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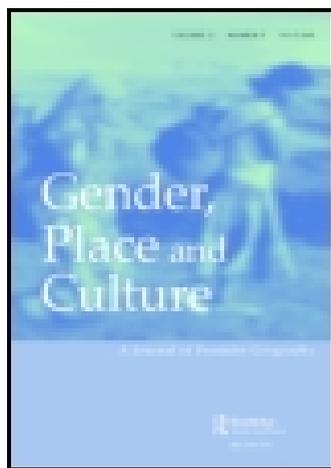
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Embodied intergenerationality: family position, place and masculinity

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Embodied intergenerationality: family position, place and masculinity

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The aim of this article is to further understandings of performances of family position, place and masculinity in what I call ‘embodied intergenerationality’. I build on research with 38 men across three generations within 19 families of Irish descent to discuss masculinity, intergenerationality and place. These men are living, or have recently lived, in the region known as Tyneside, in the North East of England. Secondary to this contribution is an acknowledgement of the significance of changing positionalities as research insider and participant observer by addressing both intersectional and intergenerational identities involved in geographic research. The article therefore responds to recent work in the discipline which has called for more critical attention towards experiences in the field, with its central contribution – embodied intergenerationality – advancing knowledge of masculinities and place for those who analyse masculinities within the research encounter. This work explores the performances and relationalities of masculinities amongst men of Irish descent on Tyneside as well as between the participants and the researcher. In working with men of different ages both within and between families, I draw conclusions on masculinity, intergenerationality and place: the roles of researcher and participant can become embodied as ‘son’ and ‘father’ in the research encounter and where the research takes place matters.

Keywords: embodied; intergenerationality; men; masculinities; Irish; Tyneside

Introduction: masculinities and place

Jackson (1991, 1994) talked of masculine pluralities and the shifting spatial structures of gendered geographies, and two decades on, like the collections of Gorman-Murray and Hopkins (2014) and van Hoven and Horschelmann (2005), this research reveals different ways in which men perform and construct gender roles. Gender is socially and spatially (re)created and (re)organised in different ways by different generations. Like Tarrant (2013), in adopting an intergenerational approach to researching men’s lives, it contributes to critical geographies of gender by focusing on the myriad of everyday practices and performances of masculinities over generations of men – in my case, from families of Irish descent on Tyneside. Scholars in social geography study people’s relationships with the places in which they inhabit, and following feminist approaches I use the scale of the body to shed light on performances of family position, place and masculinity in what I term ‘embodied intergenerationality’ in the research encounter. In short, I ask what it means to be a man of Irish descent on post-industrial Tyneside.

As a man researching men and masculinities, the usual power relations are ever-present (Hopkins 2010; Horton 2001): my position as researcher (and my intellectual motivations/agendas); my experience (social capital, academic attainment, aspirations);

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but also my physical presence (how I look, how I sound). In addition to my ‘positionality’, recent work from Punch (2012) and Moser (2008) calls for greater consideration of ‘personality’; and in response I note Vanderbeck’s (2005, 398) insight that ‘there is, however, no unitary maleness, and different men fit differently into different situations and places’. Vanderbeck (2005) rightfully points out that what type of man we are, or at least what type of man our participants perceive us to be, matters greatly. All of these factors contribute to my presentation of self, to the ‘performance’ of my masculinity (Butler 1990; Nayak and Kehily 2006). This led me to the realisation that the participant interactions of my research needed to be conveyed by more than the written word; they needed to reflect the embodied identities of the men I was working with.

I build on research with 38 men across three generations within 19 families of Irish descent to discuss masculinity, intergenerationality and place. These men are living, or have recently lived, in the region known as Tyneside,¹ in the North East of England. In 2009 there was a move towards a third phase of masculinity studies, building from a first more ‘sociological’ approach (Connell’s [1995] ‘hegemony’ and later ‘local hegemony’; see Hopkins 2007; Nayak 2006), and a second ‘cultural approach’ ‘which focuses on questions of subjectivity’ (Hopkins and Noble 2009, 813) towards a recognition that masculinities could be seen as ‘strategic’ and ‘understood as performances which are undertaken in particular contexts, drawing on specific resources and capacities’ (Hopkins and Noble 2009, 814). The particular context of Tyneside Irish masculinities and the specific resources/capacities of me as researcher and of my male participants are addressed within this article. As Connell’s (1995) seminal work states, masculinities are formed relationally with and against femininities, but also with and against other masculinities. I think relationally within all my work, in particular towards intergenerational relations (see also Richardson 2014).

