The Experience and Performance of 'Appropriate Femininity' by Teenage Girls in Contemporary Ireland: Collision of Online and Offline Selves

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research project explored a two-folded issue: how teenage girls experienced what it meant to be a girl in contemporary Ireland while being subjected by the global and local discourses of neoliberalism and postfeminism. Literature highlights that dominant media discourses address contemporary young girls as the subject of capacity ('can-do' femininity): able and capable of exercising their rights and feminine power. However, throughout media advertising, female power is continuously presented as primarily deriving from the possession of a young fit sexual female body. On the other hand, Irish cultural scripts of femininity – chaste, caring and family orientated – inform young girls about how to function in Irish society.

To date, there have been few published studies that explored the experiences of teenage girls' lives in Ireland. However, there is a gap in knowledge in understanding how teenage girls construct their online as well as offline female identities in contemporary Ireland. Thus, the question arises: *how do teenage girls in Ireland navigate their online and offline identities when they are subjectified by local and global ethics of self-realisation?*

In-depth semi-structured qualitative consecutive interviews were employed (three times) to collect data from a sample of Transition Year (15-17 year-olds) teenage girls. The interviews followed a carnal hermeneutic approach to account for embodied teenage girls' experiences. Data were thematically analysed following an interpretivist paradigm and informed by a Foucauldian and feminist theoretical standpoint. The research findings indicate that on social media the patriarchal power transforms itself through the positive affirmations of 'Like', resulting in a disembodied form of power. While teenage girls employ the language of 'can-do' femininity when constructing their social media identity, that identity is tightly policed to contain it within the stereotypical boundaries of femininity.

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This thesis is a testament to all the wonderful people who were there for me all those years while conducting this research.

The thesis is dedicated in memory of Kajus.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that, except where duly acknowledged and referenced, this work is entirely my own and has not been submitted for any other degree or qualification at Waterford Institute of Technology, or any other Institution.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Say you'll remember me standing in a nice dress, staring at the sunset, babe. Red lips and rosy cheeks-say you'll see me again even if it's just in your wildest dreams – begs Taylor Swift.

All the single ladies! – invites to unite Beyoncé with her sex-power moves.

My engine's ready to explode – so start me up and watch me go – shut up and drive! – unapologetically declares Rihanna.

In a culture where exposed female bodies are said to stand for female empowerment, where a young girl is persuaded that in order to be noticed and popular she constantly needs to watch her appearance, where Facebook 'Likes' and SnapChat 'Stories' become the measure of one's existence, the question arises - how do teenage girls in Ireland make sense of the contemporary media culture, and as a result navigate their identities. Therefore, this study explores a two-folded issue: how teenage girls experience what it means to be a girl in contemporary Ireland while being subjected by the global and local discourses of neoliberalism and postfeminism. To explore teenage girls' lived experiences the study analyses the ways teenage girls construct their online and offline identities while being addressed by the current media discourses of 'appropriate' femininity. Subsequently, the teenage girls' lived offline experiences are anchored in the analysis of the teenage girls' social media identities. The term 'appropriate' femininity is deliberately used in inverted commas and intentionality not defined throughout the study since the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity is continuously shifting and adapting to particular contexts within which the teenage girls interact. It is important to study teenage girls' lived experiences since this stage of development is a vital stage for one's identity construction and uptake of gendered social roles. To enable girls to become critical of cultural configurations that sustain gender inequality, it is important to understand teenage girls' worldview and their subject positions.

My professional interest in this study has been influenced by the Kearney's (2015) theorisations on carnal hermeneutics, as well as Foucauldian feminist writings, such as Bordo (1999), Gill (2007) and McRobbie (2009). Kearney urges to pay attention to the 'knowing, sensing, touching' body, body as the key platform for understanding, and thus a key source when producing knowledge. In addition, the above mentioned feminist writers draw links between contemporary female subjectivities and the current media culture by illuminating the profound grip of postfeminist and neoliberalist rhetoric on women's lived experiences. My own life as a woman, to some degree, is constructed in relation to the current media messages: feeling guilty and ashamed of my body that does not meet the female images on screen while feeling frustrated and not able to articulate the anger towards the current

culture, as I should 'be grateful' for what we women have. Thus, while I embody and experience frustration, my lived experiences are not given a voice within the dominant cultural discourses.

This chapter will begin by outlining the aims and objectives of this research project. The rationale for undertaking the study will be followed by the contextual background that informs this study. Thereafter, choices and justifications will be given for the methodological approach employed to explore teenage girls' lived experiences on social media. The discussion will move to reasons why this study is important and how this study will contribute to knowledge. Lastly, the layout of the study will be outlined with a brief summary of each of the proceeding chapters.

Aims and Objectives of the study

This study aims to explore how teenage girls in Ireland negotiate contemporary media messages, particularly informed by the neoliberal and postfeminist rhetoric, about 'appropriate' femininity in the construction and presentation of their subjectivity offline and on social networking sites (SNSs). In essence, since this study utilises the Foucauldian feminist theoretical approach, it is concerned with the operation of power in the production of the female subject within the online and offline spaces. The Foucauldian feminist analysis focuses on exploring the way power operates through the production of knowledge about women that establishes norms and values within which individuals function and relate to each other (Cain, 1993). In order to explore how power operates in teenage girls' lives, the study employs a sensibility of postfeminist critique (Gill, 2007). Utilising postfeminist critique enables the researcher to analyse the girls' narratives about their agency, empowerment and liberation not at face value but identify the way invisible regulatory powers operate in girls' everyday lives. In addition, the study utilised carnal hermeneutics (Kearney, 2015) as a methodological tool to account for teenage girls' embodied 'knowing' and production of knowledge through their bodily interpretations. Thus, the study aimed to include teenage girls in knowledge production about their lived experiences not only at the level of discourse and language but also the girls' phenomenological 'being' in the world.

There are a number of the acclaimed theorists, such as Bordo (1999), Gill (2007), McRobbie (2009), Harris (2004), who follow Foucauldian feminist inquiry for their conceptualisations about the configurations of contemporary culture (in particular media culture). These conceptualisations provide a solid theoretical base for analysing the current representations of women in the media and its effect on women's lives. However, there is a lack of research conducted exploring whether such academic knowledge has any relevance to young girls and their identity expressions in their everyday life and their experiences on SNSs. Since social media is increasingly becoming a vital part of teenage

girls' lives and their identity (O'Neill and Dinh, 2015; O'Neill et al., 2011), it is crucial to understand how discourses of 'appropriate' femininity operate on social media space. Moreover, while there is a significant amount of research (Dobson, 2015; Vares and Jackson 2015; Jackson et al., 2012; Ringrose, 2011, 2010) conducted exploring young girls' engagement with social media and the effect it has on girls' identity, those studies do not answer how local and global culturally meaningful scripts of neoliberal and postfeminist femininity are intertwined with the girls' online identity. This study employed interpretivist paradigm that emphasises that meaning is not constructed in isolation, but rather is culturally specific (Gergen, 2015; Burr, 1995; Berger and Luckman, 1966), it was vital to explore the interlining relationship between local and global culture in the production of meaning of 'appropriate' femininity.

Since this study views subjectivity as being produced by multiple discourses, it focuses on exploring the three interlinking layers of teenage girls' lives: public and private online as well as offline life. Thus, to unravel the main aim of this study, the following research questions are posed:

1. *How teenage girls, within a peer group and privately, negotiate discourses of 'appropriate' femininity? What kind of discursive language do teenage girls employ to negotiate and define 'appropriate' femininity? How do local and global values interplay in teenage girls' negotiations of 'appropriate' femininity?*

2. *How do teenage girls navigate the construction of their subjectivity within the public and private online as well as offline spaces? How are the definitions of 'appropriate' femininity utilised by an individual teenage girl when she presents her identity on SNSs? What kind of regulatory regimes do structure teenage girls' online identity displays? What kind of ethics of self-realisation do teenage girls employ to construct their online identities?*

Overall, this study aims to examine the intersections between the contemporary regimes of late modernity, neoliberalism and postfeminism, which I will define further, and female subjectivity in Ireland. During this study, I refer to subjectivity or identity as a product of a dialectical relationship between the cultural norms and individual teenage girl's agency when negotiating those norms. There is a long-standing debate in the feminist literature about the 'docile' female bodies that lack agency (Madhock, 2010) as well as counterarguments of female empowerment and choice within the current cultural configurations (Duits and van Zoonen, 2006). Throughout this study, teenage girls are viewed as capable and able in negotiating cultural discourses. However, this does not necessarily mean that cultural discourses lose their regulatory powers over teenage girls' realities by informing them of

4

what 'appropriate' femininity should look like. Meanings of female beauty, femininity and female confidence might be experienced as an individual construct, but those meanings are provided and sustained by our culture and society (Gill, 2008a).

While there have been studies (Greene et al., 2010; O'Connor, 2008; Hyde and Howlett, 2004) conducted exploring teenage girls' lives in Ireland, there is a gap in research exploring how contemporary and predominantly celebratory regimes of postfeminism and neoliberalism construct a young girl's subjectivity while being online. International research (Dobson, 2015; Galdi et al., 2013; Halliwell et al., 2011; Ringrose, 2010; Currie et al., 2009; Elm, 2009; McNicholas et al., 2009; Tiggemann, 2005) shows that women, in particular, young girls, are increasingly regulated by media messages about the 'appropriate' female beauty and female confidence causing young girls to be dissatisfied with their bodies and present their bodies in a sexual manner as a sign of empowerment and their agency. At the same time, young girls are positioned to view themselves as powerful and thus abandon any feminist critique (Scharff 2012, 2011; Baker 2010; Baker 2008; Rich 2005).

Rationale

Social media seems to be a 'girls' world'. Current statistics (O'Neill and Dinh, 2015) show that teenage girls in Ireland are more likely to use SNSs (76% compared to 68% for boys); post videos, photos or music to share with others (29% compared to 7% for boys). Consequently, in Ireland teenage girls' lives seem to be much more mediated by new technologies and social networking sites in comparison to teenage boys. On social media teenage girls are subjected to present themselves as objects that need to be gazed, judged and evaluated (Gardner and Davis, 2013; Weber and Mitchell, 2008). At the same time, teenage girls are positioned to view themselves as a product and an object that needs modification and enhancement to display a unified authentic online identity. Studies show that on SNSs young girls post more 'selfies' with their heads being tilted as a sign of submissiveness and heterosexual appeal (Kapidzic and Herring, 2014; Selfiecity, 2014), and they mostly upload images of themselves looking attractive (Kapidzic and Herring, 2011; Peluchette and Karl, 2010). Such teenage girls' online practises, studies (Woods and Scott, 2016; Best, et al., 2014; Meier and Gray, 2014) show, cause higher levels of anxiety and depression among teenage girls, as well as increased weight dissatisfaction, drive for thinness and self-objectification. Furthermore, while online female practices require an extensive and intense emotional labour, participation on SNSs is constructed as celebratory new avenues that allow female expressions of individuality and liberation. Girls that are aware of the contradictory online values are positioned by the current dominant cultural discourses to remain silent. Such discourses identity girls as subjects of capacity (McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004): able and capable of managing any difficulties on their own and without any complaint.

Moreover, social media platforms becoming increasingly problematic spaces when it comes to identity presentations since these spaces are primarily based on values of individualism, authenticity and expressions of one's entrepreneurial and coherent identity (Fuchs, 2014; Awan and Gauntlett, 2013; Bollmer, 2013; Gardner and Davis, 2013; Marwick, 20113; Tene, 2013). For teenage girls, international studies (Kapidzic and Herring, 2014; De Vries and Peter, 2013; Ringrose, 2010; Siibak, 2009; Manago et al., 2008) show that these SNSs values become translated through the girls' portrayals as entrepreneurial through utilisation of their sexualised bodies. Literature (Bailey et al., 2013; Ringrose, 2010) argues that the neoliberal entrepreneurial rhetoric (Bauman, 2000; Beck, 1992) of managing risk, continuously striving to optimise one's performance, improve, change and adapt to new economic situations, directly guides female identity presentations online as well as offline.

Parallel to teenage girls' sexual SNSs displays, laddish female presentations are emerging of wild, risky and socially deviant female behaviours as a sign of female pleasure and an example of strong female friendship bonds (Dobson, 2015, 2014; William and Merten, 2008). Literature (Dobson, 2014; McRobbie, 2009) argues that laddishness is a new compulsory female subjectivity if girls want their identity to be interpreted as normal and 'appropriate'. Moreover, while laddish female presentations appear to break the established gender norms, such female displays are mostly celebrated and applauded when girls portray themselves as objects of heterosexual male desire (Whelehan, 2000). Thus, literature (Dobson, 2014; Ringrose, 2011) notes that teenage girls' online self-presentations are structured by the current discourses of neoliberalism as well as postfeminism that view female entrepreneurism as linked with female appearance, and female power as interchangeable with exposure of female body.

Since such self online presentations are in direct opposition to the Irish cultural understanding of femininity, chaste, caring, family and community oriented (Inglis, 2003; Byrne, 1999; O'Connor, 1998), the question arises how teenage girls in Ireland navigate their SNSs identity presentations. To date, no published research explored teenage girls' lived experiences in Ireland in relation to their identity displays on SNSs. While the issues of identity construction due to the collision of global and local discourses had been explored within the Irish context (Inglis, 2008; Keohane and Kuhling, 2004), the individual experiences of young girls had not been studied. There are several important reasons for researching teenage girls' lived experiences online. Firstly, literature (Deuze, 2011) highlights that being continuously mediated by new technologies one's sense of identity and lived experiences are irreversibly modified.

Thus, since SNSs present teenage girls with new values and norms for their identity construction, it is vital to understand how teenage girls in Ireland are mediated by the social media, and how social media constructs teenage girls' reality and girls' subject positions. Secondly, teenage years are a

crucial time for a young woman as it is the time when her identity, self-confidence and self-esteem are rapidly developing (Rathus, 2010; Friedman, 2000). Also, it is a time when teenage girls are expected to mature and take on a 'responsible' social role. Therefore, it is a time when girls have to make vital decisions about their selves and their future selves as women. Thus, it is important to explore what kind of regulatory powers construct teenage girls' identity to enable girls in becoming self-assured and happy while being insightfully analytical and publicly critical of cultural gender restraining configurations.

Contextual Background

In Ireland throughout the twentieth century, women were regulated and controlled by top-down authoritative powers of surveillance, such as the Irish State, the Catholic Church and the medical profession, that followed values of patriarchy (Inglis, 2003; Byrne, 1999; O'Connor, 1998). Women in Ireland were imagined, and inscribed throughout the Irish legislation, within the roles of a mother, a carer and a wife (Hill, 2003). Women in Ireland were in subordinate position in power structures, and it was in these confinements that women had to realise their identity and to carve avenues for achieving honour and respect in Irish society. It was through utilisation of symbolic power that women, in particular, Irish mothers, were able to claim honour and respect (Inglis, 1987).

To this date, such Irish cultural scripts of womanhood and femininity, Irish studies (Stokes, 2014; O'Connor, 2008; Hyde and Howlett, 2004) show, inform young girls in Ireland about the values and norms when constructing their own identities. However, literature (Inglis, 2008; Keohane and Kuhling, 2004) highlights that the collision of global and local ethics of self-realisation are continuously merging, resulting in a complex process of identity construction within the Irish context. Values of patriarchy are said to be merged and sometimes replaced within the values of late modernity, such as hedonism, individualism and consumerism.

Thus, contemporary teenage girls in Ireland are informed not only by the local cultural scripts of femininity but also by the global media messages of 'appropriate' femininity. Literature (Jhally et al., 2010; Jhally, 2009; Gill, 2007; Lindner, 2004) highlights that throughout the media culture women are represented in multiple simultaneously contradictory ways. Firstly, the representation of women in the media continues to be within the boundary of patriarchal gender roles since women are mostly depicted by media advertising within the narratives of heterosexual romance and physical beautification so as to gain the male gaze (De Brun et al., 2013; Marston, 2012; Voght, 2010). Through the pedagogy of defect (Bordo, 1999), the way media advertising highlights female flaws as

faulty and unacceptable and thus in need of fixing, women are governed to surveil their bodies to reach the unattainable beauty images.

On the other hand, current media content analysis research (Jackson et al., 2012; Gill, 2008b, 2007) shows that there is a new shift in female representation within contemporary media culture: she is young and confident, she pleases herself by consuming goods and transforming her body, she deliberately plays with her 'sex' power, and in doing so she is having fun. This 'new', or as Gill (2007) calls her 'Midriff' woman, is not a passive object but a narcissistic and playful subject. Within the Midriff advertising campaigns, the female is presented as no longer seeking to gain the male gaze, but instead self-surveils her body as a sign of her power.

More recently, female body confidence (Love Your Body campaigns - LYB) narratives have emerged within the current media culture that encourage women to accept their flaws and learn how to love their bodies as they 'really are' (Gill and Orgad, 2015; Thompson and Donaghue, 2014; Evans et al., 2010; Radner, 1993). These advertisements replace the prerequisite of female sexiness as seen in the Midriff advertisements with the female confidence as the ultimate female beauty. Thus, displaying a female body in undergarments or partly dressed is constructed as a sign of female confidence and 'inside and out' beauty (Murphy and Jackson, 2011). Consequently, such media discourses re-signify female surveillance as something to be celebrated. Moreover, the surveillance over female subjectivity expands into the female psyche itself (Gill and Elias, 2014). Now the female must not only be beautiful within the bodily surface, but her mind must be worked to become 'beautiful' and confident. Therefore, throughout the LYB advertisement campaigns, female self-surveillance over their bodies is viewed as a sign of self-love and self-acceptance.

Subsequently, literature (Gill, 2018; Elias et al., 2017) notes that the surveillance over women has become more intense and widespread. While it appears that now the representation of women within the popular media culture is more diverse than ever before, the regulation of the female body and her subjectivity operates with tighter and microscopic surveillance (Elias and Gill, 2017). However, now women are not regulated by what they ought or should do but rather by what they can do (McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004). Good choices, effort and ambition alone, literature (Harris, 2004) highlights, are presented as being responsible for the success that differentiates the 'can-do' girl from the 'at-risk' girl. 'Can-do' girls are imagined as ambitious, self-inventing and self-reliant, materialistic and highly visible, while 'at-risk' girls are viewed as not trying hard enough to succeed even when they are 'given the right' circumstances and opportunities.

