



'Practice" makes perfect: locating young people in golf club culture

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**‘PRACTICE’ MAKES PERFECT:
LOCATING YOUNG PEOPLE IN
GOLF CLUB CULTURE**



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BSc. (Hons)

**Submitted for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy (Research)**

2011

I hereby declare that this is entirely my own work and has not been submitted to any other University or higher education institution, or for any other academic award in this University. Where use has been made of the work of other people, it has been fully acknowledged and referenced.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

ABSTRACT

Given its long history, conservative image, explicit norms and gendered, class-associated practices, golf has been acknowledged as a site for rich sociological investigation. Research demonstrates how golf club culture is classed and gendered, where the institutional nature of the golf club creates communities of affluent people who share in similar amounts of capital, constraining various non-hegemonic groups. This research examines golf club culture in Ireland and the influence of golf club practice on the experiences of young golfers (aged eighteen and under). The investigation is framed by critical feminism, while postmodern perspectives offer potential for new insights into golf club practice. Reflexivity and positionality acknowledge my subjectivity, bias and values in the research, and identify my positions of elite golfer, golf development officer, golf club member and researcher in the field. Along with a national questionnaire to the population of golf clubs, prolonged visits to the field include one-day visits to ten golf clubs nationwide, a three-month pilot ethnography and an eighteen-month ethnography in one golf club setting. Employing Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice, results indicate the symbolic practices used by golf clubs to classify and reproduce capital among young golfers. A creative non-fiction data representation attempts to communicate the institutional nature of golf club culture to a wider reader audience. The complex role of the golf club in promoting hierarchies among girl members is significant, where rules, restrictions and an achievement culture encouraged a dominated, ability-centred habitus. Advocating for inclusive social practice in golf, I also engage with my conflicting and compromising positions and selves in the field, highlighting the ethical dilemma and moral implications of the researcher-participant.

To the young people, members, parents and officials at
all golf clubs I visited from 2007 to 2011

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GLOSSARY

The below terms are defined in the context of this investigation. The first citation of each term in the main document is emboldened and italicised for the reader, e.g. ***adult/main club competition***

Adult/main club competition: member only golf club competition that is usually played on a weekly basis

AGM: Annual General Meeting

AIB: Allied Irish Bank

Amateur: golf participant; the R&A rules of amateur golf forbid amateurs from accepting money as competition winnings or as payment for coaching golf

Associate membership: golf club membership category that limits voting rights and use of the golf club facility to particular days; historically associated with female membership

Caddie: an advisor/golf bag carrier for a golfer on the course

CAP: creative analytic practice for ethnography (Richardson 2000)

Casual golfer: a golf participant that is not a golf club member

Charter for Junior Golf: publication discussing the state of junior golf in Ireland (GUI, ILGU & PGA Irish region 2000)

EHS: Education and Health Sciences Faculty, University of Limerick

EHSREC: Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Entrance fee: the initial membership fee charged at some golf clubs, usually where the demand for membership is high. Entrance fees are supplemented by annual fees

European Tour: tour for male professional golfers

Fáilte Ireland: the national tourism development authority for Ireland

Fourball: golf competition format involving four players, where one pairing plays against the other, and each player plays their own ball

Foursomes: golf competition format involving four players, where one pairing plays against other, and each pairing plays one ball, and every second shot

Freemason: a member or honorary member of a secret order or society

Full membership: golf club membership category with full voting rights and full use of the golf club facility

GAA: Gaelic Athletic Association, governing body of the native Irish games of Gaelic football, hurling, camogie and handball

'Girls N Golf': Junior Golf Ireland introduction to golf programme for girls, coordinated by the author

Golf club/club: a golf club refers to the venue where golf takes place, where membership can be applied for or taken up. A club is the implement used to strike the golf ball

Golf course: a venue where golf is played. Golf was first played on links land, and in the past it was considered sacrilege to refer to any other type of course as a 'links'. The term 'golf course' was then coined to describe non-links golfing grounds (Green 1994)

Golf development: creating awareness about golf through schools and communities in order to increase golf participation

Golf Foundation: organisation with responsibility for the development of junior golf in Britain. Up until the formation of Junior Golf Ireland in 2003 it was also responsible for junior golf development in Ireland

Green: or putting green; the tightly cut surface on a golf course where a ball is putted or rolled towards the hole

Green fee: the fee a visitor or non-member pays when playing a golf course

Green keeper: the staff employed to maintain a golf course

GUI: Golfing Union of Ireland

Handicap: a numerical measure of an amateur golfer's playing ability. In Britain and Ireland the maximum handicaps are 28 (males) and 36 (females)

ILGU: Irish Ladies Golf Union

Ireland: for the purposes of this research this refers to both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland jurisdictions

Irish: see *Ireland*, a person from the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland

Irish Open: European Tour event for professional male golfers

JGI: Junior Golf Ireland

JL: junior leader (adult)

JM: junior member

Junior committee: a golf club committee responsible for junior golf

Junior convenor: (or JL) an adult golf club official responsible for junior golf

Junior golf: golf activities for those aged eighteen and under

Junior golfer: for the purposes of this research a junior golfer is a golf participant/golf club member who is aged eighteen or under

KPMG: Klynveld Peat Main Goerdeler; one of the world's largest auditors. The company has carried out a number of worldwide

reports on the golf industry, including golf participation, tourism and travel

Ladies Irish Open: European Ladies Tour event for professional female golfers

LGU: Ladies Golf Union (Britain and Ireland)

LPGA: Ladies' Professional Golf Association; American tour for female professional golfers

Links: Golf course built on links land, the sandy strips of ground left along the coast when the sea withdrew following the last Ice Age. Golf courses were designed on links in the eighteenth century because the underlying sand allowed rapid drainage of water and the grass was naturally short, requiring less maintenance (Stirk 1995)

Main committee: managing or authorising committee in a golf club

Match play: golf competition format involving a direct match

Membership: golf club membership, usually involving an application and fee and taken on an annual basis

Municipal golf course: (public) golf course ran by a local council; offers unlimited membership availability

National Junior Golf Questionnaire: postal questionnaire to Irish golf clubs carried out in 2008 as part of data collection phase one

NAMA: National Asset Management Agency (Republic of Ireland)

NCWO: National Council of Women's Organisations (America)

NGF: National Golf Foundation (America)

Open week: (or day) golf club competition/week of competitions that invites the participation of members of outside golf clubs. Used as a means of generating income for the club

Partition: the 1922 division of the island of Ireland into Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland following the civil war

PEPAYS: Physical Education, Physical Activity and Youth Sport Research Centre, University of Limerick

PGA: Professional Golfers' Association, worldwide

Professional/'pro': A person who has relinquished their amateur golf status to earn money through coaching golf as a member of the PGA, or through playing golf on a professional golf tour

Putting: golf skill in which the ball is rolled along the green towards the hole

R&A: Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scotland. Along with the *USGA*, the R&A formulates the rules of golf and is recognised as golf's global governing body

Ryder Cup: a biennial matchplay golf tournament between professional male golfers from Europe and the USA

SCU: Statistical Consulting Unit, University of Limerick

Solheim Cup: female equivalent of the Ryder Cup

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

Strokeplay: golf competition format for individual players

St. Andrews: town in Scotland where golf is thought to have originated. Holds the R&A and LGU headquarters, and is often termed 'the home of golf'

SUV: sport utility vehicle

Tee: the starting point of a golf hole or the action of putting your ball in the start position, i.e. teeing up

The ban: introduced by the GAA in the early twentieth century prohibiting GAA players from playing what the association termed 'foreign games'

USGA: United States Golf Association

UL: University of Limerick

ULREC: University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee

PROLOGUE

September 2007, and all is well.

On the back of last year's inaugural staging of one of the biggest biennial sports events in the world, golf in Ireland is thriving. Hosted by the K Club, Co. Kildare, the Ryder Cup was reported to have netted €43 million for the Irish economy, with a stream of tourists anticipated following global television coverage (Fáilte Ireland 2006; Watkins *et al.* 2006). In July at Carnoustie, Fáilte Ireland ambassador Pádraig Harrington collected his first major win and Ireland's first Open championship in sixty years, while young protégé Rory McIlroy picked up the leading amateur award. Ladies golf is also on the up; AIB bank have backed the return of the Ladies' Irish Open and Ireland's bid for the 2011 Solheim Cup. Along with a 40% increase in golf courses, golf **membership** has doubled since 1985 (GUI 2008). Irish golf courses are more busy than their European counterparts and top performing courses are averaging revenues of €2.2 million. KPMG predicts that the golf market in Ireland is still growing (KPMG 2007).

In line with the general mood in Irish golf my own game is booming. I've had a steady stream of top five places at Cork, Castletroy and Roscommon, and finished runner up at the Irish amateur in Belfast. My season was topped off with our team silver at the World Student Games in Bangkok last month. I'm just back from my second Home Internationals in Scotland where I secured wins against Wales. With two of my peers on the Irish team turning professional, the national coach has convinced me that it's time to further invest in my game.

I've just graduated from UL, and have started a new post with the recently formed Junior Golf Ireland, based at one of Ireland's newest and most lavish facilities, the PGA National. Each day on my way to work I pass the K Club at Straffan, noting the greatly improved road surfaces of county Kildare. As an Irish international I can practise anytime on the vast practise areas at the PGA, in the leafy tree lined surroundings of a stud farm, helipads and the stately Palmerstown house. I regularly intercept bankers, property developers, and politicians who use the facility to host events and applaud their organisations.

During my time as a physical education undergraduate, I developed a keen interest in the experiences of young people in physical activity. Supported by JGI, I am about to embark on an examination of junior golf in Ireland.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE INVESTIGATION

Golf is widely acknowledged as a sport dominated by higher social classes (Bourdieu 1978; Schreeder, Vanreusel, Taks & Renson 2002; Stempel 2005). In its historical association with the British monarchy, the gentry and leisured classes, the origins of golf in fifteenth century Scotland have been influential in predisposing the notion of the game as elitist and gendered. The expense of equipment and playing time required limited golf to the wealthy classes and affluence and hierarchy became ubiquitous in what became known as the 'royal and ancient game' (Green 1994; Stirk 1995). Discriminatory practices were commonplace, where up until the mid 1800s women were restricted to secret games involving little more than **putting** (Concannon 1995, 1996). Exclusive membership groups and societies were confined to men of a certain social, professional and familial standing (Cousins 1975; Stirk 1995). Golf's link with the gentry and leisured classes was not confined to Britain, and the elite backgrounds of the bankers, teachers and businessmen who initiated early **golf clubs** in **Ireland** were similarly influential in establishing selective membership practices based on social standing and religion (Menton 1991; Mulhall 2006). As happened in Scotland, from early on in its foundation golf in Ireland became a game revered by higher social classes.

Outlined in the prologue, golf participation rates in Ireland have surged since the 1980s, reflecting the largest uptake of the game since the **GUI** and **ILGU** were established in the 1800s. With the country's wealth of golf facilities, participants, and volunteers, golf in Ireland has been lauded for its sociability and the way it brings people into contact with each other:

...golf has a considerable social dimension – people rarely play golf alone and golf clubs usually are venues for social interaction, not least because they often have bars and restaurants. In addition, the overall management of golf clubs is often the responsibility of voluntary committees drawn from the membership of the club...the social and organisational aspects of golf are significant contributors to the overall social impact of

sport in Ireland.

(Delaney & Fahey 2005, p.15)

In spite of this social dimension, many of the characteristics of early golf still resonate in Ireland, with evidence of exclusivity, privilege and elitism affecting socialisation into golf. From the same report used above, Delaney and Fahey (2005) found that one-quarter of the members of golf clubs in Ireland were derived from higher socio-economic backgrounds, while golf was reported as the most widely played sport among men. Females still contend for equality in golf, where many institutions afford them 'associate membership' status if at all. In a high profile case the Equality Authority took Portmarnock Golf Club to the Supreme court for failing to admit female members, only to lose on a narrow provision of the Equal Status Act 2000 (Coulter 2009; Song 2007). It is possible that the fundamental gender division in the hierarchy of amateur golf unions in Ireland does not support gender equality in golf. In spite of its five hundred year evolution, modern advancements, and the high participation rate in Ireland, gendered practices are constant and golf retains an inextricable and intransigent link with educated, higher social class realms of society.

Although it was not until midway through the twentieth century when **junior golf** came to the attention of the **Irish** golf unions, the achievements of high profile golfer Tiger Woods set about a 1990s surge of interest in the new and younger participants (Menton 1991). Junior golf arose more regularly upon the agenda of the Irish golf unions, who invested in Junior Golf Ireland as the grassroots **golf development** body (GUI, ILGU & PGA Irish Region, 2000). A minority in Irish golf clubs, junior golfers represent about one tenth of golf club members, while junior girls comprise just 2% of the overall population of members (ILGU 2011b) (see Table 3.1). In contrast, several studies affirm golf as the most popular sport among middle to older adults in Ireland (Central Statistics Office 2007; Delaney & Fahey 2005; Fahey, Layte & Gannon, 2004; Ipsos MORI 2007). Published by the GUI, ILGU and the Irish **PGA** in the year 2000, the

Charter for Junior Golf identified policy inadequacies and child unfriendly practices in Irish golf clubs (GUI *et al.* 2000) (see Section 2.6 and Table 3.4). While the achievements of Rory McIlroy and the work of JGI have supported increased awareness in junior golf in Ireland, most golf facilities are adult-oriented environments, run by adults predominantly for the adult golfing population. As minority participants and latecomers to the sport, junior golfers are potentially isolated in these environments.

Coalter (2007) suggests that where golf clubs are mostly private institutions and not in receipt of public funds, their relevance to broader policy is limited. Alternatively, given the country's staging of significant golf events, golf's social dimension, the high participation rate, large number of facilities, along with the awareness created by world-class Irish players, it could be argued that golf is central to Irish life, not least in the sport, tourism and business sectors (see Prologue). With its lengthy and importunate association with the upper echelons of society, and the limited sector of participants it attracts in Ireland, it could be claimed that golf legitimates inequality. Further, it is possible that fair play remains unattainable for young participants in golf environments. This project seeks to investigate golf club culture in Ireland, and the subsidiary effect of club practices on shaping the values and actions of junior golf club members.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE, PURPOSE & RESEARCH GOALS OF THE INVESTIGATION

In view of its long history, conservative image, explicit norms, class-associated practices, economic importance and global popularity, the subculture of golf has rich potential for sociological investigation (Perkins, Mincyte & Cole 2010; Stoddart 2006b; Wheeler and Nauright 2006). In terms of literature, Concannon (1996) suggests that the body of golf-related writing far surpasses any sport for sheer quantity. Topics such as *golf courses*, equipment and technique have been accounted since the nineteenth century, while golf

union/federation policy documents supplement the catalogue of golf publications. In spite of this wealth of literature, and the global nature of golf, Perkins *et al.* (2010) assert that the social contours of the game have been rarely touched on by academic analysts, while Haig-Muir (1998) contends that women's golf has been virtually ignored by scholars. With the exception of research on gender discrimination (Haig-Muir 1998, 2004; Nylund 2003; Shotton, Armour & Potrac 1998), landscape and place (Perkins 2010), sexuality and ethnicity (Douglas & Jamieson 2006; Jamieson 2001), and disability (Maas & Hasbrook 2001), little attention has been given to the critical examination of golf's social and cultural practices. The golf club as a site of cultural reproduction is given less consideration, and research on the aforementioned golf practices, the formalisation and regulation of golf, selective membership criteria, and elusive joining processes, are not evidenced in academic literature. Focusing on golf club practice, this project seeks to add to the already scant literature on the sociology of golf, looking in particular to complement, contribute to and develop three main areas discussed below: (1) youth sport environments, (2), theoretical developments and (3) alternative qualitative research, and to negotiate three research questions:

1. What are young people's experiences in golf club settings?
2. In what way does the combination of theories offer a meaningful explanation of young people's experiences in golf club settings?
3. What alternative methods of representing qualitative research will enhance the study of golf club culture?

Although aspirational, where I aim to conduct a social and cultural critique of power relationships of golf club settings, transformation of golf club culture is a long term goal.

1.2.1 Youth sport environments

Although there is some research on the values and meanings young people attach to sport practices (Eley & Kirk 2002; MacPhail, Kirk & Eley 2003; MacPhail, O'Sullivan & Collier 2009; Wright, Macdonald &

Groom 2003), a well-documented high performance and psychological focus has dominated research on youth sport and physical activity. Less attention has been afforded to the contexts and environments in which youth sport takes place, and the role of these settings in forming and shaping the identities of young people, particularly young females. These environments have the potential to be empowering, but also potentially inhibiting, especially given young girls' self-image, body image and self-esteem levels. While there have been particularly useful and insightful studies on girls' subjectivities and identities in the physical education classroom, the differences between school and sports club environments should be acknowledged as varied and many. Given young females low engagement with sport and physical activity in the Irish context, some have recommended exploration of female participation in both recreational and elite level sport, suggesting a focus on the routes individuals take into and out of sport and the factors affecting their decisions (Liston 2006a; Lunn & Layte 2008). As further outlined in Chapter seven, understanding girls' experiences of sport with reference to their embodied experiences is vital in understanding their decision to participate or not.

As discussed in section 1.1, there is much potential for the investigation of golf clubs as environments for youth sport practice. While the small-scale survey used in the Charter for Junior Golf provided some evidence of the structural organisation of policy and practice, there was little evidence of engagement with individuals in golf club settings (GUI *et al.* 2000). Given my positions in the field as an elite golfer, golf development officer and golf club member, from the outset I anticipated that I could regularly collect data from the field. Whilst gathering information on the policy and practices of junior golf in the population of golf clubs, this project seeks to engage with individuals in the field to achieve a more in-depth insight into the contexts in which junior golf takes place. **Adding to the research on youth sport environments, this investigation aims to better understand young people's experiences in golf and to**

contribute policy recommendations for junior golf practice from club to organisation level, particularly in the recruitment and retention of girl participants. This aim stretches from organisational to interpersonal levels, eliciting a perspective that works from meso to micro (Collins 2000). Given my position as a JGI employee where I can have a direct influence on JGI practices, this aim is particularly significant.

1.2.2 Theoretical developments

Sometimes juxtaposed, this research endeavours to combine both critical and postmodern frameworks in the investigation of golf club culture. The critical feminist perspective in this research is evidenced in the socio-historical context of golf (Chapter two) and the focus on golf's pervasive inequalities, particularly in the intersection of gender and social class constructs. Liston (2006a) suggests that sport can be explained by examining its integration in wider social figurations such as national societies, and as outlined in the prologue and epilogue, linking my personal experiences with wider social circumstances in Irish society and Irish golf further signals a critical perspective. In reflexively identifying my positionality and subjective bias in the collection of data I employ postmodern viewpoints on knowledge and truth. As outlined in Chapter four, this framework presents challenges for the qualitative researcher, notably where I attempt to combine quantitative and qualitative data. Similarly, some suggest that generating historical contexts and literature reviews appears to match the positivist supposition that knowledge is progressive and moves towards the goal of obtaining truth. However, I believe that a variety of viewpoints are warranted in this investigation, and combining both perspectives will offer new possibilities particularly in the presentation of data and resultant reader appeal.

Many writers have drawn on Pierre Bourdieu's theories in positioning their research on sporting practices and participants (Collins & Butler 2003; Stempel 2005; Wilson 2002). For the

purposes of this study, Bourdieu's (1977) concepts of field, capital, practice and habitus are deemed suitable lenses through which to examine the power relations in golf club culture, participants' interactions with the institutionalised practices of golf clubs and the related inclusions and exclusions for young people. Stempel (2005) posits that previous studies that used Bourdieu's conceptual tools have been limited to broader measures of sports participation and involvement, and researchers have failed to examine individuals' experiences. As outlined in 1.2.1 above, through encompassing both the wider organisational context and the closer inspection of participant experience, this investigation should add to the knowledge base on Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of culture. While Bourdieu's neglect of a gendered habitus has received widespread criticism from feminists, I attempt to further perspectives from Lovell (2000) in outlining how combining these theories can offer a fruitful explanation of girls' gendered habituses in a golf club setting (see Section 4.9.1 and Chapter seven). **Thus, along with offering new insights into Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital, practice and habitus in the context of sport sociology literature, this investigation supports the combination of critical, feminist and postmodern perspectives in a reflexive examination of golf club culture.**

1.2.3 Alternative qualitative research

In advocating attempts to tell the researcher's many and varied positions and approaches to research, this project outlines the significance of the involved researcher in the recording and telling of data. My involvement in the field implied an unavoidable reflexive and biographical dimension, and as a researcher-participant I tell my lived experiences of golf club culture reflexively and subjectively from multiple positions. Autoethnographic approaches as evidenced in sport and physical activity literature have often focused on the perspectives of elite coaches and athletes. In using personalised journal extracts I surmise how autoethnography can elicit new frames

of reference across the spectrum of sports participation, and especially at development and recreational levels. In terms of data representation, I use 'storying' to critically write about golf club culture, aiming to increase awareness and understanding of the underlying assumptions, constraints, and contradictions in golf clubs. **In this way, this research endorses new and alternative methods of collecting and representing qualitative data on golf club culture.**

1.3 ORGANISATION OF THE INVESTIGATION

The investigation begins with a socio-historical analysis of golf dating from the game's origins in Britain to the modern organisation and regulation of golf in Ireland (Chapter two). Substantiated by a variety of literature sourced from the sociology of sport and golf, Chapter three collates evidence on socialisation into sport and sport practices. An outline of the overarching theoretical framework and methodology employed ensues in Chapter four, detailing the critical postmodern feminist focus and critical ethnography methodology. Along with personal journal entries, four data collection phases comprise the investigation, during which field observations, focus group data and documents were collected; (1) the ***National Junior Golf Questionnaire***, (2) one day visits to ten golf clubs, (3) three month pilot ethnography at Ardloch¹ golf club, and (4) eighteen month ethnography at Riverside² golf club. These data collection phases 1-4 are presented in the chronological order they were collected, i.e. in Chapters five to eight. During this investigation I have readied four papers for the purposes of publication, three of which have been submitted to peer-reviewed journals at the time of writing. These four stand-alone studies have been re-formatted for presentation in this thesis, and comprise Chapters five to eight, ordered specifically in the chronological sequence of the data collection phases. For this reason, each of Chapters five to eight

¹ Pseudonym

² Pseudonym

begin with the abstract related to the paper submitted or in the process of submission for publication. Table 1.1 below presents Chapters five to eight, outlining phases of data collection and journal submissions where appropriate.

Table 1.1 Chapters 5-8 related to research goals and journal submissions

CHAPTER	RELATED TO RESEARCH GOALS	DATA COLLECTION PHASE	JOURNAL SUBMITTED TO	(RE) SUBMISSION DATE
5. 'Les clubs chics': locating capital in junior golf practice	Youth sport environments/ Theoretical developments	Phases 1 & 2	Journal of Sport and Social Issues	Sept 2011 (paper accepted pending final edits)
6. 'Shirts, ties, prawns and associates': Storying golf club culture	Theoretical developments/ Alternative qualitative research	Phase 2	Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health	Sept 2011 (second resubmission)
7. Girls' habituses in a golf club setting	Youth sport environments/ Theoretical developments	Phase 4	Sport, Education and Society	Oct 2011 (first resubmission)
8. Well positioned? Researching golf club culture	Theoretical developments/ Alternative qualitative research	Personal journal entries	Journal of Contemporary Ethnography	Oct 2011 (first submission)

Sparkes (1992b) suggests that language, meaning and representation are significant in terms of initiating dialogue and promoting greater understanding of ourselves as researchers. As detailed by Richardson (2000) in section 4.9.2, writing is not alone a way of telling but a way of knowing, where form and content are inseparable. In this way, along with the presentation of personal journal entries, field observations and focus group data in this research, the presentation of the thesis itself is equally important. Striving to tell a reflexive story throughout, all chapters are intercepted with retrospective memories of both my route into golf and my journey towards this research. Similarly, in following the chronological order of the data collection phases, my role as a researcher-participant shifts gradually from embodied observer in Chapters five and six (phases

one and two), to involvement as researcher-participant, and constructing the setting in my roles at Riverside in Chapter seven (phase four), while Chapter eight is a wholly subjective deconstruction of my positioning in the research. For ease of reader understanding, golf terminologies are clarified in the alphabetised glossary preceding this chapter. It is necessary to acknowledge, however, that given my proximity to the field of golf, it is possible that there are terms that are not listed in the glossary that may require further clarification. For the purposes of this investigation the term 'field' refers to all GUI and ILGU affiliated golf clubs in Ireland, and as stated in the glossary, 'Ireland' constitutes jurisdictions both north and south of the border.

The Golfing Annual 1887-88

I am writing to you, because I believe you know something about a game called Golf. Some people here object to it being called a game, and prefer to designate it a science. I should term it a disease, or even an epidemic. Its origin I cannot exactly trace, but I will just tell you, if you will bear with me, my own experience of it.

We have, or rather had, one of the nicest little social clubs here you would wish to find; nice rubber of whist, and nice quietly-dressed young fellows playing a quiet game of billiards. It was the very place in all the world for a man whose struggling days were over to sleep himself to his rest with satisfaction. There were beautiful walks. There is a common, called the *Links*, and a lovely cluster of trees appropriately named Paradise. It was my favourite walk. One day, as I strolled over the Links, I saw a party of men in the bottom of a chalk pit engaged, as I surmised, in digging for fossils. I am, as you know, something of a geologist myself. I therefore walked around the chalk pit in order to see if their search was likely to be productive, but by the time I had got round to where it was possible to get down into the pit the men were gone.

The next development was the appearance, in the hall of our little club, of a very large notice board hanging against the wall. It was covered with crimson baize, while above, in gold letters, were the words, 'Royal Eastbourne Golf Club'. I naturally traced no connection between this mystical writing on the wall and my supposed scientists in the chalk pit; but that very evening over our rubber two of our party began to talk in strange tongues. It is very irritating when people talk in a language you cannot understand, and just as bad if they talk in English over a rubber. Any how, as I soon discovered, what they did talk about was Golf, and those diggers at the bottom of the chalk pit were not geologists, but golfers. Bear in mind we play half-crown points, and it is wonderful how expensive a little golf talk comes over a rubber at half-crown points.

However, I think I bore up pretty well, because I fancied it would not occur again. Nor was I really seriously harassed when I was one day struck smartly on the kneecap by an exceedingly hard little ball as I was taking my favourite walk. I found out that it was a golf ball, and the owner, hurrying up, told me, with all the air of offering consolation, that he had called 'Four' three times – ('Fore!' the old gentleman means, of course). I replied that it would have been simpler to have called 'Twelve' at once; and he left me promptly, as if I were dangerous.

...

I determined that in my very self defence I would try

to learn something about this wonderful game, but not by personal experience. No, no, I had seen too much of the dire effects of it on others. But I had heard that you could generally learn more about a subject from one who was commencing its study than from a past master. So I asked my little niece, whom my brother used often to make carry his sticks – clubs is the technical word for them – to write me an essay on the game. This is what she wrote and I think it is very good: ‘The game of golf is a very nice game. Most people like it very much; even babies play when they are quite young.’ (This is not to say that they will not play when they are quite old.) ‘The balls you play with are very hard indeed, and they might kill anybody if they got hit very hard with them.’ (It seems I have been in some danger.) ‘When you play golf you first take a little sand and make a little heap, and then place the ball at the top of it; then you take a club called a driver, and hit the ball; that is called driving. Then if you get a good way from the hole, but too close to play a driver, you would take an iron club and play up to the hole; when you are close to the hole you would take a club called a putter; and when you get into the hole you count your strokes, and whoever gets into the hole in the least number of strokes, it is their hole’ (this is still technical, and does not mean that you acquire freehold right in the portion of ground occupied by the hole); ‘and if two people who are playing get into the hole in the same number of strokes, it is called a halved hole’.

So there! I flatter myself I know something about it now; and when I see any of these gentlemen going about with those great quivers full of sticks over their back, as they do – something like Cupids – I shall be able to tell them what they are all for, and talk away with the best of them. I assure you it is the only way in self-defence. Now they are fond of coming up to me and telling me all about their matches. This bores me, but it would bore me more perhaps if I did not understand about it, for they would tell me just the same.

...

I went out the other day to see a celebrated player who came down from London. I thought, as a resident, I had about as much right on the links as he had, but he ordered me about as if I was in his drawing-room – moved me about like a chessman, by Jove! He was very rude to me once because I made a remark – not to him or even about him – just as he was on the point of playing. And the next time when I was as still as a mouse he found fault with me because ‘he thought I was going to move!’ However could I help his thoughts? To say nothing of the confounded impertinence of his formulating any idea about my probable actions! At the next hole he picked up a small shell off the ground, and I could not resist taking what perhaps was the

liberty (but I felt it to be pardoned by the freemasonry of science) of darting forward and exclaiming to him: 'Ha, my dear sir, I observe you are a conchologist!'

'A what, Sir?' he said, as if he had never heard the word.

'A conchologist, my dear Sir,' said I.

'You're a conchologist yourself, and be hanged to you,' was his polite reply.

Now, perhaps I ought to have felt proud that the finger of science had so set its seal upon my brow, patent to all beholders, but really the tone in which the remark was made seemed to compel me to place some quite different interpretation on what he said. I left that celebrated golfer abruptly. I do not believe that he was a man of science at all, and I am certain he was not a man of courtesy.

I do not think I have much more to say – indeed, you will probably wonder excessively at my object in writing so much; but you understand this wonderful game, science, allegory of human life, epidemic, or whatever you like to call it. It is a wonderful mystery, and very dangerous; it is beyond comprehension. One man told me he could not 'hole a putt', as he called it, while Mr Gladstone was in office, but that no sooner had the Liberal Unionists got into power than he found it plain and simple. Now, what could be the meaning of that?

I had certain object in writing this to you, all the same. They are getting up golf clubs, not only at Eastbourne, but also at Seaford and Brighton, to my certain knowledge; and doubtless the same danger is threatening many of the like places, where quiet old people retire after the noontday toil of life is over. If you could but give publicity in some way or another to this piteous lamentation it might serve as a warning to others in like station with myself, and enable them to avoid falling into similar – and let me conclude in the golfing vernacular – 'bunkers'.

(Robertson Bauchope (ed.), *The Golfing Annual 1887-88*, cited in Concannon 1996)

**CHAPTER 2 A SOCIO-HISTORICAL
ACCOUNT OF GOLF**

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In attempting to explain and understand golf club practices, it is important to locate this investigation in the context of the history of golf and its structural organisation in Ireland. Historical accounts can demonstrate how the people, events, and ideas of the past influence and shape the present (Wiggins and Mason 2005). This chapter links a socio-historical account of golf in Britain and Ireland with the golf structures and provisions currently in place in Ireland, and includes descriptions of golf's affiliation with the British monarchy, golf participant demographics, and the origins and development of golf in Ireland. Whilst significant in the construction of golf practices and policies, this evidence should also explicate how golf has been widely conjectured as elitist and exclusive. In terms of sourced literature golf publications date as far back as far as the fifteenth century. The world's oldest golf magazine 'Golf' was first published in 1890, existing to this day as 'Golf Weekly' and by 1900 Ireland had a dedicated golf magazine, 'The Irish Golfer', whose pages chronicle the exploits of early golfing enthusiasts (Green 1994; Mulhall 2006). It should be acknowledged that much of this chapter's evidence is drawn from a limited range of available historical accounts (e.g. Concannon 1995; 1996; Green 1994; Menton 1991; Mulhall 2006; Redmond 1997; Stirk 1995). Records of golf union practices and policies are used where available, although given the limited elaboration on some of the formal intricacies of golf policy in Ireland, much of the detail in sections 2.5 and 2.6 are derived from my own knowledge of the field.

2.2 THE ORIGINS OF GOLF

Golf is one of the oldest sports in the world, dating back further than most ball games (Cashmore 2000). Evidence of early Victorian ball and stick games have been recorded in a number of countries, some of which claim association with golf, and many of which are idealised with the aim of presenting a prolonged and celebrated chronology of golf. The game has been linked to the pre-historic shepherd who hit a

pebble with his crook into a neighbouring rabbit-hole while It has been suggested that golf was derived as a form of hurling in Ireland or shinty in Scotland (Browning 1955 cited in Sugden and Bairner 1993; Concannon 1995, 1996; Redmond 1997; Stirk 1995). The Chinese claim that golf was imported to Europe by tradesmen as the game of 'chuiwan', with the first reference dating back to 947 AD, while another theory suggests that golf was initiated in England as the medieval pastime of 'cambuca' and brought north to Scotland by the Romans (Concannon 1996). All of these claims to the origins of golf have been shortlived. Other versions of the game include the Roman game of 'paganica', the ancient Flemish game of 'chole' ('soule' in France) and the French/Italian game of 'jeu de mail' (pall mall) (Green 1994; Stirk 1995). Steven J.H. van Hengel, a Dutch golf historian and one of the foremost experts on the origins of golf, traced the game of 'colf' (or 'kolf') played on frozen canals in northern Holland back as far as 1297, and he believed it developed as an amalgam of 'chole' and 'jeu de mail' (Green 1994). Frequent trading links by merchantmen between Holland and Scotland in the fifteenth century presented many opportunities for 'colf' to travel across the North Sea and records show that the Scots imported golf balls from Holland as long ago as 1486 (Green 1994). Thus the strongest inclination is that the Scots refined 'colf' to golf, otherwise spelt 'goff' and 'gowf' (Concannon 1996; Green 1994; Stirk 1995).

2.3 EARLY GOLF IN BRITAIN

2.3.1 15th – 17th Century

The first recorded reference to golf in Scotland came in 1457 when King James II proclaimed that "futebaw and golf be uterly cryt done and not usyt..."³ The King outlawed and banned golf and football in Scotland for the preceding 60 years, in his belief that the popularity of both sports was interfering with his subjects' archery practise for the war with England (Concannon 1995; Concannon 1996; Cousins

³ Translation: "football and golf be utterly cried done and not used"

1975; Green 1994; Stirk 1995). However, the monarchs who ratified the law had no qualms about playing themselves. In 1501 the Treaty of Glasgow brought peace between Scotland and England and shortly afterwards the long association between the Stuart Kings and the game of golf began, from King James IV, to his son King James V and his predecessor Mary Queen of Scots (Concannon 1995; Stirk 1995). Whilst attending school in France, Queen Mary was an avid player of 'jeu de mail' and golf and she often visited **St. Andrews** in Scotland, where golf is thought to have been played since the fifteenth century (Concannon 1995; Green 1994; Stirk 1995). Queen Mary's son and successor, King James VI of Scotland, who in 1603 with the union of the Scottish and English kingdoms also became known as King James I of England is credited with establishing the first golf course outside of Scotland in 1608, namely Royal Blackheath, situated 8 miles south of London (Concannon 1995; Green 1994; Stirk 1995). King James' I younger son Charles II, who also became King, was known to have been playing golf on Leith links when news of the Irish Rebellion was brought to him in 1642 (Concannon 1995; Concannon 1996). A nineteenth century reference sums up golf's association with the monarchy:

In Scotland the popular game is called Golf. It is a game that was probably played by the Romans, and in the reign of Edward III, it was called by the Latin term, Cambuca. It is played by two or more persons, armed with a straight-handed ash bat, the lower part of which is slightly curved. The object of the game is to drive a small, hard ball into certain holes in the ground, and he who soonest accomplishes this wins the game. It is commonly played in the winter time, sometimes on the ice. Great amusement is created by this game, when a number of players engage in it. The Scotchmen residing in London have a Golf Club; and at certain times of the year they meet at Blackheath and elsewhere, dressed in their national costume, and a very picturesque sight such a meeting is. It was at this game that Prince Henry, son of James I, used to amuse himself; in the beginning of the 17th century it was, consequently, a very fashionable game among the nobility and their initiators.

(Oliver Optic 1862, cited in Concannon 1996, p. 78)

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Church were

strongly opposed to golf as it was mostly played on Sundays (Concannon 1996). However, with their active involvement, the monarchy had a major influence in popularising golf, and it soon became trademarked as 'the royal and ancient game' (Concannon 1995; Concannon 1996). Green (1994, p.25) asserts "from the moment the Stuart kings took the game south to England with them, golf has always been exported with a designer label".

2.3.2 Golf and Society in Britain: 17th – 19th Century

In spite of the royal influence, up until the mid 1700s golf was largely a classless game where street folk were just as common on the links as wealthy merchants (Concannon 1995). In 1740 however, strong trading links were formed with Europe which brought prosperity to Scotland and the resultant rich could afford to indulge in arranging golf matches more often (Concannon 1995). Golf soon became considered an upper class activity for those who had time and wealth, and while the merchantsmen played golf, they employed local townspeople on meagre wages as **caddies**, club manufacturers, golf **professionals** and **green keepers** (Concannon 1995; Green 1994). Golf was the preliminary activity for these 'gentlemen golfers' as they became known, and as outlined in the opening extract. Following a game they ritualised in speech making, discussing the day's play, settling wagers and drinking copious amounts of port and wine (Concannon 1995; Stirk 1995). Marked differences in leisure and work practices between higher and lower social classes were becoming increasingly evident through golf.

Where the 'gentlemen golfers' demanded their own time on the golf course and privacy in their own circles, membership groups formed and these exclusive societies became popular among the social elite of the time (Cousins 1975; Concannon 1996). Uniforms were worn to distinguish club members from regular links players and clubhouses and dinner tables were decorated for ceremonies. Clubs had specific codes of practice and failure to wear uniform, non attendance or speaking out of turn could give rise to a 'fine' with the

most common penalty a sentence to drink a gallon of claret (Concannon 1996; Stirk 1995). Soon, the leading Scottish clubs became closed operations and their membership was confined to men of a certain social, professional and familial standing:

The butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker might be very honest fellows, and good golfers and sportsmen, but they were by no means fit for the honourable company of the lawyers, ministers, professors, and publishers who hobnobbed with the lairds and nobility in the sacred precincts of the club.

(Smith 1912 cited in Concannon 1996 p.98)

Most of the early societies were established by **freemasons** and their secrecy meant that when the clubs opened to those outside the fraternity many documentary materials were destroyed, thus making it difficult to date the earliest societies (Green 1994; Stirk 1995). The earliest formed club the Royal Burgess Society had lawyers, bankers, architects, stonemasons, bakers and grocers among its membership (Concannon 1995). The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers now based at Muirfield, Scotland is thought to be the oldest surviving golf club in the world with records dating back to 1744 (Green 1994). One of the world's most celebrated clubs formed in 1754 as the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews (The **R&A**), which, today, is one of two world governing golf bodies (Concannon 1995). With the formation of these membership groups divisions in societal class and status became more pronounced on the golf course .

In 1650 golf was only played in about 12 locations in Scotland, and at the same time in Holland 'colf' was practised in over 40 places (Green 1994). However, King Charles' II endorsement of golf increased its profile, and gave rise to the craftsman trades of golf club maker and golf ball manufacturer (Stirk 1995). In the late seventeenth century the wooden/leather golf ball was replaced by the newly invented 'feathery' ball (Concannon 1995; Cousins 1975; Stirk 1995). Skilled craftsmen struggled to produce more than four feathery balls a day, accounting for its exorbitant price, where one feathery cost twelve times the price of the wooden ball and about the

same as one wooden club (Concannon 1995; Cousins 1975; Stirk 1995). Those who could afford the feathery needed three or four in one's pocket because the balls could get lost, burst or become soggy in wet conditions. Clubs were also expensive and difficult to preserve, where links courses were rough and cluttered with debris and animal droppings, while rain often blighted wooden shafts and frozen ground split clubheads. While the rich afforded the updated equipment the less well off used old discarded balls and damaged cast-off clubs. Good weather lessened the risk of damaging these expensive tools but this luxury was available only to the gentry in their leisure time (Stirk 1995). These factors served to delineate golf as an upper class pastime rather than one for ordinary citizens, and thus began the social divide between the local artisans and the gentlemen golfers.

2.3.3 The Spread of Golf: 19th-20th Century

Mainly due to its expense, golf suffered a set back in the 1700s, but it was the enthusiasm of the freemasons and the newly established clubs that carried the game well into the nineteenth century (Stirk 1995). The monarchy used their considerable influence to spread golf beyond the shores of Britain, and with the expansion of the British Empire golf grew substantially. Throughout the 1800s the British Empire bestowed 'royal status' on sixty two golf clubs worldwide. In 1829 Royal Bombay and Royal Calcutta became the oldest golf clubs outside of Britain, established a decade after India was declared the first established outpost of the British Empire. Five clubs in Ireland were also affiliated with royalty – Royal Belfast, Royal County Down, Royal Portrush, The Royal Dublin and, although later relinquishing this title, the Curragh. British workers and residents across the globe helped to grow the game to all continents in the late 1800s, namely Canada, Argentina, Australia, South Africa, Belgium and Thailand and the growth of golf accelerated across the British Commonwealth (Concannon 1995; Green 1994; Stirk 1995). Newspaper reports suggest that golf was played in America between

1795 and 1830 even though there is evidence of 'colf' being played in New York in 1659 (Stirk 1995).

The industrial revolution around 1850 spurred on an innovation in equipment, and brought wades of popularity to golf. The advent and mass production of the cheaper and more user-friendly 'gutta-percha' or 'guttie' golf ball throughout the twentieth century brought golf within reach of millions of people all over the world (Cousins 1975; Green 1994; Stirk 1995). Available leisure time and fast developing railways made it easier to get to the golf course, while the mower grass cutting invention meant that golf was not only curtailed to the short grass of seaside links (Stirk 1995). In 1999, 47% of golf clubs in Scotland were over one hundred years old while a further quarter were founded in the first half of the 1900s (Sport Scotland 2002). In 1851 there were just 24 golf clubs in Great Britain, but by 1899 this number had risen to 1276 (Concannon 1995). However, social change was yet to come to twentieth century Britain, and in the early 1900s club membership fees were being introduced, to many golfers' disappointment:

We believe that to charge as most clubs do three or four guineas entrance and a like subscription is ridiculous and unreasonable, and that there are scores of would-be golfers who are prevented from playing on the grounds of expense alone.

(Radford, B. 1910, cited in Concannon 1996, p.178)

In the twenty year period between the First and Second World Wars resentment grew towards the upper classes and civil unrest ensued (Concannon 1995). This aversion was reflected on the golf course, where sharp disparities between classes existing in society were marked almost as clearly among golfers, while minority groups such as Jews found it impossible to gain admission to a golf club (Concannon 1995; Cousins 1975). In spite of an upsurge in participation, from this evidence it seems that golf's exclusion of minority groups and close ties with higher social classes would be preserved.

2.3.4 Females in Golf in Britain

Thus far in this chapter the place of females in golf has been silenced, much like their position in early golf in Britain. Up until the mid 1800s it was seldom that a female golfer would be seen on the golf course, and for years they were restricted to secret games that involved little more than putting (Concannon 1995). Females were shunned and eschewed from golf, which was seen as an unsuitable pastime for the wives of gentlemen:

We therefore gladly welcomed the establishment of ladies' links – a kind of Jews' quarter – which have now been generously provided for them on most of the larger **greens**. Ladies' links should be laid on the model, though on a smaller scale, of the 'long round'; containing some short putting holes, some longer holes, admitting of a drive or two of seventy or eighty yards, and a few suitable hazards. We venture to suggest seventy or eighty yards as the average limit of a drive advisedly, not because we doubt that cannot well be done without raising the club above the shoulder. Now, we do not presume to dictate, but we must observe that the posture and gestures requisite for a full swing are not particularly graceful when the player is clad in female dress.

(Lord Moncrieff 1890 cited in Concannon 1996, p. 185)

Golf was a serious space for men but a controlled social space for women, who were often perceived as emotionally unstable and organisationally incompetent in sport and as a result occupied a secondary role in the golf setting (Haig-Muir 1998). In spite of this evidence, golf gradually became an acceptable activity for well to do females, particularly as a healthy and decorous form of moderate exercise, which helped develop socially desirable attributes like self control, did not threaten male players, and provided opportunities to mingle with males and females of the same social standing (Phillips 1989). Similarly, as a sport that could be played in full covered dress, golf was considered more appropriate for 'ladies' who could afford this attire, moreso than working class females (Cashmore 2000). Although the first women's golf club was formed in St. Andrews in 1867, activities were restricted to putting on poor ground for thirty years, away from the 'real' golf played by male members. Social

changes in the late 1800s divested most of the prejudices which had restricted women's golf. Playing numbers began to swell and by 1890 female golfers could be found on many golf courses in Scotland (Concannon 1995). The Ladies Golf Union (**LGU**) was established in Scotland in 1893, which today remains the umbrella organisation for ladies' amateur golf in Britain and Ireland. However, there was some opposition to the formation of the LGU:

North Berwick
9th April 1893

Dear Miss Martin,

I have read your letter about the proposed Ladies' Golf Union with much interest. Let me give you the famous advice of Mr Punch (since you honour me by asking for my opinion). *Don't*. My reasons? Well!

1. Women never have and never can unite to push any scheme to success. They are bound to fall out and quarrel on the smallest or no provocation; they are built that way!
2. They will never go through one Ladies' Championship with credit. Tears will bedew, if wigs do not bestrew, the green.
3. Constitutionally and physically women are unfitted for golf. They will never last through two rounds of a long course in a day. Nor can they ever hope to defy the wind and weather encountered on our best links even in spring and summer. Temperamentally the strain will be too great for them.

The first Ladies' Championship will be the last, unless I and others are greatly mistaken. The L.G.U. seems scarcely worth while...

(Horace Hutchinson to Blanche Martin (first LGU treasurer), 9th April 1893, cited in Concannon 1996, p.186)

Notwithstanding the initiation of the LGU and other female golf organisations, the movement towards equal participation was hampered by golf club policies. Females were restricted to 'associate' membership in many golf clubs, while their male counterparts had access to the more expensive 'full' membership, affording them uncontested weekend playing rights, justified by the male working week, and the privileges of **full membership** (Cousins 1975). Some of Britain's renowned courses denied females access to membership, including St. Andrews, which refuses females access to

the R&A clubhouse to this day (author's experience). Ladies' golf organisations such as the LGU appeared to legitimise these practices by hosting championships at male only golf clubs. At the 1965 Ladies' British Amateur Open at a stormy St. Andrews, a group of competitors sheltered in front of the R&A clubhouse when a club official approached requesting them to lower their umbrellas because they were spoiling the view of the Old Course enjoyed by the male members in the lounge (Green 1994).

2.3.5 Formalising Golf

In 1744 thirteen rules of golf were drawn up for the first ever formal golf tournament which was hosted by the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers (Concannon 1995). The competition was originally open to all competitors but subsequently became restricted to the Gentlemen and Noblemen of Edinburgh and could only be won by members of the Honourable Company (Concannon 1995). The antiquated language, negative orders, emphasis on etiquette and male connotations of the rules reflects essentially the professional and social status of those who collaborated to devise them:

1. You must **tee** your ball, within a club's length of the hole.
2. You are not to remove stones, bones or any break club for the sake of playing your ball, except upon the fair green/and that only/within a club's length of your ball.
3. If your ball comes among watter, or any wattery filth, you are at liberty to take out your ball and bringing it behind the hazard and teeing it, you may play it with any club and allow your ambersant and a stroke for so getting out your ball.
4. If you shou'd lose your ball, by its being take up, or any other way, you are to go back to the spot, where you struck last and drop another ball, and allow your adversary a stroke for the misfortune.
5. If a ball be stopp'd by any person, horse, dog or anything else, the ball so stopp'd must be play'd where it lyes.
6. Neither trench, ditch, or dyke, made for the preservation of the links, nor the scholar's holes or the soldier's lines, shall be accounted a hazard; but the ball is to be taken out/teed/and play'd with any

iron club.

(British Golf Museum 2008)

With their reliance on competitor honesty and honour, variations of these rules were pertinent over time and are the basis for the governance of golf (R&A 2008) (Green 1994). Although the Honourable Company of Edinburgh golfers set down these rules, having already stipulated in 1858 that a golf match consisted of 18 holes, the R&A at St. Andrews assumed responsibility for the rules of golf in 1897 (Green 1994). The printed 'Rules of Golf' aim to "preserve the integrity of golf at all levels", with some sections devoted to the 'spirit of the game', and 'consideration for other players', thus accentuating etiquette and behaviour (R&A 2008).

From the mid nineteenth century onwards golf clubs in Scotland began to employ golf 'professionals' or talented golfers who made a living by making golf clubs and balls, caddying and giving golf lessons (Cousins 1975; Stirk 1995). In 1860 eight professionals were invited to compete in the first British Open, or the modern day 'Open Championship', which was also open to amateur entry (Cousins 1975). With disputes over eligibility, in 1883 a professional golfer became defined as "one who accepts prize money". In 1884 amateurism was also legislated for, and the first British Amateur Championship was held two years later (Cousins 1975). As golf grew in popularity in the nineteenth century wealthy businessmen supported professional golfers in tournaments, receiving personal tutelage in return (Concannon 1995). Given the growing numbers of professional golfers, in the late nineteenth century the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) was established in Britain in 1903 to safeguard the interests and welfare of the club professional (Concannon 1995). The PGA has branches in countries all over the world with the British and European headquarters based at the PGA Training Academy at the Belfry, England.

