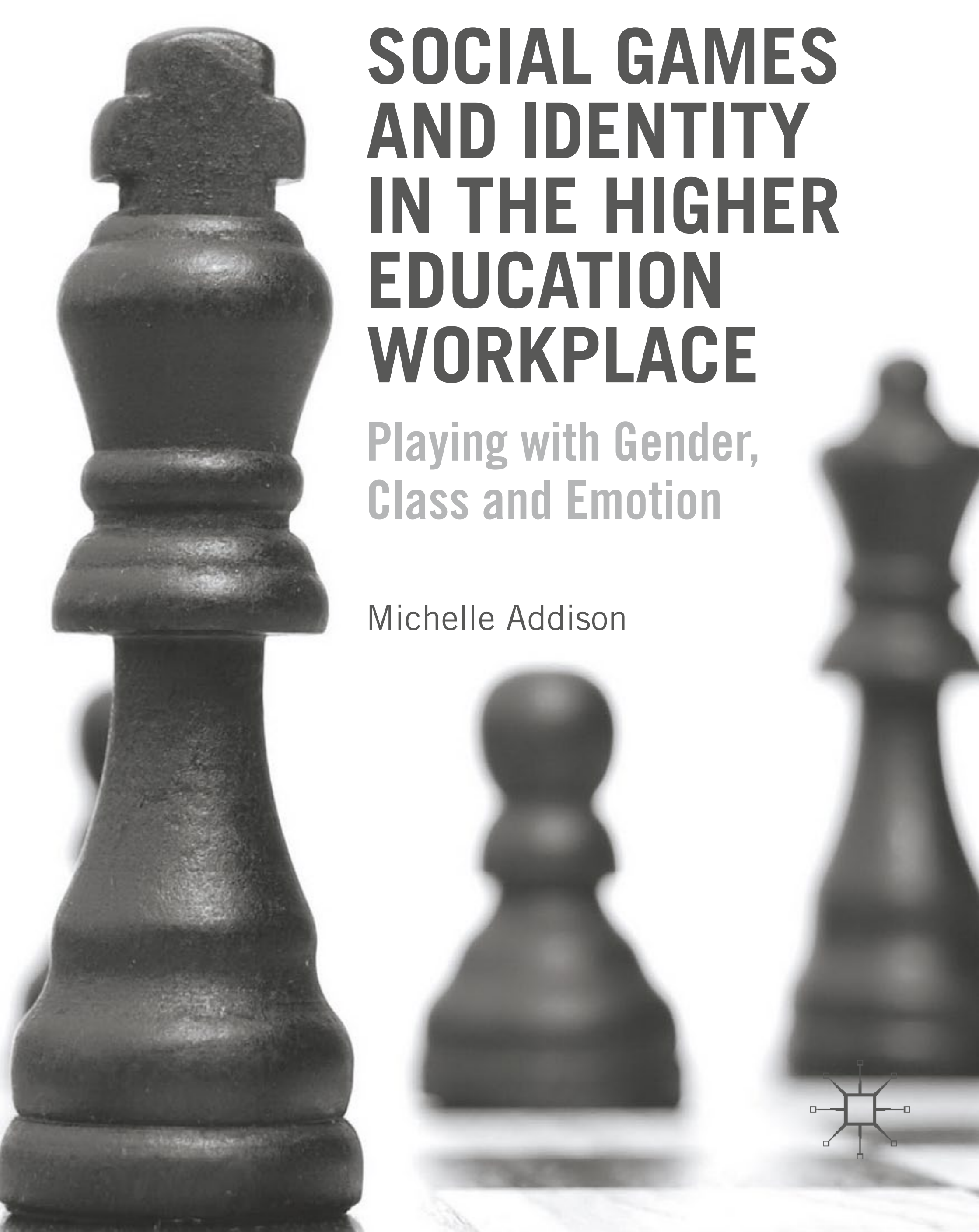

SOCIAL GAMES AND IDENTITY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION WORKPLACE

Playing with Gender, Class and Emotion

Michelle Addison

Social Games and Identity in the Higher Education Workplace

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palgrave
macmillan

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ISBN 978-1-137-51802-6 ISBN 978-1-137-51803-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-51803-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016943534

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Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd. London

For William

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book would not have been possible if it were not for the many people who have provided me with their invaluable support, time, and kindness over the years—I am so grateful. Steph Lawler and Jackie Leach-Scully in particular offered incredible guidance and feedback in the writing of this work. Thanks to Yvette Taylor for believing in me. Thanks to Lisa Crowe, my friend, peer, and colleague—her sense of humour and refreshing honesty have seen me through some tough times. I would like to thank my colleagues who helped me by reading drafts of this book and giving me valuable comments: Victoria Mountford, Anu Vaittinen, and Lisa Crowe. Thanks also to the anonymous reviewers of this book for their guidance. I would also like to express thanks to the editors at Palgrave Macmillan for their support with this project.

A huge thank you to all of the participants who generously gave me some of their precious time to take part in this study. I really appreciate it.

Many thanks also to Sue for all your support, kindness, and help through this. Thanks to my dad who instilled that 'doing your best' is important, worthwhile and *enough*. To Mairi and Billy, thank you for all your love and warmth.

And to William: it is a wonderful feeling to know that someone believes in you—love to you, always.

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CHAPTER 1

Social Games

This book is about people in the workplace and how value is attached to certain identities through class and gender. *Knowing* what kind of person has value at work is explored here, and how people use their knowledge and 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 67) to try to fit in with expectations of desirable identities. I am interested in the lives of everyday people and how it is we all find ways to fit in at work. The practice of trying to fit in is intricately bound up with feelings—it can be a painful thing to do, to fit in, and so this theme too is considered within this book. These discussions are based on a study situated in a Higher Education workplace,[1] and the employees who took part in this research work in jobs ranging from lecturers and cleaners, to managers and electricians.

This book provides an interpretation of why people act the way they do at work as an expression of game-playing, and an insight into how people try to adapt and fit in at work. Acquiring cultural capital and learning the 'right' way to be at work are crucial to being able to fit in or not. The argument I make here is that knowledge of class and gender codes, and their symbolic meanings and value, are an important component of game-playing, and playing the game well. Game-playing reflects the legitimate culture of the workplace and how things *ought* to be done to secure inclusion and belonging. This book then points to mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion of certain kinds of people in the workplace through game-playing, where the 'right' identity fits, and the wrong identity is stigmatized. This has wider

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M. Addison, *Social Games and Identity in the Higher Education Workplace*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-51803-3_1

policy implications regarding equality and diversity at work. I look at certain people who specifically experience the stigma of particular classed and gendered distinctions, and how they feel the pain of being out of place, which they then have to try and manage through emotion work. What I hope is distinctive about this book is that it considers how class and gender practices are important at work, and how differences of class and gender are managed through emotion work. The location of my research in a Higher Education setting also adds to this by providing an insight into what it is like to work in a sector that is currently undergoing significant changes within the UK (see also Lynch 2006; Chapelo 2010; Watson 2011).

In writing this book, I acknowledge from the outset that by focusing on how identities are valued, or not, via class and gender, that this is also *part* of the *making* of identities of value. Hacking (2004) discusses this pertaining to wider processes of classifications; people come into view the more we attempt to understand various ways people are classified. He writes that people 'come into being by a dialectic between classification and who is classified. Naming has real effects on people, and changes in people have real effects on subsequent classifications' (2004: 280). Relating this to my own research, I am conscious then that by making class and gender my focus I necessarily locate other ways of understanding the making of identities of value to a more marginal position. This is done with a commitment to supporting other research related to identities of value.

In the following section, I begin by firstly outlining what my research is about, and I also discuss my motivations for doing this work. I also outline the theoretical framework that I use in this study—I adopt elements of Bourdieu's conceptual toolkit, particularly *habitus*, capital, and field, and I also draw on Bourdieu's ideas about distinctions and taste. I look at Bourdieu's idea of social games and how this has shaped the direction of my own research. This is coupled with a short discussion of Bourdieu's concept of *hysteresis*. I also bring to bear some of the key concepts from Arlie Hochschild's highly acclaimed research *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1983). I draw on her concept of emotion work, transmutation, and feeling rules.[2]

MOTIVATIONS, METHODS, AND AIMS

The motivation for this book arises out of a growing collection of work that looks at identity and people in the workplace. The workplace is not a 'neutral' space (Du Gay 1996; Bradley 1989; Cockburn 1991; Adkins

1995; McDowell 1997) and constructions of the 'worker' are culturally and socially complex (Du Gay 1996; Pettinger et al. 2005; Kirk and Wall 2011; Bolton and Laaser 2013; Ray and Sayer 1999). These particular studies and theoretical approaches reveal to various extents that the workplace is a space in which workers' embodied identities can work for and against them in the new economy.

My own experiences of working in a Higher Education Institution are suffused with feelings of being 'out of place'. Here was a world where colleagues not only dressed and talked differently to me, but were also intimidatingly qualified. Fitting in here and learning how to play the game takes enormous amounts of emotional and physical effort in the beginning. Over time, I have got better at knowing how the game is played, like some of the people I interviewed in my study. I too then have felt the 'recognitions of others' (Skeggs 1997, p. 4) as value judgements, as they are read off my own embodiment. From speaking to others about their experiences in the workplace it seems I am not alone in feeling uncomfortable at times, and out of place, for reasons that appear to be located in class and gender.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: BOURDIEU AND HOCHSCHILD

Bourdieu

In this section I explain the conceptual framework I use in my study. Bourdieu offers a theory of practice, which is grounded in empirical research, that promises to overcome the antimony between the social and personal 'through an understanding of the relational properties of social phenomena' (Özbilgin and Tatli 2005, p. 857). Bourdieu's approach provides a way of making sense of the world that takes into account how the social and the personal, the subjective and objective, are inter-related and reproduce power dynamics. He has a rich repertoire of analytical tools that have excellent explanatory power that can be used in organizational research.

Habitus, Capital, and Field

Habitus is an embodied history that disposes each person to act, think, and feel in certain ways relative to their 'conditions of existence' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 52). Put another way, these conditions produce a person's *habitus,* as Bourdieu puts it: 'systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures'

(1990, p. 53). The *habitus* is a matrix of 'generative principles' (1990, p. 53) that provide a practical logic that an individual draws upon with no active conscious intent. The *habitus* then is a useful concept because it helps to explain how a person is not only a 'product of history' but also *making* history. When a person speaks, dresses, thinks, or feels, then that person is doing so with the 'active presence of past experiences', and these are structuring 'schemes of perception, thought and action' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 54). This means that practices and schemes of perception are shaped by history and 'internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 56). By a person reproducing these schemes of perception and action, which Bourdieu saw as *performative magic*, the continuity of social and embodied structures is ensured over time.

Bourdieu is often criticized for producing a model of the *habitus* that does not allow for change (see, e.g., Mouzelis 2007; King 2000; Burawoy 2012). However this is, arguably, not a justified criticism. For although a person's schemes of perception, action, and thoughts are structured by history, these durable structures are also shaped by the tiny adaptations a person makes during interactions with other people. Being disposed to act in a certain way never generates the same exact action the next time because small changes are made based on the experiences from the previous time. The effect is cumulative and a person's whole past acts upon their present. Bourdieu suggests then that we have an 'infinite capacity for generating products—thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom' (1990, p. 55). In addition, we should be mindful that the *habitus* is a system of *principles*, not rules or laws. A person is disposed to act in a certain way and can ordinarily do so without thinking about it. Bourdieu describes this as being a fish swimming in water—this is when we feel most comfortable and have a good sense of 'fit' in the practical world (1990). We become a 'fish out of water', that is, uncomfortable with a sense that we do not fit in when we cross into a field that we are not familiar with. So, we try to adapt and make changes to our *habitus* according to the field we are in.

Bourdieu's concept needs to be thought about as inseparable from objective field structures. As Thomson (2008, p. 67) notes, to fully understand relations between people one must 'examine the social space in which interactions, transactions, and events' occur. Bourdieu thinks about social space as *field*; field relates to a number of things, and it can mean a person's objective position within structures in social space. This is analogous to a football pitch, as Bourdieu says, in which players have positions and are limited by the conditions of the field. The game that takes place in this field has its own 'rules, histories, star players', making each field different to the next (Thomson 2008, p. 69). As Maton puts it, 'Where we are in life at any one moment is the result of numberless events in the past that have shaped our path' (2008, p. 52). Bourdieu theorized that there were as many possible fields as there were 'possibilities for the pursuit of distinction' (1984, p. 223). Each field[3] has a practical logic to it that a person must master if they are to be familiar and comfortable in this social space. Thomson (2008) adds that field is not fixed, rather, change occurs within the field as a result of adaptations in the way people play social games.

Bourdieu also talks about the *field of power*: this relates to 'multiple social fields' (Thomson 2008, p. 70) and the similarities between the logic structuring these fields and the dominant players. Thomson notes how fields are inter-related and so this can mean that a player's position in one field can also advantage him or her in another field (e.g., field of education and the economic field). So, 'what happens in the field of power shapes what can happen in a social field' (Thomson 2008, p. 71). The field of *cultural production* relates to a system of signs and systems of exchange that have their own meaning within social fields, and as Johnson states, 'the field of cultural production [...] encompass[es] the set of social conditions of the production, circulation and consumption of symbolic goods' (Johnson 1993, p. 9). So, for example, what is considered to be a work of art, the frontiers of fashion, or a literary masterpiece is contingent on the dynamics of the field of cultural production[4] and the prevailing dominant beliefs.

It is necessary to think about *habitus* and field as relational; they impact on each other as structuring structures and structured structures (Bourdieu 1990). They operate together 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. Objectively '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 1990, p. 53)

Bourdieu develops a typology of capitals (1983, 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) to explain how a person can claim something to be an asset and then use it to their advantage in the field. Capitals are represented as material things, as dispositions, and also as marks upon the body. They are used in a system of exchanges 'whereby assets of different kinds are transformed and are exchanged within complex networks or circuits within and across different fields' (Moore 2008, p. 102). Bourdieu identified three forms of capital that can be exchanged. These are: social capital—which is constituted by networks of contacts. These can be colleagues, friends, and family: people who can prove very advantageous to know with regards to the flow of information and acquisition of other capital. Bourdieu also outlined cultural capital—this is constituted via education, taste, poise, leisure pursuits, and knowledge of *what* is tasteful. Finally, Bourdieu developed his idea of economic capital—which is more straightforwardly constituted by the accumulation of wealth (see also Skeggs 1997 for discussion of capital). Symbolic capital is different to these other three in that it is generated by having the 'right' combination of capitals, which Bourdieu describes as constituting the 'well-formed *habitus*' (in Moore 2008, p. 103). Symbolic capital is the result of an arbitrary elevation of certain combinations of capital above others once they have become legitimated (Lawler 1999; Skeggs 1997) and, 'in a way that confers social advantage' (Moore 2008, p. 102). Moore comments that capitals are also institutionalized (e.g., through education) so that the person is able to acquire a 'predisposition to the "rules of the game"' (2008, p. 106).

A person's position in the game and how they play it depends on their *habitus*, capital, and the structures of the field, and taken together this triad generates practices; Bourdieu describes this inter-relationship as thus:

> [(*habitus*)+(capital)] + field = practices
>
> (Bourdieu 1986, p. 101)

Therefore, the practices that a person does are contingent on their *habitus* and the nature and amount of capital that they possess, as well as their 'state of play' with the field (Maton 2008, p. 51). As Bourdieu and Wacquant put it, these are the result of an 'unconscious relationship' (1992, p. 126). As Maton states, 'Practices are thus not simply the result of one's *habitus* but rather of *relations between* one's *habitus* and one's circumstances' (2008, p. 52).

Social Games

Bourdieu writes about social games in his books *The Logic of Practice* (1990) and *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984). Bourdieu does not explicitly describe what a game *is* in any definitive sense; instead he offers a 'theory of action' and 'a relational and agonistic conception of social space' (Wacquant 2000, p. 105). His idea about game-playing acts as a useful metaphorical tool that helps the analyst to describe and make sense of the logic orienting people. To put it simply then, the game is the logic that structures and orientates practice in a given field. The game is a 'social construct' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 67).

The logic orientating a person's practices will always be elusive, because, by its very nature, when a person is in the moment they are not aware of any logic structuring their practices. Bourdieu writes that practical logic,

> is able to organize all thoughts, perceptions and actions by means of a few generative principles, which are closely interrelated and constitute a practically integrated whole, only because its whole economy, based on the principle of the economy of logic, presupposes a sacrifice of rigour for the sake of simplicity and generality … in the sense of convenient, that is, easy to master and use.
>
> (1990, p. 86)

Generally, one tends to be 'born into the game' and so 'one does not embark on the game by a conscious act' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 67). If one is not born into the game, then one has to learn and pick up on the tacit rules and meaning of the game. Playing the game requires a commitment to the logic and rules, what Bourdieu refers to as 'illusio' (1990, p. 67). This is a belief in the game and that the game is worth playing. He adds that, for the most part, people tend to acquire this investment in the game unconsciously. Johnson (1993, p. 8) states that in Bourdieu's idea of game-playing a person is expected to have the appropriate *habitus* that disposes that person to the game, and also that the person must have 'at least the minimum amount of knowledge, or skill, or "talent" to be accepted as a legitimate player'. So, in my own work I borrow this analogy of game-playing to try and make sense of the games that the employees play at work.

Developing a 'Feel for the Game'

We are socialized into the ways of game-playing through our *habitus* and position in the field, so much so that we develop a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 67). Entering the game means being able to competently use knowledge of how the game is to be played (Johnson 1993). Bourdieu describes as, 'the sense of the imminent future of the game, the sense of the direction (sens) of the history of the game that gives the game its sense' (1990, p. 82). Individuals learn the game through a long 'dialectical process' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 67) in which 'history is turned into nature' (1977, p. 78). Bourdieu suggests that the earlier a person learns about the game then they are more able to act without deliberate conscious intention and without awareness of game-playing. This is because the *habitus* orients the person to practice. Through these practices the game is continually reproduced, and reproduces the logic and rules structuring others, as Bourdieu writes, 'thereby reproducing the conditions of its own perpetuation' (1990, p. 67).

As I mentioned earlier, *habitus* and field are interrelated structuring structures that orient practice. The field is the pitch or board in the game and constitutes the site of game-playing (Bourdieu 1990). There is a logic to our practices but it is always implicit to this practical relationship between the *habitus* and field. Each field can have entirely different configurations of the game and how it is to be played. So, we must acquire knowledge of how to play the game well when we cross between fields. We must also be able to keep up with changes in the field. If we fall behind and are 'ill-adjusted' to the field (Bourdieu 1990, p. 62) then we may experience what Bourdieu describes as *hysteresis* (Bourdieu 1984, 2000), that is, a mismatch between *habitus* and field. I discuss this particular concept in more detail shortly.

People deploy capital to play the game in different ways. Different combinations of capital can be used as 'leverage' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 51) in different fields. It is important that a person knows the relative symbolic value of their capital and how to use it in game-playing to develop competitive strategies. Bourdieu asserts that economic capital is generally seen as the dominating resource in most fields, and positions those with a lot of it in a powerful position. High levels of cultural and social capital are also extremely useful in securing an advantage and dominant position in the game. Being in possession of the 'right' capitals can enable a person to 'seize the "potential opportunities" that are available to them in a given field (Bourdieu 1990). However, being able to grasp these chances depends on 'dispositions that can only be acquired in certain social conditions' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 64). These dispositions are not simply acquired like a 'technical capacity', they are 'a power tacitly conferred on those who have power' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 64). We can play the game then depending on our combination and acquisition of capital, as well as our disposition to grasp these chances.

Burawoy (2012) is critical of Bourdieu's idea of games and game-playing. He writes that the idea that people are constituted by game-playing is a 'contingent notion of social reproduction that depends on the continuity of a particular game, itself embedded in a particular institution. The only assumption it makes about human beings is that they are game players seeking control of their environment.' (2012, p. 190). Burawoy argues that these two explanations of social reproduction put forward by Bourdieu, that is, people as having deeply internalized the social structure, and, people as game players seeking to master their environment, are *not* compatible. He suggests that Bourdieu cannot have social reproduction engendered in both the psyche and institutions, otherwise this results in an unchanging social structure. Instead, Burawoy wants us to think about whether social order is held together through an external social structure *or* a person's internalized social structures (where internalized symbolic domination is misrecognized as 'normal').

Burawoy's argument about Bourdieu's ideas about subjective and objective social reproduction seem to hinge on two criticisms: one, where Bourdieu's theories imply an unchanging society; and two, that Bourdieu's idea about misrecognition, whereby symbolic domination is misrecognized as 'normal' or 'natural', is only effective in some societies, whereas Burawoy thinks this concept should be universally applicable if it is to be robust. For Burawoy, Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* and social structures are also too deterministic and do not really accommodate how a person might challenge the way things are done. He argues that Bourdieu's approach to practice locks a person into a submissive state of always misrecognising and reproducing the dominant ideology, and so this disavows change. However, one possible counter argument is provided by McNay, who suggests that action is 'neither fully determined nor fully willed' (McNay 1999, p. 100) and it is this flexibility that stimulates and allows for change. That is, Bourdieu's 'person' is not totally determined, as Burawoy seems to see it, but rather oriented to action within a position in the field.

In my view then, Bourdieu's ideas of social reproduction as both deeply internalized history in the individual (*habitus*) as well as institutionally embedded (field) are not incompatible, nor do they lead to a totally determined individual or unchanging social structure. As Burawoy himself states, it is the mismatch that can occur between *habitus* and field, where the *habitus* becomes a fish out of water, which allows for and accommodates changes in the society. Buroway finds this wanting because he does not believe that Bourdieu provides any 'systematic account of how this mismatch is produced' (2012, p. 204). He thinks that Bourdieu indicates the possibility of social change but does not demonstrate how it happens. Yet there are several studies that have effectively used Bourdieu's ideas to demonstrate social change and adaptation instigated by a mismatch of *habitus* and field (i.e. *hysteresis*) (see e.g., Reay et al. 2009; Bathmaker et al. 2013; McDonough and Polzer 2012; Adkins 2002a, b also discuss this). I, too, discuss instances where the *habitus* 'misfires' (Bourdieu 2000, p. 162) in Chap. 7. I offer a discussion of *hysteresis*, which explains the idea of a mismatch between field and *habitus*, in more detail below.

What is Hysteresis?

Not everyone is able to demonstrate a practical mastery of the game being played. Some people find it difficult to fit in and to know how one should be in certain spaces and around certain people. As Reay, Crozier, and Clayton write, 'when *habitus* encounters a field with which it is not familiar, the resulting disjunctures can generate not only change and transformation, but also disquiet, ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty' (2009, p. 1105). This mismatch between *habitus* and field, when a person is conscious of it, is *hysteresis*. *Hysteresis* refers to:

> the structural lag between opportunities and the dispositions to grasp them which is the cause of missed opportunities […] the frequently observed incapacity to think historical crises in categories of perception and thought other than those of the past.
>
> (Bourdieu 1990, p. 59)

This concept was developed by Bourdieu (1984) to try to understand how a person can be out of place in certain fields. Hardy notes that *hysteresis* is associated with 'change' and a 'time lag' (2008, p. 133), that is, a mismatch between the individual's dispositional location and changes within the field: it is "… used to describe the disruption in the relationship between *habitus* and the field structures to which they no longer correspond," (Hardy 2008, p. 134).

When a person finds themselves in a situation that is too remote from their own *habitus*, they are then always essentially trying to 'catch up' with the changes within the field. A good example of this is McDonough and Polzer's book (2012) of organizational change in the public sector in Toronto, Canada, which shows how employees talked about trying to adjust to the new climate of competition developing at work. Some employees felt particularly distressed at the onset of this organizational change and that they could not keep up. McDonough and Polzer use *hysteresis* as an explanatory concept to try to understand these emotional responses. They interviewed 45 of the front-line service workers in this organization and they found that noticeable tensions emerged out of a gap between the participants' sense of self and the changing conditions at work. This gap generated feelings of frustration and anxiety amongst these workers because they felt that they no longer knew how to be perceived as 'good' public servants. McDonough and Polzer discuss how employees tried to make adjustments to their *habitus* to fit in with new organizational expectations. However, certain combinations of (e.g., gendered) capital were seen as more valuable than others in the changing conditions of the field. They argue then that some of the workers found themselves in a position where they were unable to adapt well to the changing field at work because it went beyond the limits of what was possible for their *habitus* and combination of capital. Some employees then encountered feelings of distress because of their experience of *hysteresis*, or 'embodied expressions of *hysteresis*' (McDonough and Polzer 2012, p. 372). These employees suffered from a 'destabilized *habitus*, torn by contradiction and internal division' (Bourdieu 2000: 160 in McDonough and Polzer 2012, p. 374). McDonough and Polzer are right to point out that this state of *hysteresis* is not to be viewed as signalling a state of constant adjustments, rather that *hysteresis* seems to occur at 'critical moments' when the *habitus* 'misfires or is out of phase' (Bourdieu 2000, p. 162 in McDonough and Polzer 2012, p. 362) with the conditions of the field.

Arlie Hochschild: The Managed Heart *(1983)*

I also use the concept of emotion work to explain how employees learn how to disguise feeling out of place in certain situations. It is a crucial skill in learning to play the game at work and fit in. To theorize this I draw on Hochschild's idea of emotion work. Hochschild wanted to understand social interactions between people. In particular, she wanted to explore why she was witnessing conventions shaping certain displays of feeling and emotion management (1979, 1983, 1997, 2003). Understanding what one feels requires one to explore how 'latent feeling rules' are applied in everyday interactions with others (Hochschild 1983, p. 18). She undertakes this exploration in her influential study *The Managed Heart* (1983), which is widely known because it introduces theoretical concepts that have promising potential for broad application in other disciplines. I discuss her empirical work in more detail in Chap. 2, but here I want to focus on some of her key concepts which have informed the direction of my own research, these being emotion work, transmutation, and feeling rules.[5]

In Hochschild's study of Delta Airlines (1983), she studied the mechanisms that enabled the employee to act out the role of the caring and professional flight attendant. Hochschild's conceptual ideas about acting, performance, and cultural roles are influenced by Goffman (1959). However she differs from him by focusing on the processes that are managed internally by the subject. Whereas Goffman examined action observable in body language, facial expressions, and gestures, Hochschild looks closely at the work that goes in to using and managing emotion to create convincing and believable performances. Hochschild's study shows that becoming a 'Delta Airline' flight attendant means more than simply putting on the uniform: employees are expected to embody the corporate brand materially and emotionally.

Emotion Work

Hochschild describes a previously unacknowledged, labour-intensive process of managing emotion so as to either convey a particular embodied emotion outwardly to others in the workplace, or to conceal an emotion so that it is hidden from other people's conscious awareness. One of the concepts she describes here to develop her argument is emotion work. Hochschild describes emotion work by first comparing it to her theory of emotional labour: '… the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labour is sold for a wage and therefore has *exchange* value' (1983, p. 7). Emotion work is slightly different in that, as she describes, it is a useful practice with no obvious exchange value: 'I use the synonymous terms *emotion work* or *emotion management* to refer to these same acts done in a private context where they have *use value*' (italics in original, Hochschild 1983, p. 7; see page 181 in book for further discussion). Hochschild suggests that we may undertake emotion work in our day-to-day lives in order to present feelings in a more agreeable way to friends, family and acquaintances, hiding anger or embarrassment to preserve social relations. Emotion work has no obvious exchange value but it is useful to the person. It helps a person to manage feelings during interactions with people out of respect for the other person. It is also useful because it helps the person to adhere to the prevailing rules that govern a particular social space. Preserving social relations may be necessary if we are to fit in and maintain our position within a friendship group or family. Doing emotion work, then, can also be practiced reluctantly, or even without so much self-awareness as to render it a conscious choice. Trying to fit in as a particular kind of worker can be an emotional experience for some people; therefore, I look at how employees do emotion work to try and manage their feelings whilst in the workplace so that their capacity to fit in at work is not jeopardized.

Transmutation

Emotion work has no obvious exchange value but, nonetheless, keeps social relations running smoothly. Emotion work also takes place within the workplace. Hochschild sees this as being a form of exploitation at work, which she describes specifically as the 'transmutation' of a private emotional system. Transmutation of an emotional system is taking what one might do in one's private life to work on feelings and using it to advance the needs of an organization. Hochschild describes transmutation as an 'instrumental stance' (1983, p. 20) taken by capitalist enterprises towards emotion work. Emotion work undertaken by an employee can be immensely useful in workplace relations; this utilization of emotion work in the workplace requires employees to work on themselves and their feelings to enact a good worker performance that will enhance the organization. Hochschild shows that this is difficult work, and that this is so tacit that it is frequently taken for granted and not even recognized as work by the organization. As such, the value of emotion work often goes unrecognized. This is particularly concerning to Hochschild who successfully revealed that emotion management is problematically bound up with constructions of gender at work (Hochschild 1983, 1997). She argues that, because it is framed as a natural skill for women, it is not recognized as 'work' or valued as such.

Feeling Rules

Hochschild also discussed how feelings are subject to rules, and how the way they are expressed is constrained by display rules. Emotions are bound up in communications that are, as Fineman states, 'conditioned by cultural imperatives: the social rules that sanction what is appropriate to feel and express' (2008, p. 1). Emotion work, then, is embedded within an emotion system of a workplace that produces its own unique set of structured feeling rules.[6] Hochschild describes feeling rules as, '… standards used in emotional conversations to determine what is rightly owed and owing in the currency of feeling. Through them, we tell what is "due" in each relation, each role,' (1983, p. 18).

In our day-to-day lives, feeling rules are what structure how one 'should' feel (Hochschild 1998); they are often implicit within social interactions and frequently only detected through mistakes, *faux pas*, and sanctions. We watch our audience closely to see whether our emotion displays are within the boundaries of feeling rules, or whether we have strayed into risky territory. We can gauge how appropriate and legitimate emotional displays are by watching the reactions of others; we pick up on rules that imply, for instance, that 'you ought to be ashamed', 'you ought not to let your anxiety show', 'you should feel grateful', or 'I am shocked by your reaction'. Fineman (2000, p. 2) develops this by suggesting that organizations adopt emotion rules of wider society but also adapt them to create 'emotion codes of propriety' that are specific to that workplace. This is echoed by Flam who writes that organizations have emotion rules which 'prescribe in what way these emotions should be constructed and displayed' (2002, p. 92). Further to this though, Fineman (2000) adds that this can lead to conflict and tension if there is a jarring between the individual and these organizational emotion codes.

We are likely to recognize feeling rules that govern us when we are asked to account for the way we feel, so for example, why we might feel envious, angry, or sad in a given context: 'A call for account implies that emotional conventions are not in order and must be brought up to consciousness for repair' (Hochschild 1983, p. 58). In a work context, certain emotion displays are permitted, for example, aggression shown by men at a board meeting may be interpreted as a sign of ambition in some organizations, whereas the same behaviour from women can be restricted and disapproved of.

However, Barbalet (2001) is critical of the idea of feeling rules; he argues that cultural norms are 'too broad' to be conceptualized as rules (2001, p. 23), and what is missing in Hochschild's approach is an explanation of how these rules become embedded and reproduced through day-to-day practices. Rather than feeling rules simply being cultural constructs that label and regulate emotion, Barbalet (2001) suggests that a relational approach (that draws on the idea of *habitus*) to emotions better accounts for how people are structured culturally and socially by feeling rules. I agree with Barbalet that describing feeling rules using cultural norms alone is not enough to capture how a person's feelings are shaped by and shape the social space they are in. So, I adopt a relational approach in this book, drawing on Bourdieu's toolkit of *habitus*, field, and capital, to make sense of how feelings are structured and structuring.

Methodology

Voices

This is a qualitative study of people's experiences whilst at work. It is an analysis of experiences shared by employees in conversation with me during semi-structured interviews. In total then, 31 employees took part in an interview and are from a range of social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. These conversations are complex and dynamic; they contain a myriad of stories, performances, and identity formations. Interpreting the personal histories of our interviewees and making connections with wider social structures and issues, Back (2007, 2015) notes, is a journey in history. For him, certain people are able to weave a story through time and space more freely, and there are others who are fixed in time—or worse, forgotten. It is the forgotten people, the erasure of those who don't come to 'count' for very much at all—they were born, they lived, they died—the ordinary people, that Back marks out as the sociologist's project (see also Addison and Mountford 2015): we are the 'spectators in the lives of others' (Back 2007, p. 7). What is more, paying attention to the moments of 'repair and hope in which a livable life is made possible' within the ordinariness of everyday life is, as Back notes (2015, p. 832), an important focus within reflexive research. As such, this book will only ever be a partial account of the research process; as Skeggs states, 'it would be impossible to reduce into text and convey completely the research encounter' (1997, p. 17).

The epistemological approach I adopt in this book means that I frame my discussions as illustrative of the *known* aspects of the employees' identities which they chose to share with me. This is particularly important when it comes to class. Nineteen women and 12 men were interviewed, with ages ranging from 25 to 65 years old.[7] Ten of the sample self-identified as working-class, 13 felt that they were middle-class, and eight participants did not know how they would describe themselves in class terms. These participants talked about class using their own conceptual frameworks, drawing on varied understandings that ranged from what job they did, to what level of education they had attained, their family background, where they lived, value and stigma attached to class identities, what networks they had, and what cultural interests they had. Nobody exclusively relied on one objective measure of class, instead, these identifications were complex, multi-faceted, and shifting.

When asked to talk about gender, these participants often drew on a heterosexual binary of feminine/masculine and female/male, but this was not always the case; there were times when gender was negotiated beyond these traditional normative boundaries. Therefore, even though I indicate 19 women and 12 men, these binary categories organize the participants but do not prescribe their performances of gender within the workplace.

Participants only talked about aspects of their identity that they wanted to share in the interview. As such, this study did not collect information about everything, for example, sexuality, ethnic origin, disabilities, level of education, and so on. This is not to say that these aspects of identity are not important, or did not arise. I discuss the sample giving attention to what it can and cannot illustrate. What can be illustrated in this book is limited based on what the people told me about themselves. For instance, the sample is based predominantly on white British identifying participants ($n=27$) located in a UK context; I also spoke to four participants who volunteered information indicating a different national and racial origin. My data are illustrative then of people who predominantly identify as white British, working and living in the north of England. Discussions ranging across different ethnic and racial origins would have generated different analyses. This could be said also of sexuality, for instance. Only one person talked about her sexuality openly, identifying as gay as part of her workplace identity. No one else shared their positioning as LGBTQ or heterosexual in the interview. Two people in the study lived with observable disabilities—one person needed to use a wheelchair or walking stick, and the other person told me of a mild hearing impairment and pointed out their aid to hearing. Living with disability is not always discernible however, and it may have been that participants in my study did not wish to talk about this with me. Participants did tell me their ages, but often this did not map on to any pre-conceived ideas of what a particular age was generally seen to represent.

Class Identifications

I think about class in this book as being something which is subjective and experienced day-to-day by people. Therefore, I did not sample participants based on objective class criteria. This may seem odd to some people reading this, but I wanted the participants to decide how they saw themselves in class terms, if at all. Sometimes the participants talked about class ambivalently (see Savage et al. 2001; Addison 2012), and this uncertainty reveals much about how these people experienced the workplace. Participants also made claims to identity that other people would mis-recognize. This is often the case with class where someone may identify as middle-class and yet be mis-recognized by others and positioned as working-class (Addison and Mountford 2015). Class is something which is not straightforwardly identifiable, and involves complex nuances, negotiations, and resistance; I have tried to be mindful of this in writing this book.

The working-class fraction in this study at first sight appears to present a unified grouping. However, a deeper exploration highlights that working-classness is not a homogenous category. It became clearer during discussions with participants that being working-class connoted a number of different things: for instance, being 'respectable', 'trustworthy', 'salt of the earth', and 'hardworking' despite their use of a familiar class label. Perhaps surprisingly, the participants rarely referred to their job role as a way of exclusively self-identifying as working-class; indeed, many other subjective factors impacted on this identification.

Some participants in this study were particularly concerned with distinguishing between the 'rough' and 'respectable' fraction of working-classness. Being respectable working-class, which Skeggs (1997) writes about in her study of young, working-class women, has value attached to this position that can be used in exchange in certain fields. The participants in my study who self-identified as working-class seemed to be aware of the value of being seen as respectable and tended to try and emphasize this aspect of their class identity. However, a number of participants were also concerned to separate themselves from part of what they perceived to be an undesirable and stigmatized class fraction. For instance, the class fraction of '*chav*' was deployed by participants to frequently describe a kind of person that was widely seen to disgust and repel other people. This is a class identity that operated as more than simply connoting 'rough' qualities though (see also Tyler 2013, 2015). Marking someone as a chav viscerally evoked disgust and contempt amongst some employees. It was a class label that connoted a lack of belonging within this workplace and quickly identified people who did not fit in well.

The people in this sample rarely stayed within these self-identified class fractions in a unified and consistent way. Knowing what class connoted in certain fields and how to harness the value of different class fractions is an important part of game-playing. Although many of the participants identified with a particular class, it was evident that class was frequently being mis-recognized (Bourdieu 1984). Some participants self-identified as lower middle-class, but they were not viewed like this by other people. Others frequently attempted to claim a working-class identity (as a 'Grafter'), but this was often blocked and mis-recognized by colleagues as an attempt to conceal middle-classness. There are three distinctions made within this study relating to middle-classness by the participants—these are 'upper middle-class', 'middle-class', and 'lower middle-class'. As later discussions in this book will show, being lower middle-class was considered by many participants to be a shameful and unwanted identity because it connoted pretentiousness, as well as being boring and somewhat conservative.

In addition to these class fractions outlined above, participants also self-identified as 'normal and ordinary'. This class fraction was used interchangeably in the discussions to refer to a working-class *and* a more middle-class identity—but what is teased out in the analysis is that what being normal actually connoted for these participants was specific to their desire to defend themselves against undesirable connotations of class.

The boundaries of these class fractions I talk about in this book are to be treated as fluid and often at times contradictory. This class map I have described loosely positions how participants talked about themselves in terms of class but it does not present a unified picture. This was expected and anticipated given the nature of the study of subjective experiences of class in people's day-to-day lives.

Reflexivity

In this research and throughout this book, I have tried to adopt a critical approach to knowledge, that is, a way of thinking about how we know what we know. This involves being reflexive regarding how knowledge is generated, produced, represented, and legitimated (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Childers et al. 2013; Burgess, 1984; Carter and Delamont, 1996; Collins 1998; Denzin 1978; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Denzin et al., 2011; Florida, 2002; Florida et al. 2008; Friese 2012; Guest and MacQueen 2012; Hoffman 2007; Klienman 2003; Klienman and Copp 1993; Day 2012; Skeggs 1997; Blaxter et al. 2001). This approach situates knowledge as not out there in the world to be excavated, but rather, generated, produced, and interpreted by people. In the process of designing and conducting research, Denzin suggests that it is important that we ask:

> who has the power to control the definition of evidence, who defines the kinds of materials that count as evidence, who determines what methods best produce the best forms of evidence, whose criteria and standards are used to evaluate quality evidence?
>
> (Denzin 2009, p. 142)

Listening and being attentive to the voices of my participants is important to me. This involves incorporating reflexivity into this research design as well as trying to be reflexive about my positioning in the world. Skeggs (2002) reminds us that reflexive research means being careful about how we reconstruct the lives of others and being attentive to the symbolic violence that is done when we try to represent what we think data means. Being reflexive in the research process, then, is about being accountable for how we make claims to knowledge. Being reflexive about my position in the world meant frequently asking myself, 'why would this person talk to me?' This encouraged me to think about my own privileges and how this could potentially impact on whether the person would want to speak to me, and also, how they would be able to tell their story in the interview.

The Higher Education Workplace

This research is set in a Higher Education workplace. I wanted to talk to people from various departments within this Higher Education Institution (HEI) to draw comparisons within and across employees' experiences. Universities are not all about academics; these employees are able to function because of everyone else that works there too (Addison 2012; Addison and Mountford 2015). However, the scope of my research was limited by time and resources, so I decided to focus on four areas within the university: Estates and Maintenance ($n=12$), Academics ($n=9$), Management ($n=7$), and Business Development ($n=3$). These four areas of work within the university were identified because they offer the widest scope of workplace relations within a manual, knowledge based, and business development setting, and it was anticipated that employees would have very different experiences interacting with colleagues both within and across these work spaces.

I adopt a different way of thinking about the workplace in this book compared to more traditional conceptualizations of work. I am not so much interested in the day-to-day duties connected to a person's job specification, although they do add context. Instead, I am interested in how the workplace is a setting for complex relations between people. To put it simply, I want to know more about why people act the way they do at work. As I touched on earlier, Bourdieu's conceptualization of social field is useful here to think about work as a social space, and a person's positioning within this kind of social structure. In any workplace, there are many possible social spaces where a person might act a certain way one minute, and then adapt their performance as they move into a different space with different kinds of people. These spaces, and the way people act, are organized and structured in interesting and complex ways through *social games* of distinction. To think of it another way, people are always in 'pursuit of distinction' (Bourdieu 1984, p. 223), and how they do this can change depending on where they are and who they are with. I do not think about this workplace as one unified social field then; instead, multiple fields are operating, and often overlap, thus sharing characteristics and rules governing similar social games of distinction. I am fascinated with how people learn to be a certain way at work, and how these employees endeavour to acquire knowledge of how to play the game in certain places and around certain people.

Location

The location of my research is in the north of England, in a vibrant, post-industrial city. It is an area that still remains steeped in the history of hard, masculinized industry (coalmining, ship building, and now car manufacturing), but that is changing. Whole communities have grown up with, been employed by, and suffered the pains of these declining industries in the north, and so this kind of economic, social, and cultural history will inevitably impact on and shape the perceptions of people living in the area, as well as those who move into this part of the UK. As a methodological and conceptual point then (Lawler 2015), it is important to note that people's attitudes and beliefs about class and gender included in this book, for instance, will be coloured by these economic, social, and cultural histories[8] (Lawler 2015; Taylor 2012).

What is more, it is an area in the UK that has long been identified by others as being traditionally working-class. However, this is not to say that this is a geographical and cultural identity that is unified and claimed by the people living here. Marking someone as working-class because of their job and the local industry is complicated, and has changed alongside more nuanced understandings of what class and gender are and how these shape lived experiences. This particular location was selected, though, because it is still coping with a significant decline in these industries and is adapting to emerging knowledge-based and service sectors.

Book Structure

So far in this chapter I have discussed the focus of this book, some conceptual terms, and my methodological approach. I am interested in the construction of the worker and how it is located through the lens of class and gender. I am also concerned with how people play social games of distinction at work, and how these practices can at times become a mechanism for exclusion. Chap. 2: *What is work in the twenty-first century?*, presents a discussion about work, drawing on relevant empirical studies. I look at debates relating to constructions of work in the twenty-first century and whether work is still considered to be a site that is important and relevant to people's identities and everyday lives. I outline tenets in the debate around the feminization of work and how changes in the kind of work people do, and who does it, have not necessarily amounted to notable advantages for women. This debate goes in many different directions, but I want to pursue related discussions around the culturalization of work in particular. This strand of work studies suggests that people attempt to produce themselves as 'workers' according to the needs and expectations of the market (Du Gay 1996; Casey 1995). I look at studies that examine performances of gender in the workplace, and how workers and organizations view these gender performances as a resource (Pettinger et al. 2005). Some scholars have argued that this opening up of gender as a resource at work could be considered to have 'liberatory promise' (McDowell 1997, p. 207) for men and women. Whereas others, such as Acker (1990, 2004, 2006) and Wacjman (1998), have suggested that a gendered logic structures the workplace and so continues to position women in particular in ways that are limiting. These different discussions emphasize that gender is central to how people are constructed, and construct themselves, as workers. Following this, I look at conceptualizations of class in the new economy, and how this has informed identity constructions in the workplace. The main theme that emerges from these discussions about class and gender is that employees are increasingly expected to be able to produce the right kind of self at work and this has implications for who can and cannot fit in. Class is no longer viewed as simply a description of what job someone does; it has a much broader application in explaining why people do what they do and are as they are. Later, I consider research that looks at emotion work alongside class and gender in the workplace. I am interested in how emotion work is used in critical moments at work to conceal how a person might be feeling for reasons to do with class and gender.

In Chap. 3: *The marketization of the Higher Education workplace*, I consider some of the changes that are underway in Higher Education in a climate of neoliberalism and austerity, and the impact this has on it as a place of work. Various elements such as the switch from collegiality to managerialism, a focus on student fees, pressure to publish, and the burden of having to 'add value' to one's role, are brought together here in this chapter to highlight the increasing competition and insecurity within HE.

Chap. 4: *Playing games in the HE workplace* begins by discussing social games and how they operate in the workplace. I am interested in how employees come to know, recognizes, and play games at work, and how they develop a 'feel' for the game. I draw on Bourdieu's ideas about game-playing, legitimate culture, and cultural capital to assist my analysis here of how employees grasp the logic of the game that is being played at work. My aim here is to make sense of how employees think, feel, and act at work as a form of game-playing. I suggest that competitive struggles between employees in game-playing are ongoing, and that employees demonstrate different levels of awareness of the game.