Recently, within the UK, the Shadow Health Minister Diane Abbott has claimed a British ‘masculinity crisis’ (*BBC News* 2013) and, despite coming a decade after McDowell (2003, 226) stated that notions of crises in masculinity were ‘exaggerated’, these ideas persist in political discourse. Abbott continues that ‘like the film *Fight Club* – the first rule of being a modern man in Britain is that you’re not allowed to talk about it’ (*BBC News* 2013). My participants and I chose to ignore this rule. Nevertheless, drawing from my experiences, I found many men do not voluntarily engage in conversations around feelings regularly. Deep-seated emotions are rarely put into words, and when they are, the speaker would be accused of being ‘in touch with their feminine side’. By recalling this, albeit anecdotal, evidence, I am confirming that being a man researching men presents challenges. Being a woman researching men with an obviously different gender equation has its own challenges; but they would be different to mine (for more on this, see Allen 2008; McDowell 2001; Meth and McClymont 2009; Tarrant 2013).

Furthermore, in my research design I felt that focussing on the scale of the body – during the interactions themselves, as a form of feedback and dissemination, and for all the academic analysis in between – would best support the development of the biographical oral histories. Not only does this respond to a ‘blind spot in the study of masculinities’ (Hopkins and Noble 2009, 816) or ‘corporeality’ (Tamborino 2002; Witz 2000), but also as Longhurst, Ho, and Johnston (2008, 213) state:

In discussing our own bodies as researchers and our participants’ bodies, we can begin to establish relationships. We situate ourselves not as autonomous, rational academics, but as people who sometimes experience irrational emotions including during the course of the research. Emotions matter. This enables geographers to begin to talk from an embodied place, rather than from a place on high.

Like Longhurst, Ho, and Johnston (2008), I do not think an interview (and subsequently transcribed document) could alone adequately reflect each participant's persona; and Dunn (2010, 123) states 'transcripts that are not exact textual replications of an interview will lose the ethnographic moment of the interview itself'. Challenging this is an ethical issue where verbatim transcripts can cause, for example, upset or embarrassment to a participant with regard to seeing grammatical errors or misspelled words (Dunn 2010). In fact, Daniel (fourth generation Irishman, born on Tyneside in the 1940s), who is quoted later, raised this very point with me when reviewing an earlier draft of this article. On speaking with Daniel, though, we agreed that to put my words into his text or to adopt a proof reading role as a researcher would impact upon the interaction, adversely affecting our recollections of the interview.

The 'positionality' (England 1994; Gaskin and Hall 2002; Hankins and Yarbrough 2009; Sidaway 2000; Soderstrom 2011) of the researcher has long been debated within geography. According to Grenier (2007, 716, who cites Holstein and Gubrium [1995]), the interview should be considered 'an active site where researchers and participants perform their stories, negotiate their identities' and where they construct 'meaning through interaction and interpersonal processes'.

Due to the 'interpersonal processes' of this research – or the shifting nature of my researcher positionalities/personalities – the next section of this article presents a piece of self-reflexive writing. Whilst aware of the critique of self-reflexive writing as 'self indulgent' (Kobayashi 2003; Mansson McGinty, Sziarto, and Seymour-Jorn 2012), its purpose is to clearly outline the perceived privilege that my position enables as a young heterosexual man of Irish descent. Following this, I reflect upon the implications of being this type of man researching men, on interpretations of empirical findings, before concluding on aspects of embodied intergenerationality.

'Richardson men hug'

On a dark September evening in 2007, on completion of my fortnightly pilgrimage to St. James' Park (the home of Newcastle United Football Club), looking up through the 'Dragon Arch' of Stowell Street (the entrance to the city's 'Chinatown'), I read the words 'Tyneside Irish Centre'. It was the contradictory image of the Irish Centre framed (as if deliberately) by the Arch that was to be the stimulus for my research. This should not have come as a particular surprise as I had been visiting the Centre for many years as part of a pre-/post-match ritual. But until this moment, I had never questioned why I went there and what, if anything, it might signify. I was an undergraduate at the time, studying Geography at Newcastle University.

At the project's outset, it would be fair to assume I should have been more reasonably knowledgeable about the involvement of the Irish in North East culture: born of a family of Irish ancestry who had lived and worked on Tyneside since the nineteenth century, my Dad and his twin sister, former world champion Irish dancers, my Gran's maiden name, Monaghan, and I myself having performed as a 9-year-old Irish dancer on a cruise ship in the Mediterranean. However, the reasons I stood in relative ignorance were all too evident, due in large part to very little being known about my Dad's side of the family (where the Irish connections lie). This genealogical void has not been filled throughout the entire research process. Key to providing answers is my Gran (Dad's mother) who has chosen not to talk about her family aside from the bare facts: which amount to her own grandfather being an Irishman who married an Irish woman. Why did they come to Tyneside? I do not know. Why had they left Ireland? I do not know. And so my curiosity continued.