The 1890s was a significant time for the development of golfing associations all over the world. After taking charge of the rules of golf in 1897, the R&A quickly gained a profile as a global golf governing

body, and the town of St. Andrews soon became recognised as ‘the home of golf’ (Green 1994). Aside from Mexico and the USA which are governed by the 1894 established United States Golf Association (**USGA**), 126 countries are affiliated to the R&A which, along with the rules of golf, has responsibilities for amateur golf and golf development (Concannon 1995; R&A 2011). The organisation hosts the world amateur golf rankings, male amateur championships, e.g. British Amateur Championship, and, although an amateur oriented organisation, it has the unique responsibility for the Open Championship, one of the four majors in professional male golf (R&A 2011). The LGU hosts female amateur tournaments such as the Ladies’ British Amateur Championship, and the British Open, one of the four majors in professional female golf. Gender separated amateur golf bodies in Britain were founded through the 1890s, e.g. the Welsh Golf Union (male) in 1895 but it wasn’t until after World War I that the Scottish and English male organisations were established (Concannon 1995).

2.3.6 Junior golf

Midway through the twentieth century leading figures in golf in Britain were predicting a potential crisis in the game, where levels of participation and membership numbers were falling and clubs were getting into difficulty (Menton 1991). A group of representatives embarked on a project targetting junior golf as a potential participation growth area. In 1952 a pilot scheme was launched to introduce golf to schools. Former Open Champion Sir Henry Cotton gave free lectures and demonstrations on golf to six schools in England (Cousins 1975; Menton 1991). The following year in 1953, the **Golf Foundation** was formed as a non-profit making company with the primary aim of promoting and developing golf among young people in Britain (Golf Foundation 2008). By 1954, with the help of volunteers and support of golf professionals, 200 schools were actively involved in the programme. By the end of the decade 10,000 boys and girls were playing golf in Britain and by the 1970s about

30,000 more boys and girls were being introduced to golf each year (Cousins 1975; Golf Foundation 2008). The Foundation was supported by funding from the R&A and the golfing unions in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales (Golf Foundation 2008).

2.4 GOLF IN IRELAND: 17th – 20th CENTURY

The origins of golf in Ireland date back as far as the 1600s and were heavily influenced by British professionals (Menton 1991; Mulhall 2006; Redmond 1997). While there are traces of the game of 'goff' in Ulster as early as 1606, first recorded evidence of golf in Ireland was at Bray, Co. Wicklow in 1762 (Gibson 1988 cited in Redmond 1997; Menton 1991). A newspaper journal of the day reported, "The Goff club meet to dine at the house of Mr. Charles Moran at Bray on Thursday, the 28th October, 1762 at half an hour after three o'clock – Elias de Butts, Esq. in the Chair" (The Dublin Journal No. 3704 cited in Redmond 1997, p.2). Officers stationed at the Curragh, Co. Kildare (which was later given 'royal' status) are reported to have played there from the 1850s onwards and the club's official institution was recorded as 1883 (Menton 1991; Redmond 1997).

2.4.1 Early Golf in Ireland: From the 17th Century

Golf in Ireland has been described as 'a gift from Scotland' where Scottish visitors to Ireland accelerated its growth throughout the country (Mulhall 2006; Redmond 1997). The first established Irish golf club, Royal Belfast, was founded in 1881 by George Baillie, a Scottish teacher working in Belfast (Menton 1991; Mulhall 2006). In 1885 the Royal Dublin Golf Club was formed by a Scottish banker, John Lumsden (Menton 1991; Mulhall 2006). Just three years later, the Cork Golf Club became the first to be set up in Munster and in 1894 a club was established at Rosses Point, Sligo (Menton 1991; Mulhall 2006). During the 1890s, 103 golf clubs came into existence. By 1901 there were an estimated 12,000 golfers playing the game and by 1914 Ireland had 190 golf clubs, just under half of the number that exist today (Mulhall 2006). The impressive spread of golf in

Ireland in the 1890s can be attributed to the country's short-lived but settled political climate at the time, and Mulhall (2006) suggests that around this time Irish men and women from the professional classes became obsessed with golf. The growth of railways helped to popularise the game and courses were constructed within easy reach of a railway (Redmond 1997). Similarly, the immense popularity of the bicycle also facilitated the spread of golf in Ireland (Mulhall 2006). The GUI was formed in 1891 as the earliest established golf union or federation in the world while its female counterpart the ILGU formed two years later and is recognised as the oldest ladies' golf union in the world (Menton 1991; ILGU 2011a). With interest increasing in Irish golf leading into the twentieth century, Taylor commented:

Golf may eventually prove to be the salvation of the country at large. The game will bring money from all quarters. Trade will naturally follow its wake, for tourists will cross the Irish Sea – not for the mountains, the lakes or the fishing, but for the golf.

This is not a fancy picture. There are already signs of the attractions of the game in Ireland and I have no doubt that time will prove the correctness of my estimate. Irelands' golfing capabilities have just been tapped and I have little hesitation stating that before many years have passed it will have steadily risen into the position of a great golfing country. Its advantages are many.

There you can find without great difficulty a large number of very natural courses. Magnificent in their quality and the extent of virgin ground yet to be opened up by the golf pioneer is an almost unthinkable quantity.

Irish turf is like velvet in its texture and the very finest putting greens in the world are to be found there. This is only what one might expect from the great climatic influences that are at work all the year round. Much more rain falls in Ireland than in England, the whole atmosphere is genial and moist in character and so the turf is springy, soft and as true as could be desired by the most fastidious of golfers.

(J.H. Taylor 1902, cited in Redmond 1997, p. 50)

2.4.2 Golf and Society in Ireland: 19th – 20th Century

The swift development of golf in Ireland at the end of the nineteenth

century was a reflection of increasing prosperity and the growth of a leisured professional class (Mulhall 2006). Such was the success of Irish golf in its early years that, in 1910, one of Portmarnock Golf Club's founders W.C. Pickeman expressed the view that "golf is spreading so rapidly all over Ireland that it *may* in a few years time become the national game" (cited in Mulhall 2006, p.35). However because of the narrow social stratum from which early golfers came, this was never a realistic proposition. The driving force in Limerick Golf Club's early history was Alexander Shaw, a local businessman, who owned a bacon factory and was a director of the Waterford, Limerick and Western Railway (Mulhall 2006). Shaw also helped to found Lahinch Golf Club, a place of migration for many Limerick golfers during the summer months (Mulhall 2006). One of the founding fathers of Rosses Point Golf Club was Arthur Jackson, who married an aunt of the famous Anglo-Irish painter, Jack and his poet brother W.B Yeats (Mulhall 2006). John Jameson, owner of the famous Jameson Irish whiskey distillery, was influential in the formation of Portmarnock Golf Club in Dublin in 1894 (Mulhall 2006). The professions and social standing of these golf club founders and their prominence on early golf club committees reveal the 'elite' backgrounds of those who pioneered golf in late-Victorian Ireland (Mulhall 2006). Chronicles of the Island Golf Club in County Dublin reflect societal and religious divisions in early twentieth century Ireland and the participation disparities already in place in some quarters of Irish golf. The author of the Island Golf Club history Brian Inglis, described the golf club's importance to the Protestant community in Malahide as 'the only local institution which rivalled the church as a social power' (Inglis 1962, cited in Mulhall 2006, p.34). However, eligibility for membership was not only determined by religion, where 'no retailer could become a member of the club unless of an impeccable social background' (Inglis 1962, cited in Mulhall 2006, p.34). As happened in Scotland, golf quickly became a game revered by higher social classes, where golf clubs were established and ran by businessmen and selective practices

excluded many. In predominantly poor early twentieth century Catholic Ireland golf, a pastime initiated by British Protestants from mostly professional classes, did not have the support of all.

While political figures such as Arthur Balfour (former British Prime Minister, Chief Secretary for Ireland and captain of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club at St. Andrews) and Winston Churchill (former British Prime Minister) became closely associated with golf, the game's discernible emergence in Ireland in the late 1800s coincided with political turmoil and civil unrest. In 1884, the Gaelic Athletic Association (**GAA**) was founded, a nationalist organisation which quickly became a symbol for anti-British sentiment (Cronin 1997; Cronin 1998; Cronin 1999). Cronin (1999, p.38) comments "the Irish often seek to define themselves in a manner that is oppositional to the British", particularly through non-British symbols and among Northern Catholics (Sugden and Bairner 1993; Bairner 2005). Not everyone was enamoured with the first sight of organised golf in Dublin at the Phoenix Park, where members of the Royal Dublin Golf Club wore red coats and knickerbockers and became referred to as the 'red loonies' (Redmond 1997). Reflecting on early twentieth century culture one prominent nationalist, C.S. Andrews, outlined the puritanical ethos of the GAA, disapproving of activities other than national games, "each foreign game we now disdain golf, cricket and ping-pong" (Gaelic Athlete, 3 Feb 1912, cited in Mandle 1987). Although not among the sports that the GAA banned (see '**the ban**'), on the basis of the influence of British regiments in bringing the game to Ireland, many nationalists still branded golf a 'foreign game' (Mulhall 2006). However, it seems that the game's origins in Scotland, a fellow Celtic country, along with golf's inclusion in Aonach Tailteann, the ancient international games of Independent Ireland, may have helped golf to avoid the stigma attached to other British originated sports such as cricket and rugby in nationalist minds (Cronin 2005; Mulhall 2006).

The population of Ireland declined by 48% from 8.2 million in the 1840s to 4.2 million in 1926, primarily due to famine and

outbreaks of war, which impinged on golf participation (Courtney 1995). In 1887 future British Prime Minister Arthur Balfour was appointed Secretary of State for Ireland and with the island under political unrest Balfour was constantly under police protection, even on his frequent golfing trips to Scotland and London (Cousins 1975). Many golfers in Ireland volunteered for military service during World War I, where Greystones and Galway golf clubs had a fifth of their membership going to the front (Mulhall 2006). In 1916, Royal County Down Golf Club had the largest contingent of serving golfers (107 in total), followed by Portmarnock (70) and The Island (46) (Mulhall 2006). Clubs also raised substantial funds for the war effort, e.g. £200 from the Castle golf club and £95 from Woodenbridge golf club (Mulhall 2006). These numbers are high when one considers that most golf clubs at the time had quite small memberships (Mulhall 2006) and Irish golfers' involvement in the war reflects perhaps the strong British allegiance of golf participants. During World War I the Royal Dublin links became a British Army rifle range and similarly the links were commandeered by the Irish army during the Civil War (Mulhall 2006; Redmond 1997).

The struggle to undermine British rule in Ireland dominated the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, culminating in **partition** of the island in 1922. Given their association with Ireland's social and political elite and Protestant religion, golf clubs inevitably had a difficult time during both the War of Independence and the ensuing Civil War (Mulhall 2006). As a result, many clubhouses were burned down and some clubs closed either temporarily or permanently (Mulhall 2006). It is possible that the origins of golf in Britain and its association with selective religious practices may still have an influence on the participation and involvement of particular social groups in the modern day. Later on in the twentieth century golf became embroiled in the politics of communal division in Northern Ireland, where golf clubs used membership entry mechanisms to prevent people from particular backgrounds from gaining access. The involvement of senior business, administrative and security

professionals in golf clubs implicated these facilities as terrorist targets for bombings and shootings (Sugden and Bairner 1993). As documented in hockey (Liston & Moreland 2009) and other sports (Bairner 2007), national identity issues have been reported in Irish golf, primarily following US Open and British Open Championship wins by Northern Irishmen Rory McIlroy, Graeme McDowell and Darren Clarke, all of whom have represented GUI Irish teams (Pollak 2011). With no recognised Northern Irish team, the introduction of golf to the 2016 Olympic Games may compell players from Northern Ireland to declare for either the Great Britain or Ireland team.

2.5 FORMALISING GOLF IN IRELAND

The Golfing Union of Ireland (GUI) was originally founded by nine clubs in Ulster. At the time the Union was set up in 1891, 28 'greens' or golf courses had been formed on the island of Ireland, 21 of which affiliated to the GUI (GUI 2011; Menton 1991). On the 12th of October 1891 a meeting was held in the Northern Counties Railway Hotel, Portrush for the purpose of forming a golfing union and establishing an Irish Championship. A number of resolutions were adopted at the meeting and later on the appointed honorary secretary wrote to the R&A requesting "a copy of the rules governing your Championship meeting so that we may have some basis to go on in arranging ours" (Coombe 1891 cited in Redmond 1997 p.5). Once a national union was formed the game spread rapidly and between 1892 and 1900 as many as 97 clubs were established (Redmond 1997). Following the partition of Ireland in 1922 some sports organisations split accordingly, e.g. soccer, but the GUI and ILGU remained all-island structures. Bairner (2005) comments that the still existent all-island nature of some sports organisations is surprising given the British origins of many of the sports and the constitutional separation of Ireland.

Before the formation of the Irish Ladies Golf Union (ILGU) in 1893 there is little evidence available on the early visibility of female golfers in Ireland (Mulhall 2006). Along with other Scottish women,

the wife of Captain Wight of the Scottish Light Infantry who played in Royal Belfast Golf Club was influential in inspiring the interest of other ladies to play around 1887 (Redmond 1997). Around the same time Holywood Ladies' Golf Club was formed and golf clubs in the north began to allow women to play (Redmond 1997). On December 15th 1893 in the Girls' Friendly Society Lodge in Belfast a meeting was held to form the ILGU, two years after its male counterpart and the same year as the LGU (Redmond 1997). Although numerous Irish lady golfers had great success in early tournaments there appeared to be a reluctance of clubs from the South of Ireland to affiliate to the union (Redmond 1997). The ILGU decided to enhance the spread of golf by relocating the Irish Championship to Lahinch in 1904 and to hold an annual meeting in Dublin. These decisions appeared to ignite women's golf in Ireland and by 1935 the ILGU had 165 affiliated clubs (Mair 1992; Redmond 1997).

Following the formation of the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) in Britain in 1903, the Irish Professional Golfers' Association (IPGA) was set up in 1911 under the administration of the GUI (Menton 1991). It was only in September 1965 that the IPGA decided it would be able to take control of its own affairs and it requested recognition under the PGA of Britain (Menton 1991). Currently all registered Irish club and tour professional golfers are full members of the PGA Irish region, whose offices are based in Dundalk, Co. Louth (Menton 1991). The PGA of Britain gradually became involved in the promotion of golf tournaments and by the 1960s a schedule of events for professional golfers had been established (Concannon 1995). Professional tournament golf in Ireland originated in Royal Portrush where the first formal **match play** competition among professionals was held in 1895 and was replaced by the Irish Professional Championship in 1907 (Redmond 1997). Professional golf boosted the growth of the game in Ireland particularly in the 1960s when crowds flocked to watch events in Dublin such as the Canada Cup (World Cup of Golf) in Portmarnock and Ireland became a regular stop-off on the professional golf circuit

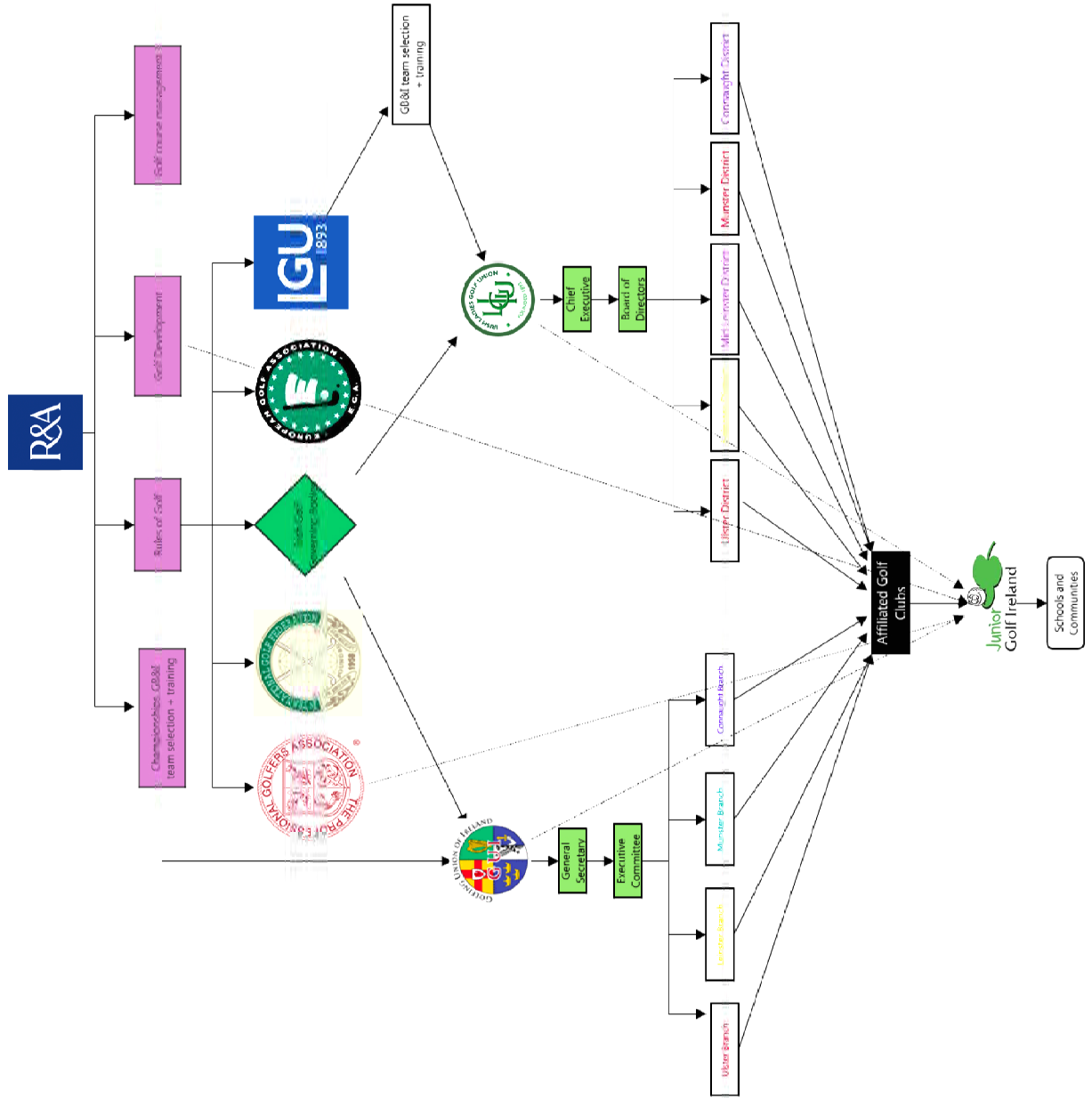
(Redmond 1997). The achievements of Irish professional golfers such as Christy O'Connor along with the televised feats of Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus resulted in a swelling of golf popularity during the 1960s with the GUI recording a dramatic increase in participation numbers at this time (Redmond 1997; Stoddart 2006a) (see Chapter three). By the 1990s, Ireland had its own annual dedicated **European Tour** golf event in the **Irish Open** and prior to the staging of the **Ryder Cup** at the K Club in 2006, the country played host to the World Golf Championships at Mount Juliet. The return of the Ladies Irish Open and the inaugural staging of the **Solheim Cup** has seen the profile of female golf rise. Since 2007 professional golfers Padraig Harrington, Graeme McDowell, Rory McIlroy and Darren Clarke have captured three of the four major championships of professional men's golf, with the US Masters the only major to evade them.

2.5.1 Amateur Golf

The GUI and ILGU are responsible for co-ordinating and developing amateur golf from club to national level in Ireland. Both unions are affiliated to the R&A for the rules of amateur golf and both unions administer these rules and the rules of amateur status in national, regional and local tournaments in golf in Ireland (R&A 2011). The R&A also coordinates team championships for the home countries (Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales) and selects, trains and manages Great Britain and Ireland teams, made up of players from these countries. The LGU carries out the equivalent coordination of Ireland's top amateur female golfers (see Figure 1.1). The most significant role of the GUI and ILGU is in their role in regulating handicaps and coordinating competitions for Irish golf clubs, of which there are over 430. Of this total, 430 golf clubs are affiliated with the GUI, while 398 are affiliated with the ILGU⁴ (GUI 2011; ILGU 2011c).

⁴ Golf clubs can choose whether or not they want to be affiliated to the national governing bodies of golf. Affiliation allows members of the club to hold an official golf handicap and compete in official golf competitions.

Figure 2.1 Structural arrangement of golf organisations



In Scotland, 98% of clubs are affiliated to the Scottish Golf Union or the Scottish Ladies Golf Association (SportScotland 2002). As part of their annual membership subscription, all members of golf clubs affiliated to the GUI (male members only) and ILGU (female members only) pay a membership levy to their respective union, i.e. €20 for GUI members, €25 for ILGU members, and €5 for both GUI and ILGU junior members). This entitles them to an official GUI or ILGU golf *handicap* and eligibility to play in formal golf competitions. Club, provincial, national and international golf tournaments for various age groups and handicap levels are organised by the unions annually (GUI 2011; ILGU 2011c).

Since their origins in the late 1800's the GUI and ILGU have always been separate entities. Liston (2006a) suggests that the dominance of the Catholic Church and sexual segregation practices and the marginalisation of females in wider society promoted patriarchal social structures in Ireland, including the organisation of sport by gender. It is thought, however that the growing number of female participants in male-dominated sports in Ireland has resulted in a shift in power between the genders (Liston 2006b). Up until recently when Welsh golf unions amalgamated and the men's and ladies' unions in England and Scotland began the merger process, amateur golf unions in the British Isles were among the only ones worldwide to be segregated by gender. At a glance, amalgamation of the GUI and ILGU would potentially deem it a stronger entity, more resourceful and efficient, and secure more funding and sponsorship from both public and private bodies. Liston (2006a) has expressed some concern with similar movements in rugby and soccer in Ireland:

Moving closer together seems to create a different kind of resistance from that involved in more segregated sport forms, involving a movement from patronising dismissals of women's sports to a heightening resentment and sometimes fear, on the part of males...the mutual balance of power between the sexes is moving from harmonious inequality towards inharmonious equality.

(Liston 2006a, p. 625)

While there is yet no sign of the Irish golf unions following their

counterparts in mainland Britain, any move towards integration of the GUI and ILGU would spark major debate in Irish golfing circles.

2.5.2 Professional Golf

The PGA Irish Region is responsible for coordinating a tournament circuit for professional golfers in Ireland, administering the training and education of PGA professionals and promoting golf coach education. The organisation licences professional golf coaches in Ireland. The Irish professional circuit comprises weekly tournaments mostly played by club professionals or those aspiring to graduate onto higher profile international tours. Those professionals who concentrate on playing golf on tour are not obliged to become 'PGA qualified' unless they choose to teach golf, which the large majority of golf professionals in Ireland do. PGA qualification consists of a part time three year foundation degree course in professional golf studies, or a full time honours degree course in applied golf management studies, both from the University of Birmingham, UK and the PGA Europe Headquarters in the Belfry, England. To be eligible for entry to the foundation course applicants must be over 18 years of age, have a golf handicap of four or less (male) or six or less (female), pass a golf playing ability test and have achieved certain grades at GCSE or Leaving Certificate level (PGA 2011a). Only qualified PGA coaches are permitted to coach golf as a paid profession. Recent figures document that there are 455 qualified PGA professionals in Ireland, 352 in the Republic and 103 in Northern Ireland, most of whom are employed as 'club professionals' in golf clubs nationwide (Gallagher 2010). Golf lessons in Ireland can be costly, ranging from €40 an hour to over €100 with the most renowned PGA coaches. Tutoring equipment such as 'launch monitors' and putting laboratories can now measure various biomechanical features, e.g., swing speed, ball spin rates, clubface angles, which can benefit PGA professionals in giving comprehensive swing analysis to their students. Through tuition with junior golfers during lessons, camps and training, the PGA plays a major role in introducing young people

to the game and providing them with the necessary skills to continue playing golf (PGA 2011b).

2.6 JUNIOR GOLF IN IRELAND

Up until the Second World War junior golfers in Ireland were few in number and unless their parents had paid a family membership subscription they were seldom allowed access to the golf club:

Fifty or so years ago young boys and girls who sought to play golf were barely tolerated by their elders and, for the most part, were regarded as somewhat of a nuisance. They were interfering with the serious business of the leisurely *fourball* of the more senior members of the club.

(Menton 1991, p.114)

By the middle of the twentieth century however, attitudes started to change and clubs began to introduce and enlarge junior membership, and as a result the GUI appointed a junior golf committee to coordinate the junior golf work of the four GUI branches and to arrange junior golf tournaments. In 1948 the GUI decided that each province could hold a boys' championship (Menton 1991). In 1957 when the union investigated ways of improving golf in Ireland they decided to increase membership affiliation fees by 50% from 10p to 15p, devoting the additional revenue generated to junior golf (Menton 1991). When the Golf Foundation formed in 1953, the organisation invited a GUI representative onto its committee, something which the GUI regarded as vital in the development of junior golf in Ireland (Menton 1991).

While the Golf Foundation supported GUI (and later ILGU) efforts in expanding junior golf in Ireland, attention was focused on tournaments, coaching and team selection for young golfers. In 1963 a schools championship was inaugurated by the GUI while in the 1960s some schools even developed golf courses on their land, e.g. Gormanstown Co. Meath, Rockwell, Co. Tipperary and Clongowes, Co. Kildare (Menton 1991). In 1966 the first Irish boys' championship was played and in 1969 the first Irish youths' (boys) championship. In 1977 Ireland entered its first team in the European Amateur Junior

Championship, a feat which is celebrated in William Menton's History of the GUI (Menton 1991). The book's small section on junior golf focuses on achievements and standards, perhaps indicating the union's ambitions for junior golf in these early years, which centred on nurturing individual boy golfers who could compete with the best in the British Isles and Europe and thus raise the profile of the union (Menton 1991). Rather than encouraging a wider and younger playing audience, this narrow provision for high performing boy players perhaps delayed the incidence of young golfers. Aside from newspaper reports on the achievements of elite young girl golfers, a history on ILGU development of girls' golf in Ireland is not available.

Towards the end of the twentieth century the numbers of affiliated golf clubs in Ireland were growing steadily and junior golf was gaining global recognition, owed to the emerging American protégé Tiger Woods. The development of underage golfers was more regularly on the agenda of both the GUI and ILGU and as a result, representatives from the GUI, ILGU and PGA Irish Region came together in the late 1990s to discuss the need for increased recognition for junior golfers in local golf clubs. A working group was formed which oversaw the publication of a Charter for Junior Golf (GUI *et al.* 2000). As part of the project the working group surveyed a representative number of golf clubs in each province in Ireland and also sourced research carried out by other men's and ladies' golf unions. The Charter outlined the structure of junior golf within the golfing unions, junior golf activities, funding (affiliated golf clubs, valued sponsorships, government sources) and the role of the Golf Foundation, unions/branches/districts, club officers, club councils, junior organisers, amateur and professional coaches in junior golf (see Table 3.4 for selected results). The unions aimed the Charter publication at junior organisers and **junior committees** in Irish golf clubs, endorsing the need for golf clubs to implement the correct approach when dealing with junior entry into golf clubs, junior membership, junior coaching and junior competition and creating awareness that early intervention in getting children into golf is

important for the development and skill acquisition of young golfers (GUI *et al.* 2000). As a result of the Charter's publication, interest in junior golf increased, and the three Irish golf governing bodies began to realise the extent of the work that needed to be done to promote golf for children. Over fifty years after union recognition of junior golf, an agreement was reached to invest in a separate junior golf body to be named Junior Golf Ireland (JGI), which would oversee the development of grassroots golf in Ireland (Culley 2004; GUI *et al.* 2000).

2.6.1 Junior Golf Ireland

In December 2003, the volunteer committee (composing of representatives of the partner organisations GUI, ILGU and PGA) enlisted support from the Golf Foundation to form JGI. Two regional development officers were originally instated, preceding the 2006 appointment of a director of development, and followed by two more regional development officers in 2007. This body became responsible for grassroots golf development in Ireland. The 2006-2008 JGI Strategic Development Plan⁵ declares the aim and vision of JGI to:

...provide resources and support services that make it possible for sustainable structures to be introduced and maintained at a local level that provide easy access to golf and result in committed young golfers...

and to:

...create awareness and promote golf to children in primary/national and secondary schools throughout Ireland, and to create pathways for those children to become regular golfers at club and elite level.

(JGI 2006, p.1)

The plan has eight key areas for improvement: golf club liaison, JGI coaching programme, JGI schools programme, JGI sponsorship, school holiday camps, marketing and communication, volunteer

⁵ Amendments were made to this plan in December 2008, which was not made public. A new plan is being worked on for 2012-2015 and will be agreed by the partners by the end of 2011

coach education and JGI membership and competitions. At the end of 2008 JGI had coaching centres in over 200 golf facilities across the island, a huge leap from the 60 achieved by the end of 2006, while in 2011 there were 218 centres on file (email to author, 19 August 2011). Buntús Golf/TriGolf (primary school) tutor training has taken place in approximately 25 counties, while new initiatives such as the 'Girls N Golf' introduction to golf programme have been successfully initiated (see Appendix D). Currently the organisation has a six person committee (two from each of the GUI and PGA, one from the ILGU and the Director) and seven employees (Culley 2004; email to author, 19 August 2011; JGI 2006; JGI 2007).

2.6.2 The Role of the GUI and ILGU in junior golf

As the development bodies for amateur golf in Ireland, the GUI and ILGU continue to have a responsibility for growing junior golf (see Figure 1.1). As part of each union's internal structure and under their Executive Committee/Board of Directors, both unions have separate sub-committees dedicated to junior golf, chaired by the National Convenor for junior golf in each union (GUI 2011; ILGU 2011c). Similarly each provincial branch (GUI) or district (ILGU) has an executive committee/board of directors, under which a junior golf committee exists, where the provincial/district *junior convenor* is responsible for junior players (GUI 2011; ILGU 2011c). Both unions have advanced coaching structures with underage panels at provincial/district and national level, where PGA professionals are often employed as mentors to coach the various player panels, usually ranging in ages from under-12 to under-18. Each union has a PGA qualified national coach, who coaches national panels and travels with underage teams to international competition (GUI 2011; ILGU 2011c). This evidence indicates the formal coaching structure in place for talented young golfers, which is supplemented by a highly organised competition season.

The GUI and ILGU each take responsibility for the running of established junior tournaments throughout the calendar year and

particularly during the summer months. The GUI holds provincial and national tournaments for under-13, under-15, under-18, under-20 (youth) and men's categories, in both individual and team (club/county/province/country) formats. The ILGU holds district and national championships for under-15, under-18 and ladies' categories in individual and team formats (club/province/country). A national junior order of merit is drawn up by both unions based on the performances of juniors at national and international tournaments and this serves as a national ranking system for juniors. Each union sends separate boys' teams and girls' teams to separate international tournaments from under-15 age level. The signature tournaments for Irish underage golf teams are the European Young Masters (under 16), Home Internationals (under 18) and the European Championships (under 18). Separate tournaments for boys and girls are held in almost all cases, aside from union exempt age group tournaments such as the Nick Faldo Series, the Darren Clarke Foundation Weekend and the Wee Wonders. This evidence suggests how junior golf for elite players is afforded some importance by both the GUI and ILGU.

High performance programmes from both unions have contributed to much of Ireland's international golfing success. At amateur level, three-time major winner Padraig Harrington represented GUI Irish teams as a junior and senior, as did more recent major victors Graeme McDowell, Darren Clarke and Rory McIlroy. The GUI supported these and other elite players throughout their amateur careers, affording them opportunities to compete in amateur tournaments worldwide, something these players have recognised as central towards their development as professional golfers:

The Golfing Union of Ireland have been incredible for me because they funded me to go to different places all over the world as an amateur to play different tournaments, different courses, and that somehow prepared me for what life was gona (sic) be like as a pro.

(McIlroy 2011)

High achieving twins Lisa and Leona Maguire have come through the ILGU programme, equalling McIlroy's amateur feats by representing Ireland at the Junior Ryder Cup, winning countless national and international titles (Gallagher 2011). Although the country's inaugural staging of the Solheim Cup in September 2011 featured no Irish players, it is widely anticipated that upon turning professional, the Maguire twins may represent Europe in future tournaments. The success of these individual amateur and professional players on an international stage suggests that the GUI and ILGU high performance structures have paid dividends. However, it is also possible that this elite player and achievement focus does little for the wider integration, development and growth of golf in Ireland.

2.7 SUMMARY

In spite of continuity and change, this chapter has highlighted how the rituals and tradition outlined in the opening extract remain relevant in modern golf. Although acknowledging that the available historical evidence on golf is limited, since its inception in the fifteenth century, Britain's influence and direction of the game has remained. The game's association with royalty, gentry and upper echelons of society, the extortionate cost of equipment, exclusive membership practices, thorough laws and even the wealth of published accounts on golf at the time are all indicative of the link between golf and the higher social classes. Low visibility of early female golfers set about early distinctions between male and female participants, evidenced through gender separated governing bodies. Incongruous practice was evident in early Irish golf where participation was sometimes influenced by one's occupation and religion. Although it remains to be seen, the late 'toleration' of junior golfers may have delayed the incidence of younger players. To this point, there is no evidence that connects the historical accounts of gender and class privilege in golf with the modern day formalisation and regulation of golf. In investigating the institutional culture of golf clubs in the ensuing chapters, it is expected that golf's social history and structural

organisation still shapes golf practice, and has implications for the resultant golf participation profile, and further, the experiences and habituses of young participants. With a focus on minority participants such as females and young participants, Chapter two seeks to locate this chapter's account of golf's initiation within current practices and policies of golf participation and golf club membership.

June 1995

As I amble downstairs in my pyjamas I contemplate the TV line-up for a Saturday morning in June. Whilst deliberating between Animaniacs and a Home and Away repeat, the phone rings, peeling my ten-year-old ears. "Niamh, phone!" Mam shouts.

"Hello"

"Hi"

"Hi"

"Dad says theres lessons on in the golf club at half nine do you wanna go?"

"Golf lessons?"

"Ya, decide quick cos we're goin' now" (patience wasn't one of my best friend's endearing qualities)

"Ummm.... ok. How much?"

"A pound. We'll be at your house in a minute."

I bound back upstairs and hurriedly throw on my Mayo jersey, Dunnes Stores shorts, tennis socks and shabby runners, and whilst booting out the door I tell Mam that Rachel's⁶ Dad is bringing us to golf.

⁶ Pseudonym

**CHAPTER 3 SOCIALISATION INTO
GOLF: PARTICIPANTS AND
PRACTICES**

3.1. INTRODUCTION

It is a widely held assumption that sport unites people from various backgrounds, and transcends all social divisions such as class, race, ethnicity, age and gender. Sporting occasions are often celebrated for their symbolic role in amalgamating unique individuals with differing circumstances and experiences. In reality, sport is a manifestation of the social world, existing as a representation of historical, social and cultural forces. Studies on sports participation in Ireland have outlined the relationship between social positioning and sports involvement, conveying the strong correlation between social class and sports participation. Adults who play and volunteer in sport have higher incomes, more educational qualifications and come from disproportionately better-off backgrounds than those who are not involved, while those with lower incomes are more likely to never be involved in sport (Delaney & Fahey 2005; Lunn 2007). The Irish Sport Monitor emphasises the strong association between income and sports participation where, from 2007 to 2009 the economic recession in Ireland appeared to spur a decline in the participation of individual sports, along with volunteering, club membership and sports attendance. This drop was more pronounced among the middle-aged, the employed and those with lower incomes (Lunn, Layte & Watson 2008; Lunn & Layte 2009; 2011). While sociology of sport literature often posits class and income level as the primary determinants of sports involvement, gender disparities in sports involvement are equally relevant in the Irish context and have been explained by segregation practices and females' historical exclusion (Liston 2006a). This chapter links the social history and regulation of golf with a sociological analysis of modern day golf participation, the golf participant profile and golf practices. In addition, this chapter examines the socialisation of young people and in particular girls, into sport and golf. National surveys of sport and golf participation are documented and complemented by research into the socialisation of young participants into sport and, where available, research on the social practice of golf. The limited evidence on golf

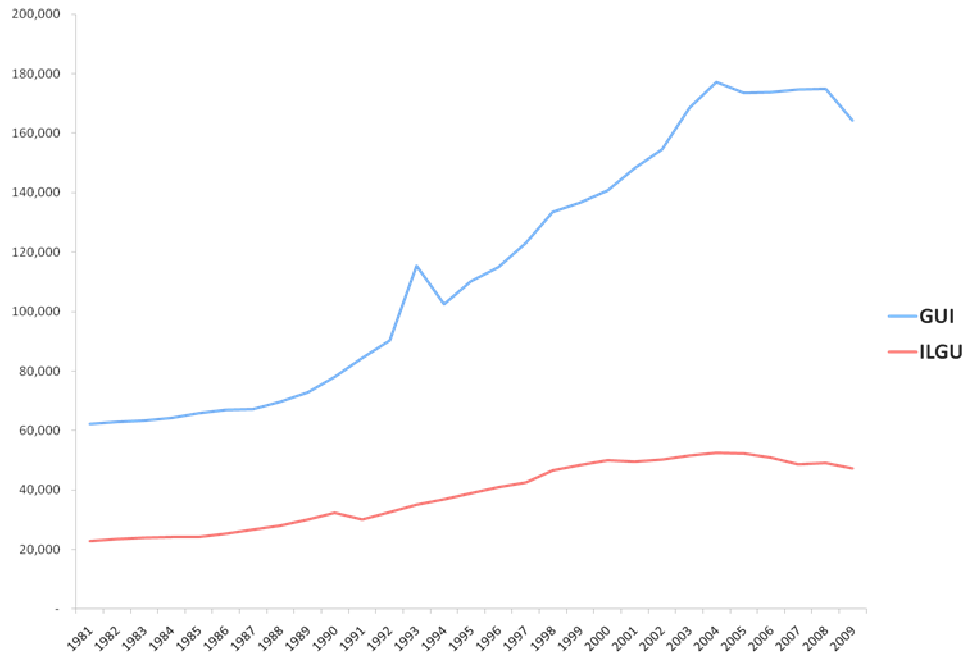
participant profiles in Ireland is supported by international literature and reports. As outlined in section 2.1, due to the infrequent documentation of golf club operations, aspects of golf practice are not readily available and, particularly in section 3.2.2, are recorded from my own knowledge of golf club settings.

3.2 GOLF PARTICIPATION IN IRELAND

Research on several decades of sporting history in Ireland reported that participation in individual sports such as golf has grown dramatically (Lunn & Layte 2008). With changing workplace practices and a greater emphasis on leisure time activity, interest in golf in Ireland significantly increased during the 1990s, and GUI membership more than doubled between 1986 and 2007 (GUI 2008; Redmond 1997). A study by the Club Managers Association and the Michael Smurfit Business School estimated that there were 350,000 members in Irish golf clubs in the early part of the new millennium (Delaney & Fahey 2005) while more conservative 2007 **KPMG** figures recorded the number of club members as 287,000 (see Figure 3.1 and Table 3.1). These totals are substantial, particularly when many golf participants are not vouched for, i.e. those who are not golf club members and instead play casual golf at **municipal**/public golf courses, driving ranges, pitch and putt venues or as part of golf societies. Where golf in Britain had an average participation rate of just over 2% in 2006, the Republic of Ireland alone had a participation rate of over 6% (KPMG 2007). In the quarterly national household survey (Central Statistics Office 2007) golf was the second most popular competitive activity behind Gaelic football. In 2007 the GUI anticipated that it would have as many as 450 affiliated golf clubs by 2010, potentially making it one of the largest golf unions per capita in the world (GUI 2007). As indicated in the prologue and in section 2.5, the upsurge in golf facilities and purpose built 'stadium courses' after the millennium boosted Ireland's reputation and capacity to host global tournaments such as the World Golf Championships, the Ryder Cup and the Solheim Cup. It is

considered that these events are significant in maintaining and increasing golf awareness and participation rates in Ireland.

Figure 3.1 GUI and ILGU adult golf membership trend 1981 – 2009



(ILGU 2011b)

Table 3.1 Golf Membership in Ireland 2010

	Adult men	Adult ladies	Junior boys	Junior girls	Total
Number	156,151	44,960	23,313	4,554	228,978
% of total	68%	20%	10%	2%	100%

(ILGU 2011b)

Prior to any indication of recession, Sport England (2008) predicted that interest in golf would decrease in England between 2005 and 2013, with participation gradually falling by 0.1%. In spite of the steady interest in golf club membership since the 1980s in Ireland, as charted in Figure 3.1, the onset of an economic downturn in 2008 spurred a comparatively sharp decline in golf club membership and 2010 ILGU and GUI figures total golf club membership at just under 230,000 members (see Table 3.1). The GUI reported a fall of 10,000 members between 2008 and 2009, and a further decrease of 8,000 members up to October 2010 (GUI 2011) (see Figure 3.1). Economic forecasts suggest that this trend is unlikely to abate, and in the 2011

GUI yearbook, the GUI honorary treasurer signalled caution:

This is obviously a very worrying situation for clubs throughout the country – especially worrying is the apparent fall off in membership in the younger age group, from 20 to 40 years old...golf is becoming an expensive and time-consuming pastime, and ways must be found to get around this problem if clubs, and thereby the Union are to survive.

(GUI 2011, p.65)

While there is no evidence of GUI participation development initiatives, since 2007 the ILGU have coordinated the 'Women in Golf' programme, which aims to introduce females to golf. In 2009 the GUI, ILGU and PGA Irish Region published a booklet on developing golf in Ireland, which focused on recruiting and retaining golf club members (GUI, ILGU & PGA 2010). Perhaps this is a sign of the governing bodies' ambition to sustain the otherwise dropping golf membership numbers in Ireland.

3.2.1 Golf facilities

The growth of golf in Ireland in recent decades has been matched by an increase in golf facilities, where, since 1985 the number of golf courses in Ireland has risen by almost 40% to 430 (GUI 2008). From section 2.5.1, the majority of these clubs are affiliated with the GUI admitting male members, with a smaller section affiliated with the ILGU. The vast majority of participants play on golf courses (nine and eighteen hole), while other golf facilities include driving ranges, par 3 courses, pitch and putt courses, crazy golf and mini golf. In sixteenth century Scotland, golf courses were originally mapped out in public places for anyone to partake, but when clubs and societies formed, club members held more authority on the course. At the turn of the twentieth century in Ireland almost all newly constructed courses were private member owned clubs only, noted for their selectivity and exclusivity. Public golf is recognised as never having taken off in Ireland, where, of the union-recognised 430 (approximate) golf clubs in Ireland, fewer than ten are public/municipal courses, where golf club membership is more affordable and less restrictive. The GUI has

been criticised for not using its influence to persuade local authorities and county councils to include golf in their leisure amenity programmes and Menton (1991) suggests that apart from 1980s talks with government representatives both North and South, and the resultant public investments in Stepside (1981) with Dublin County Council, Mahon Point (1981) with Cork City Corporation, and Rathbane (1998) with Limerick City Council, there have been no significant gains in public golf in Ireland.

One of the most prominent developments in the growth in golf facilities in Ireland was the allocation of European Union (EU) funding for the construction of leisure facilities, along with the sale of farmland by landowners and farmers, prompted by restrictive EU quotas and the decline of agriculture (Redmond 1997). As a result, golf course design and construction by private investors aimed at the tourist and corporate sectors became popular in Ireland, not least encouraged by the revenue generated. In 2007, top performing golf courses in Great Britain and Ireland reported average revenues of €2.2 million (KPMG 2007). With the rise in golf facilities Redmond (1997) estimated that up to half of Ireland's golfers would be playing over commercial and privately owned properties into the new millennium:

It remains to be seen if the supply of courses outstrips demand. In the clamour to capitalise on the 'golf rush', some errors of judgement may yet be seen to have been made. Only those who have chosen their locations wisely and who are commercially driven will survive in the long term. It is essential, therefore, that proper marketing is to the fore which, of course, would indicate that pricing, in terms of annual subscriptions and day-to-day **green fees**, will be kept competitively in favour of the player!

(p.129)

As predicted, many of the recent golf course projects in Ireland are privately owned, strategically planned in key locations with large populations, supplemented by luxurious surroundings and marketed towards the high-end tourist (O'Sullivan 2008). In spite of the increase in new golf facilities, volunteer driven self-financing private

members' clubs still comprise the largest proportion of golf clubs in Ireland, and as stipulated by Delaney and Fahey (2005) (see Section 1.1), these facilities appear significant in the consolidation of social capital in Irish sport.

3.2.2 Playing Golf

In order to progress to a reasonable playing standard and participate in officially recognised golf competitions, one must obtain a golf handicap, and to get a handicap one must be a member of a golf club. In spite of the augmented cost when compared with participation or membership fees at municipal, par 3 or pitch and putt facilities, many '*casual golfers*' choose to join golf clubs to avail of this competitive aspect. As outlined in section 3.2.1 above, the majority of golf clubs in Ireland are owned by members or are privately owned. Along with the revenue they take in from membership fees, golf clubs can generate income from tourists and casual golfers, i.e. green-fees. The tee times or course time allotted to these non-members, along with club members' playing and competition time, means that there are only so many members a golf club can accommodate. Given their historical significance, reputation, location and the quality of the course and or facilities, member-owned clubs can appear more attractive to the potential member, resulting in a high demand for playing time and more membership applications than places available. As indicated in section 3.2 an upsurge in golf participation in the early millennium resulted in a high demand for golf club membership, and Irish golf courses were significantly busier than their counterparts in mainland Britain, enrolling an average of 688 members in 2006 (KPMG 2007). In most Irish golf clubs, the first step in becoming a member is completing an application form. The process described below regarding British golf clubs in the 1970s is not an unfamiliar one:

The social barrier was even more difficult, for applications for membership had to be proposed and seconded and then approved by the existing members, and anyone not acceptable had no chance.

(Cousins 1975, p.71)

As above, in some golf clubs, applicants must be proposed and seconded by a club member, while some use interviews to process applications. If there are more applicants than places available, initially unsuccessful applicants are placed on a waiting list until a membership space is freed up within the club. A Scottish survey revealed that half of all golf clubs had membership waiting lists (Sport Scotland 2002). Membership in all clubs involves an annual fee, and where the demand for golf club membership is high, some clubs charge a once-off initial **entrance fee** along with the annual subscription. As in 2.4.2 some golf clubs have membership eligibility criteria in place which are often based around social standing, gender or religion, limiting the opportunity of certain sections of society from becoming members. Further, some clubs have several membership categories, which can curtail or restrict one's participation, e.g. full membership, five-day membership, associate membership. In some clubs there is a graduation process in place before a conditional member becomes recognised as a full member. Those with family connections, e.g. parents, grandparents and siblings in the club, are usually accepted and enrolled before others. These practices indicate the difficulty of access to golf club membership and the policies and practices that can curtail wider participation in golf. Aspects of golf club practice such as these will be further elaborated in the ensuing sections and chapters.

3.2.3 Participation costs

As indicated in section 3.1, there is a strong correlation between income and sports involvement in Ireland. Ever since the manufacturing of clubs and balls golf equipment has been expensive, where, for example, the equipment used by an average Australian private club golfer is worth approximately \$2500 (Stoddart 2006b). Golf club membership costs can limit the potential for wider participation, where, depending on the location and type of golf club, rates can be extortionate, while initial entrance fees can be

particularly inhibitive. Along with factors noted in section 3.2.2, the design, construction and maintenance of golf courses and clubhouses further contribute to high membership fees (Delaney & Fahey 2005; KPMG 2007). The average cost of taking part in golf as a junior in Scotland is estimated to be £250 per year and can reach £1000 depending on the membership and equipment purchased (Goodwin & Taylor 2004). Further alluded to in Chapter five, through ownership of equipment, uptake of golf holidays, and enrolment of golf club membership, golf offers higher social classes a platform to showcase their material wealth and economic capital.

Lunn (2007) found that sports club members in Ireland (of which golfers comprise 13%) pay an average annual subscription of €420. As in 3.2.2, in addition to annual fees, some golf clubs charge once off entrance fees to membership. KPMG (2007) recorded 2006 average entrance membership fees in Irish golf clubs as the highest in Britain and Ireland at €6000, while average annual fees were 50-60% more than courses in Wales. Given the increased demand for golf membership, fees are higher in cities and highly populated areas, particularly in the east of Ireland. In 2008 Ryder Cup venue the K Club, Co. Kildare, charged an €80,000 entrance fee before annual subscriptions, and a newspaper article reported that in spite of the economic downturn and a drop in business the club would not reduce these fees (Reilly 2008). O'Sullivan (2008) reported that the economic downturn may force golf courses to reduce their fees in order to compete on the market and with the recent trend of golf courses entering receivership, Reddan (2011) suggested that in an attempt to keep cash flow going, receiver controlled golf courses such as Moyvalley golf club are putting severe downward pressure on prices. Located in a rural area eight miles from Enfield, Co. Meath, Moyvalley Golf Club was built in 2006 as an affiliate of the exclusive 'Champions Club' of golf clubs worldwide. Membership entrance fees had started at €17,500, but following the sharp economic decline, in a bid to build quick revenue in 2008 the club cut the fee to €10,000, with an annual subscription of €1,250 (O'Sullivan

2008). Under receivership the club no longer charges an entrance fee, and 2011 annual full membership cost €850 (Moyvalley 2011; Reddan 2011). Table 3.2 compares membership fee data obtained from the websites of three Irish clubs in both 2008 and 2011. Fee decreases are notable for Macreddin and Killarney, which are based in higher population areas. Although financial difficulty in some facilities has resulted in a drop in participation costs and increased access to golf, the economic recession is likely to further distance lower income earners from golf participation.

