; Shi, 2009; Wilson, 2007).

Colin, who grew up in a White middle-class family and self-identified as bisexual, declared that his growing-up experience was very positive. He described his parents as open and supportive; he recalled watching educational films on the topic of ‘where babies come from’ with his family and friends, and talking to his parents openly about dating and relationships.

**JW:** What was your experience like growing up as a guy?

**COLIN:** Um, well, it’s been weird for me cause I’m kind of, um, effeminate, (..) so (…) it (..), you know, it never really, um – (long pause). Yeah, I mean people always thought I was gay, which never really bothered me because my family is really supportive. Like, I remember one time we were eating breakfast and I said something was “gay” and my dad was like, “Do you really understand what you’re saying here?” And, you know, we kind of discussed it and I felt really bad about it, and you know, so then I stopped using the word gay in a derogatory fashion, there and then. I was nine or ten. But yeah, it’s been pretty good, you know, ‘cause I’m – I’m bi and my family’s quite supportive. I really have always been in a supportive environment throughout high school. I mean (…) you know (…) people have called me “fag” or whatever, but uh (..), I’ve got decent self esteem so it hasn’t really gotten to me too much.

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31 Living in a globalized context, racial minority immigrant women and girls in Canada are faced with a ‘double’ jeopardy of the local (Canadian) and transnational systems of patriarchal domination. Within the Canadian cultural field, their gender and racialized “Other” status places them in subordinated positions whereby their access to cultural, economic, and symbolic capital is limited. Within their own ethnicity-cultural field, their gender status also keeps them in subordinated positions. Thus, immigrant women and girls have to engage in an ongoing struggle to maintain their elevated gender status gained through migration. As a result, many of them are caught in the ambiguous position of having to draw on the White Western hegemonic masculine ideologies and use them as a resource to resist the patriarchal domination within their own ethnic communities (Kim, 2006; McLaren, 2004). At the same time, some immigrant women and girls with the least capital within the Canadian cultural field may rely more strongly on the patriarchal family structure in their ethno-cultural communities to secure their material and social wellbeing (Shankar & Northcott, 2009).
There has been enough support from friends and family, school, even in the media, like (...) there’s enough support I find – like, depending on what you choose.

Despite his parents’ open communication about gender and sexuality issues, Colin expressed a dualistic perspective about men and women. Throughout the interviews, he drew on the dominant discourse of gender differences to describe himself as ‘effeminate’ and being more like a ‘lesbian’ than a guy. Furthermore, his ‘coming out’ experience at home reflected the insidious power behind heteronormativity in Canadian society (Ingraham, 1996).

**JW:** Did you really? You just came out and said, “I’m bi”?

**COLIN:** Pretty much, yeah. Like, we’d just be in a conversation and there’d be a pause and I was like, “I’m bi. Do you know that?”... “No I didn’t know that.” And I was like, “Oh, well, now you know.”

**JW:** So how did they respond?

**COLIN:** My mom was just like–... I can’t remember exactly what we were talking about. She was a little surprised I guess, but not too surprised. Um, and then my dad was more – he said, like, “You know that’s never something I really understood.” He was like, “Like that’s something that struck me more as somebody who doesn’t really take things as seriously.” Like, it was not in an accusatory fashion, he was just saying his opinions. “You know, somebody who just kind of likes to party.” And I’m like, “Well, you know me, that’s not really what I’m all about.” And he’s like, “Yeah, I guess you’re right. Well, you know, whatever.”

While Colin’s father appeared to be liberal minded and openly ‘gay positive,’ his reaction to Colin’s declaration of being ‘bisexual’ suggested that he too had embodied the dominant system of gender/sex differentiation, whereby sexuality was again defined in the dualistic opposition of either ‘heterosexuality’ or ‘homosexuality.’ Bisexuality was perceived to be less ‘real’ or ‘valid’ (Hopkins, 1998; Rust, 2000). His perspectives helped to explain Colin’s ambiguous articulation about gender and sexual identities.

As Bourdieu asserts, our primary habitus is durable but it is not eternal (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Although Colin’s parents had significant influence on his perspectives about gender and sexuality, these perspectives could change over time. When Colin entered school and inhabited other social fields (sports, friendship, dating, etc.), he was exposed to other perspectives and events that could reinforce or disrupt his habitus, providing Colin with the opportunity to question his old beliefs. At our follow-up interview, Colin brought with him a resonant text that he created after reflecting on what we had talked about during our first interview (Figure 7.1).
When I invited Colin to share with me the meaning behind his drawing, he explained how he came to embrace his bisexuality.

COLIN: Yeah, so it’s me in both panels, and in the first panel I’m really confused and I feel like I’m being pulled in a bunch of different directions, and I’m just not really sure, you know, about who I am or what my sexuality is, or anything like that. And then the POP is that moment when my girlfriend said, “Well I’m not really attracted to genders, I’m just attracted to people” (snapping fingers) and then that kind of clarified everything and after that I’m just like “Yeah everybody’s fantastic and I don’t really need to worry about it”.

JW: Um hmm.

COLIN: (Pointing to second panel.) So here I’m just extending in all directions instead of worrying about which direction it should, you know. Before I felt I was pulled in all these directions and now I just kind of go in all the directions.

JW: Right. Wow, you’re really artistic.

COLIN: Oh, thank you (chuckling).

Colin’s narrative provides us with some background information to his resonant text; it was his girlfriend who supported him to embrace his bisexuality. However, it was the two contrasting images in his resonant text that evoked my emotional reaction. The visual image of Colin being chained and pulled in different directions resembles *quartering*, which speaks to the power of
homophobia and the torment sexual minority young people have to endure. The second image expresses Colin’s moment of liberation; the absence of visual representations of sexual organs symbolizes his freedom from restrictive hegemonic gender and sexual norms.

Jason, who also grew up in a White middle-class family, had a somewhat different experience from Colin. He was homeschooled until the seventh grade. His childhood habitus ruptured when he his parents divorced and he was integrated into the public school system. His narratives reflect a tension in what he considered to be ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ masculinities. He recalled learning ‘nothing’ from his father.

**JW:** But did your dad ever give you any messages about how to be a guy?

**JASON:** No. Not so much. He wasn't really the best role model. It was more- I looked to my older brother for that, and other people, you know? With my dad, he would never really, kind of, show his emotions or, like, you know, only if he was angry. He wouldn't show any sadness or anything, you know, he would never cry in front of us, never said things like “I love you” or something like that, or like “I am proud of you.” Things like that, he didn’t really show us. So, it was really more like, I think he role-modeled being silent, you know. (Laughing.)

Jason’s definition of ‘nothing’ refers to the lack of ‘explicit’ and ‘affirming’ messages from his father, but his description of ‘nothing’ includes plenty of what he considered to be ‘negative’ male role-modeling. His rejection of his father’s stoicism and displays of anger suggest that Jason had embodied a different habitus compared to that of his father, possibly from his mother’s feminist influences.

**JW:** So then you feel that while you were growing up, the rules were actually quite rigid?

**JASON:** Yes. Expectations of what a guy is? Yeah, definitely, definitely.

**JW:** And how did you fare in that?

**JASON:** Me? Uh, I think I didn’t really. (pause). Like- when I was younger, ‘cause I was raised by my mom, I wasn’t really raised to be like a guy kind of thing, right? So, I think that was a big challenge – like my mom always told us it’s okay to cry for hurt and things like that. But then, I got into the school system and they’re like, “No you can’t do that.” So, I just totally – (..) even now, today, like, I can’t really cry. It’s just been kind of grayed out of my system, you know?

Jason’s comment about being raised by his mother and ‘therefore’ raised in a ‘non-guy’ kind of way illustrates the power of society’s naturalized gender division. Despite his mother’s efforts to disrupt the hegemonic masculinist expectations, Jason’s narratives suggest that once he went beyond the boundary of his own home and entered the field of masculinity at school, he was put into a state of habitus rupture, whereby his primary (or family) habitus and the masculine expectations at school were in discordance. His entrance into a new field demanded a new set of responses from him (Bourdieu, 1977, 2000). Although Jason did not speak directly about how he
responded, he implied later on in the interview that the discordance had brought many challenges for him.

**JW:** Okay so, um, being guys, so, what do you think are some of the best things about being guys and then some of the challenges of being guys?

**JASON:** Um, I guess some of the best things about being guys is you can be loud, you can be kind of outgoing, you can be really ambitious, you can do lots of things, you can kind of try to get power, and be powerful, and that’s seen as totally acceptable. That’s like the ideal. [Um hmm.] You know, the bad thing is about (...) even just being sad, being caring (pause), that’s a challenge, like being sensitive when you’re younger. Like when you’re older, it’s not the same because you got the sense of self in you, like you know what people say does not bother you. But it’s when you’re young, like crying and stuff like that, say people see you crying then they make fun of you for years, or things like that. Or you get labeled as a wuss and stuff like that, right? And then it makes things really hard you know? [Um hmm] If you’re not like good at sports, that’s another really big challenge about being a guy. Basically it’s just a machismo kind of thing.

The power behind the symbolic violence of hegemonic masculinities was so strong that Jason had to adopt a different set of strategies to play the game of manliness at school and in other non-home settings.

Ironically, although Jason expressed resentment about his father’s lack of affection and regular display of anger, he himself was somehow caught up in playing the game of masculine toughness and performing the cool pose (A. G. Johnson, 2005).

**JW:** But isn’t it okay for guys to show that they are vulnerable?

**JASON:** No, no.

**JW:** No, eh? So then that’s why you feel you need to deal with it [[emotion]] by yourself?

**JASON:** Yeah, that’s why you deal with it by yourself. I know one thing I used to do is take shower, and when I would go in the shower, that’s when I would cry and stuff like that. [Um hmm.] Because when you come out, no one can see it. You come out, you’re already wet and you’re done. So, it’s like, doing it in safe places to express, ‘cos the thing is if you don’t express it, if you don’t cry, if you don’t let that out, then your whole body can still have all these emotions inside of you. And that’s when you see guys fight all the time. You see them fight all the time because they are scared, ‘cos they’re angry. They’re angry because they can’t express their fear, their vulnerability. So, they have to put this into what they are allowed to express. So, then people just fight, and that’s why people lash out.

By retreating to the backstage (the shower) to cry, Jason was able to construct and present a socially approved masculine self in public (Goffman, 1959). His embodiment of his early socialization under his mother’s feminist influence put him at odds with the demands in the field of masculinity at school. The inertia or hysteresis effects of Jason’s primary habitus had placed him in a double bind of tension and conflicts (Hardy, 2008). Jason drew on the dominant discourse of the causal relationship between men’s unexpressed emotions and their engagement
in physical violence, and implied that his crying in the shower was not a sign of weakness but an affirmation of his choice to be a non-violent guy.

7.3. Masculine Habitus: Class Matters

As discussed in Chapter 3, class is not a ready-made or fixed reality; it is a theoretical category that allows us to explain and predict social practices and power relations (Bourdieu, 2000). Agents occupying similar theoretical positions in reality also share similar objective conditions of existence and similar class habituses. When I asked the young Black men from Macee Grove about their experiences growing up as ‘guys’ and what it meant to be ‘guys,’ their narratives painted a picture of manhood that is based on competitiveness, strength, family responsibilities, and gender roles.

TYLER: How to be a guy? Mmm, well watching TV, I learned that, you know, the guy is supposed to be the more dominant person in the relationship. Like, the guy is suppose to be the one that, you know, pretty much takes care of the woman, provides for the family, the role-model, the hard worker, pretty much – and the female is supposed to be, like, the caregiver, taking care of the kids and that kind of stuff. So I guess, like, you know, to be a man you have to be powerful and strong and determined.

JW: Do you believe in it?

TYLER: Mmm, kind of. It’s a dog-eat-dog world and you look out for yourself, then you look out for other people.

JW: What do you mean “it’s a dog eat dog world”? At your age?

TYLER: Every age. Like, if you want something, you got to go and get it. No one’s gonna hand you anything. Like, if I want something, I have to get it myself. Like me and another person want it? I’m not gonna sit there and like, “Alright you can have it ‘cause you know you want it more than I do.” If I want it, I’m getting it. Dog-eat-dog. (...) It’s survival of the fittest, pretty much.

In some ways, Tyler’s competitiveness was contextual. Throughout our interviews, he came across as a sensitive, respectful, and gentle young man; it was likely because we did not share an ‘illusio’ for a specific ‘game’ of struggles. Tyler was not interested in the academic field where I was trying to acquire capital, and I was not in the position to enter the sub-field of youth masculinity in his social worlds.

Tyler’s narrative of a ‘dog-eat-dog world’ suggests an embodiment of the symbolic violence of social Darwinism that has been revived by neoliberalism and advanced capitalism, and propagated in popular culture in the form of masculinist ‘gangsta’ rap (hooks, 2004) and reality TV shows that promote meanness and ruthless competition (Giroux & Giroux, 2008). At Macee Grove, the uptake of the dog-eat-dog discourse was common among the young men, as Shawn shared in the individual interview.
SHAWN: The thing is, you can’t trust anybody out here. Some guys, they’re your friends, like they’re really your friends and they’ll turn on you. They see that – like there’s jealous people everywhere you go. Like they’ll be your friends, come to your house eat your food, say “hi” to your mom and they find out that you’re doing something better than them and if they want that, they’ll take it from you.

The young men’s embodiment of ‘social Darwinism,’ a popular ideological discourse based on the idea of ‘survival of the fittest’ (Calhoun, 2002), created intra-group tension and contradictions as they tried to juggle peer loyalty and distrust. Being a marginalized group, their strong friendship and loyalty stemmed from their need for mutual protection and social connections (Way, 2004). However, their collective social reality of material and symbolic deprivation also defined for them the rules of the game, which often amounted to the “dog-eat-dog” mentality. While impoverished communities are often stereotyped by the dominant groups as having a ‘culture of poverty’ characterized by apathy, distrust, disorganization, and a lack of cooperation among their members, it is the inequitable distribution of power in the form of “low levels of community institutional resources” coupled with “high degrees of social isolation” that create a breeding ground for negative forces such as stigma, distrust, violence, crime, substance abuse, apathy, and so on (S. S. Smith, 2007, p. 48).

JW: Yeah? So then, you feel that you have to take care of yourself and be dominant. Were there any moment when you feel, “Oh I don’t want to be so masculine, to be so strong or to be so dominant”?

TYLER: Mm, no, ‘cos when you’re like masculine and you’re strong, it’s the same thing as being popular. The more power you have, the more people want to be your friend. The more people want to be around you. The more likeable you seem to people.

Whereas I perceived competiveness and domination as stressful performances, Tyler offered a whole different explanation of the logic of the masculine game. With or without deliberate reflexivity, Tyler perceived that acquiring one form of masculine capital would help him obtain more cultural and social capital in other forms (Bourdieu, 1986). This was a way of being that he had come to consider natural.

In addition to conceptualizing manhood based on the ideas of strength and competition, the young men in Macee Grove tended to emphasize self-reliance and economic independence.

JW: Ok. So when you were growing up who influenced you most with ideas about how to be a guy?

BRANDON: Probably – (pause) probably my brothers.

JW: The older ones?

BRANDON: Yeah.

JW: So what kind of messages did they give you?
BRANDON: Like, (pause) like, I don’t even know still, I knew how to be a man because I just see it. Like, I always see it around, I see it around me, TV, a lot of stuff. JW: So what do you see around? What does it mean to be a man around here? BRANDON: Like, to be a man around here you have to, like you can’t be asking people for like nothing that I can get, if I can get it, I don’t need to ask anyone for it. JW: So, be independent? BRANDON: Yeah, be independent. Don’t live off other people and stuff like that. Like I don’t want to live off – owing and then getting debt. (…) Yeah, and then it would just drive me crazy and stuff like that. (…) So, that’s why I don’t ask people for stuff, stuff that I can get my self.

According to the young men, Brandon’s mom had an excellent reputation among his friends for being ‘funny’ and ‘nice,’ which indicated that she frequently talked to her children and their friends. However, Brandon (like Jason) also considered his brothers to be the ones who taught him about being a guy. His initial response of “I knew how to be a man because I just see it” suggests that he took his gendered habitus for granted and seldom thought about what it meant to be a guy (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). It was only upon deliberate reflection that he came to name material self-reliance as a key signifier of manhood.

Joshua, who grew up as an only child, had a very distant relationship with his father, who remarried and started a new family. He lived with his aunt and uncle in Macee Grove and spoke about his gender socialization in general terms. His ideas about manhood came from the embodiment of what he observed in his social world.

JW: So when you were growing up, what kind of messages did you – did people tell you about how to be a guy? JOSHUA: It’s just the media, basically- yeah, because I watched a lot of T.V. growing up, music videos. And they don’t tell you but they dress in a certain way, you know, it’s like these guys are on T.V., they must be doing something right if they’re dressing like that. So there’s, like, stereotypes saying you have to dress like urban, stuff like that, you know, with all the jewelry, earrings and all that stuff. Nice cars- nice house, nice wife. Like, basically the perfect nuclear family – yeah, something like that. JW: And did your dad or your uncle ever tell you how to be a guy? JOSHUA: Probably, but I can’t remember. (…) “Just hold your head high.”

It was interesting to note that both Brandon and Joshua identified television and music videos as a key source of influence on their perceptions of masculinity. Living with limited economic and social resources, television was likely the cultural form that was most accessible to them and therefore became an important part of their masculine habituses (Seiter, 1999). Media such as the Internet and television function as a cultural field that also asserts gendered influences on the young men’s habituses.
Most of the participants at Macee Grove named hip-hop as their favorite music. Timothy J. Brown (2006) suggests that the hip-hop Black masculine culture\(^\text{32}\) has created a “modern-day double consciousness” that renders Black men as both the oppressed and the oppressors (p. 208). He considers hip-hop Black masculinity to be both progressive and regressive. Its progressiveness is associated with the freedom, albeit constrained, for young Black men to exercise power by constructing an oppositional identity that resists White hegemonic masculine domination; it also challenges the dominant discourse of Black masculinity based solely on race to include the discussion of class status. The hip-hop culture creates a field of its own whereby being Black, male, and from the ’hood is converted into valued bodily and cultural capital, as illustrated by Shawn’s popularity among Black middle-class youth in his new neighbourhood (as discussed in Chapter 6). The hip-hop culture has even enabled some Black hip-hop artists to compete in the field of the American music industry, although their lack of economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital keeps them in subordinated positions (Basu, 2005). However, Brown (2006) also considers the hip-hop Black masculinist culture to be regressive because its oppositional identity is built on patriarchal domination of women and competitive individualism that undermines the collective interests for the Black communities to resist social domination.

The adoption of the hip-hop culture among marginalized Black young men makes tremendous sense when we consider in detail the key message that Joshua received from his family: “Just hold your head high.” This seemingly ordinary message about acting with self-confidence, dignity, and pride is in fact an instruction with complex meanings. I contend that head-held-high is a social performance that is intricately tied to one’s social position. On one hand, it is about our impression management in everyday life by putting on a ‘mask’ of “the self we would like to be” (Goffman, 1959, p. 19). On the other hand, ‘which’ mask we choose to put on is not entirely of our own free will. In the case of the young men at Macee Grove, ‘holding one’s head high’ is about gaining respect and respectability, that are closely linked to their social status based on their class and racial identities. As bell hooks (2000) emphasizes, respect differs from respectability; respect is about “being seen and treated like you matter” (p. 20). Respectability, in a Bourdieusian sense, is a stake in a game that agents occupying subordinated social positions must struggle to attain.

\(^{32}\) Hip-hop Black culture is signified through specific tastes and styles: “cornrows, tattoos, baggy clothes, stocking caps, jewelry, music and use of the vernacular”; it is (re)produced in cultural products such as music videos, movies, athletic icons, and entertainment; it is reified as “a sign of a strong black man” (T. J. Brown, 2006, p. 201)
The pursuit of respectability and of respect both demand recognition of dignity . . . but what they imply differs significantly, and their meaning and occurrence vary according to the position of the individual or group within the social field. Respectability is sought by the dominated but largely eludes their reach. It is partially attainable by the middle classes, though precariously. It is taken for granted by the dominant. Respectability is sought somewhat submissively and deferentially; respect is claimed or demanded more assertively...

(Sayer, 2005, p. 176)

Sayer goes on to argue that for the subordinated to become respectable, they have to take on certain aesthetic and moral practices that are approved by the dominant classes. In other words, respectability is a symbolic capital acquired through the subordinated group’s own submission to domination and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1998). For the young men at Macee Grove, gaining respectability is not individual but a collective and precarious practice; ‘holding one’s head high’ is a perpetual performance required to counteract the racialized stigma associated with the history of slavery, gun violence, crime, and poverty, which has been ingrained in the collective habitus of Canadians. It is through the Black masculine hip-hop culture that the young men gain a sense of respect – that is, to be seen and treated like they matter (hooks, 2004), but in so doing, they also have to trade in a part of their humanness when they engage in misogynistic practices.

When I asked the middle-class young men from Troikaville similar questions about their growing up experiences as ‘guys’ and what it meant to be ‘guys,’ their narratives painted a different picture than that of the young men from the ’hood. Although they also associated manliness with sports, competitiveness, and strength, there was less emphasis on economic independence or family responsibilities.

JASON: The challenges for men are, like I guess, being competitive and argumentative, being loud, outspoken, you know?
JW: Um hmm.
JASON: People try to silence you. And being promiscuous and things like that, like that’s a big, I guess that’s something positive about being a guy, male promiscuousness is kind of accepted.
JW: You mean it’s okay for you guys to have multiple partners?
JASON: Yeah, a guy, it’s okay for guys to have lots of partners, cause that’s what guys are supposed to do, but when girls have lots of partners. I think the guys are fearful that they've got a disease.

Jason’s narrative suggests that manliness is a form of cultural capital to be acquired through normative practices such as being loud, argumentative, and promiscuous. Similarly, Mihir described a set of implicit rules on masculine performance, including being loud.
JW: What are these unspoken rules about being guys?

MIHIR: Um-m. There are a lot of unspoken rules. And I don't know who came up with them. They are not necessarily right but I'm not against all those rules. Most people think I'm a very manly guy, like macho kind of guy. They actually don't think I have feelings for any girls or anything. Most of my female friends think that I just go for girls purely because I want to have sex with them and that's it. But, you know, I do have feeling for the girls.

JW: So what are some of those rules? That makes you come across as macho to your friends?

MIHIR: Um-m-m, it's just your personality like, how you talk to people, what you look like, um-m-m, I'm not a big guy, but I'm not a little guy either, so you know, it's just like some of those characteristics and how you talk to girls, whether they're your friends, or potential relationships or whatever, like within five minutes, you could tell what kind of personality that a person have although you might not be accurate. Um-mm. (...) I think I am somewhat of a macho guy and the fact that I like to drink a lot, or I play sports, a lot of contact sports, or I go to the gym, or when I talk in a group, I'm usually louder than other people, things like that make you a bit more like a macho kind of guy. But at the same time, I like just sitting at home with my girlfriend, um-m-m, or you know hugging a girl without having to do anything else but hug her. So you know, things like people don't usually see me do, not like I'm trying to hide it from them but they just don't know that part to my personality. They automatically see these other like stereotypical things and say, “Oh, he's a macho guy and he doesn't really have any feelings.”

For Mihir, manliness was measured by how guys carried themselves in public, that is, his ‘macho’ mannerisms and practices (e.g., play contact sports, act cool, talk louder than others). His description of his intimate interactions with his girlfriend in a private space suggested that he performed his masculinity differently depending on the contexts and the demands of the fields he inhabited.

Although the young men from Macee Grove also associated manliness with how they carried themselves (e.g., head-held-high, don’t ask people for stuff), they seemed to emphasize family as masculine capital. Furthermore, what appeared to be most telling about how class mattered in these young men’s lives was reflected in their life and career aspirations. Although a few young men from both the 'hoods and non-'hoods were undecided about their career goals, most of the young men who grew up in the 'hoods aspired to take up a trade (e.g., construction, plumbing, electrician, auto mechanics, or carpentry) right after high school. Their choice of taking up a trade in college seemed to be premised on their need for financial independence and their aspiration to be material providers for their families, as reflected in Joseph’s resonant text.

They call me lover boy,
Because I love all the good stuff I get to do, and I mean it.

I love my relationships,
Between me and my girlfriend, me and my family.

I am proud of my heritage.
I want to finish school,
Go to college,
Get a better job,
Get married and have a family. (Resonant Text, Joseph, 17, emigrated from Chad)

Although all men are expected to be material providers in Canadian society, the middle-class young men in this study did not seem to express the same level of concern about their financial independence and family responsibilities. Their career aspirations tended to focus on their personal interests and satisfaction. For instance, Jason, who just graduated from university, chose to work with young people instead of older homeless adults.

JW: What draws you to working with young people?
JASON: Um, well, I started off working with homeless men, and that was like too much for me. I didn't feel I could really connect with them and stuff.
JW: Um hmm.
JASON: They just kind of saw me as a grand-kid. So, I thought, you know what, maybe I should get a job with a younger population. So, then I started working with youth. And, it's a really good spot, I feel like I can connect with younger guys and even just be like a little bit of a role model to them.
JW: So what would you like to do in five years?
JASON: Be a manager or something, a manager in a program.

Similarly, when I asked Mihir, who was in his second year of an undergraduate program at a local university, what he would like to do in five years, he replied with confidence, “I don’t know yet. Like, I am in a good program, when I finish I will find something I like.”

While all of the young men in this study aspired to become ‘somebody,’ get a good job, and have a family, many odds were against those growing up in poverty and in dominated positions.

The more power one has over the world, the more one has aspirations that are adjusted to their chances of realization, and also stable and little affected by symbolic manipulation. Below a certain level, on the other hand, aspirations burgeon, detached from reality and sometimes a little crazy, as if, when nothing was possible, everything became possible, as if all discourses about the future - prophecies, divinations, predictions, millenarian announcements - had no other purpose than to fill what is no doubt one of the most painful of wants: the lack of a future. (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 226)

Bourdieu’s words remind me of the dream of Zahid, who at aged 16 had been in and out of detention centres and was fearful for his life because of his involvement with gang activities on the street. Like Joseph and other young people living in low-income neighbourhoods (Andres & Adamuti-Trache, 2008), Zahid wanted to be the provider for a conventional family.

Zahid: I want to have a kid. (Voice softens.) I want to get married. I want to have a house and a car. I don't want to sell crack. I want to be a doctor or something and make legal money so
the police don’t raid my house and I don’t get to see my kids till I’m twenty something or whatever.

Zahid’s dream reflected his desire to escape from the stark realities of living in the ’hood and being entangled with street gangs; it was very different from the aspirations of Colin.

**Colin:** I was going to [[name of university]] last year in the [[name of program]], but I really wasn’t enjoying it so I left that about three weeks ago. I decided to become an engineer. So right now I’m going back to night school to take the necessary pre-requisites. My dad is an engineer and he is very supportive of me [[...]] I am not really worried about money. Like I need enough to live and I want to be able to pay my tuition but the engineering program is such that you don’t need a lot of money cause you can do co-op. I don’t need a lot of money so I’m just going to enjoy myself, you know, on what I’m doing.

For Colin, the career goal of becoming an engineer was within his reach. Growing up in a middle-class family and being the son of an engineer, he was endowed with a middle-class habitus that enabled him to see his possibilities in life. Furthermore, his possession of economic, cultural, and social capital would enable him to succeed not only at university but possibly in the field of engineering.

As I conclude this subsection, I cannot stop thinking about the smile on Joshua’s face as he shared with me his career dream, “I need four more credits. I’m going back to school in September [[2007]] to get that done. And hopefully I’ll go to Alberta cause I heard they need people over there. I want that sixteen-dollar an hour minimum wage job. (Laughing.) So, that’s what I want to do.” I wonder if Joshua has succeeded in acquiring his high school diploma and whether he made it to Alberta in the midst of the worst economic recession since the Great Depression.

### 7.4. Masculine Habitus: School Matters

Since habitus is not fixed but generative, our everyday experiences continue to reinforce or transform our primary (initial) habitus. The narratives of the young men in this study suggest that the school functions as both a place of competition and a social space of struggles to shape the students’ secondary (evolving) habituses (Reed-Danahay, 2005). Research on education and social inequality show that the school is a site where systemic inequality is legitimized and the dominant cultures are produced and reproduced (Georg, 2004; J. Johnson, 2002; MacLeod, 2009; P. Willis, 1981). As Bourdieu (1977) points out, the habitus acquired in the family underlies the structuring of school experiences (in particular the reception and assimilation of the specifically pedagogic message), and the habitus transformed by schooling, itself diversified, in turn underlies the structuring of all subsequent experiences (e.g. the reception and assimilation of the messages of the culture industry or work experiences), and so on, from restructuring to restructuring. (p. 87)
In competing for cultural and social capital within the social space at school, students often internalize the dominant vision of gender, class, and racial divisions and submit to the symbolic violence that perpetually shapes their secondary or evolving habitus (Giroux, 1983; McLeod & Yates, 2006), as illustrated in a chat between Tyler and Patrick during one of our go-along walks.

TYLER: So, when you were in grade six, I was in grade eight?
PATRICK: Yeah.
TYLER: So, by then I was like pretty much popular, you know? (Turns to me.)
JW: (Laughing, turns to Patrick.) Do you remember him being popular?
PATRICK: Yeah, from like basketball.
TYLER: Yeah, that was the thing, if you are on the basketball team, you are automatically, you are pretty much popular and liked by everybody. So, like, if you’re a jock kind of guy, then you are pretty much –
PATRICK: //Basketball is, like, a dominant sport in this area. Everything is pretty well about basketball.

For the young men at Macee Grove, it was through structured activities such as organized sports or choir that they were able to acquire their bodily capital and convert it into other forms of cultural capital. Similarly, Mihir also identified sports as the key strategy to acquiring cultural capital for use in the (hetero)erotic field33.

MIHIR: Um-m-m (..) definitely in high school, like (..) you know, you have the jocks and stuff like that and, uh (..) you know, especially if you played more contact sports, like I played rugby and stuff (..) or soccer. Um-m (..) you know, you were looked at being more (..) like – your athletic abilities were definitely an attractive thing to girls, and if you combine that, the athletic abilities, with being (..) you know, smart or intelligent, um-m (..) that would be like a huge bonus because I think girls like, you know, you have your jocks who are sometimes associated with being not too bright or whatever. So-o-o, you know, if you have both, then you automatically elevated in status. And yeah, for sure I think in a high school environment where everyone knows each other, they’re like, “Oh, that guy is the quarterback,” or whatever.

However, Mihir suggested that being a jock was not enough. His emphasis on the need to possess both athletic and academic abilities reflects his middle-class habitus. Mihir’s perspectives were quite different from those of the young men at Macee Grove, as Tyler and Patrick further expanded on their perceptions of cultural capital in the (hetero)erotic field.

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33 In the context of this study, the term (hetero)erotic field refers to the social space in which young men compete against other young men (and young women compete against other young women) for dominant positions that are determined by the volume of erotic capital they hold. Adam Isaiah Green (2008) defines erotic capital as “the quality and quantity of attributes that an individual possesses, which elicit an erotic response in another” (p. 29). What elicits erotic responses is shaped by the agents’ habituses. Since the (hetero)erotic field admits both men and women, it is structured by complex and overlapping social relations (e.g., patriarchy, racial domination, class divisions).
TYLER: Another big thing was choir.

PATRICK: Yeah.

TYLER: If you weren’t on the basketball team, then you were in choir, and you knew people from choir. Yeah, that was a pretty big thing, you know. It sounds kind of dorky or whatever. A lot of guys were in the choir, and they used to sing and dance and do the steps and stuff, and people would like – they would cheer them on and stuff (...).

JW: Oh so, the guys that were in choir and dance, they’re hot too?

PATRICK: Yeah, they were pretty much hot, a popular team.

JW: With guys and girls?

TYLER: Yeah, especially the girls, the girls liked the guys that were in choir, but the girls were also in choir too. They socialized a lot.

In Patrick and Tyler’s social world, academic abilities were not considered to be valuable cultural capital in the (hetero)erotic and the homosocial fields. Most of the young men at Macee Grove had not completed high school. Most of them aspired to become tradesmen. Tyler wanted to pursue a career in acting and considered school to be ‘useless’ for him. Indeed, success in academic performance was seen as a sign of a cultural ‘deficit.’

JW: So then, what happened to the guys who couldn’t play basketball?

PATRICK: They go to the computer lab (mockingly).

TYLER: Yeah. (Laughter.)

JW: Ooh, o-kay.

TYLER: They are good on the computer.

JW: O-kay. Well, at least there is a place for them.

TYLER: I am not saying we used to make fun of them or anything but (...)

PATRICK: That’s just how it is.

TYLER: I guess maybe they were too scared to talk to us, or whatever (...)

PATRICK: You just find your group.

JW: Yeah?

PATRICK: There were some guys who weren’t really good at basketball, or they, you know, but they were just funny or something. I don’t know, you find something and you just, just stick with it, you just try to blend in.

The young men’s narratives paint a picture of dynamic social positioning within multiple interacting fields: the education field, the school field, the masculinity field, the homosocial field, and (hetero)erotic field. These fields demand different kinds of cultural capital from the players as they compete for dominant positions (Thomson, 2008). For instance, the education field privileges the middle- and upper-class habituses, and tends to endow the students of dominant classes with the ‘interest’ or ‘illusio’ to take part in academic competitions at school, leaving the working-class students with ‘disinterest’ that translates into academic ‘failure’ and ‘drop-out’ (MacLeod, 2009; P. Willis, 1981).

However, social agents are never left out of all fields; students with little interest in academic competition tend to have an illusio for other games. In the case of the young men in
this study, the strategies they used to compete for cultural capital in the homosocial and (hetero)erotic fields were reflective of their class-race-gender habitus. For instance, the cultural taste in music and style of Jamie, who self-identified as bi-cultural (East Indian and Irish-Scottish) and grew up in the Kestrel Mason ’hood, differed from those of the young Black men in the same ’hood.

**JW:** When did you start getting into music? I know that both you and Paul are really into music, right?

**JAMIE:** Oh yeah, I started playing guitar in like grade six or seven.

**JW:** Yeah? So, what drew you to that?

**JAMIE:** I don’t know, like, me and my cousin wanted to start a band at one point, I didn’t know why. I just thought rock stars are so badass, ‘cos they just do what was badass. I don’t know, from a young age, I just recognized what was badass, like not what was cool, we’re like- what was badass is timeless. Badass is like snake skin, it’s like gambling, the shit that’s timeless, shit that will always be cool, like leather jackets, no matter what you do, leather jackets are badass. And, like, I just recognized that from, like, a young age, and then like rock stars, I already knew what the badass was, like Axel Rose [[of Gun & Roses]]. He was like, “Yeah man, get down the whiskey, 40 women, be right back.” Like I just thought, “That guy was like so cool.” So, me and Paul started bouncing the chicks straight up, ‘cos like we were taking one right out of the book of Gene Simmons, he was another one of my idols, he was like, “Yo man, I want to drink or do drugs ‘cos I am Gene Simmons.” Man, that guy is so cool. (Laughing.) And I’d try to be like that, but then I was like, “Well, music is interesting!” And then I discovered that I actually had an interest in music. And then I got good at guitar. And then I play with drums. I play bass.

As discussed in Chapter 6, Jamie did not take up hip-hop or basketball at school. Instead, he adopted hard rock and heavy metal music, and the punk style to construct his own distinction. Playing the guitar and adopting the punk style was not merely a hobby or an expression of taste; it was Jamie’s strategy to acquire cultural capital, which in turn helped him generate more capital in the homosocial and (hetero)erotic fields at his local school.

**JW:** Okay so, another thing that I was very curious about, you know when you guys were back in high school, and I think it was Paul who said that girls really liked the two of you because you guys were rebels. So, then how did you like present yourself as rebels and how did you get all the girls?

**PAUL:** That’s just how we were though.

**JAMIE:** That’s just how other people perceive us as rebels. Like, that’s just the way we lived life, like we had a uniform school, and it was our middle school, you’re pretty much stuck there unless you have an incredible complaint. There’s too much trouble changing schools, so I just decided to fight the system. That was a lot easier. So, I just, like, looked at all the rules cause we had a semi-casual uniform, so there was a lot of loopholes. I looked through all the rules, and I’m like, okay, and I would walk into the school with like black pants and like a black shirt, I just got dressed that morning in all black just because that’s how I dressed. I followed uniform rule, but I had like huge zippers here (pointing across his chest) and like – (...)  

**PAUL:** Dude, like retarded shit, some shit didn’t even look that cool, but we would do it to piss people off, especially authority figures that think they’re like top shit, but it’s like, “Fuck you.” We hate, we just generally hate it when people think they’re bigger than us.
Despite growing up in impoverished conditions, Jamie was creative in converting ordinary materials into distinctive cultural products as he recounted his childhood realities. “It was like, clothes that were hand-me-downs, and shelter was a shitty apartment, and the food was like-Chef Boyardee kind of thing.” In adopting the punk subculture of bricolage (Epstein, 1998), he was able to construct an identity of distinction out of subversive styles and anti-authority behaviours. In challenging the school authority, Jamie and Paul traded in their chances of acquiring ‘future’ cultural and symbolic capital through education for the more immediate homosocial and (hetero)erotic capital at their school and ’hood. For young people who grow up with material and social deprivations, investing in the future through formal education does not seem to make sense for them.

Colin, who grew up in a White middle-class family, also adopted the punk style to construct his distinction at school; but unlike Jamie and Paul, he did not adopt it to resist the school authority but to resist heteronormative and hegemonic masculine dominations within the youth culture at school. It is important to recognize that there is not one homogenous punk subculture. In general, the punk subculture represents an expression of authenticity, libertarianism, anti-establishment, and resistance to the dominant culture (Stephen W. Baron, 1989; Lewin & Williams, 2009). However, the way one goes about ‘doing’ punk is associated with one’s primary and secondary habituses. Punk youth who experience economic and social marginalization often turn to the street as their space of self-determination or resistance, as Jamie and Paul described throughout their interviews. Many punk youth engage in substance use, crime, or violence to survive the harsh realities of street life (Roy, Haley, Leclerc, Boudreau, & Boivin, 2007).

In contrast, middle-class punk youth tend to engage in symbolic resistance in the form of a bohemian lifestyle, distinct bodily fashions, and tastes of music (Stephen W. Baron, 1989). As Colin admitted, “All my friends are involved in art in some capacity, certainly like just having an interest and an appreciation of art, art for art’s sake [. . .] everybody plays an instrument or sings or designs jewelry or whatever.” Cotton Seiler (2000) argues that the punk subculture has been co-opted by advanced capitalism and turned into a form of commodified resistance. In the case
of Colin, his subordinated masculinity status associated with his bisexuality (R. W. Connell, 2005) was compensated by the cultural capital he had acquired through his dominant position as a White middle-class young man, the masculine capital he acquired through taking part in organized sports, and the cultural capital he produced through ‘being’ punk. Furthermore, his middle-class habitus enabled him to occupy a favorable position in the field of education. As a result, he was able to fulfill the academic requirements at school and attend university.

JW: So, like, the first time when people call you that [[fag]], did you react at all?
COLIN: Not really because I guess (...) in like grade eight or grade nine, I mean – I was going through a whole thing like, “Oh, I’m like a punk rock outcast.” So it kind of, like, egged me on. I was like, “Alright, these are the popular kids and they’re outcasting me, and that’s good!” You know, I was really listening to like Nirvana and stuff like that. It’s really like, “Good, we’re the outcasts.” And I had a group of friend who were really, you know, we all kind of enjoyed that kind of mentality so I even kind of enjoyed it. I guess to be honest, ‘cos I was like successfully distancing myself from the mainstream culture.
JW: So then that actually becomes a positive thing for you.
COLIN: In a way, yeah, in a really perverse way.

Colin’s adoption of the punk style and the identity of an ‘outcast’ was an act of transgression (Butler, 1990/1999). It enabled him to turn his bisexual identity into protest against heteronormativity and cultural and social capital within the context of a counterculture at school. He was able to challenge homophobia and hegemonic masculine domination in the safety of a supportive network. However, not all social agents are able to take up repetitious acts of transgression to transform their social identities, and not all performative utterances command the same effect. An agent’s ability to appropriate an insult and convert it into cultural and symbolic capital is determined by the fields he inhabits, a combination of the volume of specific capital and the overall volume of all forms of capital he holds (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In the case of Colin, his total volume of cultural capital - related to his White middle-class status - enabled him to compete at school despite his subordinated masculinity status as a bi-sexual youth (R. W. Connell, 2005). However, his freedom of sexual transgression was precarious because his sexuality also put him at risk of harassment and violence (gay bashing) in our heteronormative and homophobic society.

7.5. Masculine Habitus: Street Corners Matters

Within the education system, the students’ primary or family habitus are ordered according to the structural homology defined by the dominant cultures and classes. Zahid, who
came from a low-income immigrant family, had to contend with many challenges when he entered the cultural field of a Canadian school.

**JW:** So then, what did you remember about public school?

**ZAHID:** (...) Well I used to get picked on a lot, ‘cos I didn’t (..) I couldn’t speak English. And then, my friend Dalmar came from Somalia when I was in grade four and he was in grade five, that’s when nobody would start bothering me after that.

**JW:** How come? (...) Like, he was from Somalia, could he speak English?

**ZAHID:** No, but he was stronger than I was.

**JW:** So he’s a big guy. And then?

**ZAHID:** And me and him, we were like in the same position, right? ‘Cos (..) we were both from different countries, couldn’t speak English, we are both Muslim, our parents are the same so, you know, we got along well.

When Zahid’s family and ethnic habitus did not meet the demands of the cultural fields at school, he was drawn to take part in a different game on the street. He ‘hung out’ with Dalmar and developed his bodily and street capital through engaging in physical fights and hustling (e.g. selling marijuana, trading stolen goods, etc.).