In the next two chapters, I discuss how having the 'right' identity and capitals is a way for some employees to secure an advantage in game-playing at work. Chap. 5: *Knowledge and embodiment of femininity at work* considers how employees develop a feel for the game through knowledge of femininity, and how this can be used to construct a desirable identity. I explore examples of respectable femininities, sexuality, and emotionality in employees' discussions and how they give an insight into what is perceived to be the right and wrong way to do femininity at work. Knowing the right and wrong way to do femininity is an important feature of being able to play the game well (Bourdieu 1990), and reproduces a legitimate culture in the workplace.

Chap. 6: *Knowledge and embodiment of class at work* explores how employees develop knowledge of class as part of game-playing. I look at how this knowledge demarcates the right kind of identity at work. I look at figures of 'the *chav*', 'Mrs. Bucket', 'A Grafter', and 'Normal' in employees' discussions as indicators of what kind of person is able to fit in, or not, in this workplace. My aim here is to show that class is used to make distinctions and value judgements about certain employees by their colleagues. Knowledge about class is used by employees to play games at work and fit in with the prevailing legitimated culture. This kind of activity reproduces a classed and classing logic to the game. What is more, this kind of game-playing secures inclusion for some and exclusion for others.

Chap. 7: *(Not) 'fitting in' and emotion work* focuses on a particular aspect of employees' attempts to fit in and play games through their use of emotion work. Where in previous chapters I looked at how employees try to fit in and play games using knowledge of class and femininity, this chapter considers how employees use emotion work to manage emotions that might reveal that they sometimes feel like a fish out of water (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). I show here how emotion work helps employees cope with a mismatch between *habitus* and field (*hysteresis)*, that it helps employees to present themselves in a more desirable way, and it helps employees to fit in with organizational expectations.

In Chap. 8: *Concluding Thoughts*, I discuss how identity matters at work and impacts on the way social games are played. Knowledge of the right and wrong ways to be at work can help someone to play the game and fit in. Not having this knowledge can have important consequences for a person's sense of belonging and inclusion at work. Emotion work is a vital resource that employees use to conceal moments where they feel as though they do not quite fit in for reasons specifically to do with class and gender.

Notes

1. This is not a study of the educational field, although the field of education will have some bearing on the context and uniqueness of the workplace I am studying.
2. I critically engage with some of the problems and pitfalls that emerge in Hochschild's discussions of 'the self' in order to develop my own arguments. Whilst Hochschild looks closely at the personal perspective, embodiments, and beliefs held by the subject, that is, 'men and their moments', (1983, p. 227) I believe that she also faces phenomenological problems when she introduces the concept of 'authenticity' into her work and an ambiguity around a 'core' self. This discussion is being developed as a paper

'Bridging the Divide between Hochschild and Bourdieu' forthcoming 2016.

3. Each field is also situated in a broader field of power.
4. In my own research I am focusing on game-playing that takes place within social fields, and I leave the analysis of the field of power and field of cultural production to other scholars.
5. Whilst her other concepts such as emotional labour, deep/surface acting, and authenticity are significant, I do not use these in my book. I have included a discussion about how emotion management is *done* in Appendix 1. I have also included a discussion of her idea of the 'self'—I think both with and against her ideas of deep/surface acting and her reliance on authenticity and a real/false self.
6. Raymond Williams' concept of 'structures of feeling' (1977, p. 132) refers to values, beliefs, and meaning structured through feeling, that is, the 'affective elements of consciousness and relationships' that are historically located. He particularly saw structures of feeling evident in art and literature. Whilst Williams' ideas about feelings are popular, I adopt a more Bourdieusian approach as advocated by Barbalet (2001) in this study.
7. Please see Appendix 1 for demographic breakdown of participants.
8. If this study was repeated in a different part of the UK, it is very likely that people living and working in the area might say different things about class and gender for reasons outlined above. It is not my intention, however, to suggest that the analysis and discussion in this study are generalizable; rather, it is a study that is specific to this location and type of workplace, and provides an insight into how these employees think about class and gender at work.

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CHAPTER 2

What Is Work in the Twenty-First Century?

This chapter considers existing debates relating to identity and work in the twenty-first century and identifies gaps within these arguments. I begin by broadly outlining debates about what work is, how it is done, and by whom, in and around the twenty-first century and in a UK context. I then narrow my focus by looking specifically at literature that relates to gender, class, and emotion work. These themes in the study of work are important because they help to develop an insight into how the construction of work and workers is changing in the UK, and how work can be a site of inclusion and exclusion of certain kinds of people.

I explore the debate around the feminization of work that developed initially to try and explain the impact an increasing number of women entering the labour market has had on the economy in the UK. This debate goes in many different directions but I want to pursue related discussions around the culturalization of work in particular. This strand of work studies suggests that people attempt to produce themselves as workers according to the needs and expectations of the market (Du Gay 1996; Casey 1995). I look at studies that examine performances of gender in the workplace, and how workers and organizations view these gender performances as a resource (Pettinger et al. 2005). Some scholars have argued that this opening up of gender as a resource at work could be considered to have 'liberatory promise' (McDowell 1997, p. 207) for men and women. Whereas others, such as Acker (1990, 2004, 2006) and Wacjman (1998), have suggested that a gendered logic structures the workplace

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M. Addison, *Social Games and Identity in the Higher Education Workplace*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-51803-3_2

and so continues to position women in particular in ways that are limiting. These different discussions emphasize that gender is central to how people are constructed, and construct themselves, as workers.

Following this, I look at discussions about class in studies of work. I begin by talking about how class has been argued to be a 'dead category' (Giddens 1994; Urry 2000; Beck 1992, 1994; Pakulski and Waters 1996) because it is believed to be no longer relevant in a post-industrial society. Some scholars suggest that people do not see work as central to their identities. However, since this assertion about the supposed 'death of class', cultural theorizations of class have emerged in response (Skeggs 1997; Lawler 1999, 2000; Savage 2000) and have reinvigorated class debates. This literature has become relevant to work studies because it prompts discussion around *what* kind of people get what jobs. Class is no longer viewed as simply a description of what job someone does, it has a much broader application in explaining why people do what they do and are as they are.

Later in this chapter I consider research that looks at emotion work alongside class and gender in the workplace. I am interested in how emotion work is used in critical moments at work to conceal how a person might be feeling for reasons to do with class and gender. The important theme that emerges from these debates centres around how class and gender are increasingly being invoked as properties of a valued personhood. In later discussions I hope to show how my research develops this theme by exploring how employees develop knowledge of what aspects of class and gender are seen to have value, or not, at work.

Understanding Work in the Twenty-First Century

So, it is worth beginning by asking: what does work look like in the twenty-first century? The notion of *work* no longer just refers to waged employment that is legalized and visible (Glucksmann 1995; Pettinger et al. 2005; Bottero 2005). It is a category that has needed to expand to include many other formations, including: non-waged employment, volunteer work, labour undertaken in the home and in private, care work, emotion work, and illegal work. As Pettinger et al. (2005) note, the boundaries of how we understand work are changing in order to 'accommodate work's diverse forms' (2005, p. 4). These writers also draw attention to how the spatial and temporal dimensions of work are changing. People are now able to work remotely and at varying times during the day, meaning that when and where work is done is much more flexible. This is largely thanks to significant advances in technology; the Internet, for example, means that how we work is faster and enables us to be globally connected to others. Many organizations, then, are now centralized around information communication technologies, forming a new 'network society', as Castells puts it (2000; see also Lee 2011; Gatta et al. 2009).

Pettinger et al. (2005) and Bottero (2005) go further by highlighting how work is tangled up with the time we spend with friends and family, and this forces us to think about how we might separate work from other areas of our life. These scholars also draw attention to how not all work is equally valued, and so this means that the 'link between pay and wages and work cannot be taken for granted' (Pettinger et al. 2005, p. 4). Work in the twenty-first century, then, takes many different forms. Recognizing this helps to make certain kinds of work visible and encourages debate around how it is valued.

Expanding the category of work also demands a discussion about workers. The category of worker is no longer limited to someone who is in paid work. For example, with more attention now being given to the work that is done in private, it is possible to think about caregivers as workers that are unwaged (Hochschild 1989, 1997) and to rethink how this work is valued in wider society (Duffy et al. 2015). This means, then, that expanding the category of work opens up new conceptualizations of 'worker'.

Central to discussions about work and workers is the question about *who* ends up doing *what* work. There have been significant discussions around the division of labour, in particular in areas relating to women's equality (Bradley 1989, 1999a; Walby 1986, 1997; Pateman 1988; McDowell 2009; Crompton 1990; Hakim 1996) and racial diversity (Acker 2006; Crenshaw 1989, 1991; Ahmed 2012; Pahl 1988), for example, that have challenged who ends up doing what jobs (Duffy 2015; Showers 2015; Macdonald 2015). Connected to this is the formalization and informalization of work contracts: these can take the form of temporary contracts, zero hours, just in time work, part-time work, flexi-time work, and so on. These kinds of contracts impact on who does what kind of work and who is afforded certain rights and protection through work.

Miriam Glucksmann (1995, 2009) has been central in advancing discussions about what work is and who does it, by focusing on some of the structural differences that organize and shape work. In particular, Glucksmann looks at the 'relational organisation of all labour' (1995, p. 63) and argues that 'work tasks' are embedded in social activities and relationships (1995, p. 63). She emphasizes the impact that feminism has had on studies of work; it challenged taken-for-granted notions that work only referred to paid employment by turning attention towards the role women perform in the home and through childcare. Glucksmann develops this feminist insight and wider recognition of invisible work through the conceptual model called 'Total Social Organisation of Labour' (TSOL): 'the manner in which all labour in a particular society is divided up between and allocated to different structures, institutions and activities' (1995, p. 67). It is important to stress here that she is not saying that *everything* counts as work; indeed, she comments that if everything was construed as work then it would be 'difficult to isolate any activity that is not work' (1995, p. 64). She suggests thinking about work as something which is embedded in a wide range of relations, from the social to familial, political to sexual and not 'purely economic' (1995, p. 66). Her TSOL model helps to conceptualize how work is 'the organisation of activities from the standpoint of their economic constraints and relations' (1995, p. 67). Glucksmann suggests that her model can be used to develop a picture of how labour is organized in society and is interconnected with other spheres—for example, housework and childcare done by a person in one sphere makes paid work possible for another person in another sphere. This is also discussed extensively by Hochschild in her research around the 'time bind' (1997). This, and Glucksmann's work, has helped significantly in extending the boundaries relating to how work is conceptualized.

This helps to outline the parameters of my own research: for instance, I focus on the experiences of employees who are in waged work within a Higher Educational Institution. I consider 'work' that these people do within this workplace that is not obviously exchanged for a wage. This includes emotion work and embodying desirable aspects of a classed and gendered identity. When I am thinking about the work that these employees are doing, I focus my attentions on employees' experiences in a located work 'place'. This workplace consists of buildings, meeting rooms, corridors, offices, lecture halls, and so on. This is important to acknowledge, as I am unable to account for employees' experiences of working remotely here.

Whilst the scholars I have mentioned so far have focused on constructing new ways to understand work and workers, other scholars have argued that the sociology of work cannot keep up with transformations in society and is no longer useful as an analytic approach. It is suggested that 'work' does not matter to how a person constructs their identity anymore. Thompson and Smith (2009), for instance, write that other approaches such as sociologies of mobility, class, space, and globalization are more suitable for making sense of people and their practices in society. Further to this, Pakulski and Waters (1996) have argued that work is no longer relevant to how people construct their identity, and that a person is more likely to spend their time and money 'in the pursuit of symbolic attachments that tend to advance the interests, identities, values, and commitments to which they subscribe and aspire' (Pakulski and Waters 1996, p. 157). Kirk and Wall (2011) offer a different view, though: their empirical studies of railway workers, teachers, and bank workers show that work is a site where identity is constructed and indeed resisted.

Bolton and Laaser (2013) also add to this debate by emphasizing the deeply social and cultural aspects to work. For them, the economy is 'enmeshed and shaped by moral sentiments and norms' (2013, p. 517). In particular, they look at how people can become disconnected from work when there is a misalignment of these values between themselves, the organization, and the wider community. Bolton and Laaser suggest that, by looking at the workplace through a moral lens, this may offer an insight into how people negotiate and develop an understanding of the human element to work.

The debate around work and its relevance to people's lives has also developed to consider issues of embodiment and identity (see Strangleman and Warren 2008). For example, studies of service sector work have endeavoured to tease out the complexities of how employees are using their own embodiment and emotions to do their job and do it well (see Mann 2004; McDowell 2000, 2001a, 2009; Hebson 2009). McDowell (2009) researched the commoditization of the body in service sector work, asking questions like, 'who does what sort of work, and why'? This empirical study is focused on the body/work relationship, unpacking how bodies come to be classed, gendered, and racialized. McDowell's study highlights how certain bodies are marked for certain kinds of work and excluded from others. It also gives attention to how emotional labour is attributed as something which is innate to women and is used by organizations without adequate recognition or rewards. Taken together, this sort of focus on embodiment, identity, and social relations has helped to develop a 'deeper understanding of the activities and social relations involved in the conduct of work' (Pettinger et al. 2005, p. 9).

Feminization of the Workplace

The feminization of work is a theory that refers to changes in the kind of work, and the people who do this work, in capitalist economies. It has been used widely to describe and analyse the following: a transition from manual to information, knowledge, and service based jobs (McDowell 2000, 2001a; Bradley et al. 2000); a focus on customer service and care work; the conditions of work such as less job security, short term contracts, and poor wages; changes in the kind of people employed for particular jobs (Bruegel 2001); and, most notably, it refers to an increase in a female labour force (Walby 1986, 1997; Crompton 1990).

There is an important body of work that explores gender and work (see Bradley 1989, 1996, 1999a; Crompton 1990, Cockburn 1991; Delamont 2001; Glucksmann 2000; Hochschild 1983; McDowell 1997, 2001b, 2002; McDowell et al. 2005; Haraway 1991, Walby 1997, 2011; Bolton 2005; Bolton and Muzio 2008; Adkins 1995, 2001, 2002a). This literature looks at how work is changing for both men and women, as traditionally masculine industrial work declines and the service sector expands (Ritzer 2004). It is argued by various scholars that this economic transition to a post-industrial, 'knowledge', and 'information' society, most noticeable in the USA, the UK and Australia (Castells 2000; Delamont 2001; Löfgren 2003; Strangleman and Warren 2008; Edgell 2006), has given rise to significant growth in female participation in the labour market. These debates contend that the service sector has utilized what are viewed as 'feminine' and 'soft' skills, and this is connected to greater numbers of women now in work (McDowell 2009; see also Bolton 2005; Hochschild 1983; Bradley 1999a).

Other sectors have also capitalized on a feminized, skilled workforce as a way of developing markets in competitive times (see Bolton 2005; Thompson and Warhurst 1998). This has mostly been viewed as a 'success story', with increasing numbers of women in work and the increased visibility of feminized skills. However, Bradley notes that this rise of women in paid work is in part to do with capitalists 'taking advantage of the structure of segregation, which puts a lower value on "women's work"' (1999a, p. 29), suggesting that feminization of work may not be advantageous for *all* women. This is echoed in a study by Huppatz (2009), who looked at the value of female capital in paid care work. She found that, whilst women in this study were able to readily utilize feminized capital in care work, they also tended to be constrained to low-paid parts of the sector. It was not an easy route for these women to build on feminized capital and secure progression to higher positions within care work. Huppatz also adds that 'feminine and female capitals have limited conversion when an agent moves out of the caring field' (2009, p. 61). Further to this, Bruegel (2001) has suggested that the rise in female participation in paid work, as a result of being perceived as cheaper labour, has meant that men have increasingly become squeezed out of the lower end of the labour market, particularly those men who lack formal qualifications. McDowell (2002, p. 41; 2001a, b) also shares this concern that young, male individuals who lack qualifications are becoming increasingly disadvantaged by the feminization of work and a growing service sector, and some encounter a 'crisis of masculinity'.

There are a number of scholars (Bradley et al. 2000; Adkins 1995, 2001, Adkins 2002a, b; Walby 1997) who are critical of the theory of feminization being portrayed as a 'success story' for women. It is misleading to view rising female participation in paid work, for instance, as evidence of success and wider opportunities for women when a closer look shows that a lot of women still tend to be clustered in areas of low pay, subject to poor working conditions, and subject to sexualized work relations (Acker 2006; Glucksmann 2000; Toynbee 2003; McDowell 2009; Adkins 2001, 1995; Walby 1986, 1997; Duffy et al. 2015). Whilst there may be more women in paid work than there have been before, they are not on an equal footing with male employees. For instance, it is still a common assumption at work that the skills needed to do particular jobs are gender-specific (Bradley 1999a; Wacjman 1998; Cockburn 1991; Crompton 1990), and this has meant that women are considered *better* suited to certain jobs (e.g., care work, emotional labour) because of their 'naturalised' feminine dispositions (Hochschild 1983). In addition, Gregg highlights that, despite more flexible workplace practices, women are still being re-inscribed as 'the primary caregiver in family relationships' (2008, p. 287) and this limits what work women are able to do under such constraints.

Adkins (1995) challenges the idea that the feminization of the workplace has been positive for women. She discusses a gendered division of labour in her study of a franchise chain hotel and a small leisure park, where she examined women's employment and working conditions. Adkins shows that sexual relations were central to the organization of different roles in both the hotel and the leisure park. She highlights how women were expected to act in ways that were highly sexualized (e.g., flirt with customers and male employees) and they were also expected to look and dress in certain sexualized ways (revealing uniforms). If a woman wanted to work at the leisure park, then she needed to perform particular feminine/sexualized attributes in order to be hired to do the role; this often meant that women had to look beautiful and 'fresh' in order '*to be workers*' (1995, p. 107), whereas men just needed to be clean and willing. Furthermore, not only were women expected to look and act a certain way, these women were also prevented from operating any of the 'fast' rides in the leisure park, because this was seen to be a masculinized role suited to the male employees. The leisure park manager said that *only* men could operate these rides because of the physical strength needed—when in reality the ride need only be operated by pressing a button. Adkins' study exposes how the gendered division of labour in the leisure park was based on sexual relations that were highly heteronormative. Adkins (1995) then does not support the argument that the feminization of work is advantageous for all women, and I would tend to agree. Her study highlights that many women tend to be clustered in lower grade, feminized roles. What is more, she does not believe that this happens simply because of uneven opportunities in the labour market. Adkins argues that women are situated in these particular kinds of feminized jobs because they are designed out of the assumed competencies required to undertake masculinized roles at work.

That said, the growing feminization of work then has meant that feminized skills and attributes are in greater demand. Bradley et al. (2000) have discussed how the concept of feminization is being used to describe 'new methods of profit accumulation and new ways of organizing production' (2000, p. 78). Organizations are now increasingly alert to the 'resources' that employees bring to work as part of their embodied personhood (Pettinger et al. 2005). This has meant that workers are increasingly expected to be able to demonstrate feminized attributes to meet the changing dynamics of work. Bradley et al. write that this signals a 'call for new types of worker and different working methods' (2000, p. 78). Workplaces are 'deliberately reconstructing their work culture and with them the requirements of working "selves"' (Bradley et al. 2000, p. 78). People are required to work on their 'selves' to fit in with organizational expectations of how an ideal worker is supposed to look and behave. According to Adkins, this has given rise to 'a new sovereignty of appearance, image, and style at work, where the performance of stylized presentations of self has emerged as a key resource in certain sectors of the economy' (2001, p. 674).

Culturalization of the Workplace

This new direction in debates about the 'feminisation of work' dovetails with discussions about the culturalization of the workplace, and in particular, how workers are expected to 'produce themselves' (see Du

Gay 1996; Casey 1995; Strangleman and Warren 2008). Ray and Sayer observe that the debate about culturalization disputes the notion that culture and the economy are 'mutually interacting but separate, institutional orders' (1999, p. 3). Du Gay (1996) writes how the economy is culturally, socially, and historically contingent, and that a 'worker identity' is a constructed category. As Strangleman and Warren (2008), p. 283) note, this increased interest in cultural analysis[1] challenges 'taken-for-granted assumptions about social life and the social constructed nature of identities of all sorts'. Organizations are utilizing cultural categories, and encouraging workers to produce themselves as certain kinds of workers, in order to compete and secure economic success; this means inculcating an alignment between 'the individual employee and the goals and objectives of his or her employing organisation' (Du Gay 1996, p. 115). This kind of activity is 'intimately bound up with questions of identity' (Du Gay 1996, p. 41), and places emphasis on '"culturally" produced *self*-control' (Du Gay 1996, p. 115) and the generation of an 'enterprising self' (Du Gay 1996, p. 138). According to Du Gay, the entrepreneurial self is represented as someone who is mobile, has capital at their disposal, and is self aware, and can respond to the demands of the market. However, I would suggest that this is problematic, as not all people are able to be 'entrepreneurial' and produce the 'right' kind of self. This idea that workers are able to produce the 'right' identity at work (otherwise described as engineering the 'soul', Du Gay 1996, p. 116) to fit with organizational goals presupposes that the person has knowledge about *how* to fit in that, in reality, they may not have. Later in this book then, I explore this particular aspect of fitting in further by looking at how employees acquire knowledge about the 'right' and 'wrong' ways to be seen as valued persons at work. Du Gay encourages further analysis relating to 'the way people think, feel and act in organisations' (1996, p. 41) and how this is structured by wider society. The culturalization of work debate encourages thought about how 'social practices are invariably "meaningful practices"' (Du Gay 1996, p. 40), which are historically and culturally located.

Adkins (2001, 2005) and her other co-writers, such as Lury and Jokinen (Adkins and Lury 2006; Adkins and Jokinen 2008), connect the culturalization of work with discussions around feminization of work. They explore how gender is being constructed as a property of the person that can be utilized and performed to advance the market needs of an organization (Adkins 2005; Adkins and Lury 2006). In the workplace, aspects of femininity and masculinity are increasingly being viewed as properties of personhood that can be utilized and performed by workers to gain an advantage over other competitors. For instance, Bradley et al. comment that, in competitive times, men may ‘need to develop “feminine” aspects of themselves’ (2000, p. 78) if they are to secure certain kinds of employment. Because feminized skills are seen to be desirable traits, they are becoming increasingly expected of employees (Adkins 2001; Bolton and Muzio 2008). However, as Skeggs (2014, p. 2) points out, this is not to say that people now simply ‘become the living embodiment of capital’ and succumb to the demands of the market. People ‘wriggle and squirm within a market system’ (Bolton and Laaser 2013, p. 520). According to Skeggs, ‘…if every action was a transaction of exchange nothing could work, not even capitalism’ (2014, p. 13). What this means then, is not everyone is interested in (or can) propertize aspects of the ‘self’ at work for value in exchange, and to secure advancement. Skeggs (2014) develops this point, and makes a similar argument to Adkins (2001, 2005) here, when she states that not everyone has access to resources with which to capitalize on valued aspects of personhood. Some people are excluded from ‘the conditions of possibility for what it means to become a subject of value’ (Skeggs 2014, p. 8). Moreover, not everyone wants to become the legitimated ‘proper subject of value’ (Skeggs 2014, p. 10, see also Skeggs and Loveday 2012). My own interests in this debate lie in how proper personhood in a work place environment becomes known against those who are positioned as outside of this.

Culturalization and feminization debates dovetail then at this point, creating an image of an ideal worker as someone who is able to produce the right kind of ‘feminized’ self to meet the changing demands of an organization. Linda McDowell’s (1997) study is an excellent example of how gender is increasingly being viewed as a resource at work. McDowell says that, ‘the British economy is now dominated by occupations and jobs in which the ability to conform to a particular embodied workplace performance is crucial’ (1997, p. 206). She conducted a qualitative study of the banking and financial sector, which looked at how men, in particular, are increasingly making claims to feminized performances to fit in with the organizations’ expectations. These workplace performances draw on feminized skills such as empathy, care work, and providing a service with a smile. McDowell is careful to state that, although multiple-gendered performances are now possible in this sector, these performances still operate within a heteronormative matrix. She also writes that, ‘Men and women do not come to work with their gender attributes fixed in place but rather "do" gender in the workplace, inscribing gendered characteristics on the body in ways which conform or transgress expected patterns of behaviour' (1997, p. 133). She goes on to say that, despite this (limited) disruption of conventional heterosexual gendered identities, the possibility of 'doing' gender, 'seem to contain a liberatory promise' (1997, p. 207) for women. I think then that this means she is hopeful that femininity and feminized skill may attain greater value, be re-appropriated by women, and seen as a 'positive advantage' that erodes the gendered division of labour.

However, Judy Wacjman's study (1998), undertaken around the same time as McDowell's study, demonstrates an opposing argument which shows that women are not benefiting from the supposed disruption of traditional gender identities. Wacjman researched five male-dominated, multi-national corporations, where she looked at the management style and workplace experiences of both men and women in these organizations. What she found was that whilst 'soft skills' (that were perceived to be feminized attributes) were increasingly important in the workplace in order to advance and secure rewards, these skills were rapidly being adopted by male managers. Wacjman shows that the women in this study were not able to utilize masculine performances; she says, 'women who deviate by adopting the male role pay a heavy price', and she goes on to say '…it is still men who are best placed to lay claim to whatever characteristics are seen to be the desirable ones' (1998, pp. 76–77). Wacjman's study shows a more cynical, and persuasive, view of feminization than McDowell's, and is more sceptical about how advantageous this is for women in the workplace. Wacjman (1998) argues that gender performances are still more or less fixed for women at work, and that the performance of femininity by women has a lower value attached.

Further to this, Adkins makes a similar argument to Wacjman; she, too, is against the idea that putting on a gender performance is a resource available to all workers (2001, 2005). She asserts that, 'some workers are denied a flexible relation to gender performance' (Adkins 2001, p. 670). Whilst some scholars have said that the cultural feminization of work may be a possible source of power and authority for women (McDowell 1997; Cockburn 1991), Adkins suggests that it is a debate that glosses over how women are still relatively fixed in terms of a traditional gender logic. By this she means that women are not able to use masculine performances as a resource in the same way that has been said for male workers doing feminine performances. Women are still fixed in terms of devalued, feminized skills (Walby 2011) and performances at work because, 'these skills are often naturalized as part of the feminine *habitus*' (Adkins and Jokinen 2008, p. 143). Moreover, Adkins argues that gender categories are not being undone but rather 'being arranged in new ways' (2001, p. 670). Similar observations are also made by Bolton and Muzio (2008), who assert that gendered processes are embedded within professions such as law, management, and teaching in the UK that position women in certain ways. They state that these processes symbolically devalue femininity and also maintain the 'dominance of masculine forms of knowledge and institutionalized arrangements that exclude women' (2008, p. 285). Bolton and Muzio also suggest that the notion of 'feminization' as a supposed success story ensures a focus on the high numbers of women in certain professions, but they argue this is actually just a useful distraction from entrenched male privileges.

Adding to these debates, Acker (1990) argues that the abstract, 'ideal worker' is actually constructed as male. This contradicts the idea that feminization has disrupted traditional gender norms at work. According to Acker, the ideal worker is someone who is able to fully meet the expectations of a capitalist organization, and the person best able to 'fit' these criteria is a man who has his personal needs cared for by a woman. Acker (1990) examined the gendering of organizations by looking at hierarchies, jobs, and bodies; she was concerned with the subordination of women and why a link between masculinity and power at work persists. She looked at how jobs are evaluated by management according to an organizational logic in order to get a sense of their comparable worth (1990). Acker found that, 'gender is a constitutive element in organisational logic' and a 'gendered substructure […] is reproduced daily in practical work activities' (1990, p. 147). Acker argues then that jobs are already implicitly based on a traditional gender division of labour that 'assumes a particular gendered organisation of domestic life and social production' (1990, p. 149). The very rhythm, structure, and design of jobs are built upon a gendered substructure (division of labour, construction of gendered and gendering symbols and images, gendered interactions, work identities), according to Acker, which continue to subordinate women in the workplace today (2004, 2006). Thus, to say that gender is a resource that can be activated by everyone to produce the 'right' kind of 'entrepreneurial self' (Du Gay 1996) is an assertion that fails to take into account the structuring effects of a gendering logic within an organization.

To briefly summarize then what I have brought together so far: Du Gay, Adkins, and McDowell have argued that people are expected to produce the 'right' kind of identity at work that can help to advance the goals of the organization. The arguments that I have looked at that are for and against this have all shown that work is an important site in which identities are (re)constructed, inscribed, and contested, and this is something which I explore more later in my own data. Bradley et al. (2000) are critical of Du Gay's argument that people are able to produce themselves as workers because they say that this assumes that workers will be able to take up a position that is in line with 'managerial discourses' (2000, p. 7). They add that it is difficult for women especially to 'fit in' and produce themselves as the 'new types of worker' (2000, p. 78) when they work within a 'masculinist' management discourse at work, because they are already constructed as innately 'feminine'. Adkins (2001) is also right to point out that not everyone knows how to do the 'right' kind of personhood at work, or *can* do this. The culturalization of work (Du Gay 1996) also has particular implications regarding how value is marked onto and read off people (Sayer 1999, 2002; Skeggs 1997, 2014), and how these signifiers are transformed into 'marketable assets' (Belt and Richardson 2005, p. 258). The debates that I have discussed in this section are important to the discussions in the rest of this book because they indicate that knowledge of what performances and signifiers of gender (and other aspects of identity) are valued is absolutely central to how employees attempt to fit in at work in practice.

Class at Work

In this section, I look at debates about the conceptualization of class and how more contemporary discussions have shaped empirical studies of the workplace. This means considering firstly what class means, and so I briefly condense some of Marx's and Weber's ideas of class[2] as a beginning to this discussion about class. Marx analyses class in terms of whether people owned the means of production and whether they must sell their labour in exchange for a wage (see Bradley 1999a: Grint 2005; Strangleman and Warren 2008; Noon and Blyton 2005). Grint describes how Marx distinguished a class that was '"in itself", where the objective conditions generated a class, irrespective of the attitudes of the members, and a class "for itself", where the objective conditions facilitated the creation of a conscious solidarity among a class in opposition to another class' (2005, p. 94). Weber's idea of class was 'when a number of individuals had a significant component of their life chances determined by their power within an economic order' (Grint 2005, p. 100). Weber's theory of social stratification identifies the importance of property ownership for locating a person's class position (Grint 2005), but he also asserted the centrality of status groups and party as related to class. Grint writes that Weber defined class as 'unambiguously economic and closely related to, if not identical with, market situations' (2005, p. 100). So anyone who did not participate in the market belonged to a 'status group not a class' (Grint 2005, p. 100), and by status Weber was referring to 'social honour or social esteem' (Grint 2005, p. 101). Grint notes how Weber does not suggest that status is determined by class (i.e. the market), instead status was usually 'determined by lifestyle, formal education, and hereditary of occupational prestige' (2005, p. 101). Grint (2005) is critical here though of how Weber separates class and status; he writes, 'since the correlations between the two are usually so close it could well be argued that class provides the material wherewithal for the provision of status symbols. Thus status may not be as independent of class as Weber maintains' (2005, p. 101). Grint also adds that Weber does not provide any theoretical way of understanding class,[3] but instead provides simply, 'general empirical distinctions of occupations' (2005, p. 100). I touch on these two classical approaches to class because they have been extremely influential, however they are historically located in a time of extensive industrialization, and as such there are challenges inherent in relating this to a more contemporary society. A further criticism to make here is that Marx and Weber's approaches to class also overlook the position of women (Noon and Blyton 2005; Grint 2005), which leaves a serious empirical omission in their analysis. So, whilst their approaches are insightful and have been invaluable in providing a perspective on what class means, contemporary discussions about class and what this means in my own work have moved on significantly since their inception. I want to return to this discussion about what class means shortly.

For now, it is important to consider some of the different ways that analysts have measured class. For instance, Goldthorpe's (1980) model of a class schema[4] segments occupational classes: these being generally grouped as the service class (which in this schema refers to professionalized work), intermediate class, and working-class. The measurement of class empirically is important: a useful example is Goldthorpe et al.'s (1967) study of *The Affluent Worker*, in which they interviewed over 200 manual workers to test the *embourgeoisement*[5] thesis. As Atkinson (2010) notes, this idea about the affluent worker in this study was pivotal in showing that class still structures peoples' lives and that 'class divisions still remained'

(2010, p. 2), and because of this we are able to now reject the theory of embourgeoisement. Whilst Goldthorpe's model of class, which Crompton (1998) argues is an 'employment aggregate' model,[6] has also proved to be instrumental in furthering ways of understanding and measuring class (see also Payne 2013), as Oesch states, 'it is uncertain whether it continues to represent *contemporary labour markets*' (2006, p. 1). Similar to assessments that are made of Marx and Weber's approach to class then, Oesch criticizes Goldthorpe's approach to class saying that this model reflects a time of heavy industry and a 'male breadwinner model' of work and workers (2006, p. 1). Similarly, Bradley also criticizes this approach, saying that it does not give a clear picture of how 'the experience of class relations is played out in everyday life' (1999b, p. 184).

In more contemporary debates about class, there has been much written about it being a dead category that is no longer useful in analysis or relevant to peoples' lives (Giddens 1994; Urry 2000; Beck 1992, 1994; Pakulski and Waters 1996). Whilst these arguments have generated several ripostes, it is still worth briefly recapping them to map debates about class. Pakulski and Waters (1996) claim that class is 'dead': 'classes are dissolving and that the most advanced societies are no longer class societies' (Pakulski and Waters 1996, p. 4), and that we are living through a time of post-modernization, post-traditionalization, post-industrialization, and globalization, as well as changing labour markets. In explaining their reasons for their notion about the 'death of class', Pakulski and Waters frame class as being constituted by the job a person does. They then suggest that class is no longer a category that people identify with because people do not have the same identifications with their paid job as central to the formation of their identity. These writers see having a class as being part of an industrial past, where work *used* to be central to how a person defined themselves (see Kirk and Wall 2011). However, our employment is not to be taken as the only indicator of class (Bradley 1999b). As Bradley argues, class should be seen as 'a nexus of relations arising from the social arrangements by which societies organise the production, distribution and consumption of goods' (1999b, p. 186).

Moving on, the theory of the 'modern reflexive individual' has also shored up discussions about the irrelevance of class (Giddens 1994; Urry 2000; Beck 1992, 1994; see Atkinson 2010, 2012) to people's everyday lives. It has been said by Giddens (1994) and Beck (1992) that people are not constrained by embedded structures and identity categories. Rather, people can overcome various inequalities through the myriad of choices available. These scholars consider class a redundant way to explain embedded inequalities in society, and they also believe that it does not provide a way to account for how people now live their lives. Giddens and Beck both suggest that the modern reflexive individual is now someone who is mobile, highly individualized and self-aware, and free from the constraints of supposedly imposed categories like class and gender. As Atkinson states, 'taste and lifestyles' are taken to be reflections of 'individuality, rather than as signs of membership of any distinct category,' (2010, p. 7). This is connected to practices of 'self-actualization, self-realization, self-exploration and self mastery', that, 'enable hitherto unthinkable measures of autonomy' (Atkinson 2010, p. 26). So instead of using class as a conceptual tool then, Atkinson observes that reflexivity scholars argue that status may be a more useful way to explain 'distinguishable collectivities' (Atkinson 2010, p. 7) based on shared cultural symbols.

However, the reflexivity thesis has its problems and has since been widely criticized by many writers (including and not limited to Skeggs 1997, Skeggs 2004a, b, 2014; Atkinson 2010; Savage 2000, 2013; Adkins 1995, Adkins 2002a, b). Talking about reflexivity does not disperse identity categories, argues Adkins (2002a, 2004), rather, it is a re-configured process of classification which, far from negating inequalities, serves to privilege the exclusive standpoint of the modern, reflexive, individual. This 'reflexive' person then is someone who not only knows the rules of the game, but writes them too. Adkins argues that these reflexive techniques of knowing and telling the self are made available to some bodies more than to others, resting on, '…forms of appropriation which dispossess certain "selves" of such properties,' (Adkins 2002a, b, p. 8). Atkinson adds that 'the firm grip of class on biographies and perceptual schemes has been shown to remain unbroken in contemporary Britain', and that empirical research has shown that 'individualized reflexivity' provides 'exaggerated and ungrounded accounts of human action' (2010, p. 187).

There have been several important discussions that have provided appropriate responses to the notion of the death of class, and have offered new ways to theorize class in a more contemporary society (Payne 2006; Oesch 2006; Bonney 2007; Anthias 2001; Skeggs 1997). These responses to debates about the death of class show that inequalities, divisions, and exclusions *can* be located in class and that this is an important and relevant category for making sense of everyday lives. The idea that class is no longer relevant has stimulated lively debate and encouraged theorists and empirical researchers to develop new ways of measuring and understanding class.

For instance, Savage et al. (2013) have developed a new model of class that attempts to capture the social and cultural processes bound up in the generation of class divisions. This model draws on survey dated collected from over 161,000 web respondents and attempts to capture how people use social, cultural, and economic capital (grounded in Bourdieu's model of capital). Based on the data collected, the model delineates seven classes (elite, technical experts, affluent workers, ageing traditional working-class, precariat, and emerging service workers), which the authors believe captures new class divisions in contemporary society. This goes beyond the more traditional analyses of class based on solely measuring occupations. Savage et al. argue that their model expands understandings of class, where previous models that 'focus on occupations as the sole measure of class occludes the more complex ways that class operates symbolically and culturally, through forms of stigmatisation and marking of personhood and value,' (2013, p. 222). However, Payne (2013), p. 4) states that Savage et al.'s 'empirical operationalization of a Bourdieusian approach' is 'too sophisticated to be a conventional class classificatory schema' at this point in time (2013, p. 15). Payne suggests that this model effectively maps status and gives 'an informative picture of Britain today', but it does not work 'fluently as a class schema' just yet (2013, p. 15) because of the technical challenges involved in measuring social and cultural capitals. Back (2015) also expresses concern that the move towards online 'measurements' of class has extracted the feeling from class analysis. For Back, class is a lived experience, and 'The trouble with relying on online surveys (Savage et al. 2013) or even mass observation accounts (Savage 2010) is that they inevitably produce thin descriptions of vital and complex forms of class experience' (2015, p. 833).

The 'cultural turn' then has emerged in response to the supposed 'death of class'. These approaches 'knit cultural processes into the very definition of class' (Atkinson 2010, p. 44; see also, Skeggs 1997; Savage 2000; Devine and Savage 2004; Savage and Bennett 2005; Bradley 1999a, b; Lawler 1999, 2005a, b; McDowell 1997; Reay 1997, Reay 1998a, b; Crompton 1998; Taylor 2012; Chaney 1994; Geertz 2000). Chaney (1994) writes that cultural analysis helps us to understand further how 'members of a group have characteristic persistent forms of patterns of thought and value through which they understand and represent their life-world' (1994, p. 2). The cultural direction in debates about class then indicate that it is no longer to be viewed as a category that is limited to structural analysis about labour and income, or distribution of wealth;

instead it focuses more on the ‘subjective dimensions of classed experience’ (Lawler 1999, p. 4). Further, Atkinson writes about the cultural approach to class, saying that it identifies ‘the practical, pre-reflexive and dispositional nature of action flowing out of differentiated past social experiences and the inextricability of cultural frameworks and resources in the formation of “choices”’ (2010, p. 44).

The popularity of debates about individualization and the modern reflexive self (Giddens 1991, 1994) has meant that social inequality is widely explained through an individualizing narrative of bad behaviour and poor choices, which makes culpability a personal matter rather than a structural issue (Lawler 2005a, b). As Lawler notes (Lawler 2005a, b), this attributing of responsibility for social inequalities to individuals hides structural mechanisms which reproduce systems of power and prevents any scope to challenge the high value and desirability inscribed upon middle-class lifestyles.

Class is relevant to studies of work, as Bradley et al. suggest: ‘class should be seen as a complicated set of economic, political and cultural relationships arising from the way societies organize the production of goods and services’ (2000, p. 140, see also Bradley 1999a, b). Bottero (2004) notes, however, that this increases the areas of analysis, and also changes how class is theorized as individualized and subjective rather than traditionally as a category that accounts for collective and structural stratification. Bottero writes that this new approach to class aims to ‘question the centrality and distinctiveness of the “economic”, inflate “class” to include social and cultural formations, and reconfigure the causal model that historically underpinned class analysis’ (2004, p. 986). Whilst it does not appear that she is critical of cultural analysis of class as such, Bottero does suggest that these new conceptualizations of class as ‘cultural, individualised and implicit’ should avoid sliding into older, more traditional accounts of class as ‘collective, explicit and oppositional’ (2004, p. 987), which threaten to undo the advances that have been made in class theory. Bradley also makes a similar note to Bottero, saying that, ‘we must carefully distinguish “class relations”, “class position” and “class identification”’ 1999a, p. 136) in more contemporary discussions of class.

Taking this forth then, McDowell’s study (1997) is useful in showing how cultural theorizations of class are relevant to analysis of the workplace. In her study of the banking sector in the UK, the importance of being able to fit in through class emerges. McDowell describes how people who interviewed for a job in this workplace were scrutinized by interviewers for positive and negative markers of class and gender. She shows how this knowledge of positive and negative class and gender markers is central to the recruitment process in this particular financial organization. For instance, a common remark made by a number of employees in her study was that, 'You have to fit in, you know, to be employed here' (in McDowell 1997, p. 126), and this means knowing how to present yourself to meet the organization's subjective expectations of the type of worker they were looking for. This amounts to, as McDowell notes of Brown (1995, p. 41), having knowledge of a 'cultural code'. Bradley et al. (2000) observe how most of the employees in McDowell's study (1997) had attended elite universities, and that being able to use one's class and educational background was an important feature of getting ahead. McDowell describes the majority of the work force in the organizations she researched as being 'solidly bourgeois' (1997, p. 132) and she writes that having the 'right kind of background' and 'social status' (McDowell 1997, p. 126) can open up opportunities and enable an employee to advance. Unfortunately, it is not clear in McDowell's study how having the 'wrong' kind of background, or lack of status, might exclude an employee from accessing opportunities in this workplace and would have made for an interesting discussion. That said, what is useful in this study is that it indicates that having knowledge about class and how it is *inscribed*, recognized, and valued is an important and relevant aspect of peoples' lives today, *especially* at work. This important theme is something I explore further in later chapters in this book.

Turning now to look at another empirical study, Sherman's (2007) work also explores class practices in her ethnographic research of employees working in two luxury hotels in the USA. Her study explored class in the worker-customer relationship. She particularly focused on how employees often reproduced hierarchies of class through their embodied practices and interactions with customers, with the intention of accumulating more perceived 'value' than their colleagues. Her study shows that considerations of embodiment and subjectivity are important if we are to effectively understand what work is, how it is done, and by whom.

Elsewhere, Hebson (2009, p. 27) too provides a class analysis of women's aspirations and identities at work and an insight into how 'class is lived'. She conducted a comparative study, interviewing 36 women doing working-class and middle-class jobs; she particularly focused on how employees felt and experienced class at work using a Bourdieusian approach in her analysis. According to Hebson, previous debate in this area has failed to connect with how class is experienced in the workplace.

Her study shows that, as well as uneven access to resources being a constraining factor on these women's aspirations, the women's 'classed thinking and feeling' (Reay 2005, p. 913 in Hebson 2009, p. 40) also had a significant impact. This meant that even when potential opportunities arose to progress in their jobs, working-class women in this study seemed to rule out acting on this possibility. Hebson shows that feelings such as pride, guilt, and shame are connected to how these women lived and experienced class at work. This study is useful then as it highlights how class is socially and culturally reproduced and impacts on how employees experience the workplace.

An important study in the cultural theorization of class is undertaken by Skeggs (1997). This study spans 11 years, and three of those years are part of an ethnographic study where Skeggs tried to spend as much time as possible with the participants by interviewing them, observing them, and meeting their families and friends. She looks at how class and gender are inter-related, giving attention to how ideas about femininity continue to construct and position women in particular ways. The working-class participants in her study continued to make investments in a gendered and classed social system, but protected themselves through 'respectability'. These women were able to derive some sense of recognition and value by participating in the highly feminized care work of families, friends, and service users. They also had knowledge of class and so were careful to dis-identify with certain aspects of class that could damage and stigmatize their position—for instance, by avoiding being seen as slovenly, 'tarty', or even too pretentious. She also provides an insight into how the middle-class self acquires capitals vis-à-vis entitlement, whilst the working-class self is having to repeatedly refuse the negative 'recognitions of others' (1997, p. 4). The women in Skeggs' study use a lot of energy 'displaying that they *are* not that which is expected' (italics in original, 1997, p. 164). According to Skeggs, this knowledge is constructed and situated; it positioned these women in different ways and was reproduced through their daily practices. Skeggs argues that these reproductions of particular formations of class and gender continued to 'influence their future access and movement through subject positions within femininity and sexuality' (Skeggs 1997, p. 56). This study is important in the development of theorizations of class, because it considers how distinction and taste, inscribed and recognized through class and gender, constitute the value judgements that people make in their everyday lives to position others.