3.2.4 Golf participant profile

From the evidence in 2.3.2 the archetypal golfer as a middle-aged male conveyed the resources, leisure time and pattern of opportunities to play golf that attracted and could be availed of by a particular demographic. These characteristics remain relevant, where in England, people from the highest social classes are twice as likely to play golf as those from the next class groupings, while in Scotland, 34% of adult golfers were derived from the managerial/professional social classes (Sport England 2008; SportScotland 2002). When compared with other sports, golf demands less physical strength and endurance and the potential for prolonged participation in golf deems it attractive to older people, particularly where those of retirement age often have the time required for regular participation (Moola *et al.* 2008). In terms of gender, the 2002 general household survey of Britain found that of all sports, golf had one of the widest disparities between male (9% of the population) and female (1%) participation (Fox & Rickards 2004). Sport England (2008) reported that males were six times more likely to play golf than females, while in Scotland over 90% of adults and young golfers are male (SportScotland 2002). White people are four times more likely to play golf than those from a non-white background in England, while statistics from America suggest that golfers from minority ethnic or non-white backgrounds make up 15% of all participants (National Golf Foundation 2003; Sport England 2008). Related to the 'casual golfers' alluded to earlier

Table 3.2 Comparison of membership categories and fees in three Irish golf clubs, 2008 versus 2011:

GOLF CLUB	MACREDDIN GOLF CLUB	KILLARNEY GOLF CLUB	CLAREMORRIS GOLF CLUB
	Newly designed by Ryder Cup player, located 50 minutes south of Dublin. No membership criteria specified	Located in major tourist town in south west	Town in west of Ireland No membership criteria specified
	2008	2008	2008
	2011	2011	2011
Full membership fees	Entrance fee: €8000 Annual sub: €1500	Entrance fee: €15,000 Annual sub: €640 *for a limited period membership ...is now*	Annual sub: €640 Annual sub: €595
Other membership fees	Corporate membership: €3700 - €5100	Husband and wife: entrance fee: €23,000 Annual sub: €960	Couple: €1040 Couple: €1000
Student fee (annual sub)	Full-time: €250	€212	Over 21: €195 Full time: €205
Junior fee (annual sub)	Under 19: €250	€57	Under 21: €55-€75 Under 18: €60-80
Other fees	None made public	None made public	Life membership: €10,000 Beginner: €315 - €455 Country member: €200 Retired (over 65): €450 Beginner: €225-435 Country member: €210 Retired (over 65): €475
Reference	(Macreddin Golf Club 2008; 2011)	Killarney Golf Club 2008; 2011)	(Claremorris Golf Club 2008; 2011)

(see Section 3.2.2), the **NGF** also found that lower income golfers from non-white backgrounds preferred and had a strong presence at 'alternative' golf facilities such as par three courses and driving ranges (National Golf Foundation 2003). While there is no evidence of the racial or ethnic backgrounds of golfers in Ireland, table 3.3 evidences the direct link between class, gender, age and golf participation in Ireland, thus outlining how golfers in Ireland are still derived from the same social categories as the early golf participants.

Table 3.3. Who plays golf in Ireland?

Golf participation statistics	Reference
Golf is the most widely played sport amongst men	Delaney & Fahey 2005
One quarter of the members of golf clubs in Ireland are derived from the higher socio-economic and professional backgrounds	
Females make up one fifth of golf club members	ILGU 2011b
Juniors make up one tenth of golf club members	
Junior girls make up 2% of golf club members	
Compared with other sports golf has the highest percentage of older members in Ireland	Fahey et al. 2004
Golf has the largest percentage of members over 40 years of age	
Golf is one of the most popular sports among older people in Ireland	Ipsos Mori 2007
The popularity of golf increases among the age groups, from 2.3% (aged 15-24) to 13.8% (aged 55-64)	Central Statistics Office 2007

3.3 GOLF PRACTICES

While participation in golf can be superficially reduced to class profiles and economic associations of cost and leisure time, golf practices are also equally as significant in reproducing the narrow profile of a golf participant. From the outset it appears that some well-known and revered golf clubs and institutions are implicit in exclusionary practices, particularly where gender and ethnicity are concerned. In conducting a case study on the Honorable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, which resides at Muirfield, an Open Championship venue (see Section 2.3.2), Jarvie (2003) found that the club practised a closed door policy in terms of membership, and

females were not permitted to become members, or even play on the golf course. While equality legislation may have reversed this policy (author's experience), Jarvie (2003) suggests that this example of a private golf club reproduces the patterns of exclusivity, privilege and elitism and shows scant regard for the simple goal of equality of sporting opportunity. Although Maguire, Bradley, Jarvie and Mansfield (2002) suggest that the secretive nature of golf clubs is hard to track, this section attempts to draw together evidence and research on golf practices, with a particular focus on race, ethnicity and gender issues.

3.3.1 Race and ethnicity

Having earlier mentioned the low engagement of people from varying racial and ethnic backgrounds (see Section 3.2.4), the 1990s emergence of African-Asian-American professional golfer Tiger Woods heralded expectations of mass involvement and increased participation in golf. However, some have commented that Woods has ignored the contentious social aspects of golf, amplified by his association with a golf course development in the Philippines, in a location which is historically associated with deprivation, exploitation and acts of violence (Cole 2002; Donegan 2007; Humphries 2004). While Woods' otherwise unique background and achievements in golf has or had potential to create more awareness, the lesser participation of non-white participants is an issue embedded in social relations and stretching back to the historical withholding of their participation by golfing institutions. The constitution of the PGA of America restricted membership to Caucasian professional golfers until 1961, when the state of California refused permission for hosting the 1962 PGA Championship in Los Angeles because of its offending clause (Green 1994). Closer to home, golf institutions have also been accused of racial discrimination. In a 2007 interview, the Guardian newspaper asked an R&A official how many ethnic minorities filled senior positions within the golf's governing body, to which he

responded “we have a couple of Chinese girls who work in the clubhouse” (Donegan 2007, para.8). Donegan comments:

It’s a depressing picture for those who want to see the game shake off its reputation as the last bastion of white, middle-class privilege...critics would suggest the R&A is duty-bound to tackle insidious racism in golf clubs that has kept ethnic minorities out of the game for decades. But then perhaps too much is expected from an organisation that, in 2007, refuses to have women members.

(Donegan 2007, para.9)

Augusta National Golf Club, the venue for the annual US Masters tournament is located in America’s ‘Deep South’. Although the Masters was inaugurated in 1934 it was not until the 1970s when a black golfer first participated in the tournament. In spite of protests from civil rights campaigners and Congress who claimed that the golf club was pursuing a racist policy and the Masters was a discriminatory institution, African-Americans were barred from membership until 1990, when a high profile African-American company president was enrolled (Green 1994; Nylund 2003). Along with Tiger Woods, Fijian Vijay Singh has been the only black participant in recent US Masters competition. Of the 166 golfers competing on the US PGA tour, just Tiger and new entry Joseph Bramlett are the only two African American competitors, while there has been no regular African-American lady professional on tour since 2001 (DiMeglio 2011; Donegan 2007). However, in recent years Asian golfers have quickly emerged on the world golf scene, particularly on the LGPA tour, where at present thirty of the top fifty female professional golfers in the world are of Asian origin (LPGA 2011).

Research studies specific to race, ethnicity and golf have mostly focused on media portrayals of players from multiracial backgrounds. Examining print media representations of Mexican-American Latino professional golfer Nancy Lopez, Jamieson (2001) found that the texts showed the pervasiveness of white male superiority. Again looking at Lopez, Douglas and Jamieson (2006) further examined

print media accounts of her participation in fourteen professional golf tournaments in 2002. They found that representations of Lopez's identity firstly as a heterosexual female before her racial identity identified racialisation strategies that strengthened white racial power and privilege, and Lopez's popularity was illustrative of how discourses of whiteness are communicated through their articulation with formations of gender, social class, and heterosexuality. Scarboro and Husain (2006) examined newspaper depictions in the *Augusta Chronicle* which associated African-Americans with golf, and reported that the *Chronicle* recognised the golfers firstly as black and secondly as golfers. They comment:

Early accounts in the *Chronicle* of African Americans and golf reflect historical roots of classism - portraying the game of golf as the currency of elite whites, as a game reminiscent of the not too distant past of plantations and slavery where blacks served whites, as a leisure activity predicated on boundaries of racial exclusion and inclusion

(Scarboro & Husain 2006, p.262)

Although not conveying evidence of the actual settings in which golf takes place, these research accounts depict wider social racial and ethnic issues and the resultant problematic media representations. As indicated by the research on Nancy Lopez, male superiority appears ever-present in the golf club setting, portraying the culture operating around the field of golf.

3.3.2 Gender

Supporting the evidence in section 2.3.4 which outlines golf as a suitable pastime for females, Stempel (2006) found that although male dominated, golf is one of the few ball games in which the masculine qualities of physical aggression and dominance are muted or sublimated. In spite of this, historically females struggle to gain a presence in golf clubs, where they are initially recognised as 'associate members', if at all. Alluded to in sections 2.5.1 and 3.2.1, while the majority of clubs in Ireland are affiliated with the GUI, as many as forty are not affiliated, while some clubs still refuse to admit

female members. Further afield, a SportScotland report (2002) found that 18% of golf clubs in Scotland did not admit female members. In 2001 Augusta National's all-male membership came under scrutiny when the National Council of Women's Organisations (**NCWO**) called for membership access for females. In spite of media scrutiny and the objections of equality campaigners, the annual US Masters venue continues to refuse access to females (Nylund 2003). Regarding golf in Australia, Senyard (1998) comments that where golf club rules and regulations limited the participation of women, gender was used as a way of constructing the social meaning of golf to wider society. Haig-Muir (2004) reports that with little incentive, few female golf club members have taken up full membership:

Out-dated practices, systems and structures, and the inflexible attitudes that riddle Australian golf clubs have created a missing generation of female golfers with juniors, students, young married women, and women in the paid workforce all significantly underrepresented. Club golf as it is does not suit these groups...nor does it attract them to the game. Solutions require a major cultural shift: a complete sea change in climates of thought, traditional practices, and, above all, golfing culture.

(Haig Muir 2004, p.78)

Haig-Muir (1998; 2004) suggests that golf in Australia has been marked as a male preserve, where the social construction of golf is normatively male and the widespread gender marking of the sport is a strong force in maintaining and legitimating existing patriarchal practices and hierarchies.

Contentious legislation in jurisdictions north and south of Ireland upholds the right of some clubs to classify females as associate members and pursue all male memberships. Up until the year 2000, Republic of Ireland legislation protected golf clubs' recognition of females as 'associate members'. Following the introduction of the Equal Status Act (2000), golf clubs in the southern jurisdiction began to classify and recognise female members as 'full members', thus equal to their male counterparts. However, like at Augusta National, some golf club constitutions in Ireland refuse to

admit female members, one of which is Portmarnock Golf Club, and in 2004 the Equality Authority took the club to the District Court challenging the club's alleged sexual discrimination of females. At the time the judge ruled against the golf club on the grounds that its main purpose was the playing of golf. However the club appealed to the High Court and the case was overruled on a narrow provision of the Equal Status Act 2000 exempting clubs that form for a particular gender. The case was made that the primary purpose of the club was to cater for the "needs" of male golfers. The Equality Authority this time brought the case to the Supreme Court and in November 2009 the legal right of Portmarnock Golf Club to restrict its membership to males was confirmed by majority (Coulter 2009). In a similar move, the oldest known golf facility in Ireland, Bray Golf Club, was given a fortnight by the Equality Authority to state that female members were equal to males or face the threat of legal action. The Equality Act (2010) has been passed in Britain and like the Equal Status Act in the Republic of Ireland, it also excludes organisations that cater for certain groups, as long as it is written into the club's legal constitution. This Act signaled much debate in golf clubs across England, Scotland and Wales, where unions and organisations came under pressure to produce guidance and publications on the implications for golf clubs (English Golf Union 2011; Scottish Golf 2011). Updated equality legislation has yet to be passed in Northern Ireland, where golf clubs are still legally entitled to recognise females as 'associate members' (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland 2011).

Of the limited research on golf practice, gender has been a primary focus, with evidence of the experiences of female golfers of all ability levels. Todd Crosset (1995) conducted ethnography on the American **LPGA** (Ladies' Professional Golf Association) tour, examining female professional golfers experiences in golf club settings. Detecting that LPGA tour players experienced tensions between their roles as athletes and societal expectations of them as females, Crosset (1995) suggests that female golfers remain

outsiders in what is considered the masculine world of golf. In conducting interviews with recreational female golfers, McGinnis *et al.* (2005) found that women reported heightened experiences of typecasting in golf settings, where they felt ignored, overlooked or unimportant. Gaining the coaches' perspective, McGinnis and Gentry (2006) found that beginner female golfers face initial intrapersonal constraints related to ability, but once they start playing regularly, interpersonal and structural constraints relating to the setting have more influence on participation. Shotton *et al.* (1998) spent five full days conducting interviews and observations in a golf club, and found that although club members did not recognise the differences in gender attitudes towards participation as problematic, covert judgments of female members were ever present. Gender discrimination does not end once a female gains access to golf club membership, and female golfers have identified and experienced the institutional barriers that shape their participation in golf. McGinnis and Gentry (2006) allude to factors such as tokenism, sensible business practice, traditional politeness and good old boy network that serve to perpetuate the gender gap in golf participation. This evidence suggests that discrimination has been evidenced in golf club settings by females of all ability levels. While these accounts focus on the experiences of adult female golfers, it is considered that they are similarly relevant for girl golfers.

3.4 YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIALIZATION INTO SPORT

In line with this chapter's opening section (3.1) on adult participation in sport, research on young people's involvement in sport suggests a reproduction of sport participation processes and patterns among children and young people. Institutions such as schools and sports clubs, and socialising agents such as the family, coaches and teachers have significant roles to play in introducing children to and maintaining their involvement in sport and physical activity, and influencing their experiences and the types of activities participated (Collier, MacPhail & O'Sullivan 2007; Greendorfer 1992). This

section reviews sporting institutions and practices involving young people in sport, particularly from the perspective of youth sports clubs. With a large proportion of this investigation dedicated to girls' participation in golf, this section has a particular focus on girls' socialisation into sport, whilst it also documents available evidence on the participation of young people in golf.

In Ireland, reduced sporting opportunity for the disadvantaged and lower social classes begins in school, where the sporting needs of the higher social classes are more likely to be fulfilled (Lunn 2007). Further, the impact of social disadvantage on sports participation appears to strengthen across the life course (Lunn & Layte 2008). Connor (2003) berates the practices of schools in Ireland that marginalise disadvantaged and lower class children from sport:

...the institution of the school appears to be, on the one hand, fulfilling the sporting needs of the higher social class and, on the other hand alienating many adolescents from the lower social class groupings. Schools support middle class values...in the Irish scenario, it would appear that, in the cases of many non-active adolescents from the lower social class groupings, their social needs must be addressed before they are likely to be active in sports.

(Connor 2003, p.201)

Outside of school, significantly more children from lower class groups report to have never participated in sport (Fahey *et al.* 2005; Woods, Tannehill, Quinlan, Moyna & Walsh 2010). Participation in sport and participation frequency decreases with age, and this decline is significantly more prominent for girls and young women (De Roiste & Dinneen 2005; Lunn & Layte 2008; Woods *et al.* 2010). In Ireland, more boys than girls participate, more and varied activities are offered to boys, resources are not evenly allocated between boys and girls and most activities are derived from historically male pursuits (Connor 2003; De Róiste & Dinneen 2005; Fahey *et al.* 2005; Woods *et al.* 2010). The examination of sports participation across a number of decades found that females are not less interested in sport but their different treatment from a young age by socialising agents opens up a gender gap in participation that never

closes (Lunn & Layte 2008). O'Connor (2008) identified highly gender-differentiated patterns in young people's relationships with sport, where the male hierarchical position was underlined by boys through their participation in team based physical contact sports. It is likely that from an early age young people in Ireland are conveyed messages about gender through frameworks that impact their involvement in sport and physical activity. Where these characteristics of youth sport in Ireland manifest similarly among adults, this evidence suggests that early age socialisation is a definite precursor to later inequalities in Irish sport.

3.4.1 Youth sport clubs

Youth sport clubs are recognised as highly influential in shaping and forming the identities and subjectivities of young participants. MacPhail *et al.* (2009) suggest that the discourses of young people's beliefs and attitudes take concrete forms in institutions such as sports clubs, while Light and Curry (2009) claim that youth sports clubs are important to young people in developing identity, self-esteem and contributing to a sense of belonging. Youth sport settings and programmes have been commended for their supportive role in facilitating positive identities and empowerment of young people (Fredricks & Eccles 2006; Strachan, Côté & Deakin 2009). In spite of this potential, young people in Ireland have engaged in varying degrees in sports club environments. In their survey, De Róiste and Dinneen (2005) report that less than one third of the sample participated in a club, and much less than those involved in sports and hobbies. In analysing young people's narratives, MacPhail *et al.* (2009) reported gender disparity in club engagement, where boys conveyed a sustained club investment predominantly in team activities, while girls reported a wide variety of pursuits and less investment than club-affiliated participants. More significantly, Collier *et al.* (2007) reported that adolescents' discourses on sport and physical activity are complex and diverse, and go beyond traditional settings such as club and school sport.

Kirk and MacPhail (2003) suggest that youth sport environments are dynamic, complex and practised differently by young people, parents and their coaches. Adults and children often have incongruent assumptions of the benefits and purposes of youth sport participation, and MacPhail *et al.* (2003) found that young samplers (aged 9-11) viewed athletics as a way of keeping fit, a notion that was rarely expressed by the coaches. Recruitment strategies that encourage and attract younger children can potentially elicit negative or detrimental early specialisation practices in youth sports clubs, which can lead to burn out and/or drop out of young participants (Côté, Lidor & Hackfort 2009; Lang 2010; MacPhail *et al.* 2003). Where a survey found that 93% of primary school aged sports club members were recruited by the age of nine, sports clubs in Ireland appear to be vying for the attention of younger children (Growing Up in Ireland 2009; Woods *et al.* 2010). Mason (1995b) claimed that many sports clubs encourage able schoolchildren to join their club, with very few encouraging the less able to join. Young people have suggested that experiences in sports clubs should be continuous and not fragmented, and, calling for introductory/taster opportunities and game modifications such as smaller games and simplified rules, they suggest that clubs should be friendly places that are accessible to all regardless of ability (MacPhail *et al.* 2003). Where enjoyment has been identified as an indicator of the sport experience and central to any understanding of youth sport participation (Wiersma 2001), Fraser-Thomas, Coté and Deakin (2005) report that if the youth sport programme is not appropriate for participants, drop out from sport may occur. MacPhail and Kirk (2006) recommend organising youth sport to make success achievable for participants, and suggest an understanding that participants are likely to be involved in other sports.

3.4.2 Girls' engagement in sport and physical activity

As noted in section 3.4, girls' attrition from sport and physical activity emerges at an early age, and at a rate much faster than that of boys.

In examining the narratives of students in primary and secondary schools, Collier *et al.* (2007) found that while primary school aged children spoke favourably about their experiences relative to sport, upon entering adolescence, female attrition from sport was prominent. Sport, physical activity and physical education are imbued with negative connotations for many girls (Ennis 2000; Enright 2010). Given their low participation rate, limited engagement in and seemingly negative attitudes towards sport and physical activity, a common supposition is that adolescent girls are not interested in sport, and female non-participants are often portrayed as deficient and constructed as the problem (Enright 2010; Flintoff & Scraton 2001; Wright *et al.* 2003). Several reasons have been put forward to explain girls' limited engagement in sport and physical activity, and as discussed below, there is evidence that highlights how physical activity participation can be empowering and enjoyable for girls, particularly through opportunities to learn skills, to develop confidence, to be treated with respect, to maintain positive relationships and to be nurtured as viable contributors (Ennis 1999; Enright 2010; Flintoff & Scraton 2001; Garrett 2004).

This investigation considers that the dominant constructions of heterosexual masculinity and femininity and the influence of social constraints on female body posture and movement could potentially impact girls' decisions about their involvement in sport. Teenage girls may find it difficult to reconcile involvement in sports and physical activity with social and cultural demands and the ideology of acceptable femininity, and Hargreaves (1994) suggests that girls' participation in sport and physical activity could undermine their construction and performance of their feminine identities. Gorely, Holroyd and Kirk (2003) comment:

...if they [young women] conform to dominant forms of femininity, they are unlikely to play sport at all, or if they do, they are most likely to participate in traditionally 'female' activities".

(p. 435)

Constraining ideologies such as hegemonic competitive masculinity are thought to be inherent in physical education and in physical activity cultures generally, contributing to girls' alienation. Liston (2006a) claims that male-associated sports in Ireland have become sites for the expression and reproduction of traditional male habituses involving the display of physical prowess and power. Stroot (2002) suggests that gender labelling of physical activities supports boys, who are encouraged to be more physically active and are afforded more opportunities to play sport. The assumption that girls are physically weaker than boys also leads to adults encouraging boys to be more active than girls (Hargreaves 1994). Even girls with skills or interests in participating in sports may monitor or alter their tastes and participation based on understandings of desirable gendered behaviours (Hills 2006). These pervasive gendered societal expectations can have a harnessing potential on girls, who may choose to disinvest themselves from participation in sport and physical activity. Oppositely, however, Gorely *et al.* (2003) found that physical activity participation can empower girls to learn to challenge negative social interpretations of female embodiment, gain self confidence and assertiveness, improve strength and acquire skills. Hargreaves (2004) even suggests that young women are beginning to define themselves in ways that are in opposition to male-defined practices.

Alluded to earlier, girls' alienation and disengagement from sport and physical activity might be explained by the types of activities available and offered to them. Lunn and Layte (2008) record that the decline in sport involvement in the late teens and onto adulthood is largely due to dropout from team sports. It appears that girls of particular ages favour individual rather than team pursuits, and enjoy activities that allow maximum time for social interaction. Clark and Paechter (2007) suggest that the only way to develop and support girls' interest and skills in football was to remove their participation from the male arena and give exclusive space to girls' only play. Locations such as schools and sports clubs can be

confusing and limiting environments for young girls, particularly where stress, academic self-image, body image and self-esteem levels are factored in. From this evidence, the social and cultural contexts in which girls practise activities are significant factors in maintaining their participation and involvement in sport and physical activity. These issues are further elaborated in Chapter seven, which focuses on girls' embodiment and the promotion of a girl golfer habitus in a golf club setting.

3.4.3 Junior golf

Although not given a dedicated section until now, there is evidence to suggest the tenuous position of young people in golf club settings. As shown in Table 3.1, in terms of representation, junior golfers are minority members in Irish golf clubs. Alluded to in section 2.6, it is possible that the delay in the development of junior golf in Ireland until midway through the twentieth century has had an effect on the age profile of the participant. Further, as discussed in section 2.4, the categorisation and regulation of golf club membership can create playing and competition restrictions that hinder young people's participation in golf club settings, while section 3.3 demonstrated how golf club practices could also distance minority participants and young people from participation. Some golf clubs still do not take in junior members or encourage junior golf as a priority; in Australia junior golf is coordinated by only 50% of golf clubs, while a Sport Scotland survey reports that, 13% of golf clubs do not enrol junior members (Golf Australia 2007; SportScotland 2002). A study of junior golf club culture in an Australian golf club reported that young golfers had to assimilate and learn the cultural system of golf club rules and regulations or else face marginalisation (Zevenbergen, Edwards & Skinner 2002). Also alluded to in section 2.6, the Charter for Junior Golf evidenced numerous child-unfriendly practices in Irish golf clubs (GUI *et al.* 2000) (see Table 3.4). Although limited, this evidence conveys how golf clubs are not inclusionary environments for young people.

Table 3.4 Selected results/recommendations from the Charter for Junior Golf

SURVEY (response rate not stated)	RECOMMENDATIONS
The majority of clubs had a junior convenor but no junior committee and no plan for junior golf in the club	Clubs should not only have junior organisers but also a development programme for junior golf
Entrance fees for junior membership fees ranged from €0 to €127, with annual fees ranging from €38 to €140	Student membership fees should be kept as minimal as possible in order to retain golfers past the age of 18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >50% of clubs used 12 as a minimum membership age • Remainder used 13 or 14 as a minimum membership age 	An age of ten years is recommended for welcoming children as members in golf clubs, particularly through local and national initiatives.
The number of junior members per club ranges from 35-200 and an annual increase of 5% was predicted	Need for a code of ethics policy for children in golf (since published, GUI et al. 2006)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of clubs give priority to junior applicants who have family connections • Some clubs extend membership to promising young golfers 	Clubs are encouraged to make membership as open and available as possible and junior members should make up at least 15% of the adult membership

(GUI *et al.* 2000)

Recognising the need to attract younger participants to golf and increase their skill development, some golf organisations fund and develop junior golf initiatives. Whilst some of these programmes are attempts to increase participation, others are focused on talent identification, and encouraging higher playing standards from younger ages. In this way, golf organisations often focus much of their junior golf strategy on high performance and early specialisation, sometimes resulting in short term participation and either the success or demise of young talent (Allen 2008; Arkush 2007; Barwick 2006; Hannigan 2008). Golf organisations' support for high performance before participation is evidenced through the allocation of resources and the lack of coherence in development initiatives when compared with elite golf programmes. As alluded to in section 2.6.2, the Irish golf unions' emphasis on high performance appears to have paid dividends in the number of golfers who have featured internationally. However, a narrow focus and emphasis on competition and performance often caters for high abilities, rather than supporting and encouraging wider participation.

Haig-Muir (1998) suggests that more males play golf because they are socialised into the sport from an early age, whereas girls are socialised away from golf. With low females a characteristic of golf in many countries, federations and unions have introduced initiatives in order to increase the number of girl participants in golf, e.g. Girls Love Golf (South Africa) and Girls Golf (USA). In Ireland the ILGU have expressed concern at the low numbers of female golf participants, and in association with JGI, have put in place targeted programmes such as Women in Golf and 'Girls N Golf' (see Appendix D) to attract new female participants and assuage the gender disparity. The re-introduction of the *Ladies' Irish Open* (for professionals) along with the impending visit of the Solheim Cup to Ireland in 2011 are thought important to encourage awareness about females in golf, and communicate role models to aspiring girl golfers (O'Sullivan 2007). The indication that girls are more attracted to individual activities for personal development reasons (Lunn & Layte 2008) is thought to signal golf's potential for increasing its junior girl participation numbers in Ireland.

3.5 SUMMARY

This chapter outlines how socialisation into sport and sports practices affects the resultant participation, involvement and participant profiles. In parallel with the socio-historical/organisational account of golf in Chapter one and linking with wider sport participation in Ireland, social class and gender appear to heavily dictate the likelihood of one participating in golf. This chapter also endeavoured to delineate how sporting institutions and practices inherently preserve, support and reproduce participation inequalities. In the way that sport participation disparities are repeated from adults to children in Ireland, this chapter informs how sporting institutions such as golf clubs are subject to 'cultural reproduction', and along with this concept, Pierre Bourdieu's 'taste' and 'practice' also emerge as significant in the explication of sport practices (see Chapter five). Although much of the sport sociology literature posits class as the

strongest determinant of sports involvement, for the purposes of this investigation, class forms part of the intersection of social constructs such as race, ethnicity and disability, and given the focus on girl participants, the influence of societal norms and expectations around gender are pertinent.

Golf participants appear to be a socially homogeneous community, where those outside of the prominent demographic such as females, young golfers, those with disabilities and those of differing ethnic or racial origin, are minorities or are not traced in Irish golf clubs. The operations of golf clubs and golf unions appear to attract and support the 'elite', not only the higher socio-professional classes, but higher ability golfers. It is also conceivable that hidden furtive symbolic messages of suitable behaviour and practice are communicated to those inside and outside of the game. Research conveys the structural and institutional setting in which golf takes place for females of all ability levels, and rules and regulations in golf club constitutions evidence male privilege and limit females' participation. This brings problematic issues for the participation of girls, whose relationship with sport and physical activity suggests the influence of dominant gender ideologies and repressed patriarchal frameworks, impacting their lifestyles, life choices and interest and involvement in sport. Evidence of a pervasively exclusive golf club culture is palpable; Song (2007) believes that widespread discriminatory practices underpin the historical and beloved nature of golf and Haig-Muir (2004) suggests a major change in traditional practices of golfing culture needs to occur in order for the structural, systemic and organisational underlying issues in gender discrimination to be addressed.

May 1997

I'm waiting at the gate, gear bag packed, lucky knickers on.
My heart is knocking at my ribs.
I look at down at my confirmation watch. Twenty five past five.
Where the flip is Dad?
He told me five o'clock.
I've to pick up Lisa.
We've to be in Garrymore for half five.
My tummy is doing sommersaults.

We get there. Me and Lisa do a quick change. We're in blue, they're in red. They're tall. The ball is thrown in. It comes to me. I grab it, steal a step, take a bounce and boot it past the goalie. I score two more points and 19 minutes later we win, 1-2 to 1-1.

The next day at school I'm proclaimed the 6th class heroine, a right 'Sonia'. The next week my name headlines a small but significant piece on the Cumann na mBunscoil section in the local paper. I'm proud but distracted, conscious of my classmates who couldn't make it to Garrymore. I wish we all could have been there.

**CHAPTER 4 THEORETICAL
FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY**

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates on the framework and methodology used in the research investigation. In a reflexive contribution and furthering the opening extract, I attempt to outline how my background, values and biases shape the orientations I bring to the research. As the philosophical foundation for the research, the purposes, advantages and limitations of critical, feminist and postmodern perspectives are critiqued, as is the epistemological claims of knowledge and truth. The research design and associated critical ethnographic approach is reviewed, with elaboration on the specific data collection tools of field observations, focus groups, and document analysis. Field relations and methodological scenarios such as access to the golf clubs settings, the researcher's role and the data collections that took place during five phases of data collection are explained, while data analysis and data representation are also appraised. The closing sections discuss the application of both theory and methodology in Chapters five to eight.

4.2 PERSPECTIVES

As demonstrated in sequences intercepting these chapters, I grew up loving sport, constantly active and eager to get involved. I tried every available activity in my home town and alma maters in the west of Ireland; tennis, volleyball, Gaelic games, gymnastics, soccer, and aged thirteen, after my mother eventually gave into my begging to go with her to the golf course, I began playing golf. Prompted by the inclusive nature of other sports I was involved in I questioned golf, the formalities, blazers, rules and restrictions practised in my local club, and why so few of my fellow sports fanatic friends were involved. Despite these reservations I thrived on the challenge of golf and by the age of seventeen I had graduated to the Connaught team; by twenty-three I had represented Ireland numerous times worldwide, spending two seasons as a full time touring amateur. The positive experiences I have had in sport have encouraged me to work with the next generation, to help them discover the enjoyment and

challenge that sport can bring. I became a volunteer from a young age, coaching underage girls' Gaelic football teams and, through my golfing prowess I soon specialised in junior golf, volunteering as junior convenor in my local club, to the ILGU Connaught District and more recently as team captain for the ILGU Irish girls' team. I have a keen interest in promoting and advancing participation for all in sport and golf and at all levels.

Throughout my experiences in the field of golf, my core values of inclusion, democracy and equality in sport have been regularly tested. My own achievements and travels have shaped my opinions on the game. In August 2000, the year my mother was lady captain, I posted the best score on lady president's day, but because of a club rule that prohibited junior members from winning any of the club's four majors (e.g. captain's prize), I could not take first prize. Accepting second place in the clubhouse that night, aged fifteen, I made a stuttering, quivering speech in front of about two hundred adults. In August 2007 I competed in Bangkok at an exclusive golf resort where, every morning, tens of children piled out of a crammed school bus to work on the course in the sweltering humidity, while countless women caddied and graciously repaired our divots. In December 2007 I travelled to Argentina and played at a club that also had facilities for polo, tennis and cricket, and where nightly I wined and dined with the English-speaking social elite of Buenos Aires. Preceding a tournament in Scotland in 2008, an initial visit to the venue's majestic clubhouse was short-lived after I was ushered out and directed to the ladies' clubhouse three hundred yards down the road. Sparked by the Youth Sports and Policy module I undertook as a physical education undergraduate, I became discernibly aware of these practices and I embarked on this investigation. Concurrently I qualified as a PGA level one golf coach and acquired a position with JGI where I coordinate the 'Girls N Golf' programme (see Appendix D). My sport and physical activity experiences as a participant, coach and physical education graduate remind me that participation should unquestionably be all inclusive. However, formal archaic golf

traditions and selective club practices can influence the experiences that participants have in the game, contributing to a golf club culture that inhibits involvement, valorises status and legitimises inequality. This section shares three stances that serve as the foundation for the theoretical positioning of the investigation: critical social science, feminism and postmodernism.

4.2.1 Critical social science

The chapters thus far have evidenced inequalities in golf club culture both from socio-historical and sociological perspectives, and this project hypothesises that the social history of golf and institutionalised golf club practices are significant in understanding young people's experiences in golf. Informed also by my biography, as evidenced to this point, I approach this research from a critical perspective, considering it a suitable lens of inquiry. Critical social science looks at the broad socio-historical and political context, while it also covers examinations of the intersections of constructs such as class and gender, processes that are particularly significant in the context of this investigation. Often associated with interpretivism, critical perspectives are concerned with social institutions, underlying social relations, oppressive structures and historical problems of domination and inequality in the attempt to locate the thoughts and actions of individuals and groups in everyday life (Creswell 2007; Patton 2002; Sparkes 1992a). McDonald and Birrell (1999) recommend a 'critical sport analysis' perspective as a form of agency that opens up possibilities for the emergence of new actions. As indicated in section 3.5, through appraisal of the intersectionality of gender, social class and other social constructs in the context of the golf club, critical theory offers a medium through which the oppression of minority participants and the normalisation of patriarchal power relations can be realised. Where part of the research focuses on the habituses of girl participants, feminist theory will also frame the investigation.

4.2.2 Feminism

Cognisant of my prolonged experiences in the field as a female golfer and advocate of girls' golf, I occupy a feminist stance in this research. Derived from critical theory, feminist perspectives begin with the assumption that sporting practices are historically produced, socially constructed and culturally defined to serve the needs and interests of powerful groups in society (Dewar 1991). As evidenced in Chapters one and two, sport is one of the few categories of the social world still logically and unequally arranged by gender. Equality of opportunity between the genders has been a central argument by feminists in their quest to gain opportunities and resources for girls and women in sport, and discriminatory issues in private sports clubs have often been associated with liberal feminist perspectives (Scruton & Flintoff 2002). Accused of oversimplifying females' multiple and diversified femininities and dispositions, liberal feminist frameworks have been criticised for their lack of ideology and the absence of a fundamental critique of the structures that cause inequality (Scruton & Flintoff 2002). Cooky and McDonald (2005) suggest the need to move away from liberal assumptions in order to recreate females' understandings around bodily norms and sport experiences. While liberal feminists are interested in inequality, critical feminists write in relation to the power issues outlined in Chapter two, where gender relations often are defined by hegemonic masculinity and supported by cultural norms of male domination and female subordination (Connell 2005). In recognition of the need to consider the influence of power relations in the golf club institution on marginalised participants, and through its commitment to producing knowledge that can serve as the basis for social change, critical feminism is significant in framing this research. As part of the feminist approach, and in line with my alternative research goal, I was eager to incorporate perspectives that appreciate females' multiple voices and diversity of experiences, while also shedding new light on golf practices. Similarly, it was important to give credence to my identities in the field as author, golfer, coach and JGI employee, using

reflexivity to outline how my positions have shaped the assertions made and my potential future in the field. Thus, sometimes associated with a critical paradigm, postmodernism is also important in framing this research.

4.2.3 Postmodernism

In theorising history, society and culture, postmodernism presents discourses that reject the project of universal social science and challenge grand narratives of the world. Postmodernism spurred the 'crisis in representation', where many researchers moved from being disinterested spectators towards embodied observers (Sparkes 1995). Closely related to post-structuralism, Butler (1999) recognises postmodernism as a broad, artistic, literary research movement, which celebrates flexible selves and permeable or semi-permeable boundaries. Postmodern frameworks often address themes of diversity and transgression of boundaries, and challenge the equating of subjectivity as opinion and objectivity as truth:

The core of postmodernism is the doubt that any method or theory, discourse or genre, tradition or novelty, has a universal and general claim as the 'right' or the privileged form of authoritative knowledge. Postmodernism suspects all truth claims as masking and serving particular interests in local, cultural, and political struggles. But it does not automatically reject conventional methods of knowing and telling as false and archaic. Rather, it opens those standard methods to inquiry and introduces new methods, which are also, then subject to critique.

Richardson (2000, p.928)

In postmodernism the issues of neutrality, voice, authority, power and privilege in the text are significant. Postmodern sport feminism has been recognised as a messy, unsettled and dynamic process that can highlight complex differentiation, unstable identities and fractured experience (Birrell 2000; Hargreaves 2004). Related to post-structural feminist frameworks, Butler (1999) endorses deconstruction of the social order associated with the discursive terms and binaries such as 'woman', and instead encourages the

recognition of the multiple femininities that can be experienced both between women and by individual women. This perspective has brought a shift in feminist analyses of sport from a critical perspective on the ideology of masculinity and male power towards a focus on physicality, sexuality and the body as sites for defining gender relations (Birrell 2000). Related to my reflexive ambition, postmodernism also encourages not only the recognition of females' diversified and varying identities and realities, but the emergence of my own multiple positions and voices in this research.

The combination of critical, feminist and postmodern perspectives in this investigation might be recognised as conflicting from some quarters. Postmodernism has been accused of relativism in its neglect of rationality, structural power differences, the nature of discrimination, the politics of minorities, and in its disregard of women's shared experiences in relation to gender and in this way, it does not always compliment critical perspectives (Birrell 2000; Hargreaves 2004). Although critical theory and postmodernism differ slightly in their ontology or claim to what is real, both perspectives have similar epistemological assumptions, particularly in their recognition of subjectivity. Cole (1991) suggests that postmodern feminism attempts to critically recover discourses of historically repressed groups, and it considers differences, domination and oppression through multiple standpoint positions. Richardson (1997) claims that this recognition of diversity in postmodernism can result in political emancipation associated with critical perspectives:

Postmodern sociologists have unique opportunities to fulfil the promise of the sociological imagination. They can write the lives of individuals, groups and collectives, grounding social theory in people's experiences and celebrating diversity and multiplicity. By so doing we move closer to social history, giving voice to silenced, marginalised or inarticulate people.

(Richardson 1997, p.122)

Linked with the historical context of golf, for the purposes of this research combining critical feminist and postmodern approaches has a provisional or emancipatory purpose, where multiple perspectives

are advocated, and where representations and categories are constantly questioned. Related to the investigation goals, critical, feminist and postmodern frameworks should shape the basis for informing golf practice from club to organisational level, along with contributing to theoretical developments and new insights through alternative qualitative research (see Section 1.2).

4.3 KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION AND TRUTH

As discussed in section 3.1, sport is both representative and constitutive of social relations in a socio-historically specific period and is not neutral, objective ahistorical or independent of structural factors. Interactions, interpretations and the resultant constructs among and between individuals and groups in the field of sport are determined within unequal power relations and structural concerns, where knowledge is rooted in the values and interests of particular groups (Sparkes 1992a). Like interpretivism, critical research aims to generate insights, explain events, and seek understanding, investigating how certain meaning structures become accepted, natural and legitimate and whose interests they represent. The political dimensions of knowledge construction influence the investigation and affect interactions between the researcher and participants in the field, shaping who gets studied, who does not, what they choose (not) to report, which questions are asked and unasked, how people are written in and out of accounts and how the researcher's self/selves and others are represented. Recognising that knowledge is socially constructed and situated in a particular context, social reality is not always constructed voluntarily, and researchers and participants are often a product of the social context (Devís-Devís 2006; Silverman 2006). Creswell (2003, p.9) cites Crotty (1998):

Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspective – we are all born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture...qualitative researchers seek to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting this

context and gathering information personally. They also make an interpretation of what they find, an interpretation shaped by the researchers' own experiences and backgrounds.

In this way, critical research is relational, where it explores how and why practices have been constructed in certain ways, what values are privileged and legitimated, how people are included and excluded, and whose interests are served at the expense of others.

The 'crisis in representation' debates between subjective and objective knowledge and insider/outsider researcher positions have been well documented (Richardson 2000; Sparkes 2002b). With the postmodern movement, research accounts are recognised as situated, selective, and embedded in social constructs, personal biases and webs of power relationships. Writing can indicate a position of power, and issues of language and meaning are central in the interpretation of a text (Markula & Dension 2005; Sparkes 1995). In this way, knowledge can never be contextualised from a fully objective sphere and, with neither objective nor subjective claims fully supported, truth becomes contested and impossible to tell. Although important to pursue, in Richardson's (2000) quote above, postmodern perspectives suspect truth claims as serving particular interests. Butler (1999) contends that there are multiple and varied subjective truths, many positions from which to know, subjugated and contested knowledges and different stories involving partiality and multiplicity. As a human construction, the critical, feminist and postmodern frameworks used in this investigation reflect my interests, values and interpretations and are linked to my cultural and historical situation (Guba 1990; Marshall & Rossman 2006; Schwandt 2001; Silverman 2006). In the way that critical postmodern researchers often elicit subjective accounts, in the subsequent chapters I share my lived experience to increase awareness and understanding of the underlying assumptions, constraints and contradictions of golf club culture.

4.4 REFLEXIVITY

As above, the subjective and value laden nature of critical and postmodern research is often accompanied by bracketing or reflexivity, which are used to identify how the researcher's perspective affects what he/she is able to observe, hear and understand in the field:

...reflexivity can be a means for critically inspecting the entire research process, including reflecting on ways in which a field worker establishes a social network of informants and participants in a study and examining one's personal and theoretical commitments to determine how they serve as resources for generating particular data, for behaving in particular ways vis-à-vis respondents and participants, and for developing particular interpretations.

(Schwandt 2001, p.224)

Reflexivity in qualitative inquiry recognises how the researcher's orientation is shaped by his or her socio-historical locations, values and interests (Guba 1990; Hammersley & Atkinson 1995; Sparkes 1992b). Patton (2002) suggests that reflexivity emphasises the importance of self-awareness, cultural consciousness, ownership of one's thoughts, perspectives and interpretations, and recognition of participants' perspectives. Creswell (2007; 2009) suggests that where reflexive researchers contextualise their position in the study and comment on their relationships with participants, they eliminate compromised data collection and contribute to research authenticity. This is particularly true for many critical researchers who are sometimes accused of being overly ideological and biased in their research. Sports feminists have encouraged authors to reflexively acknowledge how their interpretations and writing are embedded in systems characterised by structured inequalities (Dewar 1993). In this investigation and primarily in Chapter eight, my situation as a researcher, golf club member, international competitor and my role with JGI is reflected through the reflexive and subjective nature of my writing in the first person and this is talked through these multiple positions.

Reflexivity encourages researcher reflection on the formulation, conduct and production of data collection, and is often employed where the researcher is the prime instrument of data collection, and where this data is produced through social interactions in the field. Here, subjective accounts of the researcher's interpretations of their experiences in the field can provide a greater understanding of field access, relationships and rapport between the researcher and the participants, and can contribute to the reader's understanding of the topic, and the researcher's interpretation of the culture. Throughout this research the constant scrutiny of my internal dialogue and attention to my varied selves is an acknowledgement of the reflexive approach in my writing. Many writers have identified personal biography as a suitable reflexive method and Patton (2002) supports writing in the first person over the passive voice, particularly where self-questioning, self-reflection and self-understanding are required. Biographical accounts such as that elicited in the prologue and at the beginning of this chapter facilitate an understanding of why and how the research came about and clarifies the general framing of the work from inception to completion (Creswell 2009). Schwandt (2001) suggests critical self-reflection on one's background, biases, involvement in the field, theoretical predispositions and preferences should be recorded and explored in a personal journal. Given my roles in the field of golf and in specific settings, these elements of reflexivity are particularly pertinent.

While there are advantages to reflexivity in terms of authenticity, Mason (2002, p.5) warns of the perils of self-indulgent reflexivity, where the researcher should avoid using this technique "to showcase egocentric or confessional tales about yourself, which may do little to illuminate your research practice or problem". Fine, Weis, Weseen and Wong (2000, p.109) state that "flooding the text with ruminations on the researcher's subjectivities also has the potential to silence participants". Further, Kenway and McLeod (2004) suggest that reflexivity has become a conventional methodological stance in feminist and post-structural research, and because of this it has been

deployed in a relatively weak and monological sense. This investigation follows the lead of Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), who advocate a stronger form of reflexivity in acknowledging perspectives, structural and spatial locations and power relations between researcher and participant. Reflexivity has also received criticism from positivist commentators, who claim that it is impossible to acknowledge all awareness of subjectivities and potential biases in the research, while on the opposite side of the continuum, postmodernists also suggest that it is unattainable to identify biases and to know fully and entirely. Cognisant of this unfeasibility, I have attempted to be aware of how my biases, values and assumptions have influenced the data I have collected, the progression of the study, the questions that are asked, and the findings I report. Although my roles in the field as a researcher, golfer, coach, employee and golf club member suggest a suitable qualified stance in the field, it is important to acknowledge that in spite of my perceived ability in golf settings, any qualifications a researcher possesses has both advantages and disadvantages. While I was familiar with golf club settings as an insider during this research, this did not assure that I knew all boundaries, norms, rules and regularities in the field of golf. My complex positioning in the research warranted a dedicated section to personal biography and the moral implications of the researcher's position are revisited in Chapter eight.

4.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

Sparkes (1992a) suggests that because of the empowering, ideological and transformative nature of critical research, methodologies that allow for regular interaction and reciprocity between the researcher and participants should take place during the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Similarly, in its focus on oppression and power relations in society, critical research is often associated with ethnography, which sometimes explores political and social minority groups (O'Reilly 2009). For the purpose

of this investigation, critical ethnography is deemed a suitable methodology through which to uncover social practices and relations and the institutional and organisational culture of golf clubs. MacPhail *et al.* (2003) suggest that ethnography is an ideal research strategy for examining the dynamic activities of youth sport. There has been some dispute as to whether ethnography should be recognised as a methodology or a method, and for the purposes of this investigation ethnography is the methodology, complemented by specific research tools of field observation, focus groups and journal entries. Where it involves open-ended observation, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest that research designs for ethnography are near superfluous, while Flick (2009) claims that information on the intentions and procedure of the planned research does not necessarily lead to more clarity, but rather to more confusion and misunderstanding. Similarly, given the changeable, discursive and exploratory nature of qualitative research, Creswell (2007) suggests that during data collection parts of the process may shift and the methodology becomes shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analysing the data. Cognisant of these contentions, the research design and critical ethnography was flexible enough to allow for emergent data.

Much of the research undertaken in sport and physical activity tends to pursue what Sparkes and Smith (2002) have termed an "outside-in" approach, where structural constraints are foremost debated, while the reality of personal experience or an "inside-out" style is less prevalent. Jones (2006) claims that the "outside-in" approach leads to an inadequate understanding of personal dilemmas within the research setting. In contrast, Sparkes (1992a) suggests the strongest form of ethnography begins with an examination of structural relationships in the wider social context, followed by data collection of individuals' understandings, meanings and interactions in the field. In this way and in line with the research goal of informing the policy and practice of junior golf, the critical ethnography was preceded by a national questionnaire to the population of golf clubs. As the relatively newly formed development

body for grassroots golf, my employers, JGI, had little information on the policy and practice of junior golf, omitting the Charter for Junior Golf (GUI *et al.* 2000). Like JGI, I was also eager to obtain a national consensus on junior golf through empirical assessment. Along with providing information on the overall context of junior golf, the questionnaire provided a baseline with which I could initiate qualitative data collection from the field. In this respect I was also keen to use my perceived abilities in the field in meeting and liaising with participants, and engaging with the field on a direct interpersonal or 'micro' level. Similar to Sparkes (1992a) above, and informed by Collins' (2000) macro, meso and micro level analysis, the data collection progressed from an empirical focus on the 'meso' or organisational implications of golf club practices in the questionnaire, to a 'micro' or closer critical examination of the role of the golf club institution in shaping the habituses of young participants in the field (see Figure 3.1). While this chapter details the critical ethnographic and qualitative emphasis of the investigation, Chapter five discusses the rationale, design and use of the National Junior Golf Questionnaire in the research.

4.6 ETHICS

In 2008, ethical clearance for data collection was sought and granted from the UL Research Ethics Committee (**ULREC**) for the period of May 2008 until January 2010, consenting to dissemination of a questionnaire, the recording of observations and field notes from golf club settings, and conducting interviews with both children and adults during golf club visits (ULREC 08-20). Renewal of ethics was granted in January 2010 from the UL Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee (**EHSREC**) for a continuation of ethnographic data collection for the period January 2010 until January 2012 (EHS REC 09-45).