**JW:** And did Dalmar stay at school? Is he in trouble too?

**ZAHID:** He had been in and out of jail.

**JW:** So what happened with him?

**ZAHID:** He beats up everybody for some reason, but he stopped. He stopped same as I did. We both feel that it’s not worth it.

**JW:** So how did all this fighting happen?

**ZAHID:** When we get picked on, we just fight, fight our way out. That’s how we grew up.

For Zahid and Dalmar, violence and physical fights were a way to gain respect and to stop the bullying at school and on the street. Zahid’s narratives suggest that his social trajectory of life chances was shaped by his social position in the overlapping fields of cultural production, masculinity, and class relations (Bourdieu, 1984). At age 15, Zahid dropped out of school and joined different youth gangs in the low-income neighbourhoods in Toronto. At the time of our interviews, he could not enter Macee Grove for fear of gang related retaliation.

Elijah Anderson (1999) suggests that engagement in physical violence is strongly associated with social class. Middle-class men are less likely to turn to physical violence or retaliation to gain a sense of self-respect as they have access to economic and other resources to sustain their masculine identities. Middle-class men, Anderson argues, may even consider it to

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34 The definition of a street gang varies across Canada and around the world. Michael C. Chettleburgh (2007) defines street gangs as groups of young people, under the age of 28, belonging to a particular geographic area, and having a fluid leadership structure. They may display their group identity through specific colors, insignia, hand signs, group codes, and graffiti; they may or may not engage in crime.
show strength of character by walking away from a possible altercation. On the other hand, impoverished inner city young men consider fleeing from a fight as a loss of self-respect and an invitation for further disrespect from others. While poverty is not the direct cause of violence and involvement in gang activities, young men who lack economic capital, educational aspiration, and cultural capital are often drawn to life on the street to achieve what they perceive to be “the mandate of manhood – namely to acquire income, status, and attract women” (Barker, 2005, p. 63). By engaging in physical violence and hustling, he was able to acquire street respect and social capital to construct his masculine identity and establish a place of belonging.

The above exchange between Zahid and me illustrated a collision of our cultural assumptions. My suggestion that Zahid did not “come across as a tough guy” reflected my ignorance on the symbolic significance of toughness to street involved youth at the time of the interview. For inner city young men, street respect is a form of rare capital that must be guarded with vigilance to the extent that “they will risk their life to attain and maintain it” (Anderson, 1999, p. 76).

In addition to engaging in physical fights, the young men from Macee Grove also acquired their socialized masculine subjectivities by hanging out with and observing the older male youth in their everyday life worlds.
Joshua’s narrative suggests that age is a form of street capital in the hierarchy of homosocial domination, whereby the trafficking of young women (G. Rubin, 1975) becomes a stake in their struggles and competitions against each other. Furthermore, since many of the young men in Macee Grove do not live with their fathers or other male adults at home, they tend to look to the local older young men for guidance, practical street advice, and protection.

Thus, most of the young men at Macee Grove seemed to accept this hierarchy of domination as natural. They perceived it to be a form of street respect based on the wisdom or power that the older male youth rightfully gained through their years of lived experience and social connections.

35 During the group interview, the young men in Macee Grove talked about ‘the locker-room-sex’ as a common practice within their housing project. According to their description, some women from other neighbourhoods voluntarily had free sex with men in the locker room in the basement of the low-rise buildings. Usually eight to ten men would line up to have sex with the woman one by one, and the younger men were often sent away by the older dominating men who took over the scene.
JW: Like what kind of trouble could happen?
MAWULI: ‘Cuz he probably knows. Like, if he’s older and he knows guys, more guys his age than we know guys our age, like, they’re probably stronger because they’re older. Stuff like that.

Although Mawuli held a naturalized perspective about the age-related power hierarchy among young men in Macee Grove, he also admitted that their submission to the older young men was based on a pragmatic recognition that any direct challenge to this domination could lead to danger and negative consequences. Other young men also expressed this sense of danger during the group interview.

JW: So then, what you’re saying is that within the neighbourhood there are guys who are older and they have more power than you guys.
SHAWN: Yeah! They just come through and just like – start bullying the little kids.
PATRICK: //Yeah.
SHAWN: And like, you can’t really do nothing ‘cos you know their EGOS and everything, so you’re just like, “Alright I’m not gonna mess with you then.”
JW: And are those guys FROM the neighbourhood or from somewhere else?
PATRICK: Somewhere else.
SHAWN: They’re probably – they’re from all over, man.
JOSHUA: They’re from all over. Here and there, near or far.
JEREMIAH: Yeah, it’s like – the older guys from the neighbourhood, you talk to them and they’re like, “Yo. Blah blah blah.” They’d be sensible, they’d be like, “Alright” or whatever. But if they’re friends from different neighbourhoods, they’d be like, (mimicking a low gruff voice) “NAH. NAH. You’re messed up, get out of here! We don’t want you, blah blah blah.”

The discussion of power and domination among the young men at Macee Grove was very much a guarded talk. Although the young men openly acknowledged that domination existed based on age, they were careful in constructing a difference between the nice insiders versus the mean outsiders in order to protect their collective Macee Grove identity and reputation (as discussed in Chapter 6).

Similarly, Matthew’s narratives on Lamarside suggest that street habitus is a socialized subjectivity embodied through immersion on the street, where lived experiences and subversive acts are converted into cultural capital.

JW: So the older guys are the cool guys.
MATTHEW: Yeah. They’re cool and they have the respect, you know.
JW: How do they earn their coolness and respect?
MATTHEW: Oh, by like, if you have an area, like Lamarside is where we chill at everyday, it’s the base. We’ve seen them around there and see what they’re doing and stuff. And like whatever we did for the first time, they have already done it. They’re more experienced and everything, and with the girls too –
JW: //Like doing what?
MATTHEW: Like ah, like drinking, buying smoke, cigarettes. Like everything you’re curious about, they already did it.

Hanging out with the older young men enabled Matthew to acquire street capital and respect among young men and women of his own age. However, this street capital was not gained without a cost.

JW: So then, the women you hang out with, are they older or are they younger than you?
MATTHEW: Well there are some girls that I meet through the older guys and some girls that I already knew from before. [Um hmm.] Like, there are two different kinds of girls, like if I hang out with the guys, I get the older girls and they know what they’re doing.
JW: Um hmm. So they’re more experienced?
MATTHEW: Yeah, they’re more mature, not like the younger girls, they’re just like talk and drink. [Yeah.] And, you know, if you have like the chemistry between each other then you can hit it off.
JW: Um hmm. So then you could hit off with some of the older girls too?
MATTHEW: Yeah, yeah. There’s a few times that the older girls tried to hit on me and stuff, but I never did it because like [pause, 0.7].
JW: Why?
MATTHEW: I don’t know. I never did, I never ever really hit off with older girls, there’s just like the tension where the older guys are there and then I’m like the youngest guy and I’m always, you know, getting bullied all the time, and get like “Go get the dishes,” “Clean the dishes,” “Get something,” you know. Always the underdog, but still part of the crew, so yeah. That’s how it is.

For Matthew, the price of membership in the local crew was to become the ‘underdog’ and be dominated by the older guys in Lamarside. This hierarchy of domination became an implicit code of behaviour that extended beyond the homosocial field into the (hetero)erotic field, whereby women were again treated as street capital to be controlled by those in dominant positions within the homosocial hierarchy.

7.6. Masculine Habitus: Double Consciousness, or Double Misrecognition?

As discussed earlier, school constitutes an important site where students compete for dominant positions in multiple overlapping fields such as the academic, athletic, homosocial, (hetero)erotic, ethno-racial fields, and so on. Bourdieu (1984, 1998) argues that an agent’s position in a field is determined by a combination of the volume of field-specific capital and the overall volume of all the forms of capital he holds. Thus, agents sharing a similar position in the social space of one field may have vastly different experiences as they compete for dominant positions in another field.

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 6, our habitus is simultaneously shaped by an interlocking system of power relations based on gender, class, and racial or ethnic divisions.
Diversity within a specific social group in terms of individual habituses, field positions, and social trajectories of life chances can be explained by the interactions between the multiple contexts of their lives: family of origin, gender, class, race, ethnicity, neighbourhood, and so on (McLeod & Yates, 2006). Thus, habitus is “an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133).

Anthony, who was born in Canada and grew up in a middle-class Korean immigrant family, described a set of high school experiences that differed from those of Jason, Colin, and Mihir even though all of them came from a middle-class background.

**ANTHONY:** Um, middle school – high school, I realized that being shy was very um, like a handicap for me and because I realized that I, in order to sort of make it in middle school and high school, I just sort of had to become more aggressive and outgoing, especially socially, but I always felt it very hard to do and um [...] Um, but you know, of course peer pressure was always there, to go and socially join things and stuff, and I found it very hard because of my upbringing, and my personality I guess, um. And in high school it was like – um, was even harder because the pressure got even more intense and besides the academic competition between my friends and I, there was like the social [competition] all of a sudden, because everybody was – some of my friends were getting girlfriends and stuff and I was still alone.

Like other young men, Anthony was under tremendous pressure to demonstrate his masculinity through competitive sports and a public display of heterosexual dating performance (Boyce, et al., 2003). But unlike the others, Anthony was not involved in any organized sports. He came from a family that highly valued academic achievements over other activities. However, his attempts to secure cultural capital through academic competitions did not seem to help him in meeting the local hegemonic masculine expectations such as popularity and athleticism at school. Furthermore, he had experienced a serious childhood illness during which his body was stigmatized.

**ANTHONY:** I was quite ill. I had some kidney disease. I had to go to Sick Kids every year. I had to go on medication and stuff, and it affected the way I looked, like the medication caused the darkening of my teeth. I also became so swollen, my face was so swollen and kids laughed at me at school. I remembered going home crying, and my mom could not help me. What could she do? (Pause.) So, you are right, I am fearful of being judged.

Anthony also recalled many other instances when he was bullied and called ‘Chinaman’ or ‘Chink.’ Unlike Zahid, Anthony was not able to fight off his bullies physically. His middle-class habitus did not endow him with the disposition or the bodily capital to engage in physical fights.
Instead he withdrew into his own world of fantasy which included pornography, voyeuristic fantasy, and masturbation.

**ANTHONY:** I have this urge. What happens is (...) when I am on the subway, or at the mall, and when I see attractive women, or even in wintertime, when I see them in those high heel boots, I feel really horny. It stays with me and when I get home, I have to masturbate (...) or I have to look at a porn magazine and go to a prostitute. It's a pattern, it's an addiction, (...) I should not go to a prostitute so often.

**JW:** So you are struggling about this pattern.

**ANTHONY:** Yes, I am, I am. I am not too happy. I don't think I ever told you. I used to pray to God to take away my life because I was so unhappy.

**JW:** What do you mean?

**ANTHONY:** When I was young, I used to pray every night, I told God, if he or she, or whatever, was going to take someone’s life, it should be mine because I was unhappy.

Throughout the interviews, Anthony expressed sentiments of shame, guilt, self-pity, sorrow, anger, and blaming. Extending Bourdieu’s work, Elspeth Probyn (2005) argues that shyness, guilt, and embarrassment are emotions rooted in and experienced as the bodily affect of shame. Shame comes about when one is interested in the stakes of a game and wishes to take part in it. When one’s habitus does not meet the demands or match the rules of the game, the emotions of shame may erupt out of the fear of contempt and rejection. In other words, shyness could be interpreted as the embodiment of the dominant vision of social divisions or symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1998). If shyness is a bodily response, then it is the omnipresent White hegemonic masculinist gaze in Canada that makes some racial minority young men ‘blush’. Anthony’s shyness is plausibly reflected in his desire to compete in the homosocial and (hetero)erotic fields at school but his ethno-racial habitus and his stigmatized body put him in a subordinated position.

However, as Bourdieu (1990b) suggests, we are always situated in a social field. The moment we step out of one field, we have already entered another. Anthony was not a docile young man. Coming from a middle-class family, he was able to convert his economic capital into (hetero)erotic capital at different non-school sites such as strip clubs and pubs36 (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; A. I. Green, 2008).

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36 Adam Isaiah Green (2008) uses the notion of “erotic worlds” to explicate the complex layers of social relations in the sexual field. When social agents, with embodied and socially constituted erotic desires, go into physical and virtual sites such as bathhouses, bars or chat rooms, they have indeed entered a sexual field structured by historical and current social relations. He conceives erotic capital as “the quality and quantity of attributes that an individual possesses, which elicit an erotic response in another” (p. 29).
Anthony: And so basically I did try, I did go to, um, a few clubs, um you know, I first started with the under-age clubs and stuff. But then, um, got false IDs and we started hanging around places like, um, like strip joints and stuff like that and, uh, basically I realized that in strip joints you could sort of become whoever you want and you didn’t have to be – even though I was shy I could, I could sort of become a different person, I felt a little bit more empowered, I guess in a strip joint for some reason. Yeah.

When Anthony described his experiences at the strip clubs, his spoke with excitement. He moved from assuming the position of a powerless victim to one of a liberated consumer. However, he also continued to express the discourse of guilt and shame. He insisted that it was his shyness and lack of confidence that left him with no other option except to engage in paid sex with dominatrices or sex workers.

Anthony: Um, sometimes when I’m out I see couples and they’re happy and they’re holding hands and they’re hugging or whatever, I sometimes feel that’s what I want and you know, it’s confusing for me because the magazines and movies and stuff, they just show the physical desire side and I’ve never had the emotional side. And maybe that’s part of the upbringing too, because my parents never showed us any physical affection. Um, maybe that had something to do with it too.

JW: So it seems like some of the intercultural issues were part of the struggles for you then?

Anthony: Yeah, always. But not just about the sexual part. Society in general, everything, you know, being caught, caught in between a White society and being Korean. It’s different, it’s difficult.

JW: So then, you mean (...) being Korean, it’s difficult.

Anthony: Um yeah, because you didn’t see any Asian women before, now you do. And um yeah, it was like the standard of beauty, the standard of acceptance was different. It seemed like the White person was the ultimate and I think even now, I see a lot of interracial couples out there and a lot of them, like, the good looking Asian women are with White guys, you know. So it seems like, um, that [Whiteness] is a higher standard.

In expressing his dissatisfaction with commercial sex, Anthony presented himself as someone who endorsed the dominant ideal of heterosexual monogamy that emphasizes affection and love. He described his non-normative erotic practices (engaging in paid sex, erotic fetishism, and sadomasochism) not as a personal choice but as a compensation for his shyness and marginalized position (Monto, 2000), plausibly because he felt the need to present before me a moral self that fitted with the stereotypical “Asian” model minority (Ng, 2004) and the social expectations of his middle-class upbringing (Beverley Skeggs, 2004a). In seeking social approval through the discourse of shyness and (hetero)erotic ‘inadequacy,’ Anthony actively contributed to the reinforcement of the hegemonic masculine norms that oppressed him.

Anthony’s discourses of blame – Whiteness as the underlying cause of his masculine subordination, and the ‘unaffectionate’ Asian parenting as the cause of his (hetero)erotic inadequacy at school – plausibly reflected his inner struggle of a ‘double consciousness,’ as W.
E. B. Du Bois (1904/2006) poignantly articulates, “It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (p.3). Although Anthony appeared to be critical of White hegemonic masculine domination, he also seemed to be caught in seeing himself and others through the lens of this domination.

Anthony’s experience of marginalized masculinity (R. W. Connell, 2005) was not unique. Since the cultural fields and subfields are located within the field of power, they function within a range of structural homologies (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Structural dominations associated with gender, class, and race intersect to differentiate actors and place them in hierarchical positions within various fields and subfields. Andreo, an immigrant young man from Colombia, shared similar experiences of social exclusion in the (hetero)erotic field.

Even though Anthony occupied a dominated position within the field of masculine competition, he also acquired patriarchal dividends (R. W. Connell, 2005) and homosocial capital by engaging in masculine domination over vulnerable and ‘unattractive’ (in Anthony’s own words) young women at school. He admitted to gaining the affections of these young women whom he “did not care for” as a way to attain his sense of manliness and sexual pleasure in the form of unreciprocal oral sex. This suggests that when men experience subordination within the field of masculine competitions, some of them may transform their sufferings into misogynist domination over women in their lives (hooks, 2004). This aspect of Anthony’s embodiment of a double consciousness is similar to that of the hip-hop masculinist culture (as noted in Section 7.3.).
JW: So do you see that as a positive thing? A good thing, or?

ANDREO: A positive thing. Yeah, I'm seeing it as a positive thing, but the negative side about it is that a lot of people don't trust — they don't want to get involved with someone from another culture because they are different, they kind of look at you like you're from a different world, so they don't want to talk to you, so you have to kind of break the ice and then when you break the ice, then sometimes they find out they like you, but they don't know 'cause they don't know people from different cultures.

JW: Have you experienced that being from Colombia?

ANDREO: Yeah, 'cause, like, this girl I'm seeing, she's Canadian, right? And she said, “Oh, I don't know about people from the Colombia. I don't know these people, I don't know how they are.” She said stuff like that, you know? So she's kind of skeptical 'cause she only dated White guys, so she's kind of skeptical of men from other cultural backgrounds, dating them and stuff, so she feels very insecure about me. She says, “You're a Spanish guy, and I never dated a Spanish guy. I only dated White guys. I don't know, we could just be friends, let's just be friends.”

The migration process ruptured Andreo’s primary masculine habitus, leaving him at a loss on how to navigate the (hetero)erotic field. He shared that most of the women he dated in Canada only wanted money and gifts from him. He felt that he was not able to develop any kind of intimate relationship with them.

ANDREO: I'm a nice guy 'cause, um-m (..), I buy everything. I (..) like to do everything, I pay the rent (..), pay the phone bill (laughs), um-m-m pay groceries, uh-h take her out to movies (…), um-m-m wash her hair. Like this other girlfriend I had, the last one — I did everything, I washed her laundry, I did her hair and her makeup, um-m-m, I did almost everything for her but she would do nothing for me, it was like (laughs), I said to myself, “Ok, I'm going to try to treat her like a queen, I'm going to wash her hair, buy her new clothes, take her out to movies, take her to rock concerts, like, just do everything for her.” And I was doing this but I was thinking “Hey, now she's not showing any affection back to me.” Like she wouldn't even kiss me as I go. I just said to myself, “I'm having some problems with that.” ‘Cause sometimes I would hold her and she'd push away from me like that (…) and I got hurt, like — “I'm trying to be nice to you, at least be nice to me.” So, like, it wasn't working. So, like, I wasn't happy.

When I asked Andreo whether his male friends were able to provide him with advice on how to interact with women, he shared that he tried to learn by observing them and following the instructions that they gave him.

ANDREO: Yeah, I had a couple of friends, like, I had my best friend, and him and I, we used to go out together and get a lot of chicks, he had a lot of chicks and I had a lot of chicks, and we talk about what chicks like, what they don't like, and uh-h, what to do, you know, to make them happy and stuff like that, yeah.

JW: And do you find what he's telling you useful?

ANDREO: Yeah, yeah, a lot of the stuff he says — but the thing is, he has a girlfriend like every two months, like he can't keep a steady relationship.

JW: So what are some of the things that he told you?

ANDREO: He said, “Ok, Andreo, to attract a woman, you've got to be more assertive.” He told me I'm too laid back. “You have to be assertive. Ok, a pretty girl walks by and you're sitting in a bar or something, or sitting in a public place, you've got to say something first.” He told me to say things like, “Oh ah, nice weather today, by the way um-m, you look very nice
JW: So have you tried that and did it work for you?
ANDREO: (Laughing.) No, no, no. I tried it and it didn't work. I tried it a couple times but I got like rejected and told to get lost. (Laughing.)

Andreo’s experience illustrates that our bodily hexis – the way we think, speak, stand, look, or move about in our social world – is a durable system that cannot be changed overnight. Although Andreo tried to follow the instructions of his local male friends by adopting the slang of calling women ‘chicks,’ and attempting to flirt with women at pubs and bars, his bodily hexis betrayed him. Furthermore, his lack of hegemonic masculine capital in the context of Canadian society (physique, Whiteness, mainstream Canadian accent, financial success, etc.) likely put him in a dominated position in the (hetero)erotic field. His experience of multiple rejections by women at pubs and other hook-up places suggested that there was a mismatch between his habitus and the Canadian (hetero)erotic field in which he often found himself out-of-place. As Bourdieu (2000) argues, what the new entrant must bring into the game is “a habitus that is practically compatible, or sufficiently close, and above all malleable and capable of being converted into the required habitus” (p. 100). Furthermore, Andreo’s inability to convert his masculine capital in the Canadian (hetero)erotica field also illustrates the marginalization of racialized masculinities within the system of hegemonic masculinity (R. W. Connell, 2005).

7.7. Discussion: Gender-class-racial Habitus – Context Matters

A number of key themes emerged throughout my interpretation of the young men’s narratives. First, stating the obvious but taken-for-granted ‘reality’ that we live in a gendered world structured by masculine domination (Bourdieu, 2001), which oppresses women and socially ‘imprisons’ men. Regardless of their social backgrounds, the young men in this study all embodied certain global hegemonic assumptions about manliness: strength, competitiveness, self-reliance, economic success, and distinction (especially from women). These naturalized assumptions exert pressure on the young men to conform and participate in (re)producing the hegemonic masculine bloc (Demetriou, 2001) to gain patriarchal dividends and homosocial capital that put them in dominant positions in the field of masculinity and (hetero)erotic fields, but at the same time imprison them within these fields.

Second, through their everyday interactions within their families, at school and on the
street, the young men internalized their structural conditions of existence that produced their masculine habituses, which in turn endowed them with a gendered vision of division to guide their everyday practice. For instance, Mihir’s early socialization at home contributed to his naturalized assumptions of gender differences. For Jason, it was the dominant masculinist culture at school that ruptured his pro-feminist primary habitus, resulting in his construction of a masculinist public self and a sensitive pro-feminist private self. Furthermore, the narratives of the young men show that the symbolic power embedded in sports is (re)produced in schools across all neighbourhoods to reinforce hegemonic masculine ideologies that perpetuate social divisions among men, and between women and men. For the young men who grew up in the ’hoods, street corners and local courts were important places of gender socialization where the hierarchy of domination based on age, toughness, and ’hood networks was accepted as ‘earned’ respect on the street.

Third, class habitus matters in how the young men experienced their gendered worlds. Young men sharing similar conditions of existence, as Bourdieu (1984) argues, tend to internalize a similar set of collective expectations that produce a similar set of dispositions. In this study, most of the young men from the ’hood or living on the street expressed their distaste towards schools and formal education. They did not see any practical values in investing their time and energy at school. In resisting the middle-class school culture (MacLeod, 2009; P. Willis, 1981), they traded in the possibility of a ‘brighter’ future for their immediate access to acquiring economic and homosocial capital by engaging in the street economy (busking, panhandling, hustling) and local masculine competitions (sports, altercations, turf fights, ‘scoring’).

The young men’s disinterest towards education was perpetuated by structural inequalities within the education system. For instance, the zero tolerance measures at the Toronto District School Board and elsewhere are driven by a middle-class racist and racialized ideology of safety (Dei, 2008). It penalizes students of poor working-class and racial minority backgrounds to perpetuate middle-class domination and racial hierarchies. Studies in the US found that racial minority students are more likely to be suspended because they appear to be threatening or

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37 In June 2000, the Ontario legislature passed the Safe Schools Act, which amended the Education Act and granted school principals and teachers with more authority to suspend and expel students based on the policy of ‘zero tolerance’ for any type of violence. The Act came into effect in September 2001 but was found to have disproportionate negative impact on racial minority students (Bhattcharjee, 2003).
disrespectful, but White students are suspended only for serious violations such as possession of guns, weapons, and drugs (Verdugo, 2010).

In this study, most of the young Black men at Macee Grove experienced school suspensions and/or expulsions. Only one out of the eight young men had completed high school. Joshua shared that two weeks before the school semester ended, he was expelled from school. As a result, Joshua lost three course credits. This put him four credits behind in obtaining his high school diploma. The consequences of racial discrimination and middle-class domination within the education system are reflected in the research evidence on social disparity in Canada (CIW, 2009). However, not all young men from the impoverished neighbourhoods dropped out of school. Joseph, who emigrated from Chad, valued education and worked hard towards his goal of attending college or university. As Bourdieu acknowledges, “no two individual histories are identical so no two individual habituses are identical” (as cited in Reay, 2004b, p. 434). Joseph’s aspiration for education was likely shaped by the integration of his pre-migration habitus (family expectation and cultural values) and post-migration field conditions (free public education, settlement challenges).

In contrast, the middle-class young men’s experiences in their gendered and classed worlds were drastically different. Some of them actively participated in class domination. For instance, Mihir made it clear that being a respectable manly man requires ‘more than being a jock;’ he had to be sporty and academically smart at the same time. Although their subjectivities were also shaped by the overarching influence of hegemonic masculine domination in society, their possession of middle-class cultural, economic, and social capital enabled them to engage in local masculine competitions without jeopardizing their life chances. All of them, except Anthony, were either in university or had completed university. Colin was able to adopt a middle-class punk style to resist peer conformity and achieve distinction at school without comprising his academic future. At the time of his interviews, he was preparing to go into an engineering program with the full support of his father, who was an engineer.

Lastly, narratives of the young men illustrate that racialization as a social process and racial discrimination as a condition of existence interact to (re)produce racialized subjectivities and naturalize racial divisions within and across social classes. Since our habituses are simultaneously classed, gendered, and racialized, the young men experienced their racialization
processes differently within and across class. For instance, both Mihir and Anthony were of middle-class background, but their racialized subjectivities differed. Having a racialized body did not stop Mihir from competing with other young men (White or non-White) at school. His athletic and academic capital enabled him to navigate and compete in the homosocial and (hetero)erotic fields at school. While he acknowledged the dominance of Whiteness at school, he did not feel immobilized by it.

In contrast, Anthony’s experience of racial domination at school was agonizing and painful. Having to contend with multiple forms of social domination – racism, White hegemonic masculinity, xenophobia, body discrimination (sick body, racialized body), bullying – Anthony tried to construct a viable masculine identity by emphasizing his middle-class and heterosexual identities, and repressing his ethnic and racial ones. In attempting to meet the demands of both the dominant White culture and the Canadian Korean culture, he experienced a psychic splitting of the self (Truong, 2006), whereby he felt ashamed of his ‘visible’ and racialized Asian body and his non-normative sexual practices. He also embodied a double consciousness (Du Bois, 1904/2006) through which he recognized the hegemony of Whiteness but he also saw his world through the lens of Whiteness. To retreat from local masculine competitions at school, he entered into the subfields of commercial sex, pornography, and voyeuristic fantasy, where his economic capital enabled him to secure a favourable position within the subfield of commercial sex.

The variations between Mihir’s and Anthony’s racialized subjectivities were possibly influenced by their lived experiences as they inhabited two unique and individualized combinations of fields and subfields. However, their homosocial and (hetero)erotic practices were still collective in the sense that these practices were shaped not only by the structural demands of the fields and subfields they inhabited but also by the field of power that defined the rules of domination for these fields and subfields.

Similarly, the racial minority young men from the ‘hoods also demonstrated variations in their racialized subjectivities. Whereas Zahid asserted that it was systemic racism that pushed all the Black families into impoverished neighbourhoods, Patrick perceived that it was ‘laziness’ and ‘a lack of focus’ among the ‘older’ Black folks that led to the high concentration of poor Black families at Macee Grove. Despite their different perspectives regarding issues of race, most of these young men expressed pride in their collective racial identities. For instance,
Matthew considered his Filipino identity as a valuable form of cultural and social capital on the streets in Lamarside.

The young men’s collective racial pride could plausibly be explained by Canada’s economic apartheid and neighbourhood segregation whereby racial minority families are the ‘majority’ residents in poor and low-income neighbourhoods (Galabuzi, 2006). Ironically, this high concentration of one’s ‘own kind’ within one’s immediate living environment (school, neighbourhoods, shops) seemed to offer these young men some protection against the agony of racialized splitting of selves. This does not mean that living in impoverished neighbourhoods is good for racial minority youth. They experienced many inequitable challenges including poverty, health disparities, violence, and stigmatization. Rather, it affirms that contexts and place matter in the sedimentation of race-class-gender habitus.

In Macee Grove and other ’hoods where the majority of the families were Black, the young Black men’s experiences of racial discrimination differed significantly from Anthony’s experiences. They did not have to contend with racial domination at the peer level; instead, they experienced racism in their encounters with employment, school, and law enforcement authorities. Their collective struggle as a Black community against systemic discrimination and marginalization sedimented into a form of racial pride that was specific to their local worlds. In the context of their immediate milieu, these young men were more interested in competing with each other for economic, homosocial, and (hetero)erotic capital. Competition for racial capital was less meaningful or pertinent at the local level because there were very few non-Black young men in Macee Grove.

On the other hand, Jamie and Paul, who self-identified as biracial of Asian and White backgrounds, were faced with different challenges and demands. Growing up in Kestral-Mason, a predominantly Black neighbourhood, they occupied a ‘minority’ status in the field of racial status. Their non-Black primary habituses did not endow them with the dispositions or capital (body, cultural, social, symbolic) to compete in the local fields (homosocial, (hetero)erotic) and subfields (hip-hop, reggae, basketball, break-dancing, rhythms, etc.). The dissonance between their habituses and these fields demanded their reflexive responses (Bourdieu, 1977). To compete for distinction and other forms of capital, Jamie and Paul adopted a ‘situational’ identity of being ‘White,’ which enabled them to inhabit the subfields of ‘punk’ and ‘hard rock.’
However, to inhabit the subfield of punk and to acquire economic capital through busking and jamming at punk events, they inevitably had to leave their original neighbourhood. When they moved from their inner suburban ’hood to Troikaville, the value of their bodily and cultural capital increased significantly.

Jamie and Paul’s responses to their racialized objective conditions suggest that our social identities are fluid and context bound. Although Jamie adopted a White identity to enter the subfield of punk, he did not reject his Asian ancestry. He expressed fondness towards his East Indian extended family and continued to attend family events even after he left for Troikaville. His biracial identity enabled him to traverse between these two socially differentiated racial worlds without experiencing any psychic splitting of the self or embodying a double consciousness, as Anthony did. In inhabiting the space of ambiguity and contractions, Jamie and Paul were able to see their possibilities and act on them to ‘slightly’ transform their objective conditions of existence (Beverley Skeggs, 2004b). Living on the street, they still faced the challenges of violence, poverty, and addiction, but they were able to acquire more symbolic capital and engage in a different kind of street economy (busking, panhandling vs. hustling in the ’hoods).

7.8. Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have drawn on Bourdieu’s notions of habitus to explore how the young men in this study engaged in being-doing-becoming manly men through early socialization at home, and ongoing socialization at schools and on the street. The results presented in this chapter show that habitus as an analytical concept does not suffer from determinism as some of Bourdieu’s critics assert (Butler, 1999; R. Jenkins, 1992; Lovell, 2000). When used in conjunction with the notion of field, habitus enables me to examine the subjective experiences of the young men and the objective structures that shape these experiences. The similarities and differences of the young men’s collective and individual habituses suggest that habitus, as a structured structure and a structuring structure (Bourdieu, 1977), is an open system that responds to the changing contexts of our highly differentiated society (McNay, 1999a).

As discussed throughout the chapter, social identities are constituted through relations of power based on an infinite configuration of socially constructed but naturalized divisions such as
race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, citizenship, physique, and so on. These relations of power operate simultaneously at different scales (local to global) and in diverse places and space (physical, virtual, symbolic) to produce intertwining and varying effects on the objective structures of our existence (McDowell, 1999). I argue that it is this infinite number of possible combinations of power relations derived from an infinite configuration of social divisions and exercised across time and space that produces infinite numbers of distinct fields and subfields, making it possible for an agent to enter a unique combination of fields and subfields to embody a unique and individual history, even though it is only an “individual trace of an entire collective history” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 91).

In the next chapter, I continue to draw on the work of Bourdieu and feminist scholars to explore the (re)production of hegemonic masculinities and how the young men in this study embodied their masculine subjectivities through their everyday guy-talk and other social interactions. I also focus on the relationships between the young men’s individual and collective habituses.
8. Introduction

We are forever composing impressions of ourselves, projecting a definition of who we are, and making claims about ourselves and the world that we test out and negotiate with others. In situations of difficulty, social actors stage performances of desirable selves to preserve “face.” . . . As Goffman elegantly put it, “What talkers undertake to do is not to provide information to a recipient but to present dramas to an audience. Indeed, it seems that we spent more of our time not engaged in giving information but in giving shows.” To emphasize the performativeness is not to suggest that identities are inauthentic . . . but only that identities are situated and accomplished with audience in mind. To put it simply, one can’t be a “self” by oneself; rather, identities are constructed in “shows” that persuade. Performances are expressive, they are performances for others. (Riessman, 2008, p. 106)

Our social identities, as Catherine Kohler Riessman (2008) points out, are fluid and situated. It is through storytelling that we construct our identities and define our social relationships in different contexts (Chase, 2008). While stories and narratives do not represent a single absolute truth, they do reflect social realities in the sense that the narrators draw upon discourses and cultural resources that are available to them to construct their stories (Silverman, 2006). Furthermore, storytelling consists of performatory utterances (Austin, 2004). Stories do things. In this chapter, I draw on narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993, 2008) and the notion of performative performance to explore how young men in this study engage in hetero-guy-talk to negotiate their gender and other social identities.

As noted in Chapter 3, gender is a situational accomplishment (West & Zimmerman, 1987). It is an enactment of rules and expectations that we have internalized through early socialization (Goffman, 1977). Gender is a performatory performance whereby our gendered subjectivity is constituted through ritualized and repetitious reiterations that are regulated by the regime of power/knowledge (Butler, 1990/1999). However, speech acts are excitable; their meanings and effects are not fixed or totally controlled by the speaker, making it possible for unauthorized appropriation. Thus, gender and other social identities are open to re-signification through subversive parody and discursive agency (Butler, 1997).

Bourdieu (2000), on the other hand, asserts that a speech act is performatory only when it is imbued with the symbolic power or the authority to command its intended action; not everyone’s utterance carries the same power to perform the desired action. McNay (2004)
suggests that the differences between Bourdieu and Butler on performativity are not so much in material versus symbolic determinism but in how they conceptualize agency in performativity. She argues that Butler’s focus on ‘negative’ agency – in the form of displacement of dominant symbolic gender and sexual norms – misses the way creative agency operates within different social structures to stimulate or impede change (McNay, 1999b). On the other hand, Bourdieu’s tendency to reduce “symbolic relations to pre-given social relations” underestimates the extent language can be used to subvert domination (McNay, 2004). However, McNay contends that the notions of habitus and field when used together enable us to examine the socialized subject in the context of symbolic and material structures to resolve the tension around the dichotomy of agency and structure.

Following McNay, Wendy Bottero (2010) proposes the concept of situational intersubjectivity to explore the “more ambiguous, detached and reflective aspects” of the socialized subjectivity of habitus (p.15). It is ambiguity that opens up the space for agency and diversity. Situational intersubjectivity as an analytical concept allows us to examine social practice not only as predisposed actions but also as indeterminant (albeit constrained) responses to the demands, expectations, obligations, collective monitoring, and mutual influences among agents who interact with each other in their social networks or in the fields they inhabit.

This potential indeterminacy between dispositions and collective practice creates the space for ambivalence or irony in relation to the constraints of collective practice; not simply in the interface between habitus and field when dissonant, but as a general feature of practice. Our engagement with practices as collectively held means that individuals often feel it is impossible to swim against the tide, a situation which may generate ambivalent, resigned or even cynical stances to the enactment of practices. (Bottero, 2010, p. 16)

For Bottero, reflexive actions are not limited to moments of rupture when habitus and field are misaligned. The socialized subjectivities of habitus are modified as agents interact in their everyday practice within the constraints of the objective structures.

In this chapter, I draw on the young men’s narratives in hetero-guy-talk to examine: (1) how structures of the (local and global) fields of masculinity authorize performative utterances in subject formation; (2) how these young men’s practices are related to their social positions, their position-taking, and their capacity to improvise in meeting the demands of the fields they inhabit; and (3) how young men of similar conditions of existence embody these conditions
differently to produce unique individual habituses that support transformation in hetero-guy-talk.\footnote{I originally used the term ‘guy-talk’ to explore the issues in this chapter. However, upon reflection I decided to use the term hetero-guy-talk to make visible heteronormativity or compulsory heterosexuality as a key organizing principle of our social life. By adding the prefix ‘hetero’ to guy-talk, the term also highlights the focus of this type of gendered and gendering talk.}

I begin this chapter with an extension of the description of Bourdieu’s theory on habitus presented in Chapter 3. It focuses on the relationship between individual and collective habituses. I then illustrate how the young men in this study and I co-constructed our situational identities through talk, and how hetero-guy-talk is both a social space of masculine competition and a performative practice in which young men actively take part in the (re)production and transformation of hegemonic masculine discourses.

8.1. The Relationship Between Individual and Collective Habitus

In analyzing the young men’s narratives in hetero-guy-talk, I am at times overwhelmed by their reiteration of misogynist and patriarchal ideologies. However, I also recognize ambiguities and tensions embedded in these talks. They lead me to ask the question: Is hetero-guy-talk always a space that (re)produces masculine domination or is it also a ‘third’ space\footnote{The notion of the ‘third’ space was introduced by Homi Bhabha (1994) in \textit{The Location of Culture} to represent a semiotic space in which “interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot ‘in itself’ be conscious. What this unconscious relation introduces is an ambivalence in the act of interpretation” (p. 53). Although Bhabha’s interest was in the indeterminacy of cultural identities in this space of resistance, I suggest that the third space can also be applied to other contexts. In the context of hetero-guy-talk, a third space represents a space of in-between-ness and transformation whereby the past no long takes hold of the present and the future has not yet occupied the space.} of ambiguity and possible transformation (Bhabha, 1994)? To answer this question, I draw on Bourdieu’s notions of individual habitus versus collective habitus in relation to field because they allow us to look at socialized subjectivity as generative and not deterministic. I contend that it is the indeterminancy of the individual habitus that is critical in shaping situational intersubjectivity during hetero-guy-talk.

In \textit{The Logic of Practice}, Bourdieu writes:

Each individual system of dispositions is a structural variant of the others, expressing the singularity of its position within the class and its trajectory. . . The principle of the differences between individual habitus lies in the singularity of their social trajectories, to which there correspond series of chronologically ordered determinations that are mutually irreducible to
Thus, as I illustrate in Figure 8.1 below, an agent’s individual habitus is unique because of her unique biographical history. However, it also resembles the collective habitus (as indicated by the colors) because all agents within the same class or social groups embody similar structural conditions to produce a similar schema of dispositions, perceptions, taste, bodily hexes, and practice. Over time, an agent’s individual habitus changes as she responds to the changing structural conditions of the fields she inhabits. However, like her biographical history, her habitus is never entirely new; it is an evolving ‘1.Nth habitus’ because of the sedimentation of her individual and collective experiences. Her past is always in her present, not as a backdrop but as an embodied but ‘forgotten’ history (Bourdieu, 1990b).

Figure 8.1 Relationship Between Individual and Collective Habitus

In the following sections, I apply the notions of individual and collective habituses to make sense of the young men’s narratives in hetero-guy-talk.
8.2. Presentation of Self: Talk as a Situational Performance

During the individual and group interviews, I asked the young men where they learned about sexuality and sexual health. Many of them shared that they learned from pornography, local health centres, or ‘just from doing it.’ When I probed further, most of them shared that they learned about sex and sexuality by talking with their male friends or the older young men\(^{40}\) in their social circles.

\[\text{JW: What do you guys talk about?}\]
\[\text{MIHIR: Yeah well, guys really like talking about their, I guess their, uh – sexual escapades, or if they were with a certain girl, or you know, what they did or how far they got, um-mm or you know, if it was good or if it wasn’t good or stuff like that. Yeah.}\]
\[\text{JW: Do you guys ever talk to women friends who are not sexually involved with you about things like that?}\]
\[\text{MIHIR: Um-mm, sometimes but only close female friends, but not to the degree that we would like – (..) we’re usually a bit more crude, I guess.}\]
\[\text{JW: Can you give an example?}\]
\[\text{MIHIR: Um-mm, (…) like we wouldn’t – (..) like we, like my friend, if he was going to say something like – (…) if you came on a girl or something like that, he wouldn’t say that in front of another girl. [Mm hmm.] He would tell us but he wouldn’t, you know say it [[to a girl]]; he’ll say, “Oh it was, it was really good.” Or something like that, you know.}\]

Mihir suggested that ‘sex’ was a common conversational topic among his male friends. His choice of the term “sexual escapade” implies a certain degree of freedom and boastfulness in hetero-guy-talk. His narrative also implies that sex talk is a gendered talk (Cameron, 1997). It is worth noting that Mihir came across as a little bit ‘stumped’ when I asked him for an example of ‘crudeness’ in hetero-guy-talk. Upon reflection, he shared that his male friends tended to use explicit descriptions of male sexual prowess among each other. However, they refrained from using these explicit descriptions to gain and maintain respectability among their female friends.

Mihir’s disposed gendered talk was not limited to his interactions with his peers. In the above excerpt, although I used the term “you guys” in my questions, Mihir replied by using the terms ‘the guys,’ ‘they,’ and ‘my friend’ to distance himself from the practices that he was describing, likely to present himself as a respectable young man in front of an Asian woman researcher of his parents’ age. This form of distancing was also evident in my interview with Jason.

\(^{40}\) As discussed in Chapter 6, for the young men in this study, ‘older guys’ refer to young men who were approximately 22-25 years of age.
JW: Many of you talked about learning from, you know, older guys, like older brothers or friends who are older. (...) So, what exactly did they teach you?

