­A Better Example of a Literature

Review

This literature review outlines the development of ideas for the research. This chapter shows how I am connecting the pertinent themes for my research, including banter, gender, identity, performance, space, and sport. The review will begin with a section dedicated to exploring men and masculinity, followed by discussion of banter and gendered identities, themes of performance, and finally, situating banter in space.

Finding Your Way: Clarity could be added here on what the aim of the chapter is and why looking at these themes together is important (signposting the rest of the chapter).

### Men and Masculinity

This section will explore the gender theories which will act as the foundation for my project. Hegemonic theorizing will be introduced first, as this is a prominent theme. Once this theory has been summarized within the context of my research this section will progress to engage with theories which have emerged to expand and progress this thinking.

Finding your Way: This is still a bit vague, why is this theory important?

#### Hegemonic masculinity theorizing and its critiques

Theorizing on hegemonic masculinity is the main theory in discussions of men and masculinity.  This is also a prominent theory in research on men and sport. My research will aim to explore how men in my research experience hegemonic masculinity in the real world. Therefore, I begin with a discussion of the ways in which this theory has developed, also noting the problems with this idea.

Theorizing of hegemonic masculinity is a new development in studies of gender and masculinity, with many advocating that the concept proves as ‘slippery’ to understand as that of masculinity itself (Howson, 2006). The idea builds upon the work and Marxian perspectives of Gramsci on hegemony (Gramsci, 2005, Connell, 2005). Within this work Gramsci (2005) says that hegemony is significant to understanding the maintenance of power in society, as well as the formation of dominant social groups and structures. Raewyn Connell supports this, arguing that hegemony is ‘the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life’ (2005: 77).

The term hegemonic masculinity itself came later. Sociologists suggest that this coincided with behavioural and identity changes seen amongst boys after the Second World War (Howson, 2006). Described by Connell (2005: 831) to be a ‘synthesis’ of many other ideas, particularly stemming from frustrations with the ‘male sex role’ model prominent in the literature on gender in the 1970s, Connell tried to improve this idea. Male sex role theorizations asserted that specific traits, attitudes and behaviours acted to validate an individual’s sex as male (Pleck, 1987). Such work was problematic for a number of reasons, most of all the positivist connotations; however the prominence of the work within academia meant that ‘normative’ ideas of identity according to sex became mainstream. Connell’s work provided a critique of these narratives, offering different opinions to previous theorising, with emphasis instead being put on issues which has not been looked at or thought about previously which include power. Overall though, Connell’s work was deemed important due to its strengths and potential to be applied to other work.

Despite criticism, the concept of hegemonic masculinity remains widely used. This wide application has meant that some confusion remains regarding definitions. However, most people agree that Connell’s (2005) early theorizing remains most significant. Early ideas were based on ideas of power, dominance and difference (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 832; Connell, 2005). Since then, the term is used to explore gender and Howson notes that hegemonic masculinity took ‘control of the gender order’ (2006: 3). Connections to gender scholarship have been discussed lots of times since with writers suggesting that hegemonic masculinity theorizing paved the way for new work on gender to be done.

It has been noted that masculinities can change and that the dominant form of masculinity is moveable (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). This means that hegemonic masculinity will change too. McKay et al. (2000: 7) acknowledge that experiences of men within sports settings are not ‘uniform’ bringing in the argument that men might not all experience hegemonic masculinity in the same way. Ian Wellard (2009, 2002) provides further insight into this idea and says that there are some exclusive forms of masculinity with others being possible too. Wellard (2009) suggests that men have to do some work in order to feel like they belong so here we see the idea that men might be making some decisions about this which is not talked about in other places.

To conclude this section, it is helpful to think about what this all means. All the ideas of masculinity presented show that there is the space for new theories to come forward. My dissertation will continue to do this.