I returned then to my starting point – the Tyneside Irish Centre. As Justin Hill, a friend, Irishman and PhD student from Northumbria University, once (rightfully) pointed out ‘there’s more to the Tyneside Irish than the Tyneside Irish Centre’ (field notes, March 29, 2012) but for me at this initial stage of research, it was all I had. It was where I went with my Dad. It was where he sang, where he danced. It was where I met his friends, who became my friends. It was where I learned of camaraderie, of male bonding. It was where, for the first (but not the last) time, I heard the phrase ‘Richardson men hug’. What does this mean? What does this obviously tactile gesture signify? It announces verbally and visually that it is okay for men in my family to warmly embrace each other with a cuddle, sharing a hug with other men who are our friends. This was actively encouraged by my Dad to me and to my brother and to all other male relatives for as long as I can remember. We happily impose this mantra onto many of our friends (I am reliably informed that to date, this has been well received). I have always been told that this affection is acceptable, even essential; it is part of being a man. It goes hand in hand (pun intended) with the football pilgrimage. We walk to the game closely packed together. We cheer together, sing together, get angry together and (more often than would be liked) get miserable together!

Men researching men

This extract from my field diary points to aspects of my family position, the places I inhabit and my masculinities. In mentioning my family background, relationships with my father and other male relatives, I am openly referring to the intersections of age, gender and ethnicity that shape my own masculinity. The Women and Geography Study Group (WGSJ; since renamed the Gender and Feminist Geography Research Group) state: ‘... to be masculine often means not to be emotional or passionate, not to be explicit about your values, your background, your own felt experiences’ (WGSJ 1997, 23).

These words are particularly useful as they apply to me as a researcher equally as they do my research participants. As an academic I am also warned that writing personally is not something with which I will be naturally comfortable due to being a man through a gender politics of research (Anderson and Smith 2001), and so the intellectual bind on my emotions is twofold. I hasten to remind the reader that I am a man who is accustomed to hugging his male relatives in pubs. A significant lesson learned from my time with the Tyneside Irish community is that identities, including my own and my participants’, are increasingly multiple (Collinson and Hearn 1994; Connell 1995) and intersect with gender, family position and age.

Historically, a strand of Irish masculinity was often portrayed amid a backdrop of an embodied feminised Celtic idyll – a soft and artistic identity, contrasted with the rational Anglo-Saxon (Hickman and Walter 1997). But does this apply to the Irish literary greats or the stereotypical Irish labourer? I glean insight from my research and Bob (third generation Irishman, born on Tyneside in the 1960s), who draws influence from his grandfather.

I was always tempted by my gran’s example of her husband. My grandfather. You can be a strong man who cries; if it’s merited, if you see what’s going on in death camps, it’s a rational thing to do. You can stand up for what’s right and wrong. You don’t have to be histrionic about it. And be included. You can be a good feller, and be the life and soul of the party, and still appreciate, I dunno, culture, music, entertainment all the rest of it. And contribute to all of that. And I suppose it’s a bit strange and high-fullulent to talk about a renaissance man being a Tyneside based musician, but absolutely.

We see here then the embodiment of intergenerational relations. Bob's grandfather's lived experience is personified through his own outlook on life 'you can be a strong man who cries' though elements of a 'renaissance' softer masculinity are encompassed into the hegemonic masculinity 'it's a rational thing to do'.

A more apposite question for this article is how do the men of my research position themselves in relation to me? How do I impact upon the research and what is it about being a man researching men (and their masculinities) that should be acknowledged; did my ease at hugging male relatives align my masculinity to that of Bob's aspirational, crying 'strong man'? It was the following comments made during a visit to the home of Victor (fourth generation Irishman, born on Tyneside in the 1940s) which highlighted that I was influencing the interactions not only as a man, but also with my physical appearance:

You know it's funny, Michael, you look just like my nephew ... the spitting image in fact, only he's a little taller.

These social interactions are determining the performances of particular identities. As a man researching men and their masculinities, I must also be aware of how my own masculinity is presented and therefore how it relates to the masculinities of the men of my research. How my masculinity is structured with and against that of my participants' masculinities is under constant negotiation. Connell's (1995) 'hegemonic model' talks of masculinity as either 'dominant', 'subordinate', 'complicit' or 'marginal', and in truth all four of these could have aptly described my relationship with my participants at different stages of the research. Did the participant react to me differently if and when I did not look like their nephew? Did my dark hair, tanned(ish) skin and blue eyes – or in the words of Victor, my 'Spanish Irishness' (field notes, May 10, 2012) – affect the interactions in particular ways? Equally, did participants' perceptions of my age (Biggs 2005; Tarrant 2013), class (Skeggs 1997), sexuality (Vanderbeck 2005) and working background (McDowell 2001) make a difference?