JASON: Uh, it’s like, I think a lot of it is – people teaching from stories, you know, telling stories of things that they’ve done. [Um hmm.] And that’s, like, the learning aspect, you know, people can hear what someone has done, say someone’s like, “Oh I saw this girl and, you know, I took her up to someone’s room, and then I had sex with her.” Stuff like that, but there’s not like a lot of detail about the stuff, right? [Yeah.] So, I think a lot of it is a story, so depending on the person who’s telling the story. That’s your information, like how to talk to females, you know? Even at the centre I see a lot of young guys, just how they are talking to females, it’s like, “This is obvious from your older brother or your older siblings, right?” They don’t really get it; it’s just about kind of like live up to that standard that’s been set.

JW: Yeah, what standard is that?

JASON: Standard? I guess, I think a lot of people, it’s the males that are dominant, and you need to kind of talk down to girls, and I think that is like a big piece.

In this narrative, Jason uses the term ‘people’ instead of ‘we’ or ‘I’ to distance himself from the practice of telling or learning from sex stories. He avoids positioning himself as someone who bragged about sex, or as someone who was sexually inexperienced. He emphasizes the non-detailed nature of these stories to distinguish them from pornographic talk.

Jason’s distancing allows him to occupy a position in which he cannot be evaluated or judged. It is only when he talks about the heterosocial communication styles of the younger men at the drop-in centre that he inserts himself back into the story as an active observer. Through Jason’s eyes, we see the ‘inadequacy’ and ‘misogynist behaviour’ of these other young men. In taking a moral evaluative stance on these younger men’s behaviour, Jason presents himself as a mature, profeminist, and ethical young man (Goffman, 1959), which is not an impression that he would construct among his male peers, as illustrated in the following excerpt from the group interview.

JOSEPH: Why do guys always have to go talk to girls? Why girls can’t come go talk to guys?

JW: What do you mean guys have to go and talk to girls?

JOSEPH: Like, to get their number, get to know them, whatever.

JW: So, you feel there’s a lot of pressure on guys when guys have to be the ones to approach girls?

JOSEPH: Yeah, because it’s always like that. When you’re approaching them you look like, you know, you’re boosting them up or something. Then they just might take advantage of you.

JW: Would you guys prefer women come and talk to you?

JOSEPH: Yeaaaah.

DANNY: I wouldn’t mind it.

DOLAN: Yeah, I don’t go around talking to girls.

JASON: But this – when girls are too forward, then it’s just – (...) nah.

DANNY: Yeah, that stuff turns me off sometimes too.

JASON: It’s like, there’s no chase involved in it, there’s nothing to it, you know?

DOLAN: Like I said, occasionally, it’d be alright. Not every other day.

YUSUF: You like it now and then, but not all the time, you know?

JASON: Definitely, definitely.
When Joseph questioned the merits of the dominant *guys-make-the-first-move* (hetero)erotic practice and opened up the space for other young men to challenge this normative practice, it was Jason who interrupted this dialogue of ambiguous gender practice by bringing in dominant discourses of exaggerated femininities (i.e., not too forward) and hegemonic masculinities (i.e., the thrill of the chase). He was able to redirect the talk and reinforce the masculinist expectation of men-being-in-control.

My interactions with the young men show that they were predisposed to engage in gendered talk. However, their actions and interactions were not always pre-reflexive. When they were called to perform in different contexts, they engaged in practical reflections to derive the best strategy to meet the demand of the situation (McNay, 2004). For instance, most the young men in this study acted politely to acquire the cultural capital of respectability from Dan and I. However, when the field of social desirability overlaps the field of masculinity, the demands of the fields changed and the young men engaged in masculinist talks to compete for dominant positions against each other.

The young men’s interactions, as discussed above, illustrate that hetero-guy-talk is a collective practice. In the following sections, I focus on hetero-guy-talk as a ‘performative’ performance in which the young men embody their situational intersubjectivity (Bottero, 2010) to actively negotiate their individual and collective masculine subjectivities.

### 8.3. Hetero-guy-talk: A Space of Homosocial Competitions and Bonds

In the following subsections, I illustrate how the young men in this study engage in hetero-guy-talk to: compete for dominant positions within the homosocial field, produce and maintain gender divisions, and reinforce hegemonic masculine domination (Cameron, 1997; Coates, 2003; R. W. Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Their narratives and interactions show that guy-talk is not only a gendered performance but also a gendering practice that is performative.

#### 8.3.1. Gaining Respect Through Hetero-guy-talk

During a group interview, I invited the young men at Troikaville to react to the statement: ‘Not all guys are interested in sex.’ They engaged in a colorful discussion. Marcus and Kyle,
who were the oldest (aged 23 and 24) in the group and had more experience living on the street, started the discussion.

**MARCUS:** Well, personally speaking, I think that (..) not all guys are interested in sex because (...) maybe they got too much work on their hands, or (...) like they could be a business man, you know, they have so much paper work they have to go through –

**KYLE:** //Ha ha. (Laughing.)

**MARCUS:** //They don’t get much sleep –

**KYLE:** (Laughing.) You’re bull, man, bullshit, ha-a-a. (Laughing loudly.)

**MARCUS:** //Or they could be impotent, or they could just have difficulties or something, or you know (..) premature ejaculation or something like that. (...) So that’s, that’s my opinion.

**JW:** Mm-hmm. Ok.

**KYLE:** I think that’s bullshit.

Marcus, who self-identified as Aboriginal and grew up in three different White Christian foster homes, used a different strategy to position himself in the group. He drew on the popular biomedical discourse of stress related impotence and premature ejaculation to legitimize his opinions, likely to challenge the historical racist stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples as ‘uncivilized’ (Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003; Mundel & Chapman, 2010) and the present-day stereotypes that portray homeless people as unskilled, uneducated, and unarticulated individuals (Wright, Rubin, & Devine, 1998). He also cleverly positioned men, who are deemed ‘productive’ and ‘successful’ based on middle-class norms, as the sexually impotent ‘Other’ to challenge their hegemonic masculine position.

Unlike the young men from Macee Grove, Kyle who was from a White middle-class background did not hesitate to use street slang or swear words. His interest was not in gaining my respect but in establishing a hyper-masculine image in front of the other street-involved young men. Kyle met Marcus in jail a couple of months prior to this study. Since then, they had occasionally ‘hung out’ with each other. Thus, they were at ease in challenging each other in a friendly manner.

**KYLE:** I think all guys are – all fucking want sex. I think especially sometimes when they are in the parking lot, they want sex.

**MARCUS:** Yeah, but not, they are not always interested. Maybe they want money first.

**KYLE:** Not always interested but sure –

**DAVID:** Take advantage of it! (Laughing, others laughed.)

**PAUL:** I think eventually (…) all guys are interested in sex. It’s just if there’s a problem when they’re having sex, they’re not gonna do it, but they wish they didn’t have that problem so they can have good sex. (Laughter, many talking at once, inaudible.) I think (..) all guys (..) love sex (…) but not all guys love the idea of sex (..) because if they got that (…) erectile dysfunction, all that bullshit, (…) then they don’t find sex that cool, they can’t have good sex.

**JW:** So it’s when guys have problems then they might not be interested in sex–
PAUL: //Yeah, ‘cos if they have a problem they might be like (mimicking voice) “Fuck! I can’t have good sex.”

DAVID: //There’s two – there’s two reasons in the world a man isn’t interested in sex. One, Ok, maybe three. One, either your balls are removed, you’re a priest or you’ve chosen a life of celibacy, and even then, priests screw alter boys so – (Laughter.)

In the above excerpt, Kyle pushes Marcus to return to their everyday street life reality of parking lot sex. David, who was younger and only recently had entered the street scene, also uses street slang to establish his toughness. He sides with Kyle’s argument to naturalize the discourse of men’s inherent sexual interests and implies that one could verify one’s manhood by demonstrating sexual interests. However, he is also careful to draw on a different set of discourses to distinguish himself from Kyle. Like Marcus, he uses the discourse of ‘priests as pedophiles’ to challenge the authority of the socially respectable Other (priests) and to present himself as a knowledgeable, worldly young man.

Paul, on the other hand, hovered between Marcus and Kyle’s arguments to suggest that although all men are interested in sex, these interests are dependent on their ability to perform good (penetrative) sex. As I followed up with Paul’s comment and directed their discussion from sexual interests to sex, the group dynamic changed.

JW: Mm. Okay. So what is good sex anyway?

MARCUS: Sex in general is good sex, right? Even if she doesn’t enjoy it, you can still enjoy it right? (Laughing.)

JAMIE: I think good sex is just enjoyable sex. If it’s not enjoyable, then it’s bad sex.

DAVID: Satisfying sex, when the a girl is moaning, that’s good sex –

PAUL: //If she lasts, she will enjoy it –

DAVID: //Moaning –

PAUL: //And you enjoyed it –

DAVID: //That’s good sex –

JAMIE: //And you realize she told her friends that she didn’t enjoy it, and her friends tell you and you’re just like, “Huuu, what am I going to do?”

Here, the three younger men – Jamie (aged 16), Paul (aged 16), and David (aged 18) competed to be heard. Paul and David were eager to construct an image of being sexually ‘experienced’ and therefore masculine. Jamie contradicted Marcus’ remark that sex was good even if their female partners did not enjoy it. He pointed to the power embedded in sexual relations – success in pleasing one’s partner sexually could be converted into cultural capital in the form of an enhanced sexual reputation in their local (hetero)erotic field. Jamie highlighted ‘pleasure’ as an important aspect of engaging in sex, which is often absent in public health sex education (Allen, 2005c; Hirst, 2004).
To diffuse Jamie’s challenge, Marcus drew on another hegemonic discourse – men’s phallic power – to define good sex.

**MARCUS:** I guess it depends on how – how equipped you are, more or less.  
**JW:** What do you mean by “equipped”?

**MARCUS:** Um. (...) Whether you’re twelve inches or you’re two inches, right? (Laughing.) That’s what I mean, to be a little specific, right? And you know, some people say, “Well, it’s not the size that counts, it’s the way they use it.” But I don’t think that because (...) if you’ve got a small penis, you’ve got a problem, right?

**JW:** What do you guys think?

**DAVID:** I’ve never had that problem so I can’t really sa-a-a-y. (Laughing.)

**PAUL:** Well, like, apparently size matters, so I think, I think it matters.

**JAMIE:** If it’s big enough to get the job done and you’re really good with it, then um –

**JW:** Ok that, yeah, so when you guys say “get the job done,” what do –

**DAVID:** //If you can’t get it to work downstairs, you use your mouth, or your tongue –

**PAUL:** //If you can make a chick cream, then (...) you’re really good.

To acquire a fuller appreciation of the above exchange between Marcus and Jamie, it is necessary to consider the proximal and distal contexts (Holstein & Gubrium, 2007). Marcus was a fairly big man; approximately 5’ 11” in height and weighed between 180-190 lbs. On the other hand, Jamie was comparatively small and very slim; he was about 5’ 8” and maybe 110-120 lbs. When Marcus equated penis sizes with sexual ‘competence’, he was not only drawing on the dominant ‘racialized’ discourse of penis size. He was also taking advantage of the immediate context in which the visible difference between their physiques allowed him to position himself as superior to Jamie and the other young men. In return, Jamie insisted that size did not matter as much as sexual performances.

The young men’s interactions illustrated that a group interview was a hetero-guy-talk in situ. It appeared that these young men engaged in competitive sex-talk to acquire masculine capital and street respect. Elijah Anderson (1999) suggests that street respect is a form of social capital that is particularly valuable to marginalized individuals and groups whose access to other forms of capital is limited. Furthermore, street respect and a reputation for toughness are particularly important to street involved young men because they protect the young men from victimization and enhance their ability to survive on the street (Stephen W. Baron, 2003).

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41 The dominant discourse of penis size consists of racist and homophobic stereotypes to suggest that the inferior ‘Other’ have either abnormally larger (e.g. Black men and gay men) or smaller (e.g. Asian men) penises (Fung, 1991/1996; Paley, 1999). Implicit in these stereotypes is the popular imaginary that the penis size of heterosexual White men is the norm (Paley, 1999). Furthermore, there is also the popular myth that physically big men have larger penises (Madaras & Madaras, 2007).
8.3.2. Benchmarking Masculine Performances through Hetero-guy-talk

In a discussion about young people’s knowledge on sexuality, most of the young men admitted that it is impossible for guys to ‘know everything about sex.’ They shared that they learned how to ‘do’ sex mostly from pornography and from their sexual partners, but they also emphasized that it is a guy thing to talk as if they know everything about sex.

JW: When guys get together, do they always talk like they know everything about sex?
DANNY: All the time. (Laughter.)
JOSEPH: Oh, they always say, “Oh yeah, I banged this girl.” That’s it! (Laughter.) And then, “How many girls did you bang?” (Laughter.) You know what I’m saying? That’s how men like to roll, alright?
JW: So then, why- why do you think that is?
DANNY: It’s a guy thing.
Multiple Participants: It’s a guy thing.
Danny: When we get in the tribal circle, we just talk that junk all day. (Others agreed.) If that one guy got a story, you gotta have a better story.

In using the term ‘tribal circle’, Danny highlighted the ritualistic performances in hetero-guy-talk. Stories, exaggerated or not, functioned as instructions to guide the young men’s homosocial and (hetero)sexual practices. Through storytelling, these young men actively engaged in (re)constructing local and global benchmarks that were used to evaluate their own (hetero)sexual performances and those of others, as Yusuf elaborated, “Yee-ah, if you sit there quiet, after a little while, the circle’s gonna come around, and it will be just joke time on you for sitting there.”

Thus, storytelling in hetero-guy-talk is not merely about exchanging information. It is a collective practice in which young men draw from each other’s stories and hegemonic masculine discourses to create ‘superior’ stories that are then converted into homosocial capital (Bird, 1996). It is also a performative act in which the reiteration of masculinist stories perpetuates the naturalization of gender division, patriarchy, heteronormativity, and masculine expectations (Butler, 1990/1999; Curry, 2001).

Furthermore, masculine competition in hetero-guy-talk is not limited to telling exaggerated stories verbally. Young men also accumulate homosocial capital through displays of their (hetero)erotic achievements. For instance, Danny shared that he had a friend who never took part in telling sex stories. This friend performed his ‘cool’ by having a woman by his side. It was his silence that spoke louder than words.

DANNY: There’re some guys- I know a lot of my friends who- who just sit with a girl and (.) the minute you talk about that, they’d be like, “Let me watch that.”
YUSUF: Yeah, they don’t talk, they just watch-
DANNY: That’s just how it is. You’ll be like, “Who’s that- who’s that girl you’re with the other day?” “Oh, just a friend”’’. Like you know, this is the kind of guy, he’s just sitting there with a girl, that’s like the only (..) real way of not (..) bringing out a story, and not getting, you know, anyone on your case with that, like-
DOLAN: “Yeah, you see me make out and that’s nobody’s business.” (Laughter.)

Thus, within Danny’s homosocial circle, one could demonstrate his manliness through telling the best story or simply present his symbolic capital of having a woman by his side.

The narratives of these young men illustrate what Bourdieu (2001) calls the economy of symbolic goods in which women are denied as “subject of exchange” and reduced “to the status of object, or rather, of symbolic instruments of male politics” (p. 43, emphasis in original). The logic of this economy requires “not only the specific structure of this exchange, but also the social labour” to (re)produce the agents’ socialized subjectivities and the stakes of the game (p. 44). Hetero-guy-talk is one form of this social labour.

The economy of symbolic goods seems to prevail across class and racial divisions even though the symbolic products may vary.

MATTHEW: Back in the day when me and my three guy friends, we were like strong, very close, and there was like this popular girl. Well, one of my friends dated her and we gave him credit for that, like, you know we worshiped him.
JW: Ooh?
MATTHEW: Because he dated this girl that was like a bombshell. So then that’s how it was. It was, like, date the right girl and get the respect you earn.
JW: So, bombshell- meaning what?
MATTHEW: Bombshell means like hot, like sexy and very beautiful.
JW: So you date a popular, beautiful girl and you get respect from the guys?
MATTHEW: Yeah, yeah.

Matthew’s narrative illustrates that the conversion of women into symbolic capital is closely linked to the hegemonic masculinist habitus in the form of appreciation, taste, and the demands of the field of hegemonic masculinities. This means that having a girlfriend or being in a (hetero)erotic relationship does not automatically convert into homosocial capital of popularity or respect. The worthiness of women, as objects or instruments for symbolic homosocial exchange, is measured against the normative standards of beauty and femininity defined in the fields of culture, media, and hegemonic heterosexuality. A (hetero)erotic relationship that does not meet the demands of these fields may actually lead to further victimization of both the young man and the young woman involved.
Jason: So, for girlfriends, what are guys looking for? Uh, someone who’s pretty, someone who’s kind of funny, someone whom they can be around and associate with, and tell others, “This is my girlfriend,” and no one’s going to make fun of him about it, and she hasn’t been with a lot of guys, you know?

JW: What do you mean by “make fun?” You mean guys make fun of other guys’ girlfriends?

JASON: Yeah. Like say, if the guys think your girlfriend’s ugly, they’re going to make fun of you ‘cos your girlfriend is ugly, or if your girlfriend’s fat or things like that, or if your girlfriend’s slept with a lot of guys. Guys will say, “Hey, your girlfriend’s a slut.” And stuff like that, that’s a joke but that’s the pressure around that.

Jason’s narrative illustrates a double-standard paradox – while these young men had to demonstrate their masculinities by having sex with many women, they also had to demonstrate their ability to ‘acquire’ girlfriends with sufficient bodily capital (physical looks, beauty) and symbolic capital (Madonna, purity). Thus, within these young men’s homosocial space, women became sexualized objects that were trafficked in the game of masculine competition.

JW: So, why do guys do that to each other?

JASON: Um, why do guys do that? (Long pause, in thought.)

JW: That seems mean.

JASON: But that’s just guys making fun of other guys. Yeah, that’s like kind of common. Just for fun, like making fun, you know? It’s not, like, bad intentions, it’s just to make other people laugh, and a lot of the times that is what guys do, when they get in their circle they start making fun of each other.

JW: But, then does that cause any trouble for people’s relationship?

JASON: Oh yeah, for sure, for sure. If a guy was sitting here and he’s just newly going out with this girl, and the guys made fun of him so much, do you think he is going to continue going out with her? No way, he’ll break up with her. Or you better keep your relationship on the down-low and don’t tell people about it, or he’ll end it.

Jason’s description suggests that hetero-guy-talk is a form of social labour that (re)produces and reinforces the male-centred schema of social divisions that oppresses not only women but also men. When I asked him why young men engage in ‘making fun’ of each other, he was stumped. He seemed to have a hard time finding a ‘logical’ explanation, plausibly because it was a naturalized and ritualized practice. Like other young men in the study, Jason’s subsequent answer was “But that’s just guys being guys.”

Jason’s narrative also challenges the popular belief that (hetero)erotic relationships in the West are based on ‘free’ love, as compared to the ‘less civilized’ practices of ‘arranged marriages’ in other societies. It illustrates that agents’ autonomy to engage in (hetero)erotic relationships are constrained to varying degrees by the objective structures in the (hetero)erotic field specific to their societies. It also shows that the practice of in-group teasing works in tandem with other social labour in the fields of media, family, school, and so on to naturalize and
reinforce patriarchy (A. G. Johnson, 2005). Within the economy of symbolic goods, a young man’s position in the homosocial field is defined by the symbolic capital derived from his relations with other men and women. The collective practice of ‘making fun of each other’ instills shame (Probyn, 2004) in agents who do not meet the demands of the hegemonic masculine domination field. It also functions as a disciplinary strategy that reinforces the symbolic violence of hegemonic masculinities to produce the agents’ individual and collective habituses in the form of tastes (feminine submission, beauty, softness), dispositions (homosocial loyalty, (hetero)erotic strategies), perception (compulsory heterosexuality, masculine superiority, class superiority), and bodily hexes (cool pose, misogynist talk, bragging, ‘sugarcoating’), which I further discuss in Chapter 9.

8.3.3. Constructing Codes of Homosocial Practice through Hetero-guy-talk

During the group interviews, I used a case scenario about negotiating between (hetero)erotic desire and potential conflicts in homosocial friendship to elicit the young men’s perspectives on what they considered to be acceptable practices. The discussion among the street-involved young men reflected a collective assumption of women as men’s cultural and symbolic capital to be exchanged in the homosocial field (Bourdieu, 2001).

**MARCUS:** She’s horny?
**PAUL:** Rebound. (Others agreed.)
**JW:** Rebound? Ok. So (...) what do you think Stephen should do? (Many talking at once, inaudible.) What did you say?
**DAVID:** You don’t fuck friends’ girlfriends, so I think Stephen should just sssssuck it.
**JW:** //But they are breaking up-
**DAVID:** //Doesn’t matter, it’s not right, it doesn’t matter, it was still the property of yours and just owned, OK? Yeah, it’s just not right.

David asserted that it would be wrong for any guy to date a friend’s ex-girlfriend. He presented a strong moral stance on homosocial loyalty to justify the patriarchal norm of treating women as men’s property.

As I pushed them further about Stephen’s crush on Sara since Grade 9, they insisted that Stephen needed to obtain permission from Chris.

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42 Scenario: Sara and Chris are good friends with Stephen. They all hang out with a couple of other friends almost every week. Sara and Chris have been going out for the last 6 months. Stephen has had a crush on Sara since Grade 9. Last week, Stephen heard that Sara and Chris were breaking up. Yesterday, he ran into Sara in the subway and the two of them went out for coffee. Stephen noticed that Sara was showing interest in him.
KYLE: Oh, they’re breaking up, but they’re breaking up, fucking right, yo.
PAUL: Yeah, I’d talk to Chris.
DAVID: Depending on Chris’s, uuh, mental situation, Stephen may have a couple of broken bones and maybe a few missing teeth.
MARCUS: There’ll be a confrontation of course, I mean, especially when it comes to party, alcohol, and if they are drinkers, right? He comes up at a party, “Yo man, I heard you wanted to fucking, I heard you wanted my ex, eh? Well, you know what? I still like her and you should be a good friend, and at least don’t try to dominate and let me try to hook back up with her. Don’t just fucking go behind my back like that and screw her.”
DAVID: No, like, honestly? (Pause.) There’s something about my friend’s fucking girl (…) like, let’s just say my friend has a girlfriend, and he breaks up with her, and say, the girl is good looking and let’s say I wanted to date her. But there’s something about me sticking my dick into something that my buddy’s dick has already been into, it’s just not appealing to me.
PAUL: It’s been washed.
MARCUS: It’s been wrapped though. What if it’s been wrapped?
DAVID: I know. I’m not saying it’s dirty or anything. It could be the cleanest pussy in the world. It’s just-
JAMIE: //You’re saying psychologically?
DAVID: Psychologically, would you wanna fuck something your friend just stuck his dick into.
MARCUS: //Oh no, you’re just screwing her and all of sudden she just screams out someone else’s name!
DAVID: //No one should dip in your sugar bowl. NO ONE should dip in your sugar bowl.

The young men seemed to suggest that (hetero)erotic involvement with a friend’s ex-girlfriend represents a form of disrespect and an act of domination that would likely result in physical violence. David used homophobia as a strategy to advance his argument and to silence the oppositional voices. He insinuated that one could implicate a form of ‘homosexual’ connection with one’s friend via the vagina of the friend’s ex-girlfriend. Furthermore, David also engaged the young men in a process of dehumanization. By turning the female body into disembodied parts and presenting the vagina as a receptacle (symbolized by a sugar bowl) for men’s pleasure, David constructed women as less than human, reinforcing the patriarchal imagination of women’s inferiority and justifying their subordination.

Being the only woman in the group discussions, it was at times challenging for me to take these young men’s comments in stride. I was aware of the performative effects of the reiteration of patriarchal values and symbols (Butler, 1990/1999) on the young men in the group interview, which was a hetero-guy-talk in situ. I found myself faced with the dilemma of keeping silent and

43 The process of dehumanization involves the denial of unique human characteristics (as distinct from other animals) to essentialized outgroups. It is often through emotions of contempt and disgust, or psychological distance, indifference and a lack of empathy (Haslam, 2006). Paulo Freire argues that when “the oppressors dehumanize others and violate their rights, they themselves also become dehumanized” (Freire, 2000/1970, p. 56).
therefore placed in the position of supporting patriarchy, or challenging the young men at the risk of the loss of our rapport. To steer our discussions away from the misogynist talk, I often had to rephrase their comments or asked a different question. For instance, to disrupt the ‘sugar-bowl’ talk, I reframed their points of argument, and it seemed to work.

JW: //So even though you've broken up, you prefer your ex not to have sex with anybody you know. You rather they date someone else.
DAVID: //Well, not anybody I know, not my inner circle of friends.
JAMIE: Yeah, like a close buddy of mine.
JW: OK, so do guys all know that? Is this a rule that all guys understand?
DAVID: Pretty much.
PAUL: Pretty much.
MARCUS: Oh no, I guess it depends how the friends are.
PAUL: Guys are just like (…) yeah, well, it more depends on how they react if you say no. If you say no, they’d be like, “Fuck you!” Then they just fuck her, and you’re just like, kicking your ass. Yeah, you gotta (…) do something, ’cos they asked you, they did the right thing, then they did the wrong thing, so.
DAVID: (Quietly.) Go behind your back.
MARCUS: That’s what I say, it’s instant beef with them.

For these young men, their inner circle functioned as a kinship. They seemed to relate to each other based on a collective code of homosocial practice in which having sex with a friend’s ex-girlfriend was taboo. Although the code of seeking permission grants the young men a certain degree of intra-group homosocial respect, it also creates a space of vulnerability. A young man may experience betrayal and become doubly insulted when someone within his social circle seeks permission only to defy his decision and engage in sex with his ex-girlfriend anyway.

The objectification of women through hetero-guy-talk was not limited to the street-involved young men. I engaged the young men at the Cassandra Drop-In Centre in a discussion on the same topic and some of them also engaged in misogynist talk.

JW: So, if you have been dating a girl, but you’re no longer together, you broke up and (..) one of your friends want to date your ex, is that ok?
Multiple Participants: Yeah, go ahead! Go ahead!
Joseph: My leftover, dog!
JW: But should he ask you first?
YUSUF: No way.
DANNY: Yeah, nobody- that's not your property anymore.
JOSEPH: It's not your property, it's all your LEFTover.
YUSUF: That depends, some people think about exes like, “MY EX, she still belongs to me.” But that don’t matter, once it’s your ex, it’s no longer yours. You know what I mean? (Others agreed.)

The responses of the young men at the Cassandra Drop-in showed that there is a dialectical
relationship between their collective and individual habituses; their masculine practices were influenced by but not reduced to dominant hegemonic norms (McNay, 1999a). For instance, some of the young men considered dating a friend’s ex-girlfriend as an acceptable practice. However, similar to the street-involved young men, they did not consider women as active agents with the ability and rights to make choices about their erotic or sexual relationships. Instead they constructed women as sexualized objects and men’s property to be trafficked between men to compete for domination or to strengthen their homosocial bonds within the patriarchal system (G. Rubin, 1975; Sedgwick, 1985). Furthermore, as Bourdieu (2001) argues, the significance of the trafficking of women is not limited to the objectification and exchange of women; these practices reinforce the logic that (re)produces the ‘gendered’ habituses and naturalizes the vision of division that organizes the social world.

Despite the initial permissive attitude towards dating a friend’s ex-girlfriend, the young men at Cassandra Drop-in Centre suggested that homosocial solidarity would be a key consideration in their decisions.

JW: So you all feel comfortable dating your friend’s ex then.
DOLAN: //Hey, yo! If I know that my boy is, like, hurt from the breakup between him and his ex and they've been dating for a while then I won’t. I'll wait a while, at least wait a few months, ‘til I make a move.
JASON: Yeah, I wouldn't move in on one of my good friends’ ex-girlfriend. Depends on how long they've been dating. If they've been dating, like, for like a year or two years something like that--
DANNY: //You know what, I keep it from the guys.
JASON: //I'm not gonna bring that girl back into our circle of friends. Not gonna happen.
Multiple Participants: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
DANNY: But that’s out of courtesy though, but she still wanna go with you or you still wanna go with her, you go--
DOLAN: //I want to, like you said, not to bring her to the circle of friends but --

The above excerpt illustrates that the critical issue for these young men was not whether one should date a friend’s ex-girlfriend, but how they would go about doing it. Within the local context of their lives, the young woman had to be kept out of their homosocial circle to maintain respect for their male friend and homosocial solidarity. The logic behind this practice could also be related to Joseph’s assertion that the ex-girlfriend had become ‘leftovers’ and therefore could be considered a deficit in the economy of symbolic goods within the local field of masculinity.
Regardless of the outcome of the young men’s decisions, what is critical in a feminist analysis is how hetero-guy-talk functions to establish codes of local and global expectations of acceptable homosocial practices that regulate how young men relate to other young men and women. The interactions of the young men in this study suggest that heteronormativity and homophobia continue to be key organizing principles in doing masculinity, as illustrated in a discussion on pornography among the street-involved young men.

JW: A lot of guys told me that they learn sex from pornography, what do you guys think about pornography-
DAVID: //Everybody watches porn.
JAMIE: I watch porn with anyone who wants to watch porn with me.
PABLO: NO, NOT GUYS, YO. I never watch-
KYLE: //I don’t know, they’re gonna be, like, really close to me, you know?
MARCUS: //It’s okay!
KYLE: //NO FUCKING WAY! No, I don’t wanna watch porn with guys. I don’t wanna get into no fucking (.) horn dog.
MARCUS: //Sitting there and, like, you’re gonna cross your leg-
DAVID: I don’t want to watch porn with guys. (Laughing.) I don’t watch porno for no reason, dude! (Pause.)
KYLE: Like, who’s gonna be, “Let’s throw on some porn”? (Laughter.)

Some of the young men’s objections to the idea of watching pornography with men reflect the prevailing homophobia in the Canadian society. Kyle and Marcus implied that watching pornography together could lead to unwanted sex with another man.

Kimmel (2005) suggests that homophobia is associated with one’s fear of not being considered to be a ‘real’ man. It speaks to the instability of heterosexual masculine identification that requires incessant “repudiation of both femininity and homosexuality” (Edwards, 2006, p. 96). Homophobia is one of the patriarchal strategies used to maintain hegemonic masculine domination. In reviewing the historical development of the term ‘homophobia’, Gregory M. Herek (2004) argues that homophobia is not a static phenomenon. The changing contexts of the power relations between and within communities of diverse sexualities require us to think about homophobia not as an individual fear or phobia but as a collective practice. He suggests that a new way to reconceptualize homophobia is to focus on antigay hostility and prejudice.

First, such hostility exists in the form of shared knowledge that is embodied in cultural ideologies that define sexuality, demarcate social groupings based on it, and assign value to those groups and their members. Second, these ideologies are expressed through society’s structure, institutions, and power relations. Third, individuals internalize these ideologies and, through their attitudes and actions, express, reinforce, and challenge them. I refer to these three aspects of antigay hostility as, respectively, sexual stigma, heterosexism, and sexual prejudice. (p. 14)
Herek’s proposed concept of antigay hostility is aligned with Bourdieu’s theory of practice. I contend that homophobia is a socialized disposition acquired through our immersion in a patriarchal society in which compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1983) is institutionalized to achieve its ubiquitous status: in family, marriage, kinship, school, media, law, religion, division of labour, symbolic, and cultural products, and so on (Jackson, 2005). Internalized heteronormativity, as a principle of vision and division, structures our collective habitus and is expressed in our dispositions, perceptions, tastes, emotions, and visceral reactions. It guides our actions and functions to structure the objective conditions of many social fields (e.g., sports, homosociality, heterosociality, culture, education, etc.). However, since our biographical experiences are unique, our individual socialized subjectivities also differ in how they influence our varying ways of enacting heteronormativity.

It was intriguing to watch the young men’s interactions when Dan pointed out that many men go to strip clubs with other men.

**DAN:** That makes me think of something though – lots of guys will go to a strip club together–

**KYLE:** //Yeah. That’s different.

**Dan:** //Would you go to a strip club with a bunch of guys?

**PAUL & KYLE:** Yeah.

**DAN** But you wouldn’t watch a porno with them?

**KYLE:** Yeah, but a porno is different. Porno is actually engaging in fucking sex. You got-

**MARCUS:** //A hot girl-

**KYLE:** //A girl, a hot girl just squatting around, no problem. I’ll do that.

It appears that watching ‘virtual’ pornography with other men was taboo for some of these young men; Kyle equated it with having sex with these men. This is likely because masturbation occurs in a private space and men watch pornography to masturbate (Escoffier, 2007). However, the young men saw no problem going to a strip club with other male friends. Both Kyle and Marcus implied that the presence of female bodies (‘hot’ dancers) in a strip club (public place) made the collective consumption of (hetero)erotic entertainment acceptable.

I contend that these young men’s refusal to watch pornography together in private space is an expression of embodied homophobia. Within a heteromasculine and homophobic society, male homosociality is dichotomously defined in opposition to homosexuality (Rich, 1983). Since pornography is commonly acknowledged as erotic materials that arouse sexual excitement, the absence of ‘real’ female bodies (strippers, dancers, girlfriends) coupled with the presence of sexually aroused male bodies in private space heightened the young men’s fear of
Since heteronormative homosociality is a patriarchal strategy to subordinate women and gay men, homosocial desires (erotic or otherwise) must be repressed and controlled to ensure the survival of hegemonic masculine domination (Kaye, 2009).

In contrast, going to strip clubs with other men represents a common heteromasculine practice. As customers, men engage openly in sexualized heter(erotic) relationships through economic exchange; their behaviours fits with and reinforces the heterosexual norms (K. Frank, 2005). In the social space of strip clubs, women are objectified, turned into conduits that can be used by men in ‘triangular’ (male-male-female) homosocial relationships (Sedgwick, 1985). When the female dancers are assumed to be the ‘object’ of desire, men are free to unleash their sexual energy ‘together’ without any fear that their behaviours will be judged as homoerotic. The practice of going to the strip clubs together fulfills men’s homosocial and/or homoerotic desires in the proximity of each other without putting themselves at risk of masculine subordination (Flood, 2008).

8.3.4. Gender Ordering in Hetero-guy-talk and Family-talk

During the group interviews, I drew on the popularized and dominant discourse of gender differences in communication and interactions to explore the young men’s perspectives. I asked them to respond to the statement: “It’s hard to know what women really want.” This statement unleashed a flood of complaints among the young men at the Cassandra Drop-in Centre. For the subsequent 20 minutes, they spoke animatedly about the differences between women and men.

Danny: Women are strange, they make it haaaaaard, yo.
Joseph: They wanna talk all day!
Danny: And, like- this one girl took offence to it when I told her, you know, I don’t like cell phones and honestly, I only have, like- fifteen, twenty minutes in me at most to talk on a cell phone, like (...) it’s a big deal, like.
Yusuf: You know what, I think that guys are, like, more simple in a way. Like, if you want something, you'll say “This is what I want” —
Dolan: //If girls want it, they'll try and be sneaky, like you're supposed to know, like –
Joseph: //It's like when they go shopping, they look at these clothes and be like, “Oh I want this.” And then they'll switch, “Oh I want this!” You know, they just want something GOOD, you know what I'm saying? (Laughter.)

The discourse of gender differences in communication and heterosexual relationships has been popularized and naturalized by the self-help industry. For example, see best-sellers such as John Gray’s *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus* (J. Gray, 2004); or Barbara De Angelis’ *Secrets of Men Every Woman Should Know* (De Angelis, 1990), etc.
DOLAN: They’re subliminal masters. They’re like that, they like to hint a lot (..) in a conversation, like, “Oh, this WOULD be nice.” Or, “It WOULD be nice if I had a glass of water.” Couldn’t they just say, “Could you get me the glass of water?” (Laughter.)

JOSEPH: They can be a little more straightforward in their speech.

JW: Why do you think women are not straightforward?

JASON: It’s, like, to test you!

DOLAN: Well, I know women who are too straightforward.

JW: Ok, can you (..) say some more about that?

DOLAN: They’re just, like, crazy. Like, one little thing and they’ll start screaming and they’re like – especially when they’re PMS-ing. Like, that is the worse. Being around a girl who is PMS-ing.

The young men’s perspectives on young women were not merely ‘neutral’ descriptions of differences. They listed a number of ‘feminine’ behaviours that they judged to be problematic and mindboggling to them. Dolan used the popular discourse of biological determinism (Dworkin, 1996) – Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) – to naturalize his representation of women as being out of control and mentally unstable. Yusuf suggested that women’s insistence on talking with them on the phone for a long period of time was a form of control and surveillance. “You’re stuck, they can hear you,” Yusuf elaborated. “You can’t be talking to other ladies or doing whatever ‘cos they have you there on the phone. They can hear you.” Others asserted that women were manipulative in social situations out of jealousy or for their own gains.

JOSEPH: No, whenever you try to talk to a girl, and she’s with her friend, DON’T. (…) If you’re trying to get hot on a girl-

DANNY: //You’re going mute, eh? (Laughing and giggling.)

JOSEPH: //Yeah! Don’t do it, dog. ‘Cos you’re stranded. If you’re trying to be like, “Yo, can I have your number?” Don’t, dog. Her friend might tell some stuff about you, you know what I’m saying? They’re jealous, eh. “Yo, why are you talking to her instead of talking to me?” Like, uh, definitely stop here.

YUSUF: Yo, that’s all vengeance.

DOLAN: You got to crack a joke to both of them.

It was through a male-centric schema of division (Bourdieu, 2001) that these young men perceived the male way of communication and interactions to be superior, sensible, and truthful. In constructing women as the problematic, superficial, and manipulative ‘Other’ through hetero-guy-talk, these young men were able to stabilize their masculine identities and police against “the feminizing and homosexualizing influences of excessive heterosociality” (Flood, 2008, p. 355). They were able to justify their own (manipulative) behaviours such as ‘sugarcoating’, smooth talking, or lying to gain young women’s trust and sexual intimacy.

‘Othering’ as a practice of masculine domination (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001), was not limited to hetero-guy-talk. During our first individual interview, Mihir compared how young men and women engaged in homosocial friendship differently.
Mihir: We [[young men]] talk about a lot of other things, everything from like school, ambitions, sports, family, traveling, uh-h, just everything that girls would talk about too. But we would do less of, you know, this sort of empty, supportive words that girls always say, like- “Oh-h, it's going to be okay” and this and that. Like, it sounds so fake sometimes, and um-m, I mean sure, like, some girls wouldn't, but they do it so often that's, like, they'll do it to random acquaintances, you know? Like it doesn't have as much impact I think, so we won't do that as much, but we'll talk about the same topics otherwise, yeah.

Similar to the other young men, Mihir’s description of young women was also oppositional. He suggested that young women engaged in ‘empty words’ and ‘fake’ concerns. It was paradoxical that these young men seemed to hold a lot of contempt towards young women, whom they also pursued as their ‘objects’ of desire.

The naturalized gender division (Bourdieu, 2001) was also reinforced in their family-talk at home. Mihir shared that when he left home to attend university in Toronto, his mother warned him to stay away from girls because “they are trouble.” His mother’s instruction reinforced the misogynist discourse of young women as dangerous, untrustworthy, and in need of control (Douglas, 1966; C. Patton, 1995). But Mihir’s mother was not alone in this type of thinking; other young men had received similar messages at home.

Dolan: My family had nothing to say about sex. (Others agreed.)
JW: Really? Nothing?
Dolan: “Don't bring no kids home.”
JW: Ok. (Laughing.)
DANNY: Yeah, I heard that one. (Laughter.) “Don't trust a girl.” That's what my mom told me too. That's pretty much it. On the sex details, NO WAY!
JOSEPH: “Don't worry about a girl” or, “Yo, focus on school”.

In most cases, their mothers considered young women as ‘bad’ for their sons not because these young women posed any actual danger. They were more concerned with any potential ‘disorder’ in the form of unplanned pregnancy or other ‘undesirable’ sexual outcomes that could derail their sons’ education and career paths. This concern for ‘disorder’ seems to be stronger among middle-class families (Layte, Mc Gee, Rundle, & Leigh, 2007). Working-class families seem to have a different set of concerns, as illustrated by Yusuf’s experience of bringing home a girl.

YUSUF: Yo, the first time I brought a girl home, my mama – she had the biggest grin on her face ’cos all day long I just, like– run around with all my buddies doing my business and she’s like, “Ahhh, you guys, just stay out of trouble, stay out of trouble.” (...) Then one day, I came home and she’s like, “Where’s all the guys?” I was like, “Oh, no, it’s just me and my friend.” She’s like, (mimicking a satisfying tone) “Aaaaaah.” (Laughter.) “Good stuff, good stuff.” She just smiled, I'm like, (..) “Ok.” (..) ‘Cos, like, I was around all the boys, you know, like skipping school, like– (Laughter.)
JW: So then your mom actually thinks that you’re better off being with a girl than running around with all the guys.
YUSUF: Yeah.
Danny: I guess it had no effects on him. (Teasing and laughing.)
JOSEPH: Yeah, like girls can always keep you out of troubles and stuff like that-

For Yusuf’s mother, young women function as her son’s “protectors” to keep him out of trouble. Her view was drastically different from that of Mihir’s mother, plausibly because of the differences in their class habituses. Living in an impoverished neighbourhood, she may have been much more concerned with other struggles that her young Black son was faced with, including racial profiling, police harassment, and involvement with hustling, selling drugs, or gang related activities (Springer, Roswell, & Lum, 2006).