4.7 CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography is a study of the behaviour, language and interactions

of an entire culture-sharing group of people in their natural settings over a prolonged period of time (Creswell 2009). Hammersley and Atkinson (1995, p.1) define the ethnographer's role as:

...participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research.

Many commentators have criticised traditional ethnography as a purely factual, conservative approach, which is written dispassionately in the third person and fails to recognise the value of the researcher's experience and presence in the setting (Creswell 2007; Zevenbergen *et al.* 2002). Critical ethnography, in contrast, links the detailed analysis of ethnography with wider social structures and systems of power relations and usually involves the researcher as participant, who emphasises a value-laden orientation, addresses concerns about institutional power, and investigates how certain meaning structures become accepted, natural and legitimate in the culture and in participants' lives (O'Reilly 2009). With its focus on revealing relationships in the everyday reproduction of practices, rules and interactions, this critical methodology is sometimes referred to as institutional ethnography, and is considered the best approach to meet the research goals alluded to in section 1.2 (Creswell 2007; Flick 2009; O'Reilly 2009). A critical ethnographer is usually active as a participant in the field, where the critical researcher can gain a closer understanding of the values, meanings and actions of the participants in their natural settings (Pope 2006). Given my allegiance with female golf as a female golfer, girls' coach and particularly my position as JGI national coordinator of 'Girls N Golf' (see Appendix D), girl golfers gradually became the focus of the investigation. Cole (1991) proposes a critical feminist ethnography, which:

...offers the potential for raising new questions and dealing with difference for all ethnographers including those who locate local subjects, local knowledges, and discursive regularities through the cultural terrain of sport.

This methodology is specifically used in Chapter seven to assess the impact of dominant gender ideologies and golf club practices on girl participants' habituses in the golf club setting. Framed by the critical ethnography, this section details the selection and sampling of the research settings and the ethnographic data collection and data analysis procedures.

4.7.1 Selecting the research settings

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest that the ethnographer can rarely specify the precise nature of the setting required, while Flick (2009) reports that the selection of cases in theoretical sampling should proceed according to their relevance as opposed to their representativeness. As detailed in section 4.5, sampling and selecting the research setting(s) grew directly from the initial questionnaire, which became recognised as **phase one** of the data collection. Following the postal questionnaire (Appendices A & B), 142 golf clubs (74% of respondents) expressed their interest in partaking in phase two of the research through a tick box at the end of the questionnaire. Based on these clubs' general characteristics, and their level of detail in the questionnaire response, twenty were selected and written to, where I requested the club's permission to carry out a one-day field visit and record observations (see Appendix C). I stated in the letter that as an Irish international golfer and qualified Level one PGA coach, where possible during the visit I would facilitate coaching sessions with junior golfers. Twelve of the twenty letter recipients signed and posted back the consent form permitting my visit (see Appendix C) and thus began the selection of research settings. From July to October 2008 I made one-day visits to ten golf clubs located in the Republic of Ireland (8) and Northern Ireland (2), in what became data collection **phase two**. During this time I began to take notice of how my own personal observations and orientations were being shaped in the research and I started to record my own interpretations of the field in a **personal journal**.

Figure 4.1 Data collection phases

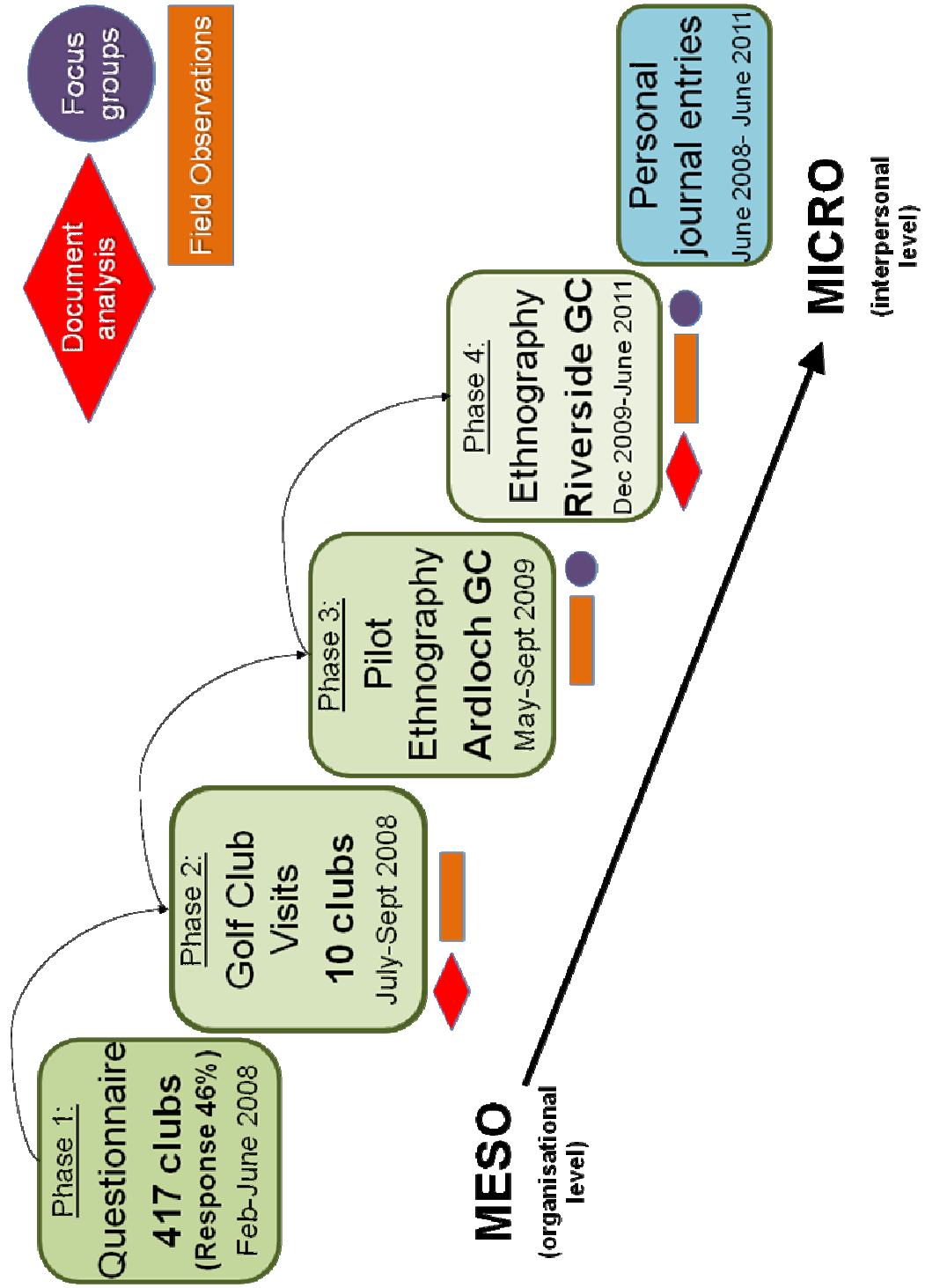


Figure 4.1 shows the meso-micro progression of data collection phases in the research. Table 1.1 details the relationship between the five data collection phases outlined in figure 4.1 and individual studies in Chapters five to eight. Further elaboration on the data collected from the questionnaire and field visits (phases one and two), is presented in Chapter five.

Having collected a wealth of data from the ten golf clubs (phase two), I began to realise the extent of data that might be collected from 'thick description' at one setting. A data collection dilemma ensued, between continuing to visit each club, studying fewer clubs in less detail, or conducting a detailed examination in one club. Based on the richness of notes I took from the initial visit, the relationship I developed with the potential gatekeeper, and the club's location relative to my home when compared with the other nine clubs, I decided to commence a single case ethnography with Ardloch⁷ golf club, a private members' golf club in the east of Ireland. As part of the overall data collection plan this became known as **phase three** (see Figure 4.1). From May 2009 I conducted weekly visits to Ardloch on the 120-mile round trip from my home in Co. Kildare. Unexpectedly however, in September 2009 I relocated to the other side of the country, and though I continued to visit Ardloch weekly, the 330 mile round trip was no longer feasible and my visits ceased in October 2009. Due to the miscellany of data at my disposal for presentation in this investigation, I chose to omit the observation and focus group data. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) contend that in conducting ethnography the collection of primary data often plays a key role in developing research problems. While I have not found a means of including the data from Ardloch data in this investigation, as an inexperienced ethnographer at the time, I believe my duration in the setting was valuable in terms of gaining experience and refocusing on my research goals. In this way the

⁷ Pseudonym

phase three data served as a pilot ethnography in preparation for a longer-term stint in the field.

Before the premature end to my tenure in Ardloch I endeavoured to source another club to renew the critical ethnography. With none of the phase two golf clubs in reasonable proximity to my new home I had to search for another golf club. I narrowed the search to seven union affiliated golf clubs within a twenty-mile radius of my home. Given that I had planned to conduct regular visits across one year in a club setting, I decided to choose a club that would be nearby and that would best facilitate me as a regular visitor or even a member. Supported by my acquaintance of one club member, in September 2009 I chose to approach Riverside⁸ golf club and prior to the endpoint of my visits to Ardloch I achieved confirmation of my access to the club. The data I collected during my eighteen-month ethnography at Riverside became **phase four** of the research. Since commencing my personal journal around the time of the phase two golf club visits, I continued to record my own interpretations of the field throughout data collection phases three and four.

4.7.2 Ethnographic data collection

For the purposes of this research a number of specific research tools or methods comprise the critical ethnographic methodology, all of which are planned, guided and employed by the researcher:

...the observer is the primary research instrument, accessing the field, establishing field relations, conducting and structuring observation and interviews, writing field notes, using audio and visual recordings, reading documents, recording and transcribing and finally writing up the research.

(Walsh 2000, p.221)

As outlined in Figure 3.1, along with my own personal journal entries and a questionnaire to the population of golf clubs (phase one), phases two to four of data collection included field observations,

⁸ Pseudonym

informal interviews and focus groups, and analysis of golf club documents. Following golf club visits in phases two to four I logged naturalistic field observations on gendered processes and institutional mechanisms such as membership fees, clubhouse décor, language and occupations. I also recalled detail from conversations and interactions between junior golfers, adult members and junior golfers, and adults talking in relation to junior golfers. In examining the habituses of the girl golfers at Riverside (phase four) I paid specific attention to the girls' dispositions and actions. Before visiting the phase two golf clubs I scanned each golf club's website in order to get acquainted with the club. With a prepared list of questions I conducted informal interviews, recording responses to questions on site where the gatekeeper approved. Whilst at each club, including Ardloch and Riverside, I sourced documents such as club yearbooks, historical accounts and flyers. At Ardloch and Riverside I conducted focus groups with junior girl (both clubs) and junior boy (Ardloch only) members, aiming to establish the participants' orientations towards golf and golf club settings. Although working with young people enlists numerous challenges around language and attitudes, engaging participants in critical investigation about their lived experiences yields rich data and contributes to participant-researcher relations (Enright 2010; MacPhail *et al.* 2009; Oliver 2001). Similar to MacPhail (2004) in her dual roles as athlete and researcher, I began to realise how central my personal biases were in the collection of field observations, and in a reflexive move I chose to separate both types of reflections through my personal journal. In addition, my experiences in the field of golf outside of the research settings warranted recording, particularly given the countless golf club establishments I visited both in Ireland and abroad in a professional or competitive capacity, as an international player, JGI employee, or ILGU volunteer. Although all observations related to the field of golf, many of these reflections diverted from the research questions and included reflection on my golf game and wider circumstances in the field. Aside from elucidating between

Table 4.1 Data collected

	PHASE 2 GOLF CLUB VISITS	PHASE 3 PILOT ETHNOGRAPHY	PHASE 4 ETHNOGRAPHY	PERSONAL JOURNAL
Presented in chapter	5 & 6	N/A	7	8
Duration of phase	One day at each club	5 months	18 months	3 years
FIELD OBSERVATIONS				
Frequency	Once	Weekly/ fortnightly	Weekly	Weekly
Types	<p>Descriptions of golf club location, setting and time of year</p> <p>Available historical accounts on the club</p> <p>Institutional mechanisms and symbols such as evidence of golf rituals, traditions, rules, membership criteria/fees, membership selection processes, clubhouse décor and participants' occupations and home addresses</p> <p>Provisions and policies for junior golf, e.g. membership, coaching, competitions, rules, handicaps, child protection</p> <p>Recollection of informal dialogue with club members and officials, parents and junior boy and girl golfers; descriptions of interactions with peers and adults, language, speech patterns, behaviours and relationships; unusual incidents.</p> <p>In phase four particular attention was paid to junior girl members' embodiment in the setting, including their facial expressions, dress, appearance, language, actions, body language, postures, gaits, actions, behaviours.</p> <p>My personal opinions and experiences in numerous golf club settings during work, research, as a volunteer or as a competitor.</p>			
INFORMAL INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS				
Frequency	Informal interviews with golf club officials and gatekeepers at each visit	3 focus groups with junior girl members and 3 with junior boy members	6 focus groups with junior girl members	
ARTEFACTS, DOCUMENTS AND OTHER SOURCES				
Types	Golf club websites and historical accounts	Golf club website, club calendar, email/phone correspondence	Golf club website, club yearbook, email/phone correspondence	

work and tournament settings in the field, these journal entries and reflections took no specific format. Table 4.1 outlines the specific research tools used in data collection phases two, three and four, as part of the critical ethnography. Detail on the questionnaire (phase one) is presented in Chapter four.

4.7.3 Ethnographic data analysis

From the number of research visits carried out across phases two, three and four, not to mention my own journal interpretations from the field, I began to gather a wealth of qualitative data from the golf clubs. Some authors suggest that using the correct qualitative analytic techniques to manage the data is imperative, particularly for ethnography, where data is collected over a long period of time (Silverman 2006; 2008). Walsh (2000) suggests that in the process of data collection the researcher should write down any analytical ideas that arise, where these analytic memos help to identify emergent ideas and inform the research strategy. The field observations from the phase two visits to ten golf clubs were initially coded and compared with the questionnaire data and this comprised the study that is presented in Chapter five and linked to the first research goal (see Section 1.2). It also became clear that the data collected from the phase two visits could be used in an alternative data representation (see Chapter six). In collecting field observations and conducting focus groups at Ardloch (phase three), a record of processes developed systematically, where themes were identified, coded and categorised. During phase four data collection at Riverside, rather than grouping themes together and risking the use of inappropriate categories and excluding data and deviant cases (Jupp 2006), I decided to use Lincoln and Guba's (1985) naturalistic in-depth analysis approach. This included iterative repeated reading of the ethnographic data, endeavouring to find common themes and patterns. Ethnographic content analysis and document analysis were enlisted on texts that were obtained, e.g. club documentation, yearbooks, historical accounts, phone/email correspondence and

websites (Bryman 2008). Similar to the phase four data, in analysing my journal entries I strayed from any coding or theming. From these personal notes and reflections, the phase two narrative (see Chapters five and six) and the investigation of my positioning in the research (see Chapter eight) were crafted. Data representation and analysis is further elaborated in section 4.9.2.

4.8 FIELD RELATIONS

When entering the field over a long period as an ethnographer, aspects such as access, permission, gatekeeper approval, trust and the researcher's role are central to field relations (Marshall & Rossman 2006). My position in the field afforded me ease of access to each research setting. Given the length of time I spent at Ardloch and Riverside in particular and my unfamiliarity with the patrons and members at both clubs, trust and forming relationships were of concern. This section discusses field relations, access, gatekeepers and my role during the data collection phases two, three and four. While the data from the observations and focus groups I conducted in Ardloch is not presented in this investigation (although one observation is included in Chapter eight), I consider it important to include my relations in the field as comparable against the other research settings.

4.8.1 Access and gatekeepers

Given my affiliation with JGI, the ILGU and my status as an international golfer, and PGA level one coach, gaining access to the field was never problematic. The letters to clubs for phases two to four (see Appendix C) were sanctioned by JGI and printed on JGI headed paper, on which there are also logos from JGI's partner organisations the GUI, ILGU and PGA, demonstrating the endorsement of the primary golf governing bodies in Ireland. Flick (2009) cautions that authorisation by higher authorities may produce distrust in the research participants although this did not appear to be the case. Aside from the seven non-respondents for the twenty

phase two letters, I received immediate responses and consent from twelve clubs (ten of which were visited), and officials at each setting were wholly supportive of my visits and involvement. Detailed in Chapters one and two, golf's association with an educated class was also potentially significant in gaining access, where club managers, officials and adult members were familiar with university institutions and the significance of postgraduate research. My willingness to work with the junior golfers where possible during the phase two visits, and my volunteered support to coaching the junior golf sections in Ardloch and Riverside, were also contributory factors to gaining access (see Appendix C).

During the phase two visits, the consent form signatories were in most cases a designated junior convenor or adult in charge of junior golf in the club, and this person became the gatekeeper in each club with whom I arranged the one-day visit. It was clear that each gatekeeper monitored my access differently, where some informed the relevant management committees, while others did not acknowledge my visit or my research purpose to the club hierarchy. In all ten clubs the gatekeepers made me very welcome, in some cases introducing me to numerous club dignitaries and junior golfers, and in all cases, providing me with beverages and sustenance. It appeared that gatekeepers welcomed, introduced and recognised me firstly as an Irish international golfer and coach, secondly as a JGI employee and lastly as a researcher. For example, at Garavin⁹, the junior convenor displayed a poster on the club notice board which read "Garavin Golf Club welcomes Irish International golfer Niamh Kitching". In most clubs the gatekeepers endeavoured to discuss the successful aspects of their junior golf programme, and in particular their most talented junior golfers, especially where they interpreted JGI as a talent identification organisation rather than a grassroots golf participation organisation. Thus, from early on in the ethnographic data collection, it was clear that the access and trust I

⁹ Pseudonym

gained was associated with my positioning in the game of golf, rather than my position as a researcher of golf. After achieving access to Ardloch I wrote to the ten phase two clubs informing them of the new direction of the research.

Having mentioned the possibility of ethnography with the gatekeeper at Ardloch I followed this contact with a formal letter to the club's general manager, who obliged me permission and returned the consent form. From once I contacted her following the phase two visit, the gatekeeper was very involved in securing my access to the club, and even achieved consent from the club's management committee and junior committee on my behalf. She immediately took an interest in my research and was very facilitative of my visits. On one occasion, after I distributed parental information sheets and consent forms for a focus group, in my absence the gatekeeper followed up with junior golfers and parents to ensure that all willing participants had returned the signed forms. My last visit to Ardloch in October 2009 coincided with the club's last junior outing of the year and during a prize presentation to the juniors the gatekeeper made a presentation to me, acknowledging my contribution to the club. Prompted by an invitation from the gatekeeper, in November 2009 I returned to the club to speak about my research at the club's inaugural junior golf **AGM**.

After liaising with JGI work colleagues and my contact at Riverside golf club I identified the general manager as a potentially trustworthy and supportive point of contact in the setting. Following a phone call I arranged an initial meeting with him, at which I pitched the idea of conducting a one-year ethnography at Riverside. He immediately signed the consent form, promising to inform the club's relevant committees and officials about my research. Whilst at this initial meeting, I enquired about club membership. Four weeks later the general manager informed me through email that there would be no fee payable in respect of my membership for one year from December 2009. This was significant access as it meant that I perform my researcher role as a club member and insider, and not as

a visitor to the setting, as had been the case during the phase two visits and whilst at Ardloch for phase three. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) warn of gatekeepers' legitimate eagerness to see themselves and their colleagues in the setting presented in a favourable light, and thus attempt to exercise some degree of control over the researcher. In this regard it was important that I monitored my relationship with the manager, to avoid any potential for my research to become bounded within his remits. It is also necessary to communicate findings and outcomes of the research to gatekeepers, to avoid any potential disquiet within the setting. Although I presented my research data at Ardloch, in spite of offers to present my findings at Riverside I was told it was not necessary.

4.8.2 Researcher's role

The ethnographer must contend with the overt nature with which those in the field know about their role. Gatekeepers and participants can often be wary of the ethnographer's identity and intentions and are sometimes more concerned with what kind of person the researcher is than with the research itself (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). The definition of the researcher's role in the setting is important in this regard, and the construction of a working identity that may be facilitated if the researcher can exploit any skills or knowledge in the field (Sands 2002; Sparkes 1992b). While I was primarily a researcher during the phase two visits, at Ardloch and Riverside I was a participant-researcher, and, as in the last section, at Riverside I was also a club member. At my weekly attendance at Ardloch the gatekeeper was very proactive in giving me the role of coach of the junior girl members. During every visit I spent time on the course with the girl members, while I also travelled to two away competitions, helping them to prepare before their round, watching them play, and helping them to reflect on their performance. Similarly, shortly after my induction as a member at Riverside, I received a phone call from the lady captain, inviting me to join the junior girls' committee. Immediately I was involved in coordinating a

coaching programme for girl members, where I had a role as coach, while I also captained the club's girl team in interclub tournaments. For the next eighteen months at Riverside I sat on the junior girls' committee, and was involved at club meetings, presentations, dinners and outings. As a club member at Riverside I participated on club teams, attended coaching sessions, practise rounds and tournaments, making up to one hundred and fifty visits to the setting. My legitimate position as a club member, and my knowledge and experience in the field of golf certainly contributed to easing field relations at Riverside while my frequent attendance at coaching, competitions and committee meetings encouraged the use of my skills and experiences as a qualified coach and international golfer.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest that access is not merely a matter of physical presence in the setting and there is much work to be done in forming relationships with participants. For the data collection in phases two, three and four I was highly conscious of the impression I created in the field and I concentrated on controlling my appearance, making small talk with adults, being a good listener and generally being overtly friendly to anyone I met in the golf club settings. As a female researcher there were numerous pitfalls I had to confront, particularly were female researchers can sometimes find it difficult to be taken seriously by males, while they are also perceived as a threat by female participants (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995). With my regular access to the ladies' section at Riverside golf club I felt that building relationships and trust amongst female members was of utmost importance, and I endeavoured to involve myself in even the most mundane activities and aspects of golf club practice. For the first four months of my stay at Riverside I played in the ladies' club competitions every Tuesday, where I met new lady members and got to know parents and relatives of the junior girl members. I spent extra time in the clubhouse, before, during and after coaching sessions, tournaments and meetings, engaging with golf club staff, officials and members. I supported club teams at interclub competitions, I represented the club at national

and international level in individual tournaments, and when playing for Riverside I displayed competitiveness and will to win. This appeared to resonate with many club members, who supported my progress as a team member and girls' coach. This investment in my time, presence and relationships in the setting allowed me to develop close relations at Riverside. Although adults and male members in the settings viewed my credentials as an international golfer favourably, the junior girl members related more to my familiarity with their hobbies, interests and social networking tendencies. Where the majority of female members were over the age of fifty, being in the minority of young members was of benefit in building a relationship with the girl golfers. Chapter seven elaborates further on the Riverside setting, where critical ethnography is used to assess the impact of dominant gender ideologies and golf club practices on girl participants' habituses in the golf club setting.

As an insider in the field I had to negotiate several ethical and moral dilemmas during data collection and my insider position complicated my positioning in the field. During my time at Riverside in my roles as coach, and, golf club member and junior girls' committee member, it was important that I acknowledged how I potentially constructed the setting, in the decisions I made as the junior girls' coach, girls' coach and member of the junior girls' committee, and in the activities I coordinated. Further, it was important to remember the ethical and moral commitment I had to the research settings. Although I was eager to engage girl participants in a social critique of golf club culture, care was needed in bringing my values to the field, particularly where my orientation towards golf could encourage participants to consider golf more critically and develop negative attitudes towards the game. Similarly, my role as an international competitor and employee in the field of golf meant that I could not risk the overt promotion of field inequalities. In speaking about the challenges ethnographers face, Richardson (1997) suggests that participant researchers must be careful about ethical issues but not overly so, however, and she calls on

ethnographers to self-reflexively deconstruct their practices. Chapter eight further outlines my personal journey in the research and my location in the elusive struggle towards inclusion and equality in golf.

4.9 APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

The philosophical framework and methodology outlined in this chapter interact in different ways with the research goals, data collections and analysis drawn up in the subsequent chapters. As alluded to earlier, Chapters four through eight have been reworked from initial paper submissions to peer-reviewed journals, and presented as stand alone studies, where each chapter relates to the research goals shared in Chapter one, asking different questions and having different critical aims (see Table 1.1). While the overarching philosophical framework of critical feminist postmodernism has been outlined, Chapters five to eight use further theoretical concepts. In addition, the critical, feminist and postmodern perspectives are more pertinent in some chapters than others, as are the specific research tools, the level of researcher involvement and methods of data presentation and analysis. Differing from the overarching framework and resembling a post-positivist stance, Chapter five analysis combines questionnaire data with field observations from the phase two visits in a mixed methods study. This methodology entails a contrasting ontological orientation from what is presented in this chapter, where the use of mixed methods signals distinct claims to truth and reality from that presented through the critical ethnography. However, as protracted in Chapter five, it could be argued that the use of the more in-depth phase two data as framed by my broad critical epistemology and subjective accounts brings me closer to the participants. Using the phase two data in a fictional representation, Chapter six connects with the investigation's postmodern framework, while the subjective exploration in Chapter eight is also in line with the ontological assumptions outlined in section 4.2. In examining the influence of golf club practice on girls' habituses, Chapter seven assumes a more critical perspective. This section links the

investigation's overarching philosophical foundation and critical ethnographic methodology with the theoretical concepts, data representation techniques and reflexivity used in the studies presented in Chapters four to eight. In instances where evidence points to an overlap or clash between the philosophical perspectives and theory, limitations of the framework are critiqued.

4.9.1 Capital, field, practice and habitus theory

Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual tools of capital, field, practice and habitus are used throughout this research. Chapter four employs Bourdieu's concepts of capital and field to assess junior golfers' acquisition and use of capital in the field of golf, while in Chapter seven, a critical feminist ethnography is specifically used to assess the impact of golf club practices on girl participants' access to capital and habituses in the golf club setting. Some commentators have expressed concern regarding the use of Bourdieu's theories in postmodern examinations. Contrasting with the flexible and permeable nature of postmodernism, the concept of habitus has sometimes been recognised as an overly restrictive and structuring mechanism, which does not allow for innovation or agency (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Lovell 2000). Butler (1999) claims that Bourdieu makes social institutions static where, essentially, habitus encounters and is dominated by the authority of the field, thus failing to grasp the iterability that allows for social transformation. However, rather than criticising the relationship between Bourdieu's sociology and postmodern theory, Lovell (2000) suggests that combining both perspectives might be mutually profitable. Although Skeggs' (1997) study is primarily framed within the forms of capital, in analysing her data she moves closer to Butler's post-structural feminism of performativity, signalling how both concepts may be used.

Related to the critical feminist framework outlined in this investigation, criticism has been levelled at Bourdieu's failure to acknowledge gender in his conceptual developments and for his deterministic account of the gendered habitus. Although McNay

(1999) claims that Bourdieu fails to integrate the gendered habitus with his concept of the field, she suggests that Bourdieu's habitus was not conceived as a principle of determination but as a generative structure, which elicits an infinite number of unpredictable and diverse behaviours, thoughts and expressions. While both McNay (1999) and Clément (1995) support the use of habitus in the context of feminist social theory, others have considered gender and sports practices from field and habitus theory (Hills 2006). Devís-Devís (2006) suggests that some studies have used Bourdieu's contributions to attempt to find a way to interrupt the habitus to facilitate physical activity participants' empowerment. Thus habitus has been used alongside research on gender, and should provide for an interesting examination of the dispositions of girl golfers in Chapter seven.

Although reflexivity and biography are often part of postmodern investigations, Bourdieu supports subjectivism in varying degrees. Reflexivity for Bourdieu does not refer simply to autobiographical validity and writing about the dispositions of the individual researcher, but to an examination of the epistemological unconscious and the social organisation of sociology (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). Although Bourdieu's reflexive sociology has a certain affinity with feminist traditions of reflexivity in research, feminist writers have criticised some of Bourdieu's perspectives on reflexivity. While Bourdieu encourages researchers to work with multiple perspectives, he criticises subjectivism and relativism and argues for one single perspective (Kenway & McLeod 2004). McNay (1999) suggests that Bourdieu fails to recognise the complex nature of subjectivity and how females inhabit, experience and exist in social fields. While there exists relevant tensions between this investigation's philosophical framework and Bourdieu's concepts, as demonstrated in Chapters four through eight, this combination of perspectives should attend to the research goals outlined in section 1.2.

4.9.2 Data representations and writing research

With the influence of postmodernism, experimental writing is becoming a more common method of representing research data. Creative representations have been advocated by Evans (1992), who calls for rethinking about how we write about, represent and describe the actions of physical education teachers, in order to better conceptualise the nature of their thinking and subjectivity. Hopper, Madill, Bratseth, Cameron, Coble & Nimmon (2008) calls for a genuine openness in academia to create polyvocal exchanges that challenge the dominant, promote collaboration and offer different insights:

Evoking the emotional texture of felt human experience; providing an audience with more immediate and authentic contact with others different to ourselves; reinforcing the shared subjectivity of experience; hearing the heartbeats of others; illuminating the quest for meaning; living outside of ourselves; perceiving, experiencing, and understanding what has previously been neglected; reorganising experiences of the familiar; challenging habitual responses to the commonplace; offering new ways of perceiving and interpreting their significance; and “breathing together” would all seem worthy goals for researchers to aspire to in their writing.

(Sparkes 2002a, p.182)

Writing is not alone a way of telling but a way of knowing, where form and content are inseparable (Richardson 2000). Sparkes (2002b) suggests that how we write about a phenomenon shapes how we come to understand it, while Coffey and Atkinson (1996) claim that all representation strategies hold implications for analysis. In presenting the phase two data as a story, I needed to be aware that the text conventions and language forms used are actively involved in the construction of reality, and research findings are not detached from the presentation of observations, reflections and interpretations. With the necessity to engage with negative instances from the field, choosing which journal entries and field observations to include in representations was difficult. Cole (1991) advises that obscure contradictions, inconsistencies and disruptions, and unexpected

practices and voices should be reported because they are seen as opportunities for alternative interpretations and conceptual developments. In the data representations I have made important choices in the analytical process that carry my interpretations of the culture and define the possibilities of the reader's interpretations. As linked to the alternative qualitative research goal, aspects of postmodern writing, particularly narrative research representations and creative non-fiction, are further developed in Chapter six.

4.9.3 Positionality

As demonstrated in earlier sections of this chapter, critical ethnographic and postmodern researchers are encouraged to engage in a self-reflexive analysis of their personal positions, selves and identities in the research (Cole 1991; Richardson 1997; Sparkes 2002a). Using positionality theory in an autoethnographic style, in Chapter eight I attempt to delineate my multiple positions in the research, and discuss how these stances influence and shape the observations I collect, the data I present and the stories I tell. The notion of positionality rests on the assumption that a culture is more than an explicit entity to which one belongs or not, and positionality is determined by one's location in the field in relation to 'the other' (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Lee, Ntseane & Muhamad 2001). Contrasting with postmodernism and akin to the debate about habitus, limitations of this approach have signalled the organisation of identity categories and fixed binaries of positionality. Robertson (2002) suggests that 'wearing categories' is a form of self-stereotyping that does not reveal but obscures one's unique personal history, effacing the complexity of personal and professional lives, and rendering the ethnographer impervious to new encounters, acquaintances, and experiences. Narayan (1993) writes:

To acknowledge particular and personal locations is to admit the limits of one's purview from these positions. It is also to undermine the notion of objectivity, because from particular locations all understanding becomes

subjectively based and forged through interactions within fields of power relations.

(p.679)

Similarly, in the way that it focuses on my personal positioning in the investigation this chapter comes with some issues for the critical researcher. Although feminist researchers have contributed to the expansion of writing research beyond the traditional dominant objective male voice, my presence in the text is contentious in critical writing (Richardson 1997). Claiming experiential authority in representing the realities of others is problematic, where my voice and values could potentially dominate, suppress and replace the voices and interests of research participants. In spite of this critique, I consider positionality the most suitable lens through which to assert my multiple and varied approaches and to elicit new perspective and voices from the field of golf.

4.10 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the critical postmodern feminist framework and critical ethnography employed throughout this investigation. As outlined in earlier chapters, golf's association with unequal, discriminatory and gendered practices, coupled with my experiences as a female golfer in the field implied a critical feminist stance. The recognition of the multiple realities, voices and perspectives of female participants, and my use of alternative presentations of subjective and reflexive data encouraged a postmodern approach. Given my enthusiasm to collect data over a long period in the field, critical ethnography was deemed a suitable methodology, particularly given its emphasis on biographical accounts and researcher involvement. Although not at ease with postmodern perspectives, the data collection phases commenced with a questionnaire (phase one), which provided direction for the sampling and selection of golf clubs for follow up visits and longer term stays. The critical ethnographic research design comprised one-day visits to ten golf clubs (phase two), followed by weekly visits over six months at Ardloch (phase

three) and an eighteen month ethnography at Riverside (phase four), during which I collected field observations, conducted informal interviews and focus groups and gathered relevant documents. During my time in the field as a golf competitor, employee, coach, volunteer and club member, I began to record my own personalised journal entries from work and tournament settings. As demonstrated in section 3.9 the perspectives employed in this research present some conflicts for the interpretation and analysis of data. However, in presenting golf club culture in an alternative light, the following chapters justify the pursuit of a combination of strategies and perspectives. Using data from phases one and two, Chapter five begins the presentation of data with an examination of the acquired and utilised capital of junior golfers in a golf club setting.

August 1999

Three weeks before I went back to school, **open week** began at the golf club. Rachel and I entered the fourball competition on the first day, and played with the principal of the local boys' secondary school and his cousin who travelled over from England for the popular week. We won by two points, much to the disgust of some of the men in the club. Rachel and I shared the prizes for the remaining competitions that week and although some ladies spoke highly of our good golf, Mam said there was some talk of banishing juniors from winning first prize in open weeks. At the presentation I picked up a new putter, various ornaments and a wine coloured windbreaker, which proved to be my favourite piece of golfing apparel for the next two years. A week later I won the Captain's prize by eight shots and not being a full member accepted second prize. Aged fourteen I make a timid and quivering speech in front of 150 people.

**CHAPTER 5 'LES CLUBS CHICS':
LOCATING CAPITAL IN JUNIOR GOLF
PRACTICE**

5.1 ABSTRACT

This paper examines junior golf practice in Irish golf clubs, acknowledging and engaging with Bourdieu's (1984; 1986) concepts of field, practice and capital. Baseline information from a national junior golf questionnaire is complemented by data obtained from associated field visits to a sample of golf clubs. Three key themes identify the level and distribution of capital in the field, (1) controlled environment and behavioural expectations, (2) family links to membership and (3) talented golfers. Results demonstrate how golf club committees and adult leaders attach norms and values to junior golfer discipline, compliance and talent. The forms of capital are classified and reproduced by those in power positions in the field and through symbolic practices, golf clubs preserve superiority and strategies of social distance.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

Along with attending to the conceptual development and application of Bourdieuan theory in the sociology of sport, the study presented in this chapter aims to contribute to the understanding of the location of young people in sports club environments. To this end, this study investigates the junior golf policy in Irish golf clubs, concentrating on golf club practice and the distribution of capital among and within junior golf in golf club settings. As outlined in section 4.5, my employers and research funders, JGI and I were eager to obtain national consensus on junior golf policy, through empirical assessment. While the survey results in the Charter for Junior Golf (GUI *et al.* 2000) (see sections 1.5 & 2.5) provided a starting point, aspects such as (in)active junior membership, junior handicaps, competitions and child welfare and protection in golf clubs were omitted in the examination. Combining both quantitative and qualitative data in a mixed methods inquiry, this chapter presents perspectives from the National Junior Golf Questionnaire, complemented, where appropriate, by observations obtained from follow up field visits to ten golf clubs.

As detailed in section 4.9, this study assumes a more post-positivist stance, while the use of Bourdieu's concepts varies from the philosophical framework of the overall investigation. However, the mixed methodology is still in keeping with my broad critical epistemology, where it complements the historical and 'meso' organisational context presented in Chapters two and three, while it also attends to the 'youth sport environment' research goal. Further, the move towards the more in-depth phase two data brings me closer to my role as participant-researcher and guides the investigation towards critical ethnography, thus implicating a postmodern approach. Pierre Bourdieu's (1984; 1986) theory of practice and concepts of field and capital are central to the critical investigation, and to an understanding of how the golf club institution influences the forms of capital available to and mobilised by junior golfers, potentially shaping their experiences. Discussion is initiated on the location of legitimated capital within the field, demonstrating how golf clubs are conducive to cultural and social reproduction of particular practices, values and tastes. Although each of Bourdieu's (1986) forms of capital is considered in relation to junior golf, the manifestation and acquisition of symbolic capital in the field is a primary focus. Before introducing the study design, data and analysis, section 5.3 outlines the primary Bourdieuan concepts used.

5.3 PRACTICE, FIELD AND CAPITAL

Critical researchers using Pierre Bourdieu's prominent concepts of field, practice, and the forms of capital usually address the role of institutions such as sport and education in the transmission of dominant culture (Collins & Butler 2003; Devís-Devís 2006; Stempel 2005; Wilson 2002). Bourdieu's sociology of culture has been influenced by conflict theory and described as cultural Marxism, which concentrates on the historical and social formation of individuals' material conditions. Here, the social world is viewed in terms of contestation rather than passive order, where conflict is normal and institutionalised and part of the everyday politics of life

(Harris 2003). In contributing to an understanding of social life and people's location in social space and society, Bourdieu's theory of practice is offered in a totality, to explain how processes of power and privilege are reproduced not in macro forms, but through ordinary everyday practices:

$$\text{Practice} = \text{field} + [\text{Forms of capital X habitus}]$$

Thus, practices can only be examined in the context of the field and in the close intersection of capital and habitus. Practices usually have a rule-like quality, where, once a practice is learned or internalised it becomes part of a subconscious embodied disposition, to which there is usually a habitual response, and Bourdieu terms this the 'habitus' (see Chapter seven). Thus through practice, actors are oriented towards particular goals and strategies, reproducing the symbolic and material hierarchy of the social world and reinforcing claims of the powerful. Through looking at practices and how they emotionally and physically enable and constrain everyday lives, it is possible to theorise about the everyday reproduction of culture.

As outlined in the previous chapters, class is a prime social construct in the differentiation of sports participants from non participants, and Bourdieu's concepts have been used to identify the pervasiveness of higher social classes in sport. Within sports participation, class positions become reinforced through the social and sports clubs to which people belong, where, through practices, certain sports clubs promote values that appeal to and attract particular clientele and social groupings (Clément 1995; Curtin & Ryan 1989). Through 'taste' many sports such as golf retain their higher status, confining access of lower social class groups to less prestigious sports, and thus functioning to accommodate and reinforce sports participation inequality and disparity (Best 2003; Schreeder *et al.* 2002). As stipulated by Bourdieu (1990) and Clément (1995), the investment of an individual in a group is often produced by the relationship between the field of a game and a system of positions adapted to that game. Applying this to golf, the practices that attract particular clientele are closely associated with

the practices operated through the rules of golf. Identifying golf as one of the most class exclusive sports, Stempel (2005) demonstrated how the dominant classes use competitive sports that restrict direct physical domination such as tennis and golf, in order to draw distinction between themselves and the lower classes. In this way, practices can act as signifiers of taste which people draw on and invest in to distinguish themselves from others. In terms of golf, Bourdieu commented:

Social distance is very easily retranslated in the logic of sports. Everywhere golf creates distance: with regard to the nonparticipants' by the revered space, harmoniously arranged, where its practice takes place; and with regard to the opponents, by the very logic of a confrontation which excludes all direct contact, even through a ball.

(Bourdieu 1988, p.154)

In his book 'Distinction', Bourdieu (1984) also writes about the practices of 'les clubs chics' or 'smart clubs' such as golf clubs:

Smart clubs preserve their homogeneity by subjecting aspirants to very strict procedures – an act of candidature, a recommendation, sometimes presentation (in the literal sense) by sponsors who have themselves been members for a certain number of years, election by the membership or by a special committee, payment of sometimes very high initial subscriptions (...), plus the annual subscription (...) and so on.

(Bourdieu 1984, p.158-159)

Golf club rules and logic are sanctioned and complied with by those in the field, thus normalising and legitimating practices that promote a socially homogeneous community of golfers. As demonstrated in section 3.5, although class is pertinent in the examination of golf clubs, this critical study conjectures the centrality of class along with other constructs such as race, gender and disability in understanding golf club practices. Sections 5.3.1 to 5.3.3 outline 'field' and the 'forms of capital' and situate them, where possible, within golf-related research.

5.3.1 Field

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992 p.97) define field as a site of conflict, a relational arena, a network or a configuration of objective historical relations between positions in the distribution of power or capital. In the field, participants struggle to establish control in the trading, investment, conservation or subversion of the forms of capital and in this way, is useful for considering capital as situated, contextualised and controlled in a specific setting. Each field has its own logic, made known through subtle symbols, regularities, expectations and the field is maintained around specific boundaries that mark position. It should be acknowledged that where the field is a historical configuration, those in the field did not invent it or its material conditions of inclusion and exclusion. However, in the daily pursuit of practices and relationships, those strongly positioned in the social arena constantly reconstruct the field by valuing and legitimating resources and capital, thus retaining their capital and obtaining their sense of self. For this study, the parameters of the field are all GUI and ILGU affiliated golf clubs in Ireland, consisting of a system of social relations between the golf unions and individual golf club committees and officials who construct golf club practice and policy in relation to junior golf.

5.3.2 Forms of capital

Bourdieu (1984; 1986) uses capital to acknowledge the many forms of power existing in social life. Capital represents how resources are acquired, possessed, accumulated, and exchanged in order to augment one's position in society and it can take the form of economic assets, cultural competence in legitimated activities, and social resources linked to social networks (Bourdieu 1986). The nature of one's social position is defined in relation to one's access to capital, while the level and distribution of capital influences the power one possesses in the field and how well positioned one is to legitimate, redefine or allocate that capital (Brown 2005; Harvey, Lévesque & Donnelly 2007; Hunter 2004). Thus the value of capital

and the status and power that accrues to it is hierarchically determined. Bourdieu (1984) also explained the situated and localised nature of capital, where it only exists and influences in the field where it is produced and reproduced, and the level of capital is dependent on the nature of the field. According to Blackshaw and Long (2005) the point of all forms of capital is that they are resources to be exploited in the battle for distinction, and it is their exclusivity that gives them their value.

Involvement in golf is not just a question of free choice, but as Connor (2003, p.199) posits in relation to sport and leisure, taste and choice are socially constructed and reflect the possession and distribution of combinations of the forms of capital. The social position of golf indicates a high level capital, and where golf clubs operate as cultural institutions this capital is invested, traded and reproduced among golf club members. This is particularly relevant in the context of young golf participants, where existing adult golf participants, parents and families can 'invest' in a child's participation in golf, thus distributing and reproducing capital through membership access, participation costs and transport to isolated or rural golf settings (Echikson 2009). In relation to education, Bourdieu termed this cultural reproduction, where cultural values and norms were transferred from generation to generation, ensuring continuity of cultural experience (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990). Bourdieu (1991) identifies the two principal sites for the reproduction of dominant discourses as the family and the educational system. Capital takes time to accrue, and so young people cannot accrue capital readily from the home or the family. Relevant in young people's accumulation of capital, Bourdieu (1984) considers cultural and economic capital as the two main properties and the most efficient structuring principles of distinction in the social field. However Bourdieu (1986) also considers it impossible to analyse the structure and functioning of the social world without looking at capital in all its forms. This section outlines evidence of capital in the field of golf, and demonstrates the suitability of Bourdieu's forms of capital for

examination of golf club practice.

5.3.2.1 Economic capital

Economic capital refers to income, wealth, financial inheritances and monetary assets and, provided there is a means for an exchange in the field, is the basis for capital conversion (Bourdieu 1993, p.73). As demonstrated through the association of income with sports participation in Ireland, capital is often simplistically reduced to economic form and this is exemplified in sports sociologists' examination of sports practices, the majority of which have outlined the pertinence of economic capital (Collins & Butler 2003; Taks, Renson & Vanreusel 1995; White & Wilson 1999; Wilson 2002). Equating with Marxist perspectives, Bairner (2007) suggests that all forms of capital are secondary to, and defined by economic capital:

The fact is that despite various claims that the application of Bourdieu's theories permits more subtle explanations of the interaction between class, sporting preference, and access, authors who adopt this position...actually offer implicit recognition that in the final analysis it is precisely one's "position in the relations of production" that is the key determinant.

(Bairner 2007 p.29)

Outlined in the earlier chapters, there is much evidence to connect golf's high participation, membership and equipment costs with the predominantly higher classes involved. (Goodwin & Taylor 2004; Lunn 2007; Stoddart 2006b). While this economic reductionism is a credible research outcome, the earlier chapters and sections also documented how other factors manifest through economic capital. In line with this, Taks *et al.* (1995) has demonstrated that the cost of sports participation is actually weakly associated with the class status of the sport. Because of the cultural, social or symbolic wealth required for an individual to pursue interest in golf club membership, practices and taste can equally reproduce a level of dominance, while it is only through the convertibility of other forms of capital that golf clubs preserve and augment economic capital. Manifested by 'taste', golf club membership often appeals to those with cultural

‘wealth’:

The sports/golf field has specific features, operating as a network around a set of positions. These smart clubs constitute an exclusive and privileged class habitus, in which particular combinations of capital (educational and cultural as well as economic) will determine your suitability to enter that habitus. Historically, in England, golf clubs might have stretched boundaries of their exclusivity, but they have in many cases stayed remarkably exclusive by controlling membership and using recruitment practices that are really forms of person-profiling, whereby the individual’s combination of economic, educational and cultural capital is assessed. This has ensured that the habitus remains class-based and patriarchal in such golf clubs, and in corresponding smart or elite and exclusive sports clubs.

(Tomlinson 2004, p.169-170)

5.3.2.2 Cultural capital

In relation to education, cultural capital is institutionalised in the form of educational qualifications, and can exist in three forms, an embodied state (taste, accents, dispositions, deportments, ways of moving and eating, learning), an objectified state (cultural goods, books, qualifications, possessions), and an institutionalised state (private or university education) (Bourdieu 1986, p.47). Stempel (2005) suggests that cultural capital is, essentially, economic capital put to use by the dominant classes to distance themselves from the dominated classes and maintain their access to valuable resources. Although studies of sports participation, involvement and spectatorship have confirmed that sport operates as a form of cultural capital (Stempel 2005; White & Wilson 1999; Wilson 2002), Mehus’ (2005) study of cultural capital in Norway found a negative relationship between sports consumption and cultural capital, where sport was widely consumed by a wide variety of social groups.

As detailed in section 5.3.2, Bourdieu (1991) recognises the family as one of the main sites for the accumulation and transmission of cultural capital, particularly where parents may see organised activities such as golf as valuable. In relation to young participants, Stroot (2002) suggests that without parents who participate, non-

white children are extremely unlikely to play golf:

It is much more likely that a Caucasian child will have parents who play golf, and are therefore able to provide access and opportunities in the sport, and along with siblings and peers act as a support network, encouraging their child's participation. Most of the people who play golf must be affluent enough to subscribe to a club, or at least to pay green fees in a public club on a regular basis, thereby limiting this sport to parents and children who have some financial stability...If access to golf is more readily available to Caucasian, affluent males, then children whose parents are less affluent, children of people of colour, and even children of single mothers have fewer opportunities to learn to play golf.

(Stroot 2002, p.141)

Vincent and Ball (2007) suggest that middle class parents may seek out ways of distinguishing their children through involvement in sport and attendant displays of 'talent' and 'dedication', and that they view these extracurricular activities as key investments against downward class mobility. Bourdieu (1977) refers to such habits and resources as forms of cultural capital that serve to distinguish and preserve class privilege. While Bourdieu (1984) uses cultural capital to describe how middle class parents pass on to and exchange with their children the asset of understanding and reproducing middle class culture, it should also be acknowledged that children and young people have the potential and agency to distribute any capital they assume at sporting institutions and transfer it to their parents. Lee and Macdonald (2009) suggest that where parents see organised sport as valuable, the importance of the family can be seen as a form of both cultural and social capital.

5.3.2.3 Social capital

Social capital is generated through relationships and is based on connections, group membership, a belongingness and a network of lasting relations with others within or between fields:

...the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual

acquaintance and recognition or, in other words, membership in a group (...) the volume of social capital possessed by a given agent (...) depends on the size of network connections he can effectively mobilise and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected.

(Bourdieu 1986, p. 249)

Although interested in structural determinants and social connections, Bourdieu also offers a strong account of individual agency implying how social capital can be acquired through 'profits of membership' and civic associations at an individual level by those with the material and symbolic resources to do so (Kay & Bradbury 2009). Interestingly, in *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1986, p.14) "furnished only one indicator of social capital: membership of golf clubs, which Bourdieu held to be helpful in oiling the wheels of business life". Lack of social capital and networks can be a limiting/contributing factor in terms of access to golf club membership, which is sometimes confined to family connections and networks. Some suggest that people who realise capital through their networks of social capital do so precisely because others are excluded, and they intentionally build such relationships for their own benefits (Blackshaw & Long 2005). Field (2003) refers to the role of golf clubs in facilitating business networking and exchange as a conscious 'investment strategy', where membership of private clubs is not available to all. In some fields capital becomes naturalised and endorsed over a long period of time, thus validating and authenticating symbolic capital.