The listening to and presentation of biographical narratives (Roberts 2002) is an embodied experience (Sparkes, Perez-Samaniego, and Smith 2011). These interactions are mediated through language and the visual or, as Grenier (2007, 716) puts it, the 'exchange acts of hearing and telling a story'. In response to the researcher, the participant selects and presents material in particular ways (Reissman 1987) in accordance with self identity, audience and purpose (Mischler 1999).

In reflecting on being a man researching men, I have shown how the fluidity of masculinities, sometimes irrelevant of gender, is evident in the participant interactions. It was more often than not that the embodiment of intergenerational relations as 'nephew' – or as found later in the article as 'son' and 'father-to-be' – proved particularly successful in developing participant rapport. This brings into question the 'epistemic privilege' (Mannay 2010, 92), of whose knowledge should be privileged. In the next section of the article, I argue the case, like Mannay (2010), that visual methods can help overcome perceived privilege or 'researcher nearness'.

Being visual to make the familiar strange

Like Donkersloot (2012, 579), 'I understand masculinities and femininities to be a configuration of practices that are dynamic, embodied, socially constructed and socially embedded'. But with a key research question of what it means to be a man of Irish descent, how was I going to speak with men about their masculinities, considering I, too, am a man of Irish descent? As our bodies are visual (as well as physical) representations of

ourselves, I thought of using an outline of a man as a stimulus to facilitate discussion around the men's embodied identities (see [Figures 1–4](#)) and, in turn, to reflect on any intergenerational significances.

This participant-directed visual method of data collection made the 'familiar strange' in such a way that it 'lay beyond my repertoire of preconceived understandings of place and space' (Mannay 2010, 96). The participants were generating material that responds directly to the 'corporeal turn' (Hopkins and Noble 2009) in addressing characteristics of their bodies, relative to a blank outline image, more than in relation to me and my masculinity; I was able to reflect upon embodied intergenerationality by looking at variations in reactions to the method.

In speaking with men who have responded to participate in a study, they come with ideas, concerns and expectations. As a researcher, I am relying on body language and an awareness of social etiquette to 'read' their needs; and likewise they read mine. I do not work as a researcher, I am a researcher; I embody this role. As an ethnographer, I am present in the research encounter. Therefore, I influence the interactions as I listen, talk, watch, react and contribute. The visual outline of a man was an attempt to stimulate discussion about embodied masculinities by minimising the influence of my own masculinity. The cartoon-like outline became the frame of reference without privileging any particular masculinities (based on body size, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, etc.). Upon receiving the image, all of the men accepted that this was an 'outline of a man'. They recognised him from 'toilet doors' and crime scene television programmes, and often joked they wanted to draw on his genitals!

Nevertheless, it would be accurate to say that the vast majority of participants did not touch the pens, nor write or draw anything on the page at all. Most respondents claimed a lack of artistic skill as to why they would not draw something, and physically expressed that they were uncomfortable with the idea. This took different forms but typically manifested itself either as distancing themselves from the outline provided (by moving their chair further away from the table) or through a facial grimace or nervous laughter. Despite this, the visual method did help open up discussions around men and masculinities whether or not the page remained blank. I highlight four different responses to the introduction of the visual method in the remainder of this article with each of these reactions pointing towards an embodied intergenerationality of the research encounter. Due to the scope of this article, I did not include a content analysis of the narratives but will reflect upon the significance of family position and masculinity, and their intersections with space and place.

'I don't get what you're getting at'

It could be argued that the very nature of the visual prompt, in disrupting the social norm of a conversation, distracted the participants to the extent where they felt as if any verbal description of themselves would be less 'embarrassing' than a visual depiction (Prosser and Loxley 2008), though this did not have an immediate effect.

On introducing the outline to Mark (second generation Irishman, born on Tyneside in the 1960s), I warned him that 'this might seem a little strange . . .', to which he responded, 'I was worried when I seen the figure . . .'. I explained that the reason I use the outline is to bring the discussion to a focal point, to help visualise our masculinities and I asked Mark: 'is there any way you could depict how you see yourself . . . what it means to be a man to you?' To which there was an awkward silence. I broke this by following up and rephrasing my question: 'or say, who is Mark O'Malley as a man?' But again I was faced with silence.

I tried once more with: ‘it doesn’t have to be pictures but any words maybe ...?’ Mark eventually announces: ‘I don’t get what you’re getting at?’