The narratives of these young men’s family-talk reflect an emerging trend in neoliberal societies in which young women are constructed as both ‘dangerous’ and ‘protective’ while young men are constructed as ‘vulnerable’ and ‘lacking self-control,’ therefore requiring protection and surveillance by the women in their lives. Using ‘girlfriends’ and ‘wives’ as a strategy in crime desistance has been taken up in the field of law enforcement and crime prevention (Beaver, Wright, DeLisi, & Vaughn, 2008; Bersani, Laub, & Nieuwbeerta, 2009). For instance, the Toronto Police Services Board gave $30,000 to a community group in 2007 to publish and distribute the quarterly Yo ‘Mama magazine, designed specifically for low-income young mothers aged 15 to 24. The key goal was to encourage these young mothers to challenge their boyfriends and to push them to get a ‘real’ job instead of being involved with crime. As the editor of Yo ‘Mama told the Toronto Star, “I mean if he comes home and he’s covered with blood and he’s got gunpowder on him, you’re going to have to question that. The women need to start… taking responsibility for their boyfriends’ actions” (Lautens, 2007, February 21). Within the logic of crime prevention, many low-income young mothers are put into an ambiguous position. Whereas the institution of heterosexuality positions women as passive and dependent on men’s protection, the neoliberal discourse of good citizens (Rose, 1996) requires them to become an extension of the state to keep their male partners in control.

8.3.5. Freedom and Constraints in Hetero-guy-talk: Seeking Advice, Support and Validation

Although hetero-guy-talk is a form of masculine competition, it is also a key way for men to establish and maintain friendship with each other. It is through hetero-guy-talk that most young
men learn about relationships and sexuality (J. D. Brown, 2002; Selwyn & Powell, 2007). Joseph who had emigrated from Chad seven years earlier spent his spare time hanging out with his guy friends playing ball and talking about young women.

JW: Yeah, so talking about girls, what do you guys talk about?
JOSEPH: “Ah, look at this girl, what do you think she does?” All kinds of stuff like that. I was talking to one of my friends about my girl. See, I have my girl, this girl, you know, she wants this and that. I was seeing if she’s like those types of girls who like guys for money, or she likes me, you know, so I was asking my friends questions to see what’s the answer.
JW: Yeah? And what answers did you get?
JOSEPH: Like for my ex, because she always used to call me, every time she called me it’s like, “Oh can you bring me money?” So, you know (laughing), all the boys were like, “You have to let her go because she just wants to use you for the money.” And I let her go.

Getting peer advice was particularly important for Joseph since he was still learning to navigate the subfield of ‘dating.’ He relied on his male friends to help him evaluate his (hetero)erotic relationships. For the other young men, hetero-guy-talk provided them with the support they needed to make difficult decisions about their (hetero)erotic relationships.

Joseph: //We got each other's back, we back up each other when we have to now and then-
DANNY: //In a sense, if you ask them to- if you have a friend, a good friend, like some girls won't tell you things [[wanting to break-up]] straight up. This way you're acting with them sometimes, you're like pretending (..)
JW: So then your friend will support you to go and do something straight up-
DANNY: (imitating manly voice) “Whatever way you have to, handle it, man.” (Laughter.) Like, they're not necessarily telling you what to do, but just handle it. “You gotta man up, and- if you want it, you want it. If you don’t, you don’t. Like, what’s the plan?” (Others agree.) “Take a shot.”

For Danny, it was not the content of the hetero-guy-talk but the moral support and encouragement that he received that mattered. Although young men are often stereotyped and portrayed as ‘heartless’ and ‘insensitive,’ the narratives of these young men show that they also experience emotional vulnerabilities like women, but they express them differently because they have embodied a different set of gendered subjectivities and are faced with different structural demands. When faced with relationship challenges like breaking-up and conflicts, these young men look to each other for support that gives them the courage to act.

However, hetero-guy-talk is not always a forum of free expression. It is a situational intersubjective practice, guided by implicit rules, group expectations, and mutual influences (Bottero, 2005). During hetero-guy-talk, these young men engaged in constant monitoring and evaluation of each other’s ‘performances’. Their interactions were shaped and constrained by both the local and global masculine expectations (Flood, 2008). For instance, Mihir also turned
to his peers for information and advice about sex. However, unlike Joseph and his friends, seeking direct advice about sex and relationships was not encouraged in Mihir’s peer group. Topics of their sex-talk were limited to ‘showing off’ if their sexual encounters went well, or ‘laughing them off’ if they did not go well. Mihir and his friends rarely included relationship issues in their hetero-guy-talk.

**MIHIR:** Um-m-m, we’re less likely to talk about relationship stuff, sometimes the guys are just, like, you know, they’ll either make fun of you or they are just not interested in hearing about if you have emotional problems. But they’re more interested in the sexual aspects of anything, whether it was good or bad, because I guess that’s more sensational and more interesting in someway. Um-m-m, I have one really good friend whom I don’t mind talking about relationship issues with, but with some other guys I’ll just talk about the sexual part, you know?

In comparing how young women and young men do homosocial friendship, Mihir conceded that men are less likely to disclose their emotional needs to their male friends. He suggested that men experiencing emotional pain often have to suffer in silence.

**MIHIR:** I think girls always talk about it [[break-up]] with their friends in a second, and all their friends will usually be really supportive of whatever it is, whereas with guys you don’t have that at all. Some guys are really good with dealing with things [[break-ups]] or, you know, they actually just don’t care and so it doesn’t matter. But sometimes you do care and then it does really bug you and it frustrates you that you can’t talk about it with anyone. You know, it’s sort of churning in your head. Um-m-m, there’s nowhere really to go and, I mean, you can talk to a counsellor and stuff like that, but it’s not so serious that you need a counsellor, right? Yeah.

Mihir lamented that he had nowhere to turn to when he broke up with his girlfriend. When he tried to talk to his male friends, they told him to “just drop it and get on with life.” His peers’ reaction illustrates that ‘emotional repression’ is a common disposition and expectation among young men. Mihir’s narratives also reflected his inner struggles and ambiguous feelings; while he criticized women for engaging in ‘fake’ and ‘empty’ talk (as discussed earlier), he also wished that men would be more supportive of each other. In our follow-up interview, Mihir returned with his resonant text – a reflection on our dialogue in the first interview and his perspectives of being a guy.

I think that it’s a misconception amongst the general public that men (especially young men) are driven by sex and the desire for sexual satisfaction. It is true that we do think about this from time to time but our motivations are not always based on this premise. I think it’s important that people recognize that guys can have feelings and emotions just like girls although, on average, it might not be as frequent or as strong as in girls. In my limited experience so far, it has been the girl who has been sometimes more promiscuous and more likely to end relationships than my male friends. We live in a society that seeks to breakdown gender stereotypes even though they may be ingrained in our psyche. I think this is important.
and that it is vital to emphasize that we cannot slot people into categories but rather we should understand that such traits fall on a continuum and that clustering of people into groups is not representative of the real life situation. (Mihir, Resonant Text)

Mihir’s resonant text expressed his inner yearning for collective emancipation whereby everyone could break free from stereotypes. He called for society to embrace men as persons with emotions and feelings. Although his writing was still premised on a dichotomous comparison between men and women, it reflected the opening up of a space for transformation.

8.3.6. Hetero-guy-talk: Consensus and Dissensus

As discussed earlier, hetero-guy-talk constitutes a social space in which hegemonic masculine discourses are (re)produced. However, it is also a space in which dominant ideas are challenged. During a group discussion on how young men define ‘cheating,’ Tyler asked his peers to assess his situation.

JW: So, how do you define cheating. When do you
MAWULI: //When you want to be with another female. (All talking at once.)
TYLER: Yeah. Ok. I have a situation (...)
JEREMIAH: //Is oral sex cheating? (Side conversation.)
TYLER: //Hey, yo. Would you consider it as cheating if you see a girl, she talks to you, right? And you give her your number, and you never talk to her for three weeks.
PATRICK: That’s not cheating.
TYLER: Is that cheating? (Turning to another young man in the group.)
JOSHUA: No.
SHAWN: Did that happen to you?
TYLER: Yeah, that’s happened to me. Is that- (all talking at once) would you consider that as cheating?
BRANDON: That’s not cheating.

I found out later during an individual interview with Tyler that the ‘phone number’ incident occurred only a week prior to the group interview. It created a lot of tension between Tyler and his girlfriend, who decided that there would be ‘no sex’ between them until it was resolved. Tyler was eager to get his friends to validate that he had not done anything wrong. However, not everyone agreed on the definition of cheating.

JW: So, is giving a phone number cheating?
SHAWN: No, but some girls- it depends on what girl you’re talking to. Some girls define it as cheating.
TYLER: That’s not cheating. I’m leaving her some information. I talked to this girl only one time. She asked me if I had a girlfriend, I said “no.” But I didn’t have no intentions of talking to her. Or, like, meeting with her.
JEREMIAH: Why did you tell her “no”?
TYLER: I don’t know. I lied.
MAWULI: No, you didn’t cheat. You just lied. You didn’t cheat. You didn’t do nothing.
JEREMIAH: But you were on the verge of cheating-
TYLER: No, like I’m- I didn’t want nothing-
JEREMIAH: What if she said, “I want to meet up with you.”
TYLER: Like, that happened. She asked, and I said “no.”
MAWULI: That’s not cheating.
SHAWN: //But then some girls would be like, (mimicking very high pitch female voice) “If you
LOOK at another girl, YOU’RE CHEATING ON ME!”
JEREMIAH: It all depends on the girl you’re dealing with. (Others agreed.)

Although some of Tyler’s peers supported his claim that he did not cheat, Shawn and Jeremiah questioned this claim. Shawn suggested that cheating is defined within the context of an established relationship. Jeremiah pointed out Tyler’s lie about not having a girlfriend to suggest that he had the intention to cheat. However, Jeremiah was careful in ensuring that his challenge to Tyler’s claim did not pose any threat to Tyler’s intra-group respect or sense of masculinity by going along with Shawn’s non-committal answer that ‘it depends on the girl.’ Without conscious awareness, the young men at Macee Grove were asserting influence on each other.

Similarly, during a discussion on sexual coercions and assaults, the street-involved young men at Troikaville engaged in a dialogue when I asked them to respond to a poster which showed an image of a young man and a young woman, and a tagline that stated: “My strength is not for hurting. When I didn’t know how she felt, I asked. Men can stop rape.”

MARCUS: Oh, I agree one hundred and ten percent.
JW: Do you think sometimes it’s (...) hard?
PAUL: Hard to ask a chick for sex?
MARCUS: Of course it’s hard. Like I said, it all depends on the situation.
DAVID: //You’re like, so horny you can fuck anything.
JW: Ok, what if you find out that your female buddy, like her boyfriend is actually kind of using force to have sex with her, what would you do? How would you react?
MARCUS: I’d have to punch him out- (All talking at once.)
PAUL: Punch him-
DAVID: //Punch him up, man-
MARCUS: I’d be like, “Yo, man, what’s up with that? You’re like beating on chicks that are like 130 pounds, and you’re about 180, 190, 200 taking advantage. Here (mimicks punching noise) now you’re getting boxed, man, kick you right in the balls.”
JW: So you’d challenge him, you-
JAMIE: ///I’d probably talk to her about it first-
MARCUS: ///Yeah man!
JAMIE: ///I’d probably ask her how she felt first.
JW: You’d ask her about what?
JAMIE: If she thought it was a big deal, like it was beyond what she thought was right, then I’d punch him up.

In the above discussion, Kyle and Nadir were silent. Marcus, Paul, and David were eager to present a ‘moral’ and ‘ethical’ self before Dan and me. They asserted that sex by force was not
acceptable and the way to ‘correct’ this ‘wrong’ was to use physical force to punish the perpetrator.

The similar responses of Marcus, Paul, and David to our question were plausibly an effect of social desirability, but regardless of their intention, their talk as a mediated action (Tappan, 2005) produced effects. In challenging men’s violence towards women with male-to-male violence, their talk inadvertently produced numerous effects: (1) affirmation that sexual violence against women was unacceptable; (2) exclusion of women in the formulation of suitable solutions; (3) reification of women as powerless and without agency, needing men to protect them against other men; (4) reinforcement of the dominant belief that violence towards women is an individual personal problem, negating the objective conditions that perpetuate it; and (5) legitimation of the use of violence to reinforce hegemonic masculine ideologies that produce violence in the first place.

The young men’s narratives illustrate that hetero-guy-talk can challenge and/or reinforce masculine domination at the same time. It is a space of conformity and/or potential transformation because the voices in hetero-guy-talk are never totally unified or final (Sullivan & McCarthy, 2004). In the above dialogue, Jamie did not go along with the ‘punch him up’ discourse. He stated firmly that he would first talk to his female friend who was experiencing the violence to explore her feelings and needs. Although Paul and Jamie were best friends and shared a similar collective habitus, their responses to violence against women differed. For instance, in the above discussion, Jamie’s inclusion of women as active agents in solving the problem of male-to-female violence was likely shaped by his childhood experience. During our first individual interview, he shared that he grew up in a family that “tended to have male violent drunks.” He elaborated that he had witnessed his father abusing his mother.

Jamie: I don’t know if my dad ever saw my grandfather being an abusive drunk, but I watched my dad almost kill my mom. I watched him, like – almost throw her off the balcony. That fateful night I was, like, three and we just moved into the new apartment, and it was like, it was back when my dad was still drinking, he came home one day and he was just fucking drunk, and it was fucking hot and it was raining and I slept in the living room, ‘cos my room was hot . . . all I heard was my dad fucking yelling at my mom, and fucking, like, throwing her into the wall and shit, until eventually he tried to kill her or some shit, and than, like, he went to jail and my mom had a restraining order on him and they were, like, separated. . . . After that, my dad was, like, a mess . . . I saw, like, the things that made my dad quit booze. He’s been sober for 13 years since the day he went in jail. I respect that. I love my dad for that.
Perhaps it was in witnessing his mother’s agency – calling the police, charging his father for assault, obtaining a restraining order, accepting his father back into their relationship when he quit drinking – that Jamie embodied the perception of women not as powerless victims but also agents with strengths.

8.3.7. Context Matters: Making Sense of the Young Men’s Hetero-guy-talk

One of the methodological strengths of this study is the use of both group and individual interviews, which allowed me to examine the transactional relationships between the young men and me, and also between the young men. These two types of interviews created two different sets of demands on the young men – masculine competition during the group interviews and social desirability in the individual interviews. The intertextual readings of both sets of interviews enabled me to make sense of the young men’s narratives in the hetero-guy-talk. For instance, throughout the group interview, David tended to randomly utter misogynist comments, as illustrated by his interjection in the midst of the young men’s debate on watching pornography with other men (refer to section 8.3.3).

DAVID: Dude, you might as well as see strippers walking down the street with how these fucking women are dressed in these days
KYLE: Yeah, really eh, yeah.
MARCUS: //Especially when they got a set of keys and then they drop it on purpose right in front of a group of guys and they got a miniskirt on too, she’s like –
DAVID: (Laughing.) Yeah.
PAUL: I saw some girl’s ass.
DAVID: Come up right to me –
KYLE: I’ve seen enough of those.

David’s comment was out of the blue, but it had the power to steer the other young men into making similar misogynist comments as a collective masculine performance. By looking at the group interview data in isolation, it was difficult for me to make sense of the logic behind his misogynist talk beyond the obvious performance of masculinity. However, when I read and re-read the texts of his individual interviews, I began to see the inner tension, ambiguities and contradictions that David struggled with.

During an individual interview, David elaborated on his perspectives on hooking up with a friend’s ex-girlfriend. He disclosed his struggles in developing (hetero)erotic relationships with women his in social circle.
DAVID: To be honest, yes, I was actually in the ‘friend’ position a few times. It really sucks, especially since I have always had a thing for my friends’ girlfriends. They all like me but they are all dating my friends, and I always end up being the friend that they all bitch and complain to, like, about my friends being assholes to them (...).

JW: So why do they come to you?

DAVID: Because I know how to talk, I am very insightful, like I said, I had an understanding towards women, but at the same time I don’t understand them at all. [[……]] I have been told by girls many times I am too nice, I have dated girls and they break up with me ‘cos I am too nice. I am always the sensitive one, but they all want to date the asshole, and “nice guys finish last.” See, I would be the nice guy finishing last because I would make them feel like they’re special or something, like, that just the way I am, it’s the way I have been brought up and stuff. [[……]] It really sucks, I give the advice and I can’t seem to keep my own relationship. Basically, I am really good at giving relationship advice, but I cannot follow my own. The relationship I am in now is the longest relationship I have ever been in.

JW: And how long have you been together?

DAVID: A month and eleven days.

JW: So you are saying (…) young women fall for mean guys?

DAVID: Girls don’t always fall for an asshole. Girls WANT an asshole when they are young, dumb, and stupid, and when they are older and become women they want the nice guy to fall back on, to cuddle with them. “Fuck it, if you don’t like me for me. I am going to be me throughout my entire life.” They want the asshole punk who’s rebellious type shit. (…) I don’t know why, but women seem to be attracted to men that call them bitches (laughing). Bitches and hoes, honest to God. Some women are attracted to men who call them bitches and hoes (laughing). So then I call them sluts.

Here, David drew on the discourses – ‘nice guys finish last’ and ‘girls want an asshole’— to explain his subordinated position within the (hetero)erotic field. His experience of erotic rejections by the young women in his social circle plausibly explained his adamant rejection of the idea of hooking up with a friend’s ex-girlfriend. By naming it as an unacceptable practice, he freed himself from the demand of having to prove himself successful in (hetero)erotic connections within his social circle. Furthermore, by asserting that young women ‘want an asshole,’ his subordinated position in the (hetero)erotic field was reframed to present a different reality – the young women’s self-imposed oppression and their inability to appreciate a ‘nice’ young man like him. David’s use of different strategies in constructing his masculine identity suggests that agents do engage in practical reflections in response to the demands of the different fields they inhabit. However, these practical reflections do not equate to voluntaristic rational choices (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

**8.4. Discussion: Hetero-guy-talk as a Third Space?**

In this chapter, a number of key themes emerge from my interpretation of the young men’s interactions in hetero-guy-talk. First, hetero-guy-talk is a space of homosocial competition. Young men compete for homosocial capital and respect through the telling of sex
stories. However, how they compete in this space is related to their social locations and group history. The street-involved young men with limited social capital in the form of family and neighbourhood networks tended to take on hyper-masculine performances to establish toughness in order to gain street respect and diminish potential victimization. The young men with pre-existing peer relationships (Macee Grove and Cassandra Drop-in) tended to be less competitive and used teasing as a way of challenging each other.

Second, hetero-guy-talk is also a space of homosocial bonding. Most of the young men indicated that they learned about sexuality from their peers. However, how these young men sought peer support from each other was contextual to their individual and collective habituses and the fields they inhabited. In societies where homophobia and heteronormativity are the dominant organizing principles of social life, most heterosexual men avoid emotional disclosures to their male friends for fear of being labeled as gay, feminine, or weak (R. W. Connell, 2005; Courtenay, 2000). The association of shame with the expression of ‘non-macho’ or ‘feminine’ emotions in the homosocial field was reflected in the narratives of the middle-class young men in this study (e.g., Jason’s strategy to cry during his showers; the refusal for Mihir’s guy friends to acknowledge his emotional need to talk about his break-up).

However, Kimmel (2004) points out that how men relate to one another in homosocial relationships is also influenced by their social positioning in terms of their class, ethnicity, age, race, and sexuality. He suggests that working-class Black men tend to be more expressive and disclose more about themselves among close friends because peer solidarity is the key to their survival as they struggle against racism and economic marginalization in their everyday world. Kimmel’s observation is supported by the results of this study. While all the young men were faced with the demand to practice their heteronormative masculinities and demonstrate their success in the (hetero)erotic field, the young men from the ‘hoods seemed to be more opened in seeking each others’ advice on their hetero(erotic) relationships (e.g., Joseph relied on his guy friends’ advice on his relationships with young women; Tyler looked to his peers in defining ‘cheating’ in his hetero(erotic) relationships).

Third, hetero-guy-talk is a form of social labour within the economy of symbolic goods (Bourdieu, 2001) that functions to maintain patriarchy and the gender order through three key strategies: (1) establishing benchmarks for the evaluation (self and others) of hetero-masculine achievements; (2) establishing codes of masculine expectations to police individual and
collective homosocial, heterosocial, sexual, and erotic practices; and (3) constructing and strengthening homosocial bonds through emplaced, embodied intersubjectivity and subjectivities.

Fourth, the desire for homosocial approval and the fear of losing one’s manliness makes it difficult for the young men to speak out against patriarchy. During the group interviews, there were many moments when some of the young men engaged in dehumanizing processes that reinforced patriarchy. Allan G. Johnson (2005) describes patriarchy as a system of male-dominated values and symbols that are embodied in varying degrees by all of us, incorporated into all aspects of social life and reproduced in our everyday interactions.

The prominent place of misogyny in patriarchal culture, for example, doesn't mean that every man and woman consciously hates all things female. . . . to live in patriarchy is to breathe in misogynist images of women as objectified sexual property valued primarily for their usefulness to men. This finds its way into everyone who grows up breathing and swimming in it, and once inside us it remains, however unaware of it we may be. So, when we hear or express sexist jokes and other forms of misogyny we may not recognize it, and even if we do, say nothing rather than risk other people thinking we're "too sensitive" or, especially in the case of men, "not one of the guys." In either case, we are involved, if only by our silence. . . . (A. G. Johnson, 2005, p. 41)

In their quest to occupy a dominant position within the homosocial field, some of the young men in this study actively participated in the (re)production of the hegemonic masculine bloc (Demetriou, 2001) through acts of homophobia and misogyny, while others protested or remained silent. As Connell (2005) argues, it is through silence and complicity that men acquire patriarchal dividends without having to actively engage in the domination of women.

Last, hetero-guy-talk is a space of situational intersubjectivity (Bottero, 2010) whereby the young men draw on hegemonic masculine discourses that circulate in their social circles and in society (media, family, school, public policy) to construct stories and rules. However, it is also a space in which young men present different perspectives derived from their individual habituses and unique biographical histories. The combination of individual and collective habituses generate dynamics that become a structuring force in the fields they inhabit. For instance, it was the combination of the global discourses of women as sexualized objects (A. G. Johnson, 2005) and the local codes of homosocial solidarity that shaped these young men’s similar but also different perspectives on dating a friend’s ex-girlfriend. Thus, hetero-guy-talk is
a space of indeterminancy, and transformation is possible albeit difficult, as illustrated by the dissensus among the young men.

8.5. Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I draw on the young men’s narratives in their individual and group interviews to make sense of how they accomplished their masculinities in response to the demands of the fields they inhabit. The results illuminate the complex relationships between the young men’s individual and collective habituses. They also show that ‘context’ matters (De Fina, 2008) in how these young men performed their masculinities and how their habituses interacted to produce situational subjectivity that reinforced and/or challenged hegemonic masculinities. As Bhabha (1994) argues, “It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of … community interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (p. 2). Thus, most importantly, the results of this chapter show that the young men perpetually engaged in the negotiation of their intersubjectivity and in so doing, they were both structured structures and structuring structures (Bourdieu, 1990b) in their social worlds.

In the next chapter, I continue to draw on Bourdieu’s notions of habitus, field, and capital to explore the overlapping demands of the fields of homosociality and masculinity on the (hetero)erotic practices of young men.
Chapter 9
The Logic of (Hetero)erotic Practices: Habitus, Capital, and Fields

9. Introduction

I begin this chapter with a poem that Matthew wrote when he was 18 (two years prior to our interviews). He brought it to our second interview and used it as his resonant text. He shared that the poem represented the lowest point in his life when he was struggling with drug addiction, overwhelmed by the conflicts between his newcomer parents at home, and seeking a

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understand me by [GQ Label?].

sick of this shit, sick of making my life tryin’ to fit
Meaningless smiles witch only cover up my unseen denial
Living pointless tryin’ to help when you only fail
watchin’, knowing there’s nothing you can do but bail
Blazin’, juicin’, trippin’ is my antidote, just toke chug toke
The only place where I feel steady, relax, and chill and actually feel happy
My bredrins goin’ thru the same shit, having my back
spotin’ me when I got no money just like a family
Arguments fights ova and ova again, I can’t stand this bullshit
learnin’ to look for love then neva gettin’ it
Force feedin’ me to hate, making me bait to all the drug dealas, Turfs, beef
Learnin’ how to survive on the fuckin’ street
Gambling your life for money power fame respect
In the streets if you win, you’re a money making, pussy poppin’, session blazin’
big time, mans do anything for your respect
But to the world you lose, you’re a criminal, you’re a worthless nobody
a low life, an addict, a failure, the usual suspect
sometimes I don’t know where to turn anymore
But one person always boosts my strength, a random person who helps me from the floor Helps me walk thru the fire, thru the greed the temptations
A person with relation, no connection but just a simple act of redemption

I gotta change...Change...change into something I never could grasp
something I can look back to and be proud of

It’s just me against the world...

(Matthew, Resonance Texts, typed in the same style as the original)

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place of belonging on the street. His poem reflects the stark realities faced by many young men living in impoverished neighbourhoods. It points to the paradox in these young men’s life – practices that earn them economic capital and street respect also bring them societal condemnation. It also speaks to his inner struggles and his yearning for human connections. Like some of the other young men in this study, Matthew turned to street drugs for temporary relief from his psychological pain. He found refuge in hanging out with the kuyas (big brothers) in his ’hood. The ’hood habitus disposed him to engage in casual sex, drug use, and physical fights to establish his masculine status on the street. However, when Matthew read out the poem, his spirit was high. He spoke from a position of triumph – he was drug-free, waiting to become a father (his girlfriend was pregnant), and hoping to enroll in a car mechanic apprenticeship at a local college. In a quiet but powerful way, Matthew demonstrated that a person’s story is never final. Transformation is possible and there are more stories to be told.

In this chapter, I continue to draw on Bourdieu’s notions of habitus, field, and capital to examine the logic of the young men’s (hetero)erotic and homosocial practices in the multiple contexts of their lives. I also return to the notions of place and scale to examine the intersecting effects of local and global sexualized cultures, normative codes of homosocial practice, and power relations on the (hetero)erotic sexual practices of the young men in this study. In writing this chapter, I struggle constantly with the ethical dilemma of writing about the ‘Other’. In making visible the ‘transgressive’ sexual practices of these young men, I produce a specific kind of ‘knowledge’ that may plausibly be used to challenge masculine domination and facilitate potential emancipation through dialogue (Freire & Antonio, 1989). At the same time, it may be appropriated by adults in power (e.g., parents, teachers, public health officials, service providers, media, academic researchers, etc.), converted into ‘expert’ capital on risk, and used in their competitions for dominant positions within their respective social fields. Its conversion into risk discourses can also be used to further intensify the social control of young people’s sexualities, (re)produce racialized andclassed domination, and justify the symbolic violence of White middle-class heteronormative monogamy.

9.1. ‘Can’t be Soft by Her’: Love as Vulnerability

During the group and individual interviews, I invited the young men to respond to the
statement - “guys actually want love” – as a way to disrupt the stereotype that constructs young men as emotionally disconnected individuals who are only interested in sex. Although I did not mention the word ‘sex’, many of them started talking about sex.

**PAUL:** Actually yeah, oh no, I want love but then again I want sex, so.
**JW:** Ok so, can the two be together? Or-
**MARCUS:** Yeah.
**JW:** So how do you tell when (.) you’re with someone, that it’s about love or when it’s all about sex?
**PAUL:** You KNOW. If you have sex like fourteen times a day, you’re just like, “This is love, it’s not just sex.”
**JAMIE:** Like, if you’re having all this sex and then like, otherwise you’re not talking-like, they just don’t pay much attention to you then, they’re pretty much in it for sex.

Paul measured love according to the frequency of sex but Jamie assessed love in terms of communication and interaction beyond sex. Other young men at the Cassandra Drop-In echoed the love-sex connection. Danny shared that when he was younger, he thought sex equaled love.

**DANNY:** I used to think love meant sex. So I used to, like, “Yeah, I love you”, you know what I mean?
**Multiple Participants:** // (Laughter.) Aaaaah!
**DANNY:** //But it was just about the sex thing, you know what I mean?
**DOLAN:** (Laughing.) You said that? Dude, and she thought you were a cool guy-
**DANNY:** //But also I thought, “Yeah, so what though?” Like she said, “I love you”, and I was like, “Yeah I love you too!” (Laughter.) But as I got older I understood that love didn’t mean like just sex, it meant like, “Yeah I actually care for the person a lot.” You know?

Although the young men were not sure how to define love, they seemed certain that women would be pleased by the verbal confirmation of love. Thus, telling women ‘I love you’ became the ‘sugar-coating’ strategy that they sometimes used to negotiate sexual intimacy.

As noted in Chapter 2, the hegemonic ideal of ‘love’ is promoted as the goal and evidence of ‘healthy’ relationships in sex education (e.g., Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit, 2007; Peel Public Health, 2007). Unfortunately these gendered public health messages do not reflect an understanding of the logic of many young people’s (hetero)erotic practices or their social realities. Although these young men recognized the socially sanctioned ideal of sex-with-love, many perceived love and commitment as something for the future and not something that was relevant to them at their age.

**DANNY:** Aaaahhh. (. ..) Depends. Depends on the person, you know? And where they’re at with their life. I don’t know. Some people are looking for love, some people don’t wanna go into it. Me, personally, no. I’m just, riding the surfboard right now.
JW: Ok. What about you?
JOSEPH: Depends on the person I guess. It depends on how much I like the person, and how much I care about them.
Dolan: I don't know. I'm not really LOOKING for love. I'm just like, looking for a quick fling.
JW: Yeah? Quick fling? What does that mean?
Dolan: Means a new girl every few days or something.
Multiple Participants: Ah ha! (Laughter.)
JASON: I don't know if am I looking for love? Like, personally, if someone says that to you, it’s like “Oooh”, and then you take a step back, just like- and then there's like a whole next pressure piece on you and you're just like, “Aww man, I don't wanna,” ’cos I don't wanna hurt people's feelings, you know? Like, I don’t wanna crush a girl’s heart and stuff like that. So, I don't know, that whole love thing in the past, it has not ended well for me.

In the above excerpt, Danny described love as an object that others sought after. He used the metaphor of ‘riding the surfboard’ to describe his (hetero)erotic practice. This metaphor incites an image of a masculine space of freedom, excitement, pleasure and the power to conquer nature (Waitt, 2010). For Danny and Dolan, it was about the freedom to engage in sexual conquests. Jason, on the other hand, implied that young men became vulnerable when they were pressured to become committed to ‘love’. This association of love with vulnerability appeared to be another dominant gendered discourse that the young men drew on.

TYLER: I think guys don't wanna fall in love 'cos they feel that they're vulnerable, (..) they feel that they're WEAK.
PATRICK: Can't be soft by her.
BRANDON: And her friends.
SHAWN: Yeah, 'cos you know, when you're in love with somebody you have to give certain things up. Yeah.
JW: Like what?
PATRICK: //Sacrifice-
SHAWN: Yeah-like, you can't just always be with your friends, you have to spend time with them.
TYLER: //And you know that you gotta swallow your pride a lot more when you're in love with somebody. (Side talk, laughter, teasing among each other.)
SHAWN: //Because like, when you have a girlfriend, speaking from experience, that you love, like certain things that you do, if any other girl said anything to you, you'd be like, “Don't talk to me like that!” Or you'd be like, “I don’t care.” But when your girl says it to you, it's just like, (sighed, softened voice) “Okaaaay.” (Laughter.)

The young men’s fear of becoming ‘soft’ under the influence of women illustrates the precarious and socially constructed nature of masculinity. Their perception of love as a threat to their masculine identities, homosocial bonds, and individual freedom represents a popular imaginary
which is reflected in and perpetuated by the socially sanctioned and uncritically accepted practice of the pre-matrimonial stag or bachelor party\textsuperscript{45} in Western societies.

However, not all of the young men considered ‘love’ to be restrictive. David expressed a strong emotional attachment to his current girlfriend, who used to live in the same ’hood and attended the same high school.

**DAVID:** We lost contact for four years and I saw her in an alley. We saw each other and it’s love at first sight, I guess you can say.

**JW:** So, what is it about her that you really like?

**DAVID:** Like before, other girls I tried to date, they took one look at me and just like, they never gave me the time of day, ‘cos they never get the chance to know me. She is like, this girl doesn’t care that I have no money or anything like that, she loves me for me and not because of other things or just what I had. So I feel like, I love this girl, I want to start a family. I told her already, if I am dating her a year from now, I’ll ask her to marry me and she already said yes.

For David, it was the experience of gaining full acceptance by his girlfriend that made him declare his love for her. For him, love was no longer an object to be sought after or rejected; it was a generative force (Tillich, 1954) that gave him a sense of his future, even though his aspirations were still constrained by his habitus. Despite his ‘misogynist’ expressions in the hetero-guy-talk, he spoke differently during our individual interviews, as he did not feel compelled to perform a hypermasculine identity before me.

Zahid also embraced relationships of love. Unlike the other young men, he shared that he recognized love through his bodily sensation.

**JW:** So the first time you fell in love was when you were fourteen. How did you know you were in love?

**ZAHID:** I was with the girl for two years and I was always like (...) I always have this funny feeling inside.

**JW:** Yeah. What do you mean by that?

**ZAHID:** I can’t explain, like a funny feeling, like (...) inside and I knew it was love and I was with her for a long time, and then (...) she cheated on me. I punched her, I knocked her out and I left. (...) I was torn for days. Smoked weed for non-stop that month and then I realized I have more fish in the sea ’cos other girls would come talk to me when I was at the bus stop, “Hey

\textsuperscript{45} Despite being a common practice, few academics have written about the stag or bachelor party. Cele Otnes and Liz Pleck (2003) suggest that it was Hugh Hefner, through the *Playboy* magazine, who had reinvented a desired hegemonic masculine image of the successful and sexually conquering bachelor. Although not planned or carried out uniformly, the required elements of present day bachelor parties include “an all male guest list, copious amount of alcohol, pranks played on an inebriated groom, and the inevitable stripper. One goal is to thoroughly humiliate the groom and affirm a form of aggressive, joking and even hostile masculinity” (p. 79.)
Zahid described a different type of vulnerability that young men experience when they engage in relationships of ‘love’. When their (hetero)erotic relationships breakdown, many young people were at loss of how to cope with the related stress. Like the other street-involved young men in this study, Zahid used marijuana as a stress reduction strategy.

It was paradoxical that Zahid expressed his certainty of love based on his bodily sensation, but within the same breath, he spoke of hitting his ex-girlfriend in a matter-of-fact manner because she ‘betrayed’ him. Zahid’s disposed action to strike his ex-girlfriend may have been related to his individual and collective masculine habitus: his own experience of childhood victimization, physical beatings from his father, gang fights on the street and in jail, and our society’s general acceptance of violence against women (Nabors & Jasinski, 2009). Furthermore, when young men experience relationship conflicts and breakdowns, they seldom receive ‘relevant’ support from their friends, families, teachers, sex educators, or other adults (Weisz, Tolman, Callahan, Saunders, & Black, 2007). Instead, the field of masculinity demands that they ‘man up’ in these situations, deal with it, and move on.

At the time of the interview, Zahid was in a new relationship with a young woman whom he adored. When he talked about her, his voice became gentle and he smiled. He spoke of her positive influences on him.

JW: So what made you decide to quit being with the gangs?
ZAHID: My girlfriend. If it wasn’t her, I’d still be on the corner with a gun. If I see someone, I’ll smack them and take their money.
JW: Okay, so how did she influence you?
ZAHID: Whenever I get mad I do something stupid, she always stops me. Like if the bus driver pisses me off, I’ll punch him, you know. But when I’m there she’ll be like, “No, don’t do it, I’ll just put an extra fifty cents.”
JW: And you listen.
ZAHID: Yeah. Cos if you love someone you wouldn’t want to hurt them, right? There’s a lot of time she stop me for. I was going to break a beer bottle on this guy one day. [...] I picked up my fist I was like this (waving fist) and as soon I went like that she grabbed it and she hugged me, she’s like “Don’t. Don’t do nothing.” And I couldn’t, I didn’t do nothing. And the guy was there, he was talking so much, she’s like “Shh-shh. Don’t say nothing, don’t say nothing.” And at the end he just rode away.

Zahid declared that it was the love from his girlfriend that kept his anger and disposed physical violence under control. His depiction of this ‘power of love’ reflects his embodiment of the
neoliberal logic of the ‘good woman’ citizen (Rose, 1996), as I have presented in the discussion of the Yo’Mama Magazine published for low-income young mothers in Toronto (see Chapter 8).

Perhaps, Zahid adored his new girlfriend because she reminded him of his mother, who was always there to intervene and protect him against his father’s anger and physical violence when he was growing up. “My mom loves me, I’m her favorite,” he shared with an excitement in his voice, “That’s why I try to follow my dad’s rules, ’cos my dad can’t yell at me anymore, but he yells at my mom so I try to stay on course.” Without conscious awareness, Zahid seemed to have embodied the gendered practices at home and on the street, including the gendered expectations for young men and women in (hetero)erotic relationships.

ZAHID: //Girls do like guys that are tough, cos if you have a pussy guy right, a guy can just come up to my girl and say, “Oh I want to fuck you. I’m going to rape you.” And a guy would just stand there, “Oh okay, okay”. Someone said that to my girl, I’d kick his face in.

JW: So then it’s more like protection-
ZAHID: //Yeah, you gotta protect your girl. If you can’t protect your girl, what are you doing? You’re good for nothing, right?

Having limited volume of economic and cultural capital, Zahid emphasized the importance of the bodily capital in the form of physical fights. He drew on the dominant homophobic and sexist discourse of ‘a pussy guy’ to construct his masculine identity. In using the term ‘pussy,’ he implied that certain men (gay men, feminine men, weak men, men with disabilities) could not be considered as ‘real’ men (reads fully human) because they acted like women. Furthermore, in emphasizing men’s role in protecting women, he reinforced the naturalized construction of women as weak and passive, and perpetuated the masculine expectation of men being strong.

JW: Can you be tough and be sensitive at the same time? Other guys were saying that girls don’t care for sensitive guys.
ZAHID: I am sensitive with her. The other day she wanted shoes, I bought her brand new shoes. Did you see them right there? I bought her brand new pants she’s wearing, the brand new hoodie she’s wearing. I have to pay for her hair next week.

JW: So then she’s kind of like a wifey⁴⁶, more than a girlfriend.
ZAHID: Yeah, she’s my wife basically.

Zahid’s expression of love in the form of physical protection and material provision was quite common among the young men from the ’hoods and on the street. Joseph and Andreo shared

⁴⁶ Young men in the ’hoods used the term ‘wifey’ to describe a serious girlfriend, whom they respect, really care about, and consider marrying. The different types of relationships are discussed in subsequent sections in this chapter.
similar stories about their girlfriends’ expectations of them to provide financial and material support; Jamie shared that he spent most of his time with his girlfriend on the street to protect her from the police and others. The structural demands of the local (hetero)erotic and masculinity fields coupled with their stark realities of poverty and a lack of access to employment create the risk conditions for these young men to engage in the street economy of hustling, drug dealing, and robbery (Anderson, 1999; Barker, 2005; MacDonald & Shildrick, 2007).

The gendered expectation of men as material providers in (hetero)erotic relationships seems to exist across classes and ethnoracial backgrounds, but it is expressed and practiced differently.

**MIHIR:** I think girls still kind of expect at least for the first time that the guy takes care of things. I personally don’t believe in that. [[...]] You want to sort of create attraction and not give her the power in the relationship because as soon as you give it to her, like I think girls take advantage of it and they can use it to just like get things from you and not really be into you. And I prefer not to waste my time like that. But I think as a whole, if you don’t take the initiative and try to pay for something, say you’re going out somewhere, I think it reflects badly on the guy. I mean maybe when you’re full fledged boyfriend-girlfriend sort of thing, it doesn’t matter so much, you guys can talk about it but when things are still like sort of in the awkward stage where you don’t bring those issues up then, it’s sort of like a default, the guys pay for it if your on a date.

Despite the changing social status of women associated with advancement in education and employment, the young men’s narratives suggest that traditional (hetero)erotic dating attitudes and expectations persist among young people. These expectations reinforce other gendered expectations that may lead to negative relationship outcomes. Studies find that gendered expectations and practices such as ‘guys initiating the dates’ or ‘guys paying for the dates’ are associated with men’s increased expectations of sexual involvement and justification of date rape (Emmers-Sommer, et al., 2010); what seems to be alarming is that when young women initiate the dates and pay for the dates, young men also interpret this action as women’s interests in having sex (Serewicz & Gale, 2008). Neal King (2003) argues that compulsory heterosexuality and hegemonic masculine expectations for young men to act ‘straight’ dispose them to interpret women’s interactions with them as consent to have sex.

Mihir’s perception of young women’s manipulation of power and intentional exploitation of men for material gains reflects the complex struggles within young people’s (hetero)erotic field. His comment – “I prefer not to waste my time like that” – confirms the findings of other
research that the goal of first dates for many young men is sexual involvement (Mongeau, Jacobsen, & Donnerstein, 2007). Paradoxically, when the dating relationships progressed into more stable relationships, middle-class young men who possess more economic capital are not under the same degree of pressure to provide material supports for their girlfriend as compared to the young men from the 'hoods because their middle-class girlfriends are also financially resourceful. In fact, the practice of ‘going Dutch’ or mutual gift exchanges may be interpreted as one’s respect for gender equality and be converted into cultural capital in the middle-class (hetero)erotic field.

9.2. Making Sense of Young Men’s (Hetero)erotic Practices

Within the field of sexual health education, adolescent sexuality is often framed in biological and medicalized terms, with emphases on risks and physiological responses (Allen, 2005c; Shoveller & Johnson, 2006; Deborah L. Tolman & Diamond, 2001). The biomedical dominance and risk focus pose significant challenges for us to make visible the historical, social, political, and economic conditions that shape young people’s sexualities and their sexual practices.