5.3.3 Symbolic capital in the field of golf

Bourdieu (1989) views legitimation as the key to power, and symbolic capital is the form different types of capital take once they are internalised as valued and 'perceived' as legitimate by groups or individuals in a social field. Symbolic capital is formed cognitively, allowing individuals to recognise hierarchical relations in society, either in the form of notions or social positions (Bourdieu 1986). Bourdieu (1999) claims symbolic capital is constantly used to

reinforce visions of the world, visions of the visions of the world and to clarify principles of classification. He describes symbolic capital in its institutionalised state where:

...customs and rules of dress, sumptuary laws, etc. tend to constitute 'status groups' (orders, nobility, etc.) by constituting as permanent and founded in nature certain de facto differences, and by establishing mechanisms destined to assure their perpetuation.

Bourdieu (1999, p.337)

In theorising symbolic capital in physical education, Redelius, Fagrell and Larsson (2009) claim that what is valued often succeeds as the specific qualities, assets or resources that are regarded as desirable, prestigious and sought after. Following accumulation of other forms of capital, the profit arising from possession of symbolic capital is 'distinction', and a group or person endowed with this distinction has the potential, and even the power to renegotiate boundaries in their fields (Ceron-Anaya 2010).

Through prolonged exposure to and familiarisation of the field, symbolic capital can be actualised and enacted in multiple ways as power. The use of language influences the level and distribution of symbolic power and capital in the institution, and Bourdieu (1991, p.37) claimed that notions of linguistic communication are "relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualised". Along with language, the body as a 'bearer of symbolic value' plays a central role in the production of physical capital and acquiring other forms of capital in certain fields. In the examination of the embodied capital of cadet golfers, Zevenbergen *et al.* (2002) found that golf clubs valorised embodied capital, while young golfers had to assimilate and attempt to learn the cultural system of golf or else face marginalisation. While linguistic communication in the field is referred to in later sections, the research data presented in this chapter does not provide information on which to appropriately comment on this physical capital. This will be interrogated in Chapter seven's examination of the habituses of girl golfers.

Symbolic capital and power have been previously used to explain practices in the field of golf clubs. In examining the relationship between the gentrification of golf and business interests in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ceron-Anaya (2010) found that through mechanisms of selection, entrance fees, and costly equipment, golf clubs formed communities of affluent individuals sharing in similar amounts of capital. In a golf club ethnography, Zevenbergen *et al.* (2002) conclude that strong relationships exist between the field, its practices, and the systematic development of distinctively masculine forms of habitus that are converted into forms of social, cultural and symbolic capital:

At Paradise Golf Club the assembly conveyed an ethos which valorised competition, individualism, meritocracy and masculinity...the rituals that are an integral part of the golf club culture can be seen to be a display of certain dispositions that are valued within the golf club.

(Zevenbergen *et al.* 2002, para. 11.7)

In examining promotional materials designed to sell golf community property in the USA, DeChaine (2001) found examples of limited access to the golf environment, marketing strategies that focused on privilege and elite economic classes, high golf club membership fees and language of exclusivity and prestige. Outlined in the three studies above, the convertibility and the exchange of assets and different forms of capital within a club is the basis of the reproduction of capital and maintaining social status (Bourdieu 1986). Evidence of the pervasive nature of capital in the field of golf is obvious, and, as cultural institutions formed through historical relations, the field of golf clubs occupies the ideal site for the conversion and reproduction of capital, eventually promoting the formation of symbolic capital and thus distinction. Evidence from the earlier chapters suggests that young people have occupied a less important position in the adult-oriented golf club. The remaining sections attempt to locate young golfers in the relational arena of the golf club.

5.4 STUDY DESIGN

As earlier documented, as the initial phase of data collection (phase one) a postal questionnaire would be used to inform the design of the qualitative aspect of the investigation. Although quantitative data has been considered limited in cultural research, in line with Bourdieu's (1990) *Logic of Practice*, surveys and questionnaires have potential to reveal the dynamics of habitus in the construction of practices (Clément 1995). Lewis (1997) highlights Bourdieu's (1984) use of surveys to argue:

...in spite of the polite appreciate of Bourdieu, the distrust of the simple mathematics of survey research remains...If Bourdieu is the exception to the rule, the acceptance of his work suggests that there is nothing intrinsically implausible about the use of statistics and surveys in cultural studies research.

(Lewis 1997, p.85)

This considered, given the largely closed nature of a questionnaire, further methods may need to be employed to gain a better understanding of an issue (Jupp 2006). Following Sparkes (1992a) and Collins (2000) as outlined in section 4.5, the questionnaire was used as a baseline from which to draw a schedule of qualitative data collection, including visits to ten golf clubs, thus initiating a combined quantitative and qualitative data collection. Mixed methodologies are often associated with pragmatic research designs, and are used to address problems and answer questions, usually in the context of policy changes and implementation (Creswell 2007; 2009; Schwandt 2001). Rossman and Wilson (1984) suggest three broad reasons for linking qualitative and quantitative approaches; firstly to enable confirmation/corroboratorion of each other via triangulation, secondly to elaborate or develop analysis, and thirdly to initiate new lines of thinking through attention to surprises or paradoxes. Silverman (2006) and Creswell (2007) give useful examples of researchers beginning with a quantitative study in order to establish the characteristics or conditions of a group, select a sample of respondents and gauge the broad contours of the field. Using an initial questionnaire would generate background data, provide

direction for sampling and verify the qualitative data gathered during the golf club visits. I also hoped that the questionnaire results could inform my own orientations and viewpoints upon entering the field, and curtail any irregular personal assumptions. Through this triangulation, integration and sequencing of both data types, comparing both types of data can indicate surprises, shed new light on results, and contribute to validity, corroboration and generalisation of the findings (Flick 2009; Miles & Huberman 1994; Rossmann & Wilson 1984). Linking the results of both phases would thus substantiate the study conclusions. For the purposes of this chapter a junior member will be recognised as '*JM*' and a junior convenor, junior leader or adult in charge of junior golf will be identified as '*JL*'.

5.4.1 Questionnaire¹⁰ – Phase one

Previous related survey templates are useful for preparing a questionnaire for dissemination, and particularly for showing a correlation over time. However, as outlined in section 5.2, the questionnaire design in the Charter for Junior Golf (GUI *et al.* 2000) was limited in only surveying a sample of golf clubs, while it failed to address more detailed and relevant questions. Omitting university golf clubs (no JMs), there were 417 golf clubs affiliated to the GUI and ILGU in 2008, and, guided by JGI, I decided to send a postal questionnaire to this entire population. Postal questionnaires are mostly standardised and scheduled and can be prepared and piloted well in advance (Seale & Filmer 2000). As the data would be used by JGI, the organisation supported the questionnaire preparation and provided resources for its distribution. The format and questions were meticulously laid out, informed by both the Charter and similar research questionnaires from other golfing governing bodies (English Golf Union 2001; English Golf Union/English Ladies' Golf Association 2008) and consideration was given to the specific requests of JGI.

¹⁰ Both the National Junior Golf Questionnaire (appendix B) and National Junior Golf Questionnaire results (appendix C) are available for download from the JGI website www.juniorgolfireland.com

Liaison was made with the UL **SCU** and advice was sought on questions and in particular questionnaire design, structure and length, to ensure that the questions and format were relevant, clear and easily interpreted. One questionnaire was posted to every GUI and ILGU affiliated golf club in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The questionnaire was presented in a user-friendly A4 size (A3 card folded in a booklet style) (see Appendix A). Eight sections comprised the questionnaire covering a variety of angles on club policy and practice of junior golf: membership, JLs and junior committee, coaching, playing, handicaps and competitions, child welfare and protection, JGI, and two other sections on more general questions. Because of the population size and information sought, the questionnaire relied on closed and pre-coded questions in a 'checklist' format, along with some open ended questions to elicit comments under the sections on membership and competitions. Through one-word answers, closed questions are useful for obtaining quantitative results, while pre-coded or fixed-choice questions have pre-specified answers and are more manageable in response analysis. One disadvantage of the over use of pre-coded and closed questions is that answers are imposed on the respondent. By contrast, open questions allow respondents to answer on their own terms and are useful in uncovering unexpected responses and allowing the respondent to express his or her opinion (Seale & Filmer 2000). Achieving a balance between both was important for ease of response analysis, and the combination of both types enabled the questionnaire to yield quantitative data, while allowing respondents the opportunity to elaborate on junior golf policy and practice in the club. The SCU advised that empty boxes rather than lines be used for answering any open-ended questions to ensure that respondents were not curtailed in their replies by lack of space. All questions were formatted and linked with variables to ensure ease of response analysis through **SPSS** version 15.0. Each questionnaire was confidentially mapped and coded in order to track which clubs had

responded. Respondents were under no obligation to reveal themselves or their clubs but often did so voluntarily in their responses. The questionnaire was piloted on a sample of five individuals with an interest in junior golf but with no direct position in a golf club that would entail them completing the finalised survey. Their feedback ensured comprehension of the questions, where some questions were reworded for clarity of understanding, while others were re-categorised into different sections.

Because of the seasonal nature of golf, and particularly junior golf, which is most busy during the months May to August, the timing of posting the questionnaire was important in order to strive for a high response rate. Most golf clubs hold their Annual General Meeting (AGM) during the winter months, following which new committees and club officers are appointed. To achieve the highest possible response rate, I decided to conduct the survey in Spring, by which time it was expected that club officials would be in office and the golf season would begin. Some clubs had no JLs, many had separate JLs for girls and boys, while other clubs had several representatives on a junior golf committee. In this way it was important that the questionnaire was addressed to the correct person in the club, and with guidance from JGI, I decided that addressing the questionnaire to the 'junior golf committee' in each club would ensure the fairest responses. A cover letter accompanied the questionnaire, which was posted to 417 golf clubs in February 2008. Jupp (2006) notes one of the disadvantages of postal questionnaires is the lack of interaction with the respondents, which slows the responses. The deadline for receipt of completed questionnaires was the end of March 2008, but because of a slow response this date was extended to May 2008. During this period clubs received email reminders and direct phone calls, and this personal contact proved very successful, almost doubling the response rate between March and May. With the field notes to follow, the questionnaire results (see Appendix B) became a significant statistical starting base for the project. Between June and December 2008 I presented the questionnaire results to the board of

JGI, the District Executives of the ILGU, and a version focused on girl participants to the wider female golf club audience at five ILGU District AGMs, reaching about 700 people.

5.4.2 Golf club visits – Phase two

Of the 193 clubs that responded to the questionnaire (46% response rate), through a tick box on the last page, 142 clubs (74% of respondents) expressed interest in partaking in phase two of the research. Twenty of these clubs were selected and written to based on a number of characteristics including the club's location (urban, rural, nationwide spread), circumstances (privately owned, owned by members), foundation year, overall ethos, any atypical or noteworthy characteristics (e.g. one club (Rochfort) did not accept female members), and the level of detail in the questionnaire response. The letter (see Appendix C), which was sanctioned by JGI, detailed the data sought, including records on all aspects of the club's junior golf programme, copies of any literature the club devised on junior golf policy, and clarified that I would record observations (not whilst on site) of the junior golf-related activities I was present for, e.g. coaching sessions, meetings and competitions. The visits strived towards a closer examination of junior golf in the golf club setting, and to inform future plans for junior golf development in Ireland. It was also stated in the letter that as an Irish international golfer and qualified Level one PGA coach, I may facilitate coaching sessions with junior golfers where possible during the visit. Thirteen of the twenty letter recipients signed and posted back the consent form (see Appendix C) and visits were scheduled with ten of those clubs. The consent form signatories were in most cases a designated JL or adult in charge of junior golf in the club, and this person became the gatekeeper in each club, responsible for the level of access obtained. Table 5.1 details the characteristics of the ten phase two clubs.

Table 5.1 Characteristics of ten golf clubs (phase two)

Golf Club [questionnaire code]	Jurisdiction	Date of visit	Distance to city (C) or town (T) centre	Urban or rural	Est. year	Number of JMs Boys / Girls	
Blackwood [397]	Ireland	11/08/2008	2km T	Urban	1897	82	20
Garavin [219]	Ireland	13/08/2008	4.5km C	Urban	1895	90	40
Clareville [133]	N. Ireland	28/08/2008	2.6km T	Urban	1933	90	12
Cahergreen [132]	N. Ireland	28/08/2008	2.9km T	Urban	1927	86	13
Ardloch [392]	Ireland	16/09/2008	1.4km T	Urban	1927	120	21
Rochfort [203]	Ireland	15/10/2008	8.4km C	Urban	1885	136	0
Ballydesmond [303]	Ireland	12/08/2008	3.7km T	Rural	1929	81	18
Monaveen [274]	Ireland	14/08/2008	9km T	Rural	1996	9	0
Ashfield [310]	Ireland	15/08/2008	2.5km T	Rural	1991	150	30
Lisnagry [87]	Ireland	26/08/2008	4.8km T	Rural	1994	88	13

From July to October 2008 I made one-day visits to ten golf clubs located in the Republic of Ireland (8) and Northern Ireland (2). Before each visit I browsed the golf club website to acquaint myself with the club and while visiting each club I collected any club literature available, e.g. flyers, club handbooks, junior fixtures and coaching programmes. At each club I met with the gatekeeper along with other JLs and club dignitaries such as the captain/lady captain, club administrator and junior committee members. Using informal interviews (not recorded) and sample questions I spoke with these representatives at length about the history of the club, junior competitions, coaching, membership and the general policy and practice of junior golf at the club. In three cases I met with the junior golfers whilst on the practise area and coached briefly in two cases. Very rarely were any questions about the research posed and when discussing the study's purpose and procedure I never went beyond the level of detail provided in the letter. On returning home from each visit I recorded field notes from these informal meetings, along with observations of dialogue, interactions and behaviours in each of the ten settings. The field notes obtained from these visits indicated a wealth of data confirming the unequal and exclusionary practices that potentially inhibited young people in the ten golf clubs. Further discussed in Chapter eight, this collection of data also unearthed

some ethical dilemmas for me in my position in the field. It was intended that bimonthly visits to each golf club would be repeated, but due to the spread of the clubs nationwide and my international golf schedule at the time this was not feasible.

5.4.3 Data analysis

Of the 417 questionnaires 193 were returned, a response rate of 46%. Microsoft Excel was used to record each questionnaire's original code and those questionnaires received, thus allowing me to track respondent clubs and plan follow up contact. Following the questionnaire preparation, analysis of the responses was conducted through SPSS. Closed questions were pre-coded and upon return of the questionnaires the open-ended responses were post-coded. Variables and labels were inputted to the SPSS file and each completed questionnaire was numbered according to its original code before responses were recorded. Closed question responses were inputted directly into the SPSS file and yielded detailed statistical information under the various questionnaire headings. The open-ended questions were analysed through coding categories in a separate word processing file. Both SPSS and word processing files were saved onto two hard disks and back up copies were saved in other reliable sources. In analysing both the statistical data and open-ended responses from the questionnaire, five key themes emerged: (1) the adult oriented nature of golf, (2) the restrictive nature of playing handicaps and competitions, (3) access to junior golf membership, (4) low participation/high performance ethos and (5) the low presence of female leaders and players.

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) naturalistic inquiry approach of in-depth analysis through repeated reading was used on the field observations, through which I identified themes and patterns. This data conveyed a variety of junior golf practices and dynamics (both positive and negative), particularly with regard to young people's access to golf and levels of participation. Collating and crossing the data collected from both the questionnaire and club visits enriched

the findings, which are explored in the next section. While both sets of data were compared, feedback from a journal reviewer suggested the further enrichment of the data through cross tabulation between the questionnaire results with data from the phase two visits (email to author, 5th July 2011). However, although the questionnaire data is on file, at that point it was not retrievable from an old version of SPSS, and it was not feasible for me to invest the time to input the data. It should also be acknowledged that the questions asked in both the questionnaire and informal interviews potentially limited, curtailed or directed the respondents, thus affecting the data collected.

5.5 LOCATING CAPITAL IN JUNIOR GOLF PRACTICE

Data from the field observations were immediately identifiable in the questionnaire themes, and in crossing and comparing the data collected from both phases, three final themes were conceived, which differed slightly from the original five themes from the questionnaire, i.e. (1) controlled environment and behavioural expectations, (2) family links to membership, and (3) talented JMs. These findings convey the evidence of specific types of symbolic capital in golf club settings. As in Table 5.1 names of the ten golf clubs for the phase two visits have been replaced by pseudonyms, while questionnaire codes are included in square brackets to reference any responses used.

5.5.1 Controlled environment and behavioural expectations

As evidenced in Chapter two, in numerical fashion alone JMs are a minority in the golf club, where they make up on average a small proportion of overall club members (one eighth of golf club members). The golf club setting is evidently adult oriented and seldom child/youth centred. Questionnaire responses reported restrictive golf club membership access for young people, and 67% of golf clubs limited the number of JMs enrolled in the club. The ladies' section of one club that was oversubscribed for boy JMs

renounced their available girl memberships to accommodate boy JMs:

Due to the over demand of places for boys the ladies' section offered remaining girls' places to boys. [416]

In spite of the recommendations from the Charter for Junior Golf about minimum age restrictions (see Table 3.4), access for younger participants remains limited, where 15% of golf clubs that responded to the questionnaire did not take in JMs, while 72% of clubs had a minimum age at which young people were permitted to become JMs, the average of which was ten years. Acknowledging the safety implications for young golf participants, it remains apparent that golf clubs do little to provide for younger audiences, particularly in their low regard for active junior golf. However, where a talented young golfer approached as an aspiring member, some of the phase two clubs made exceptions to the minimum age restrictions, e.g. Cahergreen, Rochfort (see Section 5.5.3). Access constraints are not alleviated once a junior member achieves access to club membership. The questionnaire data demonstrated that only 54% of boy JMs and 48% of girl JMs can be classified as 'active members', i.e. they played on the course, in competitions or attended coaching. Further, the most popular competition format for JMs was 18 holes, which takes on average four hours, and does not accommodate beginner golfers, while there was no evidence of alternative competition formats offered to JMs, e.g. team formats, skills games, achievable games. Along with this lack of recognition of JMs, rules and restrictions further ostracised young participants in the golf club.

Questionnaire data reported that 82% of clubs place restrictions on when juniors can and cannot play on the golf course. In Garavin golf club, a busy club situated 4.5km from a city centre, and where tee times are a premium, other than competition times JMs have no official playing times on the course. In the summer months, girl JM competitions are held every Monday morning and boy JM competitions every Thursday morning, with tee times on both days from 8-9am. Access to competitions is also limited for JMs

where 37% of clubs do not allow JMs to enter their **adult/main club competitions**. Although busier clubs regularly hold separate junior only competitions, in smaller clubs, the adult/main club competition is the only opportunity for junior golfers to compete and reduce their handicap. One club stated “juniors can play in senior competitions only when they reach 15 years or 15 handicap” [22]. Of the clubs that allow JMs to compete, 78% place age and/or handicap restrictions on JMs winning prizes. In some clubs boys were prohibited from playing with fellow JMs in adult/main competitions. Handicap restrictions for entering adult/main club competitions were as low as 8-10 handicap for boys, while there was no evidence of handicap restrictions for girls. In fact, it can be assumed that the majority of questionnaire respondents were male, particularly where male references were often implied but not clarified. For example, this was recognised where the respondent spoke of low handicap restrictions for participation of JMs in adult/main competitions (low handicap restrictions would seldom apply for girl JMs), for example:

When a junior’s handicap reaches 12 he can play in all club competitions. [23]

There are 3 competitions that juniors can’t play in, captain’s prize, president’s prize and member’s weekend. Juniors must have handicap of 18 to compete. [32]

The rationale behind the unsympathetic low handicap restrictions on boys is most likely linked to participation numbers, where boy JMs are more evident and active in the golf club, harbour ambitions to reduce their handicap, and strive to partake in adult/main (male) competitions, while in contrast it is likely that a tiny proportion of girls partake in adult/main (female) competitions. Where their minority presence allowed them access to more adult/main competitions, rules particularly around playing, handicap and competition restrictions were more lenient for girls, and being a girl JM in the field may be advantageous in some respects. As detailed in 3.4.3, where golf unions and golf clubs value high ability JMs, the practice of limiting JMs’ (boys in particular) participation in competitions by

handicap is contradictory and futile. It appears that where high numbers of JMs partake in adult/main competitions in the golf club and win prizes, club committees are most likely to impose restrictions and limit JM participation.

It should be acknowledged that the questionnaire specifically enquired about restrictions on JM participation and involvement in competitions, and general playing times (see Appendix A). However, from the evidence above, the language used by questionnaire respondents was often negative, regulatory and rules oriented, and underpinned by symbols of domination and control. Many of the open-ended questionnaire comments centred on what JMs were not permitted to play, compete in and/or win, rather than what they were eligible to do. Bourdieu (1991) claims that historical power relations evident in even the simplest linguistic exchanges is the result of the reproduction of legitimated discourses acquired through:

...familiarisation, that is, by more or less prolonged exposure to the legitimate language, or through the deliberate inculcation of explicit rules...

(p.61-62)

Not alone do rigorous playing and competition restrictions (also witnessed in Blackwood and Rochfort golf clubs) police and limit JMs' access to capital in the field, symbolically they rank the importance of JMs in the context of the overall golf club. Decision-making on all aspects of junior golf was the concern of adult members. Only one club (Blackwood) made reference in the questionnaire to JM involvement in decision making, where the junior captain sits on the junior committee (adults), while three questionnaire respondents made references to a junior captain, one of which also referred to a junior girls' captain. Control and enforcement in junior golf reproduces an arbitrary culture, which empowers and favours the interests of the dominant and hierarchical groups in the field. With little or no consultation with JMs, golf club committees, adult members and JLs appear to sanction and control junior golf practices that confine and limit the involvement of JMs, and these regulations appear to be legitimated by the majority of golf clubs. The symbolic

capital in this regard is associated with high performance and age, where it appeared that a JM would gain access to perceivably more important competitions and achieve a certain level of respect within the club should they reach a certain age or a certain handicap level.

Linked to the controlled golf club environment, adults value and expect particular behaviours from JMs, and significance is attached to the discipline, obedience and compliance of young golfers. Ashfield golf club identified the issue of integrating JMs into a predominantly adult environment, describing it as an “us and them” situation. A disciplinary issue earlier that year (2008) was dealt with by Ashfield’s *main committee*, following which, the JLs claim, the issue was blown out of proportion in the golf club, particularly by older club members. It was felt that had the JMs involved trusted, approached and confided in the JLs the issue would have been more effectively dealt with rather than it being “bandied” around the club. Contrasting with the large majority of golf clubs, at Blackwood the JL hoped that in time the junior section would be “self sufficient” with the club inviting the junior captain/vice-captain to some of the junior committee meetings, with the long-term aim of transferring some responsibility for the junior section to the JMs. The JL also referred to the club’s regulated disciplinary system. Admittedly, similar to Ashfield, incidents involving JMs became magnified in the club following adult complaints, alluding to pressure from the club’s main committee to enforce and maintain high standards of JM behaviour. At the large clubhouse at Cahergreen, well away from the comfortable surroundings of the upstairs lounge which did not admit JMs, an old downstairs locker was converted into a junior room, with second hand couches, a television and playstation provided for JMs for bad weather days. However, when the remote control disappeared and the JL discovered the couch torn, the JL closed the room and banned JMs due to the “vandalisation” of the facility by the “boys”. Indeed, the lack of trust between adult and junior golfers in these clubs could be construed as signifying hierarchical relations, and the authority which bounds JMs. Influenced by older club

members, golf club committees appear to play a central role in authorising specific behavioural practices of junior golfers.

5.5.2 Family links to membership

Much like the age and ability membership constraints mentioned earlier, In some clubs young people could only gain access to membership through family connections, e.g. children of adult members were “preferred” [396] or “given first priority” [197], while one club had a limit on the number of JMs who are not adult members’ children. Financial concessions for transferring to the next membership category (e.g. junior to adult membership) were evident in 52% of clubs and were often family related, e.g. “50% reduction for under 18 if son of a member, scholarship for any student (18-25) if under 7 handicap” [83] (transfer fees come in addition to the new membership category fee). One club reported: “JMs who have been ten years a member and who are sons of full members may be admitted to full membership for a much reduced entrance fee (€3000 versus €20000)” [203]. In Rochfort golf club, once candidates were twelve years old they could apply for membership. The JM application required one proposer and three seconders and because of this, almost all applications were family related. A screening committee assessed the applications and recommendations were given to the main committee before the membership elections. In 2008 the club had twenty-five applications for eight JM places, and in some cases JMs were chosen not only because their parents were full members, but their grandparents also. In spite of the emphasis on family connections to membership there are some, albeit few, signs of clubs using positive recruitment practices and taking in children from alternative backgrounds. One club [407] in a highly populated area admitted 240 JMs every year, and established a junior academy for non-members, with some of the 40 places reserved for local children who had no family links in the club. Examples of these practices were seldom in the questionnaire responses and access to junior membership was especially limited for clubs in densely

populated areas with a high demand for membership.

As evidenced above, the forms of capital are a central prerequisite for access to golf club membership. As discussed in section 5.3.2.2, adult golf club members translate and transmit the significance of the golf to their children through providing networks of access to membership (social and cultural capital), paying membership fees (economic capital) and by encouraging their children to play golf (cultural capital). Some parents enrolled their children as JMs not alone in the hope that they would take up golf, but also as an investment, where, should they stay on as a member for the full duration of junior membership (varies in age 18-25), a son or daughter would have a less expensive transfer fee to adult membership. According to Bourdieu (1986) the convertibility and the exchange of assets and forms of capital within a club, and particularly between parents and children, is the basis for the reproduction of culture and the preservation of social status. Through encouraging family links to junior membership and the use of financial concessions, golf clubs emphasise the value of social, cultural and economic capital in the setting, and in the long established rules and policies of the majority of clubs these legitimated membership practices become symbolic capital in the field.

5.5.3 Talented JMs

In line with the characteristics of a field (see Section 5.3.1), golf clubs are maintained around specific boundaries that mark position, emerging as competitive arenas, and over time, intrinsic value is attached to achievement. In spite of their overall inferior position as evidenced to this point, JMs with high golfing ability command much esteem in golf club settings, and it appears that performance and achievement are valued highly in the field. This is in line with union recognition and support of high ability golfers over investing in wider participation and development in junior golf (see Section 3.4.3). Although achievements, titles and accolades were never prompted or

asked for in the questionnaire, respondents and JLs often emphasised the junior golf successes of both individuals and teams in the club, “[Name of boy] won the order of merit last year, juniors compete in all-Ireland provincial, under 15, junior and youth girls compete in more local competitions” [280] and “boys reached all Ireland semi-final, girls reached semi-final of Cidona girls, 4 players reached all Ireland schools finals” [319]. Similarly, during the phase two golf club visits many gatekeepers endeavoured to discuss their most talented junior golfers, especially when they interpreted JGI as a talent identification rather than a golf development organisation. Clareville golf club had a five-year high performance plan for ten boy JMs, involving fitness, psychology, nutrition and golf coaching. During the visit the JL discussed the plan at length, even referring to the strengths and weaknesses of each JM. In 2008 Garavin received 78 applications for 12 juvenile boy membership places (aged 9-13) and the JL deemed the fairest way to grant places was to measure their natural ability. Videotapes of 66 boys’ swings were recorded and assessed by the club professional and JL. A talented young golfer pursuing golf club membership may even bypass the membership rules of the club. In Cahergreen the minimum membership age was 11 years but if a younger child showed noticeable potential and interest he or she could be enrolled. Rochfort inserted an additional clause in the club’s constitution, which dealt with ‘talented golfers’ who may approach the club seeking membership. The main committee may decide that it is in the interest of the club to enrol the JM, particularly where the JM may go on to represent the club, province or country. The JL at Rochfort stressed that the club does not “poach” talented golfers and JMs are only enrolled in the club if first contact comes from the player.

From this evidence, sporting prowess can be recognised as a form of ‘embodied power’ in the habitus of the individual young golfer. Further elaborated in Chapter seven, in the PE class, individuals high in capital (particularly physical capital) and well positioned within the field become reproducers who legitimise the

nature of such ability in order to maintain their value (Hay and Lisahunter 2006). Honour and prestige affiliated with talented JMs can be recognised as a symbolic resource, sanctioned by golfing unions and golf club committees who bestow young golfers with, at international level, the traditional blazer dress, and at club level, grants towards participation in national/international tournaments (Cahergreen), coaching programmes (Clareville) exceptional constitutional clauses (Rochfort), and displaying photos of their successes and achievements in the clubhouse. JLs who work with talented JMs often acquire and trade some of these plaudits as their own social and cultural capital in the field, demonstrated where names of national/international junior golfers were consistently mentioned in the questionnaire and in my conversation with the JLs during field visits. As an aside, 79% of clubs responded that they completed Garda/Police vetting on golf club JLs and members of staff, and when responses were correlated with the vetting register, closer to 20% of clubs had at least one vetted candidate. This demonstrated how, similar to the communication about talented golfers as documented in section 4.8.1, golf clubs told governing bodies what they considered was best practice. At Ballydesmond the male JL suggested that girl JMs laughed and talked their way through lessons and made very slow progress. In this culture, the voices of lower ability golfers appear to be silenced and, although perspectives from individual JMs have yet to be obtained, limited competition formats, low active membership, a poor participation ethos, and the general competitive culture does little for the wider participation of young golfers, and particularly novices. Thus, junior golf talent is a visible form of symbolic capital in the field.

5.6 DISCUSSION

This chapter contributes to the understanding of the manifestation of different forms of capital in the golf club, and how capital attached to young golfers can be adopted, invested and traded by golf club committees and junior golf leaders. The examples of playing and

competition restrictions in the data demonstrate how the adult oriented golf club may be experienced as a policed and inhibitive environment for young participants. Child 'unfriendly' practices appear to be embedded and normalised in the field of golf clubs, where restricted access to playing times and competitions, behavioural expectations, limited access to membership and the glorification of high ability JMs demonstrates the lack of esteem held by golf clubs for the overall integration of JMs. Gender differences in the distribution and acquisition of capital for young golfers manifested in several ways from club committee level to the JMs themselves, and from the questionnaire, the JL is almost twice as likely to be a male member as a female member. Along with the issues associated with low female participation and presence, the lack of esteem given to females in the golf clubs is problematic for their future participation in the game. Zevenbergen *et al.* (2002) claim that young people who do not conform to the golf club habitus are marginalised and likely to leave the setting and thus it appears that young people who exhibit unsanctioned behaviour, who have few social networks, limited ability, are in a minority participant group may have little access to capital and no access to symbolic capital, implying their potential struggle to survive in, and relate to the golf club environment. This evidence suggests the need for a revision of junior golf practice in golf clubs to become more inclusive and facilitative of all participants and abilities.

Jarvie (2003) suggests that the analysis of capital raises significant questions about the practices of sports organisations in which exclusivity is celebrated in the name of group solidarity. Regardless of the actor's intentions, practices tend to reinforce the claims of the powerful, and golf club practices are often premised on the notion of the ideal junior golfer as a well-behaved, good mannered, talented son of a member. Alluded to in Chapter three, the role of everyday social practice and cultural reproduction of practices in the sporting institution is significant:

More often than not, sport is a site where dominant

cultural groups maintain their power and continue to shape sport and social interactions to reflect their own interests

(Jamieson 2001, p.347)

Not only do practices legitimated by golf club committees normalise otherwise exorbitant levels of capital in golf clubs, but undemocratic selective membership processes legitimate the reproduction of capital amongst families in the golf club signaling how golf clubs are conducive to replicating the same socially mobile community of golfers. This glorification of the dominant culture at the expense of inclusion in Irish golf is exemplified in the Equality Authority's failed court case challenges against Portmarnock golf club, Dublin, for the club's refusal to admit female members (Song 2007) (see Section 2.3.2). Bourdieu comments:

The dominant culture contributes to the real integration of the dominant class (by facilitating the communication between all its members and by distinguishing them from other classes); it also contributes to the fictitious integration of society as a whole, and thus to the apathy (false consciousness) of the dominated classes; and finally, it contributes to the legitimation of the established order by establishing distinctions (hierarchies) and legitimating these distinctions.

(Bourdieu 1991 p.167)

The forms of capital provide a useful framework for understanding divisions, hierarchies and practices in the field of golf clubs, and Bourdieu reminds us of the centrality of socio-economic status in the analysis of some sports clubs. Not alone is sport in Ireland practised by specific social groupings, but certain sports promote values that are appealing to certain sections of society, further emphasising and proliferating the participation inequalities from Chapters one and two. In almost paradoxical fashion individuals in the socially homogeneous field of golf appear to strive for their own distinction or mark of difference that sets them apart, and adult leaders achieve this through the acquisition of capital associated with junior golfers. While these findings suggest that club officials in charge of junior golf promote power-related values of favouritism and achievement, it is necessary to note that the majority of officials involved have an

inherent interest in the junior members. In almost all cases these officials are volunteers who commit their time and energy to the development of junior golf and junior golfers. The struggle between the committed volunteer and golf club practice is further elaborated through the character 'Mike', in the fictionalised representation of the phase two data in Chapter six.

In locating capital in junior golf practice, this chapter raises significant questions about golf club practice and the experiences of young participants. Although their perspectives were not obtained in this data, it is likely that capital plays an important role in the promotion of values and attitudes to young people in the field, serving to limit and/or enhance their experiences. While JMs have limited access to capital in the field of golf, given the legitimacy of family connections in the golf club it is probable that the majority of young participants have inherited or will inherit capital from the home, which is potentially transferable to other contexts and settings such as school. This dynamic enrolment of different forms of capital in different ways and by different young participants warrants examination. Focusing on the habituses of the young participants themselves, it is also possible that narratives of mutability emerge among the junior golfers, where they begin to internalise external structures and respond to the various demands of the field. An understanding of these habituated practices is important in making sense of the golf club setting and the body is an important form of capital in this regard. Acknowledging their limited positioning in the field, choosing to examine the subjectivities of girl participants I revisit these aspects in Chapter seven. The data collected during the phase four stint at Riverside should contribute to an understanding of girl golfers' habituses and their consciousness and awareness of the legitimation of capital in the field.

April 2001

I don't want to go.

I really don't.

I can't tell Mam that, she'll say I'm soft.

I'm not soft but I'm off 20. I'll be playing girls off 5 and 6. Dogged Munster girls who have signed their lives away to play golf in American colleges. Posh Leinster girls who play hockey and go to private schools and whose Dads are diplomats. Unknown Ulster girls whose Dads are pros. My Dad doesn't play golf. The last time he held a golf club he hit a nine iron off a cow's backside.

I go to my first Interprovincials. Connaught get annihilated, but I'm told it wasn't a bad annihilation. In fact my match win against Leinster was celebrated like a team victory. I guess this classes me as dogged and posh, and maybe no longer unknown.

**CHAPTER 6 STORYING GOLF CLUB
CULTURE: 'SHIRTS, TIES, PRAWNS
AND ASSOCIATES'**

6.1 ABSTRACT

Employing a critical postmodern feminist framework, this chapter introduces and examines the creative non-fiction or fictionalised narrative 'Shirts, Ties, Prawns and Associates'. Data relating to junior golf practice and policy were collected following one-day visits to ten private members' golf clubs (phase two). Field notes recorded informal interviews with gatekeepers and observations of interactions and behaviours pertinent to each club were noted. Reflexivity was central, with my positions, biases and relations in the field readily acknowledged. In line with the requirements of critical research, creatively presenting the data is considered the most effective approach to represent the complexities of golf club culture. This can be achieved through narratives that can communicate findings to a wider community, prompting those in positions of power to affect institutional change.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

Along with introducing the fictionalised narrative 'Shirts, Ties, Prawns and Associates', this chapter appraises the methodological implications and techniques used in this story. Following from Chapter five, a critical perspective is used to further analyse the field observations from the phase two visits to ten golf clubs. This is the only resemblance between both chapters. In this chapter I write from my own experience, in my own voice, employing postmodern assumptions about knowledge and truth as outlined in Chapter four. The result is a fictionalised synthesis of a 'typical' one-day visit to a golf club. Along with presenting this story of golf club culture, I use bracketing to demonstrate the influence of my positions on the nature of the storying piece. As a researcher-participant in the field I share my lived experience and knowledge with the aim of increasing awareness and understanding of the institutionalised frameworks and underlying assumptions, constraints and contradictions that operate within golf clubs. Alternative data representations such as fiction which value lived experience and multiple truths complement the

critical postmodern feminist framework. A tangible, decipherable and critical presentation of the data through creative non-fiction is considered the most effective approach to communicate the practices and complexities of golf club culture to a wider audience, and to produce knowledge that can serve as the basis for social change. Before presenting 'Shirts, Ties, Prawns and Associates', this chapter reviews narrative research representations, fiction as a critical strategy, and techniques in storying research.

6.3 NARRATIVE RESEARCH REPRESENTATIONS

There has been a growing interest in alternative representations of qualitative research, particularly in the sporting realm, where writing strategies have widened to include confessional tales (Sparkes 2002a), autoethnography (Tsang 2000), poetic representations (Sparkes & Douglas 2007), ethnodramas (Grybovych & Dieser 2010) and fictional representations (Purdy, Potrac & Jones 2008). Some would suggest that as part of the 'narrative turn' in the social sciences we live in a story shaped world (Smith 2008; Smith & Sparkes 2008). Smith and Sparkes (2009) claim that the terms 'narrative' and 'story' are misused and misinterpreted, where narrative is a distinct writing style or methodology, while storied writing is the answer to this call or the verbal or non-verbal act of telling and transmitting a message. Tsang (2000) supports Clandinin and Connelly's (1994) categorisation of stories as describing a phenomenon, whereas narratives describe the method. Many claim that storied research has the potential to initiate social transformation, where it reaches out to people in ways that other styles cannot (Markula & Denison 2005). Sparkes (1997) comments that by its ability to condense, exemplify, and evoke a world, ethnographic fiction is as valid a method for transmitting cultural understanding as any other researcher-produced device.

Progressively more participant researchers have begun to translate their work to accessible formats for both lay and academic audiences, with realist tales the most common stories told in

qualitative research (Jacobs-Huey 2002). Although this format serves some analytical purpose, Van Maanen (1988) criticises the realist author's claim of experiential authority whilst remaining completely absent from the text with only the words of the researched visible, and he links realist tales with interpretive omnipotence, where data is culled in order to link it more suitably in support of a theory. While realist tales are common, creative strategies such as fictional representations can enlist a new means of reading research data, particularly given their relativism, shared subjectivity and audience appeal (Purdy *et al.* 2008; Sparkes 1997). Narrative and poetic representations of high performance golf have demonstrated the potential of alternative representations to engage readers in ways that more traditional realist tales did not, through their usefulness, accessibility and inclusivity to a wider community including players, coaches, professionals and lay people (Douglas & Carless 2008c; Sparkes & Douglas 2007). The creative non-fiction piece presented in this chapter is told through my subjective experience, and attends not only to high performance perspectives, but also to junior golf participation and the problematic nature of golf club culture.

Concannon (1996) suggests that the body of golf-related writing far surpasses any sport for sheer quantity. Writers of fiction have long represented golf in a wide variety of ways from the crime genre of Keith Miles (1987; 1988), Michael Hamer (1991) and Harlan Coben (2000) to a tradition of humorous writing stretching from P. G. Wodehouse (1990) to John Niven (2010). Niven has written an engaging account of a young Scot who wakes from a coma to discover that he now possesses the perfect swing but also some troubling side effects, amongst them Tourette's. Perhaps best known of all, however, and of greatest relevance to this investigation is the work of Michael Murphy (1972; 1998) which offers a mystical, fictionalised account of a Scottish golf course, Burningbush, and the mythical club professional, Shivas Irons, whose ghostly presence stalks its links. The relevant point about Murphy's fiction is that "where it needs to be true, it is" (Sinclair, 2010, p.579). The same is

arguably true of some non-fiction which also plays around with the notion of truth, just like many golfers themselves do as they relate tales of the borrow of a successful putt, the length of a drive or the delicacy of a chip to an empathetic but ultimately disbelieving audience. Amongst the contributors to the highly subjective representation of reality genre are Shanley (1997), Dodson, (1997), Donegan (1997) and Greig (2006). Significantly, all of the authors cited here are male. Despite this gender imbalance, however, there is an important lesson to be learned here for academic writing about sport in general and golf in particular. As Greig (2006, p.4) remarks in his account of a journey through the golf courses of Scotland, 'all I have ever written starts from voices within, and they are true in their way'. Fictionalised representations or creative non-fiction should be as true as they need to be to achieve their aims, namely to offer new insights into specific sets of relationships and to make the case for change. My story of golf club culture is my subjective truth, a truth that is partial and, in spite of my best reflexive efforts, it is open to the contradictions of the field. Further, I share my understanding of the culture I have been a part of for over ten years in the hope that it can eventually be transformative knowledge and a catalyst for change.

The sharing of experience in story telling makes change not just possible, but central to our lives. Narrative representations can expose multiple voices, truths and viewpoints that coexist. This allows the reader to step into another's reality, provoke a visceral response, and strive for verisimilitude, a relevant truth and one that captures an experience in a way that might shed new light for a reader (Duncan 1998; Vickers 2010). Denison (2006) suggests stories offer the possibility of change, which may show that new and different things are possible. Hopper *et al.* (2008, p.231) have suggested that less conventional forms of writing research encourage more inclusive social practice, where academics present their findings to the community being researched and inform those in positions to affect change. In terms of feminist narratives, Hargreaves (2004) believes that writing should be transformative,

while Hardin and Whiteside (2009) call on feminists to produce more emancipatory stories, which can create new forms of knowledge and allow for sport institutional transformation. Some suggest that fictional representations are most suited to constructing and conveying analyses of social settings that are impossible by other means, particularly where fiction widens audience appeal and can be more enjoyable to read than specialised academic terminology. With regard to the field observations from phase two, I felt that a fictional representation was a highly suitable lens through which to understand and communicate the data collected during the ten golf club visits. Thus through encouraging more inclusive practice, and engaging the reader and those in positions to affect change, fictional representations can offer a critical research perspective.

6.4 FICTION AS A CRITICAL STRATEGY

The use of theory in transgressive writing has been varied and contested. Many autoethnographers such as critical feminists Duncan (2000) and Miller (2000) have omitted theory, allowing their stories to stand alone. Some researchers alternate between theoretical discussions and accounts of their personal experiences to explain how their stories have been socially constructed (e.g. Jones 2006; Purdy *et al.* 2008; Tsang 2000). Other writers have suggested that the traditional research format of identifying what has been done in a topic, selecting a theory and explaining the route to new insights is unsuitable for alternative research. Contrary to this, Sparkes (2000), in his earlier work, admits to including more background, context and theory in alternative representations owing to a lack of trust and fear of reader/reviewer reaction. Critics of narrative research claim that stories alone cannot constitute good scholarship and theory must be applied in order to comply with academic writing. In relation to critical ethnographic projects, Cole (1991) suggests that theory is key to situating and interpreting the observed local culture. As outlined in chapter four, this research employs critical, feminist and postmodern

frameworks, demonstrated through my personal perspectives and the orientations I bring to the field of golf.

Because of established traditional methods of inquiry and statistics based research, using a derivative of the word 'fiction' to describe one's research could mean that policy makers may not take the work seriously because of the lack of trials, tribulations and data collection that is usually associated with "true research". Knowledge and truth are challenges to fictional and fictionalised representations, which can question the author's credibility and take them into highly contested terrain (Richardson 2000). Some authors would say that the distinction between fact (non-fiction) and fiction in non-fiction writing is non-existent because no facts ever exist, except as interpretations of 'reality'. Postmodern perspectives, however, have progressed discussion of neutrality, objectivity and language and have encouraged the emergence of new understandings of truth and knowledge that are considered relativist rather than universal. Duncan (1998) suggests that the measure of truth in postmodern research is not in maintaining objectivity standards, but the power of evocation and vividness of experience. Storied research helps us to understand the tensions between subjectivity and objective exclusion by being partial, situated, selective and constantly recursive and unfinished. Some fictionalised research stories often tend to avoid closure, offering a never-ending story to a culture and enabling the reader to appreciate that interpretation is never finished (Markula & Denison 2005). With the narrative turn, qualitative researchers have moved away from assuming the stance of disinterested spectator towards embodied characters in their research stories, portraying their own experiences in the field. Richardson (1993) comments:

In feminist writings of poets and social scientists, the position of the author is linked aesthetically, politically, emotionally with those about whom they write. Knowledge is not appropriated and controlled, but shared; authors recognise a multiplicity of selves within themselves as well as interdependence with others, shadows and doubles. Alternate selves are interwoven by common threads of lived experiences...it is this

potential for relating, merging, being a primary presence to ourselves and each other which makes possible the validation of transgressive writing, not for the sake of sinning or thumbing one's nose at authority, nor for the sake of only and just writing poetry...but for the sake of knowing about lived experiences which are unspeakable in the 'father's voice', the voice of objectivity flattened worlds.

(p.705)

In contrast to fiction, authors using creative non-fiction can draw on "being there" at the described experiences, offering dramatised and persuasive factual evidence (Sparkes 2002b). Having collected the data during my phase two visits to ten golf clubs, it is important to emphasise that I was there, and thus 'Shirts, Ties, Prawns and Associates' holds a particular kind of truth and trust that may even relate to the validity associated with traditional realist tales.

6.4.1 Reader's interpretations and researcher's role

Alternative research representations are often designed to stimulate multiple interpretations by evoking a range of responses in readers who may be differently positioned towards the text. Research data can be written up to represent multiple voices, the researcher's as well as the participants' and be understood by multiple audiences (Markula & Denison 2005). Readers are invited to draw their own conclusions and make their own appraisal of the world presented. Challenging the traditional research 'triangulation' Richardson (2000) recommends 'crystallisation', which encourages more ways of viewing the world:

Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns and arrays, casting off in different directions...Crystallisation, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of validity (we feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves) and crystallisation provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know.'

(Richardson 2000, p.13-14)

In narrative research readers are usually invited to draw their own conclusions, and Vickers (2010) recognises this as the goal of qualitative research. The shared subjectivity offered by fictional representations can shed new light on an experience and encourage the reader to step into the author's reality, potentially provoking a visceral response (Duncan 1998; Hopper *et al.* 2008; Sparkes 1997). It should be acknowledged that while it attempts to stimulate multiple interpretations, the values, orientations and perspectives I present in 'Shirts, Ties, Prawns and Associates' potentially limit and shape the reader's interpretations to follow my own.

With the narrative turn qualitative researchers moved away from assuming the stance of disinterested spectator towards embodied observer. Researchers are now becoming the central characters in their research stories portraying their own experiences in the field. Markula and Dension (2005) suggest that all research is storied and the only difference is the extent to which the researcher is explicit about their role in the stories. In fictional research the presence of the author in the text is always questionable. In presenting their voices and values, the storyteller risks potentially dominating, suppressing and replacing the voices and interests of the research participants. As discussed in section 4.9.3, these issues are particularly contentious for critical researchers. Claiming experiential authority in knowledge production and representing the realities of others is problematic, notably so in creative non-fiction, where instances are sometimes dramatised. In his chapter on the textual construction of realities, Sparkes (1992b) questions how a critical tale might be represented, particularly when critical researchers strive for emancipation, and attempt to locate the actions of individuals in the wider social context. In view of the way no texts can be viewed as neutral, it is necessary to employ self-awareness regarding the stylistic conventions used in 'Shirts, Ties, Prawns and Associates'.

As outlined in section 4.8.1, having JGI sanction the initial letter to clubs (Appendix C) and supported by my offer to coach at

each setting, I gained immediate consent to access ten clubs for data collection phase two. It may be worth noting that given the inconsistent means by which some clubs dealt with consent (see Section 4.8.1), and in light of the trust I assumed through my positioning, my presence in each club could be described as “access by default” or even illegitimate access. The values and orientations I held in relation to golf club culture, and my use of the data in a fictionalised representation could potentially be seen as an abuse of trust, not least because the research participants would most likely have conventional assumptions about truth, objectivity and a verbatim telling of events. This could emerge as a problem or tension in the research process. The short length of time I spent at each club is also an issue with respect to it being widely acknowledged that the more time the researcher spends in the field the more trust is built. Maintaining club and participant anonymity has also been a challenge although combining data gathered from the ten research visits to make one story was advantageous in this regard. Golf clubs and individual participants were given pseudonyms and some ‘facts’ were changed to further protect their anonymity, e.g. golf club foundation year.

6.5 TECHNIQUES IN STORYING RESEARCH

Storying research allows the fieldworker to exaggerate, swagger, entertain, make a point without tedious documentation and say what might remain unsaid in other circumstances. In writing stories Richardson (2000) has suggested the use of an impressionistic recall of events alongside an evocative writing style. Sparkes (1992b, 1995, 2002a) refers to Van Maanen’s (1988, p.103) description of textual identities, which uses dramatic recall to bring readers into an unfamiliar story world and allows them to see, hear, and feel as the researcher saw, heard and felt:

Impressionist tales present the doing of fieldwork rather than simply the doer or the done...the story itself...is a representational means of cracking open the culture and the fieldworker’s way of knowing it so that both can be

jointly examined. Impressionist writing tries to keep both subject and object in constant view. The epistemological aim is then to braid the knower with the known.