I prompt Mark with this next statement: ‘well, for example, would you point to any aspect of who you are as having any Irish qualities?’ This proves the breakthrough moment as Mark responds:

Well, like your sense of humour. Your sense of morality. Your sense of to me, fair play ... I always remember as a kid growing up and me dad would say, obviously it was a slant at Kilkenny, but if you were a bad sportsman you were from Kilkenny, you know what I mean? To me, whatever game you played, whatever you participated in, you would always want to be seen as a fair playing sportsman. That’s what I would see myself as. I mean I get on with everybody; I treat everybody the way I would want to be tret [treated]. How I would depict that, I don’t know?

I am very much present in the recital (‘you know what I mean’) and I am assumed to have prior knowledge of Irish towns (‘obviously it was a slant at Kilkenny’). Mark tells me that he would much rather ‘talk it through ... and stumble from one bit to another’ than draw anything. According to Gubrium and Holstein (2009, 32), ‘the appearances of people’s bodies, the location of rooms and objects such as doors and furniture, and lighting can prompt particular kinds of storytelling’.

The location is worthy of mention as I interviewed Mark in a public space. Although this was in a quiet cafe on a weekday afternoon with only the members of staff for company, I argue the space explains some of the participant’s hesitancy. In public space we are more guarded, we are more self-aware and with the constant possibility that a member of staff would come and ask us for more coffee at any moment; the blank outline image remained blank. None of the outline images were drawn on in public places.

‘I dunno if that answers your question?’

Buttimer (2001), who was one of the first geographers to use autoethnography, points out that the visual alone cannot suffice in representing the data. Further evidence of this is found within my own work and with Peter (Victor’s son, a fifth generation Irishman, born on Tyneside in the 1960s), who like Mark, chose not to depict anything visual on the outline, and was similarly interviewed in a public space, a quiet pub on a weekday evening. It would be wrong to interpret that Peter did not engage with the task and that in some way his avoidance of the coloured pens meant that he was avoiding a reflexive analysis of his masculinity. He remarks:

So what I define meself as? What I have defined meself as in the past has been like the primary wage earner, you know to support me wife and me family. I mean she, well, doesn’t earn as much as me. But she makes up for that you know more than the difference by being frugal. We’re both very frugal people. We don’t tend to eat out much or anything of that nature. So how would I define meself as a man? Primarily as a husband you know and a father, I would say. I dunno if that answers your question?

So Peter doubts whether his response is what I was looking for from the outline image before going on to tell me about how he is a working man. Throughout my time with Peter, he adopts a fatherly role with me. I am close in age to his son – whom I also interviewed – and I also look a lot like him. My masculinity was normalised as it was familiar to Peter; through our commonality and shared experience, an ‘ordinary male behaviour’ developed (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 1996). He assumed (rightfully) that like him I wanted to have children one day and laid out expectations for my later life (Lundgren 2012) – ‘as you’ll see when you have kids’. I later reflected what it was about the interaction that

conveyed my heterosexuality, but realised that the most likely scenario was that Peter's heteronormative assumptions meant that he would not have expected anything else. The rapport I developed with him coupled with the use of the visual method enabled me to reach a high level of detail during the interaction:

I must admit, I didn't realise how much I valued strength. Physical strength. You take it for granted. And I've been doing a physical job since I was 16. And eh, 2 year ago now I was behaving like a 16 year old, jacking a vehicle up which was low. So the jack was well underneath the vehicle, but I couldn't get underneath the vehicle, so I was jacking it up at arm's length. And what I found out is if you're 48 year old and you try and do that, the bicep parts company with the shoulder. Ruptures. And is no longer a bicep but is now just attached at one point ... and what you're left with is a 'Popeye' muscle.

The interaction between researcher and participant becomes more of a conversation; it forms a biographical oral history rather than a semi-structured interview (Gluck 1996; see also Connell [1995] on 'life history'). The outline image empowers Peter to tell his story. He becomes the expert (Prosser and Loxley 2008), explaining aspects of his body and his injury to me with me only occasionally seeking his clarification. After rolling up his sleeve to reveal and flex his arm, he then continues:

Well I never felt any pain. But it destabilised the joint because of that. And I got all kinds of shoulder problems. And a mechanic with a right arm that doesn't work isn't worth much. And I've had back pain for about 5 year now and it's steadily getting worse. So this all culminated in one of those, aw, what they called, magnetic ... MRI? And when I came out the other end I'm sort of 'arthritis in here' and 'spondolosis in me lumber region and all that' and that's when you realise you're just a machine. And for all that I'm not old, because of the job I do; I'm not young anymore

And you were saying how do I define meself as a man? You know, I'm not the man I was. I'm not ... I don't consider meself to be old or infirm ... but I can't deny that I'm not longer able to do those things that I could as little as 2 or 3 year ago, you know.