In the following subsections, I draw on the young men’s narratives to illustrate how habitus, field, and capital interact to produce individual and collective (hetero)erotic sexual and homosocial practices.

9.2.1. ‘First Sex’ as Induction into Manhood

As described in Chapter 5, the median age of first sex was 13.5 for the working-class young men and 16 for the middle-class young men. In our gendered society, the first experience of (hetero)sex holds different meanings and significance for women and men. By the time young women engage in their first sex, they have already been constituted as ‘women’ based on the symbolic meanings society inscribes onto their bodies (pubertal changes, menarche). However, for young men living in the Western cultures, the first (hetero)sex is the key act by which they symbolically achieve manhood (J. Holland, Ramazanoglu, & Thomson, 1996), as illustrated by the young men’s accounts of their first (hetero)sex.

DANNY: I just remember walking home that day, I was like eeeeeaaaaah! (Laughing.)
JW: Do you guys remember?
DOLAN: It ain't nothing, man.
JOSEPH: Not rrrreally.
YUSUF: Yeah, mine was NICE, SO-
DANNY: //I don’t remember what it was like-
YUSUF: //Extra step in your walk-
JASON: //it was a snap. Yeah.
YUSUF: you went home that day you felt like, you know, an extra step in your walk – a little bouncing around.
JASON: Now, you’re gonna be around your friends and you’ll be like, “Yeah, trust me.”
YUSUF: YEAH. “I’m a man now.” (Laugh.)

For some of the young men, it was not only the pleasure or a sense of connection that made their first (hetero)sexual experience special. It was the sense of achievement and the anticipated recognition by their peers within their homosocial circles that made them feel happy and excited (Muehlenhard & Peterson, 2005). Matthew from Lamarside recalled a similar experience.

MATTHEW: I remember when I first lost my virginity I was so happy. (Laughing)
JW: Why’s that?
MATTHEW: Because ah, I don’t know, it was like everybody did it, I thought they did it, you know, so I was happy, like you know, when you get your first gift or something. And then I see one of my friends and the first thing I told him was like “You know, guess what, I lost my virginity.” (Laughing.) And he gave me the sign of respect and he’s like, “Yeah, welcome to our club.” And I’m like whatever, I left and I was so happy, I was telling all my boys that I lost my virginity.
JW: Yeah. So, the experience itself, what do you remember?
MATTHEW: Oh, the experience was good. It was like very satisfying, like very pleasurable.
JW: Did you know what you were doing?
MATTHEW: No, not really. I was just curious and we were in a room alone and then she was just lying on the bed and I asked her if she wanted to do it and she’s like “Yeah”. And we just did it and after we did it I told her like “I feel like a man.” It’s like that kind of feeling where you feel like a man after you do it.

Within the male homosocial field, a young man’s first experience of sex symbolizes his induction into manhood; it is converted into masculine capital that earns him peer respect.

Matthew’s narrative of his first (hetero)sex reflected the popular ‘it just happened’ discourse that circulates among young people. However, not all first engagements in (hetero)sex were unplanned. Colin, who grew up in a middle-class family and had open discussion about sexuality at home, shared that his first experience was well planned.

COLIN: I was fifteen. We had been going out for six months and um we were both fifteen and neither of us had sex before- I’m really happy with how it worked out. In retrospect, I was probably a little bit young. Like we were quite safe, she started taking the pill like a month before however long it is that you need to take it before it starts working and (...) we used a
condom and everything went really well, like we continued to go out for like almost two years after that. 

**JW:** Was it enjoyable or was it stressful?

**COLIN:** Sex? It was kind of a let down because we were both so terrible at it. Because we had never tried it before so it was like, “Oh that was it, really? Oh alright.” But it was not stressful and my girlfriend didn’t find it painful, it was really good actually and then we went bowling with a bunch of our friends [...] It was just like, “Ok, that happened. Now we're bowling and we're moving on.” Yeah, it was good because we were both very much in love and very secure in our relationship.

Colin’s experience was remarkably different from the working-class young men. Their six-month stable relationship enabled Colin and his girlfriend to plan their first experience according to the risk-based instructions that they had received from sex education at home and at school. His account of the actual experience reflected his ambiguous feelings: it was “a let down” because both of them were inexperienced; it was good because it met most of society’s moral demands – it was based on love, commitment, and responsibility. Furthermore, Colin went on to share that his relationship with this girlfriend progressed into a big stressor in this life.

**COLIN:** There were a whole bunch of things that happened and other random little things that got kind of suppressed and then became big but unspoken I've been in like a trapped feeling. 

**JW:** Trapped by what?

**COLIN:** Just by the relationship, I’d be like “Oh no, I really don't want to be going out with this person any more because she’s making such huge demands.” Cos she went to the hospital, the mental ward twice I think over the course of our relationship and was on a lot of medication all the time and you know, would have big hallucinations sometime [...] I guess at seventeen when I broke up with her, it was just a lot, it was just really overwhelming.

Colin’s experience illustrates both the success and failure of current sex education at school and in public health policy. The biomedical risk-based pregnancy and STI preventive instructions are effective in influencing the sexual behaviours among a large segment of the middle-class young people because these instructions fit with their class habituses. However, they are less effective in reaching working class and street-involved young men whose realities are vastly different from these instructions. Furthermore, the narrow focus of these risk-based instructions fails to address many critical aspects of young people’s sexuality: intimacy, pleasure, self-other connections, and spiritual transcendence (James Martin, 2006). They also do not prepare young people to deal with the complexities and challenges they are faced with in their (hetero)erotic relationships.

### 9.2.2. Reaching for Adulthood: The Desire to Become a Father

Studies on youth sexual and reproductive health identify a myriad of interpersonal and
structural influences on young people’s decisions to become or avoid becoming parents. These include: the presence (or absence) of permissive norms of early parenting (Mollborn, 2010), the validation of masculinity (Condon, Corkindale, Russell, & Quinlivan, 2006), the desire for love, and the perception that co-parenting strengthens intimate relationships (Kegler, Bird, Kyle-Moon, & Rodine, 2001). Furthermore, young people who experience social and economic marginalization are disposed to consider marriage and starting a family as a route to achieve adulthood (Andres & Adamuti-Trache, 2008).

While most of the young men in the study asserted that they ‘almost’ always used condoms during sex because they did not want to get their sexual partners pregnant, two of the young men expressed a desire to become a father.

**JW:** So when don’t you use condoms?
**KYLE:** When don’t I? (…) If I am drunk, or if I like know the girl, and if I want to get the girl pregnant.
**JW:** Really? Do you ever want to get a girl pregnant?
**KYLE:** Yeah.
**JW:** Why?
**KYLE:** It’s just the instinct in me. I want a kid around. I want someone to take after me. I really want one. I have dreams about having a kid.
**JW:** What’s this instinct about?
**KYLE:** It’s just instinct, it’s in all animals, in all species. It’s an instinct to breed, it’s an instinct you have, it’s just your instinct. It’s just from living, it’s one of the reasons you live, you live to have kids.
**JW:** How will you take care of them?
**KYLE:** Well, it would smarten me up, that’s why I want a kid too. That’s the major reason why, because it would smarten me up.
**JW:** You think it will? Like (…) 
**KYLE:** Oh yeah, big time, if I had a kid, I’d quit everything.

Kyle drew on the biological deterministic discourse of human’s reproductive instinct to justify his desire to become a father. However, his comment of wanting “someone to take after me” implied that this desire was not merely about biological reproduction but also about his symbolic existence in the world. As I probed further, he asserted that having a kid would help him to quit drug use and start a new life. Similarly, David shared that he was not using condoms with his girlfriend.

**DAVID:** I get tested once a month anyway. My girlfriend, I know she’s clean, she gets tested once a month too.
**JW:** Yeah, what about pregnancy?
**DAVID:** You know what? I am not so much worried about that. If she got pregnant, I wouldn’t be worried. No, in fact, to be honest, if she got pregnant I would probably end up in a better
place nine months from now. I would actually work, make sure this baby has everything it needs for life and stuff. If my girlfriend got pregnant I think it would actually be more of a benefit then it would be a negative thing for me.

**JW:** Because?

**DAVID:** It motivates me to better myself.

**JW:** How would having a baby be a benefit for you?

**DAVID:** Well, I would be in a better place, in the sense of society wise. I'd have my own place, I would be working, I would have a steady flow of cash, I would probably not be doing as much drugs as I do.

Both Kyle and David seemed to believe that fatherhood would change their life positively; they implied that having parenting responsibilities would give them a sense of purpose and motivate them to adopt the traditional role of being an adult man in terms of providing for the family.

At the time of the interviews, Matthew’s girlfriend was pregnant. They were expecting the baby in four months. When I asked whether the pregnancy was planned, he said light heartedly,

**MATTHEW:** No. It’s just a moment of love, where I planted the seeds. (Laughing.)

**JW:** I thought you always used condoms.

**MATTHEW:** With her, a few times it didn’t really hit my mind. But then there’s no regret.

**JW:** Um hmm, tell me more about that.

**MATTHEW:** Well yeah, I don’t know. If it were another girl, maybe. But that’s how I know I love her. If it were another girl I would be like, “No baby.” But I don’t believe in that kind of thing, like where abortion takes it.

**JW:** Is that partly because of your faith or?

**MATTHEW:** Yeah, I don’t really believe in abortion. It’s a part of me too. It’s just perfect timing, like this wonderful girl comes into my life (...) and then like she gets pregnant, it’s like a blessing.

In the above narrative, Matthew drew on a number of dominant discourses – love, family, anti-abortion – to reproduce and reinforce the moralizing interests of the heteronormative institutions of marriage and family. He suggested that his decision to have a baby with his girlfriend was based his genuine love for her. Like Kyle, he perceived having a baby as a way to extend his identity as purposeful and worthy of his girlfriend and society. As Andrew Sayer argues, social recognition is critical to our identity development.

Recognition matters to people, not just for their status in adulthood, but as a condition of their early psychological development as subjects and for their subsequent well-being. They need recognition of both their autonomy and ability to reason and their neediness and dependence on others – indeed recognition of their need for recognition. The vulnerability of individuals consists in their dependence on others not only for material support but for ongoing recognition, respect, approval and trust. (Sayer, 2005, p. 54)
For many socially and economically marginalized young men, fatherhood may come across as one of the few options that are readily available for them in gaining respect, recognition, and a sense of purpose. When Matthew’s narrative on fatherhood is read alongside his resonant text – “learnin’ to look for love then neva getting’ it” – it seems that having a baby may also express his desire for human connections. Within the context of society’s hegemonic masculine expectations, fatherhood also opens up a space where men are able to become ‘soft’ and express ‘love’ towards their children and the children’s mother without compromising their masculine identities. This type of ‘softness’ is sanctioned as a demonstration of being responsible and may even be converted into masculine capital, as reflected in the middle-class cultures.

Studies on young men and fatherhood are extremely limited. However, existing studies repudiate the stereotypes about young fathers being irresponsible, uncaring or uninvolved with the care of their children. They show that most young fathers share similar ideals of being a role model, providing financial support, basic needs and care, and spending time together as a family (Wilkinson, Magora, Garcia, & Khurana, 2009). However, the young men’s fathering practices are significantly influenced by their social positions in terms of the volume of economic capital (employment and income), cultural capital (parenting skills and competence), and social capital (parental and other social support) that they possess (Beers & Hollo, 2009; Gavin, et al., 2002; Rhein, et al., 1997). A study of young fathers in Ontario (Devault, 2006) finds that young men take their parenting role very seriously.

Becoming a father at 14, 16 or 20 years of age has a huge impact on young men. Most young fathers take this opportunity to make important changes in their lives: stop drinking or using drugs, going out and living an “unstructured” life. They all talk about “taking their responsibilities”. . . . The motivation comes from the responsibility to be the provider for this new family, and focuses on the basic things they have to do (a “compelled” responsibility). . . . For them, becoming a father changes identity and the meaning of their lives. (p. 1)

However, the study also finds that existing social structures do not support parenting among young people in general. Most of the young men do not feel prepared for parenting. They find co-parenting challenging, especially when there are pre-existing conflicts in their relationships with the babies’ mothers.

9.2.3. ‘It All depends on The Girl’: Main Squeeze, Girlfriends, Fuck Buddies, or Hookups?

Throughout the group and individual interviews, the young men tended to conclude their
debates on all topics by stating: “It all depends on the girl.” This statement seemed to embody two distinct meanings: (1) it depends on a young woman’s reaction or response to a specific relationship issue; and (2) it depends on the ‘position’ that a young woman occupies in her male partner’s hierarchy of (hetero)erotic relationships.

The young men’s narratives suggest that ‘monogamy’ is a rarity rather than regularity in many young people’s lives. Nineteen out of the 24 young men in this study shared that they had and/or were engaging in non-romantic and non-monogamous sexual relationships. This finding is similar to other studies, which find that young people engage in non-romantic sexual relationships at rates ranging from 33% to 78% (Bay-Cheng, Robinson, & Zucker, 2009). However, how these young men got hooked up or engaged in these relationships differed according to the dynamics in the local (hetero)erotic and homosocial fields. Mihir’s narrative suggested that in his social circle hooking up was simultaneously a (hetero)erotic practice and a homosocial practice.

MIHIR: Like if one of my buddies has a dry spell, then we usually try to get him in there [[to have sex]]. It’s partly because we’re friends and you know, we’re looking out for each other. We sort of know that every guy has, you know, urges or desires and that umm you know, one of those is sex, and it doesn’t necessarily need to be in the context of a relationship. And if you are in a relationship then you’re usually getting regular sex. And so, no one needs to sort of look out for you, right? Um-m, if you’re having casual, a lot of guys I know think that’s the best of both worlds because you can get it regularly and there’s no commitment or at least there’s less commitment and less ties to the girl.

The logic behind Mihir and his male friends’ casual sex practice was associated with their embodiment of the dominant discourse of men’s uncontrollable biological sex drives, which circulates as popular jokes or myths (e.g., the blue balls syndrome) in everyday places like the media, home, school, and on street corners (Murphy, 2001). Thus, young men are disposed to perceive sexual prowess as their masculine nature while young women are positioned to take on “a sense of responsibility for men’s sexual pleasure” (L. Kelly, 1996, p. 200). It is this collective

47 Despite the dominant discourse of heteronormative monogamy, young people across classes and cultures are engaging in diverse types of (hetero)erotic relationships. In this study, the young men described having different types of (hetero)sexual partners: (1) hookups or casual partners for the purpose of sex; (2) ‘fuck buddies’ or friends with benefits (FWB) who were friends but not romantically involved; the term FWB was mostly used by young men from the White cultures; (3) girlfriends who were regular sexual partners with some romantic/emotional commitments; and (4) wifeyes or ‘main squeeze’ were women they trusted and loved the most, and would like to marry in the future; wifey and ‘main squeeze’ are local terms used mostly by young Black men from the ‘hoods.
disposition that makes it possible for young men to pursue sexual prowess as a collective practice, as illustrated when Mihir explained to me about the ‘wingman’ strategy they used.

**JW:** Mm hmm, right. So then this wingman business, do you guys actually talk amongst each other, or you don't even let the guy know but do something?

**MIHIR:** Uh-h-h, sometimes it's a bit of both, like it depends. We'll be like, “Man, we'll get you this girl.” Like I would be almost as happy as I get the girl.

**JW:** /How would you guys be able to get this-

**MIHIR:** /No, we'll say that, it doesn't mean we will. Most of the time it doesn't work but- well not most of the time, about fifty-fifty. [...] If you're at a club or if you're at a party or whatever, there might be something that's distracting the girl who you're sort of targeting. And so the wingman will usually try to either talk up the friend, or talk down himself, right? And to pull away any other distractions, especially if she's with her girl friends or she's with one girl that's just sort of clingy and not getting much action.

**JW:** What? (Baffled.)

**Mihir:** Yeah, yeah, I know. It sounds bad but like almost every single guy does it, it’s bad but they call her the ugly friend, you know, like they want to get rid of the ugly friend so that your friend can get the girl, and so you're a wingman because you don’t mind, potentially hooking up with this ugly friend to keep her busy while the friend hooks up with the pretty one.

**JW:** That’s very interesting.

**MIHIR:** Yeah.

Mihir’s description of a ‘dry spell’ and his explanation of the wingman strategy in hooking up with women stirred up a mix of emotions in me: shock, anguish, pessimism, and annoyance. My emotional reaction to Mihir’s narratives illustrated the clash between our gendered and aged habituses.

The wingman strategy used by Mihir and his friends demonstrated the tight homosocial bonds that many university or college young men, especially those who play sports, seem to share (Bird, 1996; Flood, 2008; C. L. Jenkins, 1996). Mihir’s comment – “I would be almost as happy as I get the girl” – implied that the collective sexual conquest brought him just as much satisfaction and pleasure if not more. Paradoxically, this specific (hetero)erotic practice premised on their claim of biological determinism, which is that men have natural sexual urges that must be satisfied. However, their collective pleasure derived from the ‘wingman’ strategy did not seem to result from their physical sexual contacts with the women who they collectively

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48 As noted in other chapters, it was challenging for me as a woman researcher to listen to the objectification of women in some of these young men’s narratives. At the time of the interviews, my daughter was 20. Mihir’s narratives roused in me a pessimistic anxiety and a sense of danger about the state of gender relations. I could not bear to imagine that my daughter and her women friends could be exposed to these masculinist schemes. My emotional reactions and bodily sensations showed that our personal and professional habituses are inseparable; each may become dominant depending on the fields we inhabit within a temporal dimension.
conquest. Rather, these women were the conduits in fulfilling their homosocial desire (Schwyzer, 2008; Sedgwick, 1985), and are converted into cultural and symbolic capital in the homosocial exchange (Bourdieu, 2001).

Other young men in the study also expressed their interests in (hetero)sexual involvements with ‘no strings attached’. Many of them spoke of having ‘fuck buddies’.

**MARCUS:** Yeah, and especially like if you have sex with a certain girl, and she just never ever leaves you alone, and like you’re not in love with her, but she’s madly in love with you, right? And then you’re stuck in a position.

**JW:** So then what do you do?

**MARCUS:** What do you do, I don’t-

**KYLE:** Cut her off, man!

**MARCUS:** Yeah, I guess it depends on the way you put it. You can just be like uh, fucking buddies like. You can just have sex and enjoy it without having love involved.

The phenomenon of ‘fuck buddies’ (street language) or ‘friends with benefits’ emerged gradually over the last 10 years, first in the popular media (e.g. the TV show *Sex in the City*), and recently in research (Hughes, Morrison, & Asada, 2005; Manning, Giordano, & Longmore, 2006). Today ‘friends with benefits’ is no longer a hidden practice; there are open invitations on social networking sites on the Internet (e.g., Facebook) and a new TV comedy named *Friends with Benefits* on one of the major US television network.

However, ‘fuck buddies’ and ‘friends with benefits’ are not categories of relationships common to all young men. The young Black men from Macee Grove said that they were not familiar with the idea of ‘friends with benefits’. Instead, they categorized their (hetero)erotic relationships in terms of: hookups or casual partner, girlfriends (some emotional involvement) and ‘wifeys’ or ‘main squeeze’ (serious relationship and potential marriage). When I asked the young men at Macee Grove how they went about negotiating different types of sexual relationships, they contended that the most important rule was to make it clear to the young women right at the start that they were not interested in engaging in any romantic or committed relationships with them.

**SHAWN:** I don’t want a girl to like me.

**JW:** Why?

**SHAWN:** Because I don’t have time for them. Like I really think I am being, I’m being sensitive in that way, because I tell girls from the beginning before we start talking, I’m like “I don’t want a relationship. I just want to have sex.” And then some of them say, most of them say ‘no’ at first but then they’ll call me back and like, “Okay we can try it”.
JW: And then what happened?
SHAWN: I’ll try to be the biggest asshole as I can, so they don’t get attached to me. So they don’t get attached to me, and then get feelings. Because I don’t want them to catch feelings and then say like, ‘I really like you.’

Shawn’s narrative further illuminated the phenomenon of ‘girls want assholes’ (discussed in Chapter 8). David’s perception that young women wanted to be dominated was probably the effect of a common practice among young men to present themselves as ‘assholes’ to discourage their casual female sexual partners from ‘catching’ feelings and having any expectations of emotional commitment from them. They perceived acting mean as a strategy to sustain their masculine subjectivity of being in control.

Some studies suggest that many young women engage in sex with a ‘socialized’ desire for love and romance (Cokely, 2005; K. Martin & Kazyak, 2009), and/or some of them perform the socially ‘expected’ desire for love as a strategy to avoid being labeled as sluts or whores (Hollway, 1996; Houts, 2005). Wendy Manning and her colleagues find in their study that 1/3 of the young people (n=106) who engaged in non-romantic sexual relationships had the hope that these relationships would turn into more committed relationships (Manning, et al., 2006). The silence on women’s erotic desires (Fine, 1988; J. Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe, & Thomson, 1994; Deborah L. Tolman, 2002) makes it difficult to explicate women’s sexual subjectivities in the different types of sexual relationships.

However, there is also evidence to suggest that young women are becoming more open to engaging in different types of (hetero)erotic and sexual relationships (Bay-Cheng, et al., 2009; Manning, et al., 2006).

JAMIE: Like I had a friend- she was in love with me, she just thought I was adorable, she realized that just having a monogamous boyfriend is fucking difficult. She knew I didn’t want a monogamous girlfriend. [...] She thought that was the coolest shit ever, and then she was just like. “You know what we should do?” And I said, “What?” And she’s like. “You should be my un-boyfriend. And I said, “What?” And she was like, “Man, seriously, we should just like hold hands and be together, and just like do whatever we want to with each other, and have sex but straight up, do it with other people too.” And I was like, “Okay.”

Jamie’s narrative indicates that young women are not passive recipients of masculine domination; some of them exercise their sexual agency within the structural constraints to resist the normative sex-for-love monogamy that is imposed mostly on women.
However, navigating through the different types of (hetero)erotic and sexual relationships is not easy for young people because relationship boundaries are often arbitrary and human relationships can seldom be neatly defined. The ambiguities were captured during a discussion on cheating and flirting among the young men from Macee Grove. Shawn suggested that flirting was acceptable so long as there were not any overt sexual interactions such as kissing and petting. Jeremiah insisted that flirting could lead to conflicts.

**JEREMIAH:** Say-(turning to Shawn) if you have a girlfriend now, right? And then, say you're on a date with her at the movies, and I just tag along, I'm the third wheel, I'm just there watching the movie, eating my popcorn. And suddenly, your girl's been leaning on you, she's now on me. How would YOU feel?

**SHAWN:** I'd (...)

**JEREMIAH:** //You still don't answer my question (...) and she just said, (mimicking high soft female voice), “Haaaaa.” (...)

**SHAWN:** //Is it my main squeeze?

**JEREMIAH:** //Yeah! You're there, I'm there-

**SHAWN:** //Or is it just, is it just a girlfriend?

**JEREMIAH:** It's your girlfriend, it's your girlfriend. (All talking at once.)

**SHAWN:** No, but there's a difference. Is it my main squeeze, or is it my girlfriend?

**JEREMIAH:** //Yeah, it's the girl that you have sex with and you're going out with.

**Multiple Participants:** It's the same.

**SHAWN:** No, no, no, no, no. There's a difference. Is it my main SQUEEZE (Others laughing, banging on table) or is it just- If she's a girlfriend and she's on YOU, I would share her! Sure! (Laughter)

**BRANDON:** If she's my girlfriend, I wouldn't (...)

**SHAWN:** //If she is on to you, that means she's ready to share.

Shawn, who had a larger volume of economic and masculine capital compared to his peers at Macee Grove also enjoyed a larger volume of (hetero)erotic capital. He had many girlfriends and hookups. He and Tyler were the only young men who had a wifey for a substantial period of time. Perhaps it was through his extensive experience in the different types of sexual relationships that he embodied a different (hetero)erotic habitus. Although he seemed to be more permissive about sharing girlfriends with other young men, his emphasis on the exclusiveness of a wifey (main squeeze) relationship suggested that his (hetero)erotic habitus still operated within the logic of institutionalized heteronormative monogamy (Jackson, 2005).

The young men’s discussion illustrates that (hetero)erotic relationship boundaries, expectations, and obligations are complex and cannot be easily defined. Furthermore, these boundaries and expectations evolve with the changing contexts and demands of the (hetero)erotic field and other social fields. For instance, changes in the political and economic status of young
women often lead to changes in the dynamics in the heterosocial and (hetero)erotic fields (Carter, Corra, & Carter, 2009).

9.2.4. Games and Competitions in the Homosocial and (Hetero)erotic Fields

As noted in Chapter 8, the young men’s narratives in individual interviews are useful in shedding light on their hetero-guy-talk. During our first individual interview, Jeremiah revealed an experience of heartbreak, which helped to explain his strong opinion against flirting (discussed above). When his narratives from both contexts are read side-by-side, what comes across as a challenge to Shawn’s definition of flirting turns out to be Jeremiah’s subtle way of getting validation from his peers. Unlike Shawn, Jeremiah was more reserved about disclosing his personal experience, especially when it was an experience that he still felt painful about, as I could hear it in his voice and see it on his face as he shared his story.

JW: Mm. What happened?
JEREMIAH: Well, actually it was this year, well (...) I thought the girl, like she said she liked me and everything, she did like me, but because of mixed relations in the past with my friend that she still goes out with, my guy friend, (...) like, if she would go out with me, then it would make it seems like she’s a hoe or something so. (...) it’s just like- she just couldn’t do it. She couldn’t handle that so I just had to let her go.

Contrary to the stereotypical depiction of young men being heartless and only interested in sex, Jeremiah’s narrative indicates that young people expressed their humanness in complex ways. Jeremiah’s decision to let go of the potential erotic relationship premised on multiple demands in the homosocial and (hetero)erotic fields: the potential negative effects on this young women’s reputation, her entangled relationship with Jeremiah’s friend, and Jeremiah’s sense of loyalty to his good friend. It illustrates that young people’s (hetero)erotic and sexual practices are not simply individual rational choices; they are governed by local and global gender norms, peer surveillance, and their sense of ethics.

JW: So have they broken up already?
JEREMIAH: Yeah. They’ve broken up. You know guys and girls, when they’re broken up, they’re off and on. (...) So-oo, yeah and then girls, they’d be like, just a test to see how much the guy really loves her or likes her. She’ll go talk to one of the guy’s friends just to get the guy jealous. And the guy would do the same thing then. You know how it goes.
JW: So then sometimes there are conflicts because of that?
JEREMIAH: Depends on how great your relationship is with the guy friend. Like I know, ’cos when that happened to me, like my relationship with my guy friend was pretty strong, so at
the end of the day the girl wouldn't be there, it will always be me and him, so. (...) You gotta really choose whose side you're taking on that one. I wouldn't want to lose my friend that I've known for ten years over a girl that I've only met like, four months ago. It makes no sense.

The individual interview, as a ‘private’ talk, created a space for Jeremiah to express himself with less demand for a masculine performance. He spoke reflectively about what happened without putting blame on either the young woman or his friend. His final decision and action show that young people are capable of problem solving and being altruistic, even though adults in society are often reluctant to recognize and build on these strengths.

Jeremiah’s narrative illustrates the challenges and complexities that young people are faced with as they navigate through their (hetero)erotic and homosocial relationships. It also highlights young people’s taken-for-granted practice of evoking jealousy as a way to test or affirm love. Jealousy, naturalized as an innate emotion, is accepted by young people and adults alike in our society as an ‘involuntary’ response to real or perceived relationship threats (Fleischmann, Spitzberg, Andersen, & Roesch, 2005). The unproblematic acceptance of jealousy as an instinctive response perpetuates the norms of ownership and entitlement in erotic relationships and justifies violence towards intimate partners (Caldwell, Swan, Allen, Sullivan, & Snow, 2009; Power, Koch, Kralik, & Jackson, 2006; Wang, Parish, Laumann, & Luo, 2009).

In addition to engaging in jealousy induction, the young men described other strategies that they use in exploring potential (hetero)erotic relationships. Sometimes these strategies involved young men colluding with each other to ‘test’ out the ‘virtues’ of the young women they were interested in.

Danny: I got this scenario, like, it’s not me, I don’t do this. Like, some people might say it’s twisted. You have a girl, and you like the girl, and you just technically show her to your friends, throw her to the wolves like, and just leave. And then, a friend will come back and be like, you know, “I was chilling with your girl the other night and you know, I fucked her.” There’re guys just like that, like.

JW: So the guys accept it?

Danny: No, the guys will be like, “Yeah?” And they will get a different perception of the girl. Or someone would be like, you know, “That girl’s cold-hearted, she didn’t look at me, she didn’t speak.” Like, and some guys will take that as a, you know, “She’s a good girl.” Like-

Yusuf: //Yeah, ’cos, it’s a test.

Dolan: //You know the guys are gonna go after her-

Thus, young women are judged according to how they perform their femininities, particularly in terms of their abilities to demonstrate ‘faithfulness’ and ‘purity’. Danny’s emphasis – “I don’t do
that” – suggested these young men were aware that an outsider like myself could view this type of homosocial collusion as ‘twisted’ or negative. They also pointed out that sometimes complications arose from these testing games.

_Danny_: //I’ll tell you, when it gets serious, that’s when the guy doesn’t tell you, ’cos then there’s a- (speaking in an intense way) there’s a sneakiness involved, there’s a behind-the-back factor. It’s not just about you trying to show him about this girl- it’s more about, you know, you are trying to make him look like a fool. I don’t know, I guess it’s an issue for me still. Maybe if you’ve got a chance to pursue [[the girl]], it would be different, but I don’t know, the situation is like-

_Yusuf_: //Well, if you guys were friends anyway. (..) Yeah, if you’re gonna take the girl, like, at least let your buddy know, like, “Yeeeeah, i’m gonna race too man. We’re racing for the same girl right here, man.”

Thus, a game that begins as a form of homosocial solidarity to test the ‘worthiness’ of someone’s potential girlfriend may open up a space of vulnerability where another young man deliberately has sex with this young woman as an act of domination of over this specific young man, and the young woman becomes the object of masculine competition (Curry, 2001). Furthermore, a young man who engages in flirting as part of this homosocial game may develop genuine feelings towards the young woman and become caught in a dilemma of betrayal and conflicts.

### 9.3. Sexualized Places: Local Codes and Norms of (Hetero)sexual Practices

In the following subsections, I return to the notion of place to make sense of the (hetero)erotic sexual practices of the young men in this study. Doreen Massey (1993) suggests that places are not merely physical spaces with boundaries but “articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings” that are connected to the wider world (p. 66). As agents with embodied structures (habitus) interact in their local space, they actively imbue it with symbolic meanings to construct places with specific reputations, which in turn shape their subjectivities and (re)produce the local sexual cultures and practices (B. C. Kelly & Muñoz-Laboy, 2005).

#### 9.3.1. Hooking Up Parties: ‘Alcohol as a Social Lubricant’

When I asked the young men how and where they met their potential or existing sexual partners, they named an array of places including the school, the mall, the bus, and the street. However, most of them identified ‘parties’ as a key place for hooking up. These parties took
‘place’ in different physical and social spaces: houses or apartments, pubs or dance clubs, raves, or local jam concerts. The types of parties that the young men went to were tied to their habituses. For instance, Tyler shared that he seldom went to pubs or dance clubs because the service charges and the drinks were too expensive; going to house parties seemed to be part of the growing up culture for Tyler and his peers.

**TYLER:** And they use to have like house parties in the basement.

**PATRICK:** Where like everybody used to like come in the basement, and like bubble on girls and stuff.

**JW:** What’s bubble on girls?

**PATRICK:** Like dance on girls. From when we were like in middle school, like grade six and stuff.

**TYLER:** I mean that’s what we were pretty much learning, like how to have sex with them from uh dancing. You learned like what to do, what feels good, why you are doing it (...) And then you just learn, like no clothes and stuff, (...) the lights are like low, and cause we are dancing and you find a girl (...)

Aligned with the mainstream heteronormative habitus, as demonstrated in the success of the Disney empire (Cokely, 2005), these parties appear to be sexualized places where young people embody the local norms to form their erotic habitus and sexual body hexis.

**JW:** So (...) where are the parents?

**PATRICK:** You come by yourself.

**TYLER:** No parents.

**JW:** I know, but (...)

**PATRICK:** Oh, for the house, or the parents of the house.

**TYLER:** They’re probably there, or they’re probably not.

**JW:** They just let you guys have the room, have the space?

**TYLER:** I never asked that question. (Laughter.) It never clicked in my head to find out where the parents were. I mean the parents were probably there, made an appearance and then went out or something. I was like, “Oh well, empty house! Party!”

My exchange with Patrick and Tyler represented another instance where our habituses clashed. Both Patrick and Tyler were surprised by my question about the presence/absence of parents. For most young people, parties represent a claimed space, ‘free’ from adult surveillance, where they ‘rebel’ against adult ‘normative’ expectations to construct their ‘distinct’ youth culture.

Paradoxically, parties constitute a social space of struggle where adult anxiety and discourses of youth ‘risky’ behaviours associated with alcohol or drug use and/or sex are (re)produced (Irvine, 1994). It is also the space where young people adopt normative drinking and engage in sex as their strategies to acquire the cultural and symbolic capital of ‘adulthood’ (Beccaria & Sande, 2003; Järvinen & Gundelach, 2007), as illustrated by David when he
recalled, “Well my first sexual partner was 22, I was 16 and she had two kids. (Laughing.) I got
drunk, and the next morning we had sex.” Furthermore, it appears that it is the permissive
culture of drinking and sexing at parties that makes sexual transgression possible.

**COLIN:** Well, I’ve only once (..) had sex at a party with somebody that I didn’t know that
well. Um and that was pretty casual. We just, it was a really (..) relaxed party (snickering)
like obviously. We just kind of went into a room and (…) myself and a guy and we just did
orals so-. We didn’t use a condom for that. I guess people don’t use condom for oral.
**JW:** Mm hmm, how did you approach each other? How did you signal each other that
there’s interest?
**COLIN:** I don’t know, it just kind of clicked. It was like we were just kind of sitting in this room
and (…) and then it came up that we were both bi and then it was like maybe we should have
sex like, I guess it was like (..) fairly frank and straightforward actually. I mean like we had
been drinking so that made it like (..) easier to do. We weren’t extremely drunk or anything
but it definitely made it a lot easier to just kind of say what you want to say.

The use of alcohol to diminish social inhibition in erotic interactions among young people is not
a new phenomenon. More than three decades ago, Liz-Marie Kruse (1975) observed that
drinking enhanced young men’s ability to make conversation with other young men and to
approach potential partners for contact-making (or what we call hooking-up today) at
discothèques and restaurants that served alcohol. Her findings suggest that drinking enhances
social transgression. People tend to act or do things that they feel are otherwise not permissible.
Today young people hook up at different places (e.g., house parties, raves, pubs, weddings, etc.),
but drinking continues to play a dominant role in ‘lubricating’ their erotic interactions. In Colin’s
situation, drinking made it easier for him and the other young man to disclose their sexualities
and proceed to a same-sex hookup.

However, social transgressions often take place within the constraints of dominant
cultures and place-specific norms, as Colin discovered at a rave party.

**COLIN:** My friend really like (..) got off on the fact that I was bi or something and I was like “I
think I’m going to ask a guy if he wants to dance.” She was like, “YEAH, YEAH, do that. That’s
a good idea.” But like it wasn’t a gay club, and it was like a rave type of thing, so I guess the
guy I asked was probably straight. (…) And then after that I was thinking like, “Yeah if I want
to hit on men I should go to a gay club like.” (Laughing.) It wasn’t like specifically a straight
club where like, you know, macho guys go in their like nice shirts and you know girlie women
go in their short skirts and high heels, it wasn’t one of those places so there were definitely
lots of people there who were of various sexual orientations, but uh, at the same time it just
made it kind of confusing. And it was embarrassing you know when the guy was like, “NO-o-
o.” And I’m like, “I’m sorry.” That was definitely embarrassing.

Colin’s experience illustrates that places are constructed through power relations. Within our
heteronormative culture, LGBTTTIQ persons have to “deny or disguise their sexual orientation except in specific (and often marginal) spaces because of fears of homophobic abuse and intolerance” (Hubbard, 2000, p. 192). Although Colin experienced a strong desire for erotic connections with young men, he often felt out of place and did not really know where he could go to meet other LGBTTTIQ youth. His middle-class heteronormative habitus did not endow him with the bodily hexis or a feel of the ‘cruising game’ specific to gay youth culture (Eyre, Arnold, Peterson, & Strong, 2007). At the time of our interviews, Colin was in a new, committed relationship with a bisexual young woman who was connected to the LGBTTTIQ communities. She encouraged him to resist the normative definitions of sexual identities and to expand his social networks. It appeared that he was beginning to develop a secondary habitus through his new experiences and with the support of his new friends from the artist communities.

Among Mihir and his university guy friends, the use of alcohol in parties to facilitate sexual connections was also a norm. Mihir suggested that most entertainment events targeting young adults served alcohol because it helped to get everyone into the ‘good mood’ for hookup sex. What seems to be less obvious to Mihir and his friends is that young people constitute a target population for alcohol sales (Demant & Østergaard, 2007; Griffin, Bengry-Howell, Hackley, Mistral, & Szmigin, 2009; McCleanor, Greenaway, Moewaka Barnes, Borell, & Gregory, 2005)

**MIHIR:** Yeah, it just helps people loosen up, it’s like the perfect social lubricant. And for most people, we called it beer goggles, right? Like, everything looks a little better then.
**JW:** Oh, is that really true?
**MIHIR:** Um-m-m, I don’t know if it’s really like they look better, I know that sometimes you can actually not see as well if you’re really gone. Um-m-m, but on top of that like you get more horny. You know, you’re less inhibited, and I think it works similarly for the girls, maybe not as much, but guys naturally get either more aggressive, or more sexually aware, or just more enthusiastic, or like they also have the courage now to go talk to the girl if they didn’t while they were sober, so it really helps to get everyone in that good mood sort of thing. I think it just speeds things up and that’s what people want. If I think back to all the times where I had sex with a girl but there was no alcohol involved, it just took longer.
**JW:** Longer meaning in-
**MIHIR:** //Like, it didn’t happen that same night. If you wanted sex that same night, it’s more likely with alcohol. You gotta go out a couple more times or you gotta know each other more and that sort of thing, um-m-m, but I think most people will- at least guys don’t want to have to do all that work. For a guy it’s like, “Oh well, okay, I gotta spend the time here and I gotta probably spend the money too to do this.”
By using the metaphor of ‘work’ to describe the reluctant efforts some young men put forth to achieve hookup sex, Mihir provided a clear message that some young men are not always interested in developing ‘romantic’ or ‘love’ relationships. Furthermore, since young women “don’t want to get a reputation”, Mihir explained, drinking “helps to loosen everybody up” so that hookup sex takes place.

Mihir’s narrative illustrates a paradox of the dominant sexual cultures in Canada and the US. Although the pervasive heteronormative sexualizing contents in the mass media (TV, movies, music videos, advertising, magazines) present North American societies as sexually permissive (Ward, 2003), the inability for young people (especially young women) to openly communicate their desire for sexual connections and their reliance on alcohol to facilitate this (mis)communication present a picture of sexual repression (Fine, 1988; Deborah L. Tolman, 2002; Welles, 2005). However, as Foucault (1978) argues, discourses of sexuality do not produce sexual repression; instead they function as a disciplinary technology that constitutes the sexual subjects and shapes their sexual practices. Normative discourses of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity (R. W. Connell, 2005) are insidious in all social fields (family, school, media, public health, etc.); they function to reinforce the gendered rules within the game of (hetero)erotic hookups. The consumption of alcohol at parties reinforces the demand for women to perform feminine passivity and sexual ‘innocence’ (Demant, 2009). At the same time, it enables young men to take up the discourse of ‘under the influence” to justify their transgressive sexual practices, including naturalized male sexual aggression.

9.3.2. ‘Testosterone Flying’ at Parties: Drugs, Alcohol, Sex, and Physical Fights

While parties constitute a common place for (hetero)erotic hookups, they are also sites of masculine competition. According to the young men in this study, fighting seemed to be another common practice at parties.

**MATTHEW:** We went to a house party, (..) I went with this other guy, it was just me and him. It was over at my ex-girlfriends house, it was far [[...]] and then we just smoked some weed outside her house and then we had a brawl with other guys there.

**JW:** Was that like a fight?

**MATTHEW:** Yeah like a fight, ’cause like they were saying that we smoked inside her house and I didn’t smoke inside her house. But it was like a misunderstanding ’cause we threw some in her garbage and it smelled like the weed but we didn’t. So it was like, “I didn’t smoke weed in your house.” And, they’re like, “Well, why then it smells like weed? Go clean it up.” I was
high on drug at the time and they were drunk, so I was like, “No, man if you want beef, come bring it down to Lamarside, ’cause I had like my boys down there.”

**JW:** So, what happened?

**MATTHEW:** There were a lot of them and it was like two of us. And I was pumping, I was like “Yo, you want a beef. Bring it. Bring all your boys down to Lamarside.” And then this other guy punched my friend. Boom in the face. And my friend like, he didn’t do anything. He’s shocked, he was speechless, he was scared, he didn’t do anything. I’m like, “What the fuck? What are you doing?” We just started punching each other. And now all of his boys came at me. I’m like sh-sh I was on the floor, like (...) deck them and stuff and I was fighting back and then. I got jumped by like fifteen guys and I was fighting fifteen guys and my friend left.”