Further to this, Skeggs (2004a, b) develops this theoretical approach to class by thinking about it in terms of processes of inscription, exchange, evaluation, and perspective. Her framework teases out how class is under constant production and how value is generated and attached to particular bodies and not others. Skeggs clarifies her conceptualization of value as "…contingent and situational, circulating through fields (calculation and conversion), and mechanisms (labour, gift, affect) of exchange, carried, inscribed and recognised on bodies," (Skeggs 2010, p. 34, 2014). She emphasizes that value is created through differently legitimated symbolic systems, which enable some people to be recognized. Further, she argues that understanding the production and circulation of processes of inscription, exchange, and value is '…central to understanding how differences (and inequalities) are produced, lived and read' (2004a, b, p. 4). Skeggs (2010, 2014) adds that value is often thought about as synonymous with economic exchange, but it is also used to connote an ambiguous moral notion of what is meaningful (see Addison and Mountford 2015). She encourages more research around the concept of 'person-value', and how processes of exchange produce different value outputs for different people.

Skeggs and Loveday (2012) build on this way of analysing class by discussing how people who might be denied value by a dominant symbolic system are able to secure value for themselves in a more localized symbolic system. They conducted research related to the British New Labour government's 'Respect Agenda', launched in 2005, and they talked to 12 black and white male ex-offenders in South East London, eight white women aged over 80 in East London, and four white men and women aged over 80 from Middlesborough about their perceptions of it. These participants showed an awareness that this agenda positioned them negatively; they knew that they were being judged by it and refused to accept these judgements as authoritative. Skeggs and Loveday describe the participants' responses as 'legitimate affective responses to inequality,' (2012, p. 488). These participants were being denied symbolic value and refused access to resources; however, Skeggs and Loveday suggest that the participants also circulated a different understanding of 'what matters and what counts' (2012, p. 472). These people 'refuse what they are refused' (Skeggs and Loveday 2012, p. 487). These working-class participants talked about generating value through 'connections to others', rather than as part of a future-orientated model of investment and accrual (Skeggs and Loveday 2012). However, Skeggs and Loveday do point to the constant struggles these people faced in actualizing a different set of values to those in the dominant symbolic order. They ask important questions regarding how understandings are formed about people who cannot operate legitimately within the dominant symbolic order (see also Skeggs 2011, 2014), as well as how value is generated beyond 'dominant circuits for exchanging, accruing and investing in different forms of capital' (2012, p. 486; Skeggs 2011).

Continuing with the theme of value and personhood, Haylett (2001) also examines how certain people are constructed as outside of dominant circuits of value (Skeggs 2011, pp. 507–508). His study looks at the construction of white, working-class identities as abject within popular media. These representations frame these people as out of place in a multicultural nation in the UK. In particular, Haylett looks at how some individuals become positioned as 'too white' and 'too poor' and constructed as racist, 'backward', and unaccepting of multicultural differences within a liberal, middle-class discourse. Clarke et al. (2009) are also critical of these kinds of representations that portray working-classness through the lens of racism and against representations of middle-class people as 'good' and liberal. Haylett argues that this negative construction of certain people as working-class and racist is a useful and strategic diversion of attention away from embedded class inequalities and struggles for resources; he highlights how 'class is remade as an ethno-difference' (2001, p. 364). These struggles over resources, space, and national identity are portrayed and explained as racial hatred instead of class inequalities, where class becomes an illegitimate discourse and unspeakable. Haylett argues that 'this middle-class dependency on working-class 'backwardness' for its own claim to modern multiculturalism citizenship is an unspoken interest within the discourse of illegitimacy around the working-class poor,' (2000, p. 365).

The idea that aspects of the self can have a use and exchange value is developed further in analysis of the workplace and debates relating to the 'labour of aesthetics' (Witz et al. 2003; Karlsson 2012). The labour of aesthetics looks at how people work on their selves to present desirable behaviours and a desirable image that fits in with organizational expectations. Karlsson writes that aesthetic labour 'involve[s] knowledge originating from our sense [...] and the meanings of this knowledge [...] these meanings contain judgements' (2012, p. 51). People are increasingly using aesthetic labour to produce a stylized performance (of class for instance) as a way of 'looking good and sounding right,' (Warhurst and Nickson 2001). A useful example of this debate within empirical work is Warhurst and Nickson's study where they studied job adverts in UK press (2001). These job vacancy notices were advertising for people who could be characterized as 'stylish', 'trendy', and 'well spoken and of smart appearance' (2001, p. 17). They found that people were increasingly trying to embody these attributes through physical appearance and bodily practices using aesthetic labour and cultural knowledge.

Aesthetic labour is a prominent feature of the new economy. Witz et al. (2003) looked at employees' interactions in service work and found that these people were working on themselves, that is, how they looked and sounded, and I would also say in order to fit with organizational expectations of a certain kind of classed image of a worker. This kind of activity, Witz et al. argue, is occurring through 'the mobilization, development and commodification of "embodied dispositions" (Bourdieu 1984),' (2003, p. 37) in order to secure workplace rewards and fit in. Workers are increasingly expected to put on a 'staged performance' (which the authors argue is significantly classed and gendered), utilizing certain emotional skills and 'modes of embodiment' (2003, p. 44) to match organizational goals. These scholars are concerned then that some organizations are capitalizing on a person's capacity to do this kind of aesthetic labour, and in doing so, are reproducing a narrow idea of valued personhood: they state that, 'the kinds of embodied dispositions that acquire an exchange value are not equally distributed socially' (Witz et al. 2003, p. 41). To exemplify this, they observed that middle-class and masculine attributes are aspects of the assumed competencies to do particular 'managerial and professional positions' (Witz et al. 2003, p. 41).

It is possible then to make a connection between debates about the aesthetics of labour and other discussions relating to class and gender. Particularly pertinent to this is Adkins' discussion regarding the propertizing of personhood in the new economy (2005; see also Skeggs 2004a, b, 2014). She argues that the notion of 'properties in the person' (2005, p. 112), for instance, gender, class, and race, have supposedly become detachable from the person and can be performed as an act as required. She is critical of this, as is Skeggs (2014), saying that when theorists have argued this that they assume that people are 'largely in control of and indeed […] own their own identities and bodies' (2005, p. 112). Witz et al. (2003), for instance, develop a theory of personhood where the person is seen to own forms of capital that can be deployed as aesthetic labour to produce a classed performance at work. Du Gay (1996) has also said something similar in his idea of the 'entrepreneurial self'. Adkins is critical of such approaches because she argues that people are *not* able to straightforwardly own property in the person. The property being exchanged in these interactions at work is a stylized performance, and this means that the worker is never 'quits' (see Slater 2002, p. 237 in Adkins 2005, p. 115)—that is, they are constantly having to re-enact value distinctions in their performances. These performances must be reproduced again and again, so the exchange is never complete: the 'worker cannot be separated from his/her capacities' (Adkins 2005, p. 117). Adkins extends her argument further by saying that it is not a struggle over properties in the person that characterizes the new economy (i.e. whether aspects of class or gender are enacted), but rather, it is the authorizing and legitimating of these properties. The capacity to authorize which properties produce a valued personhood is retained by a powerful few. Generally then, most people do not decide what aspects of personhood have value attached, they only reproduce 'circuits of value' (Skeggs 2011, pp. 507–508). In contrast, many advocates of aestheticization 'assume a social contract model of personhood where a person is assumed to own and to be in control of their identities and bodies' (Adkins 2005, p. 121); Adkins argues otherwise saying that people are not usually the authors of their performances. So, whilst some employees may be able to use aesthetic labour to capitalize on valued properties of personhood (e.g., such as deportment and an Received Pronunciation (RP) accent—see Addison and Mountford 2015; Loveday 2015; also The Guardian, Weaver, Monday 15 June 2015 'Poshness Tests'; and The Guardian, Moore, Monday 15 June 2015) and secure recognition and rewards for their efforts, not everyone is able to do this. Some people cannot escape the stigma that is attached to their own embodied identity, even if they were to try and use aesthetic labour. Doing this kind of labour also presupposes that a person has knowledge about what properties of personhood have value, or not, in certain settings. This, too, is problematic, because not everyone knows how to do the 'right' kind of performance at work.

Having knowledge about which aspects of identity are stigmatized, and which have use or exchange value, is central to identity formations and refusals and the conferring of identities, that is, 'something imposed on us irrespective of how we feel about ourselves' (Lawler 2005a, p. 802). This means having knowledge of how people are marked 'as lacking in appropriate tastes and demeanour' (Savage et al. 2000, p. 108) and, as Skeggs (2004a, b) says, how value is carried on the body. Some people are able to use this knowledge of dominant classifications to propertize their personhood (Adkins 2005, Skeggs 2004a; Addison and Mountford 2015). Some people are not able to do this convincingly, or willingly; they do not embody the 'good citizen' (Skeggs and Loveday 2012, p. 473) in neoliberal times. This provides a foundation from which others are then able to demonstrate difference, through distancing techniques and tacit forms of distinction (Skeggs 2004a; Addison and Mountford 2015).

In the rest of this book I am particularly focusing on participants' class and gender identities and identifications at work. This means exploring employees' knowledge of what aspects of identity have value in the workplace setting and 'the processes by which individuals locate or align themselves in terms of class [and gender]' (Bradley 1999a, p. 137). What is important to me is how participants *acquire* knowledge about the right and wrong way to be represented through class and gender at work, and how this impacts on what identities are then actualized and included. So, although occupation provides some context to participant's discussions in my research, I must stress that I do not map class according to an 'employment aggregate' model (Crompton 1998) here. Instead, I use a Bourdieusian approach to understanding class, which I discuss next.

Having knowledge and a 'cultural competency' (Bourdieu 1983) of what is 'tasteful' and 'tasteless' is crucial to how a person fits in, or not, in a particular setting. Bourdieu (1984) writes about how people acquire knowledge of what is tasteful and what is tasteless in his influential work *Distinction*. He describes taste as 'the propensity and capacity to appropriate (materially or symbolically) a given class of classified, classifying objects or practices' (Bourdieu 1984, p. 169). Bourdieu goes on to say that one's tastes reveals one's social positioning:

> Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed.
> (1984, p. xxix)

Knowing what is tasteful and what is tasteless is important cultural capital and can help a person to navigate the social order. Accruing cultural capital helps one to become familiar with the prevailing classificatory system, and is central to inclusion in the field (Calhoun et al. 1993). Skeggs provides a useful summary of cultural capital, indicating that it occurs in three forms in Bourdieu's work: 'in an embodied state, i.e. in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and the body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods; and in the institutional state, resulting in such things as educational qualifications,' (2004a, p. 16; see also Atkinson 2010; Robbins 2000). Possessing cultural capital means having the knowledge of how to classify and decode things. As Bourdieu describes, classifying is '…a process of communication, that is, an act of deciphering, decoding, which presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a cipher or code' (Bourdieu 1984, p. xxv). Bourdieu writes how acquiring practical mastery of a classificatory system enables a person to *see* how the names (or codes) for things function to shape how others see the world. These practices of making distinctions using a classificatory system of codes occur because of a continuous struggle for monopoly over the correct way to do things in a particular field (Bourdieu 1984). Having knowledge of what is tasteful is a form of useful capital to a person. This means knowing what is considered legitimate, for as Lawler writes, 'It is only when cultural capital is sufficiently legitimated that it can be converted into symbolic capital' (1999, p. 6). A person is able to use their knowledge of what is legitimated as a 'right' to claim prestige and perceived cultural competency (Lawler 1999). Lawler suggests that those who are unable to demonstrate cultural competency in this way are perceived as failing in these games of distinction. She adds that knowledge of what is legitimated is not viewed as a 'social mechanism', but tends to be 'assumed to inhere within the self' (1999, p. 6).

The analysis of cultural expressions and mobilizations of classed resources is appearing across a number of empirical studies. Addison and Mountford's (2015) work around the deployment of accent by particular people within the education sector, for instance, shows that there is a return to more traditional classificatory mechanisms where value is read off how a person talks. This system of judgement enables some to be socially mobile, whilst conversely fixing others in place through accent. Elsewhere, a Bathmaker et al. (2013) study examines how students in a HE institution use their knowledge of classed and classing mechanisms to play the game and get ahead. Middle-class students, for example, are able to utilize valued cultural capital more readily than other working-class students as a way of gaining employment after graduation (parental networks, internships). This study shows that knowledge of the prevailing social game is essential to gaining a superior position ahead of others. This is further compounded by so-called 'poshness tests', which are tacitly being used by employers to discern more about candidates in interviews (see *The Guardian*, Monday 15 June, 2015). This ‘poshness test’ arises from research by the Social Mobility and Child Poverty commission who, according to Weaver, found that:

> as university education has become more prevalent employers have turned their attention to other characteristics “such as personal style, accent and mannerisms, adaptability, team working”. These “soft skills” were repeatedly found to be interpreted as “proxies for ‘talent’”.
>
> (*The Guardian*, 15 June 2015)

Knowing how to *be* in certain spaces and around certain people is not a straightforward practice, and often one’s feelings may jeopardize attempts to fit in; nevertheless, graduates, employees, and employers are sensitive to how important it is in playing the game and getting ahead. Being able to manage emotions then is an important part of knowing how to *be*, and an essential way of preventing one’s feelings from revealing or undermining one’s game-playing. In the next section I look at literature that relates to emotion work.

Emotion Work

The previous sections highlighted relevant debates about analysis of class and gender that are connected to the direction of my own work in this book. These debates connect with a surge of interest in the study of emotion in the workplace, and have culminated in a wealth of interesting theories and research (e.g., Fineman 2008; Scheer 2012; Bolton 2005). To begin with, I look at avenues of this debate that depict emotion as something which is cultural, and this leads me on to foreground my discussions of emotions as relational in this book. After this, I look at discussions that represent emotion work as the management of feeling in day-to-day interactions at work. Because the literature is so extensive, I leave other discussions around emotion and emotion work to scholars such as Ashkanasy et al. (2000), Rietti (2009), and Shilling (2002), who provide a useful history of emotion studies if the reader is interested in this, and the different ways emotion[7] can be theorized and analysed.

Recent debates then in the sociology of emotions have put forward a cultural approach that suggests that emotions are socially constructed (Jackson 1993; Hochschild 1983). We make sense of what an emotion is using the cultural frame of reference we are immersed in. How we feel and recognize particular emotions is always changing and under construction through cultural and social processes. How we think, feel, and recognize emotion is also something that is historically located in time (Jackson 1993). Burkitt (1997, p. 42) agrees with Jackson (1993) that a cultural approach to how we understand emotion emphasizes the 'malleability and historical nature of emotion', but he is also critical of Jackson's approach, saying that she is not precise enough about what these social and cultural processes that construct emotions actually are. Barbalet (2001, 2002) adds to this debate about emotion, saying that a social constructionist approach does not account very well for emotions that are physically felt by a person but have not been given a cultural label or a way to frame them through language. Burkitt (1997) also suggests here that a social constructionist lens actually disconnects the embodied aspects of emotion from external social and cultural processes. He argues then that emotions are not exclusively constructed in discourse, but also experienced in everyday relations. Burkitt proposes a relational understanding of emotion that avoids a dualism between self and society, or separating the biological from the social. He argues that emotions arise and are expressed in relationships and 'they have a corporeal, embodied aspect as well as a socio-cultural one' (Burkitt 1997, p. 37). Fineman (2000) and Barbalet (2001) support this conceptualization of emotion, as does Wulff who adds that emotions should be analysed within a 'social context' (2007, p. 14). I think the idea then that emotions are something that are felt and experienced within and on the body, and are made sense of through cultural and social frames of reference, is persuasive. This is because a relational approach to emotion accounts for the interaction of the social and biological aspects of everyday life upon the person. This approach also fits with a Bourdieusian conceptualization of personhood and practice, which I adopt in my own research.

Taking this strand further then, Burkitt (1997) and Scheer (2012) draw on Bourdieu's idea of *habitus*[8] to develop this relational model of emotion. They suggest that the way emotions are learnt, felt, and displayed is dispositional as well as embodied. People develop a *habitus* that is based on a cultural 'language and set of practices which outline ways of speaking about emotions and of acting out and upon bodily feelings within everyday life' (Burkitt 1997, p. 43). This way of thinking about emotions as embodied and dispositional is useful because it helps explain how people interpret and read other people's emotions differently based on their own emotional perspectives inculcated in the *habitus* (Bourdieu 1983). People also have different ways of mastering and managing their own emotions.

Scheer states that emotions emerge from 'bodily dispositions conditioned by a social context, which always has cultural and historical specificity' (2012, p. 193). This model of emotion is particularly useful in developing a discussion about emotion work here. It encourages us to think more deeply about which emotion displays are considered acceptable, or not, based on the prevailing social and cultural order, and how people acquire this knowledge.

Emotion work is a concept that is growing in popularity across a range of disciplines because of its usefulness in explaining how and why people manage feelings in different settings. Looking at emotions in work organizations provides a useful insight into how people act in these particular spaces. Ashkanasy et al. argue that 'the emotional dimension is an inseparable part of organisational life and can no longer be ignored' (2000, p. 4). Stets (2010; 2012, p. 331) also agrees that emotions are an integral part of 'economic transactions', and that the impressions that one forms in these interactions can affect the overall outcome of the interaction. Fineman further adds that emotions should be viewed as shaped by and shaping of the 'norms and values of the organisation' (2008, p. 1). It was Hochschild's seminal research *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1983) that paved the way for a body of research in the area of emotion and work (Bolton 2005; Bolton and Boyd 2003; Ashforth and Humphrey 1995; Mann 1999, 2004; Fineman 2000, 2008; Koster 2011; Morgan and Krone 2010; Cain 2012; Tonkens 2012). But whilst Hochschild's study *The Managed Heart*[9] is more widely known for the concept of emotional labour (management of feeling in exchange for a wage), she also discusses emotion work. I discussed this concept in detail in Chap. 1, so only briefly recap it here. It refers to the emotion management that a person undertakes during interactions. Hochschild suggests that 'Emotion management is the type of work it takes to cope with feeling rules' (1979, p. 551), and that these feeling rules are contingent on the legitimate culture in a particular space. Hochschild developed the concept of emotion work because she was curious about what we do with emotions and how we express them in a capitalist society. Based on her study of air hostesses, her findings show how these employees' feelings are exploited by the organization. Henceforth, she is particularly concerned with how the unequal distribution of power and authority inherent in both private social relations and work interactions between certain people makes emotion management unequal.

We are expected to behave in a particular way by managing emotion in certain spaces and around certain people. Fineman (2000, 2008) is concerned with how certain people are permitted to express emotion, and in certain ways, more readily than others, and whether this constitutes a silencing of certain voices, particularly in the workplace. For example, Mirchandani's study (2008) of transnational call centres shows that employees in this organization were expected to manage their emotions even when dealing with racist abuse from customers located in North America. These employees were expected to match the organization's expectation of an ideal worker, that is, someone who 'not only correctly performs emotion work, but who also looks good and sounds right to customers' (Mirchandani 2008, p. 89). This performance of the ideal worker was also located in enacting desirable aspects of westernized middle-classness. The employees were expected to talk a certain way to customers on the telephone, regardless of how the racist abuse that some employees received made them feel. Emotion work then is connected in this study with being able to manage a favourable classed impression at work whilst also being able to conceal the pain felt as a result of racist abuse.

There are sanctions attached to particular forms of emotional expression that go against feeling rules in certain spaces. Some people have more power than others to negotiate, name, or ignore feeling rules; as Fineman states, 'The playing field for impulsivity or deviation is rarely an even one' (2008, p. 4). This is demonstrated in Morgan and Krone's research (2001) into the health care profession, in which they show how doctors are able to transcend feeling rules, albeit not completely, whereas some of the nurses in their study were described as 'role embracers' (2001, p. 329) because they aligned themselves closely with feeling rules. Morgan and Krone argue that the nurses in particular did not have as much power as some of the doctors to negotiate structures of feeling, rather, they were expected to show that they believed in the care work they were giving to patients. The doctors, however, were less invested in making their emotions 'believable' and were not as compelled to do this kind of emotion work. In empirical work related to this, Bloch (2002, 2012) conducted a study that examined emotion work where she spoke to 54 academics working in academia. She hoped to build up a picture of the culture of emotion in academia. What she found was that there was an organizational expectation that these people would be 'competent' in being able to manage emotions, and that they would conform to feeling rules governing academics. These academics talked about feeling as though they had to be neutral and distant in this workplace, and other feelings that did not fit had to be managed (see also Ehn and Lofgren 2007). Fitting in and managing emotion at work is challenging, especially if there is an imbalance of power or an expectation that everyone *knows* how to do emotion management.

Hochschild also encourages us to think about how emotion work helps a person to manage 'mis-fitting feelings' (1983, p. 63). How a person feels, and indeed expresses himself or herself, may not 'fit' within the social situation and the people they are around. The timing of certain feelings may be inappropriate. These scenarios characterize mis-fitting feelings. Hochschild gives the examples of not feeling sad at a funeral, or feeling relief at the death of a parent—these emotions don't fit with the normative feeling rules structuring the circumstances. What are the repercussions when feelings don't fit? A person's position in social space can be in jeopardy if their feelings challenge the existing feeling rules or undermine the social game that everyone else is playing. Emotion work, then, can help a person to manage these mis-fitting feelings. However, Barbalet (2001) adds a note of caution here and emphasizes that what Hochschild is suggesting here requires a person to be self-conscious of their emotions and also to have knowledge of the prevailing cultural codes or feeling rules. This is not always the case; a person may not have knowledge of the relevant 'cultural dictionary' of emotions (Hochschild 1998, p. 15). Also, a person may feel a certain emotion[10] without necessarily being self-conscious of this, that is to say, these emotions can be part of 'habituated behaviour' that is both 'movements of the body' and dispositional (Scheer 2012, p. 200). It is difficult then for this person to know whether what they are feeling fits in, or not, with the prevailing feeling rules and cultural codes. When a person does not know what it is they are feeling, then emotion management becomes hard to do. In my own study, I focus on moments where the employee *is* self-aware of feeling a certain way and has some knowledge of how they are expected to display feelings at work, so looking at emotion work in this context is appropriate.

Conclusions

I am interested in how work can be a site of inclusion and exclusion of certain identities that are represented as valued and valueless. So, here I looked at debates and empirical studies that are connected to the culturalization and feminization of work, as well as conceptualizations of class. The main theme that emerged in this chapter is that employees are increasingly expected to produce the right kind of self to meet changing organizational demands. This can mean working on certain aspects of one's identity (e.g., to do with class and gender) using emotion work to try and fit in at work. I believe that this poses several issues: this activity presupposes that a person has knowledge of the right and wrong way to be at work; it also takes for granted that a person is self-aware of how they are seen by others; it assumes that everyone is able to work on the self; and finally, it ignores that some people are unable to escape being read as valueless in prevailing 'circuits of value' (Skeggs 2011, p. 507). I want to address these issues in this book by foregrounding analysis of employees' knowledge of the right and wrong way to be at work. What this book now sets out to do is to show how knowledge of class and gender informs the social games (Bourdieu 1990) that people play in a workplace environment, and demonstrate how this then impacts on how a person fits in, or not, at work.

Notes

1. Referred to in various debates as the 'cultural turn' (Strangleman and Warren 2008, p. 283).
2. This is intended to only offer some context to the debate around class and as such I do not go into detail about their complex ideas.
3. Weber also methodologically rejected a structural approach to class; instead, he advocated looking at how these things were 'reducible to their individual constituents' (Grint 2005, p. 102), foregrounding then interpretative analysis.
4. The Goldthorpe Class Schema: Separates 11 classes based on their occupation, ranging from higher-grade professionals to unskilled manual workers and agricultural workers.
5. The embourgeoisement book refers to the idea that incomes and living conditions were improving and the benefits of this were being cascaded throughout different classes in society, and that working-class people were being co-opted into the middle classes (see Atkinson 2010).
6. A comparable class schema includes: The National Statistics Socio-Economic Classifications (NS-SeC) which 'has been constructed to measure the employment relations and conditions of occupations'; by employment relations it means 'aspects of work and market situations and of the labour contract' (http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/soc2010/soc2010-volume-3-ns-sec--rebased-on-soc2010--user-manual/index.html#2). This

schema separates classes into eight groupings based on occupation and employment contracts. Those who are not employed are categorized as 'not classified'.

7. For instance, a biological tradition looks at emotion as being neurological and physiological processes responding to stimuli; socio-structural approaches that consider the macro structures of society and the formation of emotion (see Barbalet 2001, 2002); cultural approaches that see emotions as socially constructed in people's everyday interactions (Stets 2010; Hochschild 1983).
8. See discussion in Chap. 1.
9. *The Managed Heart* (1983) is a detailed account of flight attendants' emotion management at Delta Airlines in the USA. This ethnographic study was particularly focused on the institutionalized staff training programme which prescribed a legitimated way of 'being' at work, as well as the emotion work undertaken by staff to implement a premium service for customers. Hochschild utilized non-participant observations, individual and group interviews with executive management, recruitment, sales personnel, supervisors, flight attendants, and advertising officials, and microfilms from 30 years of advertising of Delta Airlines.
10. I adopt the same approach as Hochschild in my own study, who uses feeling and emotion interchangeably in her work. She describes them as a 'bodily cooperation with an image, a thought, a memory' (2003, p. 87).

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CHAPTER 3

The Marketization of the Higher Education Workplace in the UK

This chapter considers some of the changes that are underway in Higher Education (HE) in the UK in a climate of neoliberalism and austerity, and the impact this shift is said to be having on HE as a place of work. The discussion offered here is brief as it is meant only to give a flavour of the social context to HE when this research was undertaken. My aim here is to demonstrate that there are many changes occurring in HE, affecting how employees think, feel, and act at work. The employees I spoke to discussed their experiences at work, often with reference to austerity measures, budget cuts, job instability, and a greater sense of competition amongst colleagues. I think through these indeterminacies using ideas that connect to marketization and marketingization (Nedbalová et al. 2014) as they come to apply to HE. Whilst I do not wish to suggest here that all major change underway at the moment in HE is directly attributable to marketization, it is interesting nonetheless to explore connections to marketing practice and market logic.

Public spending cuts have had devastating effects on areas of, and not limited to, social welfare provision, work programmes, and education (Cochrane and Williams 2013). The education sector in particular is undergoing rapid change in the UK (Reay 2012a, b; Taylor 2012), partly as a result of the recommendations made in the Browne Review (The Browne Report 2010) and government policies put forward by the Conservative-Liberal Coalition rhetoric of 'the Big Society' (Farnsworth 2013). HEIs have responded to these changes

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M. Addison, *Social Games and Identity in the Higher Education Workplace*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-51803-3_3

to spending and cuts with increased overseas student intake, increased assessment of courses, adapting and scrutinizing of staff performances, and greater pressure to add value in a bid to survive and adjust to the increasing marketization of education (Brewer 2013; Bolden et al. 2014; Nedbalová et al. 2014). Lynch writes that 'universities have been transformed increasingly into powerful consumer-orientated corporate networks' (2006, p. 1) involving a manifest return to exclusivity and 'elitism' via 'marketisation and commercialisation' (2006, p. 2) to compete in global markets. Further, Lynch (2006) and Bulotaite (2003) both argue that, in order to compete in this now global education marketplace for things like research funding, student admissions, citation listings, staff recruitment, REF[1] cycles, and customer service, HEIs are being increasingly tasked with establishing their own unique selling points and competitive differential advantage.

Nedbalová et al. (2014) write about the various ways in which the UK Higher Education sector is increasingly subject to economic market forces (marketization) and marketing practices (marketingization). Economic market forces imply that 'no-one, other than the buyer and the seller, decides on the nature of the product or the service by negotiating the price' (2014, p. 179). Buyers try to get the highest quality for the best price, and the seller tries to meet the buyers' needs, as well as extract a profit. However, when this market logic is applied to HE, it puts universities in a tricky position, because, as Nebalova et al. point out, 'the HE environment is not free from government influence' (2014, p. 179). The reason for this involvement, Nedbalová et al. suggest, is that HE is considered to be a 'public good' as it has a wide range of social, cultural, political, and economic benefits. Herein, then, is where the major tension lies: can marketization be a force for good in HE, or not? The argument for the marketization of HE advances autonomy as a positive, so that means the freedom to determine prices, offer a product, use resources, and provide information. Being free to respond to market forces, it is argued, helps to improve the overall offering provided by universities. However, conflict arises at this point because some people do not see marketization as being a force for good. If HE was 'unregulated and fully autonomous', in line with market logic as Nebalova et al. note, this could 'trigger significant societal problems' (2014, p. 192), exacerbating social inequalities. And yet the other side of it is that if HE was fully regulated, as Nebalova et al. argue, the sector would become 'stagnant' and 'unresponsive' (2014, p. 182) to global competitors.

It is important then to consider the purpose of HE. Is it to extract a profit, or to offer an intrinsically valued education for education's sake? Is it to provide a public service, or to advance research, or is to provide training for students' future careers? These competing aims are of course not mutually exclusive, but they are the main source of tension underpinning complex arguments for and against the marketization of education (Maton 2008; Inglis 2000, 2004; Locke 2014). Some writers, like Nedbalová et al. (2014) and Brown (2011) believe that marketization should not to be viewed so negatively in the HE sector as it can have many benefits, including greater competition, better services, more choice, and more autonomy. However, there are others, such as Maton (2005), Inglis (2000, 2004) and Taylor (2014), who would argue that the purpose of HE is the inherent value of the education being offered, not the volume of economic capital (Bourdieu 1984) that can be extracted. As Maton points out, this ongoing struggle between academics and free market advocates amounts to 'which form of capital should be the Gold standard' (2005, p. 690) in HE.

Maton discusses how academics used to enjoy much greater freedom in UK HE in the early 1960s, when the sector was not subject so much to 'political and industrial interests' (2005, p. 688). He argues that this freedom experienced by academics to research, teach, and assess, exclusive of outside interest, is 'increasingly fractured' by 'moves towards marketization and managerialism in higher education' (2005, p. 688). This involvement of outside 'interested' parties producing an economy out of knowledge (i.e., an advantage and profit from knowledge), Maton argues, has led to an 'academic drift' (2014, p. 702), where academics are reporting an increasing feeling of disinterestedness and fatigue relating to the running of the institution. This, Maton notes, has grown alongside new forms of managerialism: 'the adoption in university governance of organisational forms and practices more typically associated with the private "for profit" business sector' (2005, p. 699). Bolden et al. (2014) also contribute to this debate about the marketization of education by highlighting the pressures exerted on HEIs working within a neoliberal climate to secure a competitive advantage. Specifically, they investigate the impact this kind of culture has had on leadership and management practice within academia. They contend that academic citizenship which demonstrates a responsibility to community, involvement, and moral responsibility (see Macfarlane 2005) has 'become sidelined by organisational concerns about financial performance, research output, workload allocation, student recruitment and institutional ranking' (Bolden et al. 2014, p. 756).

Acquiring a competitive edge, then, is forefront in strategic development for many HEIs; this edge is captured by some through a corporate image of 'excellence' (see also Chapelo 2010; Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana 2007; Taylor 2011). This excellence is achieved, as Nedbalová et al. (2014, p. 180) write, through the adoption of more advanced marketing techniques as a means of getting ahead and carving out a distinctive position appealing to students, integrating the principles of price, place, promotion, and product known as the 'Marketing Mix'. This further positions students as consumers who look at the price of a degree as being an indicator of quality (Nedbalová et al. 2014). Identifying a unique position within a competitive market in HE is difficult, and so utilizing marketing tools such as 'segmentation, targeting, positioning and branding' (Nedbalová et al. 2014, p. 187) are a means of capitalizing on reputation and prestige. One employee in my study comments on the strength of the brand within his HEI, saying: 'if I asked you about the brand of the university, you would say the brand was pretty strong' (Colin, Senior Management, 51 years old, middle-class). This impetus of 'excellence' and strategic branding of HEIs (Bulotaite 2003; Pettinger 2004; Bunzel 2007; Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana 2007; Hey 2004; Lynch 2006) is being filtered throughout and shapes the way an employee is expected to be at work. In my study, there is a raised awareness amongst a number of staff about the centrality of branding and corporate image within the institution:

> It's all about the *corporate image*. […] Cos you're wearing their uniform. It's got *their* name on it.
>
> (John, Maintenance Electrician, 53 years old, working-class)

> I know that they have done a lot of work on it [brand], we *can* see things *better* now, you can see the logo better, the signs, all that kind of thing. As for the corporate image and behaviour, I mean yeah, we are a *professional* organisation, we should behave professionally. As fees go up, students are going to become customers at the end of the day and we are all going to be fighting for their money, so you know, bringing across that attitude is going to become even more important. But that's the kind of the image you portray externally I think. So it's about creating a perspective. It's an image, um I mean yeah it does lean itself to how we behave internally, cos things like that always filter through.
>
> (Paula, School Manager, 40 years old, lower middle-class)

Having a visual brand presence is recognized as part of an important agenda within the university. These employees draw a parallel, then, with the perceived value of the brand, the image the organization is trying to present to those outside the organization, and their own behaviour as employees. These comments from John and Paula give an insight into how employees come to embody and take on the characteristics of the organization's branded image. When wearing the logo as part of a uniform, an employee is expected to act a certain way, as they are easily recognized as belonging to the organization. Similarly, the corporate image is also captured in the professional service employees are expected to offer students. As student fees increase, Paula feels that competition is going to become more intense to attract students, and she and her colleagues play an active part in attracting and retaining students through their own behaviours and practices. By putting on the right performance at work, she is participating in creating a prestigious narrative around the brand of the organization.

Whilst there is a long list of factors that could be discussed here, I focus on particular elements to do with the marketization of education: I look at increased student fees, the move from collegiality to managerialism, pressure to publish, competition and anxiety, and the burden of having to 'add value' to one's role. These factors are brought together here as a way of providing an insight into the social context shaping the HEI as a place of work.

Student Tuition Fees

In this section I want to briefly touch on how student fees have shaped the landscape of Higher Education in the UK. The Browne Review[2] in 2010 was commissioned to provide an independent assessment of HE funding and student finance. This review recommended that the cap on tuition fees should be removed. This was adopted in part by the Coalition (Tory/Liberal Democrats) government who capped fees at £9000, with those charging over £6000 also expected to cover bursaries and scholarships. It was expected that many students would take out a government-provided loan to cover these costs, and these would be repaid when they are earning above £21,000 (see Locke 2014; Bolden et al. 2014). The sentiment behind this was that increased competition would force universities to focus on improvements independent of government funding, as well as give precedence to their relationship with students (Browne et al. 2014). Introducing neoliberal values into HE in this way has had wide ramifications: Bolden et al. (2014, p. 755) suggest that these changes have fundamentally changed the 'nature and purpose of HE, as well as its place in society'. Whilst some universities have been able to capitalize on this competitive change in direction and get ahead, others have suffered considerably, lacking the resources to compete in a global marketplace on these kinds of terms (Addison 2012; Taylor 2012, 2014). In the UK, this has amounted to numerous departmental closures, redundancies, and the hollowing out of universities in more deprived areas. The marketization of education is not a positive step for all (Taylor 2014).

Further to this, Mountford (2014) writes about the impact the introduction of fees and changes in HE has had on students. She notes how many students are under pressure to excavate as much value from their 'experience' of university as possible, to justify the costs accumulated through student fees and day to day living (see also Archer et al. 2003). As Mountford says, students are pressed to accrue a portfolio of capital through the student experience; indeed, they must think about more than the 'qualifications gained, which were once considered symbolic capital alone' (2014, p. 62). The increase in student tuition fees has fundamentally shifted the education landscape, positioning students as consumers intent on buying the student 'experience' and extracting as much value as possible from their education to justify paying high tuition fees. Further, Reay et al. (2009) too have undertaken extensive research focusing on student experiences within HE. The capacity to adapt to changing circumstances and to extract value from the 'student experience' is forefront. Students are increasingly aware that they must accrue more than a degree from their time in HE—the value of cultural experiences and social networks are imperative to getting ahead.

The idea that students are positioned more like consumers now is echoed in some of the discussions I had with employees, who felt that the student/academic relationship had altered as a result of the changing economic climate:

> Students aren't clients but they are consumer like in some respects, that is quite an interesting conundrum, once you start charging much higher level fees, it's not a *normal* um consumer relationship because you can't *buy* education like you can buy a suit, it is a process, it is an interaction, so therefore it is different […] the other side is that you know people have got expectations and value for money, and I think academics need to get a bit more orientated to that.
>
> (Ann, Executive Management, 61 years old, lower middle-class)

Ann draws attention to some of the complexities bound up with the increasing tuition fees and the service that is now expected within HE. She gives an insight into some of the tension that arises as a result of positioning students as consumers: a degree is not simply a product that can be bought (see also Maton 2005; Bolden et al. 2014). For Ann, whilst it is a process that requires effort from students, she also feels that academics within the university have to be able to adapt to the changing environment which positions students as discerning customers seeking to extract value for their money. Some employees expressed concerns about tuition fees, like Evie, who felt that class distinctions would become more obvious: 'I suppose that there is still a class divide and you're going to see it more now, since the university tuition fees rise. I think that is the biggest thing now …' (Evie); and John, who was concerned about the cost of a degree compared to a person's relative income afterwards: 'You've got kids that go to university and that … there's that many kids that have got degrees now and that … and there's no jobs … is there? So, you end up working in friggen *McDonalds* or stacking tins on shelves … but all the costs … like 30 odd grand a year … that you still have got to pay back anyway … what's it all for?' (John).

Bathmaker et al. (2013) write about undergraduate students' attempts to fit in, adapt, and get ahead through game-playing. Their findings suggest that students demonstrated a raised awareness and an inclination to adapt to changes in an attempt to improve their chances of employment after university. They argue that learning how to play these games requires having knowledge of the 'right' capitals in HE and how to use them to get a desirable graduate job. Skeggs (2011) notes that Bourdieu's ideas about social games situate the accrual of capital as a central reason for playing. This inclination is a 'structuring mechanism organised into a *habitus* generated from birth through access and inclusion to and from fields for exchange and the possibilities for accumulating value' (Skeggs 2011, p. 501). Bathmaker et al.'s findings show, then, how the middle-class students in particular in their study demonstrated an 'instinctive' (2013, p. 740) approach to playing the game in Higher Education, that is, they had a feel for the game without having to think about it. Their family history and accrued capital meant that they were already familiar with and accustomed to playing the game and accruing capital in higher education. Some students, though, had to work harder to learn how to play the game, and these people tended to be from a more working-class background and did not have the same familiarity with the game. It is in the interests of the middle-classes, then, to exclude others from the possibility of accruing capital. According to Skeggs,

> The middle-class is formed as a class in this process by protecting its interests through processes of legitimation: through the symbolic-boundary markings such as the exclusionary practices of high culture, or the definition of the proper through law, limiting access through institutionalisation such as education and purposefully making mis-recognisable the episteme and power relations that underpin how to accrue the "right" capitals (in a combination of social, cultural, economic and symbolic).
>
> (2011, p. 501)

Bathmaker et al. (2013) are concerned with the increasingly competitive environment in HE and the effect this has on students' 'feel for the game'. In particular, they look at how students are responding and adapting to the changing rules of the game and what resources and strategies are being deployed to secure future success. They argue that middle-class students are able to mobilize forms of valued capital more readily than working-class students to secure a desirable social position after graduation. This includes capitalizing on parental networks and internships. They also suggest that '"knowing the game" helps some students maintain social advantage' (Bathmaker et al. 2013, p. 724). They show that those who know the game and how to play it build on their already valued and accumulated capital further and secure a greater advantage over those who are not so familiar with how things are done or how to play the game. My own study resonates with Bathmaker et al.'s (2013) research, because it also focuses on how people develop knowledge of the game and learn how to play it, although my focus is on employees rather than students. However, where Bathmaker et al.'s study (2013) goes on to look at how this knowledge of the game is activated by people through the mobilization of the 'right' capitals, my own study foregrounds knowledge of game-playing.

Moving from Collegiality to Managerialism

The move towards a marketization of education influences the style and tone of collegiality between colleagues, departments, and other institutions, leading to, some say, a culture of managerialism (McNay 1999; Macfarlane 2005). This culture of managerialism within universities, Bolden et al. argue, leads to greater emphasis placed on financial objectives, services, brand, and performance, rather than social and academic goals. The effect of this move from collegiality towards managerialism has led to some academics reporting that they feel cynical, sidelined, and disengaged from HE (Macfarlane 2005; McNay 1995). In my own research, Lucy, for instance, gives an insight into her feelings of depersonalization as she sees the focus shifting from the inherent value in her role as an educator to the impetus being on providing a good and ultimately measurable service:

> I mean, it's kind of a neoliberal thing that turns the students into consumers even more than they are, *us* into producers that provide a service, everything gets judged in that way, which, is a completely different philosophy of education that you could have, you know, most people working kind of … whatever would think probably should have … or want to have um, and it also kind of really … it doesn't treat either students or especially probably staff as *people*, you know? It's kind of like, um, the bottom line becomes making a *profit*, but like, making what the university does profitable.
>
> (Lucy, Lecturer, 32 years old, middle-class)

Lucy gives a sense of how things are changing in the field she is working in, and how the focus is now on extracting a profit. There is a sentiment here, then, of feeling judged by neoliberal standards, which transforms the working culture and, as Lucy puts it, the 'philosophy of education'.

This uneasiness related to the changing culture in the education sector is felt by other academics. For instance, these feelings are present in Bolden et al.'s research (2014), where they explored the experiences of participants working within HEIs in the current neoliberal climate. Using a qualitative approach, they adopted three 'listening posts' (2014, p. 757)—Bolden et al. identified a sense of erosion regarding collegiality in HE. It was felt that there has been a shift in the core values and purposes of HE in light of neoliberalism, where profits, student numbers, and a competitive advantage replace a sense of collegiality and moral responsibility (Macfarlane 2005). Bolden et al. highlight, then, that participants felt as though their activities outside of the institution, such as editing journals, chairing research panels, co-ordinating events, or engaging with policymakers, were not 'recognised or rewarded' (2014, p. 764). This produces a 'sense of disengagement and disconnect from their own institutions [which] erodes commitment to principles of "academic citizenship" and "collegiality"' (Bolden et al. 2014, p. 764).

A culture of managerialism has led to an increased pressure to perform well in funding bids, citation listings, and other attempts to 'add value'; this is evident in everyday interactions in the HE workplace. For instance, in Scott's (2011) research of 'academic hothouses', she looks at how organizations are seeking to gain a competitive advantage by, as she argues, privileging and prioritizing certain kinds of people who can demonstrate certain kinds of identities. Privileging certain kinds of identities has the effect, Scott suggests, of encouraging micro-managing of self-presentation amongst employees. Managing presentations of self in this way is a strategy that is deployed by these employees to try and ensure that they only show desirable aspects of themselves (see also Hey 2004). In short, Scott's research shows that these employees she interviewed are trying to make small *embodied* differences matter and work to their advantage. Scott writes that 'Academic life comes to be perceived as a faintly ridiculous game of strategic self-presentations and bureaucratic hoop-jumping to discursively reconstruct one's professional reputation' (2011, p. 205).

Moreover, leadership roles in particular are becoming framed as 'executive' and 'corporate' positions, which further compounds a sense of HE as a business enterprise (Bolden et al. 2014; Macfarlane 2005). Rather than a culture of managerialism, which encourages assessment of 'individual performance against workload allocation models and research outputs', Bolden et al. suggest that institutions should be looking at ways in which to reward 'citizenship behaviour' (2014, p. 765) and bring people together cohesively. This would foster greater collegiality amongst academics, and renew a sense of belonging within the respective institution.

Competition and Strategic Positioning

The marketization of education has led to increased competition both within and between institutions (Brown 2010, 2011). Universities in the UK vie for position by focusing on quantified rankings regarding student satisfaction, the REF, citation listings, employment outcomes, and so on. Rankings such as these, Locke argues, have 'helped to embed the logic of the market within organisational structures and processes and within the minds and practices of organisational members' (2014, p. 77). Locke (2014) researched institutional rankings in the UK on behalf of the Higher Education Funding

Council for England (HEFCE) and found that, not only are these figures being used in a way that wasn't originally intended, they are also invested with more meaning than the data can justify. He writes how the rankings contained within the three UK national tables, as well as two international ranking tables, are largely based on an institution's reputation as opposed to the quality of performance. This makes big marketing budgets critical in attracting students, funders, and employers, as institutions start to 'invest in improving their rank positions, adjusting decision making to take account of the effects on rankings, using them for promotional purposes, and incorporating them into strategic planning' (Locke 2014, p. 79). In particular, Locke reports particular ways in which institutions draw on rankings as a means to acquire a competitive differential advantage, for instance: to formulate a strategic position as 'elite' or grouped within 'competitive sets' (Locke 2014, p. 81); to alter perception; publicizing ranking position to enhance reputation further; as a way of boosting morale across staff or holding certain departments to account. He argues that rankings such as these become 'naturalised and legitimized as arbiters of status for the vast majority of institutions and their members' (Locke 2014, p. 80). Locke cautions that rankings can also cause a great deal of pain across HEIs that do not do well in these league tables. Indeed they can be a 'source of stress', whilst also embedding a blame culture amongst staff.