Therefore, by utilising the discursive regulatory language of 'can-do' (Harris, 2004), beautification, transformation and constant self-surveillance over their bodies are narrated as a practice of female

empowerment. Thus, literature (Elias et al., 2017) notes that the contemporary female is no longer associated with a role but rather women's investment in their body as a visual surface becomes the sole site of women's value. However, to be addressed as subjects of capacity, young girls from different ethnic and social backgrounds are expected to be grateful for what they have and to abandon feminist critique so as not to align oneself within the narratives of victimhood (McRobbie, 2009). Literature (Murray, 2012; Ringrose, 2011; Gill, 2007) notes that these new conceptualisations about women are part of the broader regimes of late modernity, neoliberalism and postfeminism.

Scholars point out that the break from industrial capitalism marks the start of late modernity (Bauman, 2000; Giddens, 1990). This new era is defined by global capital economies, rapid and complex markets, instability, flux identity, individualism and consumerism. Scholars, such as Beck (1992) and Bauman (1995, 2001), suggest that due to the rise of globalisation, the collapse of industrialisation and break down of cultural traditions, risk and unpredictability became embedded within social structures. Since longstanding social relationships and collective ties are fading away, individuals are positioned to become responsible for their success. Throughout risk societies, people's lives are viewed as 'choice biographies' or do-it-yourself (DIY) biographies. Now individuals are expected to self-govern themselves by making the right choices to manage the environment of constant change and uncertainty. Therefore, in late modernity, individuals are asked to become responsible, adaptable, and self-making citizens who do not rely on the State's support. Young women, in particular, literature (McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004) points out, are constructed as an ideal type for fulfilling the late modernity subject because they are perceived to be resilient and flexible, but above all, self-making.

Similarly, to succeed in the neoliberal economy, one needs to be active, entrepreneurial, a risk-taker and self-governing. Neoliberalism is an economic term that advocates for corporate deregulation, entrepreneurialism and open market to achieve financial success and individual fulfilment. Literature (Elias et al., 2017; Rose, 1999) notes, that neoliberalism evokes market principles into all spheres of life and in particular into the construction of subjectivity. Women, in particular, are imaged as being the ideal type of neoliberalism: now they are 'empowered' to maximise their full potential due to feminist achievements, they are the ideal subjects of consumption, and lastly, they are imagined by the dominant media narratives (e.g. *What Not To Wear* TV programme) as flexible and adaptable so as to continuously self-transform in order to become a 'better version' of themselves (Gill, 2018; McRobbie, 2009). Since the contemporary women's identity is directly associated with their body (Jhally et al., 2010; Orbach, 2010; McRobbie, 2009; Gill 2008b; Ringrose, 2006; Bordo, 2003; Wolf, 1991), the female body becomes the key site to exercise and display women's participation in neoliberalism.

Gill and Scharff (2011) assert that due to resonance between neoliberal and postfeminist rationalities it is precisely women who are called upon to fulfil the new forms of governmentality through self-management, self-discipline, the transformation of the self, regulation of their conduct, and presentation of their behaviour as freely chosen. The concept of postfeminism can be used in a variety of ways: from a historical shift after the second wave feminism (Tasker and Negra, 2007) to a backlash against feminism (Whelehan, 2000). However, this study follows Gill's (2007) suggestion of utilising postfeminism as a sensibility. Gill (2007:4) defines the postfeminist sensibilities as a combination of interlinking ideas, which are as follows:

- Femininity is a bodily property;
- The shift from objectification to subjectification;
- An emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and self-discipline;
- A focus on individualism, choice and empowerment;
- The dominance of a makeover paradigm;
- A resurgence of ideas about natural sexual difference.

In essence, postfeminist sensibilities make a direct link between the female power and the female body. Thus, women who invest in their bodies through practices of diet, beautification and exercise, are constructed by the current media discourses as taking control and becoming empowered.

Teenage girls negotiate media messages

Teenage girls are not passive victims of contemporary media messages. They actively engage in reading and negotiating the discursive media images presented to them (Wulf et al., 2010). A number of studies (Vares and Jackson 2015; Jackson et al., 2012; Malson et al., 2010) indicated that teenage girls frequently rejected media messages that showed women in a hypersexualised manner through processes of 'Othering'. The utilisation of the figure 'Slut' and the expression of disgust allowed teenage girls to distance themselves from represented media images. However, as some of the studies (Press, 2011; Kehily, 1999; Currie, 1997) show, teenage girls used media messages as a benchmark for self-regulation and self-correction of their behaviour.

Surely, assuming that the media has a direct cause and effect relationship with teenage girls' understandings about their femininity and womanhood would oversimplify the issue. Nevertheless, media messages surround teenage girls' every day offline and online spaces providing a context within which teenage girls' identity is evaluated and judged. Moreover, current studies (Galdi et al., 2013; Halliwell et al., 2011; McNicholas et al., 2009; Tiggemann, 2005) show that contemporary media messages of femininity have an effect (direct or indirect) on real material conditions on girls' bodies, their sense of self and their lived experiences: girls are dissatisfied with their body size and

their appearance, they continuously engage in dieting behaviours, and when they do not diet girls relate to each other through 'fat talk' (Nichter, 2000) - the way women deliberately criticise one's body when having a conversation with others.

Due to the regimes of neoliberalism and postfeminism, women are called upon to become important to themselves and display this importance through women's investment in their bodies in modes of diet, exercise, consumption of beauty products and plastic surgery – to name but a few. Moreover, female dissatisfaction with their bodies and their appearance are understood as individual female pathologies that can be solved by educating girls to love themselves and develop confidence (Gill and Elias, 2014). Consequently, literature notes that due to the regimes of neoliberalism and postfeminism, which construct women's self-surveillance practices as 'freely chosen', it is more difficult to identify and critique the contemporary regulation of women (Pomerantz et al., 2013; Scharff, 2011).

Teenage girls and SNSs

Scholars (Marwick, 2011; Miller, 2010; Livingstone, 2008) argued that SNSs created a new space, where teens could 'hang out' (Ito et al., 2010), express their identities and re-imagine new ones. The shift in teenagers' socialising habits from physical to online spaces (boyd and Marwick, 2011) creates new structures and dynamics for teenagers' social interactions and identity formations. Previously teenagers' identity construction was much more spontaneous and momentary, whereas now their identity presentation is much more reflective due to continuous online surveillance as well as permanence and traceability of their digital identity. Since social media is the new space for one's identity presentation that is based on permanent surveillance, the question arises how teenage girls display their subjectivity online. A number of studies (Awan and Gauntlett, 2013; Stern, 2008) argue that teenage girls can bend the established gender norms while being on social media. On the other hand, current studies (Bailey et al., 2013; Ringrose, 2009) show the online space is increasingly becoming regulatory and surveillance orientated regarding female identity construction. Literature (Kelsey and Bennett, 2014; Bauman and Lyon, 2013; Jurgenson, 2013; Jensen, 2007) notes that on social media the Panopticon (where the few watch the many), Synopticon (where the many watch the few) and Omniopticon (where the many watch the many) powers of surveillance operate at once. Such kinds of surveillance blur the boundaries between the online and offline audience resulting in the tighter policing of the female subjectivity and their bodies.

In addition, as digits and numbers gain vital importance on the social media platform in the form of 'Likes' and 'Hearts', social media users are positioned to seek and desire to be under surveillance

(Lupton, 2016; Bauman and Lyon, 2013). Thus, to be visible on social media, one needs to seek being objectified and identified with a digit while narrating one's social media practices as freely chosen (Marwick, 2013). Consequently, on social media platforms, the objectification of women through the act of self-subjectification becomes normalised.

Consequently, research (Dobson, 2015; Kapidzic and Herring, 2014; De Vries and Peter, 2013; Ringrose, 2011, 2010; Siibak, 2009; Manago et al., 2008) indicates that on social media teenage girls' presentations are mostly constructed around their beautified bodies that are marked by the embodiment of sexiness and more recently laddishness. While such self-presentations are expected on the online platforms, they are condemned during the offline interactions, leaving teenage girls to continuously internally negotiate and manage their identity displays (Ringrose, 2011). Moreover, since the social media audience migrates between various sites and mostly consists of people from teenage girls' offline world, presenting one's identity as authentic and unified becomes paramount (Gardner and Davis, 2013). While participation on social media requires a continuous negotiation and daily management of one's identity displays, social media companies employ the language of 'being yourself' and 'being authentic' (Marwick, 2013). Such contradictory rhetoric disguises the regulatory powers over subjectivity, and in particular, the regulation of female subjectivity in contemporary society.

Furthermore, research (Hyde and Howlett, 2004) conducted in Ireland indicates that teenage girls' sexual presentations are condemned and repudiated by utilisation of the label 'slut', thus one needs to raise a question *how do teenage girls in Ireland present themselves online while being subjectified by the social media norms of female self-presentation through sexiness and laddishness*? In addition, social media ideals of authenticity and emphasis on the expressions of individualism stand in direct opposition to the Irish values of community and solidarity. Therefore, one needs to pose the question: *how do teenage girls in Ireland navigate the presentations of the self on social media while being addressed by two contradictory ethics of self-realisation?*

Reasons for undertaking the study

When writing my undergraduate thesis on anorexia nervosa, I came across Susan Bordo's work. Not only did I feel inspired by her style of writing, but her work evoked something within me. For the first time, it seemed I was able to see the cultural patterns that constructed my reality. How many times did I catch myself feeling guilty and ashamed after eating 'that' chocolate cake? How many times did I refuse to enjoy swimming because I feared being seen in a swimsuit? How many times was my New Year's resolution 'to lose weight'? I was routinely working towards making my body

acceptable to be gazed at and judged by others rather than focusing on critiquing the dysfunction of the contemporary society.

On completion of my undergraduate thesis, I was left with the puzzling question: *since Bordo's writing was based on the analysis of the twentieth century, could it be that the twenty-first-century young girls are more empowered since they have a new niche of social media for self-expression*? I was hoping that since social media enables young girls to connect to a wide range of people and thus establish different relationships, girls would be able to imagine themselves in more diverse roles than their previous generations.

Thus, I entered this study believing that girls are powerful and capable of changing the established gender roles. Now, at the end of my study, I still maintain this belief. However, my views on social media were transformed completely. During the research interviews, I continuously heard teenage girls' stories about their fears, anxieties and constant doubt when engaging with social media. Later when transcribing and analysing the interviews, I was exposed to the even deeper sadness that social media evoked for young girls. During those stages of data analysis, I imagined my five-year-old niece growing up in this world of technology, and it made me so angry and sad and disappointed.

Thus, in writing up this thesis my aim is to appreciate teenage girls' lived experiences in the hope that their stories and knowledge would enable us, as a society, to support and guide young girls and boys in the world of technology and social media so that no one would feel they need to be defined by 'Likes' and 'Hearts', that young girls would not make New Year's resolutions to gain high numbers for their 'pretty' photos so that they would feel confident and good about themselves.

Methodology and source of data

There had been a number of quantitative psychological studies (Galdi et al., 2013; Halliwell et al., 2011; Grabe et al., 2007; Tiggermann et al., 2005) conducted exploring teenage girls' lives and their relationship with the contemporary cultural meanings of 'appropriate' femininity. These studies reveal the issues, such as eating disorders and body dissatisfaction, that teenage girls experience in these current times while being subjected by the popular media discourses. However, such studies do not address what kind of social structures and functions sustain the issues that teenage girls experience. On the other hand, studies that employed qualitative interviews (based in social sciences) when exploring teenage girls' engagement with the current culture (Dobson, 2015; Ringrose, 2010; Currie et al., 2009; Elm, 2009), primarily used once-off semi-structured interview methods, focus groups method or online observations. This study was informed and guided by such methods in relation to best practice when conducting research with teenage girls and their online presentations.

However, as this study aimed to explore how the social, cultural and interpersonal interact and interconnect when teenage girls construct their identity, employing once-off interview methods did not allow to unravel such interconnections. In addition, once-off semi-structured interview methods, focus groups method or online observations do not illuminate how the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity operates in teenage girls' lives and most importantly how it is sustained by the different social structures that teenage girls engage with. Overall, there is a lack of research that utilises consecutive in-depth qualitative interview methods (based on focusing on various aspects of teenage girls' lives) when exploring teenage girls' experiences in relation to contemporary media culture. Moreover, there is a lack of research that accounts for teenage girls' embodied 'knowing' during the research process and the production of knowledge about their lived experiences. Thus, to understand teenage girls' worldview, it is vital to meet teenage girls for interviews several times and pay attention to girls' embodiment during the research process. By doing so the researcher is able to get a sense of girls' everyday context, gain their trust, and explore the intersecting patterns between local and global culture as well as discursive and sensed girls' experiences that construct girls' understandings about their reality. Paying attention to all these elements enables the research to include teenage girls' as active participants in knowledge production throughout all stages of the study.

Theoretical framework

The theory that informs our understandings about teenage girls' lived experiences, their relationship with global and local culture and their identity construction are inevitably directed by one's ontological and epistemological position. A number of studies that explored teenage girls' lives and their relationship with SNSs did not account for knowledge production as a sensuous embodied stance during research. This study views teenage girls' bodies as a vital part in knowledge production and theory building, and thus the study utilises methods that account for the girls' embodiment during the research process.

This study follows an interpretivist paradigm as it is concerned with individual teenage girls' understandings and meanings attached to their feminine identity and its construction. The researcher who follows an interpretivist paradigm acknowledges that the reality is relative, it is not there to be discovered but is subjectively experienced and thus made real intersubjectively (Abram, 2014; Kitzinger, 2004; Walkerdine et al., 2002; Haraway, 1988). Nonetheless, individuals do not exist in the world of continuous flux and meaningless. On the contrary, individuals are bound by culture and language that stabilises the meanings and thus gives a structure to the phenomenon (Gergen, 2015). However, meaning for the interpretivist researcher is not rooted in the phenomenon but is sustained in practice and language (Burr, 1995; Berger and Luckman, 1966). Therefore, this study aims to

explore teenage girls' practices of 'doing' a girl in the times of neoliberalism and postfeminist sensibility. Exploring the ways teenage girls 'do' the female may deepen our understanding of how the meaning of contemporary femininity is regulated, sustained and thus established.

Consequently, this study situates itself within the ontology of phenomenological hermeneutics. Research that follows hermeneutic phenomenology acknowledges that our interpretation of the phenomenon is built on previous interpretations (hermeneutics), at the same time, that interpretation is directed by our being in the world – the immediate lived experience (phenomenology) (Laverty, 2008). In other words, our interpretations of the phenomenon are not the acknowledgement of what has been understood, but rather our interpretations are based on what is possible to understand (Heidegger, 1953/2010).

Since this study's ontological position emphasises the importance of language as the vital structuring principle in one's understanding and interpretations, this study pays close attention to the powers of language (Hekman, 1997; Haraway, 1988; Smith, 1988). Firstly, the study pays close attention to language that teenage girls use in describing their experiences, and also to the discursive knowledge that is expressed in that language. Moreover, I am mindful of my use of language and the power that my language has in constructing teenage girls' subjectivities. Furthermore, as this study is informed by the feminist standpoint philosophy, it acknowledges that my speaking position as a researcher has the power to construct reality for others through the production of knowledge. Feminist standpoint theory argues that knowledge and its claims to truth are produced through multiple speaking positions/standpoints, and thus knowledge is perspectival and should be conceptualised as situational rather than universal (Hekman, 1997; Haraway, 1988; Harding and Hintikka, 1983). Therefore, the study utilises methods, such as, a photo-elicitation and 'a day routine clock', that is anticipated to create a space where teenage girls' stories may be heard without a researcher's preconceived understandings.

Moreover, when producing knowledge, I take into consideration not only my understandings and interpretations but also acknowledge that others, in their sensory system's totality, know it also. Thus, while hearing teenage girls' narratives, I pay particular attention to the concrete lived experiences that are not yet articulated in language and dominant discourses. Therefore, within the analysis chapters, I illustrate (by using handwritten font) teenage girls' body language, their tone of voice and immediate social environment (when relevant) to account for knowledge production through bodies. I follow Kearney's (2015) conceptualisations on carnal hermeneutics to guide the interview process and data analysis. Kearney (2015) argues that hermeneutic interpretations begin in our flesh. Nancy (2015), expanding on Kearney's (2015) theorisations, observes that when one enters a shared space, the bodily presence sends a motion that moves others within that space. The presence of the body acts

15

and reacts at the same time. Therefore, this study is attentive to the power of the bodily dispositions in the process of producing knowledge.

Study sample and Research process

The sample for the study was selected from Transition Year girls (15-17 year-olds) within two secondary schools (School No. 1 and School No. 2) within the South-East region of Ireland. The research participants varied in their geographical location (urban/rural) in Ireland, social status and educational settings (single-sex schools – School No. 1; and co-educational – School No. 2; Catholic religious – School No. 1; and non-Catholic religious– School No. 2). The school is the important environment as it is the immediate habitual context with which teenage girls engage and thus are given the understanding of what 'appropriate' femininity is (Currie et al., 2009). The selection process for taking part in the research was based on a voluntary and a first come-first served basis. In total, I interviewed twenty teenage girls, whom I met for interviews in their schools on three consecutive occasions: during focus group discussions, the first stage of One-to-One interviews based on a 'day routine clock' and second stage of the One-to-One interviews focused on topics about SNSs.

As the study focuses on individual lived experiences, it was essential to interview teenage girls three times so the researcher would be able to get a sense of teenage girls' subjectivity and their worldview as well as to feel the atmosphere of the space teenage girls shared with each other every day. Interviews were carried out in two phases: interviews in School No. 1 were conducted in Spring of 2013, and interviews in School No. 2 were conducted in Spring of 2014 (Refer to: Table 7 Time Frame of Data collection, p. 274). All of the interviews lasted an hour depending on the participants' willingness to share and engage. The recorded interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis informed by a Foucauldian feminist theoretical approach and assisted by the MAXQDA software.