(Van Maanen 1988, p.102)

Some authors have recommended the use of literary devices such as alternative points of view, dramatic control, fragmented knowledge, strong characterisation, unusual phrasings and subtexts, which can provide a heightened evocative depiction (Markula & Denison 2005; Richardson 2000). Because my voice is central to the story, I employed autoethnographical techniques including strong metaphors and imagery, endeavouring to invite the reader to engage with my perspective and interpretations. Alongside literary techniques, Denison and Rinehart (2000) suggest that researchers who engage in the use of sociological narratives need to be rigorous in delivering quality writing in order that the research will be conducive to change:

A storied research account should contribute to our understanding of social life while also being artistically shaped and satisfying...requires a high level of skill and dedication both to the craft of writing and the analytical skills of a scholar. Only by following this type of commitment will critically informed stories have value in their own right, with the power to illustrate, illuminate, inspire and mobilise readers to think and act critically and reflexively.

(Denison & Rinehart 2000, p.3-4)

Along with the challenge of drawing on writing techniques in storying the data, as suggested by Foley (1992), portraying familiar golf club settings presented a narrative challenge for me as author inasmuch as I endeavoured to question the reader's understandings of golf club culture.

As one of his recommended data analysis techniques for writing stories Sparkes (1999) suggests 'narrative analysis', whereby the author sifts through the raw data to detect the setting, characters and plot for the story. Markula and Denison (2005) expand on Sparkes' efforts outlining three analytical steps of description, interpretation and explanation. Having travelled many miles in weather conditions to cover all seasons I encountered all the characters, viewed the sights, the various golf club settings and

facilities, old and modern urban and rural, and I realised that this data provided the ideal basis for a story which needed to be shared. The story was grounded in my field notes, journal entries and memories and it was crafted from recollections of the settings and observations from which strong narrative and purposeful moments stood out. Creative representations provide a more colourful, vivid and dramatic picture of the research setting, and this was something I aimed to present to the reader, rather than the traditional prescribed genres of research writing. During my research journey, and strengthened by the critical research rationale, I discovered that fictionalised writing encouraged my own new reflections on the experiences of those in golf club culture. I also enjoyed the freedom of dramatising experience, flirting with instances, extracting from the data and the satisfaction I got from resonating with the reader.

Although junior golf practices are the focus of the wider investigation, through my predominant liaison with, and observation of adults during each visit, the piece focuses mostly on adults' roles in shaping young people's experiences in the golf club. In creative non-fiction, characters must be given names, faces, motives, lines to speak and things to do (Sparkes 2002b) and 'Mike' was formed from characteristics of the various different junior convenors I met along my journey, the majority of whom were male. The presentation of Mike was as true to the male characters I met in each of the ten settings, with a minimal level of metaphoric and stylistic conventions used to bring Mike to life. Choosing which observations would make up the story was difficult, because I was conscious that in telling transgressive research I should not exclude details that do not fit with the story. Cole (1991) advises that obscure contradictions, inconsistencies and disruptions, and unexpected practices and voices should be reported because they offer opportunities for alternative interpretations and conceptual developments. It is also important to acknowledge that in writing this account, I have made important choices in the writing process that are rooted in my own

interpretations of the culture and define the possibilities of the reader's interpretations.

Sparkes (2002b) suggests that creative non-fiction must have a plot, giving the story more life and generating more interest. However, such an approach may anticipate an ending to the story, and would not reflect the reality of my visits. In order to preserve the story as non-fiction, albeit fictionalised, I chose to combine snippets and encounters from each golf club to describe a typical golf club visit, using the same characters to provide a natural flow. The vignettes include varied examples of golf club practice from the characters' perspectives, complemented intermittently by descriptions of my own feelings in the setting. Sparkes (1995) claims that authors incorporate feelings as dimensions of knowing, not only of the cognitive domain but the affective domain too. These descriptions were often dramatised and I included dialogue to allow readers to experience the lively imagery of an otherwise distant social reality. All of the details and experiences were encountered during the visits, although specific events are fictionalised versions of what really took place and the order of vignettes is not the chronological sequence of my club visits. Footnote references to each golf club clarify the link between the research visits and specific episodes of the story. Both the choreographing of events and the use of 'Mike' as main character worked to create a flow between visits.

Shirts, Ties, Prawns and Associates

10:48 Clenching the shuddering steering wheel, my 1996 accomplice and I belt down the motorway. The beat in my hands resembles my heart activity. I squint around the corner, peering for the Rochfort exit. Twelve minutes.

10:53 "Ok, so straight through the traffic lights, turn right onto Dawson Lane, past the park, around by the tennis club, take the next left after the school entrance, follow the narrow road for a mile and...

10:59 At last, a high stone wall comes into view ahead, never ending, it seems. I slow down as my car approaches an impressive pillar entrance, whereon the words ROCHFORD GOLF CLUB EST. 1887 are etched. Beyond the gates a winding uphill driveway is buttressed by pristinely cut grass, pruned shrubbery and encompassing foliage, all glistening in the cool October sun. At the top of the hill stands a vast clubhouse, contemporary in build and appearance, not matching the club's foundation year.

11:00 I hurriedly vacate the car in a quiet corner of the visitor's area, far away from the impressive selection of gleaming BMWs, Mercedes, and Range Rovers in the members' car park. Trying hard to make myself as inconspicuous as possible, I scurry towards the clubhouse bypassing a dark-haired woman dressed in black, and, in the visitors' car park, other females whose car boots are surrounded by a cluster of boys, reaching and removing their clubs and shoes.

11:05 Inside I am introduced to a group of men. Captain, vice-captain, junior convenor, general manager, junior committee chairperson, PGA professional, sons, brothers, fathers, grandfathers. My hand is sore from firm handshakes, some natural enough no doubt, others more knowing attempts to demonstrate physical prowess. My shoulders tighten with tension. My head spins as I'm confronted by one hundred shirts and ties. My heart thuds like the 1996 steering wheel.¹¹

11:30 Clubhouse main corridor

Mike gazes into the glass cabinet with excited eyes, marvelling at the thronged collection of cups, shields and plaques. A photo of a spiky haired, baby-faced boy donning a shirt and tie complements the assortment, its presence explained by the caption, 'Simon Phillips Irish International'. "He hits it further than any man in this club. Professional golf is not far away for the boy", Mike prophesises, his mouth salivating. "If you're good enough you're old enough". The

¹¹ Rochfort Golf Club 15 October 2008

lingering smell of recently drunk coffee and the telltale signs of greying hair add to his retired school teacher aura. Mike has an obvious vocation to this golf club. Unperturbed by my blank expression, upon entering the committee room he shoved a ream of paper towards me, "Take a look, you'll like this", he spouts. 'Junior Boys High Performance Plan 2008-2013'. Mike leans back into his leather cushioned chair with a smug smile and stretches his arms up, dragging the club crest on his pullover closer to his chin. "Strength, conditioning and psychology programme for our junior boy members", he yarns. Resting the back of his balding head in his hands he stares into space, probably somewhere 'out of this world', a phrase he had earlier used to describe Simon.¹²

"So Mike, how many junior members in the club?" I ask.

"About sixty one or sixty two" he replies, with a curious mixture of certainty and imprecision.

"And junior boy members?"

"About sixty one or sixty two"¹³. A pattern is emerging.

12:00 Main committee meeting

"Next agenda item, ahhh... Catherine, I'll let you take the lead."

"Thanks Mike", Catherine gulps, as if overwhelmed by this generosity of spirit and wondering if the committee members are ready for such a deviation from protocol. Maintaining her upright poise Catherine brushes her reading glasses back through her hair and positions them behind her ears, revealing a pair of deep brown eyes. Leaning forward she scans the table for an ally, but finds no solace.

"Equality" she swallowed, "the club needs to address it." Her quivering voice signalled her already rosy cheeks to warm. Four male heads perk up from the slumber of a committee meeting on a dreary November afternoon.

"We already considered this", pipes Colin, eager to make a quick exit. Premiership this afternoon, Man United away to Spurs.

¹² Clareville Golf Club 28 August 2008

¹³ Monaveen Golf Club 14 August 2008

“Catherine, I was under the illusion that the lady members had no concerns”, Mike quips. Catherine draws a deep breath, reaching for her scribbled notes. It was always like this, his way or the fairway.

“On the contrary Mike, there has been a lot of debate in the ladies’ section recently. Need I remind you that legislation will be passed next year? It’s time to change the club constitution,” she declares pointedly.

“And what lady member will want to pay full membership fees?” quizzes Colin maddened by this futile debate. Next thing they’ll be asking for Saturday tee times.

“Our working ladies can’t play midweek. Numbers are falling, we only had thirteen in Tuesday’s competition”, Catherine blurts out. Gaining some composure she proudly announces, “The ladies’ committee proposes a vote of lady members to achieve consensus on whether or not to abolish associate membership and pursue full membership”.¹⁴

14:00 Clubhouse lounge

He opens the small box, revealing a shiny polished piece, propped up on its holder. Intricate links and an elaborate face comprise the watch, which is fronted by an engraved gold plate:

‘Mr Noel Henderson

President’s Prize to the juniors 26th August 2008’

Grinning proudly Mike holds the green box preciously in his large creased hands, examining it from every angle. “The president got it done himself, well at least his wife did. Nice isn’t it?” His eyes stare down into mine searching for approval. I faked a smile. “Lucky the boy who gets this”, he continues, rising from his seat and making towards the large bay window. In the restaurant area a dark-haired woman in a black uniform is bent over a Hoover, sweeping the navy club-crested carpet.

¹⁴ Ardloch Golf Club 16 September 2008

“There’ll be great competition today; Simon, James, they’re all psyched up. There’s two of them now, off down the sixteenth”. Mike peers out the big bay window, gaping at the group on the hole adjacent to the clubhouse. A brightly dressed lanky teenager strides along the middle of the fairway, bags strapped across his back. The other languishes behind, his trucker style cap covering a thick mop of hair, which almost distracts attention from his untied shoelaces. He advances towards a big sycamore, where a small white dot has befriended the tree trunk. Swoosh! Iron meets timber. Smack! The white dot dribbles out of the forest at a second attempt. Thud! Mike’s fist bangs the windowsill. “For god’s sake Darragh! We’ll never make a golfer out of him. He swings like a girl.” Noticeably dejected, Darragh feebly drags his trolley towards his next task. “No speech from him later”, Mike jokes mirthlessly whilst smirking at the small box. “Now, take a look at Simon.”¹⁵

14:30 Car park

Tackling Tesco bags, tennis rackets and a mane of blonde hair, Grace fishes through the boot for remnants of her son’s clubs. “Enjoy honey, gimme a text later” she bellows into the back seat, hoping James has heard. Reaching her tanned glowing arms upwards she grabs and delicately closes the boot of her Lexus. No kids, no surgery, peace, at last. Traipsing towards the girls, she notices that they appeared deep in debate. She rehearses the shopping list in her mind, mustard, crackers, brie, lamb cutlets, merlot...

“The letters went out this morning. Seemingly there were sons of non-members chosen. If it’s true there will be a lot of disgruntled parents”, the lady hints to Simon’s mother, squinting in the morning sun.

“Fabulous day girls isn’t it?” Grace interrupts.

“Did you hear the latest on the juveniles?” the woman whispers.

¹⁵ Lisnagry Golf Club 26 August 2008

“What, you mean Mike’s ludicrous picking process?” Grace and her mother were not fond of the club’s juvenile member selection policy. Catherine had fought for years to eradicate selective practices such as this talent identification for membership.

“They trawled through the video tapes of the boys’ swings last Friday. Apparently there were twelve membership places for seventy eight applicants”, the mother utters, flapping at the swarm of midgets surrounding her short hair.

“I actually think that video taping the boys’ golf swings was a useful exercise”, yawns Simon’s mother, grateful for the relatively straightforward trip to the golf club. Her son’s demanding tournament schedule had taken its toll in recent weeks. “But Mike and co. should have had more discretion. Rumour has it Colin Brennan’s son didn’t get in”.

“What?” Grace chokes, “that’s ridiculous, the Brennans go back generations in this club. Colin will be seething”.¹⁶

15:10 Practise area

*Swoosh...clunk...slap...“Really?” ...whir... giggle
...swoosh...thud...“on facebook”...smack. Nine gawky contorted bodies yielding sticks stand before us, one thousand shades of pink swaying, twisting and fighting with small white balls.*

“You see those two over there,” Mike whispers as discreetly as he is able, “their mother drops them off every Wednesday morning for this ‘babysitting’ hour. No interest.” One girl chats with a group her own age, one hand leaning on her seven iron, one on her hip, as she identifies a group of boys on a nearby hole. Her younger sister is on her knees, ransacking her golf bag for fruit pastilles. Mike rolls his eyes.

“This is such a waste of time.”¹⁷

15:15 Outside the pro shop

¹⁶ Garavin Golf Club 13 August 2008

¹⁷ Ballydesmond Golf Club 12 August 2008

Balancing golf shoes, socks and energy supplies, James lugs his bag around the flowerbeds and down the path towards the clubhouse. Having barely made out his mother's muffled goodbye he had turned and waved, before dumping his stand bag at the door of the locker room. Making space amongst tees, balls and waterproofs he squeezes the variety of fruit and energy bars his mother had prepared into his golf bag. It's nice that she has the day off from looking after other people's children. After swapping his 'vans' for his 'footjoys' he enters the pro shop, gathering the eight-euro entry fee from the pockets of his tailored shorts. Scribbling his name into the competition book his heart skips a beat when, four lines above his name he noticed Simon's scrawled signature. Presuming he was at another tournament, James had never considered that Simon would be at the club today. No doubt he would adopt his usual arrogant demeanour, flashing his Irish gear, telling tales of his trips abroad and describing all the good shots he had hit. Bar Mike, nobody liked Simon. Grudgingly leaving the pro shop, James notices Darragh leaning against the low wall of the shrubbery. Head down, James watches him pick blades of weeds from in between the stones, staring at them, before tearing them into strips.

"You playing today?" James enquires.

"Already did", is the stifled response. "Gave up. Simon was giving me wrong scores so I walked in."

"Tell me exactly what happened".¹⁸

18:00 Clubhouse restaurant

Monkfish, pan-seared cod, Cajun salmon, grilled trout, smoked haddock. After choosing the best table overlooking the beautiful coastline, Mike invites me to select whatever I want from the clubhouse menu, suggesting the exorbitantly priced fish. We are joined by two of his cronies, one of them, the club captain, whose belly is so large he sat a good two feet from the table to allow it room.

¹⁸ Ashfield Golf Club 15 August 2008

A dark haired waitress dressed in black approaches, armed with pen and pencil, and prepared for the onslaught from three hungry men and an uneasy visitor. "Take it away, captain", Mike declares.

"I think the routine is ladies first Mike," the captain asserts. I imagine him at the helm of a ship, steering his mates and responsible for the safety of his crew, with me cast as the perilous iceberg they had not yet spotted. Mike had already told me that in its initial years females were forbidden from entering the clubhouse and even prohibited from looking through the clubhouse window between 12:30pm and 3:00pm. While I sit digesting prawns and discussing business with the crew, the dark haired waitress serves the junior golfers on their arrival from the course. More than once I ponder the place of a twenty two year old girl, me, in the presence of three retired men whose main topic of conversation is my golf – where in the world I would travel next and how many golf balls I hit per day. After the fill, Mike initiates the formal proceedings, "James Walsh, our junior captain would like to say a few words." Sitting amongst five other boys a pasty white teenager hauled his legs from under the tablecloth, and rises assuredly, making his way towards the microphone. "Captain, Lady Captain, President, Junior Convenor, club committee members, junior members, ladies and gentlemen."¹⁹

20:00 Phone conversation

"What do you mean he didn't get in?" Colin roars down the phone.

"The decision of the junior committee wa..."

"Don't give me that Mike, you know he should have been selected. I've been a member of that club for nearly thirty years!" Colin retorts, seething with anger and glaring out the window of the office block.

"Look, we spent hours interviewing those boys", Mike responds, beads of sweat forming on his forehead. "Your fella is only nine, we'll make sure he gets in next year" he says, exasperated and aware of the inevitable lambasting yet to come from other aggrieved parents.

¹⁹ Cahergreen Golf Club 28 August 2008

“And what’s this about non-members’ children getting in?” Loosening his suit tie, Mikes squirms in his chair, wondering how Colin’s father might react. The Brennans were virtually synonymous in the golf club. John Brennan had served as captain and president, and Colin had similar ambitions.

“Well I insisted that we gave three lads a chance. They showed great enthusiasm and attitude during the trials.”

“Is there no loyalty in this bloody club?!”²⁰

6.6 AFTER THE STORY

6.6.1 Judging the story

There are multiple and contradictory standards governing how to say things and what to say in qualitative research (Jacobs-Huey 2002). Holt (2003) claims that judging personalised research is extremely problematic, where reviewers often critique it against more conventional and realist forms of writing research. Concepts such as validity, reliability, generalisability, and other standards associated with traditional notions of truth are considered unsuitable for judging experimental genres (Sparkes 2002a; Sparkes & Douglas 2007). In analysis of **CAP** ethnography, Richardson (2000 p. 15-16) asserts that she uses five criteria in reviewing these styles of writing: substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, impactfulness, and expression of reality. Sparkes (1997) suggests that stories can only be judged by aesthetic standards, their emotive force, their capacity to engage the reader emotionally in the story and their verisimilitude. For narrative potential to be realised, Sparkes (1995) claims a believable, engaging, evocative and authentic tale has to be told. In validating transgressive writing, Richardson (1993) suggests the importance of lived experience, shared knowledge, and recognition of the author’s multiplicity of selves. In judging the utility of a text Hopper *et al.* (2008, p.229) asks, “does the meaning conveyed resonate with the reader, and were they catalysed into

²⁰ Blackwood Golf Club 11 August 2008

action?” If the readers resonate with the story then it should work to achieve verisimilitude and to bring a previously hidden reality to light. In this way the story establishes its own truth.

6.6.2 The consciousness of agendas through multiple positions

My situation as a researcher, golf club member, international competitor and my role with JGI is reflected through the reflexive and subjective nature of my writing in the first person and this autobiographical narrative is presented through these multiple positions. Richardson (2000, p. 14-15) claims that reflexivity alerts us to “the complex, political/ideological agendas hidden in our writing”. As previously acknowledged, the values, orientations and agendas I bring to this research have allowed me to critically present events and instances that are otherwise normalised in the setting, while ‘Shirts, Ties, Prawns and Associates’ is constructed and influenced by my feminist positioning. Rather than providing a tidy narrative or a composite picture of golf club culture, I have added my own personal tensions and anxieties, outlining my discomfort with my own capital in the settings presented. However, this is not to assume that my positioning allows me to present the truth, even if one was to believe in such a concept, as my multiple positions can also complicate or compromise an understanding of golf club environments, and on the other hand, my knowledge of the settings could mean that I have omitted important observations. For these reasons, the piece is far from the full story. Nevertheless it is a story and represents one version of reality.

As a critical feminist I am conscious of the picture I present of gender relations and the subordinate position of females in golf club settings. My sympathetic stance towards Catherine’s struggle for membership equality, Grace’s doctor/mother balancing act and the muted voice of the dark haired clubhouse worker are obvious. These examples are supported by my nervous trip to the male-only club Rochfort, and my strained relationship with Mike. While he assumed

authority as the dominant male in each setting, I preferred to relinquish the capital afforded to me. By defining women's identities in terms of their caring role (dropping-off/collecting duties, lunch makers) and their oppression by men in terms of their power, the story has potential to provide an oppositional account of gender relations. However constructions of femininity and masculinity in this culture are less hermetically sealed than might be presumed. The 'established order's' respect for my golfing ability at the lunch table in Cahergreen, Catherine's ardour in pursuing full membership for the ladies' section at Ardloch and Darragh's lack of interest in competition provide diversified and alternative gendered accounts. In terms of gender/class intersectionality, the story also demonstrates my indifference towards the glorification of upper class symbols in the settings, e.g. high-end cars, menu prices, food, professions and clothing labels, while my quick exit from my own twelve year old car in Blackwood also highlights my concern at potentially being recognised as lower class. In line with the dominant golfer participation profile, race and ethnicity constructs were not realised.

Along with drawing attention to females' inferior positions in golf club settings, supplementing the evidence from Chapter five, the story portrays the constrained realities of junior golfers. The perspectives offered outline my contradictory and multiple orientations towards both junior golf participation and performance. As a member of the national high performance squad at the time of data collection, I empathise with elite young golfers such as Simon, who are sometimes over trained, pressurised to perform and susceptible to burnout. As a young 'prodigy' in my home club, I can relate to the attention given to and the valorisation heaped upon Simon by Mike and the club, and the tensions and resentment driving a wedge between Simon and other junior members. However, this perspective is complicated by my position as a JGI employee, where, as demonstrated by my support for the girls in Ballydesmond, and my concerned observations of Darragh on the course at Lisselan, my primary focus is to increase participation and enhance the enjoyment

of young people in the game. Along with his favouritism towards Simon, Mike's membership selection practices (Garavin), and his lack of understanding of the girl players at Ballydesmond is at odds with my expectations of an effective golf leader. It is widely acknowledged that the integration of girls into sport requires an appreciation of their social tendencies, while there is much evidence to refute golf's status as an early specialisation sport. Along with Clareville's limited high performance programme, the practices and attitudes of adult leaders such as Mike are damaging for the wider participation of young people in golf. Ominously, 'Mikes' were evident in each club I visited. These contradictions and problems are further elaborated in Chapter eight.

6.6.3 From story to practice

Through offering an open, embodied account, 'Shirts, Ties, Prawns and Associates' seeks to engage the reader in my critical insights of golf club culture. The aim of story telling is to clearly capture the lived experience of the subjects and those that include an identifiable subject, theme and storyline. Stories may even allow policy makers to enable, mobilise and progress the research agenda (Markula & Denison 2005, p.180). In this way and in line with a critical feminist agenda, the knowledge produced in this chapter aims to encourage change in golf club culture. Hopper *et al.* (2008) suggest that alternative methodologies must be of value to the community that is being written about, and with the postmodern emphasis on theory over practice, sports feminist scholars call for strategies that enable challenge to the oppression of minority groups (Birrell 2000; Dewar 1993; Hargreaves 2004). As demonstrated by Sparkes and Douglas (2007) and Douglas and Carless (2008c), sharing the story is thought to be the best means of increasing awareness and achieving consensus, while Hardin and Whiteside (2009) suggest distributing feminist emancipatory stories to children in sport in order to create new forms of knowledge and allow for sport institutional transformation. Although sharing my perspectives may instigate

change, as outlined in Chapter eight, tackling a legitimated culture is also problematic, where I broach ethical and moral predicaments, including drop out from competitive golf, and the risk of my writing on my long-term employment in the field.

Although a creative version of events comprise this story, my research journey provides countless examples of the gendered, selective practices that are in operation in golf clubs. Societal advancements since the 1500s have improved women's inferior position in the game, but golf club practice remains tied to tradition and exclusion and is slow to initiate or welcome change. Where it offers a 'no holes barred' approach, 'Shirts, Ties, Prawns and Associates' presents challenges for golf governing bodies, volunteers and participants of all levels. My hope is that increased investigation into the constituents of golf club culture will in time, resonate with policy makers and create awareness in the wider golf community of the exclusionary and unequal practice of golf, and help shape and alter golf club practices and policies in ways that promote equity. Change is surely needed in order to loosen the shackles of tradition and promote progress and growth of the sport.

November 2002

Sitting on the cold and clattering train I feel like the loneliest person in the world. I read the letter again, "You have been selected for the Under 18 National Panel and are invited to a training weekend in Portmarnock on....". Why was I picked? Who would be there? What clothes should I wear? Will they be strict? These thoughts regurgitate in the taxi journey and all of a sudden I'm at the door of the guesthouse, knees knocking, tummy turning.

The return train journey is once again sore, this time because of what I had left behind. I take home two positive memories. Realising I had enormous potential is one, meeting friends for life another. While my schoolmates in international swimming and volleyball are invoiced for their training, I'm on an all expenses paid weekend with the best girl golfers in Ireland, tutored by the national coach and cared for by top class officials. Having lost Rachel to boys and drink, here was an environment where I could further challenge myself, and a competitive level that I hadn't previously considered.

**CHAPTER 7 GIRLS' HABITUSES IN A
GOLF CLUB SETTING**

7.1 ABSTRACT

Following the Chapter five examination of golf club practice and the manifestation of the forms of capital for junior golfers, this chapter investigates young females' acquired capital and the promotion of specific habituses for girl members in a golf club setting. Journal observations from an eighteen-month critical ethnography are complemented by data from focus groups with junior girl members at Riverside Golf Club and Bourdieu's (1977; 1986) concepts of capital and habitus are enlisted in the inquiry. While girl members have limited access to capital in the wider club environment, through the physical and cultural capital associated with their abilities and achievements, the higher ability 'team golfers' acquired and distributed capital among girl members. Although these processes suggested conflict between the peer group and the wider club setting, this distribution of capital was premised on the same hierarchal and patriarchal manner through which capital is allocated in the wider setting, representing a reproduction of culture. The resultant girl member habitus promoted by the golf club focused on domination and achievement, while more subtle gendered messages were also relevant. This evidence suggests the reproduction of discourses that constrain girl golfers and potentially inhibits the wider participation of girls in sport specific clubs.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

As detailed in Chapter one, a body of literature has developed in recent years, which examines the femininities, embodiment, subjectivities and habituses of girls involved in sport and physical activity, particularly in the physical education setting (Clark 2009; Cooky & McDonald 2005; Evans 2006; Flintoff & Scraton 2001; Garrett 2004; Hay & Lisahunter 2006; Hills 2006; 2007; Hunter 2004; Lee & McDonald 2010; Paechter & Clark 2007). Building on this literature in a youth sport specific environment, and using critical postmodern perspectives, this study aims to establish if and how girls acquired capital at Riverside, and if and how overriding patriarchal

golf practices promote a specific habitus for girl members. Along with capital and habitus (Bourdieu 1977; 1986), concepts of embodiment, physicality and physical capital aid the examination. Particular attention was paid to the girls' interactions, behaviours, language, values, beliefs, appearances, and physicality, variables which were innately linked to, and significant in, the explication of their acquired capital and gendered habituses. Acknowledging and engaging with girl participants' dispositions and embodiment should inform the processes of power relations and cultural reproduction in the golf club institution. Before introducing the data, this chapter outlines the theoretical framework used and aspects of critical ethnography at Riverside, some of which has been already alluded to in Chapter four and Chapter five (forms of capital). As outlined in chapter one, there is a dearth of literature on young people's experiences in sport-specific settings, and while the differences between school and sports club environments are acknowledged, much of the literature cited in this chapter is contextualised in the physical education realm.

7.3 A FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCHING GIRL MEMBERS' ACQUIRED CAPITAL AND HABITUSES

Along with using the forms of capital, the deconstruction of participants' gendered dispositions in this study incorporates Bourdieu's primary conceptual tool, 'habitus'. Bourdieu (1977, p.214) described habitus as "a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body), and in particular a disposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination". The habitus operates below a level of consciousness and through practice it shapes one's perception and thoughts to become unquestioned beliefs seldom formulated in words, but embodied and enacted in the speech, actions, thoughts and appearance of individuals and reflected in how we eat, walk, carry and communicate with our bodies in everyday interaction. Linked to the epistemological foundations of critical theory, Bourdieu referred to habitus as socially constructed and acquired through historical interactions and relations "deposited" within individual bodies mentally or corporeally:

The habitus, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the ‘correctness’ of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms.

(Bourdieu 1990, p.54)

The habitus forms in response to the demands of the field in which the individual is engaged, leading to different practices and stances depending on the state of the field. Conversely, for people to engage in communities and practices successfully they must work within an identifiable habitus where they feel an obligation to share in the lifestyle, tastes and dispositions of a particular social group or community of people. However, habitus operates below the threshold of consciousness, and through practice, individuals internalise and embody key dispositions and aspects of the social order, and are oriented towards particular goals and strategies. In this way the habitus can reinforce and reproduce desirable behaviours and the social order. Where people have their own interpretations of practices, socialisation into a particular habitus in a field is not without conflict.

Habitus and the forms of capital have been previously used in the explication of participants’ experiences in sport and physical activity contexts. Devís-Devís (2006) suggests that the concept of habitus is significant in the theoretical development of critical research perspectives in education and sport, and in the investigation of the practices of institutions such as schools and sports clubs. Hills (2006) used habitus to conceptualise 12-13 year old girls’ understandings of their gendered physicality:

...the use of the concept habitus seems apt when considering the lingering strength of the associations between embodiment and hegemonic masculinity that permeate sport and physical activity despite girls’ diverse experiences and increasing participation.

(Hills 2006, p.541)

Habitus has also been used to examine how abilities might be

constructed in physical education (Evans 2004; Hay & Lisahunter 2006). Children acquire habitus in environments that are classed, cultured and subject to variation and Evans (2004) quotes Crossley (2001) in stating that it is hardly surprising that a child brought up in a football-loving household is far more likely statistically to develop their own love of football and will acquire the 'know how' and dispositions for 'true' appreciation. In their study of junior golf club culture, Zevenbergen *et al.* (2002) found that cadets who were exposed to early golf experiences in other clubs created a habitus congruous to that of the setting and were more likely to participate more effectively within golf practices. Further, participants who did not conform to the club habitus were marginalised and eventually withdrew from the setting.

As detailed in section 4.9.1, some commentators have highlighted Bourdieu's neglect of a gendered habitus. For the purposes of this postmodern study, habitus is conceived as a generative structure, which is fluid across contexts, recognises multiple and diverse behaviours, thoughts and dispositions, and situates girls' embodiment and subjectivities within wider social structures. Some authors note that habitus is immeasurable and impossible to identify, where it is so learned, hidden and internalised that one is not conscious of it. Furthermore, where young people's identities and subjectivities are constantly in a state of flux, the habitus is not always identifiable. Given my concerns with reporting on the habituses of individual girls (see Chapter eight), I chose to examine how practices at Riverside golf club promoted an idealised or sought after habitus for girl members. Along with the golf club, it is important to acknowledge the influence of other social contexts, locations and socialising agents in shaping the girls' acquired capital and habituses. Evans (2004) points out that this socialisation may be more significant than any processes and dispositions acquired in a youth sport setting such as the golf club. Further, understanding girls' habituses and acquisition of capital in sport and physical activity requires an appreciation of the complex relationships between

physicality and physical capital (McDermott 1996). This section further elaborates on these factors.

7.3.1 Physicality

As detailed in section 3.4, children are thought to be treated in different ways by their parents, where boys are encouraged to be more active than girls, who are often taught that they are weak. This 'inhibited intentionality' sometimes results in females underestimating their physical potential and so they experience their bodies as a 'fragile encumbrance, rather than the media for enactment of aims' (Young 1990). As a result, physicality and success in sport has been linked with traditional gendered power relations and a pervasive hegemonic masculinity (Hills 2007; Roth and Basow 2004). Clark (2009) asserts that the equation of fitness with a lean but not muscular body seems to frame girls' and women's participation in sport. Garrett (2004) found that girls evaluated their physicality in relation to idealised norms of femininity such as slenderness and tone, with less valuing of physical skills related to physical activity. In relation to specific sports, Clark and Paechter (2007) found that 'being nice' and maintaining friendships sometimes affected girls' participation in football, where competitiveness and aggression are required. For girls involved in sport and physical activity, the ability to feel and experience the body as capable and coordinated plays a central role in moving away from the dominant characterisations of female physicality as fragile and restricted. Depending on the dominant discourse of the setting, the characteristics, capabilities and management of the body are central to the production of physical capital, and the physicality that girls embody can limit or enhance their access to capital in the context.

7.3.2 Physical capital and ability

Bourdieu (1986) views the body as a form of physical capital, where the social context influences the development of the body, ways of presenting the body and engagement in physical culture. Physical

capital and success accrued through sports participation can be converted into other forms of capital (see Section 5.3.3). Gorely *et al.* (2003) found that physical activity participation can empower girls to learn to challenge negative social interpretations of female embodiment, gain self confidence and assertiveness, improve strength and acquire skills. Clark (2009) claims that opportunities for girls to utilise physical capital are restricted rather than non existent, and through placing emphasis on their embodied experiences rather than aesthetic appearance, girls can use sport and physical activity to resist gendered expectations. However, as evidenced in Chapter five, the capital associated with sport and physical activity is usually reproduced amongst boys rather than girls, and it is often associated with pervasive hegemonic masculinity and traditional gendered power relations (Clark 2009; Hills 2007; Roth & Basow 2004; Shilling 2004):

While the physical capital provided by engagement with physical activities such as sport has an exchange value for boys, the utility of physical capital for girls largely remains bounded with the physical activity field itself.

(Gorely *et al.* 2003, p. 437)

As demonstrated by physical education researchers, the acquisition of physical capital is directly related to ability and competence (Evans 2004). In investigating the legitimisation processes that shape student possibilities in the physical education class, Hay and Lisahunter (2006) found that capital available to students has physical and material consequences, and serves to support some students and limit others, while individuals high in physical capital in particular and well positioned within the field become reproducers who legitimise the nature of such ability in order to maintain their value (Hay and Lisahunter 2006). The ideal female physical education student remains most clearly embodied in relation to qualities associated with masculinity, while ability and competence were as highly regarded as a healthy appearance and ideal body type:

The subject positions that were therefore rewarded in PE were legitimated as competent display of skill performance, appearance of health and ideal body type

(not being fat), knowledge about the objectified biomedical body, displays of competitive fitness indicators, and being a good student.

Hunter (2004, p. 180)

From this evidence, the physical capital available to girls through their competencies is rarely translated to their positions in sport and physical activity contexts. While there are some examples of female athletic bodies creating a valuable form of social capital among female peer groupings in the field, this has been limited by discourses on boyfriends and emphasised femininity within peer cultures (Connolly 1998; Garrett 2004). Hills (2006) claims that girls have limited scope to benefit from cultural, social and physical capitals associated with football-related skills and knowledge, where most girls evidenced feelings of conflict regarding the practices associated with femininity, physicality and physical activity. Girls may have some opportunities to benefit from cultural and physical capital associated with sporting skills, knowledge and achievements, but it appears to be limited and rarely achieves symbolic value in the field.

7.4 CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE FIELD

As linked to postmodern feminism, critical ethnography and 'thick description' in this study strived to provide an understanding of the influence of the golf club institution on girl participants' acquired capital, actions and dispositions in the setting. The fluctuating identities of adolescent girls as manifested in their reactions, interactions, behaviours and dispositions can create challenges in understanding habitus. Acknowledging how postmodernism advocates multiple, shifting and recursive selves, combining ethnographic journaling with participant engagement in focus groups was considered the most effective method of negotiating the girls' changeable dispositions in the setting. Many young people have very sophisticated forms of critique, and girls value the opportunity to discuss and reflect on issues and experiences in their lives during focus groups and interviews (Hills 2007). In addition, engaging and involving girls in critical inquiry and discourse can achieve a number

of successes, particularly in terms of girls' physical activity enjoyment and motivation (Ennis 1999; Enright 2010; Oliver 2001). Further detail about the selection of the setting, the sampling of girl members, field relations and my access to and role at Riverside is documented in section 4.8.

7.4.1. Data collection and analysis

Over a period of eighteen months more than one hundred and fifty visits were made to Riverside golf club. Aside from overt focus groups with the girl members, all visits were naturalistic and, from club members' perspectives, appeared to concern my role as a club/team member, committee member and coach in the setting. These visits included meetings, junior golf activities, competitions, practise rounds, club events and presentations, following which I recorded my field observations relating club practices to girls' acquisition of capital and habitus formation. Coupled with the focus groups which outlined girls' relations with their peers and golf club officials, long term observation over eighteen months at Riverside would go some way towards revealing the influence of golf club practice on the experiences of girl members. As documented in section 4.7.2 and Table 4.1, naturalistic field observations included notes on girl participants' postures, gaits, appearances, actions and behaviours, and recollection of informal dialogue indicating speech patterns, and use of language and interactions with peers and adults. In-depth analysis of the ethnographic data was conducted using a naturalistic inquiry approach (Lincoln & Guba 1985) and repeated reading of the data to identify patterns. My ethnographic observations were supplemented by four focus groups, which were held with girl members during the eighteen-month period, followed by two final focus groups, to ascertain whether the data collected was permissible. The data is presented under the headings related to aspects of capital distribution and the promotion of girl habituses. Examples of Riverside practices, rules and norms are included throughout, which were employed by golf club officials and members.

In referencing the data, direct journal entries are dated and codes FG1, FG2...FG6 are used to identify one of the six focus groups. All girl participants were given pseudonyms.

7.4.2. Riverside

As documented in section 4.8, when entering the field over a long period as an ethnographer, aspects such as case selection, gatekeepers, and the researcher's role are important. One of the longest established clubs in Ireland, the private members' club Riverside is located in a rural suburb, about four miles from a city centre. Due to the club's popularity, a waiting list exists for potential members and membership access is difficult. The club's board of management makes decisions on membership applications and selection. Two existing club members are required to propose and second a membership application and applicants without family connections in the club are unlikely to be admitted. Membership fees for full members in 2010 included an initial entrance fee of €10000 and an annual fee thereafter of approximately €3000. Annual membership fees for those aged eighteen and under are €165. Membership access and fees were rarely discussed in the club, and were generally enigmatic and inaccessible. In the old clubhouse, part of the bar had been reserved for male members only, and following recent renovations, part of the new bar area was reserved for members' only, and was usually consolidated by males. In 2010 the club had almost three hundred members aged eighteen and under, 69 of whom were girls. When I arrived at the club in Winter 2009/2010 there was little visibility of active junior girl members, and the club had no officially reserved tee times or organised activities in place for junior girl members.

As in section 4.8.2, at Riverside I used my skills and experiences as an elite golfer, qualified coach and golf development officer as a club team member, girls' coach and in my role on the club's junior girls' committee. My honorary membership and high level of engagement in the field allowed me to regularly interact and

develop close relations with club officials, junior girl golfers and their parents. However, this high level of involvement meant that I constructed the setting in some respects, particularly where many members acknowledged that, were it not for my input, the junior girls would never have achieved all that they did. In my role on the junior girls' committee and as coach and captain of the girls' team I coordinated coaching, tee times, competitions and practise sessions for girl members, involving the participation of about fifty girls. All golf activities for junior members were gender segregated where, as asserted by Clark and Paechter (2007) there appeared to be increased potential for girls to gain confidence and self-esteem. By the end of year one over half of all girl members were active in the club, at least ten new girl members had been introduced to golf, individual players had been selected for further regional coaching and, following a competition series, the girls' team won provincial and national titles. Given this was the club's first female national title in twenty years, Riverside Golf Club applauded this achievement and were hugely enamoured with my role as team captain and coach. I was given honorary membership for a second year.

7.4.3. The girl members

Although about fifty girl members actively participated at least once during my time at Riverside, roughly thirty girls, aged nine to seventeen were involved in the data collection. While I collected a wealth of data on individual girls' family and school backgrounds, it was impossible to present this detail on all girls, and in Chapter eight I contend that my position in the club rendered any articulation of individual girls' lives unethical. This section attempts to string together background information on the group of girl members. While there were glaring examples of the girls' educated, higher-class lifestyles, it must be acknowledged that they are not all the same. All girls had varying degrees of interest, attendance and competence at golf, with the majority having irregular attendance, while six regular attendees (termed 'team golfers') were members of the team that

won national and provincial titles. With membership access difficult, the majority of the girls had both parents as members at Riverside, while others had brothers, sisters, aunties, uncles, grandparents and cousins. Many of the girls lived in the same area of the city, while the majority lived in close proximity to the golf club and many had summer homes in seaside towns or European countries. Some of their parents' occupations included teacher, solicitor, doctor, financial consultant, banker, property developer and laboratory scientist, and during focus groups some girls responded that their parents did "nothing" (FG3, FG4). While this evidence suggests a focus on girls from privileged backgrounds, in the context of other research on young people, I consider the experiences of this demographic silenced. Further, as testified by the data, the demarcation of girls by ability categories was necessary to highlight the achievement culture at Riverside.

Many of the girls had strong values that outlined the importance of achieving, education, career, money and socialising in their lives. There was a consciousness and emphasis on education, where many of the girls took extra tuition, extra language courses, weekend study, exam refresher courses, and grinds (individual or small group subject tutorials). Money was a major career motivation and the older girls had assured expectations of enrolling at university (FG5, FG6). Some of the girls had realised the significance of their social networks and they acknowledged that they could use the social capital attained from their social mobility and appearance to advance their careers (FG2). Two of the team golfers were visible as final year students in their respective rival schools, where one was school vice-captain and captain of the senior cup hockey team (Elaine), and another was school head girl (Sarah). In the second year of the study both Elaine and Sarah withdrew from the setting to invest in their studies. Along with their high reaching academic ambitions and career goals, the team golfers in particular were competitive, determined, and skilled at a variety of sports. Through their involvement in training and tournaments outside of the golf

setting, all of the team golfers demonstrated a high level of commitment to at least one other sport, and one of the girls (Cora) represented Ireland at hockey. Along with hockey, other interests included music, soccer, Gaelic games, sailing and swimming. Levels of social and cultural capital were high between and among the girl members.

Although Chapter three conveys girls' low involvement in physical activity and sport, there is evidence of a minority of girls who are engaged not alone in high-level sport but in a high standard of academia. These middle class adolescent girls have been problematised as strong academic performers, who are more likely to sacrifice their free time and physical activity in order to attain academic success (Walseth 2008). The models of excellence and achievement that are promoted in secondary school education often results in a shift from pleasure to achievement in sport impacting significantly on girls' involvement. For middle class girls this climate of achievement means either increasing the commitment in a particular pursuit and combining this with high academic achievement, or drop out from sport, due to increased homework and academic pressure (Clark 2009; Walseth 2008). Those who continue in extracurricular activities increasingly model perfection and performance, and their participation in sport sometimes compromises the enjoyment, bodily engagement and sociality they had at a younger age (Clark 2009, p.611). The expectations placed upon middle class peer groups for girls to be nice, kind, polite and unassertive can also prevent these girls from fully expressing themselves, often resulting in drop out from sport and physical activity (Hey 1997; Kehily, Mac an Ghail, Epstein & Redman 2002). Given that Riverside girl members are derived from perceivably higher and middle class backgrounds these models of achievement could affect their participation and levels of engagement in the setting.

7.5. GIRL MEMBERS' ACQUIRED CAPITAL

Following from Chapter five's examination of symbolic capital in junior golf practice, this section looks at girl members' acquired capital in the setting. Compared with other members (1000 adult male, 500 adult female, 230 junior boys), girl members (69) were minority participants at Riverside. Although their participation and presence increased during the eighteen months of my data collection, in the context of the overall club, girl members' low visibility at Riverside deemed them less important. Two sections on data related to rules and restrictions and achievement culture at Riverside are collated to demonstrate girl members' low acquisition of capital in the wider context of Riverside golf club.

7.5.1. Rules and restrictions

Similar to the section on control and behaviour expectations in Chapter five, rules and restrictions in and around the Riverside clubhouse evidenced junior members' low presence and significance in the setting. Tables in the clubhouse lounge were scattered with mini plaques, saying "no mobile phones". Instead the girls made phone calls from the ladies locker room, or if in the main lounge they would sheepishly send texts or avail of the club's free wireless internet out of sight of older club members. Subconsciously, or otherwise, the girl members always avoided the members' access, instead opting for the back or side doors, and they rarely entered the member's lounge. Junior girl presentations, meetings and meals were often held in corners of the restaurant and main lounge, avoiding interruption of the clubhouse lounge and member's area:

At the presentation, the lady captain abandoned the earlier enthusiasm she imbued among the girls and opted for a formal unappealing speech of thank yous. Thirty girls aged 8 to 15 sat obediently and attentively, waiting for the prize giving. None of the ladies who made speeches congratulated the girls on their attendance at coaching, or gave them encouragement to come back, apart from the mention of upcoming competitions, which drew no excitement. Across the lounge in the member's area a bunch of male members

cheered and groaned at a televised rugby match, oblivious to the presentation.

(06/03/2010)

The club diary detailed the following limits for junior members in using the club facilities:

Members under the age of 18 years are not allowed to play the course or to use the practise areas and the Clubhouse at the following times:

1. On Sundays
2. On Saturdays except between designated times
3. On Tuesdays, except for girls Students
4. Everyday after 5:00pm (an junior starting a round before 5:00pm are entitled to finish the round, once they can hold their place on the course). Play must start from the first tee.

(Riverside Golf Club Diary 2011, p.14)

At the beginning of my second year at the club, a club email was sent to adult club members, in which the junior boys' chairman reminded club members about the policy in relation to junior members' use of Riverside facilities. Signed by the junior boy's chairman, the information detailed the junior policy in the club (boy's and girl's) and, although the detail was not approved by our junior girl's committee, it made no effort to identify that the information was for boys only:

With Summertime and School holidays upon us, I feel it is a good time to remind Juniors of our policy with regard to their use of the club facilities. Riverside Golf Club has a long tradition with regard to Junior Golf.

We have a Junior Golf Competition time on our timesheet every Saturday during the School year and on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays during School Holidays. To be fair to our Adult Members and especially those who are working during the week, there is a Junior Golf policy on the use of the club facilities in place. In brief, Juniors are not allowed to play on the course or use the facilities:

On Sundays,
On Saturdays, except for Junior Golf,
On Tuesdays, except for Junior Girls times,
On Thursdays, before 2pm.

In addition, Juniors may not use the facilities after 4pm on any day, except the course and even then they must

have already teed off the first hole by that time (4pm). Juniors/Minors should not be in the clubhouse any day after 7pm.

(email Riverside Golf Club to author, 16/06/2011)

In an unqualified move, these restrictions on junior member activity changed from those stipulated in the Riverside club diary above. In such a busy golf club, girl members received little or no priority on the club's busy weekly timesheet:

I phoned the club PGA professional today to book evening or weekend tee times for junior girls' activities between now and May. He seemed to suggest that I was crazy, and that there was "no hope, no way" that the girls would get ten minutes on the tee on weekday evenings. Apparently, although the club manager had granted the girls tee times for our formal coaching programme, in the two weeks immediately after the programme the times were not used by the girl members, and because of that there would be no more allowances made.

(14/04/2010)

Girl members were always cognisant of Riverside golf club rules and policies, and, in fear of breaking rules they regularly asked questions about what competitions they could enter and what times they could play on the course. Scenarios like the below example contributed to the girls' uncertainties in using Riverside facilities:

After spending 15 minutes setting up putting drills and games for ten junior girls, and another few minutes explaining how it worked a tall greenkeeper pulled up his thunderous machine close by and made a beeline towards me. Standing very close he talked right down into my face, gesturing vigorously and blasphemously ordering me and the girls and my games off the green. In spite of the roaring grasscutter the girls heard the whole façade. A few hours later I got a phonecall from Sarah's mother complaining that his attitude was unacceptable and frightened her daughter. A few weeks later a sign went up on the putting green saying "no juniors allowed".

(24/05/2010)

Also related to club rules and etiquette, differences were notable between some of the girls' dispositions on practise areas versus the course:

Whilst introducing the drills at a coaching session for the older girls the captain's daughter Kerry arrived at the green. I attempted to stem her energy by giving her a role as my helper, and involving her in some of the drills. When it was time to bring the group on the course she pleaded with me to come and I gave her a job as a caddy. Stepping onto the course Kerry became a different person. Her facial expression changed from glowing to anxious, and she became robot-like in her role.

(18/05/2010)

This evidence suggests girl members' overall subordinate and less important position at Riverside, something which the girl members had a conscious awareness of, demonstrated through their focus group comments (FG1, FG2). Along with clubhouse rules, similar to the evidence conveyed in Chapter five, an achievement culture appeared to limit many of the girls' access to capital in the wider golf club setting.

7.5.2. Achievement culture

The clubhouse at Riverside was decorated with trophies, cups, pennants and photos of victorious teams, and the club's internationally capped golfers were given space for individual portraits, detailing their feats and successes. Presentations and speeches lauded and celebrated club officials and the day's best golfers. While this achievement culture matched many of the girl members' higher-class backgrounds and the values they attached to success, Riverside's competence structure did not achieve symbolic levels of capital for the team golfers, while it served to exclude the lower ability golfers. As evidenced in Chapter five, adult leaders often consolidated the capital associated with talented junior golfers and junior golf achievements, and, although the team golfers were praised following their provincial and national titles, club officials appeared to gain more esteem from their success, while I was awarded honorary membership for a second year. Further, this achievement culture brought about a constraining element for the

lower ability golfers, some of whom admitted that being under a watchful eye inhibited their participation on the golf course:

Jane: I always mess up my shots when am people are watching me...if I see them looking at me then I get all tense and then I hit it really badly.

(FG5)

Connie: I get frustrated when people watch me cos they're lined up...