Pressure to Publish

The pressure to publish is connected to the above discussions about rankings. It has questionable effects, noted by a number of academics (Hey 2004; Lynch 2006; Watson 2010; Taylor 2012, 2014; Reay 1998a, b): In the pursuit of publications, who is this knowledge for? Who is being engaged with? And whose views become sidelined in the race to publish and accrue citations? Taylor writes about the increasing pressure for academics to publish in Higher Education, stating that 'publications are conveyed as outputs, and impacts are counted, to be rated, ranked and publicly profiled' (2014, p. 1). She encourages discussion around the purpose and output of research and publishing in these competitive times; she writes about how 'impact agendas in and beyond universities frequently demand outputs as tangible products rather than as relational, always ongoing, incomplete (even 'failed') learning processes' (2014, p. 3). Taylor goes on to point to the ascendance of the 'entrepreneurial university' (2014) and the intensification of expectations placed upon academics to publish, particularly early career, and to practice entrepreneurialism and add value to the overall brand offering of the institution. Locke, too, draws attention to the effects marketization of education can have on employees working in academia. He suggests that the pressure to publish and get ahead in these rankings becomes internalized by some, and can foster anxiety and resistance. Ranking tables, and other ways of measuring performance, become part of a managerial culture to drive other change agendas (Locke 2014).

‘Adding Value’

Marketization of education encourages institutions and their members to focus on different ways to add value, identify a differential advantage over competitors, and capitalize on the unique selling points (Nedbalová et al. 2014). Many of the employees I spoke to talked about themselves in terms of needing to add value as part of their role. With difficult financial times ahead, these employees saw this activity as strategic action to offset risks to their position at work.

> We are now having to demonstrate value added, it is more about perception that ever. So, especially in the current climate of reorganisation, everyone wants to be impressing whoever the client might be at any specific time. Be that er, PVC and faculty, or be that a Dean of development in the faculty, or the PVC.
>
> (Toby, Manager, 38 years old, working-class)

> You have got to be showing the you are value for money, haven't you? If you're not then you're out!
>
> (John, Maintenance Electrician, 53 years old, working-class)

> It might be people like me who she makes redundant so then I have to sort of prove my worth, if you like?
>
> (Simon, Surveyor, 31 years old, lower middle-class)

Ravi, too, talks about how the changes within his workplace have meant that co-workers compete against each other to find new ways to prove their value and retain their position.

> Well of course you are competitive, you're trying to prove that you are the best person to be kept on. And that's what creates a conflict, before we were being competitive as a team, saying we are the *best* team there is, all of a

> sudden now that jobs are at risk it's now a case of saying 'well, I am the best that there is', you know?
>
> (Ravi, Business Development Manager, 40 years old, middle-class)

Ravi talks about how his way of coping with the climate of uncertainty and increased competition for resources and jobs is to adopt specific strategies to get ahead of his colleagues:

> If my job is at risk and I have to convince someone that I am the best person for the job then therefore I have to do the *best* I can currently, in order to be noticed, so when it comes to selection, I will be the person selected. That's all it is. But you're never explicit about it because we're supposed to be working as a *team*, so I can't turn around to my colleague and say 'look, I am going to do more than you today because I want to be noticed,' so what you tend to is do it by stealth. Put it this way, if you walked into the office and, I walked in at ten past eight this morning, straight away I was already 'Hmmmmm, what is he doing here, what is he trying to prove, okay I will stay *longer* then', and it is these sorts of things, first in last out, scenarios. You *never say*, you *never* talk about it! [laughs] Cos then it's 'oohhh, you're trying to break up the team, what have you got to prove?' So. But we are all doing it, we're all guilty of it.
>
> (Ravi, Business Development Manager, 40 years old, middle-class)

This adds to a feeling of divisiveness and a fragmented sense of collegiality in HE amongst employees. The pressure to add value and to prove one's worth has meant that, for many, they turn their focus inwards to consciously protect their own position and guard against others in a game of one-upmanship with colleagues.

Seeking out new ways to add value has meant going beyond experience and qualifications. Many of the people I spoke to talked about ways to make their own embodiment count in social relations and interactions. As I will talk about in later chapters, these people sought out ways to reproduce the value which is made to inhere in their own embodied social differences (Addison 2012). What is concerning here is how value comes to inhere within embodied differences between people, read off bodies to signal the 'right' sorts of capital within HE. It is troubling, as a matter of diversity, then, which kind of people end up being marginalized, unable to fully participate in HE (Archer 2007). Taylor looks at how diversity, for instance, has become a key term in university strategic development, serving to reconfigure 'mainstreamed-marginalised identities' and serve as 'capital, cure, caveat and check' (2012, p. 1). She notes how certain people come to signal diversity, and how these people are integrated into university online advertising campaigns aimed at attracting a particular target market of students. Like a 'Benetton advert' which 'seemingly represents institutional success at "doing" diversity (Ahmed 2009 in Taylor 2012, p. 2).

The point here, then, is that people, both staff and students, are becoming more and more central to how numerous HEIs are seeking to add value to their unique market offering, in the hope of acquiring a differential advantage over the competition. As Taylor rightly points out, this kind of marketing utilizes the idea of valued persons who are able to accumulate and become 'future-orientated' individuals (2012, p. 1; see also Skeggs and Loveday 2012; Loveday 2015), whilst overlooking, or perhaps omitting, those kinds of people who do not immediately add value to such a campaign. For Taylor, diversity is something that is problematically being marketed in HEI, whilst at the same time leaving white middle-classness, heterosexuality, and able-bodiedness as the baseline that is 'simply subject *to* diversity' rather than being 'the subject *of* diversity' (2012, p. 4). She urges caution over the use of the supposed 'catch all' phrase that is diversity. Indeed, as the search to add value in HE continues, Taylor encourages reflexivity regarding 'who remains on the normative inside, watching diverse others and speculating at what their efforts and presence could add' (2012, p. 13). The marketization of education has prompted much change, but perhaps it also signals a return to older, traditional ways of excavating value, namely through one's own embodied capital (Bourdieu 1984; Addison and Mountford 2015). As the rest of this book shows, this is dangerous and problematic for those who do not have, or are unable to utilize, valued capitals.

Job Insecurity and Anxiety

As the ramifications of this kind of competitive neoliberal climate begin to become apparent, tension amongst staff in HEIs starts to mount and performances slip. Many HEIs have announced departmental closures, redundancies, and withdrawals from areas of research in which they cannot be deemed 'excellent' (Addison 2012; Kok and McDonald 2012; Shattock 2010). More job insecurity and austerity measures have led some of the employees in my own study to report increasing levels of anxiety as they try to work out what is going to change amidst budget cuts, job losses, and organizational restructures. This tension is captured in the accounts below from employees:

> There are some major changes going on at the minute which is a little bit worrying.
>
> (Jane, Receptionist, 49 years old, working-class)

> Our lot are frightened man … they've all been told that they have to save 'x' amount of pounds. So how do you save the billions? You've got to start laying people off, haven't you? People now are frightened for their jobs … they're back stabbing … and what have ya. They're frightened to look over their shoulder cos they're getting watched … *all* the time.
>
> (John, Maintenance Electricifan, 53 years old, working-class)

> I think there are bits that are *not* terribly happy, and that's again, partly to do with the economic climate, not knowing about how secure they are.
>
> (Diane, Facilities Director, 57 years old, unsure of class)

> Er, a little bit down actually. What is happening with the economic situation, I just feel insecure in the position at the moment.
>
> (Ian, Surveyor, 31 years old, middle-class)

> Don't step out of that line, you are literally floating past the window here. I mean look at my office there is literally nothing in here. They can literally come through that door and say 'your contract is ended' and I will pick up my cardy and go. They don't give you the impression you are *here*.
>
> (Linsey, Temporary Lecturer, 51 years old, unsure of class position)

> My work morale is incredibly low right now, the prospect of securing a job at the end of it is not likely. […] There is nothing, that sticks a bit. It's a difficult time economically, there are so many jobs going and higher education cuts. I am just *trying* to be pleased that I have a job.
>
> (Hannah, Funding Officer, 33 years old, no class position)

> Uncertainty, you know, it's a long period to be unsettled and uncertain about where you are going, where you are heading, what is happening, will I have a job, will I not have a job? And, the *worst* of those feelings, of lack of *control*.
>
> (Ravi, Business Development Manager, 40 years old, middle-class)

These excerpts also give a sense of the uneasy emotions that employees report feeling during times of insecurity and change. Many are fearful that their short-term contracts will not be renewed or that the criteria that they are measured against are constantly shifting and unknown. What is more, sometimes these feelings of anxiety, worry, and stress are hidden out of sight in case they signal that an employee is not up to the job or cannot cope.

Hey and Leathwood (2009) emphasize the role of emotion in Higher Education, challenging the notion that HE is an arena of pure rationality and a place for objective truth. This is particularly important in light of a neoliberal marketization of education, which refocuses attention on the rationalizing and quantification of skills and ability in the workplace. Hey and Leathwood are concerned with the effacement of emotion and research into this area from HE—a culture which seeks to 'bring into being a society entirely characterised as neo-liberal, post-feminist and socially fragmented' (2009, p. 431). Instead, what Hey and Leathwood wish to do is to give attention to the many embodied forms of pain, pleasure, and fear in education, especially now that the neoliberal turn induces increasing emotional demands on academics and other staff in HE.

Fitting in to this new market logic is problematic and not without emotion; students are expected to find a way to negotiate their way in a labour market which discriminates based on age, ethnicity, gender, education, and so on—they must construct the right 'personality package' (Brown et al. 2002, p. 28) and, as Mountford suggests (2014), it is HE practitioners who are meant to be able to assist this. To add to this, HE practitioners are also faced with the same dilemma of negotiating the HEI as it moves into a neoliberal culture which constantly requires them to prove their value and worth, being productive employees (Addison 2012). Hey and Leathwood (2009) and Duffy et al. (2015) argue that this activity disguises structural inequalities and naturalizes skills and attributes as biological advantages of being male or female. Success in the newly masculinized HEI privileges white, middle-class men who rearticulate the rational, objective, valued employee who fits with strategic objectives (Adkins 2002a; Acker 2004). This draws attention to major issues regarding fear of social difference, and the reproduction and preservation of a particular kind of rational worker in HE (Acker 1990, 2004, 2006). Hey and Leathwood (2009) problematize the return to an archaic and lost world of education in which particular bodies are able to fit with the neoliberal brand of HE and the expense of and fear of social differences. The authors argue that the study of how emotion is used and exchanged, then, within the education sector, given the (re)turn towards a rational, masculinized HE culture, is crucial in understanding how subjects come to negotiate, resist, and control new emerging academic identities which dis/align with HEI corporate identity; pursuing this research is important in ascertaining which bodies get to 'fit in' in a HEI and which come to be excluded.

Of course, it is important to remember that it is not just academics that are facing unprecedented colonization of their roles as educators, researchers, and public critics. There is a much wider body of staff who operate within a HEI who are also under immense pressure to demonstrate excellence, add value, and prove their worth as part of the institution's brand offering in a global marketplace (Pettinger 2004; Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana 2007; Lynch 2006; Addison 2012). As Watson notes, the impetus to secure a strong and valuable image in challenging times, and get ahead of the competition, is affecting *everyone* who works in HEIs (see also Addison and Mountford 2015).

Summary of the Political and Social Context

Whilst I wanted to briefly draw attention to some of the changes affecting the Higher Education sector in the UK at the moment, this chapter is not meant to be a historical account of Higher Education or its relationship with the national/global economy. There are already some very good studies that I do not wish to replicate (see e.g., Bathmaker et al. 2013; Watson 2010; Reay et al. 2009; Lynch 2006). The aim of this chapter has been to provide an overview of the political and social context to my own empirical study. I wanted to highlight that HE is undergoing significant economic shifts in light of some major structural changes (including increased tuition fees, increasing pressure to publish, compete in global league tables, and acquire lucrative research grants, and to demonstrate social impact, to list but a few). The intention here has been to enable a discussion, then, in the rest of this book about how practices of adding value at work are utilizing embodied differences (Addison 2012; Addison and Mountford 2015). That is to say, that employees must learn how to add value if they are to get ahead at work in competitive times. In order to do so, many must learn how to adapt and play social games of distinction (Bourdieu 1990) in these competitive times.

Notes

1. Refers to the 'Research Excellence Framework' in the UK.
2. www.independent.gov.uk/browne-report.

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CHAPTER 4

Playing Games in the HE Workplace

> **Game** (*noun*): 'a form of competitive activity or sport played according to rules'.
>
> (Oxford English Dictionary)

> One does not embark on the game by a conscious act, one is born into the game, with the game.
>
> (Bourdieu 1990, p. 67)

In this chapter, I write about social games that people play. My focus is on how employees come to 'know' the game and develop a 'feel' for the game in this workplace (Bourdieu 1990, p. 67). For Bourdieu, trying to explore game-playing means thinking about what gives the game its *raison d'être,* direction, and orientation, as well as getting a feel for what the stakes and what the possible outcomes might be in the game (1990). Bourdieu uses the idea of game and game-playing as a metaphor to help explain the logic orientating people's practices. How well one is able to play the game depends on one's *habitus*, the position one holds in the field, as well as the different combinations of capital one has at their disposal. Developing a feel for the game is about having a sense for how things ought to be done. A true feel for the game is about being able to know the 'right ways of being and doing' (Bourdieu 1986, p. 511) without having to think about it. In the discussion that follows, I draw on some of Bourdieu's ideas about game-playing (1990) to help me in showing how people grasp the logic of game-playing at work.

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M. Addison, *Social Games and Identity in the Higher Education Workplace*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-51803-3_4

In the first section, then, I discuss moments where participants pick up on how things should be done in this workspace; I compare this to Bourdieu's idea of legitimate culture (1990, p. 298; 1984, pp. 79–80), in which it seems that there is a 'right' way to do things that employees, particularly new ones, must acquire knowledge of, that is, cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984), if they are to stabilize their position in the field. In the second section, I look at how employees develop their knowledge of the game (cultural capital) into a true 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 103) (i.e., unthought practice). I argue that developing a feel for the game—that is, a practical anticipation of the future as well as possessing embodied and habituated knowledge of the game (Bourdieu 1990)—is imperative if employees want to stay ahead of the competition. The argument I make in this chapter forms the basis of this book—that employees play games at work and, from these games, on-going competitive struggles continue to be reproduced. My aim here is to open up space in Chaps. 4 and 6 to consider some of the competitive struggles in game-playing related to the acquisition of knowledge and embodiment of the 'right' and 'wrong' classed and gendered identities at work.

The Field of Play: How Things Are Done Around Here

Here, I want to explore moments where employees talk about the way things are supposed to be done in this field. I indicate what I think are the signs of a legitimate culture that feature in participants' discussions. Some of the people I spoke to were more aware than others of what they felt was game-playing. These people talk about picking up on subtle signals that they feel direct and shape the way they should act, think, and feel when they are at work. There was a sense in their discussions of how things ought to be done. It is this notion of 'how things are done' that I think, and hope to show here, resembles Bourdieu's ideas about a 'legitimate culture'. A legitimate culture simply means the correct way to do things, a logic which structures space and the people in it. Bourdieu writes that practical logic

> is able to organize all thoughts, perceptions and actions by means of a few generative principles, which are closely interrelated and constitute a practically integrated whole, only because its whole economy, based on the principle of the economy of logic, presupposes a sacrifice of rigour for the same of simplicity and generality … in the sense of convenient, that is, easy to master and use. (1990, p. 86)

A culture, for instance, is legitimated through 'individual perception orientated by collective representations [where] each group tending to define the values with which it associates its value by opposition to the values of other groups' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 304). These values are continuously reproduced through 'a system of generative and classificatory schemes' that are structured by and structuring of the *habitus* and the field (Bourdieu 1990, p. 304), that is, a person's history and position in social space. Bourdieu writes that perceptions of value differences are reproduced and misrecognized by individuals and collectives as if these differences were real and 'grounded in nature' (1990, p. 304). So, the way things ought to be is taken for granted on the basis of familiarity and the way things have always been. Bourdieu emphasizes that 'those who, not having acquired legitimate culture in the legitimate manner (i.e., through early familiarization), maintain an uneasy relationship with it' (1984, p. 80). This shows itself when we feel uneasy and uncomfortable in certain spaces and around certain people.

Doxa is a useful concept to think of here, because it relates to the way things are done in a social space that is taken for granted and done unconsciously with a more embodied and prediscursive kind of knowledge: '*doxa* allows the socially arbitrary nature of power relations (e.g., classifications, values, categorizations and so on) that have produced the *doxa* itself to continue to be misrecognised and as such to be reproduced in a self-reinforcing manner' (Deer 2008, p. 12). We accept that this is how things are done, and that this is the *social order*. Having a complete immersion and commitment to the game is what Bourdieu describes as being a true feel for the game. *Doxa* reproduces the social order through people's perceptions and practices (i.e. *habitus* and field) (Deer 2008). Deer goes on to write that this interplay between *habitus* and field 'strengthens the prevailing power of the *doxa,* which guides the appropriate "feel" for the game of those involved in the field' (2008, p. 121).

There are those who just seem to be completely at ease in situations that might evoke complete terror, or perhaps a more pervasive sense of unease, in you or I: the big presentation in front of co-workers; an upmarket dinner party; or perhaps interacting with certain people in the corridor—some people just seem to know how to *be* and what to *do*. And yet these situations, and interacting with these kinds of people, might be enough to bring out a cold sweat in other people. Whilst there are those who readily have a feel for the game—they seem *born* into it—I am more interested in those who don't have this sense of belonging or this ease at fitting in. I want to know about what is going on in these moments. There are some people in my own study who shared that they felt that they did not quite fit in at work and did not quite get how things were meant to be done. These people were still acquiring knowledge about the game, that is, cultural capital. These people showed a raised awareness of game-playing, because they were actively trying to pick up on the rules that structure how we are supposed to be and put them into practice. It is in these moments that I think one is able to gain an insight into game-playing, and that I want to focus on, as well as what supposedly constitutes the 'right' way to do things.

I want to share now some of the discussions that I had with employees about the game-playing that they could see going on at work. Linsey was working on a fixed-term contract as a Lecturer. She tells me about recent turbulent encounters amongst colleagues that stemmed from a meeting that took place involving all staff. In this meeting, the discontinuation of certain employee contracts was being openly announced for the first time. Some people found out that they were losing their jobs. The people who did not get their contracts renewed were upset, Linsey tells me, and this led to her observing difficult interactions between certain colleagues. These circumstances heightened tensions in difficult economic times amongst colleagues. After these circumstances, Linsey is able to go on to describe in detail how she picks up on how things are done around here, and the type of people she feels she is sometimes up against in the workplace:

> It is unspoken, it is implicit, but it is very there. But at the same time it is very overt, there are those who have power and there are those who have been here a long time who get away with a lot. You pick it up as you go along, it is tacit, those that have to be listened to. Those that maybe aren't as powerful, I can't really explain it, you just kind of pick it up as you go along. You know, '*yes, I see that they're very powerful*'. Or sometimes you can think of it in terms of reputation, sometimes it is just cos they're a certain person in the department. There are those who *are* in a position of power who won't *assert* that power. […] So, you have to kind of negotiate these power relations, quite carefully.
>
> (Linsey, Temporary Lecturer, 51 years old, unsure of class position)

Linsey's discussion seems to pick up on many characteristics of game-playing: there are players, tactics, implicit knowledge, possible outcomes, and an orientation of how she thinks she should be in these situations. I believe that Linsey seems to be describing a logic that governs people's behaviour at work and, importantly, that part of this logic involves knowing and acknowledging a person's positioning in the field. Linsey describes the game to me and points out that a powerful person is not always the person who holds the most senior job position within that space at that point in time; sometimes a person is recognized as powerful for other reasons. This indicates how Linsey learns to play the game her way and develops a practical sense for how things are to be done (Bourdieu 1990): she pays close attention to how people act so that she can acquire further information about these players. This knowledge, or rather, cultural capital, might help her to be more familiar with how to play the game in future interactions with these people. This knowledge then is useful to have and helps us all to develop a familiarity with the games that we encounter day-to-day.

These attempts to develop a practical sense of the game are also echoed by another employee, Erica, who says:

> When you are new in a situation you have got your tentacles out a bit I think, haven't you, to see what it's like and what people do. To observe people in different contexts, how people do things.
>
> (Erica, temporary Lecturer, 62 years old, middle-class)

Erica is also experiencing changing conditions in her department and is trying to develop her understanding of what is going on by watching other people. Bourdieu writes about developing a practical sense, saying that this sense 'orients "choices"' (1990, p. 66) and that this sense is a 'proleptic adjustment to the demands of a field' where the person starts to develop a 'feel for the game' (1990, p. 66). What Linsey and Erica both seem to notice because of their sensitivity to game-playing is that some people are able to move around and assert their own interests more than others, especially in light of difficult times in their departments. They both talk about having strategies for interacting with, and coping with, certain people in the department who play games to their advantage. Both Linsey and Erica are able to use this cultural capital that they have acquired to anticipate future scenarios and interactions and ultimately improve their feel for the game.

Both Erica and Linsey demonstrate an interest in and commitment to playing the game as it is. This commitment to the game is more apparent in the following comment from Erica:

> It is one of those funny things you know, where you are quite a junior member of staff and you think 'Well, this is the way it is, I had better just adopt it as my way of *being*, as well'. It's not easy to be the one who stands out or who questions things.
>
> (Erica, Temporary Lecturer, 62 years old, middle-class)

Rather than trying to change the game, Erica reproduces the game as it is, and in so doing legitimates the perceptions and values of the collective group. The more Erica does this, the more likely, I expect, it is that her conscious attempts to fit in and get a handle on the game will develop into a true and unconscious feel for the game.

Attempts to make sense of what is going on at work are also discussed by Josie. When I interviewed Josie, she was just coming to the end of her contract working with what she describes as a difficult manager. She had problems interacting with this woman throughout her time in this social space and at times found herself upset and disorientated with what to do next. This was Josie's first job in this institution, so she was not really familiar with how things are done in this field. She told me several times that she felt that she had difficulty picking up on, as she puts it, 'unwritten rules'. Her account below provides an insight into her attempts to pick up on the 'legitimate culture':

> You pick up on it don't you. I feel … I don't know, if I go to a meeting and everyone is sat around in suits looking very smart … and very… their hair is carefully done, women with makeup, I don't wear it very often, never for work, I never wear make up for work. I suppose I am conscious of that, because other people that I work with, they're perfect … they wear a lot of makeup, and … I feel that I am sometimes people may … *underestimate* or may sort of think 'Who is this?' this might be my personal insecurities, you know, like 'Who is this scruffy oik coming to our meetings?' But I don't know that for sure. I don't know I am not inside their heads, maybe it is my personal insecurity of feeling that, when you work in an organisation where people do turn up in uniform or in suits […] I *feel* that might potentially have happened to me and I have been *seen* as not… unprofessional, but not really following the *rules*, or fitting in with what people expect. I don't know. I couldn't know that, I just pick up on it.
>
> (Josie, Research Associate, 50 years old, middle-class)

Josie came to the interview dressed in smart trousers and a casual, long sleeved top, so to describe her concerns about being seen as a 'scruffy oik' reveals something about the importance of looking a certain way in this workplace. Josie is emphasizing here that it is important that she does not fall into this category. To be seen as scruffy and as an 'oik' describes someone who is 'a person regarded as inferior because ignorant, ill-educated, or lower-class' (thefreedictionary.com). How we look to others can betray our handle on the rules of the game. So, the rules to the game that Josie is trying to pick up on are in some ways classed and classing of individuals. This logic to the game constructs a person who can legitimately fit in against a classed other who does not fit in. Josie's discussions illustrate that looking 'right' is important knowledge to have about the game.

Josie is concerned that her embodiment does not send out the messages to others at work that she wishes to share. She is particularly conscious that image is an important part of game-playing: 'you want to look reasonably presentable, but to project a certain image of yourself' (Josie). She compares working in academia to other roles she has had in the public sector and she feels that here, 'Academics have the freedom to look … to look a bit *different*,' but just so long as they are 'well presented'. Josie's discussions here show that she sees how different players in the game are able to play the game. It is generally accepted in this field that academics are permitted to dress in a casual way, but as her above excerpt indicates, this is still structured and located in classed terms, particularly when she uses the term 'oik'.

In the excerpt below, Josie tells me about an incident where she is accused by her manager of 'getting above herself' for wanting to publish something, and she was told she did not know her 'place'.

> It made me feel really frustrated and angry, but it also made me doubt myself, and made me feel down on myself, like maybe I am extremely arrogant and big headed, really I am getting carried away with myself. It made me feel worried that I wasn't managing to pick up on the nuances of behaviours and the unwritten rules of how it *should* be. It made me angry, if those are the unwritten rules then they are *crap!* It made me think 'Do I want to be a part of this?' And at times in academia, it seemed like a lot of self-important shit where you sit around writing for each other, and what is important is how much you impress each other.
>
> (Josie, Research Associate, 50 years old, middle-class)

This quotation is rich in emotion. Josie senses that something is not right with what has happened to her and has an angry emotional response to this. What appears to be happening is that Josie has been called to account according to a set of implicit and legitimated rules that are supposed to govern behaviour in this academic workplace. These rules are not in policy documents; they are meant to be immanent in the workplace. These embedded rules are not obvious to Josie—even watching other people's behaviour to emulate their practices does not seem to help her work out the subtleties of the legitimate culture. Only when Josie is reprimanded by someone in a more powerful position in this field does she become aware of breaking with the way things are done around here. So, not knowing how things are done here and getting it wrong in this instance raises her awareness that there is a game being played and that she is expected to submit to the rules of the game. She spurns the legitimate culture by calling it 'crap', and it is this moment that I think is the most revealing in Josie's discussions: her conscious attempts to inculcate the ways of the legitimate culture are halted. She seems to experience a moment of crisis where she questions the meaning of the game and her own investment in it. It would seem then that if she is to carry on and get used to the way things are done in this workplace, it would involve accepting a lot of discomfort and pain until she is socialized properly into the correct way of being. But she isn't at this point willing to accept what she sees as a harmful aspect of the game as just part of the norm of what things are like in this workplace, and this seems to prompt her to question the purpose of the game. This questioning of the rules and the way things are done around here help crystallize the game to her. It is not clear, though, whether Josie is likely to disinvest in the game and disrupt the smooth running of it, or whether she will accept things as they are and play along.

Josie is not the only person who senses that there is a legitimated logic that governs her behaviour and interactions at work, a logic that prescribes the way things are done around here. Hannah was relatively new to the university when I interviewed her. She is not sure how things are to be done here, so she tells me about a couple of incidents where she asks some senior members of staff how to proceed about various administrative tasks. Although these particular staff members were very helpful, this practice of going above her 'grade' and speaking to employees that were deemed *too senior* was called into question by her manager. Hannah soon acquires enough cultural capital to know that 'going above her grade' is not how things are done here. She feels perplexed with this, and in the next excerpt talks about figuring out what is going on at work:

> You have to have a grading system, in every sort of environment and structure but the way the hierarchical structure relates to pay, and how it plays out here seems to mirror a class system […] I was being told there was

> an order … you know, you can't … I suppose, it was extremely weird. So, I, don't know where all of this stems from but you kind of learn to work within the parameters, and you do kind of figure out the *game*, what is going on.
>
> (Hannah, Funding Officer, 33 years old, no class position)

Hannah talks about learning how to act in this workplace. What is striking about Hannah's excerpt is that the way things are done around here seems to her to be rather odd. She is not familiar with the legitimate culture because of her relatively new status, and so she does not yet take the legitimate culture for granted. Because of this, she seems to have difficulty making sense of why she is told she is not allowed to talk to certain people at work when these people are more than happy to help her; this rule seems absurd to her. She seems to hit upon implicit restrictions that govern her behaviour in this field that she was not aware of before, and, like Josie, it is in these moments when she breaks with and begins to question legitimate culture. In this critical moment she seems to glean an insight into the inner workings of the game and a snatched glance at the rulebook. She starts to recognize other people's practices as characteristic of game-playing, but it is not clear to what extent Hannah views how things are done in this field as normal. It is also not apparent yet whether Hannah will attempt to interpret these practices and 'restore their meaning, to grasp their logic' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 18) and so forget that they seemed odd, or whether they will persist in being illogical to her. Her capacity to fit in and ensure the reproduction of the game depends on whether she is able to accept how things are done here, or whether she will begin to disinvest in the game as a result of finding it nonsensical.

Linsey has only worked in her current role for a couple of years. This means that she is still going through quite a raw process of trying to get a sense of how things are done here; she does not yet have a true feel for the game. She shares how, when she first came to work here, she noticed that other staff made distinctions about class. She shares that she sensed when she first arrived that there was an implicit expectation that staff should act in certain 'classed' ways:

> There is the big um … the big rush … to get away from working-classness as fast as you possibly can! Which is ridiculous! But … whether you like it or not There is this huge rush to … peel off er … the trappings of working-classness and go on to restaurants and eat rabbit food and everything comes with it. And if you don't do that … you have to be brave cos you are then not playing the game, and I am not sure … and again I am

> very naive, I am not sure how that affects you. I don't know how that affects your positioning, how *much* it affects your positioning in the department, in terms of career trajectory, do you *really* have to play the game in order to get … you know?
>
> (Linsey, Temporary Lecturer, 51 years old, unsure of class position)

Linsey tries to make sense of what is going on around her and how people act in this space by using class as an explanatory tool. When she talks about class, she frames it in terms of social mobility and practices that help employees fit in with the conditions of the field. Linsey talks about working-classness in particular as being an identity that her colleagues want to distance themselves from. She reports picking up on implicit rules that seem to imply that being seen as 'working-class' is undesirable in this field. Part of the entry requirements of fitting in appear to include concealing signs of working-classness to give the impression of a more desirable classed positioning (see also Charlesworth 2000, Taylor 2010). Linsey seems to recognize this as legitimate culture, but is also disparaging about it—suggesting that she does not wholly accept this way of doing things. That said, she also conveys that to challenge this taken-for-granted class prejudice inherent in the way things are done here in this HEI is risky. She is ambivalent about the capacity of others to change the dominant way of playing the game, and she signals that perhaps one has to be complicit in it in order to get ahead of the competition, and also survive the game.

What Linsey, Erica, Hannah, and Josie all appear to have in common is that they have moved into a field that they are not completely familiar with, they lack cultural capital, and, as such, there appears to be a degree of 'mis-match' (Bourdieu 2000, p. 162) between their own *habitus* and the conditions of the field. Put another way, there is a disjuncture between their own ways of being and doing, and the way they are expected to be in this particular social space. This mismatch enables them, in my view, to question the legitimate culture and the extent to which they are expected to take it for granted. In these moments of unease and discomfort, I think they recognize aspects of game-playing that others who may have been in the field for a long time might just take for granted and misrecognize as normal. Linsey, in particular, is someone who is experiencing a change in the conditions to the field. I think she is sensitive to feeling out of place at work when she first starts and, as a result, is more attentive to changes to the rules, and legitimate culture, of the game.

Clark and Zukas (2013) write about how it is that employees actually develop a feel for the game and become, to use a Bourdieusian phrase, a 'fish in water'. They suggest that 'the relationship between *habitus* and the social world of work (field) will determine whether or not a newly employed graduate, for instance, is like a "fish in water"' (2013, p. 209). Those who feel like they can fit in take the world around them for granted. Using data from a qualitative longitudinal study of graduate employability in the IT sector, these writers argue that a person's 'fit' with a certain workplace largely depends on their *habitus* and, as such, they suggest that embodied characteristics such as class, gender, and ethnicity are important factors that may determine whether someone feels like they are a 'fish in water'.

Playing the game according to the rules, and maintaining the equilibrium of the game, requires that employees misrecognize the power imbalances fuelling legitimate culture and that they accept this as the norm 'around here'. The extent to which each employee accepts the dominant way of doing things and plays the game according to the legitimated rules seems to differ from person to person. My discussion of game-playing so far resonates, too, with Nolan and Walshaw's findings when they write that,

> Similar to games, social fields are constructed with specific structures and rules, and the relative smoothness of the game/field often depends upon the players unquestioningly accepting and following these rules, regardless of how arbitrary they might seem. (2012, p. 358)

In the next section, then, I look at how participants develop their own feel for the game at work.

Getting a 'Feel for the Game' and the Players

So far I've tried to show that games are played implicitly in our interactions at work, and that many employees are aware of this going on. But what does it mean to actually have a feel for the game? When Bourdieu talks about developing a 'feel for the game', he likens this to the learning of one's mother tongue, of which the same 'principle generating practices' (1990, p. 74) apply to the learning of a foreign tongue. Having a feel for the game means a capacity to 'think in (rather than with) the language' (1990, p. 67); this practical language, or rather, sense, makes people's actions intelligible. Having a true 'feel for the game' means that other people's actions appear entirely sensible and *logical*. Actions appear sensible because one has an understanding of the 'right' way to do things around here. This involves the acquisition of cultural capital that will help familiarize the person with the way the game is played. Knowing what is legitimated as 'right' helps a person to claim prestige and demonstrate a recognized level of cultural competency (Lawler 1999) within game-playing. We recognize these people as being at ease with their surroundings. According to Lawler, if a person does not demonstrate cultural competency, then they are not fully at ease, and I would suggest that this lack of ease may be perceived as failing in game-playing.

In the following excerpt, Leah describes what it was like for her when she first started working at the university. She speaks now with a level of confidence about her work and interactions that it seems she did not possess when she first started here. Instead, she told me that she had to work at 'fitting in' and making sense of what was going on around her. Many things appeared quite strange to her usual way of doing things in the beginning and she could not easily make sense of how various people interacted in this space.

> **M: Can you tell me about when you first started working here, what was it like and how did you feel?**
>
> Very, very scared! Cos I had never, I had never well, I had never worked in a university […]. I was very, *very* intimidated when I first started. I didn't understand how universities worked, really. Um, but after seeing the big picture, I did. So it was quite terrifying, all these processes. It is a very different, I mean in industry for instance, it is very clear cut line management. It is very different in the university. The way academics operate, they *have* to be given more freedom, um, so I actually found it quite confusing working out who held the power in the organisation, you know, who must I not offend? [Laughs] who must I befriend? It was actually very confusing, at first.
>
> (Leah, Funding Manager, 56 years old, working-class)

It is apparent in Leah's discussions how uneasy she felt when she first started working here: she did not have a 'feel for the game' or knowledge of how things are done here. Her feelings seem to signal to her that she is somewhat out of her depth, not knowing how to 'be' around certain people, particularly academics. Her initial preconceptions of academics were that academics occupy a social position in this space of very elevated prestige ('they're so well qualified and clever and brilliant!'). She seems to find this social positioning deeply intimidating when she measures herself against these academics.

Leah has a familiarity with how organizations are 'supposed' to work because of her industry experience, but she is yet to work out how things are done around here. This excerpt above shows a misalignment between her usual way of doing things—Leah does not know how the game is to be played here, she is not yet competent, and her past experiences do not really help her. Later in her discussions we can see how she works at developing a 'feel for the game' and making more sense of what is going on around her by asking other people what it all means and who are the 'big players'. Becoming familiar with how she should be and how things are done here are a way in for her to sharpen her feel for the game.

In the next quotation, Leah tells me about an incident where she is very unsettled and disorientated with what happens, and does not understand how these practices are permitted to go on here.

> I had only been in the job about two days … when um, erm, I was meeting a member of academic staff and he came in and he just about took the door off its hinges […] he wanted *me* to tell the other academic that they could *not* put in an application to the same scheme cos he was more important, and to me I was just terrified! This man was ranting, just absolutely ranting, and I just didn't know who to speak to, or what to do. Erm, so that was … in the end I did *nothing*! And the problem sort of went away. I realised that academics sometimes, bless them, do rant and rave, and the next day they've got something else to worry about. Erm, so that was really quite disturbing.
> (Leah, Funding Manager, 56 years old, working-class)

It is possible to see in this example how Leah begins to painfully develop a feel for the game. As a new entrant to this workplace, Leah is trying to develop a feel for how things are done here. She encounters the rules in quite abrupt ways when she interacts with an academic. She senses that she is expected to behave in a particular way, but her disorientation about what to do next makes her feel deeply anxious. She cannot even comply with the rules, because she does not know what they are. After two days of working here, she has no knowledge of the sanctions she might encounter should she make a wrong move playing this game. She cannot anticipate what a desirable outcome might look like here, as she has little knowledge of the players in this game yet, or how they might act. In the end, rather than make the wrong move, Leah decides to make no move at all to address the situation that was put to her by this academic. It would seem that if she does not make a move, then she cannot be held accountable for it.

At the end of the quote, Leah reflects back on this critical moment of disorientation in the game and tries to interpret the events and make some sense of the way the academic went on, using the knowledge she has now acquired of the game. This shows that she has invested in and is committed to the game and the way it is played: she has more of an understanding of an academic's unique social positioning in this workplace and she recognizes that these kinds of academics hold powerful positions in the game. She misrecognizes, though, the unequal exchange in this interaction as being a reflection of the legitimate culture and simply the way things are done here with academics as players.

Various participants, not just Leah, have described some academics and their behaviours as being 'eccentric', 'child-like', 'toddlers', 'free-spirits', and 'ranters and ravers'. Of course, this does not extend to all academics, but I think what it does highlight is the unique positioning academics seem to occupy in this social space. This is revealed more in Leah's excerpt below:

> It's different in a university. See, if that had have been in industry, the individual concerned would have been hauled up and you know, either you know, would have been dealt with in some way, so I realise that academics are free spirits [laughs] that's how they do what they do. And, so that was actually difficult to learn how to handle.
>
> (Leah, Funding Manager, 56 years old, working-class)

This workplace, then, is different to how games are played in previous organizations Leah has worked in. Academics in particular are an integral part of this social space, and make playing this game very different to other kinds of employment. To reiterate what Leah said earlier, she believes now that 'academics have to be given more freedom'. But, freedom from what? She seems to be highlighting from her experience that academics are permitted more freedom to play the game in a way that does not subject them to the same rules or sanctions. It is not clear why this is, but my guess is because of the combination of capitals and creative licence academics are supposed to possess, as well as a powerful positioning in a Higher Education organization, these people are able to improvize more with how they play the game. She gives a further insight into this positioning of academics in relation to her own administrative position at this institution:

> The Head of School was never going to tackle it cos they're academics and erm … me as er, fairly, middle, ranking administrator you know, it wasn't my job to do it. […] So I did find that very, very disturbing. But over time, it's like water off a duck's back now. If that sort of thing happens, I just say 'That's academics, that's how they go on sometimes'.
>
> (Leah, Funding Manager, 56 years old, working-class)

She identifies that some academics she works with are not subject to the same kind of rules that she is at work. She has knowledge that she has little power to try and question an academic's behaviour and she notes that even the Head of School is not able to tackle some behaviours from certain academics. Part of learning to play the game well then for Leah is misrecognizing the reasons that academics retain a unique flexibility and freedom within the game that she herself does not have. This helps her to avoid feeling alienated by the game.

Acquiring knowledge about the game helps Leah to develop a feel for the game, to develop her cultural competency, and to anticipate future interactions and secure desirable outcomes. But she also reproduces a legitimate culture where academics are the more powerful players and get to monopolize how things are done around here. Bourdieu suggests that it is these 'countless acts of recognition which are the small change of the compliance inseparable from the belonging to the field, and in which collective misrecognition is ceaselessly generated' (1990, p. 68). It seems that part of what Leah learns is to make sense of the game through misrecognizing her own dominated position, that is, the way she is treated by various academics, as being a natural precondition of the field (Bourdieu 1990).

This idea that academics are 'big, powerful players' in the game being played in this workplace is reiterated by Tony in the discussions we had. Tony is someone who says he is quite reserved and quiet at work and he tries to avoid conflict. He was not really aware of game-playing amongst the staff in the department until the conditions of the field changed and he acquired a promotion. He discusses his views of academics below—it seems that academics do not always play the game by the rules and there is little to be done about it:

> To be a *successful* academic I think you have to have a degree of *selfishness* about you […] people can reach a stage that they think 'Actually the rules don't apply to me' and ultimately 'whatever the university says I can do what I want, and if I shout and *scream* enough' I am exaggerating slightly, they're not really going to do that, well *most* of them anyway [laughs] but ultimately um, they can't be managed because when push comes to shove their ultimate threat would be that 'well, if I can't do this I will *simply* go and take my research group with me to another university down the road, whatever, where they'll be pleased to have me, and I will do it there'. You know? So, you know, that's a difficult situation where you have people who you know at the end of the day, pretty much do what they *want*.
>
> (Tony, Dean of School, 48 years old, middle-class)

In talking about academics like this, Tony is demonstrating a feel for the game at the top end of the job hierarchy where part of his role is to 'manage' academics. I use the term 'manage' loosely, because it seems it is unclear how academics are to be managed. Tony talks about how academics have a great deal more freedom to negotiate and refuse rules that might govern other people in this workplace. Through this discussion, he reveals an insight into the power relations woven into the game. This university is in the business now of selling knowledge, be it to students, clients, or organizations, and this makes some academics a more valuable asset than others. However, the ownership of knowledge is only ever partially possible to claim by the institution; the organization depends on the academics to continue to exchange their labour power for a wage. Whilst this could be said to be true of all employers, what make universities distinctive is that academics, as employees, tend not to be so easily or straightforwardly replaceable. Academics tend to specialize in a specific kind of knowledge that allows them to carve out a relatively unique positioning at work. So, the more established an academic becomes (through publications, teaching, and research for instance), the more irreplaceable, and therefore valuable, they are able to make themselves. Put another way, these academics have managed to personalize their cultural capital and it becomes an asset the institution cannot necessarily afford to lose. This is a powerful negotiating tool that the more established academic can, and does, use to manipulate and negotiate the rules of this game in the workplace. Tony is aware of this kind of game-playing by academics and likens it to the Football Premiership in the UK, where the more expensive players are able to have greater say over what happens in the club, or they can threaten to go elsewhere. So in a similar vein, whilst not all academics are powerful to begin with, if academics reach a stage where their labour is considered highly lucrative to this workplace, then they seem to be able to use this power to negotiate the games and how the rules governing their behaviour and practices apply to them. Tony says that he has witnessed this happening in the workplace, and, as we can see in the next excerpt, his acquisition of cultural capital has meant that he has developed a level of cultural competency and a 'feel' for how to play this kind of game with these kinds of players:

> I am a *lot* wiser to it *now*. Sort of … when I first started as the Dean, it's the sort of thing I might have got … stressed about, I guess, but I think all jobs get easier over time. And I think they get easier over time because you build up a bank of what you might call 'case law' or um, you know … once you

> have made a decision once. If the same situation arises again in a years time, essentially you don't have to go through the thought processes again because you think 'oh, under these circumstances this is the …' you develop a set of working rules, basically. I think things get easier over time. Um. And also, again, which I think … you build up relationships with people, you know a bit more about people, the way they are going to behave. You build up relationships with people's managers, their heads of school, and so on. At the end of the day, it can take the heat out of a situation, and short circuit things.
> (Tony, Dean of School, 48 years old, middle-class)

Unlike the learning that is done in childhood that becomes re-enacted by the body without thinking, the learning process that Tony has experienced in this social space trying to consciously adjust his *habitus* to the new conditions of the field has been quite painful and emotional. He did not know how to act at first, and this initial disorientation was stressful to him. Only by encountering the presuppositions of the game again and again over time is he able to develop his cultural capital and subsequently a better, although not absolute, feel for the game being played. This helps him to sharpen the strategies that he will use. Tony talks about recalling strategies that he previously deployed to help him to judge what would be the best course of action in similar situations. He also discusses how he now feels he is in a better position to predict what others might do. I think that Bourdieu would describe this acquisition of, as Tony puts it, 'case law' as being an example of 'practical mimesis', which, in other words, is a practical reactivation of 'fundamental schemes to one's own body' (1990, p. 73). Put another way, Tony is now able to reactivate past experiences to orient his own actions in the game without so much conscious thought. However, what is not clear is how long it takes for this 'case law' to become so automatic that, Tony for instance, does not have to think about it. What these aspects of Tony's discussion do show is that he is getting better at developing a practical mastery of the game where he is able to handle powerful players in the game with greater tact and secure more desirable outcomes with less risk.