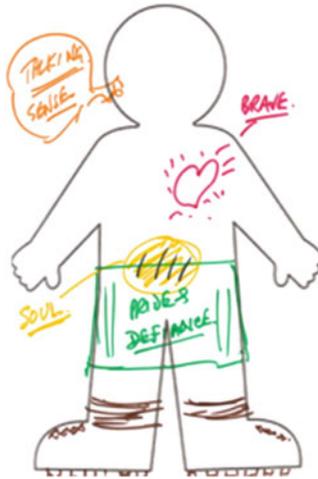
'Ok so here we go ...'

Whilst achieving the same end result, of developing an in-depth embodied biography, the process of being visual differs greatly between the participants. By contrast, the outline image of Daniel – who did opt to use the pens for colour and annotations (see Figure 1) – creates a biographical narrative by talking through step by step what he is drawing. Speaking in his home, this teacher in his 60s picks up the coloured pens and seems to have ideas about what he wishes to draw. His living room location, a place of comfort and familiarity but with a sense of public display, coupled with his educational working background, explains his increased ease at embracing the creative opportunity.

Ok so here we go ... I would go like that, and it's deliberately green because if it was round the back it would have pleats. And I'll just put pleats there. Cos that's my kilt. And I was very proud as a teenager to wear my green kilt. Cos it was green. It could have been saffron, it could have been black. But I had a green kilt. That was my dancing uniform. I knew that surprised people. But I was proud to wear it. I was defiant. 'Hey, look at him in the green ... hey big girl'. Not at all. And me and 3 or 4 of me mates would chase them kids that were shouting at us and we would frighten them ... kilts and all.

With a big smile on his face he continues:

So that was my football boots there. And you know, I played soccer from September to April from the age of 10 – 34. Virtually every day. So it was absolutely massive. We haven't really talked about the soccer side today, but that was massive. And that gave me lots of masculinity I think. Lots of masculine outlets. I mean just today I was jumping around with one of me sons cos Newcastle scored a brilliant goal and it was fantastic. He's 40, I'm 65 and we're leaping



around like a couple of maniacs. I mean completely spontaneous. You know, we never thought 'stop, why are we doing this?' It was just incredible

We talk here about football, about the scores that day. I am able to very naturally converse on these topics as a keen football supporter myself. The latter section of his narrative is framed within a religious context. His repetition of words and phrases are for my benefit (unlike himself, I did not have a strong religious upbringing), whilst, physically, it also gave him an extra moment to think about what he is going to draw, write or say next. Again I point to the value of being visual as a tool as, in this example, Daniel directs the conversation to wherever he wishes. It is upon seeing a gold coloured pen on the table that he recounts that his grandmother, who died when he was 7 years old, had a favourite hymn called 'Soul of My Saviour'. He began to recite the lyrics to me before stating:

I knew I had a soul and the soul was sort of in here somewhere. And you couldn't see it, but every time you made a mistake, which is the modern way of saying . . . making mistakes is the modern way of saying you committed sins. And sins made a nasty mark on the soul. A venial sin made a nasty mark on the soul. And dulled the soul. And when you made a mortal sin. And there were plenty in the book for mortal sins. Like not going to church on a Sunday. The whole soul was black. Blackened, mortal sin. It was dead. Black, totally black. And what you had to do was, you had to go to confession and get rid of that blackness. And by confessing your sins the priest was forgiving you on behalf of Jesus and God, then it became golden again. It remained golden until you made a sin, making mistakes, and dirtied the soul again. And imagine, that's still with me. But I know it's . . . I sort of don't believe it. It's gone. I certainly don't believe in institutional religion.

These examples have already touched upon the roles of the breadwinner, family, marriage, physicality, employment, health, ageing, culture, pride, sport and religion in relation to the embodied identities of just a small selection of my research participants. As Ahmed (2004, 4) tells us, 'emotions shape the very surfaces of bodies, which take shape through the repetition of actions over time'. Perhaps then, the repeated processes of drawing and talking about, on and in the body have helped articulate emotions. Certainly I have gained insight to information that a pre-set semi-structured interview schedule would not have accessed.