Rachel: Ya I hate when people watch me

Charlene: ...I think I play worse

(FG6)

Unlike club members' praise and high expectations of the team golfers, regrettably adult leaders such as the Riverside PGA professional showed little confidence in the lower ability girls' continued participation:

Not knowing much about the facilities at the club I asked the PGA professional if we could cater for 40 girls over the six weeks. He responded "What, we've got 40 girls right? We'll be lucky if there are 25 of them by the last week."

(27/01/2010)

In spite of these expectations of drop out, only two of the starting thirty-five girl members chose not to continue. As evidenced in Chapter five, limited competition formats also constrained these girls:

Ten-year-old Alison was bursting to get going for her 9 holes today, and although she started brightly, some fresh airs and lots of putts later she began to wane. She gave wrong scores to her marker Jane, which required my intervention. By hole number five there were tears in her eyes and her enthusiasm dwindled.

(28/06/2010)

Competence has been identified as a key differentiating factor for girls in sport (Chepyator-Thomson & Ennis 1997; Skelton 2000). While team golfers were lauded for their achievements, the competence structure distanced the lower ability golfers from acquiring capital at Riverside, and potentially shaped their habituses in the setting. Similar to the evidence in Chapter three, Riverside golf club is identified as an adult-oriented environment, where norms and practices implied girl members' low presence and significance in the setting and their limited access to capital, symbolic or otherwise, in

the overall club. As stated in section 7.3, where people have their own interpretations of practices, socialisation into a particular habitus in a field is not without conflict, and, although not always overt and confrontational, girl members expressed discontent with Riverside club practices.

7.6. CONFLICT BETWEEN GIRL MEMBERS AND CLUB PRACTICES

Derived from their recognition of club rules and restrictions, the girl members regularly imbued compliance, respect and awareness for authority at Riverside. Some adult leaders in the setting commanded this respect:

Whilst talking to the lady captain (Sandra) before today's coaching session, nine-year-old Kerry was passing and she bowed to us. Apparently Sandra told the girls at last week's session that they had to bow to the lady captain.

(06/02/2010)

However, there was a noticeable contrast between the interactions the girls had among themselves and the relations they had with senior club officials such as the captain, lady captain and golf club manager. While the team golfers often practised behaviour that could potentially challenge traditional female expectations (FG4; FG6), in the presence of club dignitaries the girls said very little and used polite and mannerly language and tones. When asked would they act differently amongst adults in the golf club than they would amongst their peers, Naoise answered, "oh ya you're more proper" (FG4). Further, there was some evidence of conflict between the girls and lady members at Riverside. Aside from Sarah who played with her mother, the team golfers had no interest in participating on ladies' club teams or participating in the club's weekly ladies competitions, both of which were consolidated by adult females. Naoise was particularly adamant about not participating:

The manager of the challenge cup team told me today that Naoise dropped herself off the team. In an earlier trial match, Naoise was wrongly adjudged by her opponent Grace to have incurred a penalty on the final

putting green, which ultimately decided the outcome of the match. A few days before Naoise was due to play a trial match against Rose Kelly, Rose sent a text message to the manager asking, "what are ye running here, a kiddy campus?" Although these issues were brought up to the team captain and lady captain, Rose and Grace both kept their places on the team and Naoise never played.

(23/03/2010)

Naoise was not alone in declining participation in the ladies' section of the club and despite opportunities and encouragement to do so; Elaine and Cora were similarly disinterested:

Elaine: Sometimes you feel like they don't want you there.

Naoise: I'm 14 like. No wait I'm 15 now do you know...I'd prefer just to do juniors...if you take their place on the team like you know, then it changes

Elaine: That is it completely

Cora: ...they wouldn't like accept her as much as they'd accept like a woman

Naoise: That's what I mean like, they're all really nice to you but then when you get on and take their place that's when..

Elaine: That's when the claws come out

(FG2)

In further evidence of conflict, girl members regularly opposed the Riverside dress code, which states:

On the course the following items of dress are unacceptable at all times:

...garments displaying slogans, track or leisure suits, trainer shoes or runners...In the clubhouse smart casual dress is essential and it must be clean, neat and tidy and in keeping with the high standards of the clubhouse. Any type of footwear worn on the course is not acceptable in the clubhouse.

(Riverside Golf Club Diary 2011, p.8)

Some of the girls appeared to subscribe to the golf club dress code theoretically (FG6):

Naoise: It's easier with the rules that are there, (because) otherwise it'd be the biggest fashion show ever.

However this did not amount to their actions. Lines of clothing usually included 'canterburies', 'Abercrombie's', or other casual tracksuit bottoms, hoodies, and in the clubhouse, trainers or runners. Low

attendees Eilis and Connie emphatically opposed the regulations, often wearing their trousers/tracksuit bottoms dragging along the ground, and wearing trainers both on the course and in the clubhouse. Given their frequent exposure to the clubhouse the team golfers were more compliant with dress regulations, but there remained some concerns:

Elaine: I think it's a bit too strict. It's so oldfashioned

NK: In what way?

Naoise: I think the pants, you should be allowed wear tracksuit pants

Elaine: Ya and like ... no offence to this golf club but like the jean rule I think is so stupid. Do you know like even like when I won when there's award nights here my Dad just doesn't let me wear jeans do you know. Cos he said it's the rule.

(FG2)

At times, the differences between girls and adult members in the setting came to the fore, resulting in confrontation. Some of the Riverside girl members had been subscribed to membership by their parents and were reluctant participants. At a high profile tournament in the area I bumped into low attendee Izzie's father who lauded her golf talent and determination, which, because of her non-attendance, I had never witnessed. Eilis and Connie repeatedly attempted to reject or resist the discourse of the setting, apparently as a means of rebelling against their parents, who had enlisted them at Riverside. In interactions with Eilis and Connie there was always an increased likelihood of confrontation:

Today Connie's mother dropped off her and Samantha at the golf club. When the car boot would not open Connie and her mother began to argue in the car park. After a few minutes of bickering, eventually getting her equipment out and making for the clubhouse Connie ignored her mother's request to take her golf shoes, and instead strolled off scowling. Embarrassed and angry her mother approached Sandra and me who had been in the car park to apologise and asked us not to take any "cheek" from Connie, who it seems, had been recently causing trouble at home.

(20/11/2010)

This evidence suggests that junior girl members at Riverside attempted to reject some of the practices and Riverside, and instead created their own norms, some of which they chose to conceal from golf club officials. While this might infer the potential for a symbolic struggle at Riverside, the girl members' low accumulation of capital in the setting actually encourages them to conform with club practices. Alternatively, perhaps girls' low presence in golf clubs is a response to this symbolic struggle. Although they had little presence in the wider club, among their own peer group, girl members created their own norms and constructed their own strategies of inclusion and exclusion, and the exchange, distribution and acquisition of capital were central in this regard. The resultant hierarchy was premised almost entirely on the achievement culture described in section 7.5.2.

7.7. CAPITAL DISTRIBUTION AMONG GIRL MEMBERS

The field of peer relations have been identified as significant in illustrating perceptions of desirable forms of physical capital and predispositions to participate in physical activity (Hills 2006). Through their networks of family, friends and neighbours as golf club members, their strong relationships, and through their excellent communication and interaction skills, many of the girl members displayed high amounts of social mobility and capital at Riverside. More significant in the distribution of capital among the girls, however, were the forms of cultural and physical capital associated with golf talent and ability. These capitals markedly delineated girl members according to competence among their peer group, encouraging the emergence of specific physicalities and dispositions, particularly during golf activities. As detailed earlier by Hay and Lisahunter (2006), those strongly positioned in the field become the distributors of capital, and, while their high levels of physical and cultural capital did not reach symbolic status in the overall club setting, the achievements and ability of the six team golfers granted them symbolic status among their peers. The resultant peer group norms reflected and revolved around success and winning.

Specific bodily practices, such as traits of masculinity, competitiveness and aggression are valorised in sporting practices and can affect how much participants engage in physical activity (Wellard 2006). Where many of the team golfers were involved in other aerobic sports they embraced the feeling of being fit and strong and were visibly confident in their bodily positions and physicality in swinging the golf club. Prior to and during tournaments the team golfers displayed masculine related competitiveness, determination and doggedness in their trial matches, practise and preparation:

Naoise was swinging brilliantly today. I gave the girls a circular target 130 yards away, and while the others struggled Naoise pounded her balls with an eight iron, all landing within ten yards of the circle. When Naoise found out that Cora was hitting a five iron she bragged about the distance she gained on Cora's shots.

(26/02/2011)

On the golf course Natalie, Elaine, Naoise and Cora carried themselves in tall, strong postures. This physicality was particularly obvious during tournaments, where they exhibited strong and positive body language. Natalie always strode confidently ahead of her match play opponents, while Elaine imbued a grave disposition, displaying her 'game face', as she termed it (19/07/2010 and 23/08/2010). In comparison with the team golfers, many of the other girl members did not acquire the traits of physicality, competitiveness and determination thus differentiating them by golf competence and physicality, and limiting their acquisition of physical and cultural capital.

Contrasting with their relaxed dispositions in the clubhouse, whilst attending outdoor golf activities, lower ability golfers appeared anxious, tense and evidently restricted. During golf performance these girls expressed and embodied self-consciousness, many of them walking with weak postures, tight and hunched up shoulders and intoed stances, some of which they maintained during their golf swings. In contrast to the 'rolled-up sleeves' style of team members Naoise and Cora, the lower ability golfers often carried themselves sheepishly on the golf course, walking in short slides and dragging

their golf bag behind. Some of the lower ability golfers were highly aware of their lack of physicality in comparison to the team golfers; low attendee Samantha expressed disappointment with her lack of power in her golf swing, and she often grew increasingly frustrated on the golf course, walking in on more than one occasion. Following the success of the team golfers during the first year of this study, many of the lower ability golfers harboured ambitions to improve, motivated one suspects, by the accolades, plaudits and attention that came with the team victory. Eight months in advance of the team's title defence, and not long after the Lady Captain's dinner in which the girls' victory was celebrated, low attendee Samantha enquired "When is the team competition starting again, I want to be on that team" (20/11/2010). Having watched the team golfers in the national final, Izzie, Simone and Hayley also became increasingly competitive, the latter two invested time in getting their handicaps and playing their first eighteen hole competitions, while Izzie began to embody a more competitive persona on the golf course. All three girls made the team in the second year of the study. These ambitions perhaps outline the esteem in which the peers viewed the team golfers, and peer in-group recognition of the physical, cultural and even symbolic capital associated with golf competency and achievement. While structures based on competency are constraining for lower ability golfers, from this evidence the norms of achievement and competition among girl peer groups might encourage more girls to take on and endure with sport and physical activity.

Through demonstration of competence and strategies of inclusion and exclusion among their peer group, girls who are physically skilled are able to exercise practices centred on their ability to maintain their status and marginalise lower ability girl participants (Evans 2004; Hay and Lisahunter 2006; Hills 2007). Along with their proficiency at golf, the team golfers emerged as confident in their ability to demonstrate success and to convert their physical capital to social capital. At the end of year one our junior

girls' committee appointed team golfer Naoise as junior captain for the girls' section, a position that consolidated her symbolic capital among her peers in the golf club. Through using phrases and telling stories known only to the team golfers (e.g. they exclusively termed golf the "schnare" (FG2)), the team golfers used their empowered position to isolate lower ability participants. As evidenced by the above extract from a coaching session (26/02/2011), in my presence and among their peers, the team golfers practised behaviour that could potentially challenge traditional female expectations, including slugging, teasing and cajoling, often related to competence (FG4; FG6). Team golfers' discourse regularly centred on golf ability, where they marvelled at the high abilities of the club's male golfers and glorified the coaching and playing abilities of the club's only international male golfer. Natalie, whose father was junior boys' convenor at Riverside, was particularly impressed by the abilities of the club's junior boy members. In the physical education context, Hills (2006) found that girls adopted strategies for exercising power and investing in capital according to their perceptions of desirable norms within the setting. While the girls' access to capital was limited in the overall setting, as demonstrated in this section, among the girls themselves, the acquisition of capital was dependent on structures formed around the cultural and physical capital related to achievement, ability and competence in golf. This hierarchical arrangement indicates the subscription to, and reproduction of, gender oriented and hegemonic capital distribution strategies and determinants that govern the golf club institution.

7.8. PROMOTION OF A GIRL MEMBER HABITUS

The evidence implies the significant role of golf club practice in forming, shaping and potentially constraining girl members' actions, behaviours, dispositions and habituses. Where club captains deliver speeches, present prizes, chair meetings, make decisions and wear club blazers, golf club practice ensures that participants are not oblivious to hierarchical structures. At Riverside, these symbols and

practices communicated club expectations to girl members and promoted a 'dominated' habitus. Girls' relations with golf club officials and the club hierarchy, and their engagement with the clubhouse and course environs demonstrates their constrained position and struggle at Riverside. In similarities with adult leaders' use of the capital associated with talented golfers (Chapter five), the individual's inheritance of learned and lived habits in the field suggests the distribution of capital to inheritors, resulting in the reproduction of culture.

Supplemented by symbols such as prize presentations and speeches on the best day's play, competitiveness, skill and winning were to the fore at Riverside, thus constructing an achievement culture at the club. Evans (2004) suggests that competencies developed through habitus have an exchange value and can function as capital, depending on the prevailing attitudes in the field. Amongst their peers, the team golfers dispelled notions of the most valued attributes of a girl member, which included physicality, competitiveness and ability on the course, and the achievement culture promoted by Riverside practices was central in communicating this achievement habitus. Hay and Lisahunter (2006) contend that if the field does not allow the selves constituting the habitus to operate there is a rejection or resistance to the discourse, resulting in a change to the field or a marginalisation of the habitus by the field. Like Zevenbergen *et al.* (2002), for involvement, girls had to adjust and become more competitive, and lower ability golfers who did not conform were marginalised from the setting. Hills (2006) suggests that girls' rejection of sport and physical activity discourses is a form of Bourdieu's (2001) symbolic violence.

As detailed in Chapter five and in earlier sections of this chapter, boys accrue more capital than girls in golf club settings. Chepyator-Thomson and Ennis (1997) found that 'sporty' female students who displayed skill had the capacity to challenge boys' dominance of space or playing, but resisted this because of their potential marginalisation. Hills (2006) cites Whitson (1994) who found

that girls' desires for participation in football could also be read as a potential endorsement of masculine forms of physical and cultural capital and the maintenance of hegemonic power relations. Although the team golfers built up a certain level of agency through their physical capital and achievements, the constrained dispositions of the lower ability golfers during golf activities suggest the reproduction of discourses that constrain girls and girl golfers. Linked to male hierarchy, Bourdieu (1991) suggests that the kind of complicity demonstrated by the participants is not a sign of submission, subordination or adherence, it is inscribed through their habitus and becomes their logic of practice. Similarly, girl members' adoption of a peer group hierarchy premised on ability meant that they complied with the prevailing patriarchy, power relations and gender typology in the golf club and potentially reinforced, rather than challenged gender relations. Bourdieu (2001) claims that the capacity for girls who enter male domains to subvert the gender order is subject to cautionary criticisms that question the transformatory power of acts perceived as marginal or outside the realm of 'normal' experience. The effects of gender ideology do little for gender equality in institutions such as sports clubs, and the habituses of these girls support the reproduction of the same norms and inequalities in the golf club. Overt gender segregation in golf clubs will continue to hamper efforts to empower females and encourage equality.

Hills (2006) suggests that exploring girls in differing social fields helps increase understanding of social and cultural discourses and practices that reinscribe the masculinity/sport relationship. Processes at the golf club regularly intersected with settings such as the home, school, hockey clubs, subcultures in local communities and through media such as social networking, local radio stations and television. However, along with factors such as the demands of femininity, girls' evaluation of their bodies, and processes such as constant comparison and the male gaze, it was not possible in this investigation to engage in and attend to these contexts, all of which were relevant in the explication of capital distribution (Evans 2006;

Frost 2001; Garrett 2004; Hey 1997; Kirk & Wright 1995). As Collier *et al.* (2007) report, adolescents' discourses on sport and physical activity are complex and diverse, and go beyond traditional settings such as club and school sport. While many of the themes presented have been previously articulated in research on girls' embodiment in sport and physical activity environments, there are important messages for adult leaders in youth sport environments, particularly where club structures showed little appreciation and understanding of the norms created among the adolescent girls.

Positions

I am a twenty six year old, able-bodied white female. A student. I come from a middle class family. My parents did not attend university and my father did not finish school. I love sport. I value democracy, inclusion and equality. Yet I find myself embroiled in a self-indulgent sacrilegious critique of a legitimated culture, spanning hundreds of years and propped up by royals and upper classes. Golf.

I am a golfer. For seven years I chased a white ball for Ireland. I spent mornings before lectures on frosty, soggy and hard playing fields, pitching between goalposts. I flexed, trudged, lunged, squatted and jack-knifed in the university gym to hit the ball further. I visited physios, physical therapists and masseuses, in efforts to correct my posture and avoid neck and shoulder pain. I ground out hours on practise fairways correcting my out-to-in swing path, transitions, sequencing, ball striking. I repeated repetition, over and over and over again. I gave up holidays, family weddings and funerals, to haul my fourteen irons, woods and best friends on buses, trains, taxis and flights across five continents. I glared at my opposition, trusted my coach, worried about my putting stroke, gave up on my coach, won, lost, cried, cheered and broke my heart for my game.

I am a golf development officer. I coordinate 'Girls N Golf', a programme that introduces thousands of teenage girls to the game. I speak with golf club officers daily. I encourage and train them to train and encourage their clubs to become more welcoming and inclusive to all abilities, genders, creeds, classes, appearances, skin colours. I criticise the national governing bodies' overemphasis on high performance and fight to secure funding for grassroots golf.

I am captain of the Irish girls' golf team. I travel to tournaments and training, cheering and consoling eight elite early specialised teenage girl performers. I compare them against Europe's elite early-specialised teenage girl performers. I select their line up on technical ability, experience, maturity and composure.

I am a golf club committee member. I do my hair, make up and wear my newest neatest cleanest smart casual clothes to the golf club. I talk in a tactful, polite manner. I respect dress codes and blazers and network with doctors, barristers, bankers and other 'important' people. I sit at meetings, and I'm complicit as committee members

determine who or what can be a member of our golf club. I select teams on playing ability and the junior girls' captain on social mobility.

I am a student, a critical postmodern feminist researcher, in a university that convenes strict ethical protocol. I acknowledge the problematic nature of my authoritative voice and the contentions of my potential constructing of the field. I assume my real lived experience as unique, but I recognise the coexistence of multiple viewpoints, knowledges and truths and I see my orientation as contradictory, fragmented, messy, unsettled and dynamic. I realise that my familiarity with the language and practices makes writing about golf club culture more difficult.

**CHAPTER 8 RESEARCHING GOLF
CLUB CULTURE: WELL POSITIONED?**

8.1. ABSTRACT

This chapter examines researcher positionality and self. Through autoethnography, I situate my selves and engage with my multiple positions in the field of golf, including elite golfer, golf development officer, golf coach and researcher. Although seemingly cogent, these categories overlap, coexist, shift and change, evidenced by four combined and conflicting vignettes of personalised journal entries recorded across three years in the field. Presented through the core of the paper, these journal entries indicate my envelopment in ambiguous power relations in a legitimated culture, where, in spite of my wider positions and gradual disillusion with elite golf, I was identified primarily as a high performance golfer. The contradicting and compromising positions, selves and identities presented resulted in ethical and moral dilemmas for me as a researcher, and had implications for the overall research agenda and research dissemination. As a way of relating the personal to the cultural, I present my positions to encourage readers to relate to or create their own truth(s) and to recognise and interrogate their role in their field.

8.2. INTRODUCTION

As alluded to in Chapter four, qualitative researchers have been encouraged to engage in reflexive analysis of their positions, selves and identities in the research process (Cole 1991; Oleson 2005; Richardson 1997; Sparkes 2002a). Ethnographers are increasingly expected to account for how their positions and ways of asking, seeing, interpreting and speaking influence their production and representations of their field engagements. In this chapter I talk through my personal and professional interests, and complex perspectives from over three years in the field. Some of these positions precede this chapter, and further extracts highlight the precarious position that I occupied and struggled with. In striving to highlight the exclusionary culture in the game I revered from once I took it up, it was never my intention to become the subject of the research and thus I have struggled with the process of

autoethnography. In allowing for an emergent research design, however, as experienced by MacPhail (2004) in her dual roles as athlete and researcher, the qualitative data I collected for a wider investigation of golf club culture was prejudiced by and intrinsically connected to my positionality in golf club settings. As Richardson (2000) contends, the ethnographic life is not separable from the self, and like Maydell (2010) my positioning implied an unavoidable biographical dimension in this research, necessitating personalised reflection and reflexivity, which challenges the researcher to examine their values, assumptions, interpretations, power relationships and the active construction of their experiences in the field. Using the potential of autoethnography to construct the personal alongside the cultural (Purdy *et al.* 2008; Zanker & Gard 2008), this chapter endeavours to highlight the methodological implications of this approach, engaging in debate on the problematic nature of my collection, analysis and representation of data, and research dissemination. There has been little written about success and failure in ethnographic careers (Humphreys 2005; Reed-Danahay 2001), and in sharing my conflicting perspectives and research predicaments, I hope that the reader/researcher can understand, appreciate and learn from the positions they bring to their chosen field.

8.3. POSITIONS, SELVES AND IDENTITIES

As outlined in Chapter four, this study is framed by critical, feminist and postmodern perspectives. Fine and Weis (1998) acknowledge that critical ethnographers have a responsibility to talk about their identities, what they choose (not) to report, and why they interrogate what they do. The multiple shifting perspectives, representations of self, unstable identities and lived experience presented in this chapter are characteristic of postmodern research. In terms of theory on the self and identity in the sociology of sport, authors have employed Goffman's conceptualisation of the presentation of self and impression management (Jones 2006), and, in sports feminism,

Foucault's technologies of the self (Markula 2003). In order to unpack the taken-for-granted holistic self, positioning theory may be used by autoethnographers as an analytical framework providing the guidelines for analysing different aspects of identity enacted discursively through various subject positions (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999; Maydell 2010). Autoethnographers suggest that self-reflexive critique upon one's positionality as a researcher inspires readers to reflect critically upon their own constructions of self (Ellis & Bochner 1996; Spry 2001). As referred to in Chapter four, my use of autoethnography in this study includes explication of knowledge production and truth representation. This section details the positioning theory, autoethnography and knowledge and truth claims related to this study.

8.3.1. Positionality

Positionality is determined by one's location in the field in relation to 'the other', and has been used to describe how the writer delineates his or her position in relation to the research, and how these positions influence or shape aspects of the study (Merriam *et al.* 2001). Robertson (2002) suggests that positionality is a condition of and for reflexivity, where social constructs and positions are not fixed, but emerge and shift in the contiguous process of doing and writing about fieldwork. For Bourdieu, spaces of objective positions must be analysed together, treated as "two translations of the same sentence" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p.105). Positionality in this research highlights the insider/outsider debate, where my positions and selves are fluid and shifting, indicating the changeable nature of insider/outsider status. Narayan (1993) contends that native ethnographers that solely celebrate the privileges associated with being an insider often fail to expose the negotiation of identity. The process whereby native scholars are attributed particular social roles, along with subsequent attempts to comply with or contest these positionalities illustrates how insider status is an insufficient descriptor for the manner in which scholars negotiate multiple

identities in the field (Jacobs-Huey 2002; Narayan 1993). Banks (1998) proposes four positions to outline how individuals share knowledge that can differ in significant ways from those socialised in other micro cultures, i.e. indigenous-insider/outsider and the external-insider/outsider. Merriam *et al.* (2001) found that close examination of fieldwork experiences revealed multiple insider/outsider positionalities and complex power dynamics, factors which affect knowledge construction and representation. My role as a researcher has heightened my conscious exposure to these multiple positions, but researcher or not I would have experienced these contradictions in the field. Where the term native has been shunned as confining and limiting, this research supposes that there is no essential insider or native perspective.

In opening this chapter I endeavoured to delineate my inhabited categories of elite golfer, golf development officer, golf club member, team captain and researcher. As detailed in section 4.9.3, critiques of positionality theory have cautioned this type of organisation of identity categories and fixed binaries. In line with postmodern thought, I acknowledge that anomalies may exist in my presentation of these cogent positions, which are not fixed and intact but are instead constantly recursive, and reconstructed, and only become reified and cemented through language and the social world. As I seek to implicate several defined roles in the field, my multiple selves, voices and identities are far from stable, and instead overlap and coexist. Further, these positions do not fully describe the reality of my subjectivities in the field, and in fact, the process of clarifying these positions is problematic and unattainable. Using Davies and Harré (1990) perspectives on the multiplicity of selves, Kirk and MacPhail (2003) suggest that sports clubs operate according to multiple agendas, which contain conflicting expectations and competing aspirations, while coaches practised the single position of the coaching self in a range of diverse ways. Thus multiple perspectives are possible through one single role. Central to this research is my understanding of my location of these contradictory

and relational selves and identities, as demonstrated by my incongruous and varied journal extracts from the field. Through identifying these salient and significant positions in my research however, I can embrace their deconstruction and explore the resultant conflicts, tensions and dilemmas particularly in relation to data collection and representation.

8.3.2. Autoethnography

Autoethnography is a systematic sociological introspection and self-narrative, told to make sense of the experiences one has lived through. Richardson (2000, p.11) constitutes autoethnographies as “highly personalised, revealing texts in which authors tell stories about their own lived experiences, relating the personal to the cultural.” Deconstructions, justifications and critiques of autoethnography have already been well documented in qualitative research (Sparkes 2002a; Holt 2003; Hopper *et al.* 2008; Humphreys 2005; Miller 2008; Parry & Johnson 2007), and Sparkes (2000, p.30) outlines how autoethnography has been described as self-indulgent, narcissistic, private and overdramatised, while the centrality of researcher subjectivity and bias is criticised in terms of validity and credibility. Miller (2008) calls for a retreat from personalised research towards ethnography and textual analysis. Alternatively, authors of alternative qualitative research have attempted to highlight the advantages of autoethnography, particularly where social experience is written and filled with multiple voices (Hopper *et al.* 2008; Sparkes 2002a). The individual is linked to wider social circumstances, where the personal is constructed alongside micro-power issues within a public macro social milieu (Hargreaves 2004; Purdy *et al.* 2008). In support of autoethnographic research, Smith, Collinson, Phoenix, Brown and Sparkes (2009) suggest that monological debate risks colonisation, where the researcher infringes on the other’s side, violating what makes them the other, and rules out all competing voices. Sparkes (2000) claims that any criticism of alternative methods of inquiry as self-indulgent promotes reductionism, which

incorrectly infers that the piece is only about the writer's self and no one or nothing else. The inclusion of theory appears to strengthen autoethnography, and it is intended that the postmodern feminist approach will contribute to the portrayal and analysis of my vignettes in this chapter. The reflexive outlook as detailed in Chapter four is central, where I attempt to identify my values and interests, and endeavour to acknowledge how my perspective affects what I observe, hear and understand in the field.

Sport sociologists have outlined autoethnography as a viable research method (Denison 1996; Foley 1992; Sparkes 2000; 2002a). Many of the narratives in the literature are derived from athlete/coach experiences in high performance sporting contexts, outlining the fluid and contrasting nature of the self and the variety of perspectives offered in autoethnographic pursuits (Denison 2006; Jones 2006; McMahon & DinanThompson 2011; Purdy *et al.* 2008; Tsang 2000). In line with the use of narrative in Chapters five and six, Smith (2008) suggests that narratives of the self are important in the realm of sport and physical activity:

There is no real or true self that exists as some entity in our brain. Rather, the stories that we compose, in the social medium of language, function to create to the illusion of seamlessness in our self-perceptions and a sense of self-sameness....people use narratives to make sense of their lives, to give their lives meaning, and make each self-perception intelligible to not only themselves, but also others. Seen in this light, narratives *do* matter. They are important resources to explore people's self-perspectives of disability, sport and physical activity.

(Smith 2008, p. 24-25)

Evidence of alternative or personal explorations of the golf environment include poetry and narratives derived from female tour professionals (Carless & Douglas 2009; Douglas 2009; Douglas & Carless 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, Sparkes & Douglas 2007). In striving for authenticity, neutrality and objectivity, Douglas and Carless (2008a) emerged as performative researchers, where Carless separated his singer-songwriter and academic-writer selves,

while Douglas contrasted the self she invested in golf-related broadcasting with the strong sense of authenticity she felt in interpretive research. Apart from a piece by Douglas and Carless (2008b) on the over-reliance on training dominated vocabulary in golf, similar to autoethnographies in wider sport and physical activity, these perspectives have not attended to wider participation and development in golf. The vignettes offered in this chapter are derived from the combined perspectives of grassroots golf, golf development, golf club membership, coaching and individual and team high performance. I present my personal experiences in golf to a wider audience with the aim of resonating the personal with the cultural and enabling others to read the culture through my detailed experience in the field of golf.

In the postmodern, the self is recognised as multiple, dynamic and ever changing. The narrative of self is an evocative form of writing that produces highly personalised and revealing lived experiences, in which the author is the 'other' (Richardson 1994, p.521). By being partial, situated and unfinished, autoethnography aids understanding of the tensions between our subjective selves and the other. In autoethnographies, the lived experience, shared knowledge, embodied selves and multiple shifting identities of the authors are central to the story being told and are important in validating this method (Richardson 1993). Maydell (2010) suggests that it is impossible to engage fully with autoethnography without understanding the impact of others on self and identity construction. In this research the relationship between my positions and selves is complex and inseparable. Richardson asks:

How does one's writing reflect one's social privileges? What part of my biography, my process is relevant to text writing? How do I write myself into the text without being self-absorbed or unduly narcissistic? How can I write so that others' "voices" are not only heard but listened to? For whom should we write? What consequences does our work have for the people we study, and what are my ethical responsibilities for those consequences? These are not only my personal issues;

they are ones that engage (enrage) both feminist and postmodernist researchers.

(Richardson 1997, p.106)

Where my positions situate me in the social world and in the field of golf, my selves are constructed in and through these positions and situations. These selves are far from stable, explicit and secure, and instead overlap and coexist, and the dynamics between my selves shifts and changes where an essential self is unattainable. Although internal, this monologue of selves is socially constituted, practised and inhabited. Similarly, my identity as constructed by my selves and others never reaches any fixed manifestation, but instead is constantly repeated through interactions, my internal monologue and repetition of self. Thus, my positions, selves and identities are inseparable, and are mutually constituted in the field.

8.3.3. Knowledge, truth and voice

As detailed in Chapter four, in exploring the contradictory and fragmented manifestation of my positions, selves and identities, I recognise the conflict between subjectivity and objectivity, where truth is context dependent, knowledge can never be contextualised from a fully objective sphere and where I advocate multiple positions from which to know (Nilges 2001; Richardson 2000; Vickers 2010). The political dimensions of autoethnography shape the construction of knowledge, where the researcher is a product of the social context. Where autoethnographers present their values and posit their own voices in highly personalised accounts they claim experiential authority, and in doing so risk the potential domination, suppression and replacement of the voices and interests of others. Although this perspective is problematic for the critical researcher, my identity in the field was co-constructed by and bound together with those around me, e.g. my colleagues in JGI, my golf coach and the golf club volunteers, and my representations are filled with the voices of other people. Thus like Denison (2006) and Maydell (2010), through eliciting a variety of expressions and reflections of self, this

chapter endeavours to be polyvocal. Although I tell the data from my point of view, like Jones (2006) and Tsang (2000) I consider my experience to be of public concern, particularly in the way it presents the everyday conflicts and contradictions of golf club culture. The representation in this chapter should enable others to read the culture through my detailed experience within it. This study is also about others, my interactions with them, my perceptions of them and how I define myself in relation to them. It is important to acknowledge that although I afford myself the possibility of being read from multiple positions, the participants in this chapter are not given this opportunity. Thus any representation of others and others' realities in this data is not finite. Similarly, although my journal entries are written at a specific point in time, this representation is also far from finished and the manifestation of my selves is constantly ongoing.

8.4. ME, THEM AND US

In line with reflexivity and the negotiation of self, Coffey (1999) contends that fieldwork is a social setting, inhabited by embodied, emotional, physical selves, helping to shape, challenge, reproduce, maintain, reconstruct and represent ourselves and the selves of others. As detailed in Chapter four, I began to record my own personal journal entries after a year in the field (from June 2008). These observations comprise lengthy reflections from particular settings in the field including tournaments, meetings, research forums and coaching sessions, while personal entries were also recorded during data collection at Ardloch and Riverside (phases two and three). Most of these data collection opportunities took place in golf club settings, and thus it was not possible to isolate any of my roles with a particular golf context in the field. Those mentioned in the observations include golf club members, junior golfers, club volunteers, caddies, coaches, officials, JGI colleagues, school teachers, family and friends. In presenting these observations I have made important choices in the analysis process that carry my own interpretations of the culture and define the possibilities of the

readers' interpretations. The journal entries I include are presented in four vignettes, each of which highlights my contradicting and compromising reality in the field. Each vignette is contextualised to indicate their prevalence in the wider examination of my positionality and selves.

The vignettes presented speak through the dilemma of my multiple voices following particular scenarios, while others separate my positions, indicating the contrasting power relations of each position I occupied in the field. The chronological order of each individual vignette also outlines my drop out from high performance golf, my induction, acceptance and inclusion at Riverside, my growth as a golf development officer and researcher, and concludes with my reestablishment in high performance golf as Irish team captain. This sequence gives an insight into the changing nature of my selves and my reality over the past four years. Similar to the story presentation in Chapter six, the entries also highlight how female participation in the field is embedded in power relations, and while the overwhelming perspective demonstrates female subordination, my positions offer the opportunity to oppose these oppressive relations. It is also important to acknowledge the apparent absence of wider categories of ethnicity and disability in the vignettes.

8.4.1. Championship, hardship and membership

17th August 2007 – World Student Games, Bangkok, Thailand

Having played within myself all week I was confident heading into today's final round. At the start of the day we had a nine shot lead over several teams, including Great Britain, Italy and Mexico, and they had all the work to do. I started well, really well, and at two under par after eight holes I was coasting, as were the Irish contingent of athletes and supporters. On the ninth hole my mind drifted back home, the coverage in the national media and the expectations of the union, my coach and my family. There began my capitulation, starting with a double bogey and followed by eight

bogeys in a row. We took the silver medal, finishing one shot behind Mexico.

My distraction from competitive golf this week has been the venue, an exclusive golf resort thirty minutes from Bangkok. With irregular bus transfers from where we stayed at the university, we often arrived at the golf course at 6am, moaning the 4:30am start and the long wait until our tee times. I also grumbled about the overcrowded practice facilities, the sweltering humidity, the impossible to read grain on the greens and my boredom with rice and salad. It almost went unnoticed that while we played, countless uniformed women lurked in the trees, only coming out to repair our divots. While I sweated over drives and putts, tens of children were bundled into a school bus and transported to the golf course each day to dig, lift, carry and fill. My day on the golf course, my groans and disappointment could not have been more dissimilar to theirs.

2nd July 2009 – At an away junior golf competition with Ardloch golf club, Ireland

In an effort to further develop relations and trust with the Ardloch junior girls, their parents and mentors, I accompanied them to a junior event today. Children aged 5-12 competed on a shortened golf course at an illustrious golf resort. I arrived at the clubhouse, which is located behind a huge hotel and leisure complex to see a very large conspicuous gold-plated sign inside the main door saying “NO CHILDREN under 12 years of age”. Ironic, I thought, given that there were about one hundred 5-12 year olds and their parents in the vicinity. On the golf course I witnessed focused and stressed golfing miniature adults, closely followed by their adult parents. Officials and parents recognised and approached me, enquiring about my golf, the season, the upcoming European Championships, the usual stuff. The question I hadn't prepared for was what was my relationship with Ardloch. I told anyone who asked that I was helping the club with their junior section.

4th September 2009 – Initial visit to Riverside golf club, Ireland

I wore my neat jeans, newest flats, and a smart top, glasses and primed my straight hair, bronzer, eye shadow and mascara. I waited for him to ask me the question. Meanwhile he asked about my golf, where in the world I've played, who's my coach, when my next tournament was. I feigned enthusiasm, but I was nervous, and consigned to the improbability of using Riverside as a research setting. The man at the local petrol pump told me it costs €15,000 to get into this golf club, that's before the annual fee.

“So, Niamh, what has you here?”

Minutes later I tried not to let him see the shock on my face when he signed the consent forms, dismissing any need for a meeting about my new role in this exclusive setting. On the 27th October 2009 I received the following email from him:

Niamh

Just to let you know that I have processed your membership and I am delighted to welcome you to the Club. There will be no fee payable in respect of your subscription for 2010.

If I can be of any assistance to you, please feel free to contact me.

Regards

*John O'Neill
General Manager
Riverside Golf Club*

The tensions between my position as an elite golfer and researcher took seed in Bangkok. Our silver medal on a world stage brought much applause from our clubs, coaches, friends and families, and, more significantly the golf union. Although losing the gold was initially difficult to take, as outlined in the prologue, my performance that week cemented my place on the national team that year, bringing training, grants and international trips for years to come. Also at that time I was about to embark on a sociological inspection of golf

practices, and a part time golf development position, completely unaware of the contradictions and complexity this would bring.

Almost two years later I began formal ethnography firstly as a pilot with Ardloch (phase three), and secondly on a long-term basis with Riverside (phase four). The journal entries above demonstrate my identification in the field primarily as a high performance golfer. Both golf clubs articulated my position as a golfer or junior coach, and rarely enquired about my research. The relaxed approach of the general manager to my access at Riverside initiated what became my near silent researcher profile at the club, and, although at the request of Ardloch I spoke about my findings at the junior club AGM, Riverside did not take up my offer to do so. From my own perspective, I was uncomfortable with the titles 'researcher' and 'ethnographer' and I preferred to avoid this identification and instead regularly engaged with my golfer/coach positions in the field. This perhaps demonstrates my tentative stance as a researcher in the field, and in some respects I felt as though I was conducting covert research. The only indication of potential disquiet about my research came from three of my junior girls' committee colleagues at Riverside, who enquired on a handful of occasions over the eighteen months about my research inquiry. For the most part, golf club officials and volunteers were more concerned with the day-to-day practical operation of the golf club, and, as signalled in later sections, overlooked my position as a researcher. I have considered that if the members and officials at Riverside were coherently aware of the full extent of my field endeavours, observations and journal entries, access might not have been so forthcoming.

8.4.2. Losing and leading

11th September 2009 – Home Internationals, Irvine golf club, Scotland

I feel horrific.

*For the first time in years my name is omitted from the day one **foursomes** matches. It was difficult to take, not hearing your name*

called out by the captain, the thrill of the early Wednesday morning start, the unity with a fellow team member. But I saw it coming. You can always tell in the practise rounds if it's not going to be your week; you're grouped with the most inexperienced players in practise rounds, and you're ignored by the captain, manager or coach, who choose to converse with you in small chit chat rather than team tactics. If that's the case you're destined for the morning off. It didn't feel good, particularly so when my parents and my JGI boss had travelled.

I got my token chance that afternoon, and though I played well against the Scottish number one, I crumbled at the finish. My head was in smithereens after a mentally gruelling season. Dagers of thoughts occupied my mind, prodded my confidence and shred it to bits. Is my clubface open? How is my hip rotation? Is it my neck injury? Has anyone noticed my demise? When I lost I was dead, out of it, I had nothing left. I wasn't played for the rest of the week and I wasn't there; me and my game were missing, on vacation with perilous thoughts. For the first time in my sporting career I blamed someone else, the captain, a sure sign of my absence. A drunken Friday night did little to quell my angst. I came to on Saturday at Edinburgh airport, when I asked the captain why she didn't play me for the rest of the week. She had no answers.

*9th April 2011 – Irish Under 18 Girls **Strokeplay**, Knightsbrook golf club, Ireland*

Out on the course between the 9th and 18th holes I met two selectors, two regional chairpersons and the president of the union, all armed with a selection of glasses, timesheets, scores, binoculars and of course, a running commentary. I get congratulations on my new appointment, but I refuse to engage in the sound bites on these girls' extraordinary talents and busy lives, and decline the opportunity to wax lyrical about their powerful swings and short game skills. Near the clubhouse I observe a medley of emotions on a variety of young faces and those of their families; anxiety, fear, joy, relief, stress,

frustration, exhaustion. Kisses, hugs, excuses, tears, regrets, smiles, debates. Talk of the twins. While the select elite girl golfers in Ireland hit the shots on the course, as their captain, I call the shots off it.

7th May 2011 – Interclub competition, venue undisclosed, Ireland

“On the tee, representing Riverside, Niamh Kitching”

In the teaming rain I step up, ignoring the applause, the hoist of umbrellas and the buzzing and swarming around the first tee. Fifty minutes ago I was in my bedroom, tapering a paper on my positioning in the research. Now I'm in the pouring rain entering another battle, this time with a sixteen-year-old girl who's vying for a place on my Irish team. It takes until the back nine and an intervention by my caddy and last year's lady captain for me to realise who I am today, a member of Riverside. I need to beat this contender. Riverside erupts when I win on the 18th green.

From the journal extracts above it became apparent that the more I was embedded as a researcher in the field, the sooner came my demise as a golfer. Following my medal winning performance in Bangkok I continued my selection on the national high performance squad, various Irish teams and represented Ireland on five continents. Throughout 2008 I was the number one ranked golfer in the country, making this my most successful competitive phase (see Appendix E). Contrasting with the 2007 event, to an extent the 2009 Home Internationals marked my disillusion with my game. Incidentally that tournament took place one week after I achieved access to Riverside. In the two years from 2009 to 2011 I reconnected with regional and club golf and developed a renewed focus on my research and work as a golf development officer. Much like Douglas' (2008d) research on the lives of professional female golfers, I found my drop out from elite level golf extremely trying, particularly where the field continued to identify me as a golfer and rarely took my other roles in the field into account. Tsang (2000) uses

Shogun's (1999) argument to show that the hybridity of identity disrupts the normalising project of modern high performance sport.

In 2011, I returned to high performance golf, where I was invited to take on a new role, as captain of the Irish girls' (under eighteen years) team. In a position that contrasted entirely with my role as 'Girls N Golf' coordinator, I faced the challenging prospect of reflection on the selection of the country's top under eighteen golfers, satisfying eight individual driven personalities, whilst readying them for performance in international competition. My ambivalence towards the officials standing on the hill at Knightsbrook developed during my time as a researcher and golf development officer in the field, where I regularly met 'Mikes'. Union emphasis on early specialisation and talent identification was also a cause of concern, and in my role as Irish team captain I used caution in dealing with team members' parents. Whilst consoling and encouraging my panel of players, I faced them in club and regional tournaments, circumstances that were challenging. My commitment to and involvement at Riverside, the club that identified me as an elite golfer, is evident from the third journal entry, where I was determined to beat my opponent, who later made the Irish girls' team.

8.4.3. Gaining support?

7th May 2009 – 'Girls N Golf' Gala day, North Dublin, Ireland

With the help of fifteen club volunteers, six schoolteachers and a couple of bus drivers I dispatched ninety novice girls onto the golf course. 90 school uniforms, hoodies and tracksuit bottoms, a spectrum of neon and pink, countless ipods several wads of chewing gum and an odd golf stick. 90 girls with short hair, long hair, bleached hair, pink hair. Black, white and everything in between. A good day's work.

29th May 2009 – St. Rule Trophy, St. Andrews

Following yet another frustrating round I sat on the sun-kissed balcony of the Links clubhouse at St. Andrews, waiting for my

teammates to trample up the eighteenth. While there I spotted a young boy on the expansive putting green, no more than three and a half feet high, gripping a tiny putter. He was accompanied by two burly, noticeably American men who also practised their putting. I watched him putting for a while, before consigning myself to the green, unable to shake the memories of my recent three-putt disease. Soon bored and frustrated, I asked the American dot if he would like a putting challenge. "Yes Mam", said Scott, aged six, and from Dallas, Texas, USA. He had been playing in the US Kids World Golf Championship (Europe) in Edinburgh in the age seven and under category. He shot scores of thirty-eight, thirty-seven and thirty-nine strokes for 9 holes, and when compared with his high finish in the American equivalent, needless to say he was nonplussed. In fact he seemed nonplussed at most things, aside from his putter. His baseball cap overshadowed his face and I never got a glimpse of his eyes, which only had time for the ball and the hole. He beat me over nine holes.

27th October 2010 – Meeting with the ILGU, Dublin, Ireland

"You want to spend €5000 on keyrings? And Nintendo Wii games? Do you realise we're in a recession?"

I wanted to scream. I had spent the four weeks since our meeting last month orchestrating a three-year plan for developing girls' golf in Ireland. Rumour had it the union had forked out €250,000 on high performance golf, and here they are complaining about a tiny investment in development, and awareness? I knew I couldn't question her, or the union.

17th January 2011 – Winter School on research methods, UL, Ireland & Junior girls' registration evening, Riverside golf club, Ireland

Contrasting with the seemingly uncomfortable conversations I have with golfers, my PhD topic appears to be something that all non-golfers want to engage in. It seems that all non-golfers have a story about golf. We did the usual introduce yourself and your research at

the UL Winter School today. At lunchtime 'Gráinne' from the engineering faculty approached me and enquired about my research and my research setting, which I didn't share with her. Surprisingly, she told me that her mother was an associate member of Riverside, where she could only play competitions on Tuesdays, while men had the Saturday timesheet. At a younger age, Gráinne's mother attempted to get her junior membership but to no avail. When the Equality Act (2000) was initiated, Riverside was obliged to abolish associate membership and deem all females full members, something that Gráinne claimed was well overdue. However, to Gráinne's shock, her mother had no interest in becoming a full member, because of the little difference increased membership would bring. In an aside, she had heard a rumour some years ago that a club near the university was sacrificing its reputation by "letting taxi drivers in" for membership. Gráinne was visibly annoyed with golf, and had no intention of taking up the game.

Forty girls turned up to register this evening, most of whom were members, or had brothers, parents or grandparents as members. Two girls had no family links in Riverside and because their membership applications were unlikely to be accepted by the club, the lady captain deemed them ineligible for the coaching programme. Fuming inside, I argued for including the two girls. However, as someone who did not pay the extortionate membership entrance fee or any annual fee at Riverside, I didn't push it. I wondered what the lady captain might have said to the girls' parents – they're just not the calibre the golf club are looking for?

As a high performance golfer the ILGU supported my game for several years and afforded me life opportunities and travel, which I am eternally grateful for. As team captain of the under eighteen Irish girls' team I liaised closely with the union in preparation for the 2011 European Girls Championship and Home Internationals, while most of my team receives high performance support from the national golf union. Conflictingly, in my role as a golf development officer I

struggle to communicate the potential of 'Girls N Golf' and contest for increased resources for this grassroots development of girls' golf, at the expense of high performance golf. My detachment from my own elite golf, and my investment in my work as a golf development officer signalled a shift in my positioning, even though elite golf came back within my radar in my role as Irish captain. With girls' participation in golf in Ireland so low, I was determined to make an impact, and, I presented the National Junior Golf Questionnaire to ILGU audiences, and spoke at JGI and 'Girls N Golf' events and meetings nationwide encouraging golf clubs to take up more girls. Whilst I strived to introduce thousands of girls to golf, increase teenage girls' awareness of the game and improve the structures to allow for this development, as a member of Riverside I was complicit with exclusionary member selection, and as team captain for Ireland and Riverside, I include and exclude the country's elite early specialisers. Talking to the non-golfer at the UL Winter School brought home to me the normalised practices golf clubs, and the failure to recognise the mechanisms with which minority participants are discriminated against. In fact only in my discussion with non-golfers do incidents of exclusion from golf arise. While this investigation attends to participants' experiences, it does not include the communities that are marginalised from participation and may never have the opportunity to play.

8.4.4. Honour

18th June 2010 – Fourball at Grangepoint golf club, Ireland

*After presenting the 'Girls N Golf' programme to the **PEPAYS** research forum today I rushed to the seaside links at Grangepoint, where my Riverside foursomes partner Majella had invited me to play in a team of four charity fundraising event. Majella and her husband Brian, both barristers, owned a summer house on the coast and were members at both Riverside and Grangepoint golf clubs. Rushing through Friday traffic to Grangepoint, I just about made my tee time. I scurried to the clubhouse and approached the check-in desk with*

about €55 in my wallet. "Your team has already been paid for," the man declared. "Do you mind me asking how much it costs?" I asked. "€450 per team." On the first tee Majella handed me a goodie bag with enough bars, fruit, drinks, tees and golf balls for four rounds of golf. Along with their son Luke's exceptional play, Majella and Brian revelled in my golf, where I birdied my way around the course. At the 10th hole, a par 3, the charity offered mulligan shots for €50, and Majella and Brian bought four. At the 11th hole Majella pointed across the bay to her sister's summerhouse, her brother's next door abode, and, further back, a home bought by her and Brian via a tax break scheme. Preparing for a tournament the following day I declined their clubhouse invite for a three-course meal, and departed Grangepoint feeling like a VIP.