Like Tony, Hannah also talks about developing an understanding of how things are done around here and what it takes to be able to move around in the game:

> Well, I guess, it is a game in some sense […] It is some sort of way of operating, it is very, strange in many respects. I think it's understanding how that works kind of where you fit into that big column, and what you need to do if you want to move around, how you need to be *seen* or kind of …

> there is a bit of a game if we're talking about career progression particularly, it is kind of understanding that […] it is kind of understanding place and what you maybe need to do or not do, or ask or not ask … or just kind of, you know, how far you need to play within that in order to get what you need, but also to not be abused.
>
> (Hannah, Funding Officer, 33 years old, no class position)

A lack of a feel for the game makes people pay closer attention to how it is played. This is apparent in Hannah's account above where she talks about getting a better understanding of the place in which she works. She begins to acquire knowledge about the presuppositions of the game and who the players are so that she can secure desirable outcomes and avoid sanctions. This is particularly important to Hannah given her difficult encounters with her boss. There were times where she has been so upset at not knowing how things are to be done here that she has hid in the toilets away from the game-playing. Hannah also had this to say:

> **M: Are some people better at playing this game than others?**
>
> H: Yeah. Definitely. There's a lot of *lunching* that goes on [laughs]. And I … I am not, I have not been here long enough to know the people, I am not really, I don't see myself as a big gossip or want to get into that whole sort of like bitchy scene, there is … I mean, if people are looking to move around, you will suddenly see a lot of lunch dates with *key* people in the university in the diary, that sort of thing, massaging egos.
>
> (Hannah, Funding Officer, 33 years old, no class position)

Hannah develops her own feel for the game by watching what other players do here to get ahead. She sees how other people use strategies to advance in the game that is being played, as well as capitalizing on their combinations of capital. Hannah seems to recognize that, in order to secure desirable outcomes, certain kinds of practices take place that she does not necessarily approve of. It is not clear whether Hannah is prepared to emulate these kinds of practices to advance her own position in the game-playing.

Simon also recognizes that different ways of playing the game are required depending on the situation and the people he encounters at work:

> You do change how you act with different people, even within one organisation, there's different approaches needed for different situations.
>
> (Simon, Surveyor, 31 years old, lower middle-class)

Being able to adapt to different social games taking place at work is not easy and requires knowledge of the game and how to put this into practice, which I discuss in more detail in Chaps. 5 and 6. What Simon's comment does give an insight into is that there are a number of different games going on in different social spaces across the institution. Like Clark and Zukas (2013), I am interested in the mismatch that can occur between *habitus* and field, that is, knowing how to be in certain spaces, and how it is that people try to adjust to the field and game that they are in (I discuss this more in Chap. 7). What I have tried to show so far is that the dynamics and logic of social games are at their most exposed when people do not have a true feel for the game. I think what is most striking about my discussions with participants is that almost everyone I spoke to told me about moments where they felt uneasy at work. Very few people, it seems, demonstrated a harmonious alignment of *habitus* and social space all of the time. This seems to be because several fields overlap within this field of employment and, as such, the rules of the game seem to change depending on where the person is at a particular moment at work. This is not unexpected given the complex structures of the work environment and the overlapping fields a person may encounter as they move through the day and through space.

As employees can find themselves moving within and across several fields in a day, and interacting with a wide range of people in such a large institution, it is in their interests to be more attuned to changes in the conditions of the field and the people around them. Working out what is going on can help an employee register how well, or not, they feel that they are doing in the game. To put it simply, many of the participants I spoke to demonstrate behaviour that suggests they are still developing a feel for the game because, it seems to me, they haven't forgotten that there is a game being played.

Reay et al. (2009) write about a similar theme, looking at how working-class students at elite universities adapt to try and fit in around certain people and in certain places. They interviewed nine working-class students about their experiences of coming to an elite university. Reay et al. write that usually 'when *habitus* encounters a field with which it is not familiar, the resulting disjunctures can generate not only change and transformation, but also disquiet, ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty' (2009, p. 1105; see also Reay 2005; Addison and Mountford 2015). However, their own study shows that these working-class students maintained a connection to their own social background and family, and adapted well to the new field of the elite university. Reay et al. argue that these students were able to do this because they had developed a strong sense of self-awareness and strategies for adaptation as a result of not feeling as though they had 'fitted in' at high school. These feelings of unease meant that they had developed a heightened ability to read the conditions of other fields. This raised awareness and capacity to then adapt to the condition of the field had become part of their *habitus*. Thus, they were able to become 'familiar strangers' (Puwar 2004 in Reay et al. 2009, p. 115) in a field that was strange to them. This seems to be quite similar to some of the participants I spoke to, in that they demonstrated a capacity for adaptation and an ability to pick up on changes to the field that might affect their game-playing. This was not true for all participants in my study—there were some who felt stuck as a result of not knowing how to fit in, which I explore further in Chap. 7.

Knowledge and Identity at Work

I continue my focus on knowledge of the game in this book by looking at aspects of identity that are seen to have value, or not, in the next two chapters. Identity is a sticky concept to unpack and is theorized in a number of different ways (see Lawler 2008a; Elliot and Du Gay 2009). The approach most relevant to my discussions frames identity as *embodied*. An embodied identity is a sense of self that is inscribed on the body, as well as both literally and metaphorically under the skin; it is shaped by the society it is positioned in and, relationally, also shapes society. This model of identity is a useful way to think about how identities are structured by the workplace and, in turn, are structuring of the workplace. Bourdieu offers a heuristic approach to thinking about identity in this way.

Bourdieu develops a detailed theoretical framework about embodied identity that was intended for practical use in empirical research. He developed a tripartite model that offers a way of understanding how a person shapes the world and people around them and how they are also shaped by the social world. This model is the *habitus*, field, and capital. As I have already written about this model in Chap. 1, I only briefly recap it here.

Bourdieu describes that a person's *habitus* and the capital they have is constitutive of an embodied identity. It is 'history turned into nature' (Bourdieu 1977, p. 78). The *habitus* disposes a person to act, think, and feel in a certain way, but this can sometimes be more, or less, in keeping with the structures of a particular field. Field is a useful way to think about social space more as ‘constellations of social relations’ (Bourdieu 1993, p. 72). The value of capital (cultural, economic, social) is organized in different ways relative to particular fields. A person may be able to exchange capital for value in one field, for example, but this may not be the same once they have crossed into another field (Bourdieu 1984, p. 56 in Moore 2008, p. 106). The organization of capital and how it acquires value in different combinations constitutes the legitimate culture of a field (Bourdieu 1990, p. 298; 1984, pp. 79–80). Ways of being in social space are legitimated through a continuous reproduction of ‘generative and classificatory schemes’ (Bourdieu 1990, p. 304). This representation and recognition of value occurs through a relational process where value is known ‘by opposition to the values of other groups’ (1990, p. 304). Lawler writes, ‘… we as social actors daily participate in the constitution of such a self and, in the process make and remake the social every day through our social interactions’ (2008a, b, p. 109). Moreover, Moore suggests that a person needs to understand the principles that govern this ‘legitimate culture’ (1984, p. 56 in Moore 2008, p. 106) if they are to secure advantages in this particular field. This means having knowledge of what is considered legitimate (or correct) in a particular social space and how to mobilize this as part of the game.

Further, having knowledge about how class distinctions work and are valued in certain fields helps a person play the game (Bourdieu 1984, 1990). For instance, this may mean selecting the right materials to distinguish oneself (for instance, picking the right suit, reading certain books) so that one is de-coded and read as having a valued position. Mobilizing certain capital can hinge on whether another *type* of person did not; this emphasizes the relational character of value distinctions. This makes having knowledge of how certain things are ‘culturally and socially valorised for their opposition to an extreme’ (Moore 2008, p. 107) crucial to game-playing.

Some people know the correct way to do things because they have inherited cultural capital that has socialized them with the rules of the game governing a specific field and its legitimate culture. These people are familiar with the correct way that things are to be done without needing to think about it—they fit in with ease and have a true feel for the game, whereas other people may not be so familiar with the correct way to do things and may feel out of place in certain social spaces. Although one may feel out of place in some social spaces, as in a stadium full of football fans for instance, this is not as important, perhaps, as if one felt out of place in the office with other colleagues. In some places it is central to try and fit in and know how the game is played. Getting it wrong and not knowing how to be in some spaces has different social consequences—for instance, at work around one's colleagues compared with a watching a football match with friends.

Conclusions

I have opened up a discussion about how employees come to 'know' the game, demonstrate cultural competency, and develop a 'feel' for the game in this workplace (Bourdieu 1990, p. 67). The acquisition of cultural/knowledge capital is important to being able to play the game well. This chapter presents the basis for my argument, which I develop in the rest of this book. I have suggested here that different social games are being played between people at work. The idea of 'game' and game-playing is intended to act as a metaphor to help me to explain how it is that people come to act, think and feel in certain ways at work. Bourdieu's ideas about the logic of practice (1990) have been particularly useful here in helping me to consider the ways in which people try to get a sense of 'how things are done around here', acquire cultural capital, and also how people try to develop a feel for the game being played.

My argument so far is thus: people play games at work, and the employees who took part demonstrate different levels of awareness of the game and cultural competency. Although awareness of game-playing can increase for reasons to do with intensifying competition for instance (Bathmaker et al. 2013), what I suggest here is that, in moments where a person feels disorientated or uneasy at work, their awareness of a game and game-playing becomes raised. At these critical points that arise in game-playing, participants make more conscious attempts to work out the game, acquire cultural capital, and try to fit in with the perceived 'right' way to do things. These critical points tend to occur when an employee crosses into a new field or when the field begins to change and they do not know how to keep up with the game being played.

Developing a feel for the game is not easy, especially when a person's *habitus* appears to be at odds with the way things are done in a certain social space (Bourdieu 1990). Employees' discussions about their experiences at work offer an insight into their perceptions of 'legitimate culture' or, to put it another way, the 'right' way to do things around here, which I discussed in the first section. A number of these employees talked about trying to pick up on what was going on around them and offered examples of this connected to when they first started or when they encountered a situation that made them feel disorientated. I suggested that these attempts to pick up on 'unwritten rules' or to emulate other colleagues is an effort by the person to acquire cultural capital and develop a *feel for the game*. Through this sense-making, these employees tried to make other people's practices around them more intelligible. This activity shows that they are committing to an investment in the game and trying to develop a feel for the game. A true feel for the game means that employees have achieved practical mastery of the game and so no longer have to think about how to do it; it becomes part of their *habitus*. However, there are occasions where the game is questioned and some, like Hannah and Josie for instance, seemed to waver in their investment in the game.

By thinking about why people act the way they do at work as an expression of games and game-playing, one is able to gain an insight into how people try to adapt and fit in. According to Bourdieu (1990), a person is able to fit in with the conditions of the field if they have internalized the logic of the game, which he describes as being 'the almost miraculous encounter between the *habitus* and a field' (1990, p. 66); throughout the rest of this book, I consider this by looking at times when people do not feel as though they fit in and for what reasons. I now turn to discuss how knowledge of class and gender helps employees to develop a feel for the game, and later, to how emotion work conceals times when a person feels like a 'fish out of water' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

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CHAPTER 5

Knowledge and Embodiment of Femininity at Work

In the previous chapter, I considered how people try to develop a feel for the social games that are played at work. Developing a feel for the game means having cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984/2010), that is, knowledge of how things *ought* to be done around here. Knowing how things ought to be done is central to being able to fit in with the legitimate culture. I continue with this theme of game-playing in this chapter by considering employees' perceptions of the 'right' and 'wrong' way to be at work. I hope to show that possessing cultural capital, that is, knowing the right and wrong way to be at work, is an important feature of being able to play the game well (Bourdieu 1990).

What follows here, then, is a discussion about employees' knowledge of how to *do* gender in this workplace. I consider how these employees develop perceptions of right and wrong ways to do gender at work by looking specifically at examples in their discussions of respectable femininities, sexuality, and emotionality. I suggest that these employees pick up on right and wrong ways to do gender, as this helps them to develop a true feel for how to be in the game. So, with this in mind, I want to argue two things here: firstly, that having knowledge about how to do gender, or not, is a central feature of being able to fit in and play the game well at work; and secondly, that these employees reproduce a gendered logic as part of the game in this workplace.

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M. Addison, *Social Games and Identity in the Higher Education Workplace*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-51803-3_5

Respectable Femininities Around *Here*

Being seen as respectable was a theme that emerged in a number of the discussions I had with employees in this workplace. Skeggs writes that respectability is ‘an amalgam of signs, economics and practices, assessed from different positions within and outside of respectability’ (1997, p. 15; see 2004). In her study of the lives of working-class women, she argues that respectability is a ‘central mechanism through which the concept class emerged’ (1997, p. 2). Respectability is a lens then through which people make moral judgements about others. As Skeggs notes of Strathern’s (1992) work, ‘respectability was the means by which morality was made public and seen to be an object of knowledge’ (1997, p. 3). Respectable femininity specifically relates to the *right* kind and amount of gendered behaviour and practices for a woman to display and embody (see also Fernando and Cohen 2013). Femininity is never completely habitable for most women because ‘it would be to *to be* without agency, to be a sign of powerlessness’ (italics in original, Skeggs 1997, p. 102). For the people I spoke to, respectable femininity was a subject position that was persistently reproduced for women in this workplace in terms of the *right* way to be.

A number of employees thought that it was important that women looked and sounded respectable. Women were represented as signifiers of moral decency (Skeggs 1997) at work, and this meant that greater emphasis was placed upon them to uphold and embody respectability. For example, this becomes apparent when conversations turn to a discussion about swearing at work. In the following excerpt, Simon tells me about how he tries to keep his discussions ‘clean’ when the only female engineer is working in the shared office with other men.

> S: …there’s a lady engineer and just if she is there it’s quite *clean*, and if she’s not then … they made everything mixed up, and there is a lass in our office now, and whenever she is there things are, you know, you don’t swear […] when she is around, I don’t swear, some people will swear occasionally and raise eyes and apologise to her, it has changed the whole dynamic of it. I suppose it’s back to this whole, try and be a *gentleman* thing, I mean she said it doesn’t bother her but within *reason*, but still, I don’t know, I was always told off when I was younger, and if you’re going to swear, don’t swear in front of a lady.
>
> **M: So when she is not there, do you have more banter?**
>
> S: Well yeah, it’s us lads together, isn’t it? We’ll all be saying things. We’ll still talk a lot when she’s there, but it changes what you talk about […] if

> you're a professional then you should be addressing people a certain way, you just don't swear around a lady, do you?
>
> (Simon, Surveyor, 31 years old, lower middle-class)

Simon works with mostly male co-workers and clients, as there are few females working in this field. As a consequence, gender appears to be an important way for Simon to describe and make distinctions about his female co-worker. He marks her as respectable by coding her as a 'lady' and someone who he should be respectful to. The use of the word 'lady' to describe his female colleague carries connotations of respectability and indicates how he should act around her. In Allan's (2009) ethnographic research in an education setting, she explored how female students embodied the discourse of 'lady' and how this meant upholding the values of 'decent feminine behaviour' (2009, p. 146). The associations with being a 'lady' are profoundly classed and imply an expectation of propriety and upper-middle-classness (see Delamont 1978). Allan's research shows how this discourse 'constructs the figure of the middle-class lady as a way of policing and maintaining classed and gendered boundaries' (2009, p. 146). Similarly, Simon codifies some women in this way and this is suggestive of a particularly middle-class and feminine ideal of respectability. By representing his female co-worker through the discourse of being a 'lady', it constructs a right way for the woman to be at work. This poses the question of who can fit in with this middle-class, feminine image, and who ends up being excluded from it. I address this question shortly.

For Simon, the logic of the game he has come accustomed to has been affected slightly because of this entrance of a female colleague to the field. He tries to regain a feel for the game and work out how he is supposed to act around this woman by drawing on ideas about gender. He perceives that the right way for him to be around her is to act like a gentleman (appear considerate and courteous), to treat her as a lady and someone who is respectable. One of the main ways of doing this, as his excerpt shows, is by not swearing or having what he sees as inappropriate conversations around this female colleague. Acker (1990) writes about how interactions like these between men and women are structured by a gendered logic. For instance, she comments on West and Zimmerman's (1983) conversational analysis studies that show gender differences in 'interruptions, turn-taking, and setting the topic of discussion' (1990, p. 147) saying that these differences in conversation 'recreate gender inequality in the flow of ordinary talk' (1990, p. 147).

So, for instance, whilst it is important to Simon to be respectful to his colleague to show his recognition of her respectability, his concerns with his own respectability seem to depend on who else is involved in the field. Simon and his other male colleagues are not fixed by their role as a gentleman at work. They can play the game in different ways; for example, swearing becomes a way for Simon and his colleagues to transgress gendered expectations of gentlemanly behaviour. This affords them flexibility and mobility to negotiate the right ways to be at work; that is, they are able to act like 'lads together', as Simon puts it. Simon's way of playing the game reproduces a particular gender logic that helps him to code switch his own performances between 'gentleman' and 'lads together', but this also means fixing his female colleague in place as a lady.

The female co-worker that Simon is talking about was also a participant (Lisa) in this research. I was conscious to preserve anonymity at all times, and so did not refer to any of their colleagues during the interview—any mention of colleagues by these participants was unprompted. Lisa talked to me about some of the kinds of conversations her male coworkers would have in the office. She mentioned that their discussions would often be about 'checking out' and talking about other women if they forgot she was there. She comments that this means they are frequently apologizing to her:

> In my section there are about 12 people, I share my office with 4 other guys, which makes it interesting because they're always saying 'sorry' for something, after every sentence because they're usually swearing or saying something. [laughs]
>
> (Lisa, Engineer, 25 years old, unsure of class position)

She tells me about how she tolerates their behaviour, which includes swearing. That said, she also says that she expects them to adapt their behaviour a little because of her presence in the field:

> They *have* had to change their attitudes a little bit, with the way that they kind of talk and stuff. But erm, they *try* their best, they just … you kind of expect it I guess, I mean you *don't* expect them to be *rude* and things, on *purpose* and things, but you *expect* a few slip ups cos they are guys at the end of the day […] I think that they forget sometimes that they share an office with me.
>
> (Lisa, Engineer, 25 years old, unsure of class position)

Lisa's discussions provide an insight into the way the game has changed slightly since she has relocated to their office. The male colleagues have had to adapt their feel for the game by being more aware of their actions. This seems to be in an attempt to show some consideration, recognition, and value for her presence in the field. Lisa emphasizes this change in the way the game is now to be played in the following excerpt.

> I think it's acceptable for them to talk amongst themselves like that but not in front of *women*. I don't think they would do it in front of their own wives and girlfriends type of thing [...] Or that they should. *They* don't think that they should do it in front of *me*.
>
> (Lisa, Engineer, 25 years old, unsure of class position)

Lisa's comments indicate that she seems to want to reinforce a gender logic that structures a right and wrong way for them to act around her. This means that respectable women are to be treated respectfully. This gendered logic to game-playing provides Lisa with some symbolic power to exert some influence over her male colleagues' behaviours, and being perceived as respectable helps her to acquire some symbolic value for her position. However, slip-ups can be seen as offensive and damaging to this particular construction of a woman as respectable, and Lisa recounts to me that there are often slips in her office. In these moments where the men slip up in conversation, their feel for the game seems to go back to what it was before Lisa was present in the field. Lisa tolerates this by acknowledging that they have to invest effort into trying to be different and any slights, she hopes at least, do not happen on purpose. When these male colleagues slide back into their previous feel for the game, Lisa's strategy of game-playing then is to 'just kind of *block* them out, to be honest. You let them get on with their own conversations'. This practice of blocking out unrespectable behaviour possibly allows Lisa to continue to affirm her own position as respectable in moments where they are respectful. The men often forget her presence in the office, and Lisa knows this. In forgetting that she is there, they also fail to provide recognition of her as respectable. Lisa depends on them to see her for them to provide recognition of her position in the game as valued. There is an inherent struggle going on, then, for Lisa to try to reaffirm these rules to the game to secure her value in the game. When her male colleagues do not play by the rules and treat her as respectable, then the field becomes unstable for Lisa and her position of value is undermined.

Whilst I have said that respectability affords Lisa moments of temporary symbolic power, she is also fixed within the realms of respectable femininity—she cannot move beyond it to be 'laddish' like Simon, for example. I want to suggest, then, that respectable femininity is a limited and yet fragile way for women to secure a position of value within the game, and playing the game this way narrows down the options for her to play the game and fit in, in any other way. This is particularly evident in this next excerpt. I talked to another male participant who happened to work in the same office as Simon and Lisa. He also brought up the topic of swearing at work and said very similar things to both Simon and Lisa about not swearing in front of women. I asked him what his response would be if the female colleague he talked about (Lisa) started joining in their conversations and swearing:

> I: Yeah, it would be interesting if she started swearing. You don't really expect it off women though do you? [**don't you?**] Ah I am going to shut up I sound sexist! [laughs] [**Go on, explain what you mean**]. But you know, walking down the street and you see some women and they're walking along cursing and swearing at their kids and you just think 'that's just *appalling*, that's appalling!' and you'll be out in town and you hear some woman 'F-ing and blinding' and you think 'Bloody hell, god I wouldn't want to be with *that!*' But then she is just doing what guys do, isn't she? But I think it's a no. It's a strange thing that, isn't it?
>
> **M: So if someone like that is swearing, what impression does it create?**
>
> I: The wrong impression cos you always think '*Christ!* She's a bit er… God she must be from the East end!' You do that … you get that kind of *feel*, that feel about them, don't you? I don't know. I shouldn't … if you walk along and hear a woman f-ing and blinding, […] they're a bit *rough*, you get that feeling they are a bit rough.
>
> (Ian, Surveyor, 31 years old, middle-class)

Ian's discussion indicates a gendered logic that structures his expectations of men and women and the way they ought to be at work. Swearing is a practice that he says he does not expect to hear from women and, rather than offer my agreement, which he seems to seek, I query his own gender expectations. I think this alerts Ian to my own doubts about taken-for-granted gender expectations and this affects how he initially continues with his discussion. He becomes self-conscious of how his perceptions unequally position men and women on the topic of swearing and he attempts to censor himself as a precaution against sounding sexist. Ian is very self-aware in the interview and sounding 'sexist' is not an image he wants to cultivate. When Ian does think about a woman swearing, he provides examples that construct women as unfit mothers swearing at their children, or as undesirable women that no man would want to be with. The connotations of a woman swearing then are distinctly negative. Women are not afforded the same freedoms to transgress the gendered rules of the game unless they wish to risk being coded detrimentally. This contrasts the flexibility that is open to men who, as Simon puts it earlier, are able to act as 'lads together', creating a bonding experience when they swear in conversation. Whereas, if a woman swears, it damages her respectability and potential to be seen as 'good' and desirable. Ian acknowledges again that he has different expectations of men and women when it comes to swearing, and despite sensing that his logic treats mean and women unequally, he still sticks by his views. Swearing, in his view, creates the wrong image for women. His discussions highlight that he believes that a woman should maintain her respectability, and if she were to start joining in conversation by swearing, this would damage her more desirable image of middle-class femininity. This reinforces respectable femininity as part of the logic of the game; but this is problematic, though, if it becomes one of only a limited number of ways for women to secure value at work.

Further to this, Ian's discussions give an insight into a distinctly classed and gendered logic to the game. Ian emphasizes that an objectionable image for a woman is someone who is undesirable to men and viewed as rough (from the east end of town).

> **M: Is that about class then?**
>
> I: I knew that was coming. [laughs] I guess so yeah. The guy who comes in our office and swears in front of that woman, he is from a *very* working-class background, and er … he comes from a pit mining village and he just … whereas the guys who don't swear and watch what they say … they come from more of a … middle-class background. I don't think any different of him, but I would if it was a woman.
>
> (Ian, Surveyor, 31 years old, middle-class)

The man that Ian describes is not so self-conscious about swearing in front of his female colleague. He seems to imply that his male colleague does not quite have a feel for the game and gets it wrong from time to time. Class position features here as an important factor in having the right cultural capital to demonstrate a true feel for how to play the game. Ian seems to use working-classness as a way of explaining why this man gets it wrong, and this is almost to be expected because of his class background—for Ian, this man does not know the right ways to be at work and makes mistakes in the game. Ian does not suggest that he thinks that this man's behaviour is acceptable, but he does seem to want to show that he does not judge his male colleague negatively for getting the game wrong for reasons located in class. What is more, Ian's views suggest that a more middle-class person is able to practice courtesy and respectfulness towards women and is more knowledgeable of the rules to the game because they have inherited appropriate cultural capital.

Moreover, what is crucial about this excerpt is how, at the end, Ian closes down all possibility of it being acceptable for a female colleague to swear at work. His comments give an insight into how ideas about gender operate together with class to warrant a harsher judgement of women for the same behaviour. The right way for a woman to be at work is to not swear. Those that get it wrong and do swear are then going against the rules of the game and showing themselves to be out of place. In Ian's view, then, women who transgress these rules are legitimately subjected to negative judgements that he reserves for working-class women.

Earlier, I drew attention to how the production of respectable femininities at work poses the question of who can fit in with this image and who ends up being excluded. Some women find it harder than others to fit in with this middle-class ideal of femininity and find themselves subject to unwelcome judgements from others. McNay writes, for instance, that 'working-class women have an uneasy relationship to dominant norms of femininity because these have evolved historically from idealized notions of bourgeois womanhood' (2004, p. 186). Walkerdine (2003; see also Walkerdine et al. 2001), too, provides an insight into how some working-class women are expected to feel shame if they encounter difficulties and a sense of unease when trying to fit in with a more a middle-class ideal. She suggests that these individuals have to undergo a lot of self-regulation to monitor what undesirable aspects of their selves may leak out. Skeggs (1997) has also written widely about the topic of respectable femininities (see also Adkins and Skeggs, 2004). In her ethnographic study of working-class women living in north-west England, respectability was an important way for these women to dis-identify with stigmatized classed and sexualized identities. These women had to constantly demonstrate their respectability and distance from signifiers of non-respectability. This involves having codified knowledge of how hairstyles, language, clothes, and makeup will be read and judged by others in the field. Elsewhere, Lawler (2002, p. 103) has written about the negative representation of working-class women in the media after the 'so-called riots in Paulsgrove'. These women were portrayed as ignorant, 'bad' mothers, and influenced by a mob mentality, and this was meant to evoke horror in the middle-class readership. Lawler asserts that, 'Issues of the women's femininity (too much, too little, the wrong kind…) were prominent features of the reports' (2002, p. 107). Reference to 'bodies, behaviour, houses and income' (Lawler 2002, p. 107) were used as markers of distinction to constitute these women in negative ways. These kinds of classed and gendered distinctions are in practice in my own participants' discussions and reinforce the logic of the game: that is, that there is a right and wrong way for men, and particularly women, to *be* at work. Further examples of this are evident in my participants' discussions when they talk about particular expectations of how women should dress in order to be considered professional; being respectable and feminine was an important component of getting this right. Ravi's conversation below is an example of how symbolic meanings of class and gender attached to women are used to determine who fits in and who attracts negative judgements. He talks about how a new *female* employee ought to act in his department. He draws particular attention to how a woman should 'package' herself at work:

> You get temp receptionists from agencies come here, and they could have worked as a receptionist for a *hairdressers* before they came here […] when it was a hairdressers there was loud music, people going in and out, say what you want, chew gum, dress however you want, you can dress *funky* loads of makeup, you can look as though you are going out to town, you know, the Bigg Market at night … when they come *here*, they can still *do* the job as a Receptionist but you have to kind of *repackage* that so, you say 'Well, *look*, here this is what we expect you to kind of wear, we can't *force* you to cos… by law you can't tell someone to wear this, the *acceptable* dress code, the *norm* is *this*' […] So, the first step is that they come in wearing grey, like everybody else, but they are *still* loud and chewing gum, and whatever, and *slowly*, they notice that nobody is chewing gum around them, so the gum goes, but they're still *loud*, even though everyone else is quiet. The next thing is they'll quieten down and be like 'Morning, tea or coffee?' Do you see what I am saying?
>
> (Ravi, Business Development Manager, 40 years old, middle-class)

Ravi seems to imply that respectable femininity in this workplace consists of grey clothes, and a quiet and polite demeanour. He uses colourful examples of how this new employee initially gets it wrong by continuing to wear clothes and makeup that would be like they were going on a night out in the 'Bigg Market' (a working-class leisure night spot). This distinction between the respectable image and the non-respectable one is coded through 'signifiers of sexuality', which Skeggs notes can be 'dispersed into other signs such as loudness, vulgarity, bluntness and openness […] through hairstyles and clothing' (1997, pp. 124–125). Ravi feels that this particular expression of femininity might have been appropriate in a hairdressers', but his distinctions reveal how he attempts to reinforce a logic about appropriate femininities in *this* workplace. Ravi expects that the female employee will slowly learn the legitimated codes of respectable femininity and eventually grasp how the game ought to be played here. His discussions give an insight into how women are regulated and also expected to play the game a certain way in this workplace if they are to fit in.

The theme of appropriate and inappropriate dress at work concerning women emerges in other interviews with participants. For instance, Maggie talks about female embodiment at work in the following excerpt:

> If someone was dressing in an extreme way. Well, maybe wearing a tiny mini skirt when you're sixty, or wearing 6 inch high heels [to work] […] Anyone would comment on that.
>
> (Maggie, Administrative Officer, 55 years old, working-class)

Maggie's comments show how women's clothes and embodiment are judged as a measure of respectability. She appears to suggest that making judgements about women is a valid thing to do if the woman is dressing in an 'extreme way'. Knowing how to avoid being subjected to judgements is part of having a feel for the game. Maggie implies in this discussion, then, that there is a 'right' way to dress, and it is important for women to possess this knowledge capital to get it right and play the game well, or otherwise risk being subjected to negative judgements. What is considered 'extreme' dress is a matter of opinion, but for Maggie her examples are particularly sexually provocative—a woman of 60 in a mini skirt, or six inch heels at work. Maggie's distinctions about women's bodies are revealing of her own taste about respectability and the right kind and amount of femininity a woman should embody in certain spaces (see Skeggs 1997; Walkerdine 2003; McRobbie 2009).

Furthermore, McRobbie writes how it tends to be working-class women who are presented as being '"in poor taste" and in need of change or adjustment' for reasons to do with 'styles of speech, styles of deportment, styles of dress and appearance' (2009, p. 136; 2004). The person is expected to conform to the 'demands set by the field' (McRobbie 2009, p. 136) and learn how to play the game, thus reproducing and reinforcing the conditions of the field. Maggie's discussions give an insight into how it is important to learn how to play the game by knowing the 'distinctions between style and fashion, between looking good and looking tarty, between looking feminine and looking sexy' (Skeggs 1997, p. 103), and to know 'one's place through clothing' (Skeggs 1997, p. 103) if one is to fit in, in this workplace.

Linsey's conversation, in this next excerpt, also emphasizes that it is important for women to have knowledge about the right dress codes at work. Her discussions draw on class as a way of explaining the right way to do femininity and play the game in this space.

> The dress it is the very overt expression of expensive clothes, but also dowdy clothes. I *really* struggle to find clothes to wear for work, I don't dress outside of work any where like I dress *in* work cos here, especially if you are a woman, you don't really dress up. There is only one member of staff who does, and I really admire that she does it but she has been here such a long time that nobody bats an eye lid, she can get away with it. For a woman, if she were to dress in a *pretty* way, you will be viewed as though that is *dumbing* you down […] And it's like 'look', I have *far* weightier issues on my mind than to worry about how I look' […] when I first started here, I thought 'Shit, everybody here is dressing *down*,' so I had to leave behind a lot of my pink, flowery shirts and look for plainer things.
>
> (Linsey, Temporary Lecturer, 51 years old, unsure of class position)

Linsey is specifically referring to the way female Lecturers should dress in this workplace if they are to fit in and play the game. It seems to be especially important that a woman in this job position should be controlled about how they code femininity to portray a particular sort of image and grasp of the game. For instance, Linsey tells me that if one was to dress in a pretty way at work, then that might be perceived as 'dumbing down' for a woman. Being intellectual and also pretty is posed as a juxtaposition by Linsey, and this knowledge reflects what she has picked up on in the game. Whilst it may be that Linsey is misrecognizing prettiness as being a reflection of 'dumbing down', she is nonetheless sensing that she can be read negatively as an academic and this is her attempt to try and make sense of these judgements and work out how she can protect her position at work. She uses this knowledge about how she thinks femininity is coded and valued at work to play the game a certain way, and also to make sense of how others play it. She senses that the clothes she used to wear in other places of work (pink, flowery shirts) are not appropriate and wouldn't fit in with the game here in academia. She also senses that pretty clothes may even be read negatively and viewed as a reflection of her intellect. What this shows is that, from Linsey's perspective, there is a right and a wrong way to do femininity in academia, and having knowledge of this is central to developing a feel for the game and securing one's position in the field as an academic. Bradley has also commented on female embodiment at work, saying that 'Feminine embodiment threatens to disrupt the rationality and impersonal order of the economic sphere' (2007, p. 102). Women are expected to make careful calculations regarding their clothing, for instance, so that their 'credibility as serious workers' (Bradley 2007, p. 102) will be protected and not undermined by too much femininity/sexuality (McDowell 1997).

Linsey's conversation also implies that she sees some female academics playing the game by wearing expensive clothes that are carefully put together so that a dowdy but intellectual image prevails—an image she later characterizes as the 'Germaine Greer' look. The connotations of this look also suggest a form of respectable femininity that is particularly mediated through class. This is endorsed by Skeggs, who also writes that 'expressions of value become not just a matter of calculation but understandings of justice, of how class and gender relations enter one's capacity to even engage in exchange' (Skeggs 2010, p. 33). To Linsey, having knowledge of how class and gender are coded is crucial to playing the game well and claiming a valued position. As Lawler writes, 'an individual's whole value as a person can be judged (and found "wrong" or "right") in class terms. It is middle-class people who have the power to define and name what gets to count as the "right" things,' (2008, p. 237). Linsey senses, then, that using expensive clothes is a strategy of game-playing and can help a person to try and manage one's presentation of self and claim a position of value in the game.

Linsey tries to follow the dress code rules that she feels regulate her as a female academic in this space, but she comments that she finds this difficult to do, especially when she was new to the field. Despite her worries, Linsey has now picked up enough knowledge about respectable femininity that she is able to code switch her style of dress quite convincingly in and out of work. Like the women in Skeggs' study, Linsey recognizes the 'recognitions of others' (1997, p. 4). Skeggs writes that, 'Recognitions do not occur without value judgements' (1997, p. 4). Linsey shows that she is aware of the value judgments that may be made at work about the way women dress and she uses this to develop her feel for the game. However, she still demonstrates a conscious awareness of how she might be read at work and this shows that she has not yet acquired a true feel for the game that comes without thinking about it.

The idea that women have to be careful to manage their appearance at work is reflected in the next excerpt from John. John has worked for the institution for several decades. He works as part of a predominantly male team, but has many female friends that he talks to around the workplace. He occasionally comes into contact with academics, but his interactions are largely with other estates and support staff, so his comments reflect this context. The notion that women can look dumb or 'dopey' because of their feminine appearance is a theme that emerges in John's discussions here, where he recounts a joke in the interview that he told to a female co-worker:

> J: Erm … like Diane, I said 'Are you *naturally* blonde? Cos you come across as a naturally blonde woman. Cos you're a bit dopey!' I said 'Cos, you're the type of woman .. where, if you made a mistake on the computer you'd use tipex on the screen … do you get me drift?' But it's a wind up.
>
> **M: Does she know it's a wind up?**
>
> J: Of *course* … she just takes it … in good humour. You've *got* to have a laugh at work man, otherwise it just becomes depressing! Doesn't it?
>
> (John, Maintenance Electrician, 53 years old, working-class)

What John believes to be a light-hearted joke reflects a right and a wrong way for a female employee to look and behave at work. This construction of feminine appearance also seems to carry the same juxtaposition that Linsey used in her discussions—that looking a certain way carries connotations of not being very clever for a woman. It has become a taken-for-granted stereotype that is commonly used in jokes, like the ones John tells above, to degrade women. McDowell writes that 'male power is implicitly reinforced in many of the micro-scale interactions in organisations: in workplace talk and jokes' and that these 'everyday interactions reinforce women's inferiority' (1997, p. 29). The reproduction of this gendered logic here in John's joke reinforces the notion that women must manage their femininity and respectability at work to avoid negative judgements. However, because John's sentiment about women is disguised as a joke, it is difficult for some women to then challenge it without appearing humourless.

In examining respectable femininities in this workplace, I have focused on a few examples here that suggest that a gendered and gendering logic shapes game-playing. Swearing, for instance, was a useful way to show that women workers are expected to play the game in a particular way that reinforces respectability, and this is different to male workers who did not always need to be seen as respectable.

Women workers are also expected to negotiate respectable femininities by having knowledge about how their bodies and clothes are decoded and 'read' as part of the game. These things have nothing to do with how qualified a woman is to do her job at work, and yet they have an important impact on how a woman is able to fit in at work and play the game. In considering how women workers are constructed through ideas of respectable femininities, it is also important to consider this alongside sexuality. In the next section, I look at how the femininities that are produced in this workplace are distinctly heteronormative.

Sexuality at Work

Why do we act the way that we do? Scholars have suggested that a pervasive gendered social system structures the way we act, think, and feel, and this persists because of a hermetic link (McNay 1999) between sexed bodies and gender. This link produces expectations of men and women that are distinctly heterosexualized. It is this hermetic link between gendered performance and sexed physicality that comes to be disguised as 'normalized knowledge' (Skeggs 1997, p. 20). It is this normalization of gendered performances, mapped onto particular bodies, that makes the constructed and iterative practices of gendering disappear.

There are many aspects to a gendered social system that could be discussed, but I want to focus on the role of respectable femininity in the workplace. Skeggs suggests that respectable femininity is based on a 'model of an ideal bourgeois femininity' (Skeggs 1997, p. 20), that is to say that it is to be transfixed within a boundaried, classed construction of how women should *be*. Anything outside of this legitimated performance for women is risky. Refusals of femininity are seen to be recognizable only from a middle-class position; and, according to Skeggs (1997), working-class refusals of femininity are frequently mis-read and de-valued. Importantly then, performances of femininity are not recognized as reflexive mimicry, but instead located as 'natural' and *heterosexual* (Skeggs 1997, 2001). According to Skeggs, women are unlikely to challenge the 'inevitability of heterosexuality' (1997, p. 126), because it is a source of respectability and status. In her study, women found that they were often heterosexualized—that is, they were 'not allowed to forget their heterosexual functions and the embodiment of positions of power/powerlessness that these contain' (1997, p. 127). Being positioned as sexual in this way often threatened how these women tried to maintain their respectability.

Heteronormativity is a useful concept to make sense of some of the participants' discussions in my own research. Heteronormativity refers to the normalization and naturalization of heterosexuality that is present and structuring of everyday practices and relations (Adkins 1995; Butler 1990). Bradley notes how, 'Heterosexual normativity was also seen as a mainstay of male power' (2007, p. 42). It is also a concept that is used by queer theorists to highlight many kinds of exclusions and oppressions of different forms of sexuality (Taylor 2013; McDermott 2006; Casey 2013).

I want to now turn to look at heteronormativity in the workplace in terms of how women are structured in various ways as sexually desirable and available to men. For instance, Alan's discussions below about junior female co-workers give an insight into how a heterosexual logic structures his interactions and game-playing at work:

> There are always tensions, you know, we're men and women! The literatures talk about it … there are the sexual and sub sexual dynamics at play, course there are. So you have to sort of *behave* yourself, in those situations. But I would be … I think … it would be … *wrong* of me to say that I don't … *warm* to and *enjoy* female company at work […] I get a sense of … a real sense of *reward* in terms of bringing the female colleague *on*.
>
> (Alan, Senior Lecturer, 48 years old, middle-class)

Alan is talking about acting as a mentor to more junior female staff in the workplace in his discussions. He reveals that he does not think these interactions with junior female colleagues are neutral. Instead, he explains his experiences in terms of a heterosexual dynamic that structures interactions between men and women. He seems to frame sexual tension as an accepted norm—just part of the game—between men and women, and appeals to accounts in literature to substantiate and legitimate his views. Alan implies that this kind of sexual dynamic has the potential to lead elsewhere, and so he pays special attention to behaving himself and following the rules governing this kind of interaction. By framing interactions with junior female colleagues in this way, Alan is able to enjoy his position as a more powerful worker and player in the game.

Alan's structuring of male and female interactions according to a heterosexualized culture fixes these women in place as being sexually available and desirable to men. He expects that this is how the game ought to be played, and this does not leave a lot of room for women whom he interacts with to play the game differently (see also Bradley 2007). McDermott (2006) has suggested that this kind of heteronormativity in the workplace impacts on how women who do not identify as heterosexual, and I would add perhaps even those who do, are able to *be* at work. She writes that some of the female participants, who identified as lesbian, in her study of the workplace felt that they had to perform a 'heterosexual masquerade—that is, they gave the false impression to their work colleagues that they were heterosexual' (2006, p. 203). She shows that these kinds of performances arise out of anxiety and 'restricted options and choices', and a sense that 'there is no other way to be a "woman" in the workplace' (2006, p. 204). That said, I did not speak to the women that Alan talks about in his discussions, so it is not possible to know for sure how they felt about these interactions; however, his discussions show how ways of playing the game at work can be constructed in limited ways for women through a logic of heteronormativity, and this resonates with McDermott's (2006) argument.

When I asked Alan to explain what he meant by these interactions being rewarding to him, he said:

> To be completely honest it is pandering to *my* feelings about myself as a *man*, I am a married man, I have been married for 12 years, I am a good husband and father, and all that, but it is quite *flattering*, actually, you know, that you have got these relationships with women at work where they respect you, care about your decisions, you know, they take the advice you give. Yeah, it is sort of a bit *flattering*.
>
> (Alan, Senior Lecturer, 48 years old, middle-class)

Alan's discussions about these kinds of interactions with women workers reveal that the rewards he talks about pertain to his own sense of power and ego at work. It is in his interests, then, to play the game according to a heteronormative logic. Women fit in, then, by becoming supporting roles to his own position in the field through a continued heterosexualization of interactions.

This heterosexualized way of playing the game was not endorsed by a number of women in my study. These women did not want to fit in and play the game this way. In the following discussion, Lucy talks about her interactions with male colleagues and voices her disapproval of a culture of 'laddishness':

> I think there is a sexism problem. One of the first things I noticed […] are the gender differences, how some *men* treat female colleagues, especially if it is not direct colleagues […] I am thinking when I meet people socially too, other Lecturers or Professors, or whatever, in non-work time, in the workplace, or whatever, and just kind of like, just a kind of *laddishness* or whatever, it's with certain groups, kind of you know, really, actually quite regressive comments being made about *gender* or women's bodies.
>
> (Lucy, Lecturer, 32 years old, middle-class)

Lisa also echoes these sentiments:

> Just general *guy* sort of *pub* talk […] Probably checking out *women*, will be one of them […] I think it is just socially unacceptable to talk about women.
>
> (Lisa, Engineer, 25 years old, unsure of class position)

Lucy's experiences reveal how her interactions with some male (academic) co-workers, particularly outside of work hours, are structured by a heteronormative culture. This perception of a laddish culture at work is also picked up on by Lisa in her conversations of male colleagues (engineers, contractors, and estates). Neither of these women like this kind of interaction with their male colleagues and see it as a negative aspect of the game for them. Bradley writes that this kind of heteronormativity works to 'maintain boundaries between men and women at work by emphasizing the difference and otherness of each sex' (2007, p. 99). Another interviewee, Bill, also states that men in the estates department interact in a way that sexualizes women, but changing this is difficult:

> I am trying to change that culture … it is difficult to change that culture in a whole load of males […] the majority understand that if we are sitting in our tea room and our Director of Estates come down, or a rep comes in and has a cup of tea, does she really want to be sitting looking at a [calendar of a] naked women who is looking at the camera?
>
> (Bill, Maintenance Manager, 57 years old, working-class)

This generally accepted way of playing the game, which sexualizes women for the benefit and amusement of men, is met with resistance from Lisa and Lucy. Bill also acknowledges that his female boss is not likely to want to see naked calendars of women in the men's workshops. Lisa and Lucy both identify this heterosexualizing aspect to the game as a problem at work which is disadvantageous to women. Lucy does not accept that this is the way the game ought to be played:

> Yeah, you know, in a way it is like 'Oh this is all … you know *social*, we're all friends, it's okay.' But then they're still colleagues.
>
> (Lucy, Lecturer, 32 years old, middle-class)

Lucy's comments give an insight into the reasons used to legitimate these kinds of 'laddish' interactions that she encounters, namely that it is a social occasion, and so the same rules and boundaries that apply to colleagues inside of work do not apply outside in a more social setting. The fields of work and leisure have overlapped here, and so this has confused how the game is to be played. It is put to her that this 'laddishness' is just friendly interaction during social occasions; however, Lucy refuses to misrecognize this heterosexualization of women as simply friendly interaction and she draws attention to their position as first and foremost her colleagues. By doing this, she seems to want to readjust the boundaries in the game back to those that apply in the workplace. It is difficult for her to do this, though, and challenge this behaviour without appearing uptight. In the workplace, the game has stricter rules and sanctions that govern sexualized interactions and, as Bill states below, many of his male employees have had to go on customer care courses to learn the new rules to the game with relation to what could be perceived as sexist behaviour. For instance, he tells me that all calendars that could be perceived as containing sexual imagery have had to be taken down and his response to this is this:

> My personal opinion, I think it's *crazy*! I think it is absolutely crazy, but that's the way the world is now, that's what people are saying we should do now. We shouldn't have people put in positions where they feel embarrassed, this that and the other.
>
> (Bill, Maintenance Manager, 57 years old, working-class)

Even though the way the game is to be played is shifting, Bill's comments suggest that he and others think that the boundaries have become unreasonably strict and there is an implication here that those who might wish to enforce them will be seen as being unreasonable too. But like the women in Skeggs's study, Lucy and Lisa (who I mentioned above) know that sexualized distinctions are coded onto and read off women's faces, bodies, and behaviours, whether this is wanted or not. Lucy and Lisa do not want to be 'categorised as sexed' or 'classified by others who have the potential to make distinctions and judgements' (Skeggs 1997, p. 136) that could potentially harm and undermine their position in the field. Lucy and Lisa are put in a difficult position in these critical moments where the game shifts to a heteronormative or sexist style of play; that is, they are having to decide whether or not to challenge or endure the way these colleagues are playing the game. This provides an insight into an inherent struggle going on between these men and women: the women want to challenge heteronormative practices as an aspect of game-playing at work, whereas some of the men I spoke to in this study wished to reinforce it as part of the game.