'This thing would have changed into so many different colours'

A final response to the visual outline that I would like to draw attention to draws on the life course which 'involves recognition that, rather than following fixed and predictable life

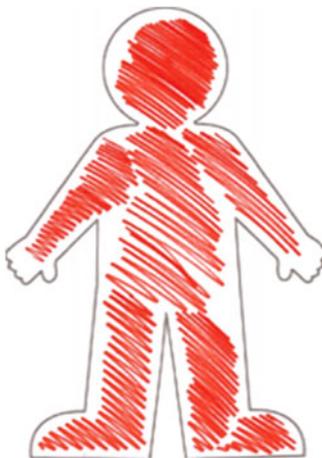
stages, we live dynamic and varied lifecourses which have, themselves, different situated meanings' (Hopkins and Pain 2007, 290). This was not particularly an area I had considered until my interactions with Bill (third generation Irishman, born in Scotland in the 1960s and moved to the North East of England as a young man) at his home. I asked him, 'if you were to say how you see yourself ... looking in the mirror asking who am I as a man ... is there anything that you'd feel would be important for you to put down on that page?' After a long pause, Bill responds:

I don't think there is. I really don't think there is. And why I don't think that way is – the thing about being a man to me is about being tolerant, being understanding, knowing your own power. I would never ever dream of accosting a woman, or children. Discipline is one thing, but smacking a bairn [child] ... totally different. It's not the way I was brought up. It's very, very difficult for me to put something on there Michael, because when I consider where I was as a youngster to where I am now, this thing would have changed into so many different colours and I would have to take it back off you again and say 'I've got to change that'.

He goes onto to explain:

Because I suppose at the moment I'm quite happy within myself. I'm at a stage in my life where I'm as settled as I've ever been. I'm very fortunate to be married to Melissa. I have a nice house. I live in a lovely area. I don't have any money problems. I don't have any personal problems to be perfectly honest and I'm a very, very happy man at the minute.

But this is in contrast to Bill as a young man. Bill did not write or draw anything on the outline during our interaction but asked me to leave it with him and he would get back to me on it. A few of the other participants had said similar things but never followed up with anything and I expected this would be the same again. Bill, however, telephoned me the day after I met with him (and his father) at his house and asked me to take out three blank copies of the outlines. He asked me to colour them: the first in red, the second as a rainbow and the third in purple (see Figures 2–4). According to Bill, these three images more accurately depicted his masculinity across his life course. He explained over the phone that the red image represented the 'hurt and anger' he experienced as a young man. This was in reference to an incident we had talked about during our meeting the day before, where 14 local men assaulted him and subsequently put him in hospital after attacking him with a hammer (Bill had showed me the scars on his head, a visible reminder of the attack). This shaped Bill's outlook on early life as a man as he sought (and successfully exacted) revenge against each one of the 14 men. He quite plainly told me of how he toughened up

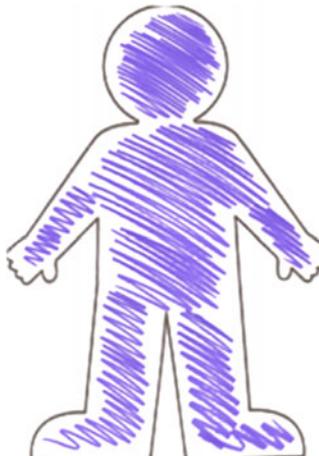




after his recovery and took a baseball bat to each of his attackers individually over a three-month period. This was not something he felt proud of, but something he felt he needed to do. I do not think this story was an example of Bill's machismo, it was more therapeutic in talking through the incident with me in my researcher, listener role (for 'therapy speak', see Munt 2012, 559).

After this, he moved to Nigeria with his family as his father worked for the British Army out there; he too went on to serve as a soldier. After leaving the Army, however, he pursued further education. He achieved a bachelor's degree and is currently completing a master's degree. He took on lots of different influences in this period (including religion) and his rainbow colours are said to reflect this stage in his life. Later then, to the present day and the purple image, we see Bill as a middle-aged man who has found a state of 'peace and calm' in his life. In a counter-narrative to ageing (which is usually rife with negativity as men enter 'older' age; see Tarrant 2013), he says the purple reflects a higher level of masculinity where, amongst other things, he has a greater reflective outlook on life.

I hope to have shown the value of using a visual research tool within research on men and masculinities (Rose 2001). The visual method employed has accessed these topics of conversation not only quickly but also in a participatory manner, which encouraged the



men to engage with a range of issues, in a way that is relevant to their own lives. The emphasis of this article has been ‘embodied intergenerationality’ the way in which performed masculinities of participant and researcher, sometimes superseding gender, spoke relationally to family position (son/father-to-be) and place (public/private space). This contribution sees a departure from gender and methods literatures to date.

Concluding thoughts

In compiling my research, I have used pseudonyms for the men of my study. Bob, Victor, Mark, Peter, Daniel and Bill are not fictional characters; the extracts used in this article are their exact words with only their names changed to protect confidentiality, in keeping with ethical guidelines within my institution. I hoped that the self-reflexive element to this article would, as a means of catharsis, open the door to my inner research dilemmas and to my methodological approaches. I heed Vanderbeck’s (2005, 398) warning that writing reflexively can reaffirm ‘researcher credibility’ in a posturing attempt to assert conformity to ‘hegemonic gender ideals’; but this was not the purpose of this article.