The association between substance use and involvement in physical violence by young men is well documented (Felson, Teasdale, & Burchfield, 2008; Stappenbeck & Fromme, 2010; Walton, et al., 2009). The practice of drinking and fighting appears to be linked to the permissive and masculinist cultures at specific places such as bars, pubs, and parties (J. C. Roberts, 2009; Schnitzer, et al., 2010).

However, the logic of the practice of male-to-male aggression varies according to the context of the homosocial interactions. Men often engage in physical violence as impression management, or to ‘defend’ their sense of honor and reputation (K. Graham & Wells, 2003). For instance, the conflict between Matthew and the young men at the party started out as a grievance against weed smoking inside the house, but Matthew’s refusal to cleanup posed a challenge to the other young men’s ’hood reputation in front of everyone at the party. While the first punch on Matthew’s friend might be associated with alcohol use or an emotional reaction to the argument, Matthew’s engagement in the brawl represented an act of ‘honour’ to defend his friend and to maintain his ’hood reputation. When the women at the party intervened, Matthew escaped narrowly with bruises and cuts. Although he fled in a state of defeat, when he saw his friends at his own ’hood the next day, he was cheered as their local hero for staying behind to do a solo fight against a group of guys. His involvement in violence and bodily injuries were converted into symbolic capital of street respect in his ’hood (and probably other hoods, as I was told that reputations travel). Many of the guys at his ’hood even pushed him to go back and settle the score, “Yo, let’s go. There’s enough of us. There’s freaking fifty of us. Let’s go, let’s go.” Matthew’s story suggests that it is the dynamics between the masculine habitus and the competition for cultural and symbolic capital in the homosocial field that shape the practices of drinking and physical fights among these young men.

The culture of drinking and physical aggression is not limited to parties in the ’hoods. It
is also common at parties organized by middle-class young men, as Colin described from his experience of parties affiliated with organized team sports.

**COLIN:** I have only cheated once. It was just like making out with somebody random at a dance. I don’t really have any regrets about that, other than, like the particular experience was just kind of ridiculous. The actual experience of cheating wasn’t really pleasant or unpleasant, it was just kind of like a thing that happened. Yeah, because I used to be really into [[name of a sport]] and at the end of the year, you know after the nationals, there’s this big dance, which is huge. And there’s only two things to do while you are there essentially – start fights or pick up people, like try to hook up with other people, like, it’s ridiculous.

**JW:** What do you mean by “start fights”?

**COLIN:** Well, like, you know, there’s a lot of testosterone flying around.

**JW:** So they’re all guys?

**COLIN:** No, there are a lot of women too, which probably makes the testosterone fly even higher.

Colin suggested that it was the presence of women at the party that ‘makes the testosterone fly even higher’. This observation implies that within the context of the sports affiliated parties, competitions in the homosocial and (hetero)erotic fields overlapped to produce a dialectic logic of practice. In a four-year participant observation study on collegiate rugby subculture, Kenneth B. Muir and Trina Seitz (2004) found that the players engaged in prescribed masculine performances including “sexual prowess and conquest, excessive alcohol consumption, displays of courage or violence, and the prolific use of vulgarity” (p. 314). At these post-game parties, women are not only the objects of sexual pursuits; they are also the objects of misogynist practice in which the women are treated as “the subjugated foci of male entertainment” (p. 318).

**JW:** So how do you pick fights?

**COLIN:** I never really tried to start a fight, but like last year I went to the big party, I was still going out with the same girl and I was like, “OK I’m not going to cheat on her again. I’m not going to start a fight, and I’m definitely not going to stay at home.” [...] So I decided that I would do the robot for the entirety of the dance and see what that was like. (Laughing.) So I was doing that and this guy was like, “Yo, stop doing the robot.” And I was like, “I can’t stop the robot, the robot is all I have.” So I just kept on doing it, and the guy started like hitting me and I just kept on doing the robot and he’s like, you know, I guess he got weird-out and just like “Whoa, what’s up with this guy, I don’t want to mess with the human robot.”

**JW:** So was there drinking at the party?

**COLIN:** Yeah, oh yeah, everybody is definitely drinking.

The sexualized culture and the hegemonic masculinist expectations were so strong at these sports affiliated parties that Colin had to strategize ahead of time on how to avoid engaging in random sex or physical fights without compromising his masculine status. His use of the robot strategy illustrates that an act of domination is simultaneously an act of subversion. There is always a
space of indeterminancy during the interaction that gives rise to the possibilities of resistance, as Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne (1994) explain:

An able-bodied man who throws a punch may be seen as affirming his masculinity, particularly if the recipient is also an able-bodied male of a similar age. In this situation, however, the masculinity of the victim is also being negotiated. He may fight back, run away or break down in tears. Or he might fight back and lose, or simply stand, with his arms folded, and refuse to fight. Any one of these responses may be interpreted as enhancing or diminishing the masculinity of either or both parties. . . . each episode is part of a continuing process whereby people negotiate relative positions of power as individuals and as representatives of social categories such as those based on gender, age, class or ethnicity. . . . At different stages in the process of negotiating masculinities, and according to the different perspectives of the actors and their audiences, attribution of masculinity can and do change radically. (p. 14-15)

By taking on the persona of a robot, Colin was able to subvert the norm of masculinist aggression and demonstrate his agency in establishing an alternative way of performing his masculine identity and having fun at the party. His middle-class position enabled him to refuse to engage in physical violence without compromising his reputation or his own sense of honour. His act of refusal opened up a space of possibilities for other young men at the party to resist the dominant culture of physical aggression and random sex.

While Colin did not approve of or appreciate the hypermasculine culture at the year-end sports affiliated parties, he admitted to enjoying his membership of a competitive sport team.

**COLIN:** Yeah it's very much a group mentality. Yeah, I'm glad I experienced a group mentality in a reasonably safe form. It wasn't like we were going out and starting fights on the street or anything. We were just competing, which is, you know, it just doesn't matter. So it's like a good place where I could learn about the scary group mentality without any real consequences. [...] You know, the coach would compare it to war and stuff like that and its nuts. It's ridiculous, but I guess its just that real intense gung-ho -- we're going to be number one, you got to be hungry for it, we're going to show everybody how strong we are -- kind of mentality that as an extension of, you know, you express it in sports, and as an extension of that I guess it just leaks over into partying, particularly a party directly associated with [[name of a sport]].

Colin’s narrative showed that the cultural practices of drinking, physical fights, and engaging in sex at the sports affiliated parties were intricately connected to the cultural practices within the social space of team sports in which hegemonic masculine competitions are sanctioned. To some degree, Colin’s perception of sports as a ‘safe’ place to practice a ‘group mentality’ was correct. Within the context of team sports, the presence of adults with authority (coaches, referees, parents) may deter acts of extreme violence or aggression, even though reports of serious injuries
from contact sports suggest otherwise (Emery, Meeuwisse, & McAllister, 2006; Shindle, 2010). Furthermore, unlike violence in the 'hoods or on the street (shootings, gang fights), aggression in the name of sports is often legitimated, tolerated, or even socially sanctioned. The endorsement of aggressive attitude is often expressed in the metaphors of ‘war’ and masculinist discourses, as reflected in an excerpt from a participant observation study carried out by Adi Adam and his colleagues:

Homophobia, misogyny, and extreme sexual violence pervaded the language that the coaches used in attempts to instill the warrior attitude in their players. For example, a coach said, “If this was a war, you'd put a bullet in the cunt's head. But it's not, its football [soccer], so stick a boot in on him next time.” Another coach yelled to his players, “Go out there and dominate them. Bend them over and fuckin' rape them!” In frustration, a coach shouted, “When you get the opportunity you’ve got to take your chances. Don't fuck it up. Don't be a fucking poof!” Another yelled, “You go out there and finish them off! You've got to cut their balls off!” (Adams, et al., 2010, pp. 286-287)

Being a symbolic cultural product with economic significance, competitive team and contact sports are legitimated to (re)produce a culture of heteromasculine aggression and violence (Kreager, 2007). These hegemonic masculine habituses often ‘leak’ into other places (fraternities, parties and pubs) within the homosocial and (hetero)erotic fields to perpetuate sexual and other forms of violence (Curry, 2001; Kreager, 2007; K. Miller, Melnick, Farrell, Sabo, & Barnes, 2006). At the same time, local masculine habituses are intricately linked to the global masculine habitus, whereby masculine domination and hegemonic masculinities are expressed in multiple forms and fields (domestic violence, gay bashing, workplace bullying).

9.3.3. ‘Running-a-Train’: Locker-room-sex

During the group interview with young men from Macee Grove, both Dan and I were surprised to learn of a sexual practice that was called ‘running-a-train’⁴⁹. When we checked with some of the young men from other neighbourhoods, they had not heard the term ‘running-a-

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⁴⁹ The phenomenon of ‘running-a-train’ has not been thoroughly explored in social research; the scant literature on sex involving a group of young men and one young women focus mostly on victimization such as gang rape or party rape (Rothman, et al., 2008). The Urban Dictionary defines ‘running-a-train’ as: “When three or more males take turns having sex with one female and having her perform sexual favors for them” (Running a train, np). Being an entry in the Urban Dictionary suggests that ‘running-a-training’ is either an actual practice or a discourse that circulates in specific places or both; it is plausibly a local phenomenon that may be invisible to outsiders like Dan and I. As I further explored this phenomenon, I found that a gangsta rap artist, Project Pat, has produced a song called Run a Train in 1999. The misogynist lyrics and the music are circulated on the Internet. With little research on the topic, it is difficult to say whether the song was written based on a specific practice known to Project Pat, or whether his song influenced this specific sexual practice.
train.’ This suggests that ‘running-a-train’ is plausibly a sexual practice that takes place in some neighbourhoods but not others, or various forms of ‘running-a-train’ are practiced under different names.

**JOSHUA:** Aw, locker-room-sex, when there’s a TRAIN. (Loud laughter and giggles.)
**DAN:** I want you to explain it to me, man.
**JOSHUA:** That’s when there’s like, a-one girl, there’s like, EIGHTEEN guys. Oh, you just go for it, man. (Chatting and laughter - inaudible)
**SHAWN:** He said eighteen- (laughter) locker room-

According to the young men at Macee Grove, some women from other neighbourhoods came into their ’hood to offer ‘free’ and ‘voluntary’ sex to a line up of young men. The use of a ‘train’ as the metaphor for this sexual practice distinguishes it from other transgressive sexual practices such as group sex, or gang rape. It was also called ‘locker-room-sex’ because men line up to have sex with the specific woman, one by one, inside the locker (storage) room in the basement of the buildings. The young men’s rowdy reaction suggested that ‘running-a-train’ occupied an ambiguous position within the local repertoire of (hetero)erotic sexual practices; it seemed to straddle between rumour and truth, desire and disgust, myth and reality. They also suggested that sex was not always the object of taking part in ‘locker-room-sex’.

**JW:** Does that REALLY happen?
**Multiple Participants:** YEEEEAH! (All answered at once.)
**TYLER:** Sometimes it’s one guy that-
**JEREMIAH:** //One guy that tries to stay in there for like, an hour.
**TYLER:** //There’s always- (laughter and many talking at once) guys, like, they go in, they wanna be selfish, and they wanna take forever.
**SHAWN:** They- they want like, make the girl theirs.
**TYLER:** //THEIR girl, so like, everyone else in the line don’t get their chance. (Many agreed.)
**JOSHUA:** But some guys just take too long-
**MAWULI:** //And do nothing, and they talk to her-
**JEREMIAH:** //Some man get like, turned on with the talking-
**JOSHUA:** //They don’t wanna leave.

Although the young men spoke vividly about the local practice of ‘running-a-train’, it was unlikely that they actually knew everything that went on ‘inside’ the locker room. Their narratives implied a rejection towards the men who ‘took too long’ and did ‘nothing’ but talk to the woman; they seemed to consider the act of ‘just talking’ as a double transgression, whereby these men were not performing the masculine expectation of ‘doing’ sex. In telling stories about the locker-room-sex, these young men actively participated in constructing local legends and rumors that gave meaning to the different acts of sexual transgression. By repeating these stories,
they collectively established local norms and mutual expectations that functioned to guide and/or control their sexual practices (D. E. Miller, 1992; Rosnow, 1988).

Later on, the young men admitted that they exaggerated the number of men involved in running a ‘train’; it usually involved six to eight young men.

**JW:** And so then, how does that work?
**BRANDON:** //Sometimes the lights are ON [[in the locker room]] and you- (Laughing.)
**JOSHUA:** //And like, a man could go in there, they don’t care how long it takes.
**BRANDON:** They just walk in there.
**JOSHUA:** They get there, do their train, come out and say, “Next man, come in.” And the next-next-all of them. (Laughing and talking in excitement.)
**JEREMIAH:** Most of the time they’ll go- like, five or six. And if you bring your clique or your regiment, then she’d be like, (mimicking female softer voice), “Oh, why don’t you bring all your friends?”
**MULTIPLE PARTICIPANT:** Yeah, yeah. (Laughter.)
**JEREMIAH:** Uh, like in your group, there’s always gonna be guys that are popular, and guys that are not popular. So the guys with the most popularity, they always get like first dibs on everything. (...) That’s how that works, if you’re more popular than your friend, it’s more likely that you’ll get chosen than your friend will.

Seeing that Dan and I were in disbelief, the young men emphasized that running-a-train was the woman’s voluntary act and it differed from gang rape. Jeremiah suggested that the woman who ran a ‘train’ had the power to choose which men she had sex with first. Thus, running-a-train is not merely a sexual act; it is also a performance involving the use of erotic power. Accordingly, in most of the situations the woman who ‘runs’ the train holds the power to determine the positioning of these young men within the overlapping space of the homosocial and (hetero)erotic fields. Young men are chosen and ranked based on the volume of cultural and symbolic capital they hold. In the selection process, their capital of popularity is converted into erotic capital, which is then reconverted into masculine capital within their local homosocial field.

However, the power held by the women who run the train is precarious; it exists only within the temporal limits of the transgressive act. Their (hetero)erotic capital is not a form of universal currency that can be converted freely into other form of cultural capital within the erotic or gender fields, as illustrated in Tyler’s struggles about his relationship with his girlfriend.

**TYLER:** See the thing is, I would like her to be my main squeeze, but I heard she was the kind of person- (...) like, the way she acts, I wouldn’t want to make her my main squeeze.
JW: Yeah? So then she’s a little bit more serious then just a girlfriend.
TYLER: Yeah, yeah, yeah. She’s a little bit more serious. I have feelings for her and I like her. I like being around her. I like talking to her.
JW: What do you like about her? What makes you like her?
TYLER: I don’t know. A lot of people don’t like her. She’s rude. She’s a rude girl but that’s one thing I like about her. She says what’s on her mind, but at the same time like she can be sincere. Like we’ll be on the bus, train, whatever and if an old person walks by, she’s willing to jump up and give them her seat, like that. And like, if someone on the street asks for change, she will go into her purse and give them change. I like that kind of quality in a person.
JW: So why do other people think she’s rude? Because she’s straightforward?
TYLER: Yeah and she’s kind of ghetto.
JW: What do you mean?
TYLER: She likes to wear track pants and running shoes and wife beaters. And I kind of tell her, “You know, you’re older now. Like you’ve got to start changing your appearance.” She’s starting to change her wardrobe a little bit. Just from more casual to more like sophisticated and I like that.
JW: So she traded in her free spirit. (Laughing.)
TYLER: Cause she also said, “Yeah I realize, yeah, I should start dressing differently.” I’m like, “Yeah you do.” So like, she’s helping me out.

Tyler’s struggle in fully embracing his girlfriend for who she was once again raises questions about the popular belief that (hetero)erotic relationships the North America are based on the ‘freedom’ to love whomever we please (as discussed in Section 8.2.3. in Chapter 8). Tyler’s autonomy to establish a (hetero)erotic relationship was constrained by the objective structures in the (hetero)erotic and gender fields. Tyler’s comment – “she’s helping me out” – illustrates the effect of the symbolic violence underpinned by the system of hegemonic masculinities and emphasized femininities on our social practices. To be accepted within Tyler’s social circle, this young woman had to demonstrate emphasized femininity (R. W. Connell, 2005) in the way she dressed, talked and behaved. Furthermore, as we continued to discuss Tyler’s struggles, he revealed that the biggest challenge he had to contend with was a rumor that his girlfriend was a locker-room-girl.

JW: So then why don’t you want her to be your main squeeze? She sounds like a nice person.
TYLER: Okay at first I did. I really did. But then after a while, I heard some things about her.
JW: Like what?
TYLER: (Lowering his voice and avoiding eye contact.) I heard she wasn’t the most respectable person to herself and the things she’s done (...).
JW: But how do you judge that?
TYLER: Ahm, well, I don’t know for myself. I just heard through the grapevine. I approached her about it and she came at me like you know, like that’s some bullshit or whatever. But like there are times I think that maybe it could be true.
JW: Like what kind of things?
TYLER: Okay I heard that she was a hoe, kind of thing.
JW: Like being someone who-
TYLER: I heard that she was one of those. You know how we talked about the locker room, (quiet voice) yeah, I heard she was a locker room girl. And like, if she was, like I don’t want that. (...) No, yeah, ’cause I don’t want to be walking with a person in the mall and hearing something like, “That’s the girl, blah, blah, blah.” That’s kind of embarrassing ON my part.

JW: So then, a girlfriend can affect your reputation then.

TYLER: Yeah, if this is my girlfriend, she has to be the best thing in my life. The best thing ever, you know.

While Tyler appreciated his girlfriend’s qualities of kindness, generosity, straight forwardness, and willingness to compromise her styles, he was hesitant to embrace her as a ‘main squeeze’ because of the rumor that she was a locker-room-girl. Within Tyler’s social worlds, rumors underpinned by local norms had the power to define relationships and intervene in the most ‘private’ matters.

Tyler’s dilemma suggests that although feminist activism has produced a permissive discourse that women’s ‘natural’ sex drives are equal to those of men’s, gender relations in (hetero)erotic relationships are not suddenly transformed (Hollway, 1996). Women’s and men’s sexual practices are still governed by ‘sedimented’ discourses that are ‘misrecognized’ (Bourdieu, 2001) and taken for granted in the present day world.

In addition to being given a ‘bad’ reputation, women who run a train may also experience violence because their acts of transgression take place in semi-public spaces (e.g., locker rooms, parks, school washrooms, etc.); the women’s freedom to engage in sex with men of their choice is not always guaranteed. During our discussion on sexual assault, some of the young men giggled and whispered. When Dan asked them what the giggling was about, they revealed the dynamics of masculine domination associated with the locker-room-sex.

JOSHUA: No- we know a man, he is that like, the girl’s trying to leave the locker room and like-

SHAWN: //((Mimicking a gruff voice.) “Yo! Come here, yo! Where are you going? Where are you going? Now come on!” (Laughter)

TYLER: //“You’re not going! You’re not leaving here until you give me what I want!” (Laughter).

JW: So then, but you guys don’t do anything about that?

SHAWN: (Laughing.) That’s not my problem!

TYLER: //They volunteer, they volunteer for that to happen. And if you’re talking about the guy, if he’s a guy that I’m scared of, and (laughing) I just allowed him. Shit! If it was a guy I know I can talk to, I’d be like, “You know. You can’t do that”.

JEREMIAH: //Yeah, or if you cared about her, man. (Cross-talking – inaudible.)

SHAWN: But if they appeared out of nowhere, like, they’re not a part of it, they just walked by-

JEREMIAH: //The bigger man, the older- bigger older man.

SHAWN: “Yo, what’s going on in here? Oh let me join in.” And they just come in, they’re like, (mimicking a pushy voice,) “Ohhhhhwwaaaaiirrrrgggllllaaa!”
JEREMIAH: //They’re like, way older, they try to, “Yo, yo! I’m next! I’m next!”
MAWULI: //They cut in front of the line
JEREMIAH: //“Let me do some, let me do some.” They started to punk us, like-
SHAWN: //You’re just like, “Alright man. You’re older than me, so”.
MAWULI: //It’s not worth it.
SHAWN: //Yeah, it’s not worth like- I’m not gonna fight, like I’m not going to scrap you over a fucking.

Our discussion on the locker-room-sex shows that ‘running-a-train’ is a complex phenomenon. Although the young men insisted that it was a voluntary act on the part of the women, they also recognized that this voluntary status changed into forced sex as the contexts and the players involved changed.

What Dan and I found disturbing was the young men’s casual acceptance of forced sex on these locker-room-women. Although they would engage in ‘free’ sex with these women and likely accrued masculine capital when they talked about their locker-room experiences in their hetero-guy-talk, they did not seem to recognize that these women should enjoy the equal human rights of protection and freedom from violence. When I challenged their non-action as bystanders who witnessed sexual violence, they moved from their initial defence that the women ‘volunteered for that to happen’ to admitting their sense of ‘powerlessness’ within the local hierarchy of masculine domination. Growing up in the ’hood, these young men embodied a set of street norms and rules that they were disposed to play by in order to survive; challenging the older and more powerful men at the locker was not a game that they felt safe to engage in.

Furthermore, the socially transgressive nature of the locker-room-sex may have made it difficult for these young men to seek advice from their parents or report these incidents of sexual coercion or violence. To construct and maintain their moral sense of self, they expressed that they were prepared to interfere if their peers were involved in sexual coercion or violence.

9.3.4. Hooking-up For Sex: Guys With No Fixed Address

The topic of ‘where young people have sex’ is seldom discussed in sex education. Public health practitioners tend to perceive sex as an activity that takes place in a private space. However, access to private and safe spaces that escapes the surveillance of adults is seldom within the reach of many marginalized young people (Hirst, 2004). During the group interview, I asked the young men with no fixed address where they met their potential sexual partners.

MARCUS: Everywhere, meet them at an ecstasy rave party.
PAUL: EVERYWHERE, dude. I've panhandled, yeah, fucking you know, hit on chicks.
**MARCUS:** So have I, man. I don’t panhandle them, man. Every girl I see, I say, “What’s up baby?” (Laughing.) And they’d be like, “How are you doing?”

**JW:** But how do you approach them? You just say, “Hey”?

**PAUL:** Say something witty and clever. And they laugh and they’re just like, “Oh”.

**KYLE:** The best line is like, “If I followed you home, would you keep me?” If only it’d work with a lot of girls.

**JAMIE:** That had worked for me a lot. Yeah. Considering I am a no fixed address kind of guy.

**KYLE:** Fuck her and get her number afterwards.

**JAMIE:** Yo, my buddy got taken home by a girl, like, taken in.

While these young men identified a variety of hook-up places, their narrative suggested that they sometimes looked for women who would take them home.

David, who lived in a shelter in Troikaville, met his new girlfriend on the street. She lived with her mother in a nearby housing project. Since David was not allowed to bring any women into the shelter, he spent a lot of time at his girlfriend’s apartment where they engaged in sex when her mother was not home. However, for the other young men, living in a shelter made it difficult for them to hook up with women.

**KYLE:** I got chlamydia. I didn’t even have a clue how I got it, probably from one of the fucking girls that I have slept with. I slept with a lot of girls that I do one-night stands with.

**JW:** How do you do one-night stand? How do you pick them up?

**KYLE:** I just meet a girl at a bar or at a club, but you need to have your own place though, that’s the thing, and I don’t have my own place, so I can’t say, “Let’s come back to my place.”

**JW:** They don’t allow sex in a shelter, do they?

**KYLE:** Well yeah, you can. But I wouldn’t want to be with no shelter girls. A lot of them are dirty, diseased, they have been in shelters or group homes their whole life. They’re dirty like a hoe, they sleep with anyone, they’re really easy, slutty, really easy to get with.

**JW:** Yeah, but what about the guys? Are there dirty guys?

**KYLE:** A lot of guys are fucking sluts, male prostitutes, or male whores, a man slut or a man whore (Laughing.) A lot of guys are, yeah, a lot if guys will get fucked by anything thing they get.

Although Kyle was a shelter user and openly admitted to having a lot of casual sex, he spoke about the women at the shelter with contempt, calling them ‘dirty’ and ‘slutty’. When I challenged him about men’s participation in casual sex, he laughed and called them ‘man whores’ and prostitutes. Perhaps it was Kyle’s middle-class primary habitus that triggered his aversion to sex with street-involved women. Although he frequently engaged in casual sex, he considered his sexual practices to be different from those of other street involved young people.

When I explored further with Kyle about his sexual practices, he spoke about having sex in public places.
JW: So, for people who don’t have a place, if they really hit it off, where do they have sex?
KYLE: Bathrooms. You know how many bathrooms I have sex in? A lot of bathrooms.
JW: What bathrooms? Where?
KYLE: Like [[name of fast food restaurant]], single bathrooms, like regular bathrooms in a coffee shop, stuff like that.
JW: You’re kidding! I never know that.
KYLE: Nah. I did it in the [[name of supermarket]] bathroom with fucking Angela, she’s just a fucking retard, she just wanted sex all the time. (...) She had a guy at her house, she had an actual boyfriend but she was cheating on him with me, eh. So we’d go to the fucking bathroom, she had her kid with her, she had her friend hold her kid, and hell we’d go in the bathroom, and fucking have sex.
JW: And do you use condoms?
KYLE: Ah, (...) a couple of times I didn’t, but majority of the times, yeah, I did. Sometimes there are no condoms, and if you want to do it, you know, you can just tell, she has a kid and shit, so I know she is clean.

In the above narrative, Kyle also did not use the same type of misogynist language (slut, hoe, dirty) to describe Angela. Despite his experience of having a chlamydia infection in the past, Kyle did not use condoms consistently with Angela; he assumed that mothers living with regular male partners and having their own homes were disease-free. Kyle’s distinction between women like Angela and the women living in shelters was a curious one because Angela did not quite fit with the idealized image of a pure woman within the popular Madonna/whore dichotomy (Ussher, 1997). I speculate that Kyle’s distaste for women living on the street was shaped by his middle-class habitus and his socialized perception about ‘family’, as reflected in his desire to become a father (discussed in Subsection 9.2.2 above).

In addition to having sex in public washrooms, Kyle also hooked up with women who would take him in. However, he disclosed that his relationship with these women seldom lasted because of the effects of his alcohol and drug addictions. Studies show that drug addiction is a significant determinant of health among socially and economically marginalized young men, especially those living on the street (K. Kelly & Caputo, 2007; A. S. Ritchie, 2009). While a detailed exploration of alcohol and drug addictions is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I draw on these young men’s narratives to illustrate how alcohol and drug addiction influenced their (hetero)erotic and sexual practices.

JW: You were telling me about a woman you used to stay with. How did you meet?
KYLE: Well, I was just kinda, we are more just like fuck friends, right?
JW: Oh, yeah? Tell me about that, all the guys were telling me about that.
KYLE: She’s just someone that, uh, she’s not very great looking, but when I get drunk I go over and fuck her. She’s not really that great looking.
JW: And she doesn’t care if you were drunk?
Kyle suggested that it was his drinking that led to his violence toward his ‘fuck friend’. However, he also alluded to this woman’s unworthiness of his sexual attention because she was not ‘great looking’. Kyle’s emphasis on feminine beauty was reflected in one of our earlier discussions, during the individual interview when he commented, “Girls that are good looking, guys would give them everything. But if you’re an ugly girl, yeah, you’ll have a tough time, especially if the girl herself knows she’s ugly, then that could make her depressed. I feel bad for ugly girls.” It appeared that even though Kyle cognitively acknowledged the inequitable (mal)treatment of women by men, his socialized schema of middle-class taste and masculinist disposition also shaped the way he treated ‘unattractive’ women in his life.

During our individual interview, Marcus also described how alcohol and drug addiction affected his (hetero)erotic and sexual practices. He and his siblings were placed in the foster care system due to his parents’ drinking problem. Between the ages of 6 to 13, he and one of his brothers were fostered by three White Christian families; the official rationale was that short-term foster care would prevent them from having an emotional attachment to the foster families, so that they could reintegrate into their biological family later on. His parents moved closer to the foster homes so they could visit the children, but Marcus recalled that there were times when his mother arrived at the foster home in an intoxicated state.

At age 13, Marcus was released from the foster care system; he was returned to his family and he lived on the reserve for a couple of year. At age 16, he left his family because he felt ‘sick and tired’ of the sense of hopelessness that was on the reserve. He aspired to travel across Canada and to see the world, including Egypt. While working in construction in a small Alberta town he met and fell in love with a young White woman. He lived with her for a year, but the relationship turned volatile when both of them became addicted to street drugs and alcohol. They broke up when she charged him with physical assault. When he was released from
prison, he travelled to Toronto looking for a new life, but he was not able to break free from his drug and alcohol addictions.

**JW:** So, what are the things that you do down here [[in Troikaville]] everyday?

**MARCUS:** Nothing, just usually get high and drink and stay up for a bit and get dirty.

**JW:** What kind of drugs do you do?

**MARCUS:** Uh, I don’t know. I guess like, I do everything that I can find, everything that gets me high.

**JW:** Yeah, do you ever feel down afterwards?

**MARCUS:** Well, uh, of course, when all the money’s gone, when it all comes down to it, I feel like shit. You know, I’m like, “Oh man, now I’ll have to go hustle. You know, I’ll have to go find some custys [[customers]] and shit who wants drugs.”

**JW:** But then if you don’t have any [[drugs]], how can you give it to your customers?

**MARCUS:** Hustle, I don’t know, hustling custys. You just do whatever you got to do, man, you know, rob people, or you can hook them up and they can hook you up. It’s just a great form of hustling that I enjoy.

**JW:** So do you ever get tired of hustling?

**MARCUS:** Well, of course I am now, I can hardly keep clean, dirty and smelly, I am so sick and dirty and greasy, that’s just when I dread it.

Marcus’ narrative suggested that his life on the street revolved around getting high, feeling down, and hustling to get high again. Sometimes, his hustling included engaging in sex for money.

**JW:** Yeah, so these are people that you just meet?

**MARCUS:** Yeah, people that I meet and we’re both drunk and we’re both horny and she takes me to her $1500 condominium and spoils me. I don’t know whether to call her my sugar momma, I guess it’s my sugar momma. She wants sex, she’ll get me drunk, she’ll spend money on me. She’ll give me money when I leave her place.

**JW:** So this is someone you meet in Toronto?

**MARCUS:** Yeah. And another girl, and there’s one more girl that I fuck.

**JW:** So, do you practice safer sex?

**MARCUS:** Of course I do, it’s Toronto for crying out loud.

**JW:** What do you mean?

**MARCUS:** I was told that Toronto has a real bad problem with uh, S-T-I’s [[sexually transmitted infections]].

During data analysis, I noticed the effect of hysteresis in me that sometimes limited my ability to explore the young men’s sexual practices in detail. Although I frequently reminded myself that I wanted to explore the sexual realities of these young men through a critical social lens and not a health behavioural change lens, there were many moments when my interviewing practice was prereflexively shaped by my past public health habitus. The moment I heard of stories that came across as involving ‘risky’ practices (e.g., hooking up at bars, being drunk, sex for money, etc), I jumped to the *public health surveillance* questions – “Do you practice safer sex?” In doing so, I
missed the opportunity to explore more about the meaning of sexual engagement and relationship dynamics in Marcus’ experience.

Marcus’ narratives of his drug use and sexual practices resonated with the song that Jamie and Paul sang during our follow-up interview.

I'm broke again and I can't complain, cuz I sold my body for cocaine.
I know that line will take the pain away, that's why I sell my body for cocaine.
Remember the faces, don't remember the name, when I sell my body for cocaine.
I'm in love with Mary Jane, but I sell my body for cocaine.
My penis burns with a fiery pain, cuz I sell my body for cocaine.
My criminal record won't be the same, because I sell my body for cocaine.
Got the clap but who's to blame, when you sell your body for cocaine.
Don't get crabs and don't get AIDS, when you sell your body for cocaine.
Refuse to change, I sell my body for cocaine.
Refuse to change, I sell my body for cocaine.
I sell my body for cocaine. [Resonant text, Jamie (guitar), Paul (vocal), both 16]

Jamie and Paul shared that they wrote the song based on the realities of many people they met in Troikaville. Addiction and survival sex seemed to be an accepted way of life on the street (K. Kelly & Caputo, 2007).

For Jamie and Paul, who did not use the shelter system, gaining access to a private space for sexual intimacy was also complex. They identified parties and the homes of friends as places where they engaged in sex. Their connection to the punk community at Troikaville enabled them to find ‘refuge’ at the Lynsmoore House for a brief period of time.

**JAMIE:** I was at a place, it was called the Lynsmoore House, and it was like this crazy party that started about a year and a half ago, just north of the main stretch and Lynsmoore. It was just ridiculous. It was a house rented by just one main person, her name was Krystal, and she was the second person who lived in that house. This was a punk house, and inhabited not necessarily by the renters all the time, but crazy train-hopping punks. Man, some of those guys were fucked up, like mad fucked up. Like, those guys came in on PCP and fuck shit up, those guys are serious, but I knew a lot of them and I was chill with a lot of them, so it was cool. [...] If you don’t understand this house, it was like ridiculous, punks are just like, “Yo, fuck the government, fuck the police, pro me.” That’s just what they are like, “Yo, man, fuck you.” (Laughing).

While Jamie and Paul found some relief from the street at the Lynsmoore House, they were also immersed in a culture of drugs and alcohol that reinforced their own addictions. Like Marcus, Paul shared that he spent many hours intoxicated with drugs or alcohol.

**PAUL:** Okay so, like, honestly I wake up every day and the first thing I think of is like, “Where the fuck am I?”
JW: Oh.
PAUL: I always say, “Where am I?” And then I like notice where I am and than I am like, “What did I do last night?” Like sometimes I’ll be like, I actually just sleep normally. I won’t be drunk, I won’t be high or anything, I’ll just go to sleep and I will wake up and I’ll still forget. Still forget what I did last night or like.
JW: Is that because you don’t have a place-
PAUL: //No, because it gets into a habit, usually when you get drunk enough or get high enough and you fall asleep, you forget and eventually it gets you like that. You will still forget even if you're not drunk or high.

Paul’s regular drug and alcohol use also affected his sexual practices. During the group interview, Paul frequently alluded to men’s problem of ‘not being able to do it’ or impotence. During the individual interview, I asked him about his thoughts on sex and alcohol or drug use.

JW: So, what about using alcohol or drugs? Does that affect sex?
PAUL: YEAH. Like so fucking much, you have no idea.
JW: Like what? Can you say more?
PAUL: Oh yeah, I can, yeah. I was drunk like so many times, like I really liked this girl and I wanted to have sex with her, like just to party. Usually I see sex as, like two people like each other enough to have sex, and then, like that’s cool, right? So, that’s what I wanted to do. I wanted to have sex with this girl, right? And she wanted to have sex with me, but I got way too drunk, like I was so drunk, so fast. Like I want to get drunk, but I want to get drunk and I want to have sex with a girl. I don’t want to get really, really, really drunk and just pass out in my own puke, right? But I ended up getting way too drunk. I was so drunk that I passed out, in my own puke, and my pants off, (laughing) on the toilet.

Although Paul and the other young men claimed that they always used condoms with their casual partners, their ability to practice safer sex was likely compromised when they were intoxicated (Parkers, Wight, Henderson, & Hart, 2007).

9.3.5. Sex and Pleasure: Local Norms and Codes of (Hetero)sex

The narratives of the young men in this study show that their (hetero)erotic sexual practices are influenced by the dynamics in the local and global social fields. To make sense of the sexual practices among the young men across the different neighbourhoods, I return to the young men’s common utterance -- ‘it all depends on the girl’. One may ask: What was the ‘it’ that the young men were referring to? As discussed previously (in Sections 9.2.3. and 9.2.4), the status of a young women within a young men’s hierarchy of relationships determines whether she is included in his inner circle of friends, and how she is treated when she is brought to the circle. Furthermore, the types of sexual activities that the young men and women engage in, and the degree of mutual (or non-mutual) exchange of pleasure during sex also depend on the status of the women within this relationship hierarchy.
During our first interview, I invited Mihir to respond to the statement – “It’s really hard to know what women really want.” Unlike the young men at the Cassandra Drop-in Centre whose response focused on women’s desire to talk with them on the phone as a way of monitoring their actions, Mihir’s response focused on women’s desire for sexual pleasure.

**MIHIR:** Yeah, I mean as a general rule, we think that women prefer oral sex more then intercourse, and that if you really want to pleasure your girl you give her oral sex, or you do anything, and I think that works most of the time. I guess you just don’t know whether you’re doing a good job or not, and you can’t really know unless you’re in a relationship with that girl and she’s comfortable telling you. Yeah.

**JW:** So then, in a more casual type of relationship, what happens?

**MIHIR:** You don’t care much, really. Like, if you wanted to continue with the relationship, then yeah, you’d care, but if it was just like a one-night stand, then you don’t care much.

Mihir identified cunnilingus as a key way to pleasure women sexually. However, his narrative also suggests that cunnilingus is not merely an act of sexual interaction; it is a form of cultural capital to be negotiated and exchanged in the (hetero)erotic field. Whether Mihir and his male friends engaged in cunnilingus or in pleasuring their female sexual partners depended on the status of the women within their hierarchy of relationships. Thus, what constitutes ‘good’ or mutually satisfying sex is situational; the significance and symbolic meanings attached to every sexual act vary from one context to another.

Throughout the two individual interviews, Mihir often came across as masculinist and ‘uncaring’ towards women. However, amidst his utterances of ‘dry spell’, ‘wingman strategy’, and ‘alcohol lubricated hookups’, his narratives occasionally provided us with a different perspective about him.

**MIHIR:** Well I think for guys and probably for girls as well, the physical contact is important. I mean, you know, the end result is orgasm but you achieve orgasm in different ways, and masturbation being one of them, but I think obviously masturbation is lacking the human contact. I think it means everything from being able to touch someone, to smell someone, to see that person. Um, it’s like every sense, all of your sensations are aroused in that way. I think that’s what people want and then you know eventually the orgasm is even better because of that. And on top of all those physical things, there is the emotional contact. Whether you’re in a relationship or not, you always have that emotional connection to the girl. If you are in a relationship and if you do love that person, then it’s even stronger and I think that makes sex even better. Regardless, no matter how casual, I think as soon as you’ve broken down that physical barrier, you’re immediately into a different sort of zone where you are emotionally connected as well.

Although Mihir spoke of orgasms as the goal of doing (hetero)sex, there were also moments when he described sex as something more than a conquest, a quick orgasm, or an accumulation
of masculine capital; he also perceived sex as a form of human connection that breaks down the ‘you-me’ barrier. Wendy Hollway (1996) suggests that gendered socialization has created inner conflicts and tensions about intimacy in heterosexual men. She quotes a man who wrote in *Achilles Heel*, an anti-sexist men’s magazine:

> For men (heterosexual) sex works out as a trap because it’s the only place where men can really get tenderness and warmth. But they have no skills to evoke these things because there is nothing in the rest of our lives that trains us to do this. So we come into this where we want warmth and intimacy and we don't know how to get it. But it's the only place it exists so there's this tremendous tension for men, getting into bed with women. (Hollway, 1996, p. 93)

This man’s narrative points to the contradictory and competing demands of the masculine and (hetero)erotic fields at the local and global levels, and how these demands shape men’s (hetero)erotic practices. Amidst the pessimistic picture of gender relations and the related social suffering experienced (albeit differently) by both men and women, Mihir’s utterance of human connection through sex points to the possibility of opening up a space for dialogue where young men may question their own suffering and come to recognize that of others.

For other young men, the types of sexual practices they engaged in were governed by the local norms and street codes. During a discussion about condom use and safer sex, most of the young men at Macee Grove revealed that cunnilingus was not an acceptable form of sexual practice within their social circle.

**JW:** So, do you ALWAYS practice safer sex when you have casual sex?
**SHAWN:** Yeah for casual, yeah. (..) Mm, not safe ORAL sex, but safe sex.
**JW:** Oral sex meaning (..) they perform on you, or you perform on them?
**JOSHUA:** No-no-no, we don’t perform on them. (Laughter)
**JEREMIAH:** We don’t perform, ehhhh uh, it’s a street code. (Laughter)
**PATRICK:** //You do that, you’re not liked-
**Multiple Participants:** Yeah
**JEREMIAH:** You’re shunned.
**JW:** //What do you mean?
**JEREMIAH:** //Ok, see the girl, aw, let me explain. See the girl that (..) the people are running the train on? And say, out of those ten people, one of the guys (..) decided to go down on the girl. Then, that guy loses all- (..) all of his respect.
**JW:** //But how will people find out?
**PATRICK:** Oh, you just know.
**JOSHUA:** Oh, no, the girl. The girl-
**SHAWN:** //The girl will talk about it.
**MAWULI:** //The girl will talk. The girl will talk.

Unlike Mihir, or the young men from Troikaville, who embraced cunnilingus not only as one of the many ways of doing (hetero)sex but also a solution to the problem of impotence, most of the
young Black men at Macee Grove (except Shawn) asserted that penetrative sex and fellatio were the only acceptable sexual activities. Their narratives suggest that young men’s (hetero)erotic sexual practices are strongly influenced by the local homosocial codes and penetrative sexual norms. Under the system of peer surveillance, young men who transgress from these local norms often suffer a loss of masculine capital and respect among their peers. Furthermore, their sexual transgression also creates a space of vulnerability, in which their female sexual partners may gain power over them by revealing these sexual transgressions, as illustrated by the sex scandals among politicians in the US (Bauer, 2008).

However, not all young men adhered to all the local norms. Shawn who no longer lived at Macee Grove and who possessed a substantial volume of masculine and (hetero)erotic capital was able to reject some of these norms.