20th August 2010 – Celebration of girls' national title, Riverside golf club, Ireland

As is customary, speeches followed dinner. The club captain delivered an overwhelming synopsis of the day, heaping praise on the girls and calling me 'Captain Fantastic', even suggesting that Riverside's men's teams could benefit from my skills. In the club eight months to this point, I spoke of my pride and honour as captain/coach of the girls' team and gave my appreciation to the club for the welcome they gave me, suggesting that I might like to stay on for a second year. The following day the lady captain informed me that she had spoken to the general manager, and my honorary membership would continue through 2011. Feeling confident in my position in the club, the same day I enquired with a senior lady member about conducting research interviews with the ladies' committee about gender relations at Riverside. She cautioned this move, saying that the committee would be uncomfortable with this forum, and would likely be guarded about divulging any opinions about this topic. I chose not to approach the committee.

18th September 2010 – Phone call from Riverside team mate, Ireland

A keen follower and fan of my golf, Hillary rang me this evening to say that the Riverside senior foursomes team was getting a present for the team captain, as thanks for her work. Hillary mentioned they got her a card and something small, but me being a student, they didn't want to ask me to contribute. She rang to ask me if I was ok with this.

As stated earlier, although I came to the field from multiple positions, and although I recognised my identity in the field as constantly in a state of flux, the field allowed me one identity, that of high performance golfer. Interestingly, junior girl members at Riverside were the only group in the field who did not immediately identify me as an elite golfer, and instead they positioned me as a student, and related themselves to my appearance and relationships. From Riverside alone, the honorary membership I was awarded and my day out with Majella and her family, along with the reception I received in other settings, demonstrated how my golf knowledge, ability and achievements were legitimated by the field of golf, and my position as a high performance golfer succeeded all other positions I occupied to afford me deference and distinction. As a non-paying member, the roles I advanced to at Riverside as junior girls' coach and as member of the junior girls' committee would usually take established and paying members years to achieve. However, although I had acquired this cultural capital during my time at Riverside, I remained cautious about any formal data collection with senior club members, for the sake of sacrificing my position in the club.

At Grangepoint, Riverside, Ardloch and many of the settings I visited in the field I was often treated to meals and I rarely paid for sustenance. For years my neat and new golfing attire and equipment was sponsored, free, or reimbursed by my high performance grant or the vouchers I won at various amateur tournaments. My honorary membership at Riverside allowed me to network and socialise with the judiciary, doctors, bankers, and business people. I listened as

lady members discussed their shopping habits, foreign holidays and summer homes and was indelibly reminded that my monthly wage was a minute fraction of some members' returns. Although the club bestowed honorary membership to me two years running, as a financially stricken student I was regularly demarcated and positioned outside of the club, where I would never have been able to afford club membership, or compete with the wealth of members such as Majella. As alluded to in my journal entry on my initial visit to Riverside, I was extremely conscious of the impression I created in the golf club setting and on visiting a golf club for work, in competition or otherwise I embraced a feminine guise. From experience I inherently believed that my wearing of make up and neat clothes in golf club settings consolidated the capital I was afforded in the field, where both male and female members would afford me capital not only on the golf course but in the clubhouse environs. Hillary's phone call perhaps outlined how the Riverside club members identified me, poor in the economic capital associated with wealth, but rich in the cultural capital linked with golf ability and knowledge. This positioning demonstrates the futility and fickle nature of the insider or native researcher status, which is further elaborated in the following sections.

8.5. RESEARCH DILEMMAS

The authenticity, exposure and application of autoethnography are important methodological considerations for the reflexive researcher (Humphreys 2005). Using her investigative research on sexual abuse in sport, Brackenridge (1999) examines the challenges, strategies of personal survival and ways of managing her self/selves. Others have also discussed the everyday ethical and emotional tensions encountered in autoethnography (Trussell 2010; Wall 2006) and the insider/outsider dilemma (Maydell 2010). Presenting my positions, selves and identities creates obvious fears, discomforts and tensions in this research process. The incongruity of my roles in the field of golf was compounded by my position as a researcher, resulting in

ethical and moral dilemmas on the data I reported. Similar to Jones' (2006) insecurities about his coaching identity, I was self-conscious about my identity and my credibility as a researcher; I experienced discomfort with being overtly identified as a researcher, and as a result my researcher voice was often silenced. I was fearful about speaking my true opinion in some golf settings, and, as a result I was sometimes complicit with exclusionary practices (see Section 8.4.3). The data I chose to record and present was affected by these discomforts, and thus, had a bearing on the research agenda and research dissemination, while 'leaving the field' appears unlikely.

8.5.1. Implications for the research agenda

As indicated in Chapter three, in this reflexive project I am highly conscious of how my background, biases, values and assumptions have influenced the data I have collected, the progression of the study, the questions that are asked, and the findings I report. In her roles as athlete and researcher in a sports club, MacPhail (2004) discusses the balance between distance and involvement and the implications for the quality of data gathered. Although familiarity with the norms and expectations of the golf settings was an advantage in terms of developing relationships at Ardloch and Riverside, there remained a risk of failing to recognise discriminatory mechanisms and omitting taken for granted cultural meanings and motives. Similarly, although my positions and selves in the field are inherently authentic, this does not ensure my ability to comment accurately on the culture. These aspects of positionality can affect the quality of the data collection, and the resultant data presentations.

In researching power relations in golf club culture I witnessed many inequalities and exclusive and selective membership practices. At Ardloch and Riverside and in other golf settings, where I conducted an almost covert ethnography, I collected observations about those whom I trusted and those who trusted me. I am uneasy about making examples of these participants and settings and I have a particular fear of revealing them because of my well-known golf

profile in Ireland. Similarly, there are observations I collected in my liaison with the Irish golf unions and high profile players, which I feel I am unable to articulate, especially where any honest exposure of golf club culture has implications for my future positioning and employment, and could potentially sever my links with the field. My loyalty to these relationships and settings made it difficult to report on some of my derisive field observations, thus affecting my ability as a researcher and my research goals.

8.5.2. Research dissemination and leaving the field

Stemming from my collection of data, I had to make choices in the presentation and analysis of my observations, and prudent concerns have emerged in the dissemination of this investigation. Relating to Chapter seven, a journal reviewer commented that the habituses of the Riverside girl members would be better presented in more detailed, individual girl cases (email to author, 31st August 2011). While I had considered this approach as potentially more informative, I was uncomfortable in discussing the lives of individual girls in this detail and felt that the identities of the girls could be compromised. Also at Riverside, I collected many field observations on overall gender relations in the setting, but with the hesitancy of the ladies' committee to engage in interviews, omitting my outing with Majella, I chose not to report the data on adult members. Given the personalised nature of autoethnography, I have concerns about presenting myself in this research, or in any potential publications. As earlier alluded to, my well known profile in the field of golf in Ireland could negate the anonymisation and pseudonyms used, and reveal the identities of the settings and research participants involved.

While I have presented aspects of my research to Ardloch and to the golf community, through my link with JGI and my research goals I anticipate further dissemination to the board of JGI, to the GUI and ILGU, to golf clubs, and to the media. I will have to use caution when presenting the research, and appreciate how aspects of the research are relevant to particular audiences. While 'Shirts,

ties, prawns and associates' (Chapter six) is accessible to a wide audience, data from other chapters may have to be condensed. Although the rich historical and organisational aspects of golf in Ireland are conveyed in this investigation, given the derisive and critical sections I anticipate a defensive reaction from the golf community. In terms of exposure, the presentation of my multiple selves has implications for my positions and a potential future in the field. It is hoped, however, that in the future, more voices will emerge to articulate and further advance the transformation of golf club culture. However, at some point, some one would write about golf club culture in Ireland, and if someone in perceivably strong position in the field does not expose these realities, then what researcher will speak louder and be heard? I hope that I can leave the field with a legacy, and that my long term goal of transformation of golf club culture will be realised. This investigation has shaped and influenced my relationship with the field, and while I have all but dropped out as a golf player, it remains to be seen if I will endure as a golf employee, golf club member and coach.

This chapter asks the reader to deconstruct their perceived positionality in their respective (research) fields, and to make their own meaning as to how they operate around them. The journal entries not only demonstrate the manifestation of multiple roles, but how over time these selves and identities shift and change. During three years of data collection my priorities in the field have changed. I withdrew from my own high performance golf, championed the development of girls' golf, and returned to high performance golf as Irish team captain. The complexity of these multiple positions is enveloped in and through ambiguous power relationships in a legitimated golf club culture. My immersion in the field of golf and potential data every day of every week rendered golf settings unavoidable, and distancing myself from the field unassailable. My inherent link to the field compounded the difficulty with finding an end point to the research, particularly where I have developed, maintained and plan to sustain my relationship with Riverside.

March 2006

“Remind me Niamh, why did we pick golf?”

It wasn't difficult to convince my classmate that observing junior golf for our Youth Sport and Policy module would be enlightening. We travelled weekly to a golf facility twelve miles from the university, watching group coaching for children twelve years and under. Some were dropped off in their **SUVs**, boasting top of the range age-appropriate golf equipment, others came sharing one or two clubs. The confined driving bay area meant that the coach spent more time ordering the children to stay in line, than teaching golf technique. The most talented child in the group was four years old and out-performed those twice his age. His hot-tempered Dad was always nearby. Six visits and hundreds of golf shots later we presented our observations to our classmates, paying particular attention to participation themes.

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION

9.1. SUMMARY

While earlier chapters identified golf's exclusionary history and narrow participant profile, this investigation outlines how the practices, rules, norms, values and expectations of golf club institutions are conducive to cultural reproduction for younger participants. From Chapter five, practices that distance the activity of young people appear to be embedded and normalised in the field of golf clubs, where restricted access to playing times and competitions, behavioural expectations, limited access to membership and the glorification of talented junior members demonstrates the lack of esteem held by golf clubs for the overall integration of young participants. In legitimating the location, acquisition and distribution of symbolic capital, golf club institutions support cultural reproduction and preserve superiority and social distance. Capital attached to young golfers can be adopted, invested and traded by golf club committees and junior golf leaders, and young people who have no access to capital in the setting potentially struggle to survive in, and relate to the golf club environment. Gender differences in the distribution and acquisition of capital for young golfers manifested in several ways from club committee level to the junior members themselves, and from Chapter seven, an achievement culture encouraged girl members at Riverside to form hierarchies of capital distribution premised on hegemonic ideologies. Regardless of Riverside girl members' subversion of some club practices, the majority of participants complied with the prevailing patriarchy, power relations and gender typology in the golf club and potentially reinforced, rather than challenged gender relations. The evidence from Chapters five and seven suggests the need for a revision of junior golf practice in golf clubs to become more inclusive and facilitative of all participants and abilities.

In presenting alternative research perspectives, Chapters six and eight examined my positionality in the investigation. Through offering an open, embodied and varied account, 'Shirts, Ties, Prawns and Associates' sought to engage the reader in a critical depiction of

golf club culture. As outlined in Chapter eight, sharing data from the field was problematic, where I broached ethical and moral predicaments, including drop out from competitive golf, and the risk of my writing on my long-term involvement in golf. Although I presented my journal entries and vignettes as a way of relating the personal to the cultural, nearing the end of the investigation I am concerned about the wider presentation of data and the realistic prospect of revealing the identities of research settings and participants. Related to my optimistic long-term goal of transformation of golf club culture, through enlisting new perspectives on a legitimated institution, 'Shirts, ties, prawns and associates' is a suitable format for dissemination. As outlined in Chapter one, this investigation attempted to add to or extend three main areas and address three related research goals. The following sections discuss if and how these goals may have been realised.

9.1.1. Youth sport environments

From the outset, the literature identified how Irish golf unions promoted talent identification and early specialisation before attending to wider participation and growth of junior golf. The evidence presented in Chapters five and seven extended this perspective, where the achievement culture of golf prevailed through the pursuit of symbolic capital associated with 'talented golfers', and the promotion of norms and expectations around competency and ability at Riverside. My recognition as an elite golfer in the field in Chapter eight further outlined the symbolic capital associated with golf ability and achievement. As demonstrated in Chapters five and seven, the prioritisation of golfing success before active participation is likely to constrain, marginalise and discourage the involvement of lower ability golfers, of all ages. Further, the golf media's focus on early specialisers Rory McIlroy and the Maguire twins is likely to further distance the problematic nature of golf club practices from the agenda, and instead emphasise early specialisation and junior golf success. Where girls have been found to participate in sport and

physical activity for more social means, golf club facilities should create a welcoming social environment for girls, allow them opportunities to build social capital in the setting, offer possibility for alternative experiences in golf, whilst also facilitating development of their golf competency. Golf unions, committees and clubs should consider, embrace and promote individuality and active participation of young golfers in golf club settings.

This investigation has demonstrated the centrality of higher socio-economic classes not only in golf, but also in wider sports participation. It has been speculated that the economic recession in Ireland will open up golf to a wider audience, particularly where more proprietary owned clubs have gone into administration, urging price reduction and prompting marketing strategies to attract new golfers. Although cheaper green fees and memberships are available, incomes are declining, and although the high rate of unemployment has meant more free time for participation in sports clubs, Lunn and Layte (2011) suggest that this is just a short-term trend. While recruitment practices can change and access to golf club membership can become more readily available, given the level and forms of capital required in the golf club environment, people from lower social class backgrounds are unlikely to endure in the setting. As a significant communicator of golf practices and the capital associated with golf participation, televised golf can engage or discourage potential viewers. With the focus on inter-nation competition, events such as the Olympic Games could build on the success of the Ryder Cup and other team formats to attract a mass television audience. Other tournament formats outside of the predictable eighteen hole format could include 'mixed golf', matchplay competition and mini golf tournaments. In terms of participation, there are some relatively affordable and accessible alternatives to golf club membership, including driving ranges, crazy golf and par three courses, and with 125 affiliated courses and over 12,000 members nationwide, Ireland has the most developed pitch and putt structure in the world (Pitch & Putt Union 2011). The

National Golf Foundation (1999) in America have encouraged the building of pitch and putt facilities in large parks or underdeveloped property as a means of bringing golf to children in urban areas of America. Pitch and putt has also been identified by 'Girls N Golf' as an elementary means of introducing participants to golf, whilst increasing confidence in their golf skills (see Appendix D). With a multiple of golf formats and facilities readily available in the local community, golf governing bodies should promote and encourage affordable and accessible alternatives to mainstream golf.

9.1.2. Theoretical developments

As evidenced in Chapters five and seven, the forms of capital provide a useful framework for understanding divisions, hierarchies and practices in the field of golf clubs. Bourdieu reminds us of the centrality of socio-economic status in the analysis of some sports clubs, where golf is not only exclusionary but also inclusionary. The level, distribution and nature of symbolic capital reflect power relations within golf clubs and the cultural domination that golf club committees assume in the field, while the practices sanctioned by these committees nurture processes of symbolic violence that include and exclude. Although the identities and subjectivities of young people are constantly in a state of flux, habitus remains a particularly suitable concept for examining the effect of sport and physical activity institutions on the embodiment and activity preferences of young people. Evidence from Chapter seven suggests that adult leaders promote habituated discourses among young participants, endorsing symbolic domination and perpetuating symbolic power relations. While Bourdieu's work has been criticised as structuring, the use of postmodernism in this investigation has provided a less composite perspective of golf club culture, particularly where Chapters six and eight presented the infrequent exorbitant capital of a young female (me) in the golf club setting, while my feminist positioning presents a focus on girl participants, one of the silenced and unaccounted for groups in golf club

environments. Further, my multiple roles in the field signalled the fragmented and dynamic nature of the otherwise traditional and conventional field of golf. Combining various philosophical and theoretical standpoints in this investigation has contributed to an alternative articulation of golf club culture.

9.1.3. Alternative qualitative research

Earlier chapters in this investigation identified the historically conceived and exclusively defined everyday practices of golf clubs. These processes have become so institutionalised and normalised that it appears they are no longer recognisable in some respects. As a researcher-participant embedded and involved in the field, I had to use caution in presenting my orientation towards this culture in golf clubs, particularly where those deflecting from the norms of golf club practice are often marginalised. Using fiction and personal experience in Chapters six and eight, I found a medium through which I could represent golf club culture, striving to make abnormal the normal, highlighting patently obvious exclusionary actions in a format that may resonate with the reader. In an aside, combining viewpoints from both sports development and high performance sport through autoethnography is another differentiation from the habitual. Dissemination of these alternative depictions may encourage more people to realise their positions and roles in their respective fields, and encourage emancipatory research.

9.2. THE FUTURE

This investigation has prompted a number of avenues of further research inquiry. Golf in Ireland is wholly implicated through the nexus of social and cultural patterns of Irish society, particularly where gender and social class disparities are concerned. As identified in section 9.1.2, the theoretical framework provided in this investigation may be a useful basis through which to investigate wider cultures of inequality in Irish society. Increased attention could be afforded to a more critical examination of the history of golf and

golf structures in Ireland, delving perhaps into primary document and artefact analysis. Following Delaney and Fahey's (2005) assertion about golf's contribution to the social dimension of sport in Ireland (see Chapter one), it would be interesting and informative to ascertain golf's contribution to social capital, particularly given the prologue and epilogue accounts. Given the forthcoming inception of golf into the 2016 Olympic games and the politics of representation of athletes from Northern Ireland, there may be potential to investigate golf and national identity in both jurisdictions of Ireland. As outlined in section 3.3.1, an examination of the emergence of Asian golfers in the world of professional golf could further the limited research available on race and ethnicity in golfing environments, while there is potential for examining televised golf as a means of translating golf practices. Following the narrative told in chapter six, rather than presenting the data from an adult's point of view, perhaps the fictionalised piece presented from these settings could be told wholly from a junior golfer's perspective. As indicated in Chapter seven, with the wealth of field observations I collected on the lives of both pre and post adolescent girls at Riverside, there is potential to examine the effect of societal norms and expectations of their bodies on their sport, physical activity and academic pursuits. Following Merriam *et al.* (2001), there is scope to examine in further detail how the capital I accumulated from my positioning in the field shaped and influenced the data I collected in the investigation. Although difficult to pursue, as in section 8.4.3, it may be worthwhile to record the perspectives and experiences of non-golfers, or those who find themselves distanced from golf club settings. These examples provide a flavour for the numerous potential avenues of further research.

Although transformation of golf club culture as a long-term research goal was aspirational in the context of this investigation, some of the work I have conducted over the past four years could action this ambition. While I have presented data from Chapters five, six and eight to academic audiences, my research presentations to non-academic audiences include up to 700 female golf club

members at ILGU meetings in year one (phase one), the inaugural junior golf AGM at Ardloch in year two (phase three) and the golf development managers of Britain and Ireland in year three (phase two). Future dissemination of my work in the meaningful alternative formats mentioned above has potential to ignite new lines of thinking, and may encourage the emancipation or inclusion of minority participants in sport. In another means of data presentation, I have ambitions to write a book about golf club culture in Ireland, an alternative to the customary celebration of Ireland's majestic golf courses and wonderful players. My position in JGI not only allows me access to golf audiences, but gives me the opportunity to effect practice, or at least encourage those in positions of power to influence practice. Alternatively, I have also considered that should my future not involve employment in golf, I would consider promoting my values through initiation of a small, accessible, affordable golf facility. These examples demonstrate how an inclusionary and equitable golf club culture might be a more realistic ambition than earlier considered.

While this investigation predominantly presents golf club culture in a disparaging light, acknowledging the role of history and tradition in forming and shaping golf club practice, it is important to separate the people from the 'practice'. During my time in the field I became acquainted with hundreds of people who devote their energy to golf, and who are inherently interested in developing and progressing junior golf. This project is dedicated to these people, to the young people, members, parents and officials I met along the way, some of whom have become close friends, implicating my dilemma as a researcher. The conflicts and resentments I have experienced in attempting to expand the understanding of golf and in presenting this work have manifested both through the selection of my area of study and, the timing of my research during the peaks and troughs of my golf playing career. Douglas and Carless (2008a, p.5) comment:

Within sport culture, it is often assumed that everyone involved - the media, commentators and professional sportspeople - "love" what they do for a living. To be accepted in this culture, one must appear to be authentic. If one does not "love" the culture of elite sport, it is necessary to perform passion and authenticity for those who are watching and listening.

Combining my many roles in the field has resulted in a compromise of my own golf performance at national and international level, while I have simultaneously grown distant from my interest in the field. While Douglas and Carless (2008a) suggest that one must appear authentic in providing the fervour for those consuming sport, concurrently one must love and enjoy the pursuit of sport in order to feel authentic, and to continue involvement. While my journey in golf is far from over, and while I have many more perilous pitfalls and potentialities to address, it will be some time before I experience the authenticity that started me on this research journey in September 2007.

EPILOGUE

September 2011.

The social and political landscape in Ireland has experienced significant changes in recent years, attributed to the country's rapidly changing economic circumstances. Global and local recessions have left a trail of unemployment and the highest emigration levels since 1989 (Central Statistics Office 2010a; Central Statistics Office 2010b). The inadequately regulated banking system has undergone transformation and no sector has been unaffected by the country's political and economic turmoil. Before its collapse and subsequent nationalisation by the Irish government with international assistance, Anglo-Irish bank, had spent hundreds of thousands of euros on golf days, golf balls, umbrellas and apparel for clients. Revelations of Taoiseach Brian Cowen's golf course relations with then Anglo-Irish chief Sean Fitzpatrick spurred the Irish prime minister's resignation in January 2011. **NAMA** has usurped numerous recently constructed golf courses, including Ireland's Solheim Cup venue, Killeen Castle. In spite of major victories for three Northern Irish men at Pebble Beach, the Congressional and Sandwich, golf in Ireland is at a low ebb.

The bubble has also burst in my own golf. My clubs have been sheltered away for a number of months now and I've hit two golf shots since July, a major contrast from the thousands I would hit in any given week a couple of years ago.

As national coordinator of Girls N Golf for JGI I have organised the introduction of over 5000 girls to golf, a tiny fraction of whom go on to become golf club members. At the PGA National (renamed Palmerstown Stud) an Bord Pleanála overruled Kildare County Council's planning approval on the site for a hotel with 170 bedrooms (on the vast practise area), 46 golf lodges, 105 town house and eight retail units (Kildare Planner 2011). Palmerstown Stud is now also in NAMA and JGI has moved its base to the GUI headquarters in Carton House, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

Having submitted my research thesis I will now begin a new episode working as a coaching development officer for the PGA and England Golf.

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APPENDICES



National Junior Golf Survey

NOTE: If the golf club DOES NOT TAKE junior members please tick here and return the questionnaire in the Stamped Addressed Envelope

Position of club official filling out survey

County in which golf club is located

Section A Membership

1. How does the golf club identify a junior member? *(Please tick one)*

Under 18 years on January 1 st	<input type="checkbox"/>
Under 21 years on January 1 st	<input type="checkbox"/>
Under 25 years on January 1 st	<input type="checkbox"/>
Still in Full Time Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other <i>(Please specify):</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How many members in the golf club:

Total Junior Total
 Junior Boys Junior Girls

3. How many of these junior golfers are active members (i.e. attend coaching/play in competition(s)/play on the course)?

Junior Boys Junior Girls

4. Is there a limit on the total number of junior memberships in the golf club?

Y N

If **yes** what is this limit?

Junior Boys Junior Girls

5. Does the golf club **currently** have membership vacancies for juniors?

Y N

6. Is there a minimum age at which juniors can join the golf club?

If **yes** what is this age?

Boys yrs Girls yrs

7. Please complete the following annual fee details *(Indicating currency € or £)*

Age of Junior	Male fee	Female fee
8 Years or under	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
12 Years	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
15 Years	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
18 Years	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
21 Years	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please specify other conditions on junior fees, e.g. family members, fee reductions, special term memberships:

8. Is there an entrance fee for junior membership? Y N

If yes what is this fee?

9. Does a junior member get automatic promotion to the next category of membership? Y N

10. Is there any financial concession given to junior members transferring to the next category of membership? Y N



11. Does the club host an induction courses/evening(s) for junior golfers? (e.g. etiquette, code of ethics, rules of golf)

12. Please comment on any other aspect of the club's junior membership policy:

Section B Junior Convenor & Committee

1. Does the club have a junior convenor(s)? (Please tick relevant)

No Junior Convenor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior Convenor (boys & girls)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior Convenor (boys only)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior Convenor (girls only)	<input type="checkbox"/>

If so what is his/her position in the club? (Please tick all relevant)

PGA Professional/PGA Assistant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Male club member	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female club member	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-member	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secretary/Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What is the common duration a junior convenor is in the post?

No set term	<input type="checkbox"/>	1-4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>	5+ years	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Does the club have a junior committee?

If **YES** how many of the following does it include?

Representatives	Number
PGA Professional/Assistant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Male member	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female member	<input type="checkbox"/>
Men's committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ladies' committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent representative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior representative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. How many general volunteers contribute to the junior golf section in the club?

Section C Coaching

1. Does the club have a resident PGA professional?
2. Does the club have a junior coaching programme?

If **YES** please answer (a) and (b) below:

(a) How often annually does the club offer coaching to junior members? (Please tick one)

1-4 Coaching Sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>
5-10 Coaching Sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>
11-19 Coaching Sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>
20+ Coaching Sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) Who coaches the junior section?

PGA Professional	<input type="checkbox"/>
PGA Assistant Professional	<input type="checkbox"/>
PGA Level 1 Coach	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior Golf Ireland Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior Convenor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Does the club offer junior coaching to non-members?



Section D Playing, Handicaps and Competition

1. Do juniors need to meet a certain playing standard before they can play on the course? Y N
2. Aside from allocated junior times, are there general restrictions on juniors regarding times when they cannot play on the course? Y N
3. How are junior handicaps recorded in the club? *(Please tick all relevant)*

CONGU Recommended Scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>
Separate System for Juniors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other <i>(please specify)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Which of the following competitions does the club host for juniors? *(Please tick all relevant)*

No competitions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior Boys & Girls	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior Boys only	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior Girls only	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. What competition formats are available to juniors? *(Please tick all relevant)*

Matchplay	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other <i>(please specify)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18 Holes	<input type="checkbox"/>		
9 Holes	<input type="checkbox"/>		
6 Holes or less	<input type="checkbox"/>		

6. What competition level do junior members compete at? *(Please tick all relevant)*

Competition Level	Boys	Girls
Club	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Can juniors enter all adult/main club competitions? Y N
If **yes** do any restrictions apply to juniors winning these competitions? Y N

Please comment on your answer to question 7:

Section E Child Welfare & Protection

1. Does the club have a child protection policy in place? Y N
2. Does the club implement a code of conduct for all those involved in junior golf (juniors, parents, club officials, etc.)? Y N
3. Does the club carry out Garda vetting on appropriate members of staff and/or volunteers? Y N
4. Has a representative from the club attended the Code of Ethics and Good Practice course for children in sport/golf*? Y N

*This course is run by the Irish Sports Council through the Local Sports Partnerships (sport) and Junior Golf Ireland (golf)

Section F Junior Golf Ireland

1. Previous to completing this questionnaire had you heard of Junior Golf Ireland? Y N

If **yes**, please state how *(Please tick all relevant)*

Club is a JGI Coaching Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
JGI Website	<input type="checkbox"/>
Posters/merchandising	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presence at European Tour events/National amateur events	<input type="checkbox"/>
JGI Regional Development Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other <i>(please state):</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>



2. Does the club run the Junior Golf Ireland programme? Y N

3. If you answered **NO** to the above, would the club be interested in getting involved? Y N

Section G Other

1. Does the golf club have links with local schools?

Type	Link (Y/N)	No. of schools
Primary		
Secondary		

2. Does the club have a dress code for juniors? Y N

3. Are there specific funds allocated to the junior section? Y N

4. Does the club partake in fundraising for the junior section? Y N

Section H Opinion

1. What is the general attitude of members towards junior members?

(1= Very Negative; 2= Negative; 3= Neutral; 4=Positive; 5= Very Positive)

1○ 2○ 3○ 4○ 5○

2. How would you rate the support of parents of junior members to the junior section?

(1= Totally Unsupportive; 2= Unsupportive; 3= Neutral; 4= Supportive; 5=Very Supportive)

1○ 2○ 3○ 4○ 5○

3. How would you rate the interest of the main club/parent committee in the junior section?

(1= Totally Disinterested; 2=Disinterested; 3=Neutral; 4=Interested; 5=Very Interested)

1○ 2○ 3○ 4○ 5○

4. How would you rate the success of the club's junior section to date?

(1= Very poor; 2=Poor; 3=Neutral; 4=Some Success; 5=Very Successful)

1○ 2○ 3○ 4○ 5○

Please comment on any topic related to this questionnaire:

This completes the questionnaire
Thank you for your time

If your club would be interested in participating in our next phase of research please tick here and write the club's name here:

Please return all surveys to:

Junior Golf Ireland
PGA National
Palmerstown House
Johnstown
Co. Kildare

By March 31st 2008



National Junior Golf Survey 2008 Results Summary

The response rate was 46%

7% of clubs have **no** junior members
107 is the average number of junior members in a club
 The average number of active boys is **46** and the average number of active girls is **10**

- **One third** of golf clubs have a **limit** on the number of juniors taken in
- **84%** of clubs currently have **vacancies** for junior members
- The average **minimum age** at which juniors can join is just under **10 years**
- The average **annual fee** for a junior member is **€148** in the Republic of Ireland and **£132** in Northern Ireland
- **Three quarters** of juniors get automatic promotion to the next category of membership
- **81%** of clubs hold induction evenings for junior members

The junior convenor is **twice as likely** to be a male member as a female member
69% of clubs have a junior committee
65% of clubs have a resident PGA professional
89% of clubs have a junior coaching programme
 Most clubs offer on average **5-10** coaching sessions to juniors annually

18 holes is the most popular competition format available to juniors but other formats include 9 holes, matchplay, scrambles, adult and child competitions, team events, short game competitions
63% of clubs say that juniors **can enter** all adult/main competitions

74% of clubs have a **child protection policy** in place
40% of clubs run the Junior Golf Ireland Programme

More detailed results are available from:
<http://www.juniorgolfireland.com/downloads.html>



UNIVERSITY of
LIMERICK

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

4th July 2008

Dear _____,

Thank you for completing and returning the National Junior Golf Survey on behalf of _____ Golf Club. This survey was sent to every club in Ireland and a snapshot of the results is enclosed. As stated previously, the survey is **phase 1** of research that I am carrying out in conjunction with the **University of Limerick**, the title of which is "Junior Golf in Ireland".

You may recall ticking a box at the end of the survey which confirmed the club's interest in partaking in phase 2 of the research. Of the 140 clubs to express their interest, a handful of clubs in the country have been selected based on specific criteria. _____ is one of these to be invited to take part.

Phase 2 involves a closer examination of junior golf in the club setting. As the principal investigator, I would travel to the club and collect data on all aspects of the club's junior golf programme. This includes:

- Obtaining copies of any literature the club has devised on junior golf policy
- Holding individual or group interviews with those involved (parents, children, junior officers, members, coaches, administrators)
- Recording observations (not whilst on site) at junior golf-related activities such as coaching sessions, meetings and competitions.

All information gathered would be held in the strictest confidence; the club would remain **anonymous**, and participants would be given pseudonyms. All participants would sign consent forms before participating.

In all, I would be at the club for **one day** in August or September of this year. In return, as a Junior Golf Ireland employee and current Irish international, I would facilitate the club in any way possible with coaching sessions, competitions and making progress with the junior section.

This project is the first junior sport-specific research of its kind in Ireland and will hold great significance for future golf development. If you are interested in participating, please propose this to the relevant club committee in _____. Should the club confirm their interest complete the enclosed consent form and return before July 25th.

Yours sincerely,

Niamh Kitching
Junior Golf Ireland



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OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Phase 2 Golf Club Consent Form

Title of Project: Junior Golf in Ireland: An Examination of Participation and Ethnography of Experiences

This phase of the project will involve interviews with those involved in junior golf and recording observations during junior golf activities at your golf club, e.g. meetings, coaching, competitions, and outings. The club's name and names of those participants will be anonymised and any information recorded will be held in the strictest confidence.

Should you agree to your golf club's participation in phase 2 of this study please sign the consent form below.

I consent to the involvement of _____ Golf Club in this research project.

Name: (please print): _____

Position: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION OF 'GIRLS N GOLF'

Niamh Kitching

Junior Golf Ireland, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland
University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland

KEY WORDS: equality, females, golf, junior, programme

Introduction

This paper reviews the participation of females, and particularly girls (aged eighteen and under) in golf in Ireland. Low engagement of young females in golf instigated the Girls N Golf initiative, which is run by the grassroots golf development organisation Junior Golf Ireland. The aim of the programme is to create awareness among girls about golf, to introduce girls to golf and to encourage girls to take up golf club membership. The ensuing piece reviews the Girls N Golf programme since its initiation in 2007, the progress made and challenges encountered.

Females in Golf

Research has shown that golf clubs are unequal and exclusionary institutions, where rules, policies and practices marginalise minority participants. The history of golf details participants as royals, nobles and "gentlemen golfers", while women were restricted to secret games involving little more than putting (Concannon 1995). Historically females have struggled to gain a presence in golf clubs, where some clubs refuse to admit female members, e.g. Augusta National, USA and Muirfield, Scotland (Haig-Muir 1998; Nylund 2003; Scarborough and Husain 2006; Senyard 1998; Song 2007). Gender discrimination is an ever-present characteristic of the golf club setting and research with both female professional and beginner golfers has shown that inequality is not confined by ability level (Crosset 1995; McGinnis and Gentry 2006; Shotton et al. 1998). Some claim the social construction of golf is normatively male, where widespread gender marking and the socialisation of young males into golf from a young age, support the maintenance and legitimisation of existing patriarchal practices and hierarchies (Haig-Muir 2004). As a result, female participants face tremendous barriers in the entry into traditionally male sports such as golf.

In terms of golf club membership in Ireland, gender equality has received much attention. Throughout the twentieth century, associate membership was a common amongst female golfers in mixed gender golf clubs in the Republic of Ireland. In 2000 the Equal Status Act was instituted, which denied private member clubs from instating gender specific terms and conditions on membership categories. Single gender golf clubs were not challenged until 2004, when the Equality Authority won a District Court case against Portmarnock golf club, a male only golf club. Following an appeal the case reached the Supreme Court, where the legal right for the golf club to restrict its membership to males was upheld (Coulter 2009; Song 2007). In line with a small provision in the Equal Status Act, Portmarnock Golf Club had changed its constitution to cater for the needs of a specific gender, i.e. males, rather than the needs of golfers. Equality legislation protecting the members of private clubs in England, Scotland and Wales was enforced in 2010, but no such provision has yet been made for Northern Ireland.

Girls and Sport in Ireland

Irish research has evidenced disparities in the relationship between social class, gender and sports participation, and early age socialisation is a definite precursor to later inequalities in sport. Evidence shows that more boys than girls play sport in Ireland, a greater variety of activities are offered to boys and resources are not evenly allocated between boys and girls (Connor 2003; De Roiste and Dineen 2005; Fahey et al. 2005; Woods et al. 2007; Woods et al. 2010). Reduced sporting opportunity for the disadvantaged and lower social classes begins in school, where the sporting needs of the higher social classes are more likely to be fulfilled (Connor 2003; Lunn 2007). Socialising agents such as family, peers, school and youth sport settings are crucial in the communication of dominant ideologies. Connor (2003) contends that girls are not socialised into certain sports as much as males. Lunn and Layte (2008) suggest that Irish females are not actually less interested in sport, rather, the different treatment of girls from a young age by socialising agents opens up a gender gap in sports participation which never closes. There is also much evidence of a high drop out rate of girls in team pursuits, particularly in secondary school, where they greatly value individual activities such as dance (De Roiste and Dineen 2005; Lunn and Layte 2008; Woods et al. 2010). As a highly social individual activity, golf is well positioned to attract high participation from girls.

Junior Golf in Ireland

Since its formal initiation in the late 1800s, golf in Ireland has been characterised by gender separated governing bodies, the Golfing Union of Ireland (GUI) and the Irish Ladies Golf Union (ILGU). An account of the history of the GUI describes how by the mid-1900s the organisation began to recognise the need to grow the game, and thus encouraged clubs to introduce and enlarge junior boys' membership (Menton 1991). This era in junior golf was focused on providing championships and coaching for high performing boy players, rather than encouraging a wider and younger playing audience. The 'Charter for Junior Golf' records that the number of junior members in Irish golf clubs increased by 48% between the years 1987 to 2000 (GUI et al. 2000). Following publication of the Charter, the ILGU, GUI and Professional Golfer's Association (PGA) began to realise the extent of what needed to be done to promote golf for children and they agreed to invest in a separate junior golf body to be named Junior Golf Ireland (JGI). JGI oversees the development of grassroots golf in Ireland, working primarily to introduce boys and girls to golf and to encourage pathways for children to become regular golfers (GUI et al. 2000).

The international achievements of the teenage twins, Lisa and Leona Maguire, have heralded much attention to girls' golf in Ireland. Given the twins' profile and the inaugural arrival of the Solheim Cup (female equivalent of Ryder Cup) to Ireland in 2011, high performance golf has become a prime focus in female golf. In spite of the subsequent increased awareness, the playing population of female golfers has fallen by 8% since 2008, owed primarily to the economic recession, while females make up just over one fifth of overall golf club members (ILGU 2011; Lunn and Layte 2009). ILGU programmes such as 'Women in Golf' have attempted to stem the decline in ladies membership. Akin to their adult counterparts the number of girls playing the game has always been much lower than that of boys, where girls make up less than 2% of overall golf club members in Ireland and since 2008 the number of junior girl members has dropped by 9% (ILGU 2011). In recognition of the low participation of girls in the sport,

in 2007 JGI set up a programme that aimed to encourage more girls to take up golf.

‘Girls N Golf’

Girls N Golf was developed with support from the Irish Sports Council’s Women in Sport (WIS) initiative. WIS aims to promote increased participation by females of all ages in sport, as players, officials, and coaches, and has granted over €100,000 to JGI since 2007 to run Girls N Golf. When originally established by JGI, Girls N Golf was a taster golf programme, the goal of which was to provide a novel and alternative physical activity outlet for teenage girls. However, given the decline in golf club membership Girls N Golf has become a more targeted programme, the primary aim of which is to increase the number of girls becoming golf club members. Since 2007 almost 2000 girls have participated in Girls N Golf, and funding changes have caused participation numbers to fluctuate annually, while a participant charge was introduced in 2010 (see Table 1). Feedback from the key stakeholders have initiated programme revisions, including a decrease of the target group age from 15-17 to 10-14, and a change in session times from during physical education class to outside of school time (see Table 1). In the initial years Girls N Golf was active only in the Republic of Ireland until 2010, when it was introduced to schools and golf clubs in Northern Ireland.

Table 1. Primary outcomes of Girls N Golf since 2007

	Number of schools/ golf clubs	Target group	Lesson time	Number of girl participants	Number of adults involved	Number of girl members
Year 1: 2008	15 schools/ 14 golf clubs	Transition year girls (Rep. of Ireland)	5 week programme During PE class	258	68	50
Year 2: 2009	31 schools/ 32 golf clubs	Transition year girls	6-8 week programme Directly after school	600	159	150
Year 3: 2010	33 schools/ 30 golf clubs	1 st & 2 nd year (Rep. of Ireland), Year 8/9 girls (N. Ireland)	10 week programme Directly after school	534 (charge introduced of €25/£25)	164	124
Year 4: 2011	21 schools/golf clubs + further support for 25 golf clubs	5 th & 6 th class, 1 st & 2 nd year (Rep. of Ireland), Year 8/9 girls (N. Ireland)	10 week programme After school/ weekends	400 (charge of €20/£20)	150	

Following participant recruitment at a JGI Awareness Day in a local primary or secondary school, up to twenty girls from the locality partake in a ten-week introduction to golf programme at the linked golf club. The

programme is designed by JGI and implemented on the ground by golf club volunteers and a PGA coach, and content includes basic tuition on a variety of golf skills such as putting, chipping and driving. Most sessions take place at the golf club, but groups can also avail of other local golf facilities such as a driving range, and pitch and putt or par three courses. A celebratory gala day marks the end of the programme. Junior Golf Ireland liaises with clubs to alleviate the cost of the girls' future golf participation, through equipment donations, reduced membership schemes and the 'Darren Clarke Scholarship', which entitles recipients to a 50% reduction in their club membership fee. Photos and case studies are available on the JGI website www.juniorgolfireland.com.

Evaluation

Every year a Girls N Golf evaluation is carried out to assess the participants' experiences of the programme and to gain feedback and suggestions from the adults involved, i.e. schoolteachers, golf club volunteers, PGA coaches and JGI regional development officers. Since 2008 over 2500 surveys have been distributed to the key stakeholders, whose suggestions have resulted in programme alterations (see Table 1). Tables 2-4 illustrate a sample of the participants' and adults' survey responses since 2008.

Table 2. Girl Participants' Experiences of Girls N Golf

Statement (most popular answer)	2008	2009	2010
I enjoyed this programme (strongly agree)	75%	64%	67%
I learned from this programme (strongly agree)	72%	60%	73%
I will play golf regularly after this programme (not sure)	30%	35%	38%

Table 3. Girl Participants' Favourite Aspects of Girls N Golf

Rank	2009	2010
1	Learning how to play golf/ trying something new	Spending time with friends
2	Gala Day	Gala Day
3	Playing on the golf course	Learning how to play golf
4	Driving range/hitting the golf ball	Learning a new skill
5	Making new friends	Playing on the golf course

Table 4. Selected Adult Stakeholder Comments

	School teachers	Golf Club Volunteers	PGA Coaches
2008	"The teaching methods used by the pro in our case were too boring and did not stimulate the girls. There was no progression in the teaching."	"15-17 years is too late to take up golf because from 17 years on their focus is on their academics and third level study. The project should be ran with 12-14 year olds who have less academic commitments."	"I did not spend too long on technique/tuition at any stage; instead I would teach, let them apply the information and then rotate this system a few times."
2009	"Some girls who would not have seen themselves as being	"Great way to introduce girls to golf without incurring the expense	"Team games were the girls' favourite aspects of the programme."

	particularly sporty really excelled and found something they could be good at.”	of joining a club or purchasing golf clubs. 1st years or maybe 2nd years are the best age to get them involved. Overall the ‘Girls N Golf’ programme is excellent.”	
2010	<p>“The golf club were totally inflexible when it came to providing the girls with a reduced membership fee.”</p> <p>“Running the programme should not be dependent on membership uptake – most of the girls are not ready for full membership. It is a taster programme and is valuable as a stepping stone into other opportunities. Membership is something for later.”</p>	<p>“I felt that some girls were very interested. But others really didn’t have any interest. We lost potential membership because the girls’ parents didn’t play. The pro and coordinator and school representative were excellent and couldn’t have encouraged them more. I think that if parents were more involved they might be more encouraging.”</p>	<p>“As usual the problem is going to arise when girls get handicaps and try to play in competitions. I don’t think they will be so welcome then. These are the real problems we have getting girls into golf.”</p> <p>“Girls N Golf was very enjoyable and changed my views on teaching skills to complete beginners!”</p>

Challenges

The majority of golf clubs in Ireland are owned by members or by private proprietors. Of the union-affiliated 430 (approximate) golf clubs, only five of these are public courses, where golf club membership is more accessible and the facility has a closer tie with the local community, e.g. Rathbane golf club, Limerick. Private members’ clubs implement policy and practice at the behest of their own members, and may be less willing to support outside projects such as Girls N Golf. Membership waiting lists have become popular in some areas and according to the National Junior Golf Survey, 67% of golf clubs have a limit on the number of junior members enrolled, while 16% of clubs have no vacancies for junior members (Kitching 2008). Even though interest in golf may be potentially higher, JGI rarely implements Girls N Golf in private golf clubs in highly populated areas, because of their lack of opportunity to recruit new young people to golf in these clubs.

Due to funding limitations in year three a participant fee was introduced, which was subsequently decreased in year four. Although there were few concerns about the fee from the stakeholders, given the economic climate it is likely to discourage the participation of some, as cost has proved to be an inhibiting factor in sports participation (Lunn and Layte 2009). Some golf club volunteers have actually encouraged the introduction of a cost and the elimination of bus transfers from the school to the club, where participants and their parents invest in Girls N Golf and take more ownership in the sessions and in golf club integration and membership. However, although the Darren Clarke Scholarships and the equipment ‘bin’ initiative have attempted to alleviate the burden of costs associated with

continued golf participation, follow up costs for junior golfers remain high (Goodwin and Taylor 2004).

Tables 2-4 above demonstrate the key stakeholders' interest and investment in Girls N Golf. In spite of the positive feedback the programme has not satisfied its aims, as the percentage of girls who took golf club membership has gradually decreased each year at 33% in 2008 to 23% in 2010. As pointed out by the volunteer in Table 4, girls who may have no family members playing golf may not inherit sufficient cultural and social capital from their family and social networks to endure in the setting. In an examination of the embodied capital of cadet golfers, Zevenbergen et al. (2002) found that young golfers had to assimilate and attempt to learn the cultural system of golf or else face marginalisation. Results from the 2008 National Junior Golf Survey outline a controlled, restrictive and adult-oriented golf club environment for junior members, while current research by the author has evidenced the endorsement of specific junior member behaviour by adult members, and the attention given to talented and male junior members, both of which are not easily negotiated by girls who are new to the setting (Kitching 2008). One club, which ran Girls N Golf and had recruited twenty participants as golf club members, reported that two girls who shared a set of golf clubs were asked to leave the course. An older male member approached and told them it was forbidden to share clubs on the course. Neither girl returned to the golf club following this incident.

Future for Girls N Golf

Children derived from higher social classes in Ireland are more likely to participate in sport, while in terms of recruitment, sports clubs are vying for the attention of four to nine year olds, where 93% of primary school aged sports club members are recruited by the age of nine (Lunn 2007; Woods et al. 2010). Since its initiation in 2007, Girls N Golf has grown from a taster golf programme for girls to a targeted programme to attract new members to golf clubs. Participant recruitment has been changed to accommodate clubs that struggle to attract girl members, where recruitment age has decreased, and many of the target schools are single sex, where, in the past, all girls' schools have provided the largest number of club members from the programme. Rather than attracting a narrow homogeneous population of young, middle class girls to golf club membership, through sampling and awareness the future for Girls N Golf should be in providing girls of all ages, ethnicities, (dis)abilities and social classes an opportunity to try golf. To conclude, below is a comment from Sarah in Mallow, a participant in Girls N Golf 2010:

My favourite thing about golf is that it is so flexible. You can play it individually or with friends, competitively or just for fun, wherever and whenever you want and the only expectations of you are your own. I was introduced to a new sport that I could play with my friends, at my own pace and a sport that I actually really enjoy and will definitely keep on in the future.

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Kitching's ready for Westport challenge

<http://www.independent.ie/sport/golf/kitchings-ready-for-westport-challenge-1374878.html>

By Liam Kelly □ *Irish Independent*, Wednesday May 14 2008

ASK Niamh Kitching for the secret of her runaway success so far this season and you'll be disappointed.

"There's no secret; it's just down to hard work," she said.

Dash it! Is there no easy way to win at golf? Apparently not.

Kitching goes into the Lancome Irish Ladies Close Championship at Westport from Saturday to Wednesday with confidence high after a fine start to the 2008 campaign.

The 23-year-old Claremorris GC member has already won the Munster Championship, the Cork Scratch Cup and finished second in the Welsh Open stroke-play.

Now she looks forward to the Irish Close at Westport, a course she knows well.

"I'd basically be quite optimistic about it," she said. "I've played Westport a number of times and I think there'll be a lot of support for me from Claremorris, so I'm looking forward to giving it my best shot.

"I can only look after what's under my own control and not worry about anything any other players do, but I hope to perform as well as I can."

Currently based in Dublin, where she is combining a Masters in PE with working for Junior Golf Ireland, the Irish international gets plenty of chances to practice on the excellent facilities at PGA National.

"I've put a lot of time into my game this year with the help of my coach David Kearney," she said. "Prior to that I was studying full-time for my degree in Physical Education at University of Limerick, and I put a lot of focus into my studies.

"I'm enjoying the way everything has gone so far. Normally I'm the one who's the last to get into a team or to win titles, but it's going very differently at the moment."

Kitching won the Midland Girls in '03 and the Curragh Scratch Cup in '06. She played on the Irish U-18 team in '03, and was first capped at senior level in '06, retaining her place in '07, but she has elevated her

profile by her great start this year.

Her form adds interest to the Irish Close, in which Karen Delaney of Carlow will defend her title. Last year Kitching lost to Delaney in the Championship second round at Lahinch.

Delaney has completed her studies in the US, and has made a steady start to the season, finishing second in the Munster Championships and fourth at the Lahinch Scratch Cup.

Hot on their heels will be Karen's sister Tara and '04 Champion Deirdre Smith (Co Louth) who finished second in this year's Cork and Royal Co Down Scratch Cups.

Thirteen-year-old twin Leona Maguire (Slieve Russell), fresh from her successful defence of the Hermitage Scratch Cup, is sure to feature while sister Lisa will look to go one round further having lost out to Marian Riordan (Tipperary) on the final green in last year's semi-final.

The twins helped Loreto Cavan win the Suzuki Schools Championship recently. Lisa won the French U-18 Amateur title, while Leona reached the semi-final of the French U-21 Championship.

Other players keen to capture the coveted silverware will be internationals Maria Dunne (Skerries), Maura Morrin (The Curragh), Gillian O'Leary (Cork) and Sinead O'Sullivan (Galway).