Contributions to knowledge

First of all, this study contributes to the knowledge about teenage girls' identities on social media and their everyday lived experiences. While young people's engagement with social media is widely studied, there is a lack of studies conducted exploring the interlinking relationship between girls' social media identities and the offline regulatory regimes of neoliberalism and postfeminist sensibility. These are vital regimes that construct contemporary women's subjectivity since those regimes provide norms and values within which female identities can be judged. Thus, this study will expand knowledge on young people's, in particular, teenage girls' identities on social media with a

focus on contextualising teenage girls' online conduct within the broader cultural regulatory discourses. Moreover, this study contributes to the under-researched topic of girlhood studies in Ireland.

Secondly, this study contributes to the emergent feminist literature that aims to expand knowledge about young girls' experiences and their negotiations of the contemporary media culture that utilises rhetoric of postfeminism and neoliberalism. While cultural representations of women in contemporary media had been theorised, there is a lack of research conducted exploring if academic theorisations have any relevance to teenage girls' lived experiences. This study also contributed to recent debates on the young people's agency during the research process and the need to include young people's voices in knowledge production about their lived experiences. Accounting for teenage girls' embodiment during the research process, this study expands our knowledge of how to exercise inclusive research that is sensitive to the complexity of gathering data about one's lived experiences and what one considers as data.

This study contributes to methodological frameworks in the context of ethical qualitative research with young girls. Approaches to researching teenage girls' lived experiences on social media in relation to contemporary media culture had been dominated by the once-off qualitative interview methods. Once-off methods, while illuminating some of the issues teenage girls' experience, do not allow situating teenage girls' narratives within their wider social context. My study employed multi-layered interview methods (focus groups and One-to-One interviews conducted twice) enabling the researcher to unravel the complexity of the relationships between girls' subjectivity online and their offline social context. In addition, this study illustrates the practical application of a theoretical concept of carnal hermeneutics (Kearney, 2015) during qualitative research with young girls.

Lastly, the study contributes to knowledge for youth practitioners and policy developers. While dominant approaches to young people's engagement with social media are one of educating and informing, this study's findings show that due to 'can-do' femininity narratives, talking 'at' young girls are not only ineffective but also have the potential to destroy their sense of identity. Thus, the study contributes to the policy debates on how to engage with young girls while addressing current media culture and its demands aimed at young girls presenting themselves online as 'sexual' or 'laddish'.

The layout of the study

The first chapter presents the aims and objectives of this study as well as the theoretical approach being employed throughout this research process. Justifications for this study consider the importance of the regimes of neoliberalism and postfeminist sensibility that influence contemporary media culture and the definitions of 'appropriate' femininity, and the lack of empirical studies being conducted exploring the way young girls situate themselves in relation to these current regimes. Subsequently, justifications for utilising consecutive in-depth qualitative interviews with teenage girls are outlined, and the argument is proposed that to gain comprehensive knowledge about girls' worldview it is vital to interview girls' several times about various aspects of their life and pay attention for research participants embodiment in knowledge production. Moreover, this chapter outlines the sample of the study and the research process. Lastly, my personal reasons for undertaking this study are discussed.

Chapter two focuses on exploring the key literature on teenage girls' identities in relation to contemporary media messages of 'appropriate' femininity. Firstly, this chapter focuses on discussing the historical development of femininity within the Irish context. It is important to locate the local cultural scripts of femininity that teenage girls in Ireland are positioned to navigate and embody as it constructs the available subject positions that a young girl is able to occupy. Thereafter, the chapter focuses on exploring rationalities that regulate and govern teenage years in late modernity. These rationalities draw the boundaries between 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' teenage girls' behaviours and expressions of femininity. Afterwards, the discussion focuses on exploring current media messages and female representations within contemporary media culture. Furthermore, recent research on teenage girls' engagement with contemporary media messages of 'appropriate' femininity and the way teenage girls themselves negotiate and read those messages are discussed. Lastly, the chapter explores how the cultural scripts of 'appropriate' femininity play out on social media sites (SNSs) and what kind of regulatory space SNSs is for teenage girls' identities.

Chapter three explores the methodological approach employed in the study and discusses the importance of the phenomenological hermeneutics for this research. This chapter discusses in detail the importance of utilising the interpretivist paradigm when researching individual teenage girls' worldview. The chapter begins by outlining the study's ontological and epistemological position and discusses the link between phenomenological hermeneutic ontology and carnal hermeneutics as well as a feminist standpoint. Afterwards, the discussion outlines in detail how the study was carried out utilising qualitative consecutive interview methods (focus groups and One-to-One interviews) with twenty Transition Year girls (15-17 year-olds) within the South-East region of Ireland. Ethical

considerations of interviewing this age group are discussed with a focus on the issues of informed consent and voluntary participation, confidentiality and its limits, and participants' anonymity. Lastly, the chapter explores the choice of thematic analysis to approach the qualitative data with teenage girls. Moreover, the chapter addresses the importance of the process of reflexivity during the research with young girls.

Chapter four focuses on the analysis of the research interviews. The chapter is divided into three sections: focus groups, the first stage of One-to-One interviews and second stage of One-to-One interviews. The focus group section is divided into two sub-sections: A and B. Sub-section A explores the construction of the 'appropriate' femininity within the teenage girls' focus group discussions by utilising carnal hermeneutics as a theoretical approach. It is argued that teenage girls' bodily orientation in the interview space plays a vital part in the construction of the concept of 'appropriate' femininity, and that bodily dispositions impact the power dynamics when defining the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity. Sub-section B explores the way teenage girls read media messages of 'appropriate' femininity through the photo-elicitation method. The section argues that negotiation of 'appropriate' femininity is structured around the 'can-do' and the 'at-risk' (Harris, 2004) femininity qualities. Moreover, the focus group data suggest that due to the collision culture the contemporary discourses of femininity, such as the subject of capacity, merged with the stereotypical patriarchal female representations. It illustrates that teenage girls identify a '*beautiful and gorgeous looking*' mother and a wife as the ultimate ideal femininity, which is emblematic of the collision between 'can-do' discourses and values of patriarchy. Overall, the focus group data findings show that due to the collision culture and new disembodied patriarchal power it is not enough to display a sexy (Radner, 1993), or confident (Gill and Orgad, 2015) or agentic (Gill, 2008b, 2007) female body to be considered as presenting 'appropriate' femininity. Thus, this sub-section argues that within the Irish context the regulation of female bodies appears to be much more intensely governed and surveilled than international scholars anticipate (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011; Radner, 1993).

The 'first stage of the One-to-One interviews' section is based on the analysis of the 'day routine clock' method and is divided into two sub-sections: A and B. Sub-section A focuses on the exploration of the regulatory techniques and regimes that structure teenage girls' lives and their subjectivity. The findings from this first stage of the interviews show that individual teenage girls understood 'appropriate' femininity as interchangeably linked with the female body, making the female identity as interchangeable with the female body itself. Wrapped in the rhetoric of postfeminism and discourses of body confidence (Gill and Elias, 2014; Gill, 2007), self-controlling, self-monitoring and self-regulating practices it is argued, are viewed by the teenage girls as indicating

their empowerment, their ability to manage risks and their embodiment of confidence. Since such regulatory power disguised itself under the emancipatory narratives, and thus became a disembodied patriarchal power, the teenage girls were unable to critique or reject such power. This sub-section argues that the objectification of girls' bodies reaches new process and platforms of surveillance: from spaces in town to school spaces, resulting in even tighter self-control and self-monitoring of teenage girls' every day habitus. Moreover, the sub-section argues that due to the collision culture the teenage girls' sociability became strategic: combining local values of community and kinship simultaneously incorporating market principles. Sub-section B explores how teenage girls' understandings of 'appropriate' femininity operate and are sustained in their daily practice. This sub-section focuses on three daily practices of teenage girls: doing their makeup, exercise and diet, that played a significant role in their narratives. It is argued that teenage girls continuously apply the framework of 'can-do' and 'at-risk' (Harris, 2004) feminine qualities when executing the 'appropriate' femininity, that results in inner emotional tensions. Moreover, the sub-section illustrates that the disembodied patriarchal power controlled the teenage girls' lived experiences. However, being disguise under the new discursive language of female self-love and empowerment, the teenage girls were unable to reject or critique disembodied patriarchal power.

The 'second stage of the interviews' section is focused on the issues of social media and teenage girls' identities. This section argues that on SNSs patriarchal power discharges itself through the pedagogy of the 'Like' button as an affirmative and positive objectification of female bodies. resulting in transforming patriarchal power into a disembodied power. Moreover, the section discusses the power of surveillance and its relationship in the production of the female subjectivity on social media, and argues that new powers of surveillance, what I define as 'laserscopic' surveillance, emerged due to the blurring line between online and offline. Laserscopic surveillance cuts through all layers of teenage girls' lives controlling and regulating everyday teenage girls' conduct. Moreover, 'laserscopic' surveillance produces the female subject that is continuously self-disciplining one's body as a sign of 'fun' and empowerment while simultaneously experiencing feelings of '*paranoid'*, '*annoyed'* and '*fearful'* when a girl constructs her online identity. Employing the language of 'can-do' (Harris, 2004) femininity, the teenage girls narrated their SNSs self-presentations as not bound by rules or norms, but freely chosen and executed for their own pleasure. In addition, the section argues that due to the collision culture, the teenage girls presented themselves on SNSs as *good-looking'*, '*decent'*, '*not in a bikini*', not drinking or smoking, *'not crazy'* and '*not wild.* However, values of female chasteness were utilised not to maintain communities honour but as a means for individual ends. Similarly, due to the collision culture, displays of the girls' sociability were instrumental and strategic, executed to gain individual 'Likes' and 'Hearts' rather than sustain a sense

of the community. Lastly, this section argues that teenage girls' voices and their concrete experiences are continuously being ignored and shut down due to dominant cultural discourses that position girls as the subject of capacity and beneficiary (McRobbie, 2009).

Chapter five concludes the key findings of this study. The chapter summarises the literature review in relation to contemporary discourses of 'appropriate' femininity and teenage girls' subjectivity on social media. Key themes, discussed in detail in chapter four, are brought together considering the relevant literature and methodological approach adopted in this study.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

I. GENEALOGY OF SUBJECTIFICATION OF WOMEN IN IRELAND

Introduction

The way in which a contemporary young girl constructs and represents her feminine identity is inevitably linked with cultural meanings of womanhood and femininity. The local culture provides one with cultural scripts, a set of values and ethics for constructing identities and expressing femininity (Inglis, 2015). Thus, cultural meanings of womanhood, femininity and girlhood allow a young girl to make sense of her identity, conduct her behaviour in culturally meaningful ways so as to be valued and understood by others around them. Simultaneously, cultural meanings shape the world in which one lives, it constructs a reality by naming, giving meaning and eventually labelling what is out there (Berger, 1966). Thus, to explore how teenage girls in Ireland choose to weave their sense of self, it is important to look at discourses on femininity and womanhood at play in Irish society, and how they have been historically constituted.

The cultural scripts that a young girl utilises to conduct her behaviour are part of the 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1984). This chapter section will utilise Foucault's term of 'regime of truth' as a conceptual tool to explore the construction of the meaning of womanhood in Ireland under various authoritative powers: the Irish State, the Catholic Church and the medical profession. Truth in a Foucauldian sense is an effect of a set of regulations and technologies, methods of governmentality that structure the modes of self-realisation. Therefore, the truth is always surrounded by the production of knowledge and exercise of power. Foucault (1984:73) states:

> … truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power … Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.

Truth is relative as it shifts accordingly with the shift of authoritative power, and thus varies across historical times, cultures and societies. Power, drawing from Foucault (1977), does not operate as an oppressor, but rather as a creator; it is fluid and, most importantly, functions through knowledge production. Therefore, the truth is understood not as a robust set of knowledge, but as a regime that is produced and reproduced by the authoritative power to govern and shape subjects. Consequently,

through technological means (e.g. confession, self-problematisation or self-monitoring) and normalisation processes, a subject is given birth (Rose, 1996). Thus, this chapter section focuses on exploring the norms, techniques, strategies and women's relations to the authority that construct the female conduct in Ireland. By doing so, the chapter section aims to unravel how in Ireland cultural meanings of femininity and womanhood were established at a micro everyday level and normalised as a set of rules and societal expectations. Thus, exploring how women were addressed to occupy a particular form of self-realisation within the Irish landscape, let it be through symbolic representations throughout a nationalist agenda or the Catholic Church's rationalisations about women's role in Irish society, allows one to analyse how meanings of womanhood were constructed within Irish society. The following questions are posed to guide the exploration: *what kind of relationship had women have to authoritative power? Who could speak for women's experience and life, and consequently, who produced 'regimes of truth' as to how women should behave and feel? What kind of modes of self-realisation were women in Ireland called to occupy, consequently what kind of ethics were utilised to govern women in Ireland?*

The discussion is focused on the 1920s onwards for several reasons. Firstly, this period covers two generations of women (a grandmother and a mother) and men (a grandfather and a father) with whom a contemporary teenage girl in Ireland would interact, learn from and possibly gain cultural meanings. Families, and particularly families in Ireland, are the primary platforms for a child's socialisation process during which a child learns how to conduct oneself in a culture and society in which one lives, what is acceptable, what is valued and what is punishable (Inglis, 2015). Secondly, this period is a significant historical time for the Irish State as it marks the establishment of Irish Independence from Britain. Since the establishment of Ireland's own government, it is vital to analyse how women were addressed within the new power structures, what ethics and rationalisations were utilised to govern women and how these rationalisations formed a profound grip across a variety of public and private social institutions (O'Connor, 1998).

Overall, the chapter section is interested in unravelling how values, particular to Irish society, such as social cohesions and community solidarity (Kuhling and Keohane, 2007), are evoked to produce gender relations and female subject positions. Gaining independence, in other words changing from one political governance to another, one could argue, evokes liminal conditions and thus induces fractures in patterns of identity construction (Szakolczai, 2016; Horvath and Thomassen, 2008). To break through from the liminal conditions, and restore stability and normality, the individual needs to forge a new identity that would reflect a shift of one's position within the newly established social order (Horvath and Thomassen, 2008). However, in Ireland's case, these transitionary situations created a space where the Catholic bourgeoisie seized control of society, formalising and

institutionalising their worldview and moral order (Inglis, 1987). Such transition created a type of permanent state for preparation for the next life, through the Catholic ascetic techniques to prepare one for salvation. Consequently, such type of the Catholic ascetic techniques had pronounced gender dimensions, as sexuality became the acute danger, and the target of the ascetic practices, with the critical focus on female sexuality.

Women in Ireland had (and continue to have) an ambiguous relationship with authoritative power (Inglis, 2003; O'Connor, 1998): authoritative power controlled female sexuality and their bodies, at the same time such powers produced the figure of the 'Irish Mother' who was able to establish herself as an honourable and a high-status person in Irish society. It is precisely this relationship to the authority – the Irish State, the Catholic Church and the medical profession - that shaped and constructed women's understanding of their own femininity, their place within Irish society, and therefore their subjecthood. Throughout the nineteenth century, and particularly since Ireland's independence, women in Ireland were addressed as subjects of kinship and motherhood. Scholars (Inglis, 2003; Byrne, 1999; O'Connor, 1998) point out that the meanings of 'appropriate' femininity and womanhood in Ireland were mostly in alignment with the patriarchal ideology. Women's position in Irish society was understood as fulfilling the caring role, a wife, as a child-bearer, and as a symbol of the Irish nation and its purity.

Women's role as a carer and a mother was later reinstated at a legislative level, for instance, in the 1937 Irish Constitution (still active to this day), which stated that a woman's place is within the domestic sphere, and most importantly that the term woman can be used interchangeably with the definition of a mother. Throughout Irish society values of community, solidarity, bonding and belonging were continuously evoked as a priority and responsibility for all Irish people (Hill, 2003). Similarly, maintaining families' and communities' honour and avoiding shame acted as a regulatory technique for Irish peoples' conduct (Inglis, 1987). Thus, women were called upon to fulfil their duty by becoming a stay at home wife so as to prioritise values of community and solidarity, and also to maintain family's honour by being a 'good' daughter, who marries and raises 'good' Catholic children. Calling upon these forms of self-realisation produced Irish cultural understandings of womanhood in the form of idealised 'Irish mother', the virgin pure and chaste young girl; and on the other hand, the demonised single mother and a 'spinster' single woman.

However, from the 1950s onwards, Ireland was starting to embrace the shifts of industrialisation and capitalism. Consequently, the established ethics of self-realisation, such as self-denial, female chastity and purity, collided with the new ethics of late modernity that encouraged individualism, consumerism and hedonism (Inglis, 2008). One could argue that the debates on women's right to abortion and contraception were emblematic of those two very different ethics colliding. Similarly,

throughout the Irish media, the representation of women started to incorporate elements of global femininities that oozed sexual agency (Stokes, 2014). Simultaneously Irish media messages disdained individual female achievements in favour of values of community and family (e.g. Sonia O'Sullivan) (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004). Being viewed as the 'Irish star', O'Sullivan is positioned to embody the local and the global values of femininity.

It is hard to say how a young girl in Ireland weaves her everyday identity while being addressed by such different ethics of self-realisation, as research on teenage girls' lives in Ireland and their relationship to contemporary messages of femininity are scarce. Moreover, teenage girls' lived experiences in late modernity Ireland are usually confined to the realm of childhood or youth studies which is not without its problems: implying that teenage girls are interchangeably linked with innocence, purity, and naivety, or that gender is somehow less significant for teenage girls' lived experiences. On the other hand, studies that focus on exploring teenagers' lives in modern Ireland (Greene et al., 2010; O'Connor, 2008; Hyde and Howlett, 2004) only to some extent illuminate issues about teenage girls' identity, such as teenage girls' everyday feelings of insecurity and anxiety towards the future, ambivalence and contradiction when expressing their sexual identities. One could argue that these studies have a narrow empirical focus, which does not link micro with macro, or theorise how individual experience is linked with history and culture. Mills (1959) argues that the goal of the sociological investigation is linking the private with the public and historical level. Thus, it is important to know how young girls make sense of the culture in which they live, how they construct and represent their identities so that institutional arrangements and 'regimes of truth' could be diverted to sustain gender equality.