SHAWN: I don’t agree with you, guy. I think, I think, like, when you’re married and it’s your wifey, and so you wanna please her in every way, I don’t think it’s a problem.
JEREMIAH: Ok, that’s the future you’re talking about-
JOSHUA: //We’re talking about now
BRANDON: //Oh yeah! Talk about now-
SHAWN: //If I knew somebody who did that I wouldn’t be mad at them, I’d be okay, as long as they don’t mind it. (Others interrupting, Shawn raising his voice, wanting to be heard.) I’m a person, as long as you don’t mind- I don’t care. If you can come straight to me and say, “Yeah, I do it,” oh, more respect to you, ’cos there are a lot of people who do it and don’t, and can’t, and won’t tell you. (Interjection by others – inaudible.) So I’d rather somebody come to me and say, (mimicking a gruff voice) “YEAH, I DO IT, I DO IT GOOD.” You know, respect, I wouldn’t mind, I don’t care. I’ll chill with them the same way. No respect lost. (Laughter.)

Succumbing to his peers’ opposition, Shawn qualified his argument by saying that cunnilingus within a serious long-term relationship or marriage was acceptable. In so doing, sexual deviance associated with cunnilingus in his local field was neutralized or redeemed by the socially sanctioned heteronormative expectations of love and marriage (Gagnon & Simon, 2005). However, Shawn also challenged the other young men by pointing out that many young men practiced cunnilingus ‘underground’ and he had more respect for those who were open about their practices. He was able to express his opinion because he was a popular guy at Macee Grove. Since he possessed a substantial volume of masculine and social capital, he was able to disagree with his peers without compromising this masculine identity. He was in a position to challenge some of the dominant norms within the structural constraints of the field of
masculinity. However, a total liberation from masculine domination was not possible since Shawn had also embodied the collective masculine habitus.

9.3.6. The Politics of Writing About Sexual Transgressions

Writing about the sexual practices of the young men in this study, particularly about the ‘wingman strategy’ and the ‘locker-room-sex’, has posed an ethical dilemma for me. I have removed and reinserted these sections into the chapter many times because I recognized the politically ambiguous nature of these findings and the power embedded in writing about the ‘Other’. As noted in the introduction of this chapter, I am concerned about the appropriation of these materials by adults in power, particularly public health officials, to construct risk discourses to justify the social control of young people’s sexualities, reinforce stereotypes of young Black men in the ’hoods and justify the marginalization of all forms of sexual transgression.

My final decision to include this section is based on my acknowledgement that by keeping silent, I am inevitably implicated in keeping invisible some of the misogynist and hegemonic masculine practices among these young men across social classes and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, there is a possibility that these findings may stimulate critical dialogue to challenge the dominant assumptions that adults have about young people’s sexualities; the boundaries of the social order based on White middle-class heterosexual norms of monogamy and feminine sexual passivity; and the taken for granted gendered relations among young people.

The narratives of the young men show that sexual transgression is simultaneously an act of emancipation and/or oppression, as Hastings Donnan and Fiona Magowan (2009) point out,

Sex is a powerful mediator in transgressive context, since sexual encounters invoke uneasy tension between consent, demand, resistance and reciprocity, in which elements of domination, vulnerability, risk and safety all play a part. . . . transgressive nonconformity allows us to see through issues of power and control that are variously public and private, implicit and explicit, verbalized and embodied across a range of diverse social structures and cultural forms. Sexual transgression is an enticing and hazardous proposition for reorganising human agency, perception and action as its inherent sense of crossing limits, amplifying margins and repositioning power can extend and transform the boundaries of the social body, social order and the self. (p.3)
Sexual transgressions are expressed through power relations in multiple ways. For instance, while the ‘wingman’ strategy challenged the middle-class adult norm of monogamy, it did so in ways that dehumanized both the young men and the young women involved.

In the case of the locker-room-sex, the power relations were much more complex; there were multiple transgressors: the young men who transgressed against adult sexual mores but kept silent about sexual violence against women; the adult men who dominated over the young men and violated the woman’s sexual rights and freedom; the adult men who took part through talk instead of doing sex; and the women who transgressed against normative femininity and female sexuality. Within the interlocking system of domination based on class and gender, these locker-room-women occupied an ambiguous space of liberation and subordination, pleasure and pain, security and danger.

In writing about the locker-room-sex, I was also concerned that the sexual transgressions of the locker-room-women may reinforce the sexist and classist stereotypes about young women from low-income working-class neighbourhoods. When I spoke with a young feminist colleague about my concern, she said matter-of-factly, “I think we just don’t want to believe that some women do enjoy having lots of sex with lots of partners. We tend to think that only men do that.” My colleague helped me to recognize that our own silence on women’s sexual transgressions functions to reinforce the dominant discourses on women’s sexualities. In exploring further on this topic, I found out that heterosexual women’s transgressions against societal sexual norms and restrictions do exist. They are documented in popular self-help books such as *The Ethical Slut* (Easton & Liszt, 1997), *Open: Love, Sex and Life in An Open Marriage* (Block, 2008), and journal articles on the topics of swingers (D’Orlando, 2010; R. Rubin, 2001), open marriage (A. Rubin, 1982) and polyamory (Klesse, 2006; Noël, 2006; A. Ritchie & Barker, 2006; Sheff, 2005). However, the mainstreaming of certain alternative (hetero)erotic and (hetero)sexual ‘lifestyles’ does not guarantee that women of all classes, racial backgrounds and social positions enjoy the same rights or sexual freedom (Haritaworn, Lin, & Klesse, 2006). By virtue of their social class, the locker-room-women’s sexual transgression will not be granted the same degree of acceptance or respect enjoyed by their White middle-class heterosexual counterparts even though all sexual transgressors are pushed to the margin.
9.4. Discussion: Making Sense of Young People's Sexual Practices

According to Bourdieu (1990b), agents occupying theoretical positions in close proximity to each other in social space share similar objective conditions of existence in real life. These conditions structure their collective habitus that is expressed in similar dispositions, perceptions, tastes and practices. Bourdieu’s theory of practice is critical to the analysis of these young men’s homosocial and (hetero)erotic sexual practices because it makes visible the systems of domination in our society that produce symbolic violence based on age, gender, class, race, and other social divisions. Bourdieu’s theoretical lens enables us to challenge the reification of these young men’s homosocial and (hetero)erotic practices into essentialist stereotypes against them.

In this section, I draw on the results presented in this chapter to illustrate the myriad structural conditions (see Figure 9.1 below) that influenced the young men’s socialized subjectivities, collective masculine habitus, and sexual practices. These intersecting structural influences, including symbolic violence based on age, institutionalized patriarchy and heteronormativity, youth-targeted capitalism, and economic marginalization, are discussed below.
First, I argue that the young men’s homosocial and (hetero)erotic sexual practices were influenced by the symbolic violence imposed on young people based on the naturalized social division of ‘age’. The notion of adolescence constructs young people as ‘in-between’ subjects, who have not earned their full social citizenship like (most) adults have, but are also not granted the socially sanctioned status of dependence enjoyed by (most) children. The meanings and social expectations associated with the notion of ‘adolescence’ are shaped by the social and economic institutions in our society (Grubb, 1989). The reified category of adolescence puts young people in an ambiguous position whereby many of them strive to engage in practices that denote adulthood. For instance, most of the young men in this study considered sex as the way for them to achieve manhood. Some of them aspired to become fathers because fatherhood symbolized adult responsibilities. At the same time, the notion of adolescence also created a temporal space in which many of these young men ‘just’ wanted to, in Danny’s words, ‘ride the surfboard’. Many of them appeared to have embodied the dominant discourse of partying, drinking, and engaging in casual sex as their rites of passage to adulthood (Beccaria & Sande, 2003; Demant & Østergaard, 2007).

Second, the young men’s narratives suggested that their homosocial and (hetero)erotic sexual practices were shaped by the intersecting influences of patriarchy and institutionalized heteronormativity. The young men’s sense of vulnerability, as expressed in their fear of ‘becoming soft’ by their love for women, illustrated that their masculine identities were socially constructed and precarious. To sustain their masculine status, these young men engaged in incessant efforts to distinguish themselves from women (Flood, 2008; Lipman-Blumen, 1976). Many refrained from taking part in emotional labour (Reay, 2004a) and adhered to the cool pose of being ‘heartless’ and uncaring towards their casual sex partners, as illustrated by Shawn’s strategy of acting like an ‘asshole’ to discourage women from becoming emotionally attached to him.

Since the system of hegemonic masculinity (R. W. Connell, 2005) subordinates not only women but also men who may pose a threat to its survival (gay men, transgendered and transsexual men, racial minority men, and working-class men), most of the young men took up the masculinist dispositions. They engaged in misogynist and homophobic practices that objectified women (e.g., sugar-bowl, leftover) and converted them into sexual and symbolic
resources that they could draw on to strengthen their homosocial solidarity and to compete in the field of masculinity. The young men’s homophobia was demonstrated in their perceptions and practices: Zahid used physical violence to distinguish himself from ‘pussy’ guys; Kyle expressed disgust towards watching pornography with men; and David implied that having sex with a friend’s ex-girlfriend would constitute a homoerotic sexual connection.

Third, the young men’s practices of misogyny and masculine domination varied according to their individual and collective gender-class-race habituses. For instance, Mihir and his middle-class university male friends used the ‘wingman’ strategy to objectify women and consolidate their homosocial bond. Mihir’s description of their (hetero)erotic sexual practice projected a dehumanizing picture of predator-and-prey. His comment “I would be almost as happy as I get the girl” – came across as almost homoerotic. It seemed that Mihir and his friends were able to fulfill their homosocial desires through the bodies of the women they picked up during their ‘dry spell’ (Schwyzer, 2008; Sedgwick, 1985).

At Macee Gove, the young men constructed their masculinities and strengthened their homosocial bonds by taking part in the game of ‘locker-room-sex’. Their bodily and masculine capital enabled them to compete for dominant positions in this game. At the same time, being chosen by the locker-room-women could be converted into masculine and homosocial capital, but this conversion was not reciprocal. Although the locker-room-women held some erotic power over these young men temporarily, they were considered ‘whores’ and unworthy of the young men outside of the locker-room. The phenomenon of locker-room-sex illustrates that places are constructed through power relations; they are signified with symbolic meanings or reputations (Massey, 1993). It is in and through places that agents develop their perceptions, dispositions, aspirations, and tastes to (re)produce the local sexual cultures and practices (B. C. Kelly & Muñoz-Laboy, 2005).

Fourth, the narratives of the young men suggested that their homosocial and (hetero)erotic sexual practices were influenced by the overlapping structural forces in the cultural and economic fields. For instance, throughout the interviews, the young men talked about partying as if it was synonymous with drinking and having sex. Despite popular discourses that construct drinking as a rite of passage for young people (Beccaria & Sande, 2003), studies shows
that young people’s culture of drinking was shaped by the profit-making agenda of the alcohol and night entertainment industries (Griffin, et al., 2009). The alcohol industry attracts young consumers by turning its products into cultural goods inscribed with symbolic meaning (fun lifestyles, sexiness, hegemonic masculinity); it also uses mix-marketing strategies (cheap prices, fruit-flavoured drinks) and works with the night entertainment industry to promote alcohol sales to young people (Demers, 2002; McCreanor, et al., 2005). In promoting alcohol consumption as a social practice that enables its young male consumers to accumulate masculine and erotic capital, the alcohol industry has succeeded not only in making profits from young men but also in reproducing hegemonic masculinity.

In this study, drinking as a homosocial practice was entwined with the young men’s erotic and sexual practices. For instance, drinking enabled some of the young men to engage in transgressive sex, as illustrated by Colin’s first homoerotic sexual experience at a party. For others, drinking enhanced sexual permissiveness. According to Mihir and his friends, alcohol functioned as ‘beer goggles’ that enhanced their engagement in casual sex with women whom they otherwise would not be interested in. They also considered alcohol as a ‘social lubricant’ that enabled young women to say ‘yes’ to sex. In other words, for these young men, it was alcohol that made sex possible. These young men’s perception about alcohol and permissive sex was problematic because it reinforced the patriarchal demand for women to practice feminine passivity and demonstrate sexual ‘innocence’ (Demant, 2009). It also creates conditions that put young men at risk of engaging in unwanted or coercive sex (Flack, et al., 2007), and/or unprotected sex (Parkers, et al., 2007; Rothman, et al., 2008), as indicated by some of the young men in this study.

Furthermore, within a patriarchal society, the discourse of ‘being under the influence’ is often used to naturalize male sexual aggression and violence towards women (Peralta, Tuttle, & Steele, 2010), as reflected in Kyle’s recollection of his relationship with the ‘unattractive’ woman who took him home. It is also used to condone male-to-male violence. The narratives of Colin showed that the engagement in physical fights and violence was not limited to working class young men. For middle-class young men like Colin and his teammates, male-to-male violence was socially sanctioned and encouraged in the name of sports competition and team spirit. Team sports provided a legitimate space for these young men to use their body as
instruments of aggression and intimidation (Dobash & Dobash, 1998). As Colin suggested, this culture of violence leaked from the sports field into other places such as sports affiliated parties. Drinking, hooking up for sex, and picking fights with other young men became the normative hegemonic masculine practices at these parties, in which the women became their objects of competition. I argue that these young men’s disposition towards violence is influenced by the normalization of male violence towards children, women, and some men, as expressed in bullying at school, gay bashing, wars, police brutality, and domestic violence in our society (R. W. Connell, 2005; Miedzian, 1992).

Fifth, the narratives of the young men with no fixed address suggested that their sexual practices were shaped by their street habitus, the volume of economic and cultural capital they possessed, and their positions in the local (hetero)erotic field. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, most of these young men left their original 'hoods or landscapes of impossibilities to live on the street in Troikaville. Although they drank and used street drugs before moving to Troikaville, the street culture had reinforced their addictions (Kirst, Erickson, & Strike, 2009). Their alcohol and drug use played a significant role in shaping their sexual practices. While all of them articulated the importance of condom use for sex, most of them shared that sometimes they were too intoxicated to remember whether they had (un)protected sex or any sex at all.

Furthermore, living on the street or in shelter placed a restriction on where and with whom these young men could engage in sex. Kyle, who still possessed his middle-class dispositions and bodily hexis, tended to hook up with non-street-involved women; he had sex with these women either in their homes or in public washrooms. Marcus also engaged in sex with women in their homes but he admitted to doing it sometimes for money. David and Jamie, who were in stable (hetero)erotic relationships, had sex only with their girlfriends, whereas Paul tended to have hookup sex at parties. For these young men, their ability to practice protected sex depended on their level of intoxication and where they had sex. As Kyle indicated, sometimes he engaged in unprotected sex in the public washroom because he did not have a condom.

Last, in this study, most of the young men indicated that they had multiple sexual partners. Their sexual interactions with these partners depended on the category of relationship they placed these women in: casual partners, friends with benefits/fuck buddies, and
‘wifeys’/girlfriends. It appeared that these young men were more likely to treat their casual partners (as sexual objects or sexual prey) and their ‘wifeys’/girlfriends (as prizes or possessions). When they spoke about their female friends with benefits/fuck buddies, most of them (with the exception of Kyle) did not use any misogynous language or display any ‘hostile’ masculine gestures as they did towards their casual partners. This was likely because these women were their friends and friendships represented an important social capital to them. Furthermore, perhaps the relationship status of friends with benefits/fuck buddies did not pose any perceived demand for emotional labour (beyond friendship) or material responsibilities. Thus, this study suggests that the one area that young women may have gained some ground, in terms of sexual freedom from exploitation and violence, is in their friends with benefits/fuck buddies relationships. This suggestion is supported by the results of other studies which show that ‘friends with benefits’ relationships provide a safe space for women to enjoy and express their sexualities without the threat of violence (Asada & Morrison, 2005; Bay-Cheng, et al., 2009; Manning, et al., 2006)

9.6. Chapter Conclusion

The study results presented in this chapter suggested that the young men’s sexual practices were much more complex than the simplistic picture constructed by the dominant public health messages of ‘just say no to sex’ (Durham Region Public Health Department, 2007; Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit, 2007), or sex is ‘best when there's already love’ (Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, 2007), or ‘have a boyfriend or girlfriend, be totally in love and not go all the way’ (Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit, 2007). They show that the homosocial and (hetero)erotic sexual practices of these young men were intertwined. Furthermore, these practices were shaped by myriad structural conditions and the young men’s socialized subjectivities as they encountered their social worlds. Thus, effective sexual health promotion needs to consider the cultural, economic, and political contexts of young men’s sexual practices.
Chapter 10

Conclusion: Implications for Research, Policy and Practice

This thesis set out to explore the construction of masculine identities and the sexual practices of young men from Toronto’s disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Its primary purpose was to contribute to social research and address some of the knowledge gaps in the field of young men’s sexualities. It sought to explicate how young men make sense of their gendered worlds and practice their masculinities and sexualities in their everyday socio-spatial environment. A secondary purpose of this study is to generate knowledge that can be used to guide the development of inclusive sexual health programs that reduce sexual health disparities among marginalized young men.

In this chapter, I draw on the results of this study to present a number of theoretical, methodological, and programmatic implications for research and practice in the field of young men’s sexualities. First, I summarize the overall results of this study. Second, I present the contributions of this study in extending Bourdieu’s sociology of practice to facilitate a critical understanding of the effects of social domination on the young men’s homosocial and (hetero)erotic practices. Third, I discuss the methodological implications and limitations of this study with suggestions for future research on gender and young people’s sexualities. Fourth, I translate the study results into a proposed agenda for sexual health promotion practice in which we move away from the emphasis on ‘individual risky behaviours’ to consider the ‘risk conditions’ that contribute to sexual health disparities among young people, especially those experiencing social and economic marginalization. Last, I draw on Bourdieu’s constrained optimism to pose some questions on the ideas of resistance, possibilities, and social transformation.

10.1. Study Key Findings

The results of this study challenge the prevailing assumption that young people’s sexual behaviours are based on individual rational choices. They make visible the structural forces and individual subjectivities that influence the young men’s homosocial and (hetero)erotic practices. First, the young men’s narratives showed that their gender identities constituted a state of being-
doing-becoming. Guided by their gender-class-race habituses, the young men in this study engaged in an unceasing process of defining, affirming, declaring, and validating not only their sense of who they were (self-identity) and where they belonged (collective identity), but also the boundary that differentiates the ‘Self’ from the ‘Other’. This distinction, expressed in tastes, perceptions, dispositions, and aspirations naturalized the categories of social division and the hierarchy of domination/subordination, resulting in their acceptance of ‘that’s just how life is.’

Second, the results showed that there was a dialectical relationship between the young men’s gender-class-race habituses and their construction of masculinities. It was in and through places that these young men developed and embodied their masculine perceptions, dispositions, aspirations, and tastes. While all the young men engaged in hegemonic masculine practices to gain ‘respect’ from their peers, these practices varied across and within class and ethnoracial backgrounds. The young men with limited economic and cultural capital tended to engage in street fights, hustling, drinking, and drug use to gain street ‘respect’ and establish homosocial bonds. The middle-class young men were able to draw on their economic, cultural, and symbolic capital to take part in class domination (discourse of intellectual capability). While they also engaged in drinking and physical fights, they tended to participate in socially sanctioned and place-specific violence (sports affiliated rough play, physical fights at parties or pubs).

Third, the young men’s narratives showed that their homosocial and (hetero)erotic practices were intertwined. These practices were also shaped in and through places. The in-group masculine expectations (‘can’t be soft by her’, cunnilingus and loss of respect, possession of ex-girlfriends, ‘dry spell’) coupled with the broad hegemonic masculine discourses (male sexual prowess, Madonna/whore dichotomy) asserted significant influences on their interactions with both young women and other young men. It was through the women’s bodies that many of these young men consolidated their homosocial solidarity, as illustrated in the ‘wingman’ strategy at middle-class parties and pubs, and the locker-room-sex in one of the ‘hoods.

Last, hetero-guy-talk constituted an important everyday social interaction in which these young men actively engaged in the (re)production and/or resistance of hegemonic masculine discourses and practices. It was through these talks and peer surveillance that the young men embodied the local norms and codes of homosocial and (hetero)erotic sexual practices. The
possibility for these young men to resist these local and global norms and codes was associated with the volume of capital they possessed and their interests in competing for dominant positions in the homosocial and (hetero)erotic fields. For instance, although Shawn was from Macee Grove, his mother’s upward social mobility, his possession of a larger volume of economic, bodily, and symbolic capital than his peers enabled him to speak out (within limits) against some of the local sexual norms such as cunnilingus and cheating.

These results suggest that effective sexual health promotion must go beyond the focus on individual sexual behaviours to address the historical, cultural, economic, and political contexts that shape the collective sexual health practices of young men. Furthermore, it may be useful to explore ‘hetero-guy-talk’ as an important ‘third’ space in which young men are invited to interrogate and resist misogynist, masculinist, and homophobic practices and are supported to engage in humanizing sexual practices.

10.2. Theoretical Implications

I began this dissertation seeking a theoretical lens that would enable me to explore how the young men’s sexual practices were shaped by the interwoven effects of their subjective experiences and their conditions of existence structured by their social positions based on class, gender, race, and other divisions. I decided to draw on Bourdieu’s theory of practice because his concepts of habitus, capital, and field are useful for studying the dialectical relationship between human agency and social structure. These concepts also help to explain the logic of the young men’s sexual practices in the context of their physical and social environments, their social positions, and the power relations embedded in their everyday life. In this section, I present five significant theoretical implications derived from my application of Bourdieu’s theory in studying the construction of masculine identities and the sexual practices of young men.

First, this dissertation illustrates that Bourdieu’s theory of practice is an effective analytical framework for studying the sexual practices of young men within and across social classes and ethnoracial backgrounds. The notion of habitus as a ‘structured structure’ enabled me to make sense of how the young men’s childhood experiences shaped their subjectivities (e.g., head-held-high for the young Black men, boys don’t cry, self-reliance). Furthermore, Bourdieu’s work is useful in the theorizing of place and place-making. In his essay Site Effect, Bourdieu
(1999) highlights the intricate relationship between physical space and social space. He argues that an agent’s “localization” in physical space is determined by his position and the various forms of capital he possesses in social space; his “profits” of localization – access to health, educational, and cultural resources, and his accumulation of symbolic capital in the form or prestige – are also determined by the locale or place he occupies (p. 124). In using a place-based analysis of habitus, this study made visible the structural inequalities that shaped the young men’s masculine practices (e.g., why the low-income young Black men played basketball instead of hockey; how masculine competitions differed across social classes; why some young men from the ’hoods or the street got involved in hustling). This analytical strategy illustrates that Bourdieu’s theory can be used creatively to expose the (often denied) existence of social segregation based on class and race in Canadian society. For instance, despite their close physical proximity, the residents living inside Macee Grove and those living immediately outside the housing project seldom interacted with each other. Their children attended different schools and they used different community resources. Furthermore, within the field of sexuality, erotic dispositions and tastes also reinforce this segregation. Although Andreo tried to ‘perform’ the mainstream (hetero)erotic hookup strategies recommended by his Canadian born friends, his racialized body and his primary (pre-migration) habitus (bodily hexis) left him feeling out of place and disappointed at pubs and parties.

Second, this dissertation counters some of the critiques of Bourdieu’s work. Unlike the critics of Bourdieu’s work (Butler, 1999; R. Jenkins, 1992), I did not find habitus deterministic. In contrast, by constantly referring to Bourdieu’s formula of “[habitus] + [capital] = practice” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101), I was able to explicate how the social practices of the young men were shaped by their past, current, and ongoing socialization processes and how their habituses and social practices were open to revision within constraints. For instance, although Colin grew up in a heteronormative environment (home and school), his entry into university enabled him to play in new fields (middle-class punk, artists, new age), in which his bisexuality was converted into cultural capital and his interactions with new friends enabled him to embrace his own sexual identity. Likewise, in meeting his working-class girlfriend and being accepted by her family, Matthew was able to leave his ’hood life and hustling to start a new career path in auto-mechanics and take on the role of a young father.
In using Bourdieu’s notions of capital and field in tandem with habitus, I was able to analyze ‘neighbourhood’ as both an everyday place of interaction and a social space of struggles and competitions. The study results showed that the young men’s place-based realities were structured by the volumes of capital they held in different local and global fields; these fields were influenced by the meta-field that determined the exchange rate of all forms of capital in all fields (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). For instance, the cultural capital of heavy metal or punk rock music held by Paul and Jamie had a higher exchange value at Troikaville than in the ‘hoods where hip-hop music occupied a dominant position, and vice versa. However, within the global field of Canadian music, both punk rock and hip-hop occupy subordinated positions. Thus, Bourdieu’s theory offers promising possibilities in theorizing intersectionality, that is, how the intersecting effects of social domination based on class, gender, racial, and other social divisions shape identity construction and social practices in and through places.

Third, this dissertation shows that Bourdieu’s theory is useful in theorizing social marginalization and inequities. In drawing on Bourdieu’s brilliant notion of non-economic capital (cultural, social, symbolic) and McNay’s extension of the notions of differentiated fields and subfields (McNay, 1999a), I showed that young men of different class backgrounds accumulated different forms of capital to compete in their local homosocial and (hetero)erotic fields. My analytical application of capital and field made visible how structural effects of social inequities (e.g., poverty, racism, heteronormativity, hegemonic masculinity) geared some of the young men from the hoods to engage in turf-related fights, hustling, and sex for money. These findings challenged the dominant discourse that poor working class young men ‘choose’ to be thugs and are therefore ‘unworthy’ of society. They also showed that these young people’s masculine and sexual practices were shaped by the norms that were (re)produced not only by their peers but also by ‘adults’ who dominated most of the social fields (e.g., family, school, mass media, advance capitalist markets, organized sports, etc.).

Furthermore, the above findings suggest that Bourdieu’s theory offers promising potential in enriching the theoretical development on the social determinants of ‘health disparities’ in the field of health promotion. Current discussions on the social determinants of health tend to focus on the distribution of economic or material resources (e.g., income, housing, employment). Although these discussions name gender and social exclusion as health
determinants, they are often framed in terms of economic or psychological consequences such as poverty, unemployment, or stress (Canadian Nurses Association, 2005; WHO, 2003). Few discussions focus on how economic capital and non-economic capital interact to produce and reinforce social inequalities that contribute to health disparities. This dissertation applied Bourdieu’s theory to explicate how different social, cultural, and economic determinants interact to shape the young men’s homosocial and sexual practices in a way that may lead to health disparities. For instance, in resisting racism and bullying, Zahid joined the local street gangs to acquire masculine and economic capital; his involvement with the street economy put him at risk of physical violence and homicide. Thus, I contend that Bourdieu’s theory can be extended for use beyond research to theorize the social determinants of health and health disparities; it can also be used to guide the development of ‘inclusive’ programs and services (see recommendations in Section 10.4).

Fourth, this dissertation illustrates the dynamic and interactive influences of agency and structure on young people’s homosocial and (hetero)erotic sexual practices. The results of this study showed that the young men’s actions and interactions were not always pre-reflexive and driven by their dispositions (McNay, 2004). When they were called to perform in different fields and contexts, they engaged in practical reflections to derive the best strategies to meet the demand of these indeterminant situations (e.g., hetero-guy-talk in group interviews; Colin’s robot performance) even though their practices are in general guided by their sedimented socialized habitus (as illustrated in Figure 8.1). Furthermore, in using the notion of multi-layered habitus (Reay, 2004), this study made visible how agency and structure interact to produce both individual and collective practices within and across social groups. It showed that these young men’s (hetero)erotic practices were shaped by the norms in the local homosocial fields (sugar-coating, women as a possession, no cunnilingus) and the demands of the multiple fields at the global level (e.g., alcohol industry, organized sports, mass media, music industry).

Last, this dissertation drew on the work of a number of postcolonial and critical race scholars (Du Bois, hooks, Dei, Jackson II, Brown) to explicate how the young men’s masculine and sexual practices were shaped by the historical and current symbolic violence (re)produced through racialization and racism. For instance, I applied the notion of ‘double consciousness’ (Du Bois, 1904/2006) to make sense of Anthony’s contradictory struggle – while he recognized
the symbolic violence of White hegemonic masculine domination, he also evaluated his own Asian body through the lens of Whiteness. I also drew on the notion of modern day ‘double consciousness’ associated with hip-hop Black masculinity (T. J. Brown, 2006) to illuminate how the structural forces in the fields of economics and cultural production influenced the young Black men’s participation in misogyny and masculine domination. The integration of Critical Race Theory into my data analysis and writing strengthened my application of Bourdieu’s theory; it enabled me to examine how racism and racialization intersected with class domination to structure the collective and individual habituses of these young men and shape their masculine identity construction. At the same time, I argue that Bourdieu’s theory of practice offers a promising potential to address some of the tensions in Critical Race Theory (CRT), including the debates of essentialism versus anti-essentialism, social construction of race versus colourblind individualism, and racism versus intersectional oppressions.

In the 1960s, CRT succeeded in challenging scientific racialism and establishing race as a naturalized social construction based on domination. Furthermore, CRT has also advocated for an anti-subordination analysis that takes into account intersectionality. Its goal was to secure formal equal rights for racial minorities (Valdes, Culp, & Harris, 2002). However, since the 1970s, the successes of CRT have been appropriated to create a new form of racialism based on colourblind politics (Chang, 2002). Anti-essentialism has been co-opted by the political right and turned into a form of relativism that conceals social domination. The new form of racial politics allows the state to uphold the principle of racial equality but simultaneously oppose practical antiracist policies that address income and wealth redistribution (Omi & Winant, 1986). Furthermore, CRT also recognizes that racism and racialism are (re)produced through other social forces such as heteropatriarchy. The struggle against relativistic anti-essentialism and colourblind individualism underscores CRT’s need to reconceptualize “a well-grounded and capacious theory of subordination” that can be used to locate and combat domination (Valdes, et al., 2002, p. 3).

I argue that Bourdieu’s theory of practice and its extension by feminist scholars (e.g., McNay, Bottero, Skeggs, Reay, etc.) offer an analytical framework that can be used to address

50 Scientific racialism refers to the use of science to construct a racial logic of White supremacy based on physical appearance and traits such as intelligence and moral capacity (Chang, 2002).
the tensions presented above. In this dissertation, I drew on the notions of multi-layered habitus (Reay, 2004), differentiated fields (McNay, 1999) and situational intersubjectivity (Bottero, 2010) to show that the young men who shared similar conditions of existence performed both similar and different homosocial and (hetero)erotic practices. For instance, both Joseph and Zahid were racial minority immigrant youth; both of them were influenced by the working-class gender norms to be ‘material providers’ for their girlfriends, but they chose different ways to acquire their economic capital. Joseph attended high school, worked part-time as a mover, and aspired to go to university whereas Zahid engaged in gang fights and hustling. The use of the notions of collective and individual habituses enabled me to challenge essentialism without falling into the trap of relativistic individualism.

In summary, based on the results of this dissertation, I have presented five theoretical implications in applying Bourdieu’s theory to study the construction of masculinities and sexual practices of young men of diverse ethnoracial and class backgrounds. These implications contribute to the discussion of the possibilities of applying Bourdieu’s work to theorize intersectionality in research across many fields, including sociology, social work, nursing, public health sciences, and human geography. They may inform the application of Bourdieu’s theory in the development of inclusive sexual health promotion programs that address social domination, masculinities and sexual practices among young men of diverse social positions.

10.3. Methodological Implications

Methodologically, this study is informed by the work of Pierre Bourdieu and other critical theorists. It is also guided by a critical social science paradigm that draws on a critical realist philosophy; it acknowledges that the world exists independent of our knowledge about it, and our knowledge about the world is always mediated by language and discourse (Danermark, et al., 1997). Furthermore, it draws on critical ethnography (Thomas, 1993) and narrative analysis (Pamphilon, 1999; Riessman, 1993, 2008) which acknowledge that reality is co-created when agents interact with their social worlds. These ontological and epistemological assumptions prompted me to use a number of data collection strategies, including sit-down interviews, neighbourhood walks, and resonant texts, to explore masculine subjectivities and identity.
construction. In this section, I present the methodological implications of the combined use of these strategies for future research in the areas of gender and young people’s health.

In qualitative research, sit-down interviews are considered one of the most common methods of data collection. However, discussion on whether a study uses individual interviews, group interviews, or both tend to focus on logistic matters such as sample size, resources required to transcribe interviews, and ‘richness’ of data (Given, 2008). Recent research shows that group interviews offer more than just an accommodation of a larger sample size; they allow researchers to explore interactive dynamics that are not available in individual interviews (Allen, 2005a). In this study, I used a combination of group and individual interviews. I anticipated that the group interviews would allow me to observe firsthand how the young men interact with each other, and the follow-up individual interviews would allow for ‘private’ talks and help address the issue of ‘groupthink’ (Fontana & Frey, 2008).

As anticipated, I was able to observe how power was exercised differently in each focus group based on pre-existing relationships (e.g., young men from Macee Grove) or local demands (e.g., competition for street capital among the young men from Troikaville), and how the young men drew upon global and local discourses to (re)produce local norms and codes of practice. These findings show that the use of group interviews is an effective strategy for studying masculine performances and homosocial interactions (as illustrated in Chapter 8); the group interviews were hetero-guy-talk in situ. They also suggest that the group interview method is a promising tool that can be used to study interactions among participants within and across social divisions based on gender, class, race, age, and other categories. However, to use group interviews effectively, the researchers must keep meticulous notes on the non-verbal group dynamics and transcribe the interviews in ways that collate what was said by each specific participant to make visible the interactive dynamics, contradictions, and ambiguities throughout the interviews.

This study also demonstrates that the combined use of individual and group interviews allows the researchers to gain further insights about subjective experiences that may not be assessable in group interviews where participants compete to take dominant positions or perform their social identities differently. Individual interviews, as private talks, enabled the young men
in this study to share stories that they likely would not have shared in front of the other young men. Some of them elaborated on stories or provided different perspectives than those expressed in the group interviews (e.g., some young men expressed their wish for emotional support within homosocial friendships). They also allowed the young men the opportunity to make sense of their ‘not yet finalized’ interpretation of their own experience through telling different stories or retelling the same stories differently (Sullivan & McCarthy, 2004).

The combined use of individual and group interviews is useful in studying sensitive topics because it allows the participants to present their situational selfhoods. For instance, as discussed in Chapter 4, I found myself caught between a rock and a hard place as I tried to find writing strategies that allowed me to challenge the masculinist practices of these young men without perpetuating or reifying racist and classist stereotypes of them (Carmody, 2001; Luff, 1999). In reading the individual and group interview transcripts alongside and/or against one another, I was able to identify the multiple voices presented by the young men and developed a writing strategy that simultaneously presented both the humanizing and dehumanizing acts that the young men engaged in the context of their individual and collective habituses. In other words, I was able to apply a form of dialogism which emphasizes that an agent’s voice does not exist independent of other voices; each voice “resists and contests some voices, and embraces others” (A. Frank, 2005, p. 968), including his own situational voices.

In addition to the use of sit-down interviews, I also used the go-along method (Carpiano, 2009; Kusenbach, 2003) and resonant texts to collect data in this study. Since gender is not a set of fixed attributes but a situational performance, these unconventional methods enrich our understanding of the young men’s contextual realities. The go-along method allowed me to observe how the young men constructed their social identities in and through places. Since the nearby environmental features (e.g., schools, neighbouring houses, sketchy parks, drop-in centres, etc.) and interactions on the street (e.g., busking, snorting in alleyways) were the focal points of the storytelling and discussions, I was able to gain access to stories that were not likely to be talked about during sit-down interviews. I was also able to adopt a place-based analytical approach to make sense of the young men’s narratives and interactions in the context of the power relations that produce places. Furthermore, unlike sit-down interviews, walking around the streets and neighbourhoods with the young men created a ‘temporary’ reversal of the
participant-researcher relationship, in which the young men were the ‘experts’ who decided on where we went, what the points of interest were, and what we would talk about.

However, despite the advantages offered by the go-along method, we also need to be reflective in using this method. Although going around the neighbourhoods with these young men enabled me to gain a different perspective about their lived experience in the context of their spatial environments, my access to their realities remained partial. What I was disposed to see and how I saw their social worlds were shaped by my personal and professional habitus. Furthermore, what the young men chose to show me or where they took me depended on our interactive dynamics; they do not represent the ‘absolute’ truth about the young men and their social worlds. They were acts of co-construction that required the same level of rigorous analysis and interpretation as the sit-down interviews.

Similarly, the use of resonant texts disrupts the conventional data collection method in which the participants’ narratives are limited by the questions posed by the researcher. It opens up a space for self-expression beyond the sole use of written or spoken language (Butler-Kisber, 2002). In this study, a number of young men chose the option of providing a resonant text in the form of songs, poems, drawings, and written reflections. My invitation for the young men to bring a resonant text to their second individual interview provided them with an opportunity to actively reflect on their participation in the study, their own characterization through storytelling, and the voices of others. The resonant texts became one of the multiple ways these young men constructed and performed their social identities.

In summary, this dissertation shows that the creative use of multiple data collection methods and an integration of place-based analytical approaches (Pamphilon, 1999; Riessman, 2008) are useful in studying the young men’s masculine identities and sexual practices. These methods enabled me to move between two levels of contextual analysis: (1) from the ‘bottom up’, whereby the young men’s social interactions and discursive practices (e.g., hetero-guy-talk) provided the context for understanding their everyday realities; and (2) from the ‘top down’, whereby cultural meaning and institutionally based discourses provided the context for making sense of these young men’s everyday interactions and discursive practices (Holstein & Gubrium,
2007). The critical consideration lies in using methods that are consistent with the assumptions of the theoretical paradigm.

10.4. Study Limitations

As described above, this study has made a number of theoretical and methodological contributions in the area of research about young people’s sexual health. However, it also has a number of limitations. First, I recognize that in choosing Bourdieu’s theory of practice as the key theoretical framework, I have limited my analytical lens to a structuralist-constructivist approach, which yields a particular kind of reading about the social worlds and limits my understanding of the young men’s experiences in other ways (e.g., a phenomenological reading). I have addressed this challenge by making visible the Bourdieusian and other theoretical assumptions throughout this dissertation so that the readers may choose their own theoretical lens to dialogue with the multiple voices embedded in the texts and to come to their own conclusion about the realities of the young men’s life (Eakin & Mykhalovskiy, 2003).

Second, this study uses a qualitative methodology that limits the number of study participants and the generalizability of the results. It aims to acquire an in-depth understanding of the twenty-four young men’s experiences and practices instead of a broad understanding of a large group of young men offered by other methodologies (e.g., surveys; extensive number of focus groups). In other words, this study focuses on the nature rather than the distribution of the social phenomena of interests. Thus, the study results are to be understood in the context of the participants’ lived experiences; they are not intended to be statistically generalizable (Eakin, Clarke, & MacEachen, 2002).

Giampietro Gobo (2004) argues for a new concept of theoretical generalizability for qualitative research:

In qualitative research, generalizability concerns general structures rather than single social practices, which are only an example of this structure. The ethnographer does not generalize one case or event that, as Max Weber pointed out, cannot recur but its main structure aspects that can be noticed in other cases or events of the same kind of class. (p.423)

Gobo asserts that in qualitative research, theoretical generalizability is derived from the regularities of a social phenomenon, as demonstrated in the work of Erving Goffman on social
embarrassment and William Foote Whyte on social organization and group leadership. Thus, while the study results on the young men’s homosocial and (hetero)erotic practices constitute what I call context-based transferrable knowledge and cannot be generalized, theoretical insights generated from the application of Bourdieu’s work is generalizable for use in future research.

Third, although this study intended to be inclusive of gay young men, it recruited twenty-three self-identified heterosexual young men and one self-identified bisexual young man. This suggests that the recruitment strategies I used were not effective in reaching young gay men. It also reflects the social reality of deep-rooted homophobia in Canadian society; young gay men at Macee Grove and Troikaville plausibly did not feel safe to take part in this study with other heterosexual young men. They also plausibly did not feel safe to take part in individual interviews either because I was a stranger to them. My previous experience working in public health showed that recruitment of LGBTTTIQ young people to take part in research or community programs was most effective when it was carried out in partnership with organizations that had developed trusting relationships with the LGBTTTIQ populations.

Fourth, while this study contributes to addressing the gaps in sexual health research on young men, this contribution is limited by its exploratory scope. The study’s sole focus on young men is both its strength and its limitation. It has generated the much-needed knowledge on the young men’s entwined homosocial, (hetero)erotic, and sexual practices based on their narratives and their in situ hetero-guy-talk. However, the active voices of young women and an in-depth understanding of heterosocial dynamics among young people are missing from this study. This learning has provided ideas for future research, which I discuss in Subsection 10.6.

10.5. Critical Resistance and Possibilities for Social Transformation

In writing this thesis, I constantly moved back and forth between feeling pessimistic and optimistic about the possibilities for social transformation that reduces social inequities and human suffering. There are many critical questions: Is it possible to engage young men in resisting hegemonic masculine domination? What does emancipation from social domination look like? What would promote humanizing practices and discourage dehumanizing ones among young men? Where does agency fit in?
For Bourdieu, resistance is a form of situated freedom. Like Foucault (1978) who asserts that “where there is power, there is resistance” (p. 95), Bourdieu argues that by virtue of belonging to a field, the dominated are in the position of exerting a certain force to produce effects in the field (Hoy, 2004). However, these effects are often minimal because the dominated tend to submit to the doxa of symbolic violence. Furthermore, the acts of resistance by the dominated are often ineffective because their revolt “stops short at the limits of the immediate universe and, failing to go beyond insubordination, bravado in the face of authority or insults, it targets persons rather than structures” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 232). Citing the work of Paul Willis on the ‘counter-school culture’ of the working-class young men, Bourdieu argues that “active resistance by students can, and often does, objectively collude with the reproduction of class and gender hierarchies” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 80). In other words, as illustrated in this study, when the young men from the ‘hoods or from the street rejected the dominant school culture and dropped out, they were unable to accumulate the cultural (high school diploma) and social capital (references from teachers) needed to compete in the field of employment. Their acts of resistance had inevitably reinforced their social and economic marginalization.