John describes an environment at work where female co-workers are often subjected to highly sexualized comments from other male workers:

> J: our manager is a bit rude … cos he is always on about women. Every time he sees a woman he'll say 'ah she's got a canny pair' or 'a nice arse', and sometimes he says it *loud* and he is … erm … what's the word .. very *sexually* orientated … or whatever. Which I don't agree with.
>
> **M: And how is he getting away with that?**
>
> J: Cos people just say 'ah that's just the way he is', women have said to me about a certain person that they wouldn't like to be left in the room with him. I tell this person 'Look, your attitude is awful towards women and you put the frighteners on women by er … the way you … talk and that'. And he says 'Ah well, I'm not bothered, they can please themselves,' and I say 'Look, you'll get yourself in to trouble' and he says 'No … I won't … just let them do it!'
>
> (John, Maintenance Electrician, 53 years old, working-class)

In recounting this conversation with his manager to me, John's discussions show how a heterosexualized logic is reproduced and reinforced as part of the game at work. He indicates in his conversation that women's bodies are subjected to the sexual gaze of his male manager. This overt sexualization is very difficult for these women to negotiate, because they may occupy different positions of power in terms of their job role. John comments on how these women workers (cleaners, support staff) he has spoken to do not like this kind of sexualized attention at work, and he admonishes his manager for behaving in this way. This advice goes unheeded as John's manager totally discounts John's point that these women workers do not like this kind of attention. This shows a distinct kind of masculine symbolic power and a normalcy about the nature of these kinds of interactions and way of playing the game at work. This manager does not *have* to be bothered about what these women workers think. It is particularly revealing when I ask John how his manager gets away with this kind of behaviour and his reply is to say that 'that's just the way he is'. The level of acceptance here that someone can sexualize women in such a way at work, I think, demonstrates how deeply embedded a heterosexual logic to the game is in this workplace—so much so that the male manager is not put off by the possibility that one of these women might raise a complaint against him and challenge the way the game is played. From what John recounts of this conversation, it seems as though the manager is implying that these women would not dare to challenge him. This shows, as Bradley has suggested, that far from the workplace being a 'de-sexed space', it is 'an important site of the discourse of heteronormativity, where heterosexual relations are initiated and celebrated' (2007, p. 97) by some people.

I have suggested so far that there are women in this workplace who are constrained by a durable heteronormative logic to game-playing. Some female employees were sexualized via their bodies, facial expressions, and by interactions, and a number of male participants talked about other women workers in this way (e.g.: I'm always like this with the girls, you know … a laugh and carry on you know … like 'How fat arse, how ya doin?', John; 'you still get the guys on site wolf whistling', Ian). Skeggs writes that 'heterosexuality is institutionalized, reproduced in material practices, regulated and normalized through signification, consolidated through links with other forms of capital and enacted in performance' (1997, p. 135). In order to play the game, then, a number of women workers in my study are faced with participating in heterosexualized interactions and accepting the sexualization of their own bodies as part of the game (see also Fisher 2007). Far from this being an opportunity for 'pleasurable self-expression' (Cockburn 1991, p. 151), for many of the women I spoke to, navigating this heterosexual dynamic is a struggle. For Adkins (1992), women are never free to express themselves outside of a normative heterosexual regime at work.

The Making of the Emotional Woman

In this final section, I consider how some women workers are constrained in game-playing through a logic that feminizes emotion. Acker sees capitalist organizations as systematically reproducing an embedded gendered substructure (1990). She writes that 'to say that an organisation, or any other analytic unit, is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine' (1990, p. 146). Being seen as 'emotional' has particular consequences for women, unlike men, at work. I show that, when women are portrayed as 'emotional', this is an aspect of game-playing that is frequently misrecognized[1]; I suggest that it is a subtle act of symbolic violence that is used to imply that these kinds of women do not fit in at work. This idea that women are subject to symbolic violence in the workplace through everyday forms of sexism is also echoed by Powell and Sang (2015), who explored female engineers' experiences of their degree course. What their findings show is that women often internalize gender inequality as a form of naturalization, making gendered domination an accepted and acceptable practice.

Cheryl, for instance, is a participant I spoke to who has a very senior position in this workplace and often has to interact with a wide range of staff across the university. In the following excerpt, she talks about being conscious of her emotional displays at work:

> I suppose the one thing I am conscious of on occasions I show emotion […] I think my voice goes up a bit, I am always conscious of keeping my voice sort of …low, otherwise they will think '*oh*, she's an emotional woman!' [laughs] And you also get the occasional you know, comments about you know 'ah it must be her time of the month', ah you *do*! You do! Even if they don't say it to your face [laughs] it *happens*. What I don't want to do is to give them an excuse for *dismissing* my views because of something like that,

> so I try, I don't always succeed, to keep my voice at a sort of *even*, and to be making *rational* points, supported by evidence, rather than just a *pure* emotional reaction. I don't always succeed, as I say.
>
> (Cheryl, Senior Director, 54 years old, middle-class)

What Cheryl's discussion shows is that she knows that she is likely to be read in a certain way by other colleagues if she shows emotion. She senses that the game is played in such a way that if a woman shows emotion then she is *emotional*, and it is assumed that this means she is erratic and not in control of herself.

This is also echoed by Rebecca here:

> I think when you are a woman … *manager*, I feel as if it's … it feels like a failing if you show your emotions. Because I think men will naturally say 'oh she's just being emotional, it's that time of the month, stuff like that', it's those comments you hear. And you just want to slap them. So I would try very hard not to show that, if I could.
>
> (Rebecca, Senior Administrator, 59 years old, working-class)

Both Cheryl and Rebecca comment that jokes that are made about women who show emotion have related to a woman's monthly menstruation cycle. Menstruation signifies leaky bodies, change, and often is a topic used in jest to imply unpredictable moods. So, if an employee makes sense of a woman worker's emotional behaviour (for this could only ever be done to women) by referring to it as being 'her time of the month', this person is indicating that they think the woman is unpredictable. A woman worker's emotions can be framed and misrecognized as a sign of being out of control or as irrational behaviour. This misrecognition of women as emotional, as part game-playing, means that it becomes reasonable to dismiss or refuse to consider the situation further. Hochschild writes about how it is women, and not male workers, who have to take extra care not to appear too 'irrational and hence dismissable' (1983, p. 172) to try and protect themselves against this misrecognition. Rebecca and Cheryl both know that the game is played like this at work, and so are both very conscious of being represented as too emotional. Even though it is frustrating for them to be caught in this bind, they make every effort to avoid being coded as too emotional by others.

Hochschild writes about this representation of women as emotional, saying that 'it is believed that women are more emotional, and this very belief is used to invalidate their feelings. That is, the women's feelings are seen not as a response to real events but as reflections of themselves as "emotional" women' (1983, p. 173). Both Cheryl and Rebecca struggle against being categorized as an 'emotional woman' at work. Cheryl tries to distance herself from being seen as emotional at all; this is impossible all of the time for anyone, though. She tells me about how she tries to manage her presentation of self (Goffman 1959) through the tone and pitch of her voice when she is aware she is displaying emotion, so that she can try to appear in control. As she says, she does not want to give her colleagues an 'excuse' to dismiss her views. This exposes how women are under pressure to manage their presentation of self, including emotions, in an attempt to play the game and negotiate rules that relate to a right and wrong way to be at work.

Hochschild (1979, 1983, 2003) argues that women are right to be concerned about being aligned with being too emotional, because this practice is used to devalue women's position in the workplace, in that they have 'a weaker claim to the right to define what is going on; less trust is placed in her judgements; and less respect is accorded what she feels' (1983, p. 173). In the next excerpt, Amber talks about a training event in which she and other female colleagues are given guidance about how to handle being seen as emotional women at work. Amber works in a department that is male-dominated and she has to interact with a wide range of staff across the university. She has found some of her interactions with male co-workers difficult and attended this training event to see whether she could acquire any knowledge about how to cope with these interactions better.

> I have been on all sorts of training courses, even in house, which deal with that sort of thing. I went on one fairly recently […] a woman only thing. […] it spoke specifically about being a woman, and how you are female how you might deal with some things and then they give you alternatives to deal with things another way, in certain situations. […] Things like, um, you know she was saying that *some* women, not all women, have a tendency to be *more* emotional and that can over spill at work kind of thing, so tips for dealing with things, or dealing with particular types of people, who perceive *you* to be like that.
>
> (Amber, Maintenance Officer, 30 years old, middle-class)

This training event focused specifically on how women could better manage their interactions at work with others. Amber's excerpt shows that, by attending the training event, she is learning how to play the game and developing greater self-awareness about how she might be perceived. The training event teaches the delegates how to guard themselves against this misrecognition, that is, being seen as too emotional at work—regardless of whether they *are* indeed emotional or not. For Amber, hearing that being seen as 'too emotional' at work can weaken a woman's position in the field is a useful insight into the game and raises her self-awareness. By acquiring knowledge about different ways to cope with how she might be seen as a woman at work, Amber is able to develop a better feel for the game.

This section highlights some examples of how women in my study felt that being seen as female and emotional can lead to situations where the woman and her issues are dismissed as a reflection of her perceived irrational behaviour. The category of emotional woman does not fit in with the way the game ought to be played at work. This misrecognition of women as emotional is an aspect of the game at work that can disadvantage women from being taken seriously. A number of women in this study used this particular knowledge of the game to protect themselves from being perceived as too emotional. However, it is very difficult to challenge being portrayed as too emotional once others represent one in this way, without then reinforcing this image. Once a woman is portrayed as emotional, then it is difficult to regain a position of value within the game at that point in time. Therefore, it was important for the women in my study to know how 'emotional' is coded and read so that they could then guard against it.

Conclusions

This chapter has focused on the different ways women are constructed as workers in this organization. I examined how women are framed as particular kinds of employees through 'respectable' femininity, sexuality, and emotionality. I tried to show two things here: firstly, that having knowledge about how to do gender, or not, is a central feature of being able to fit in and play the game well at work; and secondly, that participants reproduce a gendered logic as part of the game. Not knowing how to do gender properly at work can impact on a person's sense of belonging and, as I discuss in the next chapter, can mean they feel out of place in the game; later in this book I suggest that feeling like one does not fit (for reasons to do with class and gender) can be an anxious experience that necessitates that employees do emotion work.

Here, I have suggested that respectable femininity fixes women in place and limits the ways in which they are able to play the game. Although it does offer a source of symbolic value for some women, I suggested that this was fragile and temporary. Respectable femininity is highly classed and classing—only some women are able to inhabit this position convincingly, and those that can't are subject to negative judgements. Having knowledge of how respectable femininity is coded and read off women's bodies, behaviours, and clothes was useful to some participants who wanted to, and could, fit in and play the game.

I also discussed how women in this workplace are constrained by a durable heteronormative logic to game-playing. Some women used their knowledge of the game to resist this kind of sexualization. However, I argued that an inherent struggle is going on between some of the men and women I interviewed in their workspaces: namely, that some of the women wanted to challenge heteronormativity as an aspect of game-playing at work, whereas some of the men I spoke to in this study wished to reinforce it as part of the game.

Being represented as an emotional woman was code for being irrational and out of control, and these are characteristics could be damaging to a woman worker's position in the field. The female participants knew that being female and emotional was enough to warrant having their views and circumstances dismissed or discounted. This was not a risk that these women wanted to take. I learned how these female participants would develop distancing strategies to negotiate this gendered logic and protect their position in the game. This meant more emotion and presentation work for these women and careful self-surveillance (see also Finch 1993). Unfortunately, however, mud sticks and it is difficult for women to avoid being represented as too emotional without looking as though they are indeed being emotional about it. Misrecognizing a woman worker as too emotional (see also Ngai 2007), then- is a quick and deadly device in game-playing and undermines a woman's position of value at work.

NOTE

1. I am referring to a Bourdieu's concept of misrecognition (1990), where acts of symbolic violence are misrecognized as being instances of a 'natural' order of things. Misrecognizing symbolic violence makes it a more insidious and

invisible form of domination, harm and oppression. Those who suffer symbolic violence are often not aware of it and may even collude in it. The way I use 'misrecognition' is different to Nancy Fraser's (2001) definition. Her concept of misrecognition refers to the lack of recognition given to a person's status and visibility within society, and their subsequent subordination and exclusion from the equal opportunity to participate in social life. She writes that it is to be 'denied the status of a full partner in social interaction [...] as a consequence of institutionalized patterns of cultural value that constitute one as comparatively unworthy of respect or esteem' (2001, p. 27).

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CHAPTER 6

Knowledge and Embodiment of Class at Work

Knowing how things ought to be done is central to being able to fit in with the legitimate culture at work. I develop this argument further in this chapter by looking at how knowledge of class features as an important aspect of game-playing. I consider employees' perceptions of the 'right' and 'wrong' way to embody class at work by looking at their discussions of class at work. I focus in on 'The *Chav*', an identity that is explicitly named by several employees and implicitly referred to by a number of others; 'Mrs. Bucket[1]', an undesirable, middle-class identity that these employees also refer to specifically; 'A Grafter'—although this is not an identity named as such specifically by these employees, I use it here to explore further their characterizations of positive aspects of working-classness; and finally, 'Normal', an identity that employees talked about to show that they were ordinary. There were frequent references to these four identities both implicitly and explicitly in participants' discussions, which is why they are the focus here.

This chapter shows that class does exist in the workplace and that it continues to be constituted via a system of classification that draws upon cultural codes[2] to mark distinctions upon people's bodies, behaviours, and ways of being. This goes against Pakulski and Waters' argument (1996) that asserts that class is a 'dead' category. They have suggested that class is not useful because people no longer think of themselves in class terms. However, I show in this chapter that knowledge about class is frequently used by these employees to make value judgements about

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M. Addison, *Social Games and Identity in the Higher Education Workplace*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-51803-3_6

other people at work as an aspect of game-playing. These employees demonstrate knowledge relating to how class is coded onto the things one wears, the way one talks (Addison and Mountford 2015) and how one acts in certain spaces and around certain people at work. I argue here that knowledge about class is useful cultural capital that helps these employees to develop a feel for the game and fit in. I also want to show that this kind of game-playing reproduces a classed and classing logic to the game, which secures inclusion for some people and excludes other people from belonging in this workplace.

As part of my exploration of the way people play games, I am interested in why certain classed identities come to be desired and others stigmatized at work. Why do some of these employees refuse to be seen as middle-class? What is so appealing about being seen as 'normal'? Why is the '*chav*' so loathed in this workplace? I discuss these questions in this chapter by drawing on Bourdieu's ideas related to classificatory codes, cultural distinctions, and symbolic value. I also draw on some of Skeggs' ideas about valued personhood to help explain how employees in this workplace use knowledge about class distinctions to develop a feel for the game.

My analysis focuses on how employees demonstrate knowledge about class distinctions at work. During these discussions, these employees draw upon a particular kind of logic of distinction to describe themselves and other people to me. An employee might say, for instance, that 'such and such sounds coarse' or that 'they live in a council house'. These distinctions implied things about the *identity* of the person they were talking about, as well as things about themselves. These employees were essentially telling me about how they register the 'countless pieces of information a person consciously or unconsciously imparts' (Bourdieu 1984/2010, p. 169) in order to construct and position identities at work and beyond.

THE *CHAV*

The *chav*, or *charver* (a northern alternative), was a figure that was explicitly named in a number of these employees' discussions about their workplace. The *chav* was signalled through a range of popular classifying distinctions like the 'tracksuit' and cultural references to 'yobs' (see Nayak and Kehily 2008). Tyler (2008, 2013, 2015) has written about the production and representation of *chav* identities in the media. She explored how class disgust is directed at young, working-class, single mothers labelled as *chavs*. Tyler specifically focuses on the word '*chav*' that is now used in everyday language to represent a particular sort of person that evokes disgust in others.

The representation of the *chav* identity by people in the media is marked on people's bodies and ways of being (Tyler and Bennett 2010) and, as Tyler writes, captures 'contemporary anxieties about sexuality, reproduction and fertility and "racial mixing"' (2008, p. 18). Further, Tyler argues that the disgust directed towards the *chav* is 'suggestive of a heightened class antagonism' (2008, p. 18), rather than a decline in the significance of class. What is useful in her study is that she shows how the repetition of the *chav* figure across different media has material effects 'that shape the appearance of and our experience of others' (Tyler 2008, p. 18). Lawler also comments on the press attention that is directed at *chav*s in the UK, saying that it is 'just one manifestation of a widespread disparagement of the poor and the dispossessed that claims to be "nothing to do with class" even as it invokes classed distinctions at every turn' (2005b, p. 800). The *chav* identity, then, evokes 'disgust and contempt' in people and is often an identity that is 'imposed' (Lawler 2005b, p. 802). This reviled *chav* identity is known to the employees in my study and is represented in a number of discussions relating to their everyday experiences of the workplace.

Most participants demonstrated knowledge that the term *chav* tends to be used as a pejorative cultural term to identify a type of person that stands out for negative reasons. I want to note here that what follows is not a discussion of *chav* culture, but rather how the identity of the *chav* is known, configured, and excluded by employees at work. Like Lawler, my discussion here is related to how 'social class is made "real" [...] through cultural mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion' (1999, p. 4). In the following excerpt, for instance, Simon gives an insight into how class distinctions are made to mark out *chav*s. Simon has worked at the institution for several years and has interactions with a range of people from contractors to academics. In his spare time he likes to spend time with his friends from home, whom he describes as *chav*s. He also identifies himself as a *chav* at certain points in the interview.

> There are some people, obviously, who always look like they're uncomfortable in a shirt and trousers, but they're making the effort so the way I view it is, even if you do look slightly out of place, if you feel that the professional look is required in that situation, then you should wear it. It's like we see *little chav*s off the estate, and they're not happy wearing a suit, they know they have to, but they might have trainers on, but they've made the effort. It's the ones that turn up to court in jeans and T-Shirt, you know for a fact that the judge is gonna have a go at you, basically.
>
> (Simon, Surveyor, 31 years old, lower middle-class)

Simon's complex discussion about the *chav* describes an identity that is embodied. The *chav* is recognized not only through being in place (particular people living on an estate), but is also recognized as someone who is out of place in particular settings. This is signalled to others through an embodied uneasiness, for instance, when having to wear a suit. The suit can be said to be a cultural artefact that signifies formality or professionalism; it is not a cultural artefact that is easily appropriated by a person if it is not already part of their culture. A *chav*, then, is constituted, in part, by Simon's act of marking certain people out for their noticeable level of discomfort wearing a suit (notice also how Simon refers to them as 'little *chav*s' as a way of recognizing these people as powerless). In this discussion, Simon is demonstrating knowledge about how the game is played and shows an awareness that being seen as a *chav* can have negative connotations. He knows that *chav*s do not fit in, in certain fields because they are perceived as not looking right, particularly in a suit. However, he draws attention to the effort a *chav* might invest in trying to fit in with the conditions of the field by wearing a suit. He seems to want to give recognition for this attempt to fit in by acknowledging that this may be difficult and uncomfortable for a *chav* to do. He also gives an insight into what can happen if a *chav* does not make an effort to fit in with rules of the game in certain spaces, namely, that they can be subjected to negative judgements. Simon talks more about the discomfort a *chav* might feel wearing a suit in connection with his own experiences of unease wearing this attire:

> I hate wearing suits, you feel like you're all trussed up. You know that you're dressed smart and you don't feel good I suppose dressed like that. Even a tie, as soon as I put a tie on … I don't wear a tie anymore, I am uncomfortable with it.
>
> (Simon, Surveyor, 31 years old, lower middle-class)

Simon is expressing a degree of mismatch between his own *habitus* and the structure of the field he has to work in. A suit is a sign of professionalism and Simon knows that he should wear it as part of the unwritten rules in his workplace, yet he feels like a fish out of water when he does. His embodied discomfort potentially marks him as someone who does not have an easy familiarity with the game. In the next excerpt, he describes how he is used to wearing tracksuits and being with his friends, whom he identifies as *chavs/charvers.*

> When I am outside I am used to wearing tracksuit bottoms and a T-Shirt, so coming into work is *completely* different. See, a lot of me friends are charvers from estates. It's weird when you go back and meet them and you've just come from work, it's like you're the total opposite of them, but you still talk the same. They might take the mick outta you for being dressed like that.
>
> (Simon, Surveyor, 31 years old, lower middle-class)

He is knowledgeable about classificatory codes that might mark someone out as a *chav*. Tracksuit bottoms, in this particular context, are mentioned by Simon as a way of quickly conferring a *chav* identity; this code is used in conjunction with references to particular social spaces (the housing estate and workplace) to further draw out the distinctions Simon is making. The tracksuit[3] is made culturally meaningful as a sign here, because it is used to signify leisure, informality, and comfort in a particular space that is associated with *chav* culture. Simon, it seems, is trying to convey that the tracksuit carries the opposite symbolic meaning to the workplace 'suit' and that the two classificatory codes clash when viewed together in the same field. His comments indicate a struggle for power over the legitimacy of the 'correct way to do things'. When Simon moves into a more localized field of power, the opposition between the classificatory codes 'tracksuit' and 'suit' become more apparent; so, when he leaves work (where wearing a suit is befitting) and sees friends who are from the estate and dress in tracksuits, he is the one who is positioned as out of place because of the work clothes he wears. In a reversal of his first quotation where *chav*s are marked out by their embodied discomfort wearing a suit, Simon is the one who is ridiculed and feels out of place for wearing his work clothes when seeing his friends after work. This indicates that Simon is adapting the way he plays the game as he moves between fields and tries to negotiate the legitimate classificatory codes that are relative to each field. He indicates a difficult transition going back to see friends who mark him out as different. Lawler (1999) has also highlighted the difficulties some women in her study experienced moving between a working-class position and a more middle-class position. She shows that this can be a painful process whereby the person feels like they don't belong or fit in anywhere. Simon's discussions also emphasize the pain and complexity involved in moving within and across different fields and trying to be conscious of how the game is to be played, and he points especially to the transition he makes between how he is at work and who he is when he is goes back to see friends: 'It's one of the main culture clashes, workplaces. It's when you go from your workplace to see your friends' (Simon).

What is most noticeable about Simon's discussions is that he does not talk about *chav*s negatively himself; he sees himself and his friends as *chav*s, but seems to know to keep this aspect of his identity hidden from others at work: 'you don't talk about what you're doing every week, it depends who you are talking to […] I do think about it, and I think I do need to be professional at work'. Simon indicates that being seen as a *chav* does not fit with the image he would like to portray at work. His discussions show that he is particularly sensitive to being read negatively as a *chav* in this way at work.

> The lads at work take the mick out of me saying 'ah cheap little charver,' and all that. [laughs]
>
> (Simon, Surveyor, 31 years old, lower middle-class)

Simon describes how he is subject to ridicule for occasionally being marked out as a *chav* because of the way he talks, dresses, or behaves at work. This ridicule emphasizes to him that having a *chav* identity is devalued in this space. The use of the words 'cheap' and 'little' are pejorative terms that make a *chav* identity difficult to embody in this place of work. Simon's knowledge of how the game is to be played has helped him develop his feel for the game, though, since beginning his employment. In the following quote, his comments provide an insight into how he has made adapting to different people and spaces part of his *habitus*:

> I have a *very* different background to [my colleagues], and I do have very different tastes but, erm, I can sort of … adapt to different social situations. […] I've *had* to do it all the way through.
>
> (Simon, Surveyor, 31 years old, lower middle-class)

This resonates with Reay et al.'s (2009) study of working-class students who managed to make 'adapting' part of their *habitus* so that they were more able to fit in within an elite institution. Simon demonstrates a raised awareness of how the game *ought* to be played and how this is located in class. This knowledge of game-playing is central to how he adapts himself to fit in. But, fitting in is not easy to do when a person's embodied discomfort shows and they know that they are being mis-recognized. Skeggs writes that these people know and experience 'the differences between positioning, belonging and mis-recognition' (2002, p. 366). These people understand their situation and their discomfort shows, but they do not have the power in this social space to re-signify the classifications they are marked with. Instead, they must learn to adapt to the legitimated culture if they are to be part of the game.

Elsewhere, another employee called Ravi describes a '*chav*' by specifically focusing on what he sees as recognizable embodied discomfort in someone wearing a suit. Ravi is someone who has worked at the university for almost five years, and described how he sees himself as someone who can read people and adapt his interactions to fit in with any kind of person. In this discussion, he uses the suit as an example of how he is able to decode a person:

> R: Put the *best* suit on Rooney, the very *best* suit on Rooney, he is *still* a *chav*! [laughs] He really is. You can't … change him cos he hasn't got that … hasn't got that *persona*, you know? […]
>
> **M: Would a *chav* get an interview here?**
>
> R: You can pick them out, of *course* you can, of *course* you can! You don't need to be a *trained* person to do that, because it is all about what you are going to ask them, the questions, the way that they act and the way they react, if you take somebody out of their comfort zone, yeah, then they're not going to react normally. So, if you take a *chav* who has *never* wore a suit before and stick him in a suit in an interview for a job, they will feel very *uncomfortable*, almost like shackled into the suit. Um, *I* am not saying that they can't *do* the job, that's completely different, but it *is* the perception of the interviewer.
>
> (Ravi, Business Development Manager, 40 years old, middle-class)

The suit is a cultural code that changes its symbolic value when supposedly subaltern groups wear it. Ravi uses Wayne Rooney, a Manchester United football player who grew up on a council estate, as an example of a *chav* who cannot escape his embodied history. Ravi picks Rooney out as a *chav* because he believes that Rooney's *habitus* gives him away as a *chav* even if he wears an expensive suit. Being a *chav* then is marked on the body in terms of comportment and level of comfort wearing certain clothes. Bourdieu comments that 'the sign bearing, sign-wearing body is also a producer of signs which are physically marked by the relationship to the body' (1984/2010, p. 191). Ravi, then, is demonstrating a feel for the game and a familiarity with the meaning of signs and how they can be read by others. Ravi relates the suit on the 'wrong' body to symbols that are connected with imprisonment, like Simon does also. This recognition of embodied discomfort signals to Ravi that the person being interviewed does not know the correct way to do things and does not possess a mastery of how to play the game.

What is more, Ravi is showing that he is the possessor of 'legitimate culture', because he has knowledge about the correct way to do things and the way the game *ought* to be played. Whilst he presents himself as being more tolerant of mistakes in game-playing than the interviewer (in his above excerpt), nevertheless Ravi indicates that these mistakes are recognizable and subject to judgement by others in the field. As Bourdieu writes, 'The most intolerable thing for those who regard themselves as the possessors of legitimate culture is the sacrilegious reuniting of tastes which taste dictates should be separated' (1984/2010, p. 36). This singling out of the *chav* appears to be done out of fear of *chav* culture contaminating legitimate culture. What Ravi is doing here, then, in his discussion is to reinstate his own authority and ownership over the correct way to do things by marking out *chavs* who do not belong in suits and whom he sees as not fitting in, in this workplace.

Paula was also someone who expressed her feelings of disgust about *chavs* during my conversation with her. When I ask her if someone she sees as a *chav* would be in her workplace, she is careful to control her response by giving a much shorter answer to my question:

> P: … you walk down [the] street and you've got your charvers and your … you know, you look around and it's 'urrgh'. It's just *where* you are at that particular time of day.
>
> **M: Charvers, that's a funny one, do you see them in this workplace?**
>
> P: No, [smiles] I don't think so, not *here*.
>
> (Paula, School Manager, 40 years old, lower middle-class)

Paula demonstrates that she can identify a *chav/charver* figure by looking at the way a person is dressed and acts; for instance, a description she uses later is that '… they're dripping in gold. God it's just awful'. This codification of *charvers/chavs* frames this as a social position that is particularly undesirable and evokes derision. Skeggs talks about how the symbolic representation of certain kinds of people in this derisory way blocks 'their capacity to convert their cultural capital into symbolic capital to gain other capitals and ensure material security' (1997, p. 11). It seems, then, that *chavs* are blocked from exchanging capitals for symbolic value in this space. Paula uses her knowledge of class to help her to position others in the workplace. Her discussion shows that she considers *chav*s/*charvers* to be spatially distant as 'not here', that is, not part of the game or involved in her field of work, and she signals that *chav*s are to be found elsewhere outside of this particular field of employment.

Ravi puts it bluntly that a person would need to get rid of their *chav* traits if they were to work here:

> Basically you try to get *rid* of the traits that the *chav* comes with, the new ideology of this place is like a new image and you have to train them to behave in particular way, react in a particular way, *talk* in a particular way.
> (Ravi, Business Development Manager, 40 years old, middle-class)

Like Paula, Ravi is also discussing how certain classifying codes that would identify a *chav* do not fit with the image of this workplace, and any attempts to convert '*chav* capital' into symbolic value are blocked through repeated acts of exclusion. These identifying markers of *chav* culture would need to be erased or removed because they cannot be legitimately converted into symbolic capital in this field. As with Simon's discussions earlier, Ravi's conversation above also indicates that being able to adapt to the game is crucial if one is to legitimately fit in. Ravi is giving an insight into the dynamics of the game at work; namely, that one has to be able to demonstrate that they can 'fit into a particular mode of telling' (Skeggs 2002, p. 352).

In Ravi's view, the person he identifies as a *chav* would need to learn the correct way to do things—to talk a certain way, behave in a particular way, and to look a certain way in order to fit in with the legitimate culture. This reproduces the classed logic of the game by singling certain people out as not fitting in. In particular, this misrecognition of a *chav* as being out of place is a form of symbolic violence that Schubert notes is how 'social class hierarchy is reproduced' (2008, p. 189). According to Bourdieu, then, certain people will always lose out in this symbolic system by struggling for recognition and legitimacy (Bourdieu 2000; see also Atkinson 2012).

So, what I wanted to show here is that the *chav* is constructed through many cultural artefacts and classificatory codes. The few that I focused on here referred to choice of clothing, being literally out of place, and a recognizable unease when wearing a suit. Through these codes and artefacts, the *chav* is marked as someone who does not fit in with the logic of the game in this particular workplace.

DENIGRATING THE MIDDLE-CLASS: '*MRS. BUCKET*'

The identity of '*Mrs. Bucket*' was invoked by some of the employees to describe their colleagues in this social space. This character is part of a popular cultural fictional television programme entitled '*Keeping Up Appearances*' (broadcast 1990–1995 in the UK). This fictional character is meant to be a caricature of the denigrated middle-class. '*Mrs. Bucket*' insists that her name is pronounced as '*Bouquet*' rather than '*Bucket*'. She is a woman who is concerned with appearances and attempts to present herself as more affluent and more middle-class than she 'really' is, by affecting middle-class mannerisms. Her character has become a cultural shorthand in the UK to identify someone as pretentious and obsessed with particular kinds of appearances because of what they can be taken to reveal about the person. It is worth noting about this character that, whilst Hyacinth Bucket is frequently misunderstood as being a parody of middle-classness, she is also marked as from a working-class family. As Lawler discusses and notes of Bourdieu, the focus is on the difference between her *being* and *seeming* (Bourdieu 1984/2010), and this provokes the question of '*who does she think she is?*' (Bourdieu 1986, p. 380 in Lawler 2000, p. 121). Similarly, then, whilst a number of people in this research identified some of their colleagues as a '*Mrs. Bucket*'-type character directly, this kind of belittling of middle-class pretensions was quite widespread across my sample. Few people wanted to claim this kind of middle-class identity (see Savage 2005) in the workplace and, as I will show, it was particularly damaging to be marked with it.

This knowledge that it can be seen as pretentious to try and pass oneself off as being middle-class is discussed in Savage et al.'s (2000, 2001) study. They interviewed 178 people in the Manchester area in the late 1990s and found that being middle-class carried with it connotations of being boring and pretentious, so many of the participants in this study wished to carefully position themselves against this identity. Savage et al. (2000) particularly note the reticence expressed by some of their participants about describing themselves as middle-class. This highlights how these people knew of the right and wrong way to be, and that this was located in class terms. Similarly, in Fiona Devine's (2005) study of the middle-classes in the USA and in Britain, she comments that her British participants were particularly uneasy with the term middle-class. They, too, demonstrated a desire to distance themselves from being seen as middle-class, because these people did not want to be viewed as if they were trying to claim status and superiority over working-class people.

Further to this, Rita Felski (2001) talks about the shame and ambivalence associated with being read as lower middle-class. She says, 'Being lower-middle-class is a singularly boring identity, possessing none of the radical chic that is sometimes ascribed to working-class roots' (2001, p. 34). Her observations can also apply to those who wish to be seen as part of the 'respectable' working-class—for instance, like the '*Mrs. Bucket*' character discussed above. This idea that being seen as middle-class is boring and stuffy came through in my discussions with employees, and is particularly evident in Alan's comments below. He is a Senior Lecturer at the university and has worked there for many years. Even though he thinks he has a middle-class position now, he sees himself as also still holding on to a working-class background because of his upbringing and his parents.

> A lot of the people I hang out with in *London* are all like BBC producers, and artists, very, very you know, definitely *upper* middle-class people. It wasn't like I was naive in a class sense, but I hadn't been exposed to … what you might call the more pedestrianized, middle-class, a little bit more sort of … yeah, a bit more, *conservative*, I was used to mixing with… *coke sniffing* Rahs! In that sort of environment, making music and hanging out with my mates who were BBC producers. So I went to [work at] a really boring lower middle-class university, they were all really *stuffy*, and I am *not*, and that rubbed them up.
>
> (Alan, Senior Lecturer, 48 years old, middle-class)

This discussion is all about Alan distinguishing himself as *not* having a boring, lower middle-class identity. He describes his colleagues as middle-class people who are pedestrian, conservative, and stuffy. He deploys classificatory codes that are used to mark a distinction between a desirable/legitimate and parochial/de-legitimate middle-class identity. On the one hand, he is trying to demonstrate his own cultural capital by discussing his experiences in London that portray a supposedly desirable hedonistic lifestyle: cultural codes like the BBC, 'coke-sniffing', and 'Rah' (a cultural identity referring to someone who is highly affluent and usually a university student) all work to suggest that this is a legitimate, upper middle-class identity and an exciting preferential lifestyle as bourgeois bohemians. And on the other hand, this distinction works to make the other middle-class identity in his discussion, embodied by colleagues in this university, seem more dowdy and dull. This telling of the self, as Skeggs notes, 'becomes a manifestation and maintenance of difference and distinction' (2002, p. 350), and reproduces the prevalent class hierarchy.

Alan's discussions here demonstrate knowledge of the classificatory system and how it could potentially be used to position people, particularly academics, in this workplace. So, he uses this knowledge to attempt to distance himself from this middle-class positioning that he perceives as being undesirable. Felski notes that the lower middle-class are often made 'irredeemably other yet uncomfortably close' (2001, p. 37) by those who wish to protect high culture from appropriation by the wrong sort of people. Alan is showing an awareness here of a classificatory system that often constructs lower middle-classness to be a position that attempts to acquire the markers of upper middle-classness without fundamentally understanding the meaning of these cultural codes and artefacts, or how to use them (Bourdieu 1984/2010). Felski asserts that it is these failed attempts to reproduce 'upper class' dispositions which make the lower middle-classes appear conformist: the lower middle-classes are able to simulate the tastes of the upper middle-classes, but without the same recognized legitimacy and apparent disinterestedness in symbolic value. Bourdieu also writes about this in detail in *Distinction* (1984/2010) with reference to the *petit bourgeoisie*, as does Lawler (2008b), who highlights the contempt that is directed at those people who are seen to lack the appropriate qualities of aristocracy and upper middle-classness. She uses the press coverage of Prince William and his wife, Kate Middleton, to show that, in this case, a symbolic economy operates to mark class as a natural property of the person and also as an artificial system. Through this, the lower middle-classes, then, are often constructed as boring and obsessed with rules and structure because they are *noticeably* interested in acquiring symbolic value to fortify their social position in the game.

In the next excerpt below, Alan discusses colleagues as giving 'middle-class looks' to each other at work:

> There would be Professor so and so and Professor so and so there and I would be like this new bloody Lecturer without a PhD, and they would be discussing things, and I would say … along the lines of 'For God's sake, that's ridiculous, we ought to do this' and then there would be these sort of *middle-class* looks between people. I knew what was going on but I was just sort of '*fuck it*, I don't care'.
>
> (Alan, Senior Lecturer, 48 years old, middle-class)

Alan shows some knowledge of the classification system in this field again here by spotting a 'middle-class' look between colleagues. By describing others as giving a middle-class look, he indicates connotations of the conformist middle-class identity he described in the other excerpt above. This middle-class gesture is laden with meaning for Alan—he senses his colleagues' disapproval of his behaviour. He shows his disdain in this excerpt for what he perceives to be their judgements of his own behaviour by further discussing how he refused to conform to his colleagues' expectations. Not only does he suggest that he knows the 'right' way to do things in this social space, he is also able to situate himself in the field where he is able to *refuse* his colleagues' legitimate culture. This further emphasizes his belief that it is his colleagues who possess undesirable, lower middle-class identities ,and not him.

Felski identifies herself as lower middle-class and notes that it is a position that is subject to much derision, particularly from the intelligentsia. She refers to George Orwell's novel *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* ([1936]2000) to show how the middle-classes are portrayed as a 'world of identical small semi detached houses stretching into infinity, all equipped with stucco fronts, privet hedges, green front doors and showy nameplates' (2001, p. 36). She goes on to argue that this representation emphasizes the moral values of a lower middle-class world, namely, 'respectability, frugality, social aspirations', which are epitomized by the 'indestructible aspidistra' (2001, p. 36) in Orwell's novel. Whilst Orwell's novel was written in the 1930s, Felski uses it to show how the texture, symbols, and pathos of his fictional world about the lower middle-classes reveals a power struggle to 'keep up appearances' that is relevant to class struggles today.

So, whilst Alan's discussions above relate to constructing lower middle-classness as a boring and undesirable identity in this field, other employees I spoke to talked about a kind of middle-class identity that was undesirable because of its fragility and pretentiousness. Certain people were seen to be using classificatory codes and cultural artefacts as a way of claiming middle-classness illegitimately. A number of people in this research were suspicious of their colleagues' supposedly middle-class dispositions. In the following quote, Evie comments on those in her office whom she characterises as '*Mrs. Bucket*':

> You know these people like 'Mrs Buc*ket*'? They think that they're you know, cos their husbands are managers, and the things they wear […] they *think* that they're middle-class.
>
> (Evie, Receptionist, 50 years old, working-class)

Evie sees herself as working-class because she lives in an ex-council house that she has been able to buy, because of her parents, and because she left school at 15 to get a job. Evie's discussions reveal that she knows that there is a classed logic to the game at work and she is able to single out those who she believes are acting as though they are above their legitimate position in the game. These people are reaching for an identity that Evie does not think they are entitled to. Evie's colleagues might possess middle-class cultural capital (clothes, husband's occupation status), but in her eyes it is not convertible into recognized symbolic value because, it seems, they do not have a 'natural' middle-class *habitus* (Lawler 2008b). Skeggs writes about pretentiousness and notes that there is a long tradition in Britain of 'attacking through humour those who are supposed to be not only economically superior but also morally better' (2004a, p. 114). Skeggs argues that these attempts to 'de-value the valuers' (2004a, p. 114) effectively tightens a hierarchical class system and keeps the working-classes in place. She goes on to suggest that, although attacks on pretentiousness are an attempt by the powerless to resist those in power, they also 'keep the working-class alert to their social positioning and wary of any attempts to move from it' (2004, p. 114).

In the next excerpt, Evie is critical of those who feign middle-classness through distinctions that set themselves apart as better than others in the game.

> I think middle-class people think, 'ooh I am *middle-class*,' but they're probably not! They just sort of *think* that they are! Makes them think that they're better than what they are.
>
> (Evie, Receptionist, 50 years old, working-class)

Evie emphasizes the fragility and pretentiousness of trying to put on a middle-class identity. She draws a contrast between those who are entitled to be seen as upper middle-class (below) and those mentioned above who she sees as faking it. This shows the relationality of class within the game here, in that it is defined against that which is closest (Bourdieu 1984/2010).

> People who are *really* upper class tend to be *nice* people, they don't tend to be … cos they're *really* of that class. They don't *try* to be anything. They just *are* … as they are. And they don't look down on you. Whereas I think

> people who are trying to strive to pretend that they belong to a higher class here … they might sort of have to *defend* it.
>
> (Evie, Receptionist, 50 years old, working-class)

These people at work are constructed as legitimately upper-class by Evie, because they do not need to defend their position in the game by looking down on others to emphasize class distinctions and make others feel bad. Those who have a tenuous hold on a middle-class identity rely on the practice of looking down on others and feigning middle-class dispositions to defend their position in social space. Evie's comments suggest that she does not think these people have inherited an embodied history of middle-class dispositions, but instead have tried to acquire them through material markers such as driving an expensive car and living in a particular kind of house. This indicates that a person's position in the game requires recognition and legitimation if it is to be granted symbolic value.

As well as trying to embody middle-classness, a person can try to produce a middle-class identity by defining themselves against the repellent *other*. Lawler has written about how middle-classed identities are produced by marking others as repellent through the act of looking down on them (1999, 2005), for instance. She comments that the act of 'looking down' on other people 'work[s] to *produce* working-class people as abhorrent and as foundationally "other" to a middle-class existence that is silently marked as normal and desirable' (2005, p. 431). Evie is particularly sensitive to being *looked down upon* by colleagues and defends herself and others by questioning the legitimacy that a person doing the 'looking down' has to perform such class condescension. When a person is accused of having no legitimate claim to the middle-class dispositions they are trying to embody, then the person is judged as pretentious. Being marked as pretentious—in short, classified as having a '*Mrs. Bucket*' identity—especially at work, is not desirable. It signals that the person does not have a *legitimate* mastery of the classificatory system or a true feel for the game in this social space. In contrast, Evie speaks quite positively of those people at work who she sees as being inherently upper-class, because they don't need to *try* to be anything. Upper class people are secure in their position in social space through an embodied history and familiarity with the right way to do things, whereas, in contrast, those who have to try to be lower middle-class, and for this to be obvious to others, betray their lack of entitlement to this position.

Positively Working-Class: '*A Grafter*?'

Those people who wanted to be seen as working-class were cautious to select the right dispositions, classificatory codes, and cultural artefacts to discuss. Being able to comfortably claim certain aspects of working-classness, and to transform these codes and artefacts into symbolic value, demonstrates a certain mastery of the classificatory logic to this game. For instance, the 'council house' arose in several discussions with participants as a cultural signifier of working-classness: Ann, who is part of top senior management in the university, talks about growing up on a council estate ('we lived in a council house. He worked in a factory then, but my mum was a teacher'); Jeff, also a part of the senior management team, discusses living in a council house ('I come from a background which is very … which would once have been characterised as very *clearly* working-class, you know? I grew up in a council house'). Tony, a Dean at the university, says 'I think I pretty much started off as … you know … my family were I am sure were *working*, working-class *certainly* in their attitudes'. But not everyone is able to comfortably identify and claim working-classness like this using classificatory codes such as 'council house', for instance, and still fit in at work. The identity of *chav* that I talked about earlier shows that, for some people, this is a stigmatized position (associated with council housing) that does not fit in here. The *chav* identity does not possess a legitimated combination of cultural capital in this game, and so is unable to convert living in 'council housing' into symbolic value, like Ann and Jeff I just mentioned. I explore this further in this section by looking at how some participants were able to attribute value to artefacts and codes of working-classness in this field. I suggest that they are able to do this because they now also possess many of the capitals associated with middle-classness that they have worked for and therefore *deserve*.