Patriarchal representations of Irish women

Scholars (Inglis, 2003; O'Connor, 1998; Byrne, 1997; Inglis, 1987) argue that in Ireland construction of femininity and womanhood is firmly embedded with ideas of patriarchy. For instance, O'Connor (1998) argues that historically Irish women's experiences can be located within the context of patriarchal ideology. O'Connor (1998:21) notes that:

> Within a patriarchal society fundamental ideas about the nature and values of womanhood are seen as part of the mechanisms of patriarchal control. Within dominant discourse concepts of womanhood continue to revolve around caring, familism, reproduction, love, sexual attraction and gendered paid employment, preferably in a 'little job' which is part-time, low paid, and undertaken for the 'good of the family'.

O'Connor (1998) points out that in Ireland over the years, women's sense of self and their lived experiences were tightly regulated and policed by the Irish State and the Catholic Church. Indeed, in Ireland, the boundary between the State and the Catholic Church had been blurred. On many occasions, State's decisions were heavily influenced by Catholic moral teachings rather than values of social rights, as for instance illustrated by the Mother and Child Scheme controversy (Considine and Dukelow, 2009), and conflicts over abortion and contraception (Inglis, 1987).

To explore the available female subject positions within the Irish context, it is important to look at the symbolic use of the female figure employed in the Irish nationalist discourses and ideology since the establishment of the Irish Free State. O'Neill (1999:33), drawing from Adorno, notes that '..socio-economic structure is mediated in all cultural production, and expresses itself in cultural objects.' Even though the symbolic representation of women throughout the nationalist ideology does not tell as much about the real women's life experience at that time, it reveals the socio-economic structures that constructed what was expected of Irish women and how women were to behave. Accordingly, using the female figure as a symbol for the Irish nation legitimised societal control and discipline of women and young girls.

Within Irish society, women's place was often portrayed as fulfilling domestic duties, such as raising children, expressing submissiveness to and care of the husband, simultaneously conveying chastity and sexual purity (Hill, 2003; Gray and Ryan, 1997; Nash, 1993). These values became of particular importance during the Nationalist Movement (and were later taken up by other authoritative interest groups, for example, the Catholic Church and its tight control of Irish female sexuality) when a newly born Irish State needed to be established and distinguished from imperialist Britain. It is important to note that this was also the period where gender roles were most contested - particularly through the Irish Citizens' Army (Figure 1, p. 27).

Figure 1 Member of Cumann na mBan and the Irish Citizens' Army, who had taken part in the Easter Rising of 1916, pose in Dublin garden, summer 1916

During this time, women, particularly from the upper classes, were able to step outside of the traditional roles, evident by the female figures at the time, such as Countess Markievicz, Kathleen Lynn and Hannah Sheehy Skeffington. However, due to political changes of the First World War (1914 – 1916) and the Irish Independence in 1922, women's role in Ireland was reinstated within the sphere of the home. To distinguish themselves from imperialist Britain, the image of an Irish woman was utilised to represent the Irish nation through the image of Kathleen Ni Houlihan or Hibernia as a female representation of Ireland and its nation. The cultural representation of women was frequently depicted through the images of a wild and untamed poor woman (Figure 2, p. 28; Figure 4, p. 29; Figure 5, p. 29), who later was replaced by an image of an old Irish peasant mother (Figure 3, p. 28) (Nash, 1993). As Catholic moral teachings became further embedded within the Irish society, the representation of the untamed poor woman became problematic. Nash (1993) observes that images of the wild young women became viewed as indicative of moral laxity and sexual freedom.
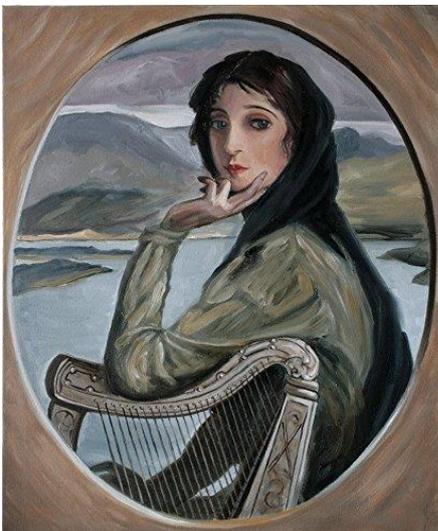
Figure 2 Portrait of Lady Laverty as Kathleen Ni Houlihan, 1928 by Sir John Lavery

Figure 3 Connemara Woman with Red Skirt by Sean O'Sullivan RHA, Galway 1952

Figure 4 Portrait of a Lady as Hibernia by Robert Fagan, 1801
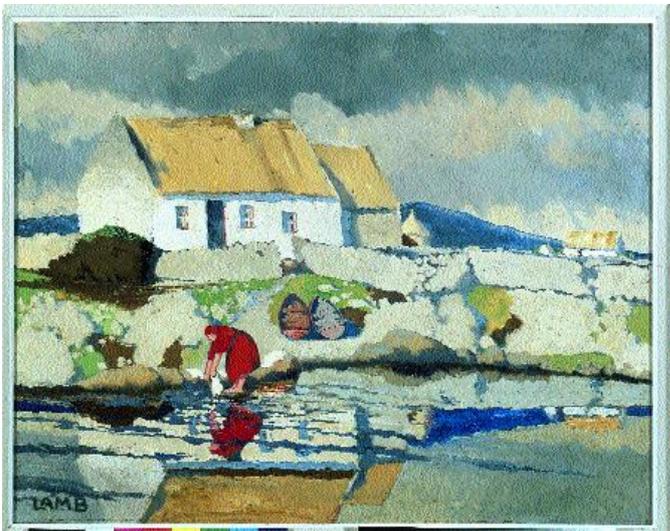
Figure 5 Loch an Mhuilinn (The Mill Lake) by Charles Lamb, 1930

In addition, Gray and Ryan (1997) observe that at that time in Ireland female representation became constructed around the narratives of vulnerability and helplessness. The female was depicted as fulfilling the virgin/whore, victim/threat roles and thus in need of protection and control (Gray and Ryan, 1997). Nash (1993) observes that representing women in this particular way corresponded with a number of concerns. Firstly, female political empowerment caused worries about cultural purity and preservation. Secondly, the demand to control female sexuality was reinforced by the Catholic Church and within the Irish socioeconomic systems of, for example, family farming and land inheritance.

Accordingly, Hill (2003) highlights that during the nationalist agenda, women's primary role eventually became viewed as perpetuating the race by sustaining and nurturing the wedlock and family life. This role was later reinstated by a series of legislative measures that targeted married women, which in turn contributed in constructing a common understanding about the female position

29

within Irish society to one of being familial and domestic. Hill (2003:100) notes 'in 1933 it became law for national schoolteachers to resign on marriage, and the 1935 Employment Act extended the marriage bar to all Civil Service posts.' The Free State Act of 1935 legitimised refusing to employ women in some industries and prevented employers from taking on more women than men. Finally, de Valera's 1937 Constitution (which is still active to this day) not only reinstated that woman's place is within the domestic sphere but also assumed that the concept of a woman could be used interchangeably with the definition of the mother. Representing women in the lines of patriarchal ideology normalised and legitimised discipline and control of Irish women. Consequently, authoritative power, such as the Irish State, the Catholic Church and the medical profession, took charge of governing the female subject.

The Catholic Church and Irish women

Since the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church established itself as an active and influential institution through controlling, disciplining and civilising the Irish, and eventually embedded itself extensively throughout Irish social order and Irish ways of being. As Inglis (2008:15) observes:

> The deeply embedded desire to remain Catholic, combined with the Church's monopoly over education, health and social welfare, ensured that little or nothing was said or done that was contrary to the ethos and teaching of the Catholic Church. While Ireland did not become a theocratic state, it did become a very Catholic society in which a Catholic way of thinking permeated public opinion, the media and everyday social life.

When it came to women, the Catholic Church took over teaching and guiding young women towards the moral Catholic life choices. Being represented as vulnerable, Irish women became continuously reasoned by the Church as victims of modern trends (Valiulis, 1995). Valiulis (1995) notes that the Church alleged public spaces as morally corrupted due to incoming outside fashions, and thus Irish women needed to be saved from potential immorality. To do so, the Church employed various technological means (e.g. Confession) to govern young people and, in particular, women. Policing sex through the control of contraception, forbidding dance halls, censoring films and limiting the number and working hours of public houses were some of the strategies utilised by the Church to govern and control Irish society and Irish women (Hill, 2003). Thus, only Church-based organisations were deemed as acceptable leisure amusements. Public spaces, in particular, where both genders could mix, were tightly surveilled.

Furthermore, Inglis (1987) argues that Confession became one of the main regulatory techniques to control Irish sexuality, and in particular, female sexuality. Since the Church portrayed the female subject as in need of protection from the innate sexual viper that lurked within each woman, it was

precisely the Irish woman who was expected to engage in the practice of Confession routinely. Inglis (1987:29) points out:

> Attendance at Confession is a major aspect of religious legalistic behaviour since the individual submits his conduct to the priest for an assessment of its morality in terms of the institutional laws.

Also, during the Confession, the priest could know the sins, worries and concerns within the community, and thus adjust his pastoral care towards the needs of the local people. Therefore, Confession allowed the priest to pass on the formal Catholic teaching simultaneously maintaining their power over people.

> The power of the diocesan priest in Irish society is, then, related directly to his level of supervision and knowledge of the moral behaviour of his parishioners

(Inglis, 1987:45).

Even though the Church firmly governed women's sexuality and women's bodies, women, particularly Irish mothers, Inglis (1987) argues, firmly aligned with Catholicism. On the one hand, this alliance gave some symbolic power to the Irish woman, on the other hand, it enabled the Church to monitor that Catholic moral teachings were implemented within the home. Inglis (1987) highlights that Irish mothers' alliance with the Church once again reinstated the values of female chastity and purity. Inglis (1987:200) states:

> For women to attain and maintain moral power, it was necessary that they retain their virtue and chastity. This was the message which mothers began to pass to their daughters. Within the rational differentiation of spheres of moral responsibility, chastity and modesty became the specific goals for women.

The alignment with such values, produced channels for Irish women through which they would realise themselves. Embodying these values became a pathway for Irish women to gain honour and respectability, seen in the discussion on the figure of the Irish mother. Similarly, though the embodiment of such values nuns in Ireland were able to wield great powers managing complex Catholic organisations, such as the Magdalene Laundries.

The 'demonic' single Irish woman

Not surprisingly single women and unmarried mothers were considered as the 'Other', and thus forced to the outskirts of Irish society. Anne Byrne (1999) highlights that in Ireland the familist

31

ideology legitimised the stigmatisation of single women. Even though postponed marriages and permanent celibacy were prevalent due to a stem family system, single women were at the very bottom of the hierarchy of the family. Stem family system is based on a patriarchal distribution of power, where:

> …the head was the oldest male parent, who ruled a number of sons and their wives and children. The work of the household was divided according to the status of the female in question: the unmarried daughters did the washing and spinning and weaving, the breeding wives bred, the elder wives nursed and disciplined the children, and managed the cooking, the oldest wife supervised the smooth running of the whole
>
> (Greer, 2006:249).

Byrne (1997) notes that situated within an Irish context where a woman was perceived as a wife/mother/carer and connected to others, women's decision to stay single was always questioned and sometimes frowned upon by the local community as well as Irish society in general. Byrne (1997) notes that frequently women's decision to stay single was interpreted as an indicator of female homosexuality.

Shame and guilt also followed single Irish mothers. Inglis (2003) argues that social bonds in Ireland were structured around values of maintaining honour and avoiding shame. Concepts of honour and shame have been used by the theorist, particularly anthropologists, to understand the structures of community and kin relations. In Ireland, Inglis (2003) notes, honour was linked to family and sexual propriety. Feeling ashamed is personal, it is experienced as an individual emotion. However, experiencing shame is governed by social bonds (Inglis, 2003). Inglis (2003) observes that in Ireland, mainly rural Ireland, maintaining honour is tightly linked with one's family. Maintaining an honourable family name produces a sense of acceptance and belonging, a sense of pride and security. Thus, conceiving outside marriage not only meant financial burdens on the girl's family, but it was also viewed as bringing dishonour and disgrace to the family's name. Honour, Inglis (2003) argues, is a fundamental pillar of Irish sense of self and social being. Inglis (2003:238) states:

> honour legitimates our social position, possessions and places in community. Our sense of self, our sense of well-being is closely linked to honour.

In Ireland, women's honour was closely linked to modesty, purity and sexual chastity. Thus, single mothers, Inglis (2003) observes, were viewed as 'fallen' women. Consequently, it was expected of them to hide their shame and withdraw from society. It was not uncommon for a pregnant girl to be placed in a Magdalene Laundry run by the Catholic Church. It not only ensured that the girl would be out of sight from society, but also it was viewed as an opportunity for a single mother 'to atone for the crime of conceiving without the matrimonial ties' (Inglis, 2003:165). Inglis also notes 'these

homes were part of the institutional strategy of shaming and saving honour' (Inglis, 2003:165). After giving birth single mothers' babies were placed for adoption or foster care. Controlling unmarried mothers through the process of shaming and isolation during which a single mother could regain her honour, functioned as a regulatory and disciplinary technique. Simultaneously, it maintained social conformity and endorsed processes of normalisation when it came to issues of gender roles; in particular, issues about womanhood and women's role in Irish society.

The medical profession and women

Institutional regulation and discipline of the female subject were not exclusively left to the Catholic Church. The medical profession took a great interest in establishing and policing gender norms. The production of knowledge about the nature of the female biology, also, control, and regulation of female bodies allowed the medical profession to establish themselves as an authoritative power (Hyde et al., 2004). For instance, Hyde et al. (2004) note that during the nineteenth-century medical science claimed that the female subject was not very rational, decisive, or intellectual, based on the size of the female skull and bodily composition. Consequently, this particular medical discourse legitimised the claim that women's place was in the home as carers and mothers. In addition, Lupton (2012) notes that since the Enlightenment period medical science constructed women and their bodies as devious, based on discoveries about the female reproductive system; and thus the female was positioned as in need of societal control and regulation. Lupton (2012:139) states:

> Women, by virtue of the menstrual cycle, came to be viewed as similar to animals experiencing sexual urges, needful of control by civilisation. Claims about the appropriateness of certain aspects of women's behaviour in the public and private spheres were predicated on the differences perceived between their bodies and those of men.

Women, who did not show obedience, servility and self-sacrifice, were diagnosed by the doctors as insane and in need of medical intervention (Lupton, 2012).

In Ireland, this particular medical science knowledge about the female body corresponded and simultaneously reinforced understandings about female's position within Irish society and family structures. Through the implementation of biopower, women were controlled and regulated. Foucault (1978:140) defines biopower as 'an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of population.' The exercise of biopower can be seen in the cases of women's committal to Enniscorthy's asylum (St Senan's) in the twentieth century. McCarthy (2001) notes that the medical professionals maintained and regulated the normalisation of femininity through the institutionalisation of women who did not fulfil the expected female role. McCarthy states (2001) that those who rejected the gender roles were vulnerable to committal: single women, a single

mother, women who spoke back to their husbands, and women who rejected Catholic religious devotions. Once admitted, women were expected to be taught how to reintegrate within society. This was achieved through surveillance of women's ability to relate to the inmates and staff.

> Any noise, heightened emotions or violence was seen as a failure and the casenotes show that doctors found such behaviour particularly unacceptable in women. […] As well as being submissive, inmates, especially the women, were expected to be neat and tidy in dress and personal habits
>
> (McCarthy, 2001:106).

The doctors' values and prejudice, McCarthy (2001) notes, were the only guidance in the evaluation of inmates' progress. Thus, as there was no official framework to evaluate the inmates' progress in their illness, only those who conformed to individual doctors' rules were viewed as improving.

Similarly, the power of the medical profession to control and regulate Irish women's bodies and lives is evident in the cases of symphysiotomy. Symphysiotomy is an operation that was carried out in Ireland during 1940s until 1980s to enlarge the female pelvis during labour when the female was experiencing minor obstruction or disproportion. The operation was preferred over the C-section in cases of minor delivery difficulties. Statistically, symphysiotomy was a safer procedure than C-section with lower mortality rates for babies as well as for mothers (Walsh, 2013). Nevertheless, the life-threatening complications related to the symphysiotomy procedure resulted in the method not being used today. Furthermore, the Western world stopped using the procedure in the 1950s as it was said to be too dangerous and viewed as a 'second-class' method (Walsh, 2013). However, the 1950s saw a peak in the implementation of symphysiotomy in Ireland. The use of the procedure reflected a time of Irish cultural norms and legislative restraints: numerous births were the norm, artificial contraception, and sterilisation to prevent pregnancy were illegal as well as ethically unacceptable, and recurrent C-sections posed great dangers (Walsh, 2013).

On the other hand, a number of symphysiotomy procedures seemed to prioritise Catholic moral teachings and values, such as female fertility and childbearing, rather than women's health and bodily integrity. For instance, Walsh (2013) observes that the use of symphysiotomy in Ireland was unique in instances of 'symphysiotomy on the way out'. 'Symphysiotomy on the way out' was carried out while the mother had been stitched after giving birth by C-section. Walsh (2013) observes that in Ireland 'symphysiotomy on the way out' was carried out in the belief that it would help with the future vaginal deliveries even though there was no medical evidence to support that. As symphysiotomy was an acceptable method for emergency and/or difficult labour, 'symphysiotomy on the way out' was seen by European doctors as an unorthodox practice.