Following Bourdieu, McNay (2008) argues against a simplistic conceptualization of domination and resistance as oppositional forces. She emphasizes that agency does not equate to resistance; but rather it is freedom in constraints or regulated liberties. She argues that with “an intensified consumerism and changes in methods of social control, what appears to be a non-conformist or resistant act at one level might, at another level, be its opposite” (p. 19). McNay’s concern about agency and resistance was illustrated by the young men’s sexual practices in this study. While most of these young men rejected the middle-class norm of monogamy and engaged in sex with multiple partners, they did not accept young women having the same sexual freedom. Their (hetero)erotic practices were often misogynous, as illustrated in their perpetuation of the Madonna/whore discourse and their sexual interactions with their casual partners. As David Couzens Hoy (2004) points out, resistance does not always equate to emancipation; it can also be “domination’s resistance to emancipatory efforts” (p. 2). He proposed the use of the term ‘critical resistance’ to denote emancipatory resistance.

Despite his realist pessimism, Bourdieu (2000) does not reject critical resistance. He asserts that even though the dominated tend to display submission, they also possess the
dispositions to resist. When agents’ expectations and chances do not match, a *margin of freedom* for political action toward change will emerge. This rupture between the structure of a field and its corresponding habitus usually takes place in times of crisis or when agents take on a ‘new gaze’ of the world (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), which can be enhanced by consciousness-raising.

> In the ideological struggle among the groups (age groups, the sexes, etc.) or the social classes for the power to define reality, symbolic violence, a misrecognized and thus recognized violence, is held in check by the awakening of awareness of arbitrariness (consciousness-raising’), which deprives the dominant of part of their symbolic strength by sweeping away misrecognition. (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 303)

However, Bourdieu rejects a naïve conceptualization of consciousness-raising. In *Masculine Domination*, he emphasizes that although “recognition of domination always presupposes an act of knowledge,” it is an intellectualist fallacy to expect “the liberation of women to come through the immediate effect of the ‘raising of consciousness’, forgetting . . . the opacity and inertia that stem from the embedding of social structures in bodies” (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 40).

Bourdieu (2000) argues that social transformation is possible only when consciousness-raising is accompanied by political action that changes the structural conditions and the experiences of the agents. He calls upon social scientists to take up a reflexive practice in sociology to expose the misrecognized social domination embedded in symbolic violence.

> The symbolic work needed in order to break out of the silent self-evidence of doxa and to state and denounce the arbitrariness that it conceals presupposes instruments of expression and criticism which, like the other forms of capital, are unequally distributed. As a consequence, there is every reason to think that it would not be possible without the intervention of professional practitioners of the work of making explicit, who, in certain historical conjunctures, may make themselves the spokespersons of the dominated on the base of partial solidarities and *de facto* alliances springing from the homology between a dominated position in this or that field of cultural production and the position of the dominated in the social space. A solidarity of this kind, which is not without ambiguity, can bring about . . . the *transfer of cultural capital* which enables the dominated to achieve a collective mobilization and subversive action against the established order . . . (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 188)

For Bourdieu, social scientists and professional practitioners are in the position to generate social critique, trigger the dominated agents’ dispositions to resist, and facilitate the formation of alliances for political actions (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).
Following Bourdieu, I contend that critical resistance is possible within constraints. In the context of this dissertation, ‘guy-talk’ constitutes a potential ‘third’ space where reflexive practitioners may work with older young men (aged 20-24) to engage young men (aged 14-19) in critical dialogue to make visible the misrecognized symbolic violence (patriarchy, class domination, homophobia) that shape their social practices. Furthermore, although this study did not include young women, based on my experience in working with young people and the reactions of some participants in this study, I propose that cross-gender dialogue and consciousness-raising may also disrupt the young men’s masculine habitus at both the cognitive and emotive level. However, as Bourdieu emphasizes, critical dialogue or consciousness-raising must be accompanied by collective political action that changes the structural forces in the fields inhabited by these young men. Thus, political advocacy efforts to change the field conditions of existence – increased access to inclusive education and meaningful youth employment, and reduced cultural violence associated with racism and classism – are critical, especially for socially and economically marginalized young men.

10.6. Recommendations For Policy-Research-Practice

Drawing on the findings of the literature review and the results of this study, I make a number of recommendations for future policy-research-practice. For the purpose of this dissertation, I chose to address policy, research, and practice together as three intertwining fields because the literature review for this study shows that knowledge production through research is shaped by the pattern of resource distribution in the policy arena. Similarly, knowledge generated through research is converted into symbolic and cultural capital of ‘legitimate truths’ and ‘expertise,’ which are taken up to reinforce and justify the existing patterns of resource distribution for research and programs/services.

As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, current public health policies, research, and programs are dominated by discourses that construct young people as at-risk due to ignorance or poor decision-making. The results of this study challenge these dominant discourses and the prevailing assumption that young people’s sexual behaviours are based on individual rational choices. They make visible the power relations that structure the young men’s gender-class-race habituses which in turn shape their homosocial and (hetero)sexual practices. Thus, effective
sexual health promotion policy-research-practice must go beyond the focus on individual sexual behaviours to address the historical, cultural, economic, and political contexts that shape the collective sexual health practices of young men. In other words, we must focus on the ‘risk conditions’ or the ‘social determinants of health disparities’ instead of individual behavioural risks.

Drawing on the key findings of this study, I make a number of policy-research-program recommendations.

**Key finding #1:** The young men’s (hetero)erotic and sexual practices are outcomes of their gender habituses. Since gender identity is a state of being-doing-becoming that requires an unceasing process of defining, affirming, declaring and validating, gender habituses are durable but not fixed.

**Recommendations:**

1. Future public health policies on children and young people’s health consider gender relations as a key action area.
2. Future research about children and young people’s sexual health include critical sociological studies that focus on how children and young people from different class and ethnoracial backgrounds construct and perform their gender identities in their socio-spatial environments (e.g., home, school, neighbourhoods, fraternities, social clubs, sports, etc.) and how these processes shape their sexual health practices.
3. Results from these studies are integrated into the development of socially inclusive health education curricula that challenge patriarchy, masculine domination, heteronormativity, homophobia, transphobia, racism, classism, and other oppressions, and to be used in the classrooms (Kindergarten to Grade 12), in community health promotion programs (for children, youth, and parents) and workshops for service providers, researchers, and policy-makers in the sexual health field.

**Key finding #2:** The young men’s (hetero)erotic and sexual practices are intricately intertwined with their homosocial practices, whereby the intra-group masculine expectations coupled with the broad hegemonic masculine discourses assert significant influences on their interactions with both young women and other young men.
Recommendations:

1. Future public policies on sexual health consider gender relations as a key determinant of sexual health disparities and address the structural influences on gender relations.

2. Public policy-makers collaborate with researchers, and frontline service providers across different health sectors (e.g., sexual health, mental health, physical health) to consider the effects of corporate advertising (e.g., youth targeted alcohol advertising) on the health practices and health outcomes of young people.

3. Future research about young people’s sexual health include critical sociological studies on how social institutions (e.g., family, education, religion, legal and penal systems, mass media, advanced capitalist market, etc.) influence the homosocial and heterosocial practices among children and young people from different class and ethnoracial backgrounds.

4. Results from these studies are integrated into the development and implementation of place-based health promotion programs that make visible the local and global norms that produce and reinforce a system of social domination and inequities that dehumanize both the oppressors and the oppressed.

Key finding #3: While all young men adopt hegemonic masculine practices to gain ‘respect’ from their peers, young men with limited economic and cultural capital tend to engage in the street economy to establish their masculine identities. These practices put them at increased risk of experiencing violence and homicide, and compromise their physical and mental health.

Recommendations:

1. Public health policy-makers collaborate with social policy-makers in the fields of education, employment, and law enforcement to act on the social determinants of health disparities by establishing and measuring inclusive practices in the education system, increasing access to equitable employment for young people; improving access to affordable housing for low-income families; and ensuring a non-racist and non-classist law enforcement and penal system.

2. Future research about young people’s health critically interrogate the effects of social domination and inequities on the health and well-being of marginalized young people, and critically evaluate social policies and initiatives that act on the social determinants of health disparities.
3. Research results are integrated into health promotion strategies and initiatives that increase access to education and employment by young people, especially those who are economically and socially marginalized.

4. Research results are used to organize community forums that promote dialogue among children, young people, adults, and other stakeholders in the community to: identify the strengths, challenges, and possibilities in strengthening their community; formulate action oriented solutions that challenge social domination; and collaborate with other marginalized communities to advocate for distributive justice.

**Key finding #4:** Hetero-guy-talk constitutes an important everyday social interaction in which young men actively engage in the (re)production and/or resistance of hegemonic masculine discourses and practices.

**Recommendations:**

1. Policy-makers collaborate with young people, service providers/practitioners, and researchers to develop program/service directions and resource allocations that support community place-based and socially inclusive sexual health promotion initiatives.

2. Future research about young people’s health include critical sociological studies that explore: (a) how heterosexual and LGBTTTIQ young people interact in homosocial and heterosocial situations to (re)produce and/or resist dominant hegemonic discourses on gender and sexualities; (b) how LGBTTTIQ young people negotiate their gender and sexual identities in their everyday social worlds; (c) the influences of older young men (21-24) and older young women (21-24) on the gendered and sexual practices of younger young people (16-20).

3. Future research about young people’s gendered and sexual practices include the use of innovative methodologies that facilitate a critical understanding of how socialized subjectivities and structural demands shape their erotic and sexual practices; for example, the combined use of narrative interviews, street phenomenology or go-along methods, resonant texts, photo-voice, and other art-based methods.

4. Future research about young people’s sexual health include the use of a community participatory action approach that engage young people in dialogue to interrogate the tyranny of social domination (patriarchy, heteronormativity, racism, classism, etc) allowing them to collectively develop strategies for emancipation.
5. Research results are integrated into the development of health promotion strategies and initiatives that (a) engage young people and support them to acquire (in Paulo Freire’s term) critical readings of their social worlds; (b) explore ‘guy-talk’ as an important ‘third’ space in which young men are invited to interrogate and resist misogynist, masculinist, and homophobic practices and supported to engage in humanizing sexual practices.

10.7. Concluding Reflections

In this dissertation, I have shown that these young men’s homosocial and (hetero)erotic practices were intertwined. These practices were shaped by myriad structural dynamics in multiple overlapping and highly differentiated social fields. They were also shaped by their biographical and intersubjective experiences as they encountered their social worlds. In seeking to make visible the young men’s sexual practices, I was faced with the same difficult questions posed by Blake Poland and Dave Holmes (2009):

[D]o ostensibly ‘progressive’ social scientists facilitate the extension of the clinical gaze, colonizing new frontiers of social practice? Does this potentially push transgression to ever more exorbitant extremes? There are no easy answers to these paradoxical ethical dilemmas of social health research at the margins. But shifting the spotlight slightly from the exotic marginalia to the regulatory practices of governmentality puts the emphasis where we believe it belongs, drawing attention to how we all collude, to lesser or greater degrees, consciously or otherwise, in complex power relations and interpersonal and institutional mechanisms of social exclusion. (p. 34)

In response to these questions, I draw on Andrew Sayer’s notion of ‘human flourishing’ to propose a different way of relating to young people – not through domination but embracement and recognition. Extending Bourdieu’s theory of practice and Adam Smith’s ideas about moral sentiments, Sayer (2005) argues that mutual recognition is critical in our identity construction.

Recognition can be given only by another subject, and it cannot be achieved simply through unilateral demands. Although it may be implied and inferred in mere looks and mannerisms, it is more fully affirmed dialogically and hermeneutically. To develop a sense of self we need others. Even though we may objectify ourselves through labour by producing objects, objects are not capable of reflecting back to us our conception of ourselves as subjects, having some degree of freedom and responsibility. Only other persons, also subjects and having some degree of freedom and responsibility, can do this. While producing things (including providing services) and hence changing the social world around us can indeed help to create a sense of self-worth, this too depends on others who (a) recognize us as subjects capable of self-determination, and (b) are capable of judging and confirming the worth of our labour. One-sided recognition cannot succeed. (p. 56)
Mutual recognition is achieved at both the local and societal level. At the local level, mutual recognition gives people a sense of belonging and the social capital that enable them to flourish (as described by the young men at Macee Grove). At the societal level, recognition is implicated in the distribution of economic, cultural, and symbolic resources (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990b). Since mutual recognition is critical in our identity construction, agents who engage in the process of ‘Othering’ to establish their social identities in effect compromise their humanness and are unable to realize their full identities (Freire, 2000/1970).

Although meanings associated with human flourishing and suffering are culturally mediated, our experience of human flourishing and suffering is very real to us. We experience them through our bodily senses, our emotions, our thoughts, our reflections, our yearnings, and so on. Thus, we need to guard against dogmatic anti-essentialism and extreme relativism that reduce human agents to either ‘everything’ or ‘nothing’ (Sayer, 2005). For Sayer, human flourishing involves being able to apply our capacities fully to engage in diverse activities, which give rise to desirable pleasures, a sense of purpose, and a sense of fulfillment. “As social beings,” Sayer (2005) argues, “the extent to which particular individuals flourish or suffer depends on their relationship to others, on social structures and embedded distribution of power which enable, constrain, and provide interpretations of, their lives” (p. 222).

I contend that if we (adults) are truly concerned about the health and wellbeing of young people, we need to transform how society relates to young people. We need to recognize young people as full social citizens and embrace them as fully human. It is through our recognition of their humanness, their autonomy, their desire to engage in activities that tap into their creativity and potential that they will embrace themselves and others as fully human. This is not to say that young people are exactly the same as people of other ages, or that young people must do exactly what people of other ages do. Rather, I argue that these differences do not justify adult domination. It is the same argument and principles that feminists (and civil rights advocates) have stood upon for decades – men and women are not exactly the same, but the differences do not justify patriarchy, masculine domination, homophobia, racism, and other types of oppression. Furthermore, what seems critical is for us (adults) to put Spinoza’s precept into practice: “Do not deplore, do not laugh, do not hate – understand” (Bourdieu, 1999b, p. 1).
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Appendix 1: Information for Service Providers / Stakeholder

University of Toronto
Department of Public Health Sciences
University of Toronto
155 College Street
6\textsuperscript{th} floor, Toronto
ON M5T 3M7

July 22, 2007

Dear ______________,

I am a doctoral student in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Toronto. My supervisor is Dr. Blake Poland. I am conducting a study called, ‘Guys: Have your say.’ to learn more about the sexual practices and sexual health needs of young men in Toronto.

Right now, there are very few studies on young men’s sexuality and sexual health. This study will recruit:

- 18-24 young men who are aged 16-19
- live in the [name of neighbourhood] area
- had made out or had sex in the last 12 months

Taking part in this study is totally voluntary. The identities of the youth in this study will be strictly protected (please see attached samples of consent form). I will invite each youth to take part in a focus group, a one-on-one interview and a follow-up interview. The study will provide each youth a small honorarium to compensate for his time. We will use what we learn to help develop sexual health programs for diverse youth.

You can support this study by posting the recruitment flyers and making the handbills available to young men who come to your organization. If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at (416) 696-8597, or email me at guys.haveURsay@gmail.com. You can also call my supervisor, Dr. Blake Poland at (416) 978-7542.

I have enclosed a summary of the study, some recruitment flyers and handbills for the ‘Guys: Have your say.’ study. I really appreciate your support for this study. Thank you.

Yours truly,

Josephine P. Wong, Registered Nurse
Doctoral Fellow, CIHR-Institute of Gender & Health, and
Health Care, Technology & Place Training Program
Appendix 2: A Sample of Recruitment Flyer

“Guys don’t talk about love or desire.”
“Guys only talk to their female buddies about love, sex & dating.”
“Guys actually really want to talk about it…"

Guys.
Have your say!
(A study to explore young men’s sexual health needs, being conducted by Josephine Wong, a doctoral student in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Toronto)

If you are a guy:

- between the ages of 16-19
- had made out / had sex in the last 12 months
- live in Macee Grove area
- interested in joining a group or one-on-one interview

Give us a call at: (416) 696-8597, or Email: guys.haveURsay@gmail.com

- Small honorarium for your time
- TTC fares
- Pizza Meal

Taking part in this study is voluntary & confidential. You will get a small honorarium for your time and TTC fares.
Appendix 3: Pre-discussion Survey (5 pages in total)

Pre-discussion Survey

Code # ______________________

Age: _________  Place of birth: ________________________________

Ethnic background(s): __________________ Faith/religion: __________________

Sexual orientation: __________________

Language(s) I speak at home: ________________________________

Language(s) I speak with friends: ________________________________

Length of time living in Canada: ________________________________

Length of time living in Toronto: ________________________________

The main intersection near my home is ________________________________; or

My postal code is: __________________

Length of time living in this neighbourhood: ________________________

The neighbourhood I spend most time hanging out:

Please check the items that most closely apply to you, and fill in the blanks.

1. I am currently:

   attending high school ( )   attending college/university ( )
   working part-time ( )   working full-time ( )
   unemployed ( )   looking for work ( )
   looking for summer job ( )
   other ( ) __________________

2. I live with (check all that apply):

   grandfather ( )   grandmother ( )
   father(s) ( )   mother(s) ( )
   brother(s) ( )   sister(s) ( )
   partner ( )   guardian(s) ( )
   other ( ) __________________

3. I am a father.

   No ( )   Yes ( )   If yes, # of children ________
4. I live in:
   a house (owned) ( )
   a house (rental) ( )
   an apartment (owned) ( )
   an apartment (rental) ( )
   Other: ______________________________________

5. The highest levels of education achieved by my parent(s) or guardian(s):
   • ______________________________
   • ______________________________

6. The occupations / jobs of the adults in my family:
   • ______________________________
   • ______________________________
   • ______________________________

7. The job I aim to get in 5 years: ________________________________________________.

8. The first time I made out was at age: _____ and where: ____________________________.

9. The first time I had sex was at age: ______ and where: ____________________________.

10. The first time I fell in love was at age: ________________________________.

11. I have had sex with:
   male partner(s) ( )   female partner(s) ( )   both ( )

12. In the past 12 months, the number of sexual partners I have had:
   1 ( )   2-4 ( )   5 or more ( )

13. I have engaged in sex because (check all that apply):
   I was curious ( )   My partner(s) wanted to have sex ( )
   Sex feels good ( )   Other guys are doing it ( )
   I was in love ( )   I was forced to have sex ( )
   Other ( )____________________________________________________
   Other ( )____________________________________________________
   Other ( )____________________________________________________

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14. Right now, the number of **steady** sexual partner(s) I have is ____________________.

15. Right now, the number of **casual** sexual partner(s) I have is ____________________.

16. My sexual partner(s) lives:
   - in my neighbourhood ( )
   - in other Toronto neighbourhoods ( )
   - outside of Toronto ( )
   - other ( ): __________________________

17. I suspected that I had a sexually transmitted infection in the past.
   - Yes ( )
   - No ( )
   - I don’t know ( )

18. I was told by a doctor or a health worker that I had a sexually transmitted infection in the past.
   - Yes ( )
   - No ( )
   - I don’t know ( )

19. I learned about sex and sexual health from (e.g. who, where, what):
   - ___________________________________________________________________
   - ___________________________________________________________________
   - ___________________________________________________________________
   - ___________________________________________________________________

20. I spend most of my spare time doing (activities):
   - ___________________________________________________________________
   - ___________________________________________________________________
   - ___________________________________________________________________
   - ___________________________________________________________________

21. The places I spend most of my time hanging out:
   - ___________________________________________________________________
   - ___________________________________________________________________
   - ___________________________________________________________________
   - ___________________________________________________________________
22. Heros & Interests:
   • My hero(s):
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My heroine(s):
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My favorite singers:
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My favorite music videos:
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My favorite movies:
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My favorite books:
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My favorite magazines:
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My favorite TV shows:
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My favorite movie stars:
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My favorite sports:
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My favorite sport stars:
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My favorite radio programs:
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My favorite artists:
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My favorite clothes stores:
     ____________________________________________________________
   • My favorite websites:
     ____________________________________________________________
• My favorite restaurants:

_________________________________________________________

• Others:

_________________________________________________________

23. My key sources of sexual health information come from (please pick the top 3 sources):

friends ( )  pamphlets ( )  posters ( )
partner ( )  Internet ( )  nurses / counselor ( )
family ( )  books ( )  school ( )
doctors ( )  radio ( )  subway / bus Ad ( )
parents ( )  newspaper ( )  radio Ad ( )
TV shows ( )  TV Ad ( )  magazine ( )
Porn ( )  Other ( )__________________________

24. I wish I can get more sexual health information from: ______________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

25. How I found out about this study: ________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix 4 - Confidentiality Agreement: Research Assistant

I, ________________________________, agree to assist Josephine Wong at the group interviews of the research study – ‘Guys: Have Your Say.’ – An exploration of masculinities and sexual practices of young men in Toronto. I understand that all information revealed at the group interviews (or during the interview transcription) must be kept strictly confidential to protect the participants and to maintain the ethical integrity of this study.

I, hereby agree to keep all information and data related to the above study confidential. I will not discuss the identity of any of the participants and any information disclosed in the group interviews with anyone except the principal researcher, Josephine Wong and her thesis advisory committee members (Dr. Fusco, Dr. McDonough & Dr. Poland).

______________________________  __________________________
Name of Research Assistant          Signature

______________________________  __________________________
Name of Witness                  Signature

__________________________________
Date
Appendix 5: Group Interview Guide

[Note: The Context of using this guide: This group discussion guide was developed as a tool to guide data collection on specific topics that were considered relevant to this study. In an actual interview situation, the content of the narratives and discussions were influenced significantly by the interactive dynamics among the researcher and the participants.]

Introduction: Welcome participants; explain study, obtain consent & establish guiding principles; Ask participants to fill out the pre-discussion questionnaire

1. Warm-up: Provide participants with a letter size paper and ask them to write down three words or phrases that come into their mind when they hear the word “sexuality”.

2. Have UR say!

Post a number of statements and posters up and invite participants to react to them. Examples of statements and images are:

- Not all guys are interested in sex
- Guys want love
- Guys should know everything about sex
- Guys always cheat
- Using condom is…

3. Group Discussion: Where do guys learn about sexuality?

- how is sex or sexuality talked about at home, at school/work, at parties and in the neighbourhood;
- what is the most important thing each participant has learned about sex or sexuality
- who/what is the most influential source of sex education in their lives;
- what do participants really want to know about sex and sexuality; etc.

4. Friendship & Relationship

Provide participants with a copy of the scenario. Read the scenario out and lead a group discussion.

Scenario: Pat and Chris are good friends with Stephen. They hang out with a couple of other friends almost every week. Pat and Chris have been going out for the last 6 months. Stephen had a crush on Pat since Grade 9. Last week, Stephen heard that Pat and Chris are breaking up. Yesterday, he ran into Pat in the subway and the two of them went out for coffee somewhere. Stephen noticed that Pat was showing interests in him.

Discussion questions:

- What do you think is happening?
- What do you think Stephen should do? Why?
- What may be some consequences of his choice?
- What do guys look for in a dating relationship? How about you?
- How do you decide whom you want to go out with? How do you go about getting a date?
- How do you decide when to have sex? How do you negotiate about having sex with a partner?
- How do you negotiate what to do in a sexual relationship?

5. Wrap-up & invitation participants to take part on individual interviews
Appendix 6 - Individual Interview Guide

[Note: The Context of using this guide: This interview guide was developed as a tool to guide data collection on specific topics that were considered relevant to this study. In an actual interview situation, the content of the narratives and discussions were influenced significantly by the interactive dynamics between the researcher and the participant, and the stories that the participants wanted to tell.]

Introduction

• Thank participant for coming. If participants have taken part in the group interviews, review info on the study again and obtain consent for individual interview.
• If participants have not taken part in the group interviews, explain the study, obtain consent & ask participants to fill out the pre-discussion questionnaire.

Interview questions:

1) General questions on background:
• Please tell me a bit about yourself (probe – family, sibling, extended family, length of time living in the current neighbourhood, etc.)

2) Questions on formal and informal sex education:
• Did your family ever talk with you about sex or sexuality when you were growing up? What was talked about? Were the messages helpful?
• What do you remember about sex education at school? What was helpful about what you learned at school? What do you wish you could have learned more about?
• Where or how do you learn about sex or sexuality now? Who do you talk with about sex or sexuality now?

3) Questions on gender socialization & construction:
• What was it like growing up as a guy? What do you remember most?
• Who did you hang out with? What did you do for fun?
• How about now? Who do you hang out with? What do you do for fun? (Probes: different transition stages – primary school, middle school and high school, or dropping out of school; different interactions with and expectations of same-sex vs. opposite-sex friends)
• How does sex fit in? (Probes: different types of relationships; negotiation processes and personal meanings; how does safer sex or emotional safety fit in?).

4) Questions on sexual attraction and ‘romantic’ relationship
• Have you ever developed a crush on someone? What do you remember?
• What do you look for in an ideal romantic or sexual relationship?
• What were your experiences like in these relationships? (Probe: what was positive and satisfying? What was challenging and negative?)
• What were your sexual experiences like? (Probe: who initiate, negotiation processes, contexts of sexual interactions, what was positive and satisfying? What was challenging and negative? How were conflicts and tension resolved? Where do young people have sex? Where does safer sex fit in?)

5) “Cheating” and “affairs” seem to be a hot topic among young people, what are your thoughts on that? Any personal experiences related to ‘cheating’ and “affairs”?

6) How about breaking-up? What were your experiences like?

7) Invite participants to provide additional comments and ask questions. At the end of interview, invite participants to return for follow-up interview and book a time.
Appendix 7 - Follow-up Interview Options

Option A: Instructions -- Bring your creative work!
Thank you for taking part in the “Guys: Have you say.” study. Your stories and ideas are very important to this study. It would be great if you can return for a follow-up interview in one to two weeks. During this follow-up interview, I will share with you my thoughts of what you have told me and we can discuss what you agree or disagree, and your additional thoughts and comments.

If you agree to return, I would like you to bring with you a creative piece of work that represent your ideas about “Young men & sexuality”. Your creative piece can be a song, a picture, a photo, a collage, a painting/drawing, a sculpture, any kind of art work or expression.

Option B: Instructions – Follow-up & a neighbourhood walk
Thank you for taking part in the “Guys: Have you say.” study. Your stories and ideas are very important to this study. It would be great if you can return for a follow-up interview in one to two weeks. During this follow-up interview, I will share with you my thoughts of what you have told me and we can discuss what you agree or disagree, and your additional thoughts and comments.

If you agree to return, I would like you to take me on a 30-minute neighbourhood walk about. During this walk, you can share with me stories about being a guy and living in this neighbourhood. You can point out to me interesting landscapes and we can take picture of them.
Appendix 8 - Consent Form: Young Men’s Group interview

Name of study: ‘Guys: Have your say.’ – A study to explore masculinities and the sexual practices of young men in Toronto.

My name is Josephine Wong. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Toronto. My supervisor is Dr. Blake Poland. I am conducting a study to learn more about the sexual practices and sexual health needs of young men in Toronto.

Taking part in this study: Taking part in this study is totally voluntary. You do not have to join in this study if you do not want to. You must be a young man of ages 16 to 19 and living in Toronto. Before you agree to take part in this study, it is very important for you to understand the information on this page. If there is anything that is not clear to you, I am here to answer your questions.

The study: We want to learn more about the sexual practices and sexual health needs of young men in Toronto. Right now, there are very few studies on young men’s sexuality and sexual health. We want to hear your ideas about sex and sexuality, your experience growing up as a guy, and how you interact with others at home, at school and among friends. If you agree to take part in the group interview, I will ask you to fill out a short list of questions about yourself. Then you will join a few other young men in a group interview. The talking and sharing will take about 2.0 hours. At the end of the group interview, you can decide if you want to take part in a one-on-one interview or not.

Risks: We do not expect this study to cause you or others any known harm. However, you may experience some unexpected emotions during the talking and sharing. If you feel upset during the group interview, we will provide you with support. We will also give you information on support services in the community.

Benefits: You may not benefit directly from this study. However, you may find it helpful to share your stories and talk to other young men with similar experiences. We will use what we learn from this study to help develop sexual health programs that better suit the needs of young men like you.

Confidentiality: We will keep what you share in this group interview confidential, except in situations where we are required by law to release the information (e.g. if we hear information that a child has been or is being abused; if we hear that you may harm yourself, that is, there is reason to believe that you are at risk to commit suicide; or if we hear that someone has threatened your life or someone else’s life, etc.). Since this group interview involves a number of people, confidentiality is kept only when all of us agree to keep everything that is shared in this room confidential and not share any information with anyone outside of this group interview. To protect everyone’s privacy, we will ask everyone to sign an agreement to confidentiality.

We will strictly protect your identity in this study. You do not have to provide any information that will identify you. You may also choose to use a name that you make up instead of using your real name. We will make notes and record the discussion on tape. This is only to make sure that we do not miss any of your valuable ideas and opinions. When we turn the tape recording into writing, we will remove all the information that identifies you. We will store all the tapes, notes and paper research data in a locked cabinet. We will protect the data in the computer by passwords. The study reports will never show your name or any information that identifies you. In addition to myself, only my research committee members (Dr. Fusco, Dr. McDonough & Dr. Poland) will listen to the audio-tapes and read the data of this study. This is so that they can
provide me with advice, guidance and supervision. I will destroy all audio-tapes and the written notes related to this study five years after I complete this study.

**Your Rights:** Your taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study. You do not have to answer any question that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. You can also withdraw from the study at any time and up to two weeks after the group interview before your individual ideas have been turned into collective themes.

If you have any questions about this study, you can call Josephine Wong (416) 696-8597, or you can call my supervisor, Dr. Blake Poland at (416) 978-7542.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Jill Parsons, Health Sciences Ethics Review Officer, Ethics Review Office, University of Toronto, at telephone 416-946-5806 or by email: jc.parsons@utoronto.ca.”

If you are interested in getting a summary report of this study, you can call Josephine Wong at (416) 696-8597 or email me at guys.haveURsay@gmail.com. The summary report will also be posted on www.guys-have-UR-say.com.

**Honorarium:** To compensate for your valuable time, this study will provide you with an honorarium of $25 and 2 TTC fares. You do not have to finish the interview to receive this honorarium.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have read this consent form. I am satisfied with the answers to all my questions about this study. I agree to take part in this study. I agree to be tape-recorded. I fully understand my rights as a person taking part in this study. I have a copy of this consent form for my own record.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(participant’s signature)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto, Ontario</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I confirm that I have read this consent form out loud to the participant named above and I have answered all his questions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(signature of person obtaining consent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto, Ontario</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Confidentiality Agreement:**

I agree that I will not tell anyone about any of the information that I hear in the group interview today, unless the speaker has told me personally that it is okay to do so.

| (participant’s signature) | (date) |
| Toronto, Ontario |
Appendix 9 - Consent Form: Young Men’s Individual Interview

**Name of study: ‘Guys: Have your say.’** – A study to explore masculinities and the sexual practices of young men in Toronto.

My name is Josephine Wong. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Toronto. My supervisor is Dr. Blake Poland. I am conducting a study to learn more about the sexual practices and sexual health needs of young men in Toronto.

**Participation:** Taking part in this study is totally voluntary. You do not have to join in this study if you do not want to. You must be a young man of ages 16 to 19 and living in Toronto. Before you agree to take part in this study, it is very important for you to understand the information on this page. If there is anything that is not clear to you, I am here to answer your questions.

**The study:** We want to learn more about the sexual practices and sexual health needs of young men in Toronto. Right now, there are very few studies on young men’s sexuality and sexual health. We want to hear your ideas about sex and sexuality, your experience growing up as a guy, and how you interact with others at home, at school and among friends. If you agree to take part in this interview and you have not taken part in the group interview, I will ask you to fill out a short list of question about yourself. Then we will talk for about 1.0 to 1.5 hours. At the end of this interview, you can decide if you want to take part in a one-on-one follow-up interview or not.

**Risks:** We do not expect this study to cause you or others any known harm. However, you may experience some unexpected emotions during the talking and sharing. If you feel upset during this interview, I will provide you with support. I will also give you information on support services in the community.

**Benefits:** You may not benefit directly from this study. However, you may find it helpful to share your stories and talk about your experiences. We will use what we learn from this study to help develop sexual health programs that better suits the needs of young men like you.

**Confidentiality:** I will keep what you share in this interview confidential, except in situations where I am required by law to release the information (e.g. if we hear information that a child has been or is being abused; if we hear that you may harm yourself, that is, there is reason to believe that you are at risk to commit suicide; or if we hear that someone has threatened your life or someone else’s life, etc.). I will strictly protect your identity in this study. You do not have to provide any information that will identify you. You may also choose to use a name that you make up instead of using your real name. I will make notes and record the interview on tape. This is only to make sure that I do not miss any of your valuable ideas and opinions. When I turn the tape recording into writing, I will remove all the information that identifies you. I will store all the tapes, notes and paper research data in a locked cabinet. I will use passwords to protect the data in the computer. The study reports will never show your name or any information that identifies you. In addition to myself, only my research committee members (Dr. Fusco, Dr. McDonough & Dr. Poland) will listen to the audio-tapes and read the data of this study. This is so that they can
provide me with advice, guidance and supervision. I will destroy all audio-tapes and the
written notes related to this study five years after I complete this study.

**Your Rights:** Your taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to
choose not to take part in this study. You do not have to answer any question that makes
you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. You can also withdraw from the study at any time and up
to two weeks after the interview before your individual ideas have been turned into
collective themes.

If you have any questions about this study, you can call me at (416) 696-8597, or you can
call my supervisor, Dr. Blake Poland at (416) 978-7542.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Jill
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**Honorarium:** To compensate for your valuable time, this study will provide you with an
honorarium of $20 and 2 TTC fares. You do not have to finish the interview to receive this
honorarium.

( ) I have read this consent form. I am satisfied with the answers to all my questions
about this study. I agree to take part in this study. I fully understand my rights as a
person taking part in this study. I have a copy of this consent form for my own
record.

( ) I agree to be audio-taped.

______________________________, _______________________, Toronto, Ontario
(participant’s signature) (date)

I confirm that I have read this consent form out loud to the participant named above and
I have answered all his questions.

______________________________, _______________________, Toronto, Ontario
(signature of person obtaining consent) (date)
Appendix 10 - Consent Form: Young Men's Follow-up Individual Interview

Name of study: ‘Guys: Have your say.’ – An exploration of masculinities and the sexual practices of young men in Toronto

Thank you for returning to take part in the follow-up interview of the ‘Guys: Have Your Say’ study. Again, my name is Josephine Wong. My supervisor is Dr. Blake Poland in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Toronto.

Participation: To take part in this study, you must be a young man of age 16 to 19 and living in Toronto. Your taking part in this individual follow-up interview and this study is totally voluntary. You do not have to take part in this follow-up interview if you do not want to. Before agreeing to take part in this follow-up interview, it is very important for you to understand this page. If there is anything that is unclear to you, I am here to answer your questions.

The Study: The goal of this study is to learn more about the sexual practices and sexual health needs of young men. Right now, there are very few studies on young men’s sexuality and sexual health. We want to hear your ideas about sex and sexuality, your experience growing up as a guy, and how you interact with others at home, at school and among friends. In this follow-up interview, you have the option of: (a) bringing with you a piece of creative work, or (b) to take me on a 30-minute neighbourhood tour. In both option, I will ask you to share with me any new thoughts or additional ideas on ‘being a guy’ and on sexuality since the last interview. I will also share with you how I understand your stories from the last interview so that you can comment on my thoughts and understanding. This follow-up interview will take about 1.0 to 1.5 hours.

Risks: We do not expected this study to cause you or others any known harm. However, you may experience some unexpected emotion during the talking and sharing. If you feel upset or distressed during this interview, I will provide you with support. I will also give you information on support services in the community.

Benefits: You may not benefit directly from this study. However, you may find it helpful to share your stories and talk about your experiences. What we learn from this study will be used to help develop sexual health programs that better suit the needs of young men like you.

Confidentiality: I will keep what you share in this interview confidential, except in situations where I am required by law to release the information (e.g. if we hear information that a child has been or is being abused; if we hear that you may harm yourself, that is, there is reason to believe that you are at risk to commit suicide; or if we hear that someone has threatened your life or someone else’s life, etc.). I will strictly protect your identity. I will make notes and record this interview on tape. This is only to make sure that I do not miss any of your valuable ideas and opinions. When I turn the tape recording into writing, I will remove all the information that identifies you. All the tapes, notes and paper research data will be stored in a locked cabinet. I will use passwords to protect the data in the computer. The study reports will never show your name or any information that identifies you. In addition to myself, only my research committee members (Dr. Fusco, Dr.
McDonough & Dr. Poland) will listen to the audio-tapes and read the data of this study in order to provide me with advice, guidance and supervision. All audio-tapes and the written notes related to this study will be destroyed five years after this study is completed.

**Your Rights:** Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study. You do not have to answer any question that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. You can also withdraw from the study at any time and up to two weeks after this follow-up interview before your individual ideas have been turned into collective themes.

If you have any questions about this study, you can call me at (416) 696-8597, or you can call my supervisor, Dr. Blake Poland at (416) 978-7542

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**Honorarium:** To compensate for your valuable time, this study will provide you with an honorarium of $20 and 2 TTC fares. You do not have to complete the interview to receive this honorarium.

( ) I have read this consent form. I am satisfied with the answers to all my questions about this study. I agree to take part in this study. I fully understand my rights as a person taking part in this study. I have a copy of this consent form for my own record.

( ) I have chosen to bring my creative work for this follow-up interview

( ) I have chosen to take a neighbourhood tour for this follow-up interview

( ) I agree to be audio-taped.

________________________, __________________________, Toronto, Ontario

(participant’s signature) (date)

I confirm that I have read this consent form out loud to the participant named above and I have answered all his questions.

________________________, __________________________, Toronto, Ontario

(signature of person obtaining consent) (date)
# Appendix 11 – Bucket Nodes and Sub-nodes

## 1. Growing up experiences
- Family
- School
  - Bullying
  - Suspension
- Neighbourhoods
- Friendship
- Fun
- Challenges

## 2. Being a guy
- Meanings
- Perceptions
- Messages
  - Family
  - School
  - Friends
  - Neighbourhoods
  - Media
- Advantages
- Disadvantages

## 3. Sexual practices
- First sexual experience
- Relationship categories
  - Hookup / casual
  - Friends with Benefits / Fuck Buddies
  - Girlfriends
  - Wifey / Main Squeeze
- Relationship interactions
  - Local games
  - / strategies
  - Gender conflicts
  - Vulnerabilities
- Safer sex practices
  - Condom use
  - Birth control
  - Testing
- Hookup Places
  - Parties
  - Pubs
  - Locker room
  - Parking lots
  - Other

## 4. Capital
- Economic
- Cultural
  - Street
  - Bodily
  - Homosocial
  - Erotic
  - Other
- Social
- Symbolic

## 5. Homosocial practices
- Have each others back
- Competition
- Domination
- Loyalty / solidarity
- Peer surveillance
- Guy talk

## 6. Doing Masculinities
- Physical fights
- Sports
- Choir
- Sex
- Punk
- Jamming
- Other

## 7. Everyday Places
- Living on the street
  - Shelter
  - Sketch parks
  - Alleyways
  - Main streets
  - Drop-in centres
- Living in the ‘hood
  - Community centre
  - Local gangs
- Living off-campus

## 8. Other health practices
- Alcohol use
- Drug use
Appendix 12 – A sample of a concept map used in data analysis and interpretation
## Appendix 13 – Notation Table for Transcription

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Symbols &amp; conventions</strong></th>
<th><strong>Examples</strong></th>
<th><strong>Descriptions</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- followed by // in the next line</td>
<td>J: even though you didn’t- Z: //Yeah, they blame me.</td>
<td>The use of a hyphen indicates a speech is interrupted mid-sentence. The use of //indicates overlapping speech</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| (. ) (. ) (…) (pause) (long pause) | Z: I don’t really know (…) I did not ask. | Dots within parenthesis indicate short pauses. 
(…) = less than half a second; 
(…) = half to one second; 
(…) = one and a half second; 
(pause) = two to three seconds; 
(long pause) = four or more seconds |
| Capitalized words | Z: I FIGHT them. I fight so hard that they stopped. | Capitalized words indicate the speaker’s emphasis on certain words or expressions. |
| Quotations | Z: I ignored them at first, but this guy said to me, “I know where you live.” So, I decide to give him the money. | Quotation marks indicate that the speaker is parodying someone else or expressing an inner dialogue within her/his head. |
| - | No-o-o-o-body | Hyphens embedded in a word are used to indicate sounds that are held. |
| [[added info]] | Z: I went to Prince Arthur [[secondary school]] | Texts embedded in double square brackets indicate author’s descriptions or added information that are not transcriptions. |
| [[…]] | Z: I told him many time. […] At the end, he did listen and it was okay. | Dots embedded in double square brackets indicate texts or repetitive information taken out of the quote. |
| X’s | Z: I was going to take up xxxx xxxx in the spring. | The use of x’s indicates words that cannot be deciphered at all. |
| [word?] | Z: He was born with [Gilbert’s?] diseases | Words in single square brackets and accompanied by question marks indicate words that are not clear and transcribed based on the best guesses. |
| [Um hmm] [Yeah.] | Z: … it made me feel weird. [Um hmm] But I went ahead… | Square brackets with utterance such as [Um hmm] indicate acknowledgement responses |
| (Laughing) vs. (laughter) | Z: He tripped over the big dog (laughing) (laughing) indicates the speaker was laughing, (laughter) indicates many participants laughing together | |

Adapted from Poland (2003) and Silverman (2006)