Skeggs (2004) writes about the opening up of new markets in which aspects of working-class culture are plundered for symbolic value. She draws attention to how aspects of class are being converted into cultural property by certain people; she says, 'it becomes more easily accessible for others to know and use it, touristically travelling in and out to see if it fits or suits' whilst avoiding the 'moral attributes of excess' (2004, p. 114). This involves having knowledge of the game and the aspects of class that are convertible into symbolic value. Savage et al. (2000) also write about how aspects of working-class culture are being utilized by more middle-class people to convey a particular kind of identity that is selectively working-class. Participants in Savage et al.'s study (2000), too, would often draw on their life narratives to invoke a working-class identity. Talking about working-class childhoods, or parents who were working-class, was also a tool that some employees I spoke to used to invoke 'working-classness' as a positive aspect of their own work identity. In the following example, Dave knows that he possesses certain capital that could be coded as middle-class, but expresses a noticeable hesitancy taking this up as an identity, and instead holds on to being working-class:

> Yes I am still working-class, *but* I don't want to be paying massive amounts of taxes for people on *daft* benefits, I think we *should* have benefits, you can't just cast people adrift, we have to look after people [...] we encourage people *not* to go to work, we need to find the right balance. Anyway, I have a 4 bedroom detached house, I have two cars, I have all these trappings of ... er, my son is at university, all these trappings of being er ... middle-class, er lower middle-class, I don't know, *whatever* you would want to call it.
>
> (Dave, Maintenance Manager, 57 years old, working-class)

Dave makes a distinction regarding those who he sees as essentially work shy and on 'daft benefits', which he believes discourage a strong work ethic. Doing an 'honest' day's work is often a characteristic associated with the respectable working-class with which Dave seems to align himself. By setting himself up *against* a group of people whom he sees as choosing not to work and instead claim benefits, he justifies his own privileges by implying that he is hard working, working-class, and has earned the trappings of middle-classness. Nevertheless, he is reluctant to identify himself as middle-class. He stalls several times as he talks about his own social position. He recognizes that materially he might be framed as middle-class by others, but he wishes to dis-identify with this being his identity. Whilst he identifies as working-class, he also does not want to take on the negative dispositions and material markers that could be associated with certain people also identified as working-class. He lightly claims economic (salary, house, car) and cultural (education) capital usually associated with the middle-classes without actually signalling to others that he has middle-class dispositions that could mark him out as pretentious and as out of place in the game. Dave demonstrates a knowingness, then, about what aspects of working-classness are convertible into symbolic capital, as well as what aspects of working-classness are stigmatized.

In the next excerpts, Simon and Ian discuss a colleague that they believe is claiming a positive working-class identity that he is not entitled to:

> We actually take the mick out of one of the blokes at work, cos he views himself as working-class, cos he is from a pit village. And we say, 'well, you're not, you have a professional job, you own your own house, you own your own cars, you work. We went online, The Times website, there's a 'are you middle-class?' There's 30 questions and you answer them and it comes out with what class you are. Can't remember what they are but we did it for a laugh! And he came out as middle-class, but he was like 'Nooooooo I am not, I am *working-class*', and we say 'but you're *not*'. And it really winds him up cos he strongly believes he is working-class, cos he has come from that background.
>
> (Simon, Surveyor, 31 years old, lower middle-class)

> He classes himself as *working-class*, and we say he is probably more middle-class because of what he does now, fair enough his family are probably working-class still … but at what point do you go from working-class to middle-class? He lives in a nice village in Northumberland, nice house, er … nice girlfriend, so how does that make you working-class? I don't know?
>
> (Ian, Surveyor, 31 years old, middle-class)

Simon appears to be ridiculing the person in his discussion, because, in his view, he is denying his upward class mobility and accrued privileges. He even goes as far as to verify his judgements of this person with a class quiz he finds on a well known news website. This practice of *having a laugh* at the person in the story has a serious edge to it, as both Ian and Simon repeatedly block the person's attempts to identify as working-class. It would appear that Simon wants this person to acknowledge their privilege and accrued capitals, but this person is emphatically rejecting Simon's attempts to position him as middle-class. Ian also calls upon objective markers to substantiate his judgements that this person is actually middle-class. Simon is refusing to let the person he describes 'escape the gravitational pull of the social field' (Skeggs 2004, p. 116) and responsibility for his privileged position. To them, it would seem that the person they are talking about is attempting to forget his accrued, middle-class privileges in the present and re-invoke a past history of working-classness (family, pit mining village). But Ian in particular questions how legitimate it is for this man to continue doing this, and at what point you move into, and *are*, middle-class. Simon's practices are a form of surveillance: he demonstrates knowledge of the classificatory codes that organize people in this social space and he is quite adamant that this person should not evade being positioned by this structure despite the connotations of middle-classness being distasteful to the individual he talks about.

In the following excerpt, Keith, a Lecturer at the university, is keen to portray his working-classness as being part of his life history, and as a result of his lack of economic spending capital. This appears to be a way to prevent himself from being recognized as middle-class because of the other material and education capitals he has acquired:

> K: I have identified as working-class, because I *am* working-class. I come from a family that believes in doing a hard days work for a decent pay, end of story. I didn't have a silver spoon in my mouth, passed my 11+ so I went to a grammar school, I am a typical grammar school boy. I believe in giving the kids the same opportunities I had, now the grandkids. But the whole family is … you might say in terms of where we *live* that it is middle-class, but I think we're working-class.
>
> **M: Why would someone say you were middle-class then?**
>
> K: Because it is a *very* nice residential area. We're both *professionals, yeah*. But you know, I have no investments, we spend what we earn a month, that month. Um, we don't believe in private education, we believe in public education but it has got to be *darn* good, like the grammar schools were.
> (Keith, Lecturer, 63 years old, working-class)

Keith demonstrates a knowingness here about what particular classificatory codes indicate to others in the workplace. He invokes a working-class life history rooted in a structuring work ethic in his family upbringing and a culture of spending what they earn. He is very aware of being read as someone who has had privileges that have helped him get to this position in the game. He wants to strongly refuse this reading of himself by drawing on his knowledge of valued working-class codes and cultural artefacts. Education is central to his discussion about his class identity, and he sees this as a way for others to capitalize on opportunities. He believes in, and praises, a meritocratic educational system that rewards hard work, and it is this hard work later in life that he sees as justifying how he has *earned* his own privileges and success. So, despite living in private housing on an affluent estate, having a professional occupation and investing emotionally in education (all indicative of middle-class capital), Keith is still comfortably able to claim a working-class identity through his supposed rejection of inherited, and thus undeserved, privilege. He represents himself as being 'not one of the privileged who have it easy', or as 'one of those at the bottom who are morally suspect' (Savage et al. 2000, p. 115). Although Keith acknowledges his privilege, he is uneasy with it. He historicizes his own class identity, then, as a way to explain his route to this privileged position, and this enables him to retain the more desirable aspects of working-classness.

Elsewhere, Linsey comments on the inclination amongst some staff she works with to want to be seen as the right kind of working-class here. Her comments provide an insight into how the claiming of a working-class identity in this workplace is made possible:

> Working-class […] is all well and good, if you just left it behind and tried to turn yourself into something else.
>
> (Linsey, Temporary Lecturer, 51 years old, unsure of class position)

Talking about being working-class is framed as legitimate in this workplace as long as it also involves social mobility. Working-classness, then, is valued as long as it is something that has been left behind or escaped (Lawler 2000).

Working-classness is also glamourized by those who are able to inhabit it temporarily, or claim valued aspects of it for use in exchange. In particular, Felski writes that 'within the elaborate minuet of distinction, the intelligentsia may choose to align itself with the culture of the most oppressed' (Felski 2001, p. 41). Felski calls this cross class identification: there are 'profound divisions between those who aspire upward and those whose status and cultural capital allow them to go slumming' (Felski 2001, p. 38). This idea of 'slumming it' is a useful way of thinking about these movements between social classes at work. Only a small number of the employees in this study were able to talk comfortably about wanting to be seen as having certain working-class dispositions in this workplace.

Being 'Normal' and 'Ordinary'

In Savage et al.'s study of class (2000, 2001), they noticed that participants discussed being normal and ordinary as a way of avoiding discussions about class and their own social positioning. The writers suggest this was a way for these people to state that they felt 'people should be treated the same regardless of social position' (2001, p. 887). The same desire to be seen as normal occurred amongst the employees in my study. Amber, for instance, describes herself as ‘middle of the road’ and extends this view to others that she works with:

> We’re all middle of the road, I wouldn’t say any of us have had a *hard* upbringing or had to struggle to go to university or anything like that, to get our qualifications you know? Same token though, none of our parents are mega rich or anything like that. Just *average* people, you know?
> (Amber, Maintenance Officer, 30 years old, middle-class)

Amber is talking about people around her at work as having had a similar social trajectory to herself. In her eyes, nobody has particularly struggled to get to their social position; she is surrounded by ‘just average people’ who she believes have had a similar access to education to her. This may or may not be an accurate conjecture that Amber is making about her colleagues. It is also possible that her colleagues who have very different social trajectories may be concealing differences that could be located in class and stigmatized. Constructing herself as ‘average’ is a useful way for Amber to put a floor and a ceiling above and below her position—it is *other* people who have had a hard upbringing and others who are ‘mega-rich’. She sees herself as neither privileged nor hard done by in this field, and, by being the same as everyone else, she develops her feel for the game and fits in. Savage et al. write about this desire to be seen as normal as being a popular cultural struggle about class that ‘situate[s] individuals as both different from those stigmatized groups “below” them, as well as those “above” them’ (Savage et al. 2000, p. 110). This is a subtle class struggle, then, that positions people in a class hierarchy whilst also denying that this struggle is taking place. Being normal, or the same as everyone else, can mean not having to see one’s own privileges or have to take responsibility for them, and it can also be a way of avoiding charges of snobbishness or pretentiousness (Bourdieu 1984/2010; Skeggs 2004; Lawler 2000, 2008a).

Amber’s reference to ‘normalness’ may also demonstrate unease with the class system and how one might be positioned in it by others. For instance, Sayer (2005) argues that class is an embarrassing subject to talk about. It is difficult for some people to talk about because it is implies judgements are being made about another person’s moral worth (see Addison and Mountford 2015). Sayer comments then that, even though a person may not wish to evoke feelings of being judged in another person, they may then overcompensate by being overly familiar or overtly respectful, and this in itself can be perceived as condescending. 'Class positions people whether one likes it or not and behaving as though it does not matter, or that one does not think in terms of class, does not make inherent inequalities disappear' (Addison and Mountford 2015, p. 4). Savage et al. (2000, 2001) suggest that a desire to be seen as normal and ordinary, then, is a defensive strategy deployed by people because these people 'know that class is not an innocent descriptive term but is a loaded moral signifier' (2001, p. 889).

Linsey also talks about herself as 'normal'. She seems to do this as a way of situating herself below those who are privileged.

> I mean, as you know, I go and buy my clothes in Primark. I am very *normal*, and yet here [...] There is this assumption that if you're an academic in the *old* school [...] it's sort of elevation to a higher class I think.
>
> (Linsey, Temporary Lecturer, 51 years old, unsure of class position)

Linsey draws on classing codes such as clothes bought from Primark (a large chain of low end *department* stores) and accent as cultural signifiers that convey her own normality. Primark clothes are cheap and aimed at a wide market. By constructing herself as the same as a number of people who buy these cheap clothes, she sharpens a distinction of herself as normal; this is emphasized by also marking others whom she later refers to as wearing very expensive clothes in an attempt to belong to a higher class in this workplace.

Other participants also talked about being 'normal' and 'common' to distinguish themselves from others. John describes himself as 'normal', distinguishing himself from a class of people he sees as below him:

> ... we're just the normal bread and butter people...

Then he goes on to say,

> I'm just say ... ticking over. I'm never going to achieve that status of being upper class, am I? I'm never going to have the money for upper class status, I'm never going to live in an upper class street. I'm just one of the commoners, one of the common people, if you like. But then there is a level which is below me, which I would class as like the down and outs ... the people who haven't got this, that and the other. So everybody has got a place in life? Am just fortunate to be where I am.
>
> (John, Maintenance Electrician, 53 years old, working-class)

John establishes himself and his colleagues as normal by drawing distinctions between those above and below him in social space. Savage et al. (2000) write that this practice of normalizing one's social position serves to create a careful distance from those who are stigmatized by the dominant culture. Representing himself as a commoner also helps John to emphasize his normality. His version of normal positions him much further away from those he sees as upper class and closer to those who are stigmatized for being 'down and outs'. Positioning himself as normal, then, is a practice that ensures he is able to avoid being cast as having a stigmatized identity at work. If he constructs an identity that is simply 'normal', and he universalizes this to his colleagues around him, then he is able to claim that he fits in this social space. Where this imaginary point of being 'ordinary' is situated is, as Savage et al. (2000) comment, relatively arbitrary. They argue that the emergence of 'ordinariness' and being 'normal' in discussions about class is a 'relational construct' that is used to draw contrasts and distinctions (see also Lawler 2011). Skeggs also writes that a person's need to be seen as normal can arise out of 'a desire not to be read as pretentious', and it is a device that is 'demonstrating awareness of, and a way of evading, hierarchy and privilege in *relationships* to others' (2004, p. 116). Claiming to be 'normal' is still a cloaked discussion about class, where it is the 'others' who 'might *not* be ordinary' (Savage et al. 2000, p. 117). Representing oneself as normal, then, is a useful way to play the game, as it helps to protect oneself from stigma, but also implicitly denies that this, too, is a stigmatizing device—for normal is only knowable *against* an 'other' who acts as the limit for normality.

Conclusions

This chapter has considered four classed identities in the workplace. My focus has been on exploring how these identities are coded, recognized, and circulated at work via an array of classifications and cultural artefacts that mark people's bodies and practices. Employees are inscribed, and inscribe others they work alongside, with identities such as the ones I have referred to with varying degrees of acceptance, recognition, and refusal. Each of these four identities are differently positioned within the legitimate culture structuring this workplace; some identities, like the *chav*, are outside of what is seen to be the way things are to be done here, whereas constructing an identity that is seen to be 'normal', or, to claim the positive aspects of working-classness, seems to secure a position in this field that has a better 'fit'. Denigrating middle-class identities, characterized by labelling colleagues' as '*Mrs. Bucket*', was an interesting way these employees seemed to attempt to fix people in positions in social space and consolidate the legitimate culture and way the game ought to be played. This identity was not quite positioned as outside of legitimate culture like the *chav*, but it was still seen to be undesirable.

The exclusion of a *chav* identity is a way of ensuring a distinction between *chav* tastes and legitimated tastes within this workplace: never the twain shall meet. Participants represented this identity by generating distinctions and classifying the clothes this person might wear, how they talk, and how comfortable they appear to be in their surroundings. A *chav* identity, then, was ultimately stigmatized by people in this workplace as being outside of legitimate culture and game-playing.

The denigrated lower middle-class identity (characterised via a '*Mrs. Bucket*') persona was a way for participants to refuse what many saw to be a singularly boring lifestyle. Participants represented lower middle-classness through examples of pretentiousness to show that it was an undesirable position. By marking others as pretentious, it carved out a space where employees were able to show that they exemplified the opposite extreme—indeed, that they were not pretentious. As Skeggs (2004) notes, this sensitivity to pretentiousness is a kind of close surveillance of social behaviour that might indicate that someone is trying to claim dispositions that they are not legitimately entitled to. Marking people with this kind of denigrated middle-class identity is a way for participants to sanction and stigmatize those who try to move position in social space without the proper entitlements. However, the flip side of this is that this identity in the workplace serves as a warning to others about attempting social movement upwards.

Some participants constructed a positive working-class identity that I talked about as 'The Grafter' because it was an identity that was based around having a strong work ethic. Working hard is a characteristic that has long been associated with a 'respectable working-class' (Skeggs 1997). This aspect of working-class culture is convertible into symbolic value in this field, it seems, because it was a way for some employees to explain their material gains which may otherwise be read as straightforwardly middle-class capital. It was useful for participants to construct a selectively working-class identity for themselves because it implied that their middle-class capital was earned the 'right way' and no short cuts were taken via a route through privilege. Some of these participants occupied a unique position in being able to claim the positive aspects of working-class culture for themselves whilst slumming it (Felski 2001), and also refuse the more stigmatized aspects of this kind of identity in this workplace.

A person claiming to embody an identity that is just normal are able to secure a position in social space that fits in. Being normal signalled an acceptable and safe space in the field. It also constructed a floor and ceiling above and below this normalized position by establishing 'others' against which normal could be defined. What was interesting here was how borders of a normal identity shifted between employees, but nevertheless served to draw distinctions between themselves as fitting in and others who were situated outside of their idea of a normal identity. This shows that normalness in this context is relational and still a discussion about class that denies it draws upon distinction.

The way participants talk about classed identities at work shows that knowledge of class, and how it is valued and coded, is important to playing the game at work well. The different ways people classify and are classed at work are an important part of the games people play at work. I wanted to show here that the way employees draw out distinctions to mark out those who fit in and know the correct way to do things around here, against those that do not, can have profound consequences on a person's sense of belonging and goodness of fit. I contend, then, that not having knowledge about class can impede a person's feel for the game (Bourdieu 1990) at work. In the next chapter, I continue looking at how people play games at work by focusing on the emotional aspects of how employees try to appear as though they fit in and play the game at work. In particular, I am concerned with how employees manage feeling out of place in the game-playing for reasons to do with class and gender.

NOTES

1. This is a fictional, female character from a popular BBC sitcom called *Keeping Up Appearances* (1990–1995), portraying class pretentiousness in the UK.
2. There are other discussions about how class continues to be constituted also (see for example Savage et al. 2013; Payne 2006, 2013; Bottero 2004, 2005).
3. The tracksuit can, of course, be read differently depending on the brand and location it is worn. For instance, Jack Wills is considered to be a high-end brand of informal leisure wear and is aimed at a middle-class demographic at university. It carries certain symbolic value when worn in the 'right' places.

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CHAPTER 7

(*Not*) Fitting in and Emotion Work

In Chaps. 5 and 6, I discussed how these employees, draw on knowledge of gender and class as a way of developing a feel for the game at work. So far, then, I have said that playing the game for these participants means learning what aspects of class and gender help them fit in, in this workplace. I have tried to show that this kind of game-playing can sometimes mean that an employee might try to put on more desirable aspects of a classed and gendered identity. Playing the game can also mean hiding aspects of one's self that could jeopardize fitting in at work. I want to now develop this argument by exploring the role of emotion work in this sort of game-playing.

I consider scenarios where employees describe to me feeling as though they are like a fish out of water. I want to delve a bit deeper into our emotional reactions and strategies when we don't feel like we quite fit in. What do we do when our feelings reveal to others our sense of being out of place? I address this question here and try to show that emotion work is a crucial skill in learning to play the game at work and fit in. I bring together Hochschild's concept of emotion work with Bourdieu's concept of *hysteresis* here to make sense of the things that we do to try and fit in. These ideas are important, and by bringing them together I am able to show how employees use emotion work to manage emotions that might reveal that they sometimes feel like a fish out of water (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). I also draw on some of Goffman's (1959) ideas relating to the presentation of self to help me make sense of how these employees

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M. Addison, *Social Games and Identity in the Higher Education Workplace*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-51803-3_7

work on their performances to fit in. I think about the limits of fitting in using emotion work and why letting off steam is a useful coping strategy for people who do emotion work. My aim here is to try, I hope, to show that emotion work helps employees cope with a mismatch between *habitus* and field (*hysteresis*), and that emotion work and impression management are integral factors in being able to play the game well and fit in.

Emotion Work

The people I spoke to talked about trying to appear confident and capable to conceal moments when they felt out of place or like they did not know what they were doing at work. These discussions provide an interesting insight into the times we all may try to manage our emotions to try and present ourselves in a certain light (see also Bloch 2002, 2012; Bolton and Boyd 2003; Bolton 2005; Bolton 2000). Hochschild (1979, 1983) suggests that emotion work is a useful skill that helps a person to project a publicly observable image (Hochschild 1979, 1983). She was the first to coin the conceptual term ‘emotion work’, and since her seminal book, *The Managed Heart* (1983), her ideas have been used and adapted by many writers (Bolton 2005; Brook 2009; Ashkanasy et al. 2000; Mann 1999; Fineman 2000, 2008; Koster 2011; Morgan and Krone 2010; Cain 2012; Tonkens 2012; Reay 2005; Duffy et al. 2015). As I discussed in Chap. 1, emotion work may not have any obvious exchange value like emotional labour (i.e. exchanged for a wage), but it is a useful practice nonetheless that people do to oil the wheels of social relations, and adapt to situations.

Hysteresis

Another useful concept here is *hysteresis*, but to explain this succinctly I need to recap some of Bourdieu’s other conceptual tools. Bourdieu’s logic of practice (1990) and concepts of *habitus*, capital, and field (1984/2010) help to explain how a person adapts how they act, or stay the same, depending on the social space they are in. A person’s *habitus* disposes them to act a certain way at work and perhaps differently at home. According to Bourdieu (1990), being able to adapt to changes within and across different fields, and around different people, is an important factor in being able to quickly get a feel for the game and play it well. By knowing the right ways of being and doing (Bourdieu 1990; Johnson and Lawler 2005;

Lawler 1999, 2004) and having a practical mastery of the game, a person is less likely to feel like a fish out of water (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

There are moments, however, where a person's *habitus* 'misfires' (Bourdieu 2000, p. 162) which relates to a disjuncture between *habitus* and changes happening within the field. As Atkinson (2012, p. 28) writes, *hysteresis* is 'the disjunction between the objectively possible and the subjectively desired induced by rapidly changing social conditions'. To put this simply, a person might not know how to fit in—they feel out of place, and this is conceptualized as *hysteresis* (Bourdieu 1984/2010, which I discussed in more detail in Chap. 1). I am interested in how employees cope with moments of feeling out of place. That is, I want to think about how we manage 'embodied expressions of *hysteresis*' (McDonough and Polzer 2012, p. 372). This is why I draw on emotion work to help me to explain how employees manage their feelings. The management of feeling also involves being able to control how we present ourselves to others, which I turn to now in the next section.

Presentation of Self

Some people's *habitus* are a close match with the expectations and demands of their field of employment, whereas others find that there is a gulf between their *habitus* and the kind of person they are expected to be at work. To put it another way, some people can fit in at work, no problem, and others find that they sense that they don't quite fit in and this can lead to all kinds of feelings such as anxiety and stress. Working at fitting in and getting better at playing the game involves managing how we present ourselves. We may want to hide that we feel like we don't belong by working on our bodily expressions. Goffman's *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) is useful here; it is a study of the roles that people put on in certain spaces and offers an in-depth analysis of 'dramatic realisations' and how people manage impressions held by others about oneself. For instance, Goffman was particularly interested in gestures, facial expressions, props, and body language to fully understand the roundness of a performance within a given context. He shows that being able to do impression management convincingly requires putting knowledge of valued social attributes (such as gender, sexuality, class, race, and so on) into practice. He believes that we are always trying to work out whether the person we might be talking to has the right to play the role they have adopted in their performance. We also try to ascertain whether the impression we form of this particular person is reliable, trustworthy, and convincing. Goffman argued, then, that we all partake in constant re-adjustments in vital attempts to manage how we present ourselves to others. This means learning how to look good and what sounds right in a given context (Witz et al. 2003; Karlsson 2012).

Hochschild (1983) and Witz et al. (2003) all emphasize that presenting ourselves in a certain light includes managing displays of emotion. Sheane suggests that this kind of emotional and aesthetic work relies on 'social, presentational rules that are cultural, situational and learned' (2011, p. 147). Feelings then can reveal the work that goes into presenting a particular sort of self (Goffman 1959). Sheane writes that this makes these kinds of performances fragile and 'pushes us to hone our presentational skills' (2011, p. 153) and control what might be unintentionally 'given off' (2011, p. 154) to others, such as anxiety, for instance. A person may work on their presentational display, then, to conceal feelings that they would rather certain people did not see. Being able to cope with a mismatch between one's *habitus* and field and manage feelings from becoming visible to the wrong people is therefore difficult, fragile, but necessary. That is to say, if a person's lack of fit is detected by others, it could potentially threaten their position in the game. As Sheane (2011) notes from Goffman's argument, if emotion and presentational work is discovered by the other person involved in dialogue, then the individual talking 'foregoes all claims to be things he does not appear to be and hence foregoes the treatment that would be appropriate for such individuals' (Goffman 1959, p. 13 in Sheane 2011, p. 153).

Coping with *Not* Fitting in Using Emotion Work

What happens, then, if we don't fit in at work very easily? In this section, I bring the ideas of emotion work (Hochschild 1983) and presentation of self (Goffman 1959) together to help me explain how employees try to conceal moments where their *habitus* 'misfires' (Bourdieu 2000, p. 162). Discussions with employees showed that feelings of uneasiness about being in a social space can become problematic, particularly if these feelings are perceptible to certain people who are competitive about game-playing at work. Emotion work is a useful strategy, then, for concealing unwanted or intrusive feelings. This can often mean taking more care to control how our body moves or looks, as well as the facial expressions we share with others in certain spaces (Goffman 1959). This is because, as Witz et al. (2003) note, feelings are inherently bound up with our embodied *habitus* and can potentially be read by other people. It is difficult to stop our bodies betraying to others how we are feeling. Simon is someone who identifies as a *chav*, but is careful to try and make sure that this identity is concealed at work. However, he experiences ridicule and teasing at work from members of his team because he likes to listen to 'hardcore' music, which reveals his positioning outside of work as a *chav*. He laughs about this, but is also hurt about being called a 'cheap little *charver*' by his colleagues. He is aware of the negative distinctions that are attached to '*chav*s' and this has made him particularly sensitive to the symbolic codes that can reveal this devalued identity in certain spaces and particularly around certain people. In the following excerpt, Simon reveals that he does not want his boss, in particular, to see him as a '*chav*':

> I would always be concerned that she would have a bad impression. That's why, you know, if I am with all them lot, and I saw me boss, on the other side of the street, I would make a point of *not* shouting over or saying hi, [...] you wouldn't advertise what you were doing, cos of their preconceptions, cos if I am with a load of charvers—therefore I must *be* like them, I must do *bad* things, whereas, it is obviously not that way. [...] people automatically assume you're that *type* of person then you're going to do *that* type of thing. [...]
>
> (Simon, Surveyor, 31 years old, lower middle-class)

Simon knows that being seen as a '*chav*' is not a desirable identity to have around certain people like his boss. Being a *chav* around his friends is legitimate until the appearance of his boss. In this moment, his '*chav*' identity is considered ill-fitting because of the way the presence of his boss brings an overlapping of the field of employment with the field he is in with his friends. Simon is describing his anxieties if his boss mis-recognizes him as a *chav*. He has knowledge of how his '*chav*' identity might be negatively read if his boss saw him with his friends: 'an example of charvers, they're going to be vandalising, taking drugs, drinking, loud music, that sort of thing' (Simon), so he tells me about how he would purposely conceal himself so that he would *not* be recognized. Simon finds that concealing himself from his boss outside of work is a useful tactic, and easier than having to manage how he presents himself to both his boss and friends at the same time. It is quite possible that Simon opts for this strategy when he is with his friends because he does not have certain props at his disposal (like his suit, computer, altered accent—see Addison and Mountford 2015) to help him to put on a convincing performance of a 'self' that Simon thinks his boss will value. It is also likely that he wants to conceal himself from his boss rather than run the risk that his friends would undermine or ridicule his performance should he attempt to present himself in a favourable light to his boss.

Simon also believes that his boss would be shocked if she saw him being a *chav*: 'She'll probably be thinking I've vandalised a bus stop or something [laughs]'. I ask Simon how he might feel if his boss did see him with his friends in this situation:

> **M: So say, you did run in to your boss and you were with your friends, how would you be feeling?**
>
> S: Erm, probably panic that she's gonna think bad of me, that whatever you do outside of work is going to have an effect inside of work [...]. You're expected to be a certain way ... like, you're supposed to act a certain way at work, speak moderately and properly.
>
> (Simon, Surveyor, 31 years old, lower middle-class)

For Simon, looking and acting like a *chav* around his friends is totally acceptable, but the possibility of being recognized with this identity by his boss changes the situation and Simon's behaviour. In the above example, Simon is describing being on the verge of *hysteresis*. This worry about being suddenly out of place as a *chav* around his boss emerges from the impending disruption to the '*relationship between* habitus *and the field structures*' (Hardy 2008, p. 134) positioning Simon. He tells me that he would panic about how, on being discovered by his boss, his positioning in the game at work might be affected. Simon's discussions give us an insight into the dynamics of the game and the impetus to control and manage our embodied *habitus*, including feelings, at work. So, for instance, Simon says: 'You start worrying straight away about what else there was that er ... might sorta give you away'. Simon goes on to talk specifically about working on his embodied *habitus* so that he is closer to what is 'acceptable' at work.

> Depending on your background, you can be further away from what is acceptable. You can be nearer or further away from what is accepted as the professional approach. Like *us* with our accents, we have got to *try* a lot more, to make them *fit*.
>
> (Simon, Surveyor, 31 years old, lower middle-class)

Simon's discussions here show the effort that he invests in trying to fit in with the conditions of the field in his workplace. He seems aware of an 'ideal' identity in this field that he has to work hard to try and emulate by presenting himself in a particular way. He does this by changing his accent (see Addison and Mountford 2015; Loveday 2015), as he senses that his local accent impacts on how people see him in a negative way, and by concealing from certain people that he identifies as a *chav*. This conversation with Simon indicates that he draws upon emotion work to fit in and to secure his position as someone who *belongs* here at work. In critical moments when he feels panicked about being seen as a *chav*, he knows he cannot show this 'embodied expression[s] of *hysteresis*' (McDonough and Polzer 2012, p. 372), because this could reveal to others that he has to continually make an effort to fit in and adjust at work. Simon is using emotion work here to hide what he sees as wrong emotions, and to project the right ones. Or, to put it another way, emotion work is a skill that Simon uses to try and work on the *habitus* and to prevent his bodily dispositions from betraying how he feels to others at work. As such, this involves trying to control and limit how feeling out of place might potentially, as he puts it, 'give him away'.

More effort to do emotion work is needed from some individuals than others to try and fit in. For instance, Tracy (2005) suggests that those with less power than others in an organization because of their lower status will experience greater frustrations arising out of doing emotion work. That is, they have less power to negotiate the emotion work that is expected from them. She conducted qualitative research in the USA, including observations and 22 in-depth interviews, with correctional officers (i.e. jail wardens), and found that the ease with which a person is able to do emotion management depends on 'resources of power, opportunities for interaction with like others, and societal discourse that define some jobs and *aspects of identity as more valuable than others*' (italics my emphasis, Tracy 2005, p. 280).

Tracy (2005, p. 279) also makes an interesting suggestion that emotion management (particularly emotional labour[1]) seems to be less exhausting for a person if they have space to let off steam and be 'themselves' at points during their working day. Though, for Simon, he seems most comfortable letting off steam when he is outside of work rather than during his working day. He talks about socializing with colleagues in a bar and how in these moments he seems able to relax. Simon is able to relax how much emotion work he does because the field has overlapped with a leisure space and he no longer feels as governed by workplace structures. That said, Simon still worries about how he behaves around colleagues even outside of the workplace: 'I take the piss a lot […], sometimes I am concerned that I go a bit far, especially when I have had a few drinks, you know' (Simon). In this situation, having a few drinks makes Simon less in control of himself and able to do emotion work. This could prove problematic for him when he has to return to work. It is tricky, then, to know just *how much* we can relax emotion and presentation work around people we work with when we are still positioned by the structures organizing the field of employment. So, it is not a particularly straightforward recommendation that Tracy makes when she suggests that organizations make space for employees to be themselves—this would require a revaluing of certain aspects of identity, as well as fundamental changes to the field. Implementing this approach that Tracy recommends seems to be a particularly difficult task. For instance, it is unclear how much space the people in this field of employment in Higher Education, for example, would be prepared to make for Simon to take up an identity as a '*chav*' when this practice could potentially impact on the image of the organization and weaken its position compared to global competitors (who might purposely exclude aspects of this unvalued identity from the workplace). It would seem, then, that Simon is going to need to use emotion work to cope with a mismatch between his *habitus* and the field until such time that his identity as a '*chav*' becomes more acceptable in this kind of workplace. Only then does it seem conceivable that he can then relax the emotion work he does.

Looking at other examples of emotion work, then, the following discussion with Tony reveals an insight into *what* emotion work is for him. Tony describes himself as quite an introverted person who found his promotion to Dean at work very stressful, because he felt like a fish out of water—that is, he did not have knowledge or experience of how the game is to be played at this level of seniority. It was not the job specification that Tony seemed to have trouble with, rather, it seemed to be connected with how to 'embody' and present himself as a Dean. Tony senses that being a Dean involves being a particular kind of person at work. He feels very unsure about what this involves and talks about how he manages these feelings that arise out of his uncertainty. So, for instance, he told me about how he would do work to present himself a certain way so that he could trick others into thinking he was confident whilst concealing that he felt 'terrified' in certain situations.

> T: You have to develop … in a sense it is a *confidence* trick, kind of. You have to develop that air of confidence and command. […] confidence is a sort of a funny thing I think. But er, I feel quite sort of bi-modal in terms of confidence. I am quite unconfident in new situations. When I first got to be the Dean I was *so* terrified at the first teaching and learning committee meeting I could hardly talk if someone asked me to do it. […]
>
> **M: So in that meeting, how did you overcome the fears that you were experiencing?**
>
> T: I am not sure I *did*! […] you know, the titles all sound scary, you look around the room and you have got the PVC and the Dean of that and the Head of the service and you think 'Oh *God*!
>
> (Tony, Dean of School, 48 years old, middle-class)

Tony is so struck at first by his new position in the field when he is first appointed as the Dean that he is almost paralysed in some of his interactions with other colleagues for fear of getting it wrong. He indicates that he is doing emotion work to manage his fears that are attached to critical moments of being out of place or out of sync with the field. He emphasizes that the different titles of his colleagues are scary and intimidating, which reveals a background tension and fear of getting his performance wrong in front of such people. Andres (2009) writes about this and how people become very sensitive to potential negative sanctions to their behaviour in situations that are alien to them. Tony says later to me, 'What if I make a mistake?! They are all … making notes, and they will be complaining to so and so'. This fear makes his confidence trick a useful and perhaps necessary performance that is made part of the job of being a 'Dean'.

To put on this kind of performance, Tony combines presentational skill (i.e. controls bodily movements) with emotion work (management of anxiety). Using emotion work helps Tony to present what seems to be a convincing performance of a Dean to his colleagues. It is possible Tony will need to continue drawing on both emotion work and presentational skills until such times that he overcomes feelings of being out of place and acquires a practical mastery of the game (Bourdieu 1990). When this feel for the game happens, he will *know* how to embody a Dean without having to think about it. He will have adapted to the game by internalizing the structures of the field as part of his *habitus*.

Tony also describes other senior colleagues that he attends meetings with:

> They will all be very macho and aggressive and all of that stuff!
>
> (Tony, Dean of School, 48 years old, middle-class)

Tony is talking about how he perceives others to be at this senior level, and, it seems, that this way of doing and being also intimidates him. Perhaps it is being around people like this that impacts on Tony's ability to fit in, in this space. It appears as though his own *habitus* is further away from what he senses is the legitimated 'ideal' for someone in this level of seniority in this field and it is this gap that makes him uneasy. Later in the discussion, I asked Tony whether he felt that his other colleagues could tell how he was feeling in that meeting and he replies with, 'Probably'. I then asked if he tried to hide his anxieties and he says, 'Obviously you *do* try and hide it. Yeah' (Tony). Hiding these feelings would be very important if Tony is to convince his colleagues that he fits in and can be a certain kind of 'confident/macho' Dean.

Trying to fit in at work can be frustrating. Emotion work is an essential resource to some people for this reason. In the following excerpt, Lisa talks about working on her feelings of anger and frustration. She is relatively new to this workplace and finds herself in a particularly male-dominated field. She describes herself as a quiet and conscientious worker. She does not like to socialize much with other colleagues (who are mostly male), because she does not feel comfortable being the only woman amongst a group of men outside of work. In her discussion below, she talks about the deeply embedded gendered expectations people have of 'engineers' in this workplace and how she hides her frustrations at this. This is exemplified after only a few weeks in her job, when a female client addresses her male colleague because she has wrongly assumed he is the engineer:

> L: … so I turned up she walked straight past me and talked to Rob instead, and I was like '*Right*, erm, *okay* then!!' [laughs] I was like '*I* was the one who *rang* you!' […] Sometimes I think you automatically just think 'well I need to talk to the engineer so it must be that guy over there', so that's one of the things but you cannot really take it to heart. […]
>
> **M: How did that make you feel?**
>
> L: Well, I had only been in the job a couple of weeks so I was very frustrated and a bit *angry* at it, but then I realised that it probably wasn't her fault, and I will probably come across this quite a bit, so I was just … kind of just kind of *have* to take it. And note to self 'Don't get angry about it cos it's gonna happen! […]

> **M: So you were angry then, did you show that?**
>
> L: No. […] I kind of let it be and just let him get on with it.
>
> (Lisa, Engineer, 25 years old, unsure of class position)

Lisa seems to establish very quickly that she is now working in an environment where people hold particularly gendered expectations of what an Engineer will be like, and *who* exactly will do this type of job. She discovers that her own embodiment, as a woman, does not match the way this field is structured and organized—people do not expect that she is the Engineer. This is a frustrating situation for Lisa, as it prevents her from getting on and doing her job, so she has to find a way to cope. Lisa's discussions indicate that she adapts to the mismatch that is set up between her *habitus* and field by managing her emotions and trying to be patient. Lisa shows that she gives herself frequent reminders not to take these slights personally (or to 'heart') as a way of distancing herself from the situation. For instance, in the next excerpt, Lisa is more explicit about the frequency of these kinds of gendered encounters and her feelings about them:

> See it has happened for a while … I don't really know what I do, you just kind of *have* to let it go … listen to the conversation that they are having talking to the *guy* and sort of answer their questions even though they are not erm talking to you directly. Erm, that's the only way around it. But it has happened that much … […] so they don't understand it, they think it's a guy's job, so they go up to the men.
>
> (Lisa, Engineer, 25 years old, unsure of class position)

She seems to accept that this kind of gendered logic at work will continue to structure her interactions with others in the future, so finding a way to cope with her own frustrations in these critical moments is an important part of survival in the game. She seems to resign herself to the way the game is played and lets her male colleague try and answer the questions that the female client should have been directing at her as the Engineer. This could be described as a form of symbolic violence. Symbolic violence occurs with the collusion of the dominated, but it remains hidden through acts of misrecognition. As Bourdieu writes,

> Symbolic violence, gentle, invisible violence, unrecognised as such, chosen as much as undergone, that of trust, obligation, personal loyalty […] presents itself as the most economical mode of domination because it best corresponds with the economy of the system. (1990, p. 127)

The gendered domination Lisa experiences could not be preserved in this workplace without the addition of symbolic violence. Lisa is complicit in these acts of symbolic violence despite having a raised awareness. Bourdieu writes that ‘symbolic violence, a misrecognised and thus recognised violence, is held in check by the awakening of awareness […] which deprives the dominant of part of their symbolic strength by sweeping away misrecognition’ (1990, p. 303). But Lisa’s discussions indicate that she does recognize the gendered domination that happens at work, but says, ‘[I] just kind of *have* to take it’. Perhaps this is because she feels she does not have the ability to change the gendered structure of the field on her own, but she still needs to find a way to do her job effectively and earn a wage. This is very frustrating for her. She finds a way to adapt her own *habitus* to fit in with the legitimate culture and she tries to accept the symbolic violence. It could be said, then, that emotion work becomes part of her job as a device that helps her cope with symbolic violence and get on and *do* her job.

Powell and Sang (2015) also explored moments of symbolic violence present in women-engineering students’ accounts of their everyday experiences of working in a male-dominated field. Like Lisa in my own study, these women in Powell and Sang’s study experienced everyday sexism as a matter of course, and accepted these subtle expressions of sexism and gender inequality as simply humour, or demonstrations of ‘naturalised’ differences (Powell and Sang 2015). They write that ‘Indeed, its routineness, or everyday nature, has rendered this sexism largely invisible for younger women’ (Powell and Sang 2015, p. 931).

Moving on to emotion work—it is a practice that has many uses and applications, but what I have focused on so far is how it is used by co-workers in everyday situations at work. The idea that emotion work is an important resource in everyday interactions at work is captured in Rebecca’s discussion below, where she implies that she is managing her emotions and how she presents herself almost all of the time at work:

> I think most of us are different at work to how we are at home. It’s different. You’ve got a different persona at work. And sometimes if your friends saw you at work, they wouldn’t recognise you!
>
> (Rebecca, Senior Administrator, 59 years old, working-class)

Rebecca highlights the centrality of emotion work in being able to adapt to the conditions of the field at work—she knows she is not the same at work as she is at home. Being able to adapt is central to her *habitus* and how she fits in, in different spaces. This is similar to the findings from Reay et al.'s (2009) study of working-class students in a middle-class Higher Education Institution. Reay et al. argue that these students were able to become *Strangers in Paradise*, the title of their paper, because they had learnt to move within and across different fields, adjusting their *habituses* to try and fit in as best they could. Adkins (2002a, b) highlights that this is not an easy thing for certain people to do who find that they do not possess certain valued capitals, like education capital, to help support their adjustments to the field. The students in Reay et al.'s (2009) study all demonstrated high combinations of education capital that helped them to find a way to belong in school and higher education, despite these people saying that they felt like outsiders at certain points for reasons to do with class. What Adkins (2002a) is concerned with here, however, is that some people are read as being without value and so are unable to move so easily within and across different fields (see also Evans 2010; Reay 2012a).

I want to emphasize Adkins' point (2002a) that adapting isn't easy, especially if, like Simon who I discussed earlier, we feel further away from what is perceived as an *acceptable* or valued identity at work. For Rebecca, doing work to present herself in a certain way, and adapt to fit in, becomes more familiar to her over time:

> I wouldn't say it was *easy*, but that I have learnt how to do it. It has become easier. Probably not always easy […] it's kind of *part* of the job […] Even though inside you might be feeling *wracked!* And you know, beating yourself up for feeling it! I'm not going to show them that!
>
> (Rebecca, Senior Administrator, 59 years old, working-class)

Rebecca's discussions show that she sees working on and adapting her self as 'part of the job'. This is a key aspect of being a particular kind of worker in HE—that is, someone who is able to do emotion work and work on the self to fit in. Not everyone finds this an easy or straightforward thing to do as part of his or her job. As I have shown in Chaps. 5 and 6, adapting and fitting in is made possible by knowing how value is coded and how to use it. This kind of coded knowledge of how to be at work could potentially act as an exclusionary mechanism, separating those in the *know* from those who don't, and therefore preventing some people from legitimately fitting in. I would add to this, based on my discussions in this chapter, that emotion work is a crucial device that enables people to adapt to situations and cope with feelings that relate to being out of place or not knowing the right way to be at work. I now want to look at some examples where participants found it difficult to fit in at work, and how emotion work was not seen as a resource they could draw upon to help them to adapt.

The Limits of Fitting In and Emotion Work

In some cases, some participants talked about how they do not find it easy to conceal from others that they feel out of place. They either do not know how to do the emotion work that would transform or conceal their feelings, or they are unable or unwilling to adapt to the field that they are in. One of these moments is captured below in a discussion between Rachel and Sarah. Rachel and Sarah talk a lot about class distinctions in the workplace in their conversation, and this developed into a discussion about how class makes them feel in certain situations and around certain people. They both say that they are proud to be working-class, but they also know that this identity does not carry a lot of social or cultural value in certain situations at work for them. They know that class signifiers, like their accents, are coded and 'read' in certain ways, and this knowingness impacts on their sense of fitting in. Sarah and Rachel talk about one of these experiences in a meeting here. Sarah in particular is not able to put what happens to her or how she feels into words as such—she simply describes it as feeling '*uh*':

> Sarah: You know, they're like *plummie*, and you feel like you're 'uh', and you try your best to speak … *properly*, but I mean you are the way you *are*, and sometimes that makes you feel 'uhh'
>
> Rachel: See I think my accent makes me feel like that
>
> Sarah: Oh no, yours is nice.
>
> Rachel: It might to you, but it doesn't to me, you know? To me this is a working-class [Scottish] accent, you know? To you, maybe not, but it is to me. So … they make me feel nervous at times when people go on like that, therefore I might have a valid point, even a good idea but because I am nervous I am reluctant to come out with it, it can hold you back.
>
> (Sarah, Cleaning Supervisor, 48 years old, working-class, and Rachel, Cleaning Supervisor, 55 years old, working-class)

Sarah and Rachel make sense of the situation in the meeting by drawing on their knowledge about class. Accents in particular are translated into symbolic value—so, for them, being around people in the meeting who have a *plummie* accent affects their own behaviour and ability to feel that they fit in. Sarah talks about trying to adapt to the conditions of the field structuring the meeting by putting a lot of effort into speaking properly. Doing this presentation work makes Sarah feel uneasy and she goes on to say: '*me* being brought up *Geordie* I think it always makes you *sound* … *lower* than them' (Sarah). Rachel agrees that her own accent can make her feel like she is apprehensive in these situations. They both seem to sense that they should be different and that their *habituses* mark them out as 'ill-fitting' in their workplace. This is a point where their *habituses* misfire and they are at a loss about how to cope with their feelings of anxiety (Addison and Mountford 2015).