The medical profession not only regulated women's material bodies but also had a profound influence in Ireland at the political and legislative level. Considine and Dukelow (2009) observe that the controversy over the Mother and Child Scheme, for example, revealed the extent to which the medical profession and the Church colluded in shaping health policy in twentieth-century Ireland. The Mother and Child Scheme was designed to provide an all-inclusive package of healthcare free and without means-testing to mothers and children up to sixteen years. It was viewed as innovative and a way forward to tackle health service issues at the time, as well as, indicating Ireland's commitment to ensuring and expanding equal social rights. Moreover, the Mother and Child Scheme was introduced in the context of the establishment of the NHS which was based on universal principles. Thus, The Mother and Child Scheme's proposal (while it advocates certainly were concerned with social rights), was also due to a sense that something had to be done, due to how Ireland was falling behind other Western states in a variety of dimensions.

The scheme was not only opposed by the Catholic Church, but also the medical profession vetoed the proposed reform. The Catholic Church opposed the scheme because it interfered with family matters. According to the Church, the State had no right to intrude into family affairs. Considine and Dukelow (2009) note that the medical profession opposed the scheme because they feared that the scheme would abolish their right to practise and profit from private medicine. Consequently, the opportunity for free medical care for mothers and children was lost and the legacy followed to the present day in Ireland. In sum, the Church and medical profession formed an alliance - the Church tended to be the owners and directors of hospitals, and many doctors were devout Catholics - with both maintaining the interests of the other, through a system based both on subsidiarity and market principles.

Winds of late modernity and women in Ireland

From a farming country, Ireland slowly became a modern country led by consumerism, individualism, and self-reliance. Inglis (2008:236) observes 'the latter half of the twentieth century in Ireland was a transition from a predominantly traditional, rural, conservative and Catholic society to a more modern, urban, liberal and secular society', and thus Catholic moral teaching struggled to sustain its importance in people's everyday life. Due to the growth in the power of the State and global media messages, Inglis (2008) argues, the power of the Church started to decline.

> The State abandoned the Church's ideal of a self-sufficient, rural society based on small-scale production in which family, community and religious life took precedence over the acquisition of material possessions. From the end of the 1950s the State began to pursue economic growth through increased industrialisation, urbanisation, international trade, science and technology (Inglis, 1987:217).

Moreover, media, Inglis (1987) argues, not only started to replace church-based activities, but more importantly, it brought new discourses of self-realisation that combined a mixture of liberalism, individualism, consumerism, and hedonism. Those messages stimulated individuals' desire for consumption and production, which were in opposition to the dominant Irish modes of self-realisation, such as self-denial, asceticism and expressions of suffering. However, Inglis highlights that the shift from one ethic of self-realisation to another was not smooth or rapid. Inglis (2008:137) states:

> Hundreds of years of practising self-deprecation, of surrendering the self to others, of denying pleasure and desire, could not be overturned in one or two generations. Notions and practises of putting oneself down, not considering oneself to be worthy, and denying oneself would not only linger for many years to come, but would re-emerge at times with vigour and certainty.

Accordingly, Ireland faced the dilemma of the coalition of cultures: embracing the new ways of self-realisation while simultaneously maintaining the local culture and locally symbolic ways of being (Inglis, 2008; Keohane and Kuhling, 2004).

Even though new trends and discourses concerning womanhood in Ireland were emerging due to the introduction of the mass media and women gaining political and economic powers, central issues on gender equality, women's bodies, and their lives were still in the hands of interest groups and a matter of political debate (Hill, 2003; O'Connor, 1998). Hill (2003) notes that although EU laws and norms started to be implanted within Irish society since Ireland joined the EU in 1973, the Catholic Church retained tight control over issues on moral and sexual behaviour. Issues concerning topics of contraception, abortion and divorce were constructed and presented to the public as moral dilemmas rather than being illegal and unconstitutional. Consequently, the distinct line between the Irish State, as a legislative body, and the Catholic Church, as an institution of spirituality and religion, increasingly became blurred. Any matters that concerned Irish family life were said to belong to the Church's authority, and the State was opposed to intervening. Values of social bonding and belonging, responsibility towards maintaining the institution of the family, and sustaining social solidarity were utilised to regulate and govern decisions concerning femininity and womanhood in Ireland (Inglis, 1998). This is evident in the manner in which Irish society dealt with the issue of contraception and abortion (O'Connor, 1998).

One can argue that the very core of the debates on contraception and abortion illustrate how two different ethics collided; and in its collision caught Irish women's bodies, their lives and their subjectivities. Holding two different and indeed opposite ethics of self-realisation, ethics of solidarity and belonging while pursuing individualism and authenticity, can be illustrated with the tragic event of the Kerry Babies death case (Inglis, 2008). In April of 1984 two newborn babies were found dead

in Kerry, and a single mother Joanne Hayes was charged and later confessed (pressurised by Gardaí) to murdering her new-born baby (McCafferty, 2010; Inglis, 2008). Only in 2018 Irish Government issues an official apology for Joanne Hayes.

Joanne was the embodiment of the new ethics: she conceived without matrimonial ties with a married man Jeremiah Locke, she was not ashamed of her first pregnancy or the fact that she was not married, she visited pubs, and she was not hiding her and Jeremiah's intimate relationship. When Joanne became pregnant for the second time with Jeremiah Locke's baby the old ethics of self-conduct, particular ethics of solidarity in the name of saving the family's honour, Inglis (2003) argues, took hold. Becoming pregnant again Joanne had to display the traditional Irish single mother's role, such as being ashamed and guilty for her actions, to save the family's name. Joanne hid her second pregnancy from doctors, wore bulky clothes to disguise her belly; her family lived with the same sense of shame, they did not mention or talk about Joanne's pregnancy.

Inglis (2003) observes that having a child outside marriage for the first time might have been viewed as carelessness or naivety being seduced by male charms, but a second pregnancy indicated a sexual desire which was against all Catholic moral decency. Joanne's second child was found dead. There were contradictory testimonies of what happened the night of the birth, but what was clear was that Joanne alone or with the family's help dispose of the dead baby's body and never talked about it again. Only when another baby was found with multiple stab wounds on Cahirciveen beach, and Gardaí opened the investigation, Joanne became the primary suspect. In the end, the handling of the legal proceedings highlighted Irish institutional mentality towards single mothers and the intense power that authorities had over women's lives. Gardaí were never criticised for their unethical methods of obtaining confessions from the Hayes family members, and the presentation of evidence during the public tribunal was continuously based on Catholic ethics which meant that Joanne Hayes was unquestionably identified as a sinner and sexually devious (McCafferty, 2010; Inglis, 2003). Joanne Hayes in a way became a figure of scapegoat that reinforced the inculcation of the morality of the Church into the habitus of women.

Contraception

As Ireland was faced with trends of the globalised capitalist economy and late modernity, Irish people were gradually emerging in new ways of being, where a need for individual self-fulfilment and self-expression took over the sense of community and responsibility for the common good (Inglis, 1998). Thus, liberalisation of the laws concerning birth control and family planning became unavoidable. However, the issues on contraception, abortion, and family planning were presented as moral

dilemmas, and thus in need of the Church's protection and regulation on those matters. One could argue that the liberalisation of birth control not only posed an actual threat to the Catholic Church's power in Ireland but also threatened the very core of Catholic moral teachings that were embedded within many Irish social institutions and most Irish people's identities. The 1929 Censorship of Publication Act censored any publications that advocated any form of birth control, including family planning. Furthermore, since the introduction of the 1935 Criminal Law Amendment Act, selling and importing contraceptives in Ireland was considered a criminal offence. McAvoy (2014) points out that any information on contraception was linked with posing a threat to the established patriarchal family structures. Furthermore, pro and anti-abortion discourse in Ireland, McAvoy (2014) notes, was instigated before Irish Independence. McAvoy (2014) argues that from the beginning of 1820, literature that promoted birth control was viewed as sinful, evil and indecent, and thus causing dangers for a social and moral order.

Only since 1979, did the contraceptive pill become available for over the counter purchase with several conditions. When the Irish government passed the Health (Family Planning) Act in 1979, the legislation reflected entirely conflicting views on the issues concerning contraception. The purchase of the pill was available only under a doctor's prescription and only to bona fide married couples, which in turn emphasised the importance of marriage and family life within Irish society. Hill (2003) asserts that even though the purchase of the pill was legalised, it did not assure easy access. As Hill (2003:158, original emphasis) observes:

> Many women remained constrained by their religious beliefs, while others found themselves reliant on the attitudes of individual doctors, nurses or pharmacists, who could refuse to co-operate with policies with which they disagreed on religious grounds.

The passing of the legislation on the purchase of contraception in Ireland was a result of several significant changes within Irish society. First, decriminalising the importation and sales of contraception in Ireland were required under the 1973 Supreme Court judgement in the McGee case, which ruled that the prohibition was unconstitutional because it breached the right to marital privacy. Additionally, Irish minority group movements, such as Irish Women's Liberation Movement (IWLM), Irish Women United (IWU), Sexual Liberation Movement (SLM) and Irish Gay Rights Movement (IGRM), started to establish themselves as an influential force, which in turn introduced new discourses on femininity, sexuality and womanhood within Irish society (Hill, 2003).

Having this heritage of sexual chastity and purity, Inglis (1998) observes, positions younger generations to balance the feeling of ambivalence and confusion when using contraceptive methods. As Inglis (1998) notes for younger generations the dilemma was about balancing being chaste while

simultaneously being sexually active. For instance, Inglis (1998) points out the issue for young women carrying condoms. On the one hand, it indicates responsibility, and on the other hand, it could be read as '… a sign of being interested in sex, not out of love, but just for the sake of sex' (Inglis, 1998:176).

Abortion

As views on contraception and birth control were changing bringing more liberal attitudes towards sexual relationships, issues on abortion became a burning matter among Irish society. There were two referenda on women's right to abortion. In 1983, the referendum to amend the Irish Constitution by including a statement that acknowledged the rights of the unborn was ruled against. However, the 1992 referendum on the issue of the legality of the distribution of information regarding the names and addresses of abortion clinics in England and about women's rights to travel to England for legal services including abortion was passed. Nevertheless, O'Connor (1998:53) observes

> The dominant discourses, both in the first and second abortion referenda, were medical and legal, with moral issues largely revolving around those related to 'ensoulment', rather than those related to a woman's bodily integrity, the nature of respect for her life, her status as a moral being and the limits of her personal autonomy.

In addition, Inglis (1987) highlights that the 1983 abortion referendum indicated the extent and strength of the Catholic Church's control over Irish society. Not only had it revealed the Church's vast organisational network in Ireland, but also it showed how the priests translated political matters as being moral dilemmas. Moreover, the passing of the Constitutional Amendment once again emphasised women's position and role within Irish society as primarily fulfilling the childbearing and domestic functions. Ethics of late modernity, such as individualisation, autonomy and consumerism, were overridden by tradition. Both referenda once more reinstated women's position within Irish society as one that is a passive subject when it came to the decisions on her fertility. Simultaneously, it legitimised and supported the control of the female body by interest groups, such as the Catholic Church and Irish medical profession.

The Constitutional Amendment forbade young girls to avail of legal abortion in Ireland, so young girls who found themselves pregnant were left to their own devices. In addition, pregnant single girls were not given any informal advice or support from the local community as a typical reaction from neighbours was to overlook the unmarried girls' pregnancy to maintain honour (Inglis, 2003). The results of such Irish societal attitudes towards pregnancy outside marriage resulted in tragic events that followed in the upcoming years, such as the death of a pregnant teenage girl Ann Lovett in

Granard (Co. Longford) in January 1984, the case of Joanne Hayes baby's death in April 1984, and in 1992 the X Case of a 14 year-old girl, who found herself pregnant after being raped, and was stopped by the Attorney General's injunction from traveling to the UK for abortion even though her parents gave their consent.

Media discourses of femininity and new ethics of self-realisation through self-indulgence in Ireland

As the Church's influence was declining amongst Irish people, the media slowly became an institution that provided people with ethics and values for leading their lives and constructing their identities (Inglis, 1987). For young people in Ireland, research shows (MacKeogh, 2004), the media acts as a source of information, especially on issues concerning sexuality and sex. However, a predicament arises when global media messages based on ethics of late modernity collide with the local meanings of womanhood and femininity. The peculiarity of the local-global clash, Keohane and Kuhling (2004) highlight, can be seen within Irish media that incorporates elements of globalisation and localisation. For instance, Keohane and Kuhling (2004) argue that throughout the RTE Guide, one of the biggest-selling magazine in Ireland, 'Irish celebrities' are represented simultaneously as authentic individuals and at the same time as belonging to the community. When it comes to a female celebrity, Keohane and Kuhling (2004) point out, that her personal achievements are represented as a contribution to common values of family and community. Keohane and Kuhling (2004:86) observe that:

> Sonia O'Sullivan's hard work and success is equated with the traditional role of an Irish woman: "Her mothering skills are obviously as effortless and as natural as her running ability" (26 August-3 September 1999, p.4).

The Irish media, scholars note (Stokes, 2014; MacKeogh, 2004), are increasingly incorporating contemporary global representations of women who portray sexiness as empowerment and individualism as female liberation. For instance, Stokes (2014) argues that post-Celtic Tiger Ireland widely incorporates new discourses of raunch culture when it comes to the representation of women. Drawing from Levy's (2006) concept of raunch culture, Stokes explains that it is characterised by hypersexualisation in popular culture of the female subject, which previously solely existed as a character in the sex industry and pornography, now is being infiltrated into the mainstream culture as a sign of the ideal femininity.

> It is a culture (…) in which the image of the sex worker (the prostitute, the stripper, the 'glamour model' and, more recently, the 'porn star') embodies ideal female sexuality and is represented as a figure of aspiration in the media and in popular cultural texts

Stokes (2014) urges one to look at the rising number of advertising campaigns launched by Irish companies to reveal the prevalence and extent of the raunch culture within the Irish landscape. Stokes (2014) highlights two major ad campaigns: Ryanair 2012 'Red Hot dares and Crew' campaign (Figure 8, p. 41) and 2011'Hunky Dory' campaign with female rugby and Gaelic football players (Figure 6, p. 41). One could argue that Ryanair and Hunky Dory advertisement symbolises the opening up of Ireland to global influences. The stewardesses in Ryanair advertisement look specifically not Irish - probably intentionally, to sell the fantasy of leaping out of the Irish culture and Irish gene pool. Thus, Irish women are not only faced with a newly found sexualisation but also with themselves not being able to conform to the ideal of femininity represented in the advertisement campaigns. Thus, in a way, Irish women are caught in the anomic position of being urged to become sexual but lacking the racial
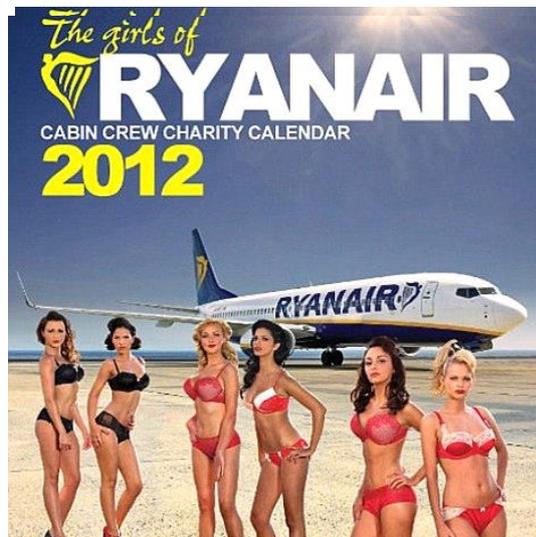
Figure 8 Ryanair 2012 campaign

Figure 6 Hunky Dory 2011 campaign

attributes to conform to the ideal. Hunky Dory advertisement merges the local GAA values with the global 'can-do' femininity qualities. However, both qualities are imagined and expressed through sexualised female bodies.

Stokes (2014) argues that this kind of pornographic representation of women in Ireland, where the female is constructed as the object of the male gaze and male pleasure, is evident over the last ten years. On the other hand, Murphy (2015) shows that the representation of women in a sexualised and objectified manner have long existed in Guinness advertising campaigns. Even though women are mostly excluded from the Guinness advertisement, on occasions when women appear in such images, they are subjected to objectification and/or androcentric texts. The effect of such female representations, Stokes (2014) highlights, is the normalisation of the pornification of the female subject and simultaneously public acceptance and expectation that the 'appropriate' femininity must display the sexually expressive characteristics to constitute as the female. Moreover, young people in Ireland accept sexual media content, MacKeogh's (2004) study highlights, as being a part of everyday life. The study points out that throughout Irish media 52% of general audience programmes contain scenes of a sexual nature. Females in these programmes were the main instigators of sexual activities such as kissing and flirting (female 69%, male 9%, mutual 22%), while instigation of sexual intercourse was more mutually agreed, but still slightly led by women (female 15%, male 14%, mutual 68%).

These new regimes of governance that celebrate female sexualisation as a form of liberation, and prioritise self-fulfilment, individual autonomy, personhood and individual choice and rights, sit uneasily with the traditional Irish meanings of womanhood that prioritise elements of familism, caring and reproduction (O'Connor, 1998). The Ryanair and Hunky Dory advertisements are emblematic of the transformation of women in Ireland from being an object of morality and Catholic moral teachings, to being an object of sexuality and empowerment. Consequently, it raises not only a question of how a young woman makes sense of the new regimes of governance, but also, how the old and the new, traditional, and modern meanings of womanhood are incorporated into young women's identity construction on social media platforms.

Teenage girls in late modernity Ireland

In Ireland, girlhood studies are limited. Teenage girls' voices and their stories of living in late modernity Ireland are usually confined to the realm of childhood or youth studies (see Inglis, 2008; O'Connor, 2008). Being located under the umbrella of childhood studies, Jiwani et al. (2006) point out, positions teenage girls to be interpreted with strong connotations of innocence, purity, and

naivety. On the other hand, being positioned under overarching youth studies implies that gender is somehow less relevant or less important for teenage girls' lived experiences than belonging to a 'homogeneous' youth group.