Peter’s narrative highlighted the importance of family position with the research, drifting between the roles of son, father and father-to-be. Mark’s narrative was interrupted by the place in which it was given. The latter voices of both Daniel and Bill spoke more directly to the particularity of masculinity; it was perhaps their working backgrounds as a teacher and student, respectively (though admittedly a former soldier), that facilitated a greater ease with alternative forms of communication than the aforementioned policeman and mechanic. I have stated my participants’ familiarity with my masculinity at times (as son, football fan and fellow ‘Irishman’); but this has allowed me to articulate the perceived advantages this position enables. Interestingly, some stark differences between the lives of my participants and my own proved less problematic than I predicted, with the power of shared experience seeming to trump most differences between us. Though not always through feelings of, as Kehily (1995, 29) claims, ‘pain, uncertainty and failure’, my reflections have laid out the ‘tensions and contradictions’ (*ibid.*) in positioning myself in the research as advocated by feminist scholars and the anti-sexist men’s movement. Questions around men and masculinities, embodiment and research methods have long been debated in the discipline – less so family position and place – and I look forward to reading more empirical data where embodied intergenerationality is similarly explicitly articulated.

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Note

1. Tyneside being the regional term for the city of Newcastle upon Tyne in the North East of England and the surrounding areas either side of the river which gave the city its name: the River Tyne.

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ABSTRACT TRANSLATIONS

Intergeneracionalidad encarnada: posición familiar, lugar y masculinidad

El objetivo de este artículo es mejorar nuestra comprensión de las *performances* de la posición familiar, el lugar y la masculinidad en lo que llamo "intergeneracionalidad encarnada". Me apoyo en una investigación realizada con 38 hombres de tres generaciones en 19 familias de descendencia irlandesa para discutir la masculinidad, la intergeneracionalidad y el lugar. Estos hombres viven o han vivido recientemente en la región conocida como Tyneside, en el noreste de Inglaterra. En un segundo plano a esta contribución se encuentra el reconocimiento de la significancia de las cambiantes posicionalidades como investigador e integrante y observador participante abordando tanto las identidades interseccionales como las intergeneracionales que son partes de la investigación geográfica. Este artículo por lo tanto responde al trabajo reciente en la disciplina, la cual ha llamado a tener una atención más crítica hacia las experiencias en el campo; con su contribución central – la intergeneracionalidad encarnada – avanza el conocimiento de las masculinidades y el lugar para quienes analizan las masculinidades en el encuentro de la investigación. Este trabajo analiza las *performances* y relacionalidades de las masculinidades entre los hombres de descendencia irlandesa en Tyneside y entre los participantes y el investigador. Al trabajar con hombres de diferentes edades tanto dentro de las familias como entre ellas, arribo a conclusiones sobre la masculinidad, intergeneracionalidad y lugar: los roles del investigador y el participante pueden encarnarse como "hijo" y "padre" en el encuentro de la investigación y dónde la misma toma lugar importa.

Palabras claves: encarnado; intergeneracionalidad; hombres; masculinidades; irlandés; Tyneside

体现的跨世代性：家庭位置、地方与男性气概

本文的目标在于推进对于我所谓的“体现的跨世代性”中的家庭地位、地方与男性气概的理解。我以横跨三个世代、位于十九个爱尔兰血统家族中的三十八位男性受访者为基础，探讨男性气概、跨世代性与地方。这些男性现正居住于、或晚近曾居住于英格兰东北部一处名为泰恩赛德的区域。此外，本研究的第二贡献在于，透过处理在地理研究中同时涉及的跨领域与跨世代身份认同，认可在研究内部人员与参与式观察者之间改变中的位置的重要性。本文因此回应该领域中对于田野经验进行更批判性的关注之呼吁，并以其核心贡献——体现的跨世代性——促进分析研究境遇中男性气概的研究者，对于男性气概以及地方的知识。此一工作探讨泰恩赛德的爱尔兰后裔男性之中、以及研究参与者和研究者之间的男性气概展现与关系性。我在与同一家庭中不同家庭之间年纪殊异的男性的共事经验中，得到下述有关男性气概、跨世代性以及地方的结论：在研究的境遇中，研究者与参与者的角色可以体现成为“儿子”与“父亲”，且研究进行的场所具有影响性。

关键词：体现的；跨世代性；男性；男性气概；爱尔兰；泰恩赛德