Feeling unsettled like this, because of embodiments of class, means that Rachel in particular opts to forego her participation in the game-playing, and so misses out and is missed out during meetings described in the above excerpt. Rather than using emotion work to present her self in a certain light, she 'holds back' or 'withdraws' as a way of coping with how she feels. This means she is able to avoid doing classed presentation work on her self to try to better fit the field.

Sarah explains further that she senses that she is read as inferior to her colleagues for reasons to do with class:

> Rachel and I, we go into meetings, I think we *feel* like they think they're better than us, certain meetings you go to, maybe with Heads of Departments, you feel like you're beneath them
>
> (Sarah, Cleaning Supervisor, 48 years old, working-class)

At this point in discussions with other participants, people have usually talked about hiding their feelings of being out of place so that they can continue participating in the game. This is when emotion work is vital. However, like Rachel, Sarah's discussions show that she doesn't adapt to the field well in this situation either. When I probed further about what Rachel and Sarah do when they feel like a fish out of water they say:

> Rachel: I withdraw, I'm not getting across what I *should* be getting across
>
> Sarah: You don't feel equal

> Rachel: … I don't feel like I have the confidence to do it. You know? If I had a meeting where it was just all working-class people I can express myself and I don't have a problem. But once people start speaking to me with that *plummie* voice, and looking down on me, I tend to lose my confidence.
>
> Sarah: It makes you withdraw more, doesn't it?
>
> (Sarah, Cleaning Supervisor, 48 years old, working-class, and Rachel, Cleaning Supervisor, 55 years old, working-class)

Sarah and Rachel were interviewed together, so it is possible that they are saying different things to the other interviewees because they are influencing each other's perspective and neither wants to be seen as more skilled in these situations than the other one. On the other hand, it may be that they feel more comfortable and reassured because of each other's presence to be more candid with how they feel in meetings about their class position. The latter seems more likely, since their discussions point to moments where they both feel overcome by feelings of uneasiness for reasons to do with their class. These women both shared with me a sense that they do not quite fit in during these kinds of meetings, and they were able to demonstrate an awareness of being seen as out of place with what others are like during these interactions. The point I am making is that, instead of trying to match the field and play the game and use emotion work to help them, they seem to recognize the limits imposed on their ability to fit in. They believe that they cannot escape their own embodiment, or how it is read in classed terms, even if they tried. So, it seems, they suffer the pains of symbolic violence without trying to resist it or circumvent it if they were to use emotion work.

Rachel notices when other people who appear very similar to her in classed terms change their behaviour and play a particular sort of game around certain people and in certain spaces. She mentions a colleague called Laura here who performs a classed presentation of self in particular places at work:

> I'll just mention Laura, she's a nice enough lass, but at times she *does*, doesn't she? I mean I would class her as working-class cos she comes across as *working-class*, but when you're in a meeting with her, she tries to erm, to er act like she's upper class. She forgets … you know, and I am sitting here thinking '*you* are forgetting … you are *forgetting* where you come from!' You know?
>
> (Rachel, Cleaning Supervisor, 55 years old, working-class)

Rachel feels that her colleague changes to become more ‘upper class’ in certain situations—it appears as though what Laura is doing is adapting to the conditions of the field and working on her presentation of self. To Rachel, working on the self in this way to perform desirable aspects of an ‘upper class’ identity is an example of Laura ‘forgetting’ her history. Rachel recognizes that Laura presents herself in different ways at work. Yet, Rachel does not play the game at work like this and instead seems to situate herself as fixed with a working-class *habitus* in a more middle-class field. Adapting to the objective structures of different classed fields does not seem to be part of Rachel’s *habitus*, so she suffers when she senses she does not fit in at work.

It is certainly possible that Rachel and Sarah do not always know the right ways of being and doing (Bourdieu 1986) in certain situations at work. Their discussions also show, in my view, that they do not seem to ‘recognise the value of new positions’ (McDonough and Polzer 2012, p. 362). It is possible they do not try to fit in, in these particular situations because, to them, performing a more middle-class self would not be convincing to others. They seem to have a sense of how their position in the field is located in class terms and subsequently how this limits how they can present themselves. For instance, their discussions repeatedly returned to their accent and how they sense that it acts as a conductor of devalued aspects of working-classness at work (Addison and Mountford 2015; Loveday 2015). Feeling fixed like this within a classificatory logic at work makes work on the self seem unconvincing and a fruitless effort.

Whilst some people are able to adapt to changing structures as I discussed in the previous section, and as Reay et al.’s (2009) research shows, McDonough and Polzer (2012) draw attention to how, for some people, the *habitus* reproduces the conditions that shaped it and can actually inhibit adaptation to new fields: as they say, ‘Because the habitus has a degree of inertia or a spontaneous tendency to reproduce itself and, thus, perpetuate the objective structures that produced it, some agents may have difficulty generating practices that correspond with the new order’ (2012, p. 362).

This feeling of inertia is present in Rachel and Sarah’s discussions. Their conversations indicate that they feel uneasy in certain spaces at work because of a mismatch between their *habitus* and the field of employment. In moments of *hysteresis*, Bourdieu writes that ‘dispositions become dysfunctional and the efforts they make to perpetuate them help to plunge them deeper into failure’ (Bourdieu 2000, p. 161 in McDonough and Polzer 2012, p. 362). Both Sarah and Rachel retain their working-class *habitus*, and in doing so appear to endure the symbolic violence done to them at work for reasons to do with class until they can exit the field to one that better fits their *habitus* and is more familiar to them. Atkinson (2012) writes that this symbolic violence is what 'accompanies the surrendering of the means of attaining, in however limited a way, the forms of recognition legitimated by those with the power to legitimate' (2012, p. 29). Like the participants in Atkinson's (2012) study, Rachel and Sarah do perceive their situation to be shaped by class, but their capacity to resist is constrained by the need to keep their jobs. My discussion of Rachel and Sarah above contrasts the findings from Reay et al.'s (2009) study, where the working-class undergraduate students they spoke to demonstrated a capacity to adapt to the new class conditions in an elite university. However, Reay (2012b, p. 43) also writes how some students are cast as 'inadequate neoliberal subjects' if they are deemed incapable of playing the game in education. These students do not fit in with the game and are framed by those in a dominant position as 'lacking both initiative and enterprise' (2012b, p. 43). She argues that the game rewards the 'strategic, those who can operate as good neoliberal subjects' (2012b, p. 43).

Whilst some of the employees I spoke to demonstrated a capacity to be able to adapt at work by drawing on emotion work, this section shows that some people like Rachel and Sarah find this difficult. However, I have tried to emphasize then that some employees find it challenging to fit in at work and play the game, and that emotion work is not seen as a useful resource that they can draw upon to help them to adapt. Instead, withdrawing from game-playing and, as Atkinson notes, 'surrendering the means of attaining […] recognition' (2012, p. 29) seems a better strategy to these people.

'Letting Off Steam'

A number of participants in my research talked about letting off steam as a way of relieving some of the tension they experienced at work arising from emotion management, and this has some resonance with Tracy's (2005) research and arguments. Letting off steam serves a very useful function, because it enables us to verify our expectations of a situation and the people involved, and to show feelings that might otherwise be concealed: 'I asked around you know, 'What should I do about this?' […] I just thought 'I'm not paid enough to worry enough to worry about this' (Leah). A number of participants talked about being cautious about venting and letting off steam at work. These people felt that they had to be particularly alert to who was around them in social space before showing certain emotional displays. This need for self-control over emotional expression was not perceived by some to apply to particular people. For example, Maggie tells me about her boss who is very senior within the organization—she says that she thinks he has a right to let off steam:

> That's just him letting off steam, and I think people […] should realise that he is entitled to do that, really, with the job he has got really. In fact they should be *pleased* that he does that, that he feels that he can do that in front of people.
>
> (Maggie, Administrative Officer, 55 years old, working-class)

This is contrasted with her own perceived requirement for self-control at work when I asked her if she felt she could let off steam in a similar way.

> Shouting and letting off steam? No. I just wouldn't do it. Here we go … you see I don't think it is appropriate. *I* wouldn't do it. Erm, I wouldn't do it so that other people could *hear*, I would do it so that maybe my line manager, or immediate close circle of people could hear but I wouldn't do it so that the whole of the floor could hear. I wouldn't do it so other sections on the floor could hear.
>
> (Maggie, Administrative Officer, 55 years old, working-class)

So, whilst having space to vent and reveal frustrations experienced at work is permissible for certain people like Maggie's boss, she herself is aware that there are different structures within the field that position her and govern her behaviour, thus necessitating emotion work. Maggie is aware of timing, position-taking, place, and the people around her before she would share her own feelings that could potentially reveal things about herself that she wants to keep hidden. This suggests that she is doing emotion work until the timing and the people around her are 'right' and it becomes her turn to vent. Her reasons for doing emotion work of this kind may be to do with her lower status within the hierarchy at work, which do not permit her such freedoms of emotional display equal to her boss. She has less power than her boss to be able to vent her own frustrations indiscriminately. McDonough and Polzer (2012) note how Bourdieu (1990) says that people are positioned differently according to the field of power, and that this organizes work relations. The authors go on to write that 'the position-takings that emerge in a shifting organisational context reflect the tacit calculation of what is possible (or not) for agents who occupy specific locations in the stratified social order' (2012, p. 359). Having more power in the social order seems to afford a person greater flexibility to negotiate their position-taking at work. I think this can be related to how these employees talked about letting off steam—it seemed that for some they were aware that it was not their place to vent, but to endure the venting from others. This is evident in Ian's discussions below, where he talks about finding ways to cope when a particular academic lets off steam around him:

> I: There's a lot of times when you go in and you know what he [the academic] is going to say so I will jot a few notes down and tick them off as he is rollicking through them—it's like *bullshit* bingo isn't? [laughs]
>
> **M: You seem quite almost amused by the venting, am I right?**
>
> I: Yeah [...] You get to realise what some academics are like [...] when I first came here, when I was a lot younger, er, they used to ... I'd go to meetings and the academics would have a *vent* at you, you would feel as though they are having a go at you, but that's not what they are doing, they are venting just for the sake of venting, trying to get things off their chest. And it's not directly aimed at you, it's aimed at ... different things, which is stressful ... I mean once you kind of realise that you can cope with it. You can't take it *personally*. It's harder to take something when you think it *is* a personal attack, but I realise that it isn't a personal attack.
>
> (Ian, Surveyor, 31 years old, middle-class)

Ian jokes about how particular academics vent. This joking seems to help him to readdress the power imbalance between himself and the academic, and to take the sting out of the encounter. He turns the interactions into a game to make them bearable, whilst also dismissing a lot of the substance of the venting as 'bullshit'. Ian does emotion work here in the form of managing *others*. He puts his own feelings to one side to deal with 'difficult people'. He was not always able to do this kind of emotion management, and he shares a past experience with me where he ended up falling out with another academic over the work that was scheduled to create disabled access into a university building. The academic felt he had not been informed of this work taking place and insisted on meeting with Ian several times to complain. Ian shares how he felt during these meetings:

> I: It upset me actually, yeah, it *upset* me. I thought '*Christ!* I am not doing this to *piss* you off, I am doing this to try and *help* you!' [...]

> **M: How did you deal with him when he said what he did?**
>
> I: Not very well, not very well. I kind of didn't *know* how to deal with him […] I tried to speak to him and he didn't want to listen, what more could I do? […]
>
> **M: Sounds like the way you respond to these people has changed though?**
>
> I: Oh yeah. Ah yeah … cos you kind of … it's experience though, isn't it? The more experience you get the better you become. Especially with dealing with *difficult people*.
>
> (Ian, Surveyor, 31 years old, middle-class)

Ian's discussions indicate that he believes he does not have the same freedoms as academics to vent—instead, he has to do work to present himself in a certain light and manage the emotions from difficult people. He does not always feel permitted to behave in the same way as the academics in these situations or to show his own frustrations. Ian rationalizes that the venting from academics is not a personal attack and finds that the best way to deal with it is to simply endure it until it is over; for instance, he says about one male academic: 'he likes to *vent* basically, you'll let him vent at the start of the meeting and he'll go on for like 10 minutes about random stuff […] It's finding ways of dealing with people. I find that the hardest thing' (Ian). Doing this kind of work, that is, enduring someone else's emotional venting, was not something Ian found easy to do when he first started here. However, he now finds that he has a better feel for the game and more experience in how to manage the emotional outbursts from these academics he speaks of. That said, he also tells me that he does not always endure the venting from some academics and will sometimes tell them that they are wrong:

> If I think a client or customer is wrong … well … I will tell him he is wrong, and sometimes I don't make things easy for myself by doing that. Some of my colleagues aren't perhaps as arsey, they'll be like whatever the customer wants they will give them.
>
> (Ian, Surveyor, 31 years old, middle-class)

Ian knows that he could make things easier for himself by accepting the venting from particular dominating academics (whom he interchangeably refers to as clients) and resorting to giving them what they want from the meeting. The above quote shows that Ian seems to resist these unequal exchanges on occasions by asserting his viewpoint. This is despite knowing that this could cause further friction between himself and the more dominating academic/client. Perhaps this is his way of readdressing the power imbalance in these interactions and rebuffing his role as an emotion manager of others.

Elsewhere, Leah talks about having to present herself in a certain way at work around colleagues and clients:

> It is a performance, you have to sparkle as best you can. You have to be breezy, interested, because, I *suppose* you never know *who* is going to have some information of value […] I will almost put on a *face*, when you got to the door you think 'Right, big breath, here we go,' open the door and then it's [high pitched and cheery] '*Hello!*' [laughs]
>
> (Leah, Funding Manager, 56 years old, working-class)

Leah tells me that presenting herself in a particular way is tiring, but she manages to cover over any of her feelings that may jeopardize her social position and reveal her presentation work:

> I become someone who *appears* very confident, um […] but underneath I might be thinking *Urggh, don't ask me that so and so cos I don't know*. […] I have to give them confidence that I am worth talking to.
>
> (Leah, Funding Manager, 56 years old, working-class)

Like Rebecca who I talked about in the first section, Leah is also talking about how emotion work helps her to present herself in a certain way at work and fit in. It is a practice she talks about as part of her job and an important factor in playing the game well. But, to be able to do all of this presentation work and to make emotion management convincing, Leah's further discussions indicate the value in having an opportunity to engage in venting oneself:

> Being able to discuss it with colleagues is a huge … it's like a pressure cooker you know? It would be really tough if I was in an environment where there was no one to kind of share, the stupidities, the irritations, the *rudeness*, sometimes. So the unreasonableness you know, 'I've got to submit this brief in 15 minutes, can you read it?' Yeah, we do get that! So erm I suppose we manage it by sounding off to one another and having a laugh. And sometimes it happens to my colleagues they are perhaps upset about something,

> or angry, or just frustrated, so talking it through with colleagues and trying to help them put it in perspective or suggest, you know … we suggest *possible* actions to one another. 'Why don't you have a quiet word with so and so?' So that's a way of managing emotions, amongst us.
>
> (Leah, Funding Manager, 56 years old, working-class)

Talking to trusted colleagues is an invaluable way to ease the tensions that result from doing emotion work and presenting the self in a particular light. Tensions arise out of putting on a performance of a particular kind of person at work. Leah describes that she is able to take her turn to talk more openly about her frustrations and concealed feelings with the right people. Tracy (2005) suggests that emotion management is eased when there is more opportunity to seek support from similar colleagues who create a 'safe' space to let off steam. Leah's close colleagues are able to demonstrate, through their social support, that her feelings do matter and she does not need to do as much emotion work around them to conceal feelings that might reveal too much about her. Ascertaining whether to vent, or not, is a complex negotiation at work and is based on a trust that the other person will not judge oneself negatively. For some people at work, they can afford to vent more freely and simply disregard the negative judgements that may arise from this, whereas for most participants in my study, they were particularly cautious about revealing their feelings and letting off steam in the right place and around the right people. Letting off steam also means that we are able to relinquish some control over how we present our selves, without fear of judgments. Because, often, we manage our presentation of self to project what we know to be a valued professional image, and the danger that comes with letting off steam is that it can damage this image we want others to have of us. This is often why many people are particularly cautious about who they 'let off steam' in front of.

Even talking about feelings at work can be difficult for some people, as they do not want to risk opening up in the wrong place or around the wrong people and attract negative judgements. In the following discussion with Lucy, she talks about being careful about when and where she chooses to open up about her feelings about work:

> I would say I manage my emotions in the workplace—with colleagues and students […] I probably talk to other *friends* or people outside of the imme-

> diate work space about it, so, it's not so much not feeling or talking about them, it's trying to *choose* the time and space.
>
> (Lucy, Lecturer, 32 years old, middle-class)

Lucy experienced a lot of emotional upheaval when she first started to work in this department as a Lecturer. She observed a lot of conflict between co-workers and noticed that some of her colleagues were trying to persuade her to take sides during these troubled times. Being witness to these practices as a new person in the department seemed to have the effect of making her want to withdraw from communicating with any of her colleagues beyond what was necessary for her to fulfil the duties of her role. Lucy is particularly conscious of field structures in her discussion above and indicates that she is more comfortable talking about her feelings outside of work. This suggests that, whilst having someone to talk to about feelings that are generated at work is a useful way to relieve tension, it is sometimes a 'safer' option to not do emotion work until one has left the field and can talk with trusted friends. For Lucy, it seems as though she is reluctant to let her guard down at work. She cannot necessarily afford to incur any sanctions should she share too much of what she is thinking or feeling, never mind let off steam like some of her colleagues. So it seems that she prefers, instead, to manage this risk by managing any emotions she feels that might arise out of difficulties at work. It is not possible to know what this mentally or physically costs Lucy to maintain this level of emotion work at work.

So, for every person letting off steam, it is likely that there is another person who is doing the listening and probably emotion work of their own. These people play their part in the game until such times that it becomes their turn to vent or just talk about their feelings. It seems a fair bargain, then, that Tracy (2005) argues for—in exchange for emotion work that employees have to perform most of the time, they should at least have a way to let off steam on occasions at work.

Conclusions

This chapter has indicated how emotion work is a common practice in the workplace and is used to help people to fit in, in certain spaces and around others. Emotion work, whilst it has many applications, can help a person to conceal that they feel like they don't fit in at work so that they can carry on playing the game. I have tried to develop the concept of emotion work in this chapter by suggesting that it is a vital resource that is used in the workplace by employees to: (1) Help them cope with a mismatch between *habitus* and field; (2) To present the self in a certain way; and (3) To try and fit in with organizational expectations. I hope I have also shown that, for a number of these employees, doing emotion work is seen as part of the job.

Throughout this book, I have been interested in aspects of fitting in and so, to continue this theme, I specifically looked at some examples in this chapter of how employees felt as though they did not fit in at work for reasons to do with class and gender. Of course, I acknowledge that there are numerous reasons why a person may not feel as though they fit in. What I hope I have shown, though, is class and gender *matters* when it comes to fitting in at work, and emotion work is a vital resource that employees draw upon to try and match the field they are in.

I also considered what happens in terms of emotion work when some people at work do not know 'the right ways of being and doing' (Bourdieu 1986, p. 511) at work and are unable, or unwilling, to draw on emotion work to help them to fit in. For people like Rachel and Sarah, withdrawing or 'holding back' from participation in the game at work was their strategy when they felt out of place. Being out of place, for reasons to do with class for example, can be a painful experience, especially when leaving the field is not an option. If a person is unable to adapt to the field or exit it, then the pains of symbolic violence come to be endured as part of the job.

Finally, I also discussed how being able to let off steam was important to employees to relieve the pressures of emotion work. I agreed with Tracy (2005) that having space to let off steam at work, without worrying about judgements or doing emotion work, is invaluable to employees. However, disparities of power to do with hierarchical position or social position mean that some people have more freedom than others to vent their frustrations at work. For every person who was venting, it seems there was another person listening and doing emotion work themselves. Some people then seemed to have fewer outlets than others to relax and ease the tensions that are felt by doing emotion work.

NOTE

1. That is, management of emotion that is exchanged for a wage.

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CHAPTER 8

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter draws together the arguments that have been made throughout this book. My aim has been to show that class and gender identities matter, and knowledge of what aspects have value attached (Skeggs 2011, 2004a; Bourdieu 1983), or not, shape the way that games are played by employees at work (Bourdieu 1990). I also made the case that this game-playing has implications for who can, or cannot, fit in at work. Having knowledge of how class and gender relate to a 'right' way to *be* at work, and how this features as an aspect of game-playing, is important in efforts to get ahead.

I explored debates around the feminization of the workplace, and looked at ways in which this dovetailed with discussions about the growing culturalization of the workplace. I also looked at arguments which highlighted that not everyone is able to work on the self to cultivate a desirable identity at work. The main theme that emerged from this engagement with existing work was that employees are increasingly expected to be able to create the right kind of identity at work. I considered this theme in detail, then, in my own work throughout this book, engaging with empirical research and the employees' discussions around class and gender, to gain an insight into how employees *know* what identities are seen to carry value, or not, at work. The issue that I raised from the outset relates to how cultivation of the right kind of classed and gendered identities at work is made distinctive against the 'wrong' kind of identities. The implication here is that the 'wrong', or stigmatized, identity is subject to

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M. Addison, *Social Games and Identity in the Higher Education Workplace*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-51803-3_8

mechanisms of exclusion from belonging or fitting in at work. Nearly all participants I spoke to wanted to avoid this, and so invested energy in knowing how to play the game at work. This necessitates the management of emotions at work.

Game-Playing

I began this book thinking about why it is that people act the way they do at work. From speaking to these employees and analyzing the data, what emerged was a logic that structured and shaped the way that people act in certain spaces and around certain people. Often these employees shared that they just seemed to *know* what to do. However, it was in critical moments of feeling either out of their depth or out of place that these employees demonstrated a greater awareness of what was going on around them. In these instances, employees talked about watching what others were doing around them to try and work out how they ought to be. These employees talked about the workplace as having implicit rules about the way they should act and be at work that were not evident to them in policy documents (Anderson 2014). This logic was rarely expressed in any tangible way; rather, participants talked about grasping and feeling their way towards a legitimate way of being and seeming at work. There was also talk of other colleagues as though they were game players, and this added a competitive element to the way people talked about their experiences at work.

Bourdieu's (1990) ideas about the logic of practice and social games provided a theory of action that helped me to make sense of why people act the way they do at work. Bourdieu suggests that there is a logic to game-playing that 'organizes all thoughts, perceptions and actions' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 86) and generates a 'legitimate culture' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 298; 1984/2010, pp. 79–80). This received and accepted logic directs people in the 'right' way to do things. Most people are not aware of this logic orientating their practices; they are 'born into the game', and so inherit a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 67) that structures the space and people around them. However, my discussions in these chapters show that a person's self-awareness of game-playing is raised when they encounter practices with which they are not familiar. In these moments, a person's *habitus* does not dispose them to the game being played (Johnson 1993). As Johnson notes, a person must then acquire knowledge of how things ought to be done if they are to be 'accepted as a legitimate player' (1993, p. 8).

My participants tried to acquire knowledge about game-playing in this workplace, and I endeavoured to foreground this in this book.

Employees who were new to the field, or had not been there long, did not know how to play the game. These people lacked the knowledge that would familiarize them with the game. This mismatch, and unfamiliarity with the field, enabled these people to question the way things were done by colleagues in this workplace, and the extent that this legitimated culture was taken for granted. Participants who felt unfamiliar with the way the game was played showed high levels of self-awareness and attentiveness to game-playing, and this generally led to a sharpened ability to read how the games were being played. This was similar to the findings from Reay et al.'s (2009) empirical work where working-class students showed an awareness of the different conditions structuring the field within an elite institution and attempted to adapt to them accordingly. For the employees I spoke to, watching how others acted helped them to recognize who holds a powerful position, how to avoid sanctions, and develop a feel for the game. I tried to show that the dynamics and logic of these social games at work are at their most exposed when people do not have a mastery of the game. It is in these critical moments that it is possible to gain an insight into what is useful and what matters in these social games to participants.

One of the main conclusions, then, is that knowing how to play games in this workplace was an important way for employees to demonstrate cultural competency. This cultural competency indicated to others that employees felt a sense of belonging and could demonstrate a goodness of fit that matched the legitimate culture. Having a feel for the game showed that a person was a 'legitimate player' (Johnson 1993, p. 8) and entitled to hold a certain position in the game. But this finding poses implications for those who are not considered to be legitimate in this space. As it turned out, knowing how to be in this workplace was often located by employees (but not limited to) in discussions about class and gender: in short, games of *distinction*.

Knowing About Gender

Much of the literature relating to femininities and the feminization of the workplace questioned whether changes at work translated into advantages for women (Wacjman 1998; Cockburn 1991; Bradley 1989, 1999a; Adkins 1995, 2001, 2002b, 2005; Skeggs 1997; Morini 2007). My own research would support this aspect of the debate in challenging how the feminization of work has benefited women. I looked at how women in particular were constructed through ideas about respectable femininities, sexuality, and emotionality at work. My findings show that a lot of the women I spoke to felt that they *ought* to act in certain ways at work that had little connection to the functional aspects of their actual job. I observed that this logic structuring their practices was reproducing legitimated ideas about gender and the way women ought to *be* at work. My main argument here, then, is that game-playing is gendered and gendering at work, and that the employees I spoke to drew on their own knowledge about gender to help them to work out what kind of person is seen to have value, and is able to fit in, in this workplace.

I tried to show that some women were not afforded the same freedoms as men to transgress the gendered logic to game-playing. Swearing usefully exemplifies this; women were not permitted to swear in the same way as their male colleagues. On the one hand, women were expected to maintain a position of respectability, and any transgressions to this way of playing the game were viewed negatively. Those women who were viewed as challenging this legitimated way of playing the game were talked about detrimentally, and framed as 'wrong' and undesirable through the way they spoke. On the other hand, I also tried to show that some women attempted to claim a valued position in the game through embodying respectable femininities. However, I proposed that this activity was still a limiting way for women in this workplace to play social games: whilst male colleagues could transgress respectability, women were not afforded the same freedoms and instead were fixed in place with few options to play the game in any other way.

Respectability was also a fragile position for some women in this workplace. I maintain that the value attached to respectability was contingent on it being recognized and legitimated by others (often male co-workers), which it often was not. In moments where a woman's respectability was not seen or acknowledged by colleagues, some participants deployed a coping strategy: one woman's attempt to keep her respectability intact was to deliberately ignore certain points in time where her male colleagues failed to treat her with respect. This practice of editing out moments that might damage a respectable woman's position in the game was a useful tactic. However, the implications of this are that these women endure moments of symbolic violence as part of their everyday experience of work (see also Powell and Sang 2015).

In addition, women were expected to be able to negotiate respectable femininities by having knowledge about how their bodies and clothes were read and decoded as part of these social games of distinction at work. Like Skeggs (1997), I argued here that respectable femininity is highly classed and classing, and only some of the women I spoke to were able to inhabit this position convincingly and fit in. The consequence of this, it seems, is that respectable femininity functions as an exclusionary mechanism preventing certain kinds of women from legitimately belonging in this workplace.

Further to this, my research shows that some women found that they were positioned through a heteronormative logic to game-playing. This meant that these women employees were at times subjected to heterosexual practices that positioned them as sexually desirable and available to men. A number of male workers enjoyed treating interactions with women as if they were infused with sexual tension. This way of seeing and playing the game at work appeared to offer these particular male employees rewards in terms of sexual gratification and an affirmation of their own masculine status. This activity, I suggested, fixes many women in place within a heteronormative structure as being sexually available and desirable to men. There is not a lot of room for some women to play the game differently when they encounter these men in the game; hence, why I suggested that heteronormativity is a limiting logic that impacts on women's capacity to play the game at work.

The women in this workplace were keen to resist this kind of heterosexualization. These women struggled at times to challenge the way the game was heterosexualized at work, especially when the field of work overlapped with a more social setting with colleagues in a pub or restaurant. In these situations, the sexualization of women was framed as 'banter', and this made it difficult for some women to challenge without appearing uptight. On occasions like this, women expressed that they endured this way of playing the game until it was possible to get away from particular players. Further to this, some of the men I spoke to wished to reinforce heteronormativity as part of the game-playing. They liked looking at women at work in a sexual way and enjoyed what they believed to be sexual chemistry in some interactions with women at work. These things, taken together, amount to a difficult power struggle within these work interactions and game-playing: a number of women were expected to just accept this game-playing as being part of the legitimate culture at work.

Women were also often represented as emotional through game-playing, and this could be particularly damaging to their position in the field. Acker (1990) has also written in detail about how women are constructed as emotional through a gendered logic structuring the workplace, and Hochschild (1983), too, wrote about how women are required to pay more attention to being seen as 'too emotional' and how this negatively impacts on their position at work. Being constructed as emotional in my study was known to both male and female employees to be a way to undermine and dismiss the voices of women in this workplace. Knowledge of this meant that female participants, in particular, tended to try and distance themselves from being framed as emotional. This meant paying attention to how they were seen by others at work. This activity translated into game-playing, where some women felt that they had to appear overly rational in moments that might be particularly emotive. These women also demonstrated emotion work during these moments in an attempt to manage feelings that might be seen by others to attest to an 'emotional' status. Women in this study also talked about knowing how to manage the impression they gave to others; this meant using techniques to look and sound a certain way (Witz et al. 2003). All told, constructing a woman as emotional at work was a device deployed by some people in game-playing to undermine a female worker's position as a valued worker. I suggest, then, that once a woman is portrayed as emotional, it is difficult to regain a position of value within the game. As such, it was important for the women I spoke to, to know how 'emotional' is coded and read so that they could then guard against it.

Knowing About Class

I specifically looked at how the figure of the worker was classed through social games of distinction at work. My goal was to show how class is part of game-playing at work: I argued that game-playing involved drawing upon classed and classing codes to mark distinctions onto people's bodies, behaviours, and ways of being. These employees drew on their own knowledge about class to help them to work out what kind of person is seen to have value, and is able to fit in, in this workplace. I particularly focused on the figure of the '*chav*', '*Mrs. Bucket*', a 'grafter', and being 'normal' as examples of representations of the right and wrong ways to be at work in employees' discussions.

The '*chav*' was seen by a number of workers to be outside of the legitimate way to *be* in this workplace. This meant that *chav* culture was often blocked from accruing any symbolic value (Skeggs 2004; Tyler 2013, 2015) and viewed as out of place in the university setting: heavy gold jewellery, tracksuits, and being too loud, for instance, were all talked about and reiterated as devalued aspects of *chav* culture. The implications of this were that the *chav* was unable to easily belong in this space and was expected to adapt to more legitimated ways of being in order to fit in: for example, grey suits, quiet demeanour, subtle makeup, and hair. However, adapting the *chav habitus* was fraught with difficulty; some people talked about being able to spot a *chav's* unconvincing attempts to fit in. These attempts were detectable through a person's obvious embodied discomfort, sense of being out of place, and lack of feel for the game.

I analysed the lower middle-class identity of '*Mrs. Bucket*': someone who was seen to have middle-class pretensions whilst originating from a working-class background. I suggested that this was a figure that was denigrated for being self-important and parochial by a number of these employees. I proposed that this practice of belittling certain people as a '*Mrs. Bucket*'-type character was a way to sanction and stigmatize those people who tried to move position in space without the perceived proper entitlements. The character of '*Mrs. Bucket*', and all that it connotes, is a way of limiting how certain people are able to play the game at work. The implication of this is that labelling someone as pretentious (i.e. '*Mrs. Bucket*') particularly serves to fix working-class people in place (see Skeggs 1997) and constricts movement.

Being seen as pretentious was not a desirable position to most of these employees, and some offered several counter-examples of their own behaviours and beliefs to consolidate their distance from it and avoid being misrecognized. These findings echo the findings from Savage et al.'s (2000, 2001, 2005) study in which they show that participants in their study wished to carefully distance themselves from being seen as pretentious. In addition to this, some participants in my study were also conscious of being seen as part of a boring and conservative middle-class. They had knowledge that this, too, was an undesirable position in the game, and so attempted to portray themselves as more liberal and dynamic. I believe, then, that this shows a certain amount of cultural competency in how to play the game in this workplace. This also ties in with Felski's (2001) discussions of lower middle-classness, in which she highlights that it is seen as a particularly boring and undesirable identity, and anyone marked with it is seen as being *too* caught up in the right way to be.

The figure of 'the grafter' I raised was linked to having a strong work ethic and desirable working-class attributes. These aspects of this identity were viewed as being convertible into symbolic value in this workplace. Participants felt that, although they possessed what could be seen as middle-class capitals (four bedroom house, two cars, highly educated, high salary), they wanted to emphasize their working-class histories and strong work ethic. I suggested that this identity and game-playing was a useful way for participants to claim that their middle-class capitals had been earned in the 'right' way. In these discussions, participants used 'working hard' to mark an important distinction against those who had accumulated middle-class capitals through privilege. This proved to be an interesting contrast to the '*chav*', who was marked as being out of place here for having the wrong class capitals and culture. The 'grafter' was better placed to comfortably claim certain aspects of working-classness and to transform these codes into symbolic value. These particular people demonstrated a certain mastery of the classificatory logic to this game of distinction in HE. It is this competency in playing the game that reinforced the 'grafter's' sense of belonging and capacity to fit in as a legitimate player.

I also proposed that the figure of someone who is just normal and 'ordinary' helped employees to try and secure a safe space in game-playing: among other things, it signalled that these people did not wish to make judgements about others. However, as Sayer (2005) observes, this is not to say that value judgements do not happen. I hope to have showed here that, indeed, these value judgements about class distinctions do occur within the workplace. My findings also resonate with Savage et al.'s (2000) study where their participants described themselves as normal as a way of sidestepping discussions about class. Savage et al. (2000, p. 889) comment here that people know that class is not a neutral category and is often used as a 'loaded moral signifier'. Normalness is a relational concept that is only known by the boundaries that are drawn between other classed selves in the workplace. So, whilst some of these employees attempted to put a floor and a ceiling above and below their own class position, they did this by marking out *other* people who have had a hard upbringing and others who are 'mega rich'. This was a way of attempting to fit in and play the game without necessarily locating this in class.

Aspects of a worker's identity are constructed through the classed and gendered distinctions that people make as part of game-playing at work.

This is not to ignore the impact that the demands of the employer, job specifications, the rewards, and grading system have on a worker's identity. However, I have focused on game-playing through social relations. Certain kinds of identities are seen to have value and are legitimated in these games, and this poses implications for how others are represented as *beyond* that which is considered desirable at work. I therefore raised concerns throughout this book that these kinds of social games of distinction can potentially impact on a person's sense of belonging and goodness of fit in the workplace.

Low Levels of Resistance and Subversion

Employees demonstrated low levels of resistance to the established way of doing things around here. The social order structuring how to do class and how to do gender was deeply embedded within this workplace. As such, many of the employees, instead of trying to *change* the game, invested their energies in trying to acquire knowledge of how to play these games of distinction as they were encountered. This low resistance activity had a number of effects: it continued to reproduce the social order organizing class and gender; it ensured that those people who held dominant positions in this social order continued to do so through the lens of class and gender; and it (perhaps) inadvertently succeeded in legitimating that these practices were the right and accepted ways to do class and gender at work.

This low level of resistance, then, is connected to insidious and everyday acts of symbolic violence that serve to keep certain kinds of people fixed in place within the established social order. The naming and identifying of *chav*, for instance, or the stigma attached to the figure of the emotional woman, or the woman that is too 'rough', are everyday acts of symbolic violence that are generally accepted and go unchallenged. This makes subverting these acts of symbolic violence difficult when they often go unseen and unacknowledged as damaging to certain kinds of people.

Being able to vent one's frustrations at work was an important outlet for safe acts of subversion. Letting off steam was an important way for participants to ease the tension that they accrued through doing emotion work. Having the freedom to vent frustrations to a friend or close colleague was an invaluable way for some of these employees to relax their classed and gendered performances in game-playing without damaging their position in the game. This involved knowing and trusting the people around you, as well as knowing the appropriate spaces in which venting emotions was relatively innocuous. Rarely was venting talked about as a way to resist the established social order and the way things were done in this workplace. Instead, venting operated as a coping strategy so that employees could find ways to tolerate and survive the harms endured through classed and gendered practices. However, for some people, even venting one's frustrations was a dangerous element to playing the game and could jeopardize their social position. For these people, it seemed, silent endurance or withdrawal from these social games of distinction was their way of surviving at work.

Being a Fish Out of Water

I discussed what it was like for employees when they felt like a fish out of water, and what some of them would do to try and cope with this. To think this through, I used Bourdieu's concept of *hysteresis*, which he refers to as a mismatch between *habitus* and field (1990, 1984/2010). Being able to adapt is a crucial part of playing games well, but not everyone feels disposed to do this. Those that could make adaption part of their *habitus* (see Reay et al. 2009; Zembylas, 2007) demonstrated varying degrees of knowledge, comfort, and familiarity with how these adjustments to one's *habitus* ought to be done. When a person's *habitus* 'misfires' (Bourdieu 2000, p. 162), they are often unsure and uneasy about how to act in certain spaces and around certain people. I also tried to highlight moments where participants have felt like their own classed *habitus* has been at odds with the game being played; for instance, in meetings or around particular colleagues. In these instances, feeling out of place to do with class frequently inhibited participation in the game and was often felt as a deeply painful experience. Some of these employees reported feeling inadequate, unequal to others, and embarrassed because of how they felt their class position was seen and devalued by others in this workplace. Being out of place for reasons to do with gender did not quite evoke the same emotional reactions in participants as class. Instead, it was mainly (but not exclusively) female participants who discussed feeling as though they did not quite fit in with how the game ought to be played for reasons to do with gender, and this often left them feeling frustrated. For instance, this occurred in moments where women were bypassed in favour of talking to a male colleague—others considered them out of place in a masculinized field.

Coping Through Emotion Work

An important way of coping with critical moments of feeling out of place for participants was through impression management. Employees were actively using presentation skills at times to manage what impression they gave to others—they talked about managing their facial expressions, tone of voice, their body language, and so on, to control how they were coded in classed and gendered ways. The aspect of this impression management related to how employees used emotion work to conceal feelings that might reveal to others that they feel out of place for reasons that they felt were to do with class and gender.

A person must be able to keep up with changes in the game—this proved challenging for some of these employees. These people became 'ill-adjusted' (Bourdieu 1990, p. 62) to the way the game was being played and so had to find ways to manage this. Some workers used emotion work to help them to manage their presentation of self and displays of emotion in critical moments where they felt out of place. Emotion work was useful in helping participants to conceal things that they did not wish others to see. In particular, emotion work helped these participants to cope with a mismatch between their *habitus* and the field.

For some people, emotion work was not actually useful because they were unable to present a convincing representation of the 'right' way to be at work. The consequence of this is that these people tended to withdraw from game-playing until they could exit the field. This can be a painful experience to endure for these employees, and was framed in a number of discussions as simply *part of their job*. In short, I argued that emotion work was quite a common practice at work and it helped employees to convince others that they fitted in certain spaces and around certain people. I suggested that this provided a masquerade of cultural competency at least, even if the participants did not feel confident in how to play the game. It is important to acknowledge that the claims I make in this study are limited based on the people I spoke to and the data I was able to gather. My research is also of a HE institution based in the north of England and in a post-industrial city. Discussions of class and gender will be historically and spatially located within this context because of this (see also Lawler 2015; Taylor 2012). If my study was reproduced in a different spatial context, and even in a different kind of workplace, it is certainly likely that different discussions of class and gender would arise. However, it has not been my intention to attempt to provide generalizable claims, but instead to offer a discussion of what I think is occurring in this kind of workplace and within this kind of historical and spatial context. I would also add that my claims to knowledge are limited by my own positionality and capacity to act reflexively throughout this research (Billig 2013; Brewer 2013; Skeggs 2002).

In closing, then, what I hope I have shown in this book is that knowledge of class and gender are an important component of game-playing—and playing the game well involves drawing on emotion work. My arguments build upon and advance existing research related to this area (McDowell 1997; Wacjman 1998; Skeggs 1997, 2011; Adkins 1995, 2001, 2002; Adkins and Skeggs (2004), Bradley 1999; Pettinger et al. 2005; Hochschild 1983; Fineman 2008; Kirk and Wall 2011; Bathmaker et al. 2013; Reay et al. 2009; McDonough and Polzer 2012) by pointing to various social and cultural mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in the workplace—where the *right* identity fits in and the *wrong* identity is stigmatized.

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APPENDIX 1: SELF-CLASSIFICATIONS

The participants all have pseudonyms and some ages have been altered to preserve anonymity. The participants can be described as follows, based on their own self-classifications:

Female

Working-class

- **Evie**, Receptionist, 50 years old
- **Jane**, Receptionist, 49 years old
- **Leah**, Funding Manager, 56 years old
- **Maggie**, Administrative Officer, 55 years old
- **Rachel**, Cleaning Supervisor, 55 years old
- **Rebecca**, Senior Administrator, 59 years old
- **Rose**, Cleaning Supervisor, 57 years old
- **Sarah**, Cleaning Supervisor, 48 years old

Middle-class

- **Amber,** Maintenance Officer, 30 years old
- **Ann**, Senior Management, 61 years old, lower middle-class
- **Cheryl**, Senior Director, 54 years old
- **Erica**, Temporary Lecturer, 62 years old
- **Josie,** Research Associate, 50 years old

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- **Lucy**, Lecturer, 32 years old,
- **Paula**, School Manager, 40 years old, lower middle-class

Unsure about class
- **Diane**, Facilities Director, 57 years old
- **Hannah**, Funding Officer, 33 years old
- **Linsey**, Temporary Lecturer, 51 years old
- **Lisa**, Engineer, 25 years old

Male

Working-class
- **Bill**, Maintenance Manager, 57 years old
- **Dave**, Maintenance Manager, 57 years old
- **John**, Maintenance Electrician, 53 years old
- **Keith**, Lecturer, 63 years old
- **Toby**, Business Development Manager, 38 years old

Middle-class
- **Alan**, Senior Lecturer, 48 years old
- **Colin**, Director of School, 51 years old
- **Ian**, Surveyor, 31 years old
- **Jeff**, Senior Management, 49 years old
- **Ravi**, Business Development Manager, 40 years old
- **Simon**, Surveyor, 31 years old, lower middle-class
- **Tony**, Dean of School, 48 years old

APPENDIX 2: DEPARTMENTS

The participants' length of service ranged from a year and a half in their job, to 37 years working for the institution. Whilst the specifics of what each person did in their job was interesting, I want to emphasize that this was not the focus of the study. I was more interested in how people interacted with each other in different spaces and around different people at work, and how class and gender infused these experiences. The general compositions of the different department structures (based on UK HEIs) that are included in this study are outlined below:

Estates and operations

Number of people employed in this area: Approx. 750 people

Gender Composition: Approx. 49 % of operations employees are female and 52 % are male

Internal Hierarchy: There is a Director of Estates and Operations who manages and coordinates five large teams. Within these teams are smaller clusters, each responsible for various aspects of the day-to-day functioning of the university.

Function: Responsible for the maintenance, security, and development of university lands and buildings.

Academic Departments

Number of people employed in this area: Approx. 2500 people (1000 in an administrative capacity)

Gender Composition: Approx. 40 % of academic staff is female and 60 % is male. Approx. 65 % of administrative staff is female and 35 % is male.

Internal Hierarchy: Each academic structure contains a number of academic units that are managed by Deans of these faculties. Within the faculty is a Head of School and departments which are managed by Subject Heads.

Function: To facilitate in the delivery of teaching and learning to students; to advance research within the university; to promote brand reputation.

Management (Senior Support)

Number of people employed in this area: Approx. 700

Gender Composition: Information not available

Internal Hierarchy: There are three core academic structures that are each managed by a pro-vice-chancellor.

Function: To facilitate in the delivery of teaching and learning to students; to advance research within the university; to promote brand reputation.

Business and Enterprise

Number of people employed in this area: Approx. 400 (this includes marketing, recruitment, advertising, PR, etc.)

Gender Composition: Information not available

Internal Hierarchy: This structure is headed by a Director. It is a structure composed of different units ranging from research support, enterprise teams, ventures, and intellectual property and legal protection. Each unit has a manager and team members.

Function: Its role is to identify and protect intellectual property; to promote the staff and the university; to improve products; advance the university's capital interests.

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M. Addison, *Social Games and Identity in the Higher Education Workplace*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-51803-3

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