Studies that focus on exploring teenagers' life in Ireland (Greene et al., 2010; O'Connor, 2008; Hyde and Howlett, 2004) to some extent illuminate issues on femininity and female identity within modern Irish society, but still do not answer how young girls balance their everyday lives while facing two very different calls for their self-realisation; what are the consequences for a young girl when she embodies these colliding ethics? A significant study that explores children's and young people's development and lived experiences is Growing Up in Ireland (2012) commissioned by Department of Children and Youth Affairs. This longitudinal study explored children's holistic development throughout two cohorts (at nine-years-old and then later at thirteen-years-old). The study is immensely informative and reports back on issues such as children's experiences of school, physical activity, relationships and their feelings. However, as the study is based on social psychological aspects of children's development, the study does not particularly single out ways young people construct their identities and sense of self in contemporary Ireland.

O'Connor's (2008) study on Irish children and teenagers focuses on exploring young persons' identity orientation in late modernity Ireland. The study invited children to write a narrative on 'describing themselves and the Ireland that they inhabit'. Drawing from the data O'Connor (2008) identifies a number of identity orientations among young people, such as a global orientation, and individualisation ethos and strong gender identity. Across both genders and age groups (10-12 year-olds; 14-17 year-olds) local community, community ties and local area were highlighted as having huge importance to young people. Moreover, O'Connor (2008) notes that children's stories about their lives indicated features of being locally embedded within a global world. As for 'doing a girl', O'Connor (2008) notes, relational discourse (indicating to family and friends) was more evident in girls' stories, as well as references to search for authenticity and managing anxieties of unclear future while simultaneously having high expectations about their education and participation in paid employment. Such tensions add up to a significant burden for girls: reconciling traditional gender roles with future career success and autonomy.

A large number of Irish studies have been conducted that paid considerable attention to teenage pregnancy and sexuality (Afra and Quigley, 2014; Hyde and Howlett, 2004; MacKeogh, 2004; Inglis, 1998). Taking into account the heritage of a peculiar relationship with sexuality and sex (e.g. evident in the debates about the introduction of sexual education in schools), and in particular the extensive control of Irish female sexuality, it comes as no surprise that there are a number of studies conducted focusing on exploring teenage sexual identity within the Irish context. While focusing on young

peoples' sexuality might instigate moral panics (McRobbie, 2000), these studies nevertheless illuminate some of the ambivalent dispositions that teenage girls find themselves in, in modern Ireland while holding the global and local ethics of self-realisation.

For instance, Hyde and Howlett (2004) research on teenage sexuality in Ireland indicated that teenage girls' narratives were full of ambivalence when teenage girls expressed their understandings about appropriate female behaviour. Hyde and Howlett (2004) highlight that teenage girls' conceptualisation of their sexual encounters were caught up between local and global meanings of femininity. Traditional meanings of Irish femininity, which emphasise female chastity and sexual purity (as previously discussed), now are entangled with global meanings of femininity that celebrate active, 'up for it' and 'in charge' female sexuality (previously discussed by Gill, 2008). During their study, Hyde and Howlett (2004:10) observed that:

> Young women suggested that they would have first penetrative sex only in the context of a loving relationship, others viewed virginity as a stigma to be removed, irrespective of whether or not they were in a committed relationship.

On the other hand, patriarchal and familist ideology that historically strongly regulated female identity was still evident during Hyde and Howlett's (2004) study. Teenage girls' understanding of their sexual desires and pleasures, Hyde and Howlett (2004) note, were organised around pleasing the man; enjoying sex for teenage girls was always associated with pleasing the man rather than satisfying their own desires. In addition, Hyde and Howlett (2004) argue that teenage girls' sexual encounters were more tightly policed with labels such as 'slut' or 'slapper'. Teenage boys, Hyde and Howlett (2004) note, escaped the cultural constraints of sexual intercourse that must be legitimised by marriage or intimate relationship. In conclusion, Hyde and Howlett (2004) state that teenage girls in Ireland are not only more likely to gain the label of a 'slut' due to their sexual experience but also, are now viewed as responsible for establishing and maintaining sexual boundaries simultaneously indicating sexual availability and interest.

Conclusion

This chapter section aimed to explore how in Ireland meanings of womanhood and femininity, which are so strongly linked with the figure of a mother, a carer, a pure and chaste young girl, became established through 'regimes of truth'. The regulation of women's identities and their lives in Ireland had been a locus of authoritative top-down powers, such as the Irish State the Catholic Church, and the medical profession. These institutions governed Irish female lives by evoking ethics of solidarity and responsibility towards the community, calling upon ideals of maintaining families' honour, and shaming girls when they disgraced themselves and their communities. However, with the trends of late modernity, a young girl now finds herself being addressed by two very different ethics of self-realisation: between old ethics of self-denial and new ethics of individualism, hedonism and consumerism. Research exploring how girls in Ireland make sense of the current ethics for constructing their identities is scarce. Therefore, it is vital to understand the strategies that teenage girls employ when they embody colliding ethics of self-realisation if gender equality is to be achieved.

II. RATIONALITIES OF TEENAGE YEARS AND TEEN FEMININITIES IN LATE MODERNITY

Introduction

This chapter section is focused on exploring the ways contemporary teenagers are addressed in late modernity. The previous chapter section highlighted the importance of Irish cultural scripts of femininity that informed the construction of female identities in Ireland. However, teenage girls, as a distinct age group, are regulated and governed by different forms and strategies than adult women. Thus, how teenage girls decide to express femininity and construct their identity is inevitably linked with the expectations and tasks that are set for this specific age group.

Thus, this chapter section explores rationalities that regulate and govern teenagers, and particularly, teenage girls. The discussion is guided by the following questions: *what kind of rhetoric is employed when talking about modern teenagers? How are teenagers as a group imagined in the contemporary society? What kind of rationalities are produced when talking about teenagers, and thus, how are teenagers governed utilising those rationalities*? In particular, the chapter section is interested in unravelling how teenage girls are imagined under rationalities of late modernity, for instance, the rationality of individualism, authenticity and choice.

Moreover, a Foucauldian understanding of political rationalities is utilised to guide the discussion for this chapter section. Rationalities are modes of thinking about the world, about ourselves and others, and thus modes of addressing one another and acting upon each other (Miller and Rose, 2008). Through systems of expertise, which identify problems, solutions and goals and produce formalised knowledge, rationalities are given form and expression. Therefore, rationalities create and justify the modes through which reality can be represented, explored and corrected (Talburt and Lesko, 2011). For teenagers, the rationalities of experts - for instance, psychologists, teachers, social workers - shape how teenage years are defined, what needs teenagers have and how those needs should be met. Being subjected to those particular rationalities a young person is given a particular subject position from which they can speak and act. In other words, rationalities create subjects.

The concept of a teenager is socially constructed. As a definite stage of in-betweenness, a stage of psychosocial development, teenage years came into being after deindustrialisation (Griffin, 1993). Due to the changes in society, young people's place and role had to shift, too (Griffin, 1993). Addressed as subjects 'in progress' – neither an innocent child nor the rational adult – positioned youth not only as a homogeneous group, but also, in need of guidance so as to ensure that young

people obtained skills and dispositions, which would enable them to function in the society, and also to become modern rational citizens.

Scholars (Popkewitz, 2011; Lupton, 1999) note that contemporary citizenship is first realised through attainment of rationality. Furthermore, citizenship is '…realized through acts of free but responsibilized choice in a variety of private, corporate, and quasi-public practices from working to shopping' (Rose, 1999: xxiii), as part of late modernity's ethos and its commitment to govern at a distance (Miller and Rose, 2008). Consequently, from an early age, young people are monitored and surveilled from a distance to ensure they are developing the skills for becoming rational citizens. However, to legitimise surveillance over youth, young people needed to be identified as a problem (Miller and Rose, 2008). This has been done by producing formalised expert knowledge about young people. Moreover, spaces that young people are asked to occupy, for instance, schools, aim to instil techniques of self-surveillance through methods of constant monitoring, measuring and surveilling young person's conduct and progress (Tait, 2011; Harris, 2004). In addition, in late modernity through technologies of free choice and responsibility, people, including teenagers, are subjected to self-surveil their conduct and their progress towards rationalisation. Consequently, teenagers become self-surveilling subjects that are 'obliged to be free' (Rose, 1999) to choose to monitor, record and judge their development.

The 'obligation to be free' (Rose, 1999) originates from the rhetoric of late modernity, in particular, neoliberal ideologies. Neoliberalism is based on principles of entrepreneurship and free economic markets. It advocates for liberating economic exchange between discrete economic units in a belief that this form of governing will produce most social goods as individuals will strive to achieve economic success for their own benefit. Rose (1999) argues that this form of governing does not reside only within the economic life. Neoliberal ideologies structure the rationalities of governing individual citizens' lives. 'Individuals are to become, as it were, entrepreneurs of themselves, shaping their own lives through the choices they make among the forms of life available to them' (Rose, 1999:230). The modern self, Rose (1999) notes, is obliged to construct one's life through the exercise of choice.

> The self is not merely enabled to choose, but obliged to construe a life in terms of its choices, its powers, and its values. Individuals are expected to construe the course of their life as the outcome of such choices, and to account for their lives in terms of the reasons for those choices
>
> (Rose, 1999:231).

The supremacy of individual's responsibility and obligation to exercise choice in a society of late modernity is evident in Beck's (1992) theory of risk society and also Bauman's (2001) analysis of

liquid modernity. Thus, in late modernity, identity is conceptualised as a collection of individual choices. Harris (2004) argues that 'can-do' girls - ambitious, self-inventing and self-reliant, materialistic and highly visible – are constructed as the ideal type of femininity due to her ability to make the 'right' choices. Thus, young girls who strive to hold a part-time job to pay for their education and at the same time 'choose' to delay their motherhood for the sake of education and career, are viewed as figures of admiration and aspiration. On the other hand, teenage motherhood is distained on the basis of 'intentionally choosing' to remove oneself from the labour market.

Moreover, teenage girls are encouraged to believe that they are the ideal type for fulfilling late modernity ideals because of girls' ability to be flexible, resilient and self-making. Furthermore, dominant media discourses aim to persuade teenage girls that they are the winners in the new economic and political configurations. Literature (Pomerantz et al. 2013; Currie et al., 2009; Harris, 2004) highlight that girls are encouraged to view themselves and be viewed by others as subjects of capacity that enjoy new freedoms. Moreover, parallel to ideologies of neoliberalism, rationalisations of postfeminism (Gill, 2008; Gill, 2007), Girl Power discourse (Taft, 2004) and Successful Girls discourse (Pomerantz et al. 2013) have a profound grip over teenage girls' subjectivities.

Girl power discourse originated with the Riot Grrrl punk scene in the United States that encouraged women to unite and fight social injustice. Taken up by the marketers, Girl Power discourse became translated into middle-class individualism and personal responsibility. Eventually, the Girl Power discourse lost its emphasis on the collective power and focused on emphasising female self-reliance, personal ambition, and independence.

> Like Girl Power, Successful Girls constructs girls' lives as beyond sexism. But rather than consumer and sexual power, the power of the successful girl expands into education, the workplace, and relationships
>
> (Pomerantz et al., 2013:190).

Furthermore, Gill (2007) argues that postfeminism should be taken not as an epistemological or historical turn, but rather as a sensibility that operates within the contradicting values that always run parallel. Gill (2007:4) defines the postfeminist sensibilities as including the following interlinking values: 'femininity is a bodily property; the shift from objectification to subjectification; an emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and self-discipline; a focus on individualism, choice and empowerment; the dominance of a makeover paradigm; and a resurgence of ideas about natural sexual difference.' Gill and Scharff (2011) assert that due to resonance between postfeminist and neoliberal rationalities it is precisely women who are called upon to fulfil the new forms of governmentality through self-management, self-discipline, the transformation of the self, regulation of their conduct, and presentation of their behaviour as freely chosen. Thus, the contemporary female

is constructed as a winner in the new cultural arrangements as she is the one who is benefiting from the feminist achievements and at the same time she is given the opportunity to put these achievements into practice (Harris, 2004).

Consequently, contemporary young girls are governed not through technologies of restraint, but through technologies of choice and capacity. McRobbie (2009) points out that now, young girls are regulated not by what they cannot or ought to do, but more about what they can do. However, to be addressed as subjects of capacity, young girls from different ethnic and social backgrounds are asked to enter a new sexual contract. This new sexual contract subjects young girls to recognise themselves as privileged subjects, most importantly, subjects that abandon the feminist critique of gender inequalities. Moreover, the attention directed at girls, places girls as subjects of agency and capacity, McRobbie (2009) argues, and thus produces particular female figures and performances: a postfeminist masquerade, a well-educated working girl, a phallic girl, and a global girl, which will be discussed in more detail below.

Considering the current governing technologies that are aimed at teenage girls, it is vital to raise the following questions:

- *How do teenage girls in Ireland situate themselves in relation to rationalities of late modernity, neoliberalism and postfeminism?*

- *What forms and performances teenage girls in Ireland take up while being subjected by the new sexual contract?*

- *How do teenage girls themselves articulate their subjectivities?*

- *Do they feel that they are the winners in contemporary society?*

Literature (Scharff 2011, 2012; Baker 2010; Baker 2008; Rich 2005) point out that since girls view themselves as subjects of capacity, also being identified as winners in the contemporary society, the critique of inequalities is obstructed. Thus, power structures that sustain gender inequality remain intact. This study follows feminist-based inquiry, which means that the researcher is concerned with analysing structures of power and gender inequality (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). Therefore, a feminist researcher would argue that it is crucial to unravelling the ways teenage girls in Ireland see themselves in current society to enable them to uptake feminist critique of power structures and thus strive for gender equality. It was highlighted in the earlier chapter section that research with teenage girls in Ireland is scarce. More importantly, there is no current published research exploring the contemporary governing technologies aimed at young girls in Ireland.

49

Rationalities of late modernity

Before exploring subject positions that are available for teenage girls to occupy and speak from inside contemporary society, it is important to understand the new rhetoric that regulates the structures within current modern society. Literature (Bauman, 2000; Giddens, 1990) point out that the break from industrial capitalism marks the start of late modernity. This new era is defined by global capital economies, rapid and complex markets, and rhetoric of neoliberal ideologies. Scholars define this period using different terms, such as late modernity (Giddens, 1990), postmodernity (Best and Kellner, 1997), or liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000). Nevertheless, the features of late modernity, postmodernity and liquid modernity are analogous: instability, global markets, flux identity, individualisation and consumerism. Scholars, such as Beck (1992) and Bauman (1995, 2001), had suggested that due to increasing of globalisation, the collapse of industrialisation and break down of cultural traditions, risk and unpredictability became embedded within social structures. Now secure full-time employment is replaced with temporary short-term temporary part-time contracts, industrial production lost its value to technology and the information revolution, and direct state provision is replaced with the rhetoric of individual responsibility and enterprise.

Beck (1992) views late modernity as a risk society. He argues that economic unpredictability and insecurities fuelled by globalisation, as well as, weakening of collective ties and identities, resulted in an enduring feeling of risk. Consequently, the individual experiences, Beck (1992) argues, a constant sense of flux. Moreover, as longstanding social relationships and collective ties are fading away, individuals' sense of identity and place within society become unstable. Consequently, individuals are left on their own to manage and negotiate a sense of risk and flux. Without any support structures or traditional patterns, individuals are positioned to become responsible for their own success. Thus, Beck (1992) argues that due to unstable structures of support people are increasingly subjected to create their own life paths. Throughout risk societies, people's lives are viewed as 'choice biographies' or do-it-yourself (DIY) biographies. In other words, Beck (1992) argues that in late modernity people are free to choose their ways of conducting their lives and thus their sense of self.

Similarly, Bauman (2001) saw contemporary era as liquidity that is marked simultaneously by disjuncture and continuity. Without any solid patterns or codes, the individual is expected to create one's life trajectory in the environment of constant change and uncertainty. Thus, right choices and patterns of consumption, Bauman (2001) notes, become anchors of one's identity in the times of liquid modernity. Individuals are asked to become responsible, adaptable, and self-making citizens who do not rely on State support. The rhetoric of individualisation, Bauman (2000) highlights, transforms the idea of individual's identity from a 'given' to a 'task'. Hence, individuals' capacity to display self-

invention becomes a measure of successful achievement of identity. In other words, speedy and continuous self-reinvention and Do-It-Yourself (DIY) self-making become the most crucial element in the globalised capitalist culture.

The rhetoric of entrepreneurship and DIY self-making not only become embedded within all spheres of society but more importantly, are constructed as expressions of individual autonomy, freedom and choice. Accordingly, structural inequalities are translated as individual pathologies and responsibilities. For instance, female lack of body confidence is presented as an individual feeling, rather than a marketing strategy employed by advertising companies that depict female flaws to persuade women to buy 'corrective' beauty products (Jhalli et al., 2010). Similarly, female anorexia is conceptualised as individual women's pathology and sometimes a choice, rather than a contemporary normalisation of extremely skinny female bodies by the fashion industry (Bordo, 2003; Malson, 1998). Therefore, in late modernity self-transformation and self-invention are presented as the primary methods to tackle injustice rather than critiquing social structures which sustain that injustice (Gill, 2008a, 2007; McRobbie, 2009).

The neoliberal, entrepreneurial form of selfhood that is individualised and disembodied from the solids that existed before liquid modernity is entirely different from the type of self that existed for women in Catholic Ireland, which was engulfed by its social groups. The self-making subject, operating in a context of risk, contrasts sharply with the dutiful, outwardly chaste, compliant subject position that was necessary to perform to achieve social honour in Catholic Ireland. Not only is this a sharp contrast, but the collision between the two moral worlds also occurred in a highly truncated period, presenting considerable difficulties for women to reconcile them in their identity work. This could be theorised as a shift for Irish women from a subject position within a hierarchical, patriarchal society that was conservative, stable, and inflexible, to one where they are demanded and imagined to be continually managing indeterminacy. Such subject position becomes an orientation to life projects as a whole.

Rationalities of teenage years

A teenager is an empty category that is expressed in a multiplicity of forms depending on a cultural context, political rhetoric and modes of governing (Cieslik and Simpson, 2013; Harris, 2004; Griffin, 1993). In the Western society, teenage years as a definite time and developmental stage came into being after deindustrialisation (Griffin, 1993). Deindustrialisation brought significant changes throughout society, such as a reduction of manual labour jobs resulting in youth economic dependency, an increase in living expenses forcing both parents into the job market, and thus bringing

shifts within the family structure (Griffin, 1993). As a result, these changes affected the way society understood young persons' place and role within a newly established order. Thus, teenage years became more clearly marked as a time of 'in between': between the time of dependent childhood and independent adulthood (Cieslik and Simpson, 2013). Viewed as subjects 'in progress' – neither an innocent child nor the rational adult – constructed young people as a homogeneous group. Moreover, youth became perceived as needing guidance if young people were to obtain skills and dispositions for successful functioning in modern society.

Talburt and Lesko (2011) point out three historical rationalities that dominate the construction of the concept of a teenager. These rationalities, Talburt and Lesko (2011) argue, continue to produce the category of youth in contemporary society. The first rationality they define is 'pastoral power', which emerged in the 1880s in the USA. Talburt and Lesko (2011) highlight that by providing solutions on how to raise the next generation of American children in an unpredictable future, systems of reasoning developed by scientists and social reformers produced a concept of an adolescent. They note that:

> Adolescence became a way of talking about the future of the nation and developing modern citizens who were rational and self-disciplined. Modernization entailed measuring, monitoring, and standardizing time, a zeitgeist applied to civilisation and development
>
> (Talburt and Lesko, 2011:12).

Consequently, teenage years became clearly marked as a period of 'development-in-time'. Following the ethos of modernisation, in particular, the need to measure progress and transformation (Seaton, 2011), the task of the authorities was to measure, and consequently, guide young persons' development. During this time the monitoring and guiding of a young person were carried through the rhetoric of 'peer relationships' (Talburt and Lesko, 2011). People in authority started acting as peers and confidants towards young people: respectful of teenagers' voices, tactful and sensitive. By utilising this conduct based on peer relationships, authorities were able to instil self-correction into young persons' conduct. 'This pastoral power distributed discipline among adult authorities and youthful subjects who internalized regulations to monitor the self' (Talburt and Lesko, 2011:13).

The second rationality Talburt and Lesko (2011) identify emerged in the 1950s with the introduction of teenage markets. Due to young people's increased ability to participate in the consumption of goods, new public spaces opened for teenagers. Consequently, young people became viewed as 'youth-as-fun' and 'youth-as-potential-offender'. Moral panics fueled the social construction of youth being in danger. These panics arose due to young people's use of their leisure time to consume popular cultures, such as rock and roll music that was viewed as causing excessive sexuality and drugs. Talburt and Lesko (2011:13) observe that:

In a context of anxiety about youth behavior in changing times, legions of psychologists and sociologists were recruited to identify and solve youth problems.

During this historical period, rationalities developed by scientists took hold of societies' imagination about young people, and their needs to reach full maturity and their role in society. Moreover, psychological and sociological theories regarding youth, which are still very influential to this day, were published during this time. For instance, Erikson's theory (1968) of identity crisis and stages of human psychosocial development. Erikson (1968) argued that to become a successfully functioning adult in society, young people needed to develop a solid sense of identity by overcoming the role confusion. In short, during this transition period, a teenager was asked to become a subject, an agent, and an independent and self-aware person by choosing to adopt roles that were valued in society. Miller and Rose (2008) highlight that the governing of people is carried out by identifying problems and simultaneously providing solutions. 'For to presume to govern seemed to require one to propose techniques to intervene – or to be dismissed as a mere critic or philosopher' (Miller and Rose, 2008:15). Therefore, by problematising teenagers and their conduct, and simultaneously identifying solutions via formalised knowledge provided by experts, the governing of young people was legitimised.

The third rationality Talburt and Lesko (2011) identify, is linked with the emergence of knowledge about youth subcultures in the 1970s. Research on youth subcultures, which were viewed as subversion and resistance of the dominant culture, perpetuated the idea that young people were somewhere in between delinquency and normalcy. These conceptualisations of youth evoked protectionist discourses. Young people were viewed as being at risk to break the established social order and thus in need of protection from temptations (Griffin, 1993). In addition, the protectionist discourse was continuously evoking the sentimental Victorian picture of childhood innocence as a universal phenomenon; and by increasing the regulation of youth claimed to save the innocence of childhood. Moreover, during this time young people were continually defined as being different from adults. For instance, various disciplines defined teenage years as a time of paternal conflict, risk-taking and moodiness (Albert et al., 2013; Lesko 2012; Casey et al., 2008). These qualities were argued to be exclusively the issue of young people, as young people's bodies were said to be going through hormonal surges (Walsh and Walsh, 2014). Scientific discoveries about hormonal changes in the young person's body and brain not only allowed 'proving' the argument that young people are going through development in-between stages but also, reinforced the idea that young people were in need of guidance from adults (Talburt and Lesko, 2011).

In contemporary society, the benchmark by which young people are measured is set in line with the values of late modernity, such as individualisation, flexibility, rationality, and its commitment to progress through rationalisation (Lupton, 1999). The process of rationalisation is structured by measuring one's attainment of reason (Tait, 2011). To be viewed as a mature person, a teenager has to go through the process of change and transformation towards developing reason (Popkewitz, 2011). Moreover, this process of reaching reason has to be expressed in such a form that it could be measured (Seaton, 2011). However, as the current mode of governing citizens is based on neoliberal ideologies, in other words governing at a distance via the knowledge of experts (Miller and Rose, 2008), now young people are asked to self-monitor and self-measure their progress towards becoming rational citizens through making 'right' choices within the neoliberal regime. Lupton (2016), for example, points out an increasing current trend of quantifying the self through self-tracking using digital technologies. Monitoring, evaluating and optimising oneself through digitally self-produced data, Lupton (2016) argues, are equivalent to moral obligations regarding working on the self. These obligations, Lupton (2016) notes, are fundamental to contemporary notions of selfhood and citizenship. Even the spaces that young people are expected to occupy in contemporary society, such as schools, leisure centres and youth clubs, are regulated and operated with vigilant attention and surveillance to produce self-surveilling rational citizens (Harris, 2004).

Moreover, as citizenship in late modernity is strongly aligned with the participation in the market through the expression of consumption and production, a young person is increasingly becoming evaluated according to the level of one's productivity and consumption (Woo, 2011). Differentiation between 'good' and 'bad' use of spare time for young people is exemplary of new measures that are set out by late modernity rhetoric. Now young people need to demonstrate their viability as consumers when entering public leisure spaces, such as shopping malls, cinema, or streets (Harris, 2004). Harris (2004:101) argues that the results of this new conceptualisation about youth spare time

> …construct certain kinds of subjects who can be managed into work and training, who are focused on success and productivity in the new economy, and who have little time and no space for unregulated leisure that does not involve consumption.

Ultimately, young people are continuously being identified and categorised according to the manner in which late modernity demands of self-realisation.

> Those who fail to adapt to flexibility and self-invention are cast as the at-risk and often undeserving because they are insufficiently responsible, and require surveillance and intervention

(Harris, 2011:146).

Late modernity and young women: subjects of capacity, beneficiary and privilege

Young women, in particular, Harris (2004) argues, are constructed as an ideal type for fulfilling the late modernity subject: a woman who is resilient and flexible, but above all, self-making. Harris asserts that two conditions made this happen.

> First, changed economic and work conditions combined with the goals achieved by feminism have created new possibilities for young women. (…) Second, new ideologies about individual responsibility and choice also dovetail with some broad feminist notions about opportunities for young women
>
> (Harris, 2004:6).

Harris (2004) notes that feminist demands for women's rights coincided with the implementation of anti-discriminatory policies and laws that privileged men in education and at work. Consequently, women's status and participation have dramatically transformed in sectors of education, employment, and heterosexual nuclear family. Now women are encouraged not only to pursue education and meaningful work but also, their participation is constructed as desirable and celebratory. The celebratory rhetoric of women's participation in sectors of education and employment, Harris (2004) highlights, to a great degree reflects the broader socioeconomic need for young women to take up a place in the new globalised economy. The collapse of the full-time youth job market, the rise of the service and communications sector, fragmentation of both workplaces and work trajectories, departure of men from some professional spheres into technology or finance sectors, created gaps in the labour market that encouraged young women's work participation. In addition, Harris (2004) notes that mainly middle-class young women are pressurised to participate in the labour market. Harris (2004:7) states

> Middle-class young women can no longer rely on marriage to secure their economic status or social standing. These young women must become successful and income-generating in their own right, and this means doing well academically and professionally.

Scholars highlight that girls are encouraged to view themselves and be viewed by others as subjects of capacity that enjoy new freedoms (Pomerantz et al., 2013; Currie et al., 2009; Harris, 2004).

> The popular story is that girls as a whole are performing brilliantly and are the great example and hope for the future. Educated, young, professional career women with glamorous consumer lifestyles appear to be everywhere. This scenario is a reality for a small number, but

the image also functions as a powerful ideal that suggests that all young women are now enjoying these kinds of lives and that is what it means to be successful

(Harris, 2004:8).

Moreover, as in risk society individuals are required to be flexible, malleable, resilient, and above all responsible for crafting their own 'choice biographies' (Beck, 1992), young women, Harris (2004) argues, are doubly constructed as ideal flexible subjects.

They are imagined as benefiting from feminist achievements and ideology, as well as from new conditions that favour their success by allowing them to put these into practice

(Harris, 2004:8).

Now young women are imagined to be the ones who are most privileged to succeed in a risk society. Harris (2004) describes a specific image of an ambitious, self-inventing and self-reliant, materialistic and highly visible 'can-do' girl, who is depicted as an example of successful adaptation in a risk society. This can be illustrated with a recent rationalisation about teenage motherhood and academically successful teenage girls. For instance, in late modernity teenage motherhood, McRobbie (2000) argues, is repudiated on the basis of dependency on the State and 'intentionally choosing' to eliminate oneself from the job market. Whereas young girls who do well academically while holding a part-time job to pay for their own education simultaneously 'choosing' to delay their motherhood for the sake of career are represented as subjects of aspiration and admiration (Harris, 2004).

On the other hand, stories of young women's success and achievements run parallel with public concerns that some young women are not succeeding as they should even though they are 'given the right' circumstances and opportunities. Harris (2004) asserts that this dual focus on young women as 'can-do' girls or 'at-risk' girls acts as a regulatory technique. Good choices, effort and ambition alone, Harris (2004) highlights, are presented as being responsible for the success that differentiates the 'can-do' girl from the 'at-risk' girl. In sum, in late modernity 'can-do' girls stand as symbols of ideal citizenship that all girls should aspire to become despite socio-economic inequalities.

Similarly, McRobbie (2009) argues that the changes in the labour market and success of feminist agenda gave rise to the new 'gender regime'. Now young women, McRobbie (2009) points out, are governed not by what they cannot do, but more by what they can do. However, to be addressed as subjects of capacity, young girls no matter their ethnic and social backgrounds are asked to fulfil the requirements of the new sexual contract. McRobbie (2009) identifies that this new sexual contract demands from girls to perform as economically active female citizens (primarily through consumption). In addition to girls' economic performance, girls are asked '… to recognise themselves

as privileged subjects of social change, perhaps they might even be expected to be grateful for the support they have received' (McRobbie, 2009:58). Moreover, feminist critique of social and structural inequalities must be abandoned.

Not surprisingly, the disavowal of feminist rhetoric was traced in a number of current studies with young women (Scharff, 2011, 2012; Baker, 2010, 2008; Rich, 2005). For instance, Scharff's (2012) study, which explored young women's relationship with feminism while being addressed by ethics of neoliberalism, identified that women repudiated feminism on a basis that taking up a feminist position indicated alignment with accepted victimhood and lack of personal responsibility. Scharff (2012) notes that a number of research participants dissociated themselves from feminism since young women viewed feminism as indicating unfemininity, man-hating, and lesbianism. Moreover, Scharff (2012) observes that neoliberal ideas and the ethos of postfeminism positioned women to present their identity as able managers of their own lives, who are well capable of managing and navigating inequalities on their own. The subject positions of man-hating feminist and of the oppressed Muslim woman were utilised to stabilise the research participants' positioning as subjects in alignment with heterosexual norms, and also as displaying being empowered autonomous and enterprising selves.

Similarly, Pomerantz and colleagues (2013) study explored the way girls in Canada articulate sexism in school in relation to discourses of Girl Power and Successful Girls. Being positioned as successors in the current economic, cultural and political climate, Pomerantz et al. (2013) observe that girls are persuaded to believe they have nothing to complain about. During their study, Pomerantz et al. (2013) found that girls utilised postfeminist discourse to manage and maintain their identities that reflect the demands of neoliberalism and postfeminism. Pomerantz et al. (2013:205) state 'postfeminism was a powerful tool for girls as they strategically deployed it to evade a "bitchy," "mean," or feminist persona.' Being identified as nice, agentic and disavowing feminism critique, Pomerantz et al. (2013) argue, structured how teenage girls understood sexism in school.

Across the social, cultural, and political landscape, a girl emerges not only as a subject of capacity and agency but also, as a subject worthy of investment. The attention paid towards girls, McRobbie (2009) highlights, positions girls to submit to processes of individualisation that demands the girls become important to themselves; in other words, to actively engage in the production of self through harsh self-judgment. The new mode of governing girls, McRobbie (2009) argues, produces particular female figures and performances - a postfeminist masquerade, a well-educated working girl, a phallic girl, and a global girl - that are viewed as the ultimate examples of the 'appropriate' femininity.

Post-feminist masquerade

In late modernity, McRobbie (2009:61) argues that concrete expression of patriarchy are replaced by disembodied abstract forms, as

> … work and wage-earning capacity come to dominate rather than be subordinate to women's self-identity, and this inevitably has a ripple effect within the field of power. The Symbolic is faced with the problem of how to retain the dominance of phallocentrism when the logic of global capitalism is to loosen women from their prescribed roles and grant them degrees of economic independence.

As the female in late modernity is presented with the powers that previously had been available only to men, the Symbolic (patriarchal power), McRobbie (2009) points out, has to find a new mode of exercising its authority and does so by delegation.

> Symbolic allows itself to be dispersed, or governmentalised. … The Symbolic discharges (or maybe franchises) its duties to the commercial domain (beauty, fashion, magazines, body culture, etc.) which becomes the source of authority and judgment for young women

> (McRobbie, 2009:61).

Consequently, through the rhetoric of individualisation and freedom, a young woman who is entering the Symbolic, is asked to participate in the postfeminist masquerade to sustain her feminine desirability and not to appear as a potential threat to masculine power and authority. McRobbie (2009) argues that since women routinely inhibit the masculine sphere, the postfeminist masquerade exists to manage the field of sexual antagonism and to re-instate women as a sign. McRobbie (2009:67) states

> The successful young woman must now get herself endlessly and repetitively done up, so as to mask her rivalry with men in the world of work (i.e. her wish for masculinity) and to conceal the competition she now poses because only by these tactics of re-assurance can she be sure that she will remain sexually desirable.

Therefore, any feminist critique of patriarchal power is depicted as a sign of female bodily failure, hideousness or monstrosity. In sum, McRobbie (2009) notes that postfeminist masqueraded functions with a double movement: it conceals the existence of patriarchy, while the demands of the beauty and fashion industry positions women as subjects of insecurity and anxiety.

One could argue that this new type of patriarchy is not anymore based on concrete social relations but rather, following Bauman (2000) – becomes a liquid patriarchy that is abstract, not based on enduring relations, or solid and unyielding institutions, but somewhat impersonal, intangible and

quickly shifting in the nature of its demands (e.g. the continuous reinventions and ever-evolving risks).

Well-educated working girl

Alongside the postfeminist masquerade emerges the figure of the well-educated young woman and the working girl. McRobbie (2009:72) states

> It is the wage-earning capacity on the part of young women which is the critical factor that underpins the exuberance of the commercial domain, as commerce embraces the possibilities opened up by the disposable income of young women, who now are expected to not just have an occupation, but to prioritise earning a living as a means of acquiring status, ensuring an independent livelihood, and gaining access to the world of feminine goods and services.

In addition, McRobbie (2009) points out that young women's capacity to earn a living is constructed as a new female privilege; accordingly, a young woman is addressed as a privileged subject in the capitalist neoliberal economy.

A successful, powerful, and attractive working woman, McRobbie (2009) notes, dominates the contemporary popular culture and functions as a benchmark against which young girls are called to measure their own capacity in the labour sphere. Moreover, McRobbie (2009:75) argues that 'young women are ranked according to their ability to gain qualifications which provide them with an identity as female subjects of capacity.' The portrayal of individual female capacity to gain middle-class status through consumption of female goods creates an atmosphere of female social antagonism. In other words, throughout popular culture, well-educated middle-class women are encouraged to repudiate their social inferiors. For instance, McRobbie (2009) observes that the current entertainment programs targeted at a female audience, such as *What not to wear*, where low-income women are ridiculed and hated for their habits and appearance, normalise female social antagonism through the rhetoric of postfeminism and 'girl power'. Women in these shows are portrayed as independently securing the means to become successful and competitive. Therefore, the audience is encouraged to believe that women no longer need the support of each other.

Likewise, Ringrose (2013) study with 12-14-year-old girls from racially and economically marginalised schools in South Wales revealed that meanness was utilised by girls to indicate one's middle-class status. Meanness, Ringrose (2013) points out, was conceptualised as a middle-class norm that keeps within the boundary of the repressive femininity. Whereas girls' violence was understood as an indicator of belonging to a low class, and also becoming too masculine, and deviant.

Ringrose (2006:405) notes that contemporary girlhood is regulated '…through class and race-specific categories of femininity, which continue to produce normative (mean) and deviant (violent) girls.'

Similarly, Winch (2013) argues that current popular culture targeted at girls normalises the scrutiny of female bodies by other women. Surveilling each other's bodies are presented as enticement and solidarity, a way of bonding and creating intimacy between women. Winch (2013:5) states

> In a neoliberal postfeminist culture, women mutually control each other through policing networks. The desire for intimacy, normativity and belonging often means submitting oneself to regimes of looking by the girlfriend gaze.

Consequently, issues of class inequalities, racism and obstacles for girls growing up in poverty are obscured by the rhetoric of individual responsibility to improve and succeed in the current economy. McRobbie (2009) notes that high numbers of young women gaining qualifications and receiving high marks through their determination and individual effort have become a point of reference for equality being achieved. Women's identity, McRobbie (2009) highlights, is no longer linked with family or kinship. On the contrary, their highly visible bodies, which must be marked by possession of grades, qualifications, and occupation, as well as, having a well-thought-out life plan, stand for contemporary women's identity.

Phallic girl

Parallel to postfeminist masquerade and the well-educated working girl, McRobbie (2009) argues, contemporary women are presented with the new subject position of the phallic girl. McRobbie (2009:83) states

> This is a young woman for whom the freedoms associated with masculine sexual pleasures are not just made available but encouraged and celebrated. She is being asked to concur with a definition of sex as light-hearted pleasure, recreational activity, hedonism, sport, reward and status.

The phallic girl figure can be illustrated by Dobson's (2013) study on female shamelessness performances and newly emergent female laddishness online (Refer to: Ladette female SNSs self-presentations, p. 106). The phallic girl is not seeking male attention, on the contrary; she is enjoying her new masculine sexual capacity. Nevertheless, female embodiment of the phallic subjectivity, McRobbie (2009) notes, must incorporate elements of femininity. In other words, the phallic performance has to remain visually coded to conform to the requirements of the fashion and beauty system. The phallic girl not only needs to emanate masculine agency but more importantly, she must

be young, attractive and invested in her appearance. Moreover, her phallic sexual capacity is celebrated and remains unpunished as long as it is performed by the white female subject. Spike Lee's comedy-drama movie (1986) '*She's Gotta Have It*' seems to be a direct response in the form of subversion to the dominant narrative of female phallicism and its relationships to race. The movie is able to endue laughter because of its content impossibility in real life. In conclusion, McRobbie (2009) notes that phallic figure acts as a strategic endowment for young women, which ultimately ensures gender re-stabilisation.

Global girl

The last female figure that McRobbie (2009) identifies is the global girl – the non-white girl. As female phallicism and the postfeminist masquerade, McRobbie (2009) argues, assumes the white female subject, the non-white girl is asked to come forward in a different form when being addressed by the new modes of self-realisation (being addressed as subjects of capacity). The global girl, McRobbie (2009) notes, comes forward in the advertising campaigns (e.g. Benetton) that visualise non-white young women as enthusiastic about memberships and belonging to a kind of global femininity. However, the global girl is lacking '…the ironic inhabiting of femininity of her post-feminist masquerading counterparts, and the aggression and sexual bravado of her phallic girls'. (McRobbie (2009:89). McRobbie (2009:89) states

> Indeed global girls are defined in terms of an intersection of qualities which combine the natural and authentic, with a properly feminine love of self-adornment, and the playfully seductive with innocent, so as to suggest a sexuality which is youthful, latent and waiting to be unleashed.

The ideal global girl is fulfilling the consumer-led discourse: she craves for the fashion and beauty products associated with Western femininity and sexuality, as well as, not posing a threat of migration by 'staying put'. The effect of the new sexual contract for a global girl figure is re-establishment of racial hierarchy. For instance, McRobbie (2009) notes that respectability and constraint in the sphere of desire have been entrenched within black women's sexual identities. Whereas for young Asian girls, white female phallicism positions Asian girls to be viewed in agitation because they are viewed as submitting to patriarchal and religious order.

Conclusion

This chapter section explored how teenage girls are governed under contemporary conditions of late modernity, postfeminism and neoliberalism. These technologies of governance implant techniques of self-surveillance, self-monitoring and self-judgment in teenage girls (Tait, 2011; Talburt and Lesko, 2011; Harris, 2004). In addition, young girls are continuously being identified as winners in the current society, as beneficiaries and as subjects of capacity (Pomerantz et al., 2013; Harris, 2011; Currie et al., 2009). This results in sustaining gender inequalities (emblematic in female discrepancies in the political scene and management positions) as girls repudiate feminist critique to avoid being identified as victims (Pomerantz et al., 2013; Scharff, 2011). It also produces a new gender regime and generates contemporary female performances, such as a postfeminist masquerade, the well-educated working girl, the phallic girl and the global girl (McRobbie, 2009).

However, alongside these new structural changes, patriarchy has persisted, in a changed liquid form. In contemporary culture, there is a demand that women repudiate critical positions, such as feminism, which provided a structural explanation for difficulties that they may face, instead now women are subjectified to push themselves towards accepting an individualising way of identifying themselves. In addition, new pressures towards sexualisation have emerged. Consequently, one could argue that women in Ireland being subjectified by the liquid patriarchy are positioned to perform their gender in a manner that was not demanded by the patriarchal society of Catholic Ireland. Thus, concrete forms of subordination have been replaced by a complex field of meanings, that now women must negotiate, mostly as individuals.

Lastly, the questions arise as to how global media advertisements utilise the rhetoric of postfeminism and neoliberalism when addressing young women*? What kind of female representations emerge from such type of advertisements; and how does it shape young girls' lives and lived experiences*? The following chapter section aims to unravel these inquiries.

III. HOW DO TEENAGE GIRLS READ AND NEGOTIATE MEDIA MESSAGES ABOUT 'APPROPRIATE' FEMININITY?

Introduction

The previous two chapter sections explored culturally specific rationalities of femininity and technologies employed to govern women in Ireland. Also, rationalities of teenage years and how those rationalities subject teenage girls were analysed. This chapter section is concerned with exploring the representation of women throughout the media landscape. It is essential to understand how women are subjected in the media as those images inform teenage girls what normalcy is, in particular, the normalcy of 'appropriate' femininity and 'appropriate' feminine conduct within digital representations. Thus, this chapter section aims to unravel available subject positions that women are called upon to occupy while being addressed by the current media discourses of 'appropriate' femininity. Moreover, the chapter section is interested in understanding how discourses of 'appropriate' femininity become established throughout media messages and consequently become 'normal' and 'common sense'. In addition, the chapter section aims to explore what kind of rhetoric is employed to sustain those messages, and what it all means for women's lived experiences and bodies.

Discourses of 'appropriate' femininity are not merely ways of representing women or a simple structure of language that addresses women. Discourses have a regulatory power that governs structures of relationships and in effect produces subjects. As Lois McNay (1994:70) notes

> the discursive formation is not just of the order of language or representation, it is a structuring principle which governs beliefs and practises, "words and things", in such a way as to produce a certain network of material relations.

Therefore, this chapter section utilises Foucault's conceptualisation about the processes of normalisation. Foucault (2004) asserted that by incorporating disciplinary techniques, such as surveillance or confessions, norms bring individuals into conformity. In the context of media representations of women, the process of normalisation functions by generating rationalities of the 'normal' femininity. Consequently, the norm is established which in turn has disciplinary power over women's subject positions and thus women's identity.

Studies (Jhally et al., 2010; Jhally, 2009; Gill, 2007) on media content indicate that women are represented in a myriad of ways: from patriarchal representations in a form of a submissive and fragile housewife (Jhally, 2009) to a more recent sexually agentic Midriff figure (Gill, 2007). Throughout

history, female bodies, scholars highlight (Banyard, 2010; Orbach, 2010; Levy, 2006), were often used as objects to be gazed at (Attwood, 2007; Berger, 1972), reaching a current phase where the advertised object is continuously being replaced with the female body itself (Jhally et al., 2010). In recent decades, a new form of female representation has emerged throughout the media. Girls in these advertisements are portrayed as empowered by choosing to please themselves through the display of their (un)dressed and frequently sexy bodies. More significantly, women in these advertisements are called upon to become important to themselves through methods of constant telescopic self-surveillance (Gill and Orgad, 2015; Thompson and Donaghue, 2014; Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011).

Situated within the shifts towards utilisation of postfeminist and neoliberal rhetoric within media culture, self-surveillance throughout media advertising becomes translated as a female privilege and empowerment, a choice and an expression of women's agency (Gill and Elias, 2014). However, now it is not enough for a woman to surveil her body through consumption of beauty and fashion products, or even to transform her physical body by undergoing plastic or cosmetic surgery. A contemporary woman is called upon to be beautiful inside and out, or as Gill and Elias (2014:190) put it '… in today's society the beautiful body must be accompanied by a beautiful mind…'. Now femininity and female beauty are understood in terms of confidence, which is said to be replacing the prerequisite of female sexiness (Murphy and Jackson, 2011). The technology of sexiness (Radner, 1993) being under attack by feminist critique, has metamorphosed into the technology of confidence (Gill and Elias, 2014). Having body confidence and publicly displaying self-confidence are presented as a new imperative for women in contemporary culture.

Furthermore, developing self-confidence is constructed as the ultimate solution to all female problems. Throughout the media landscape, the technology of confidence is widely evident in the recent advertising campaigns predominantly directed at women, that utilise the language of self-love and body love. Love your body (LYB) advertising campaigns show women in undergarments or being half-naked as an ultimate example of female love for her body and female confidence (Gill and Elias, 2014). Appearing naked or partly dressed is said to ooze 'real truth' about the female body and her newly discovered self-confidence (Murphy and Jackson, 2011). Moreover, the display of the undressed female body is said to be a sign of 'real beauty' (Gill and Elias 2014). Situated in the context of cultural preoccupation with confidence, 'real' female beauty is understood not only as a bodily surface that subscribes to prescriptions of beauty regimes but also as constant female labour towards a 'beautiful' mind.

Being addressed by these new modes of self-realisation, where 'choosing' to display a sexualised or undressed body is translated as a female privilege and empowerment, reconfigures the structure of

surveillance on a female subject. From being a subject of outside surveillance – an object to be gazed at (Berger, 1972), now the female is called upon to engage in self-surveillance of her body. The process of female objectification is transformed by media messages into female subjectification (Gill, 2008). A woman is called upon to become important to herself and display it through the woman's investment in her body in modes of diet, exercise, consumption of beauty products, plastic surgery – to name but a few.

Girls are not passive agents or victims of media messages. They actively engage in reading and negotiating the discursive media images presented to them (Wulf et al., 2010). A number of studies indicated that teenage girls frequently rejected media messages that showed women in a hypersexualised manner. Through processes of 'Othering', utilisation of the figure 'Slut' and the expression of disgust allowed teenage girls to distance themselves from represented media images (Vares and Jackson 2015; Jackson et al., 2012; Malson et al., 2010). Furthermore, discourses of sexualisation of childhood and societal expectations of age-appropriate behaviour impact the way teenage girls read media messages of 'appropriate' femininity (Jackson et al., 2012). However, as some of the studies (Press, 2011; Kehily, 1999; Currie, 1997) indicate, teenage girls used media messages as a benchmark for self-regulation and self-correction of their behaviour.

Therefore, the reading of media messages is a complex process that is always bound by the context. As Currie (1999) emphasises (that) the subject cannot be viewed as *a priori* the discursive. Thus, the social context, which directs how teenage girls read the cultural text, is inevitably embedded within the discursive formations of gender, sexuality and 'normativity' of femininity and feminine behaviour. A number of studies point out that a teenage girl's parents (Lowes and Tiggemann, 2003), her peer friendships (Mackey and La Greca 2008), her ethnicity and race (Roberts et al., 2001) are some of the factors that contribute to the development of her sense of identity, her relationship with her body and her appearance. Nevertheless, Jean Kilbourne (2010; see Jhally et al., 2010) observes that current messages presented within the media about what it means to be a woman are consistent and pervasive. Media advertising tells us that white middle-class femininity is the ultimate beauty, able bodies that are slim, athletic and oozing self-confidence are a benchmark of successful womanhood in contemporary culture (Gill and Elias, 2014; McRobbie, 2011; Murphy and Jackson, 2011). One has to wonder how teenage girls in Ireland negotiate these new representations of femininity taking into account Irish cultural scripts of femininity. What kind of discourses do teenage girls in Ireland employ to distance (or not) from represented media images of femininity and womanhood?

Of course, resorting to blaming the media for directly influencing girls' understandings of their femininity and womanhood would be too shallow. Nevertheless, media messages penetrate teenage

girls' everyday life; those messages surround physical spaces that young girls use, eventually becoming a daily context within which a teenage girl must construct her identity. Not surprisingly contemporary media messages of femininity have an effect (direct or indirect) on real material conditions on girls' bodies, their sense of self and their lived experiences. Across the globe studies (Galdi et al., 2013; Halliwell et al., 2011; McNicholas et al., 2009; Tiggemann, 2005) indicate that girls are dissatisfied with their body size and their appearance, they continuously engage in dieting behaviours, and when they do not diet girls relate to each other through 'fat talk' (Nichter, 2000)- the way women deliberately criticise one's body when having a conversation with others. Conceptualised in relation to neoliberal and postfeminist rhetoric these female practices are understood as individual female pathologies that can be solved by educating girls to love themselves and develop confidence (Gill and Elias, 2014). Once again, girls are taught to direct the attention towards themselves even when dealing with gender inequalities that are sustained by the contemporary culture (McRobbie, 2009). Consequently, the regulation of women became more obscured to define, since women now are 'freely choosing' to self-surveil their bodies and their everyday conduct. Moreover, the regulation of women reached new modes of intensity in contemporary society (Gill, 2018).

Current media messages of the 'appropriate' femininity

The image of the ideal woman has changed over time in popular media culture: from a 'good housewife' who expresses submissiveness and care towards her husband and family, to a contemporary figure of the agentic sexual seducer who is said to be confident when displaying her (un)dressed body. While such female representations are to a high degree a generalisation, they illustrate the variety of possible subject positions contemporary women are able to occupy. Even though the media representation of women broadened over time, prescription of beauty and requirement for women to invest in their body remained intact. Literature (Ringrose, 2011; Goodin et al., 2011; Thorpe, 2008; Gill, 2007; Lindner, 2004) argues that throughout media culture women and their identity are continuously being associated with beauty and physical female body. Furthermore, despite the changes in the female representation across the media, the ideal female beauty is continuously represented in alignment with Western beauty standards, that is a white middle-class female, who is usually skinny and having an able body (Wardle and Boyce, 2009; Frith et al., 2005; Taylor, 2003).

Representing women in such a limited way, while claiming democratisation of beauty and diversification of body types, results in, what Rodrigues (2012) calls a diversity paradox. Rodrigues (2012) points out that while media messages aim to claim to be inclusive of all bodies, ages and beauties they simultaneously reinstate the meaning of ideal femininity, which is continuously

interpreted as being visual, aesthetic and societal in its origins. Moreover, by incorporating neoliberal rhetoric and postfeminist sensibilities a woman is called upon to voluntarily submit in displaying her (un)dressed body as evidence of her newly found confidence and success. Therefore, the regulatory power over women's identities and bodies become transformed from objectification to subjectification.

Figure 9 Mulberry 2012 campaign

Patriarchal representation

Figure 10 Range cooker 1954 campaign

Media content analysis studies (Jhally et al., 2010; Jhally, 2009; Lindner, 2004) indicate that the representation of women in the media is continuously structured by gender stereotypes that follow patriarchal gender roles. Drawing from the existent narratives of gender roles, media culture produces processes of normalisation that have regulatory power over women's subjecthood and lived

experiences. For instance, van Zoonen (1994) notes that incorporating patriarchal rhetoric through media culture contributes to the maintenance of the established heteronormative gender roles and social order. Representing women in traditional gender roles sustains women's oppression by making it 'normal' and 'common sense'. This process of normalisation allows keeping women in their subordinate position and also persuades media audiences that women should accept this position. Over the years women were continuously portrayed in a domestic sphere (Figure 10, p. 67), where marriage and parenthood were represented as more important for women than men (Gunter, 1995). Gunter (1995) points out that from the 1970s women in the media were represented as passive, weak,

Figure 12 Gucci 2012 campaign

Figure 11 Christina Aguilera 2011 perfume campaign

ineffectual, victimised, supportive and laughable, whereas men, on the other hand, were portrayed as assertive (or aggressive), much more adventurous, active and victorious.

More recently, Sut Jhally (2009) analysed how advertising builds on the existing cultural myths of gender stereotypes when representing women in TV commercials. Applying Goffman's (1979) frame analysis developed in his classical book *Gender Advertisements*, Jhally (2009) argues that

contemporary advertisements represent females within the traditional patriarchal roles: the female is portrayed as expressing softness, fragility and powerlessness. Jhally (2009) states that within advertising women are usually depicted as expressing 'the feminine touch' (Figure 11, p. 68; Figure 9, p. 67), being subordinated (Figure 12, p. 68), withdrawn from their surroundings (Figure 9, p. 67), and/or infantilised (Figure 13, p. 69); on the other hand, men are represented as powerful and dominating.

Accordingly, Katharine Lindner (2004) using Goffman's frame analysis method highlighted that in *Time* and *Vogue* magazines during a period of 1995 and 2002 women were portrayed in stereotypical gender roles regardless of the historical changes of women's liberation. In addition, the study pointed out that *Vogue,* a magazine directed at female readers, more regularly portrayed women in stereotypical gender roles in comparison to *Time*. Thus, just as in the regime of Catholic Ireland, women were led to realise themselves through the role of the modest and caring mother, ironically in the regime of capitalism, even in publications with mostly female staff and editors, the logic of selling the orthodoxy of gender, in order to meet commercial imperatives, means that women are led to realise themselves through a different, but nonetheless, similarly conventional gender roles.

In a similar vein, Jean Kilbourne (2010, see Jhally et al., 2010) in her most recent documentary *Killing Us Softly* highlights that now media advertising sells the idea that to constitute a female, a woman needs to strive to be beautiful. Kilbourne (2010) argues that from an early age a female learns that she needs to spend an enormous amount of time, effort and money to strive to achieve the 'beauty' image and feel guilty and ashamed when she fails. However, Kilbourne (2010) points out that failure is always inevitable because the images within the media are constructed by computer programs. Yet

the female is persuaded that through the 'right' consumption of beauty products she will be able to attain the image on the screen. Furthermore, as the media images of women and their bodies are becoming smaller and smaller, Kilbourne (2010) argues, that advertising makes a direct link between female body beautification and slimness with the ideas of what it means to be a woman and to be feminine.

Moreover, Kilbourne (2010) emphasises that contemporary advertisements depict women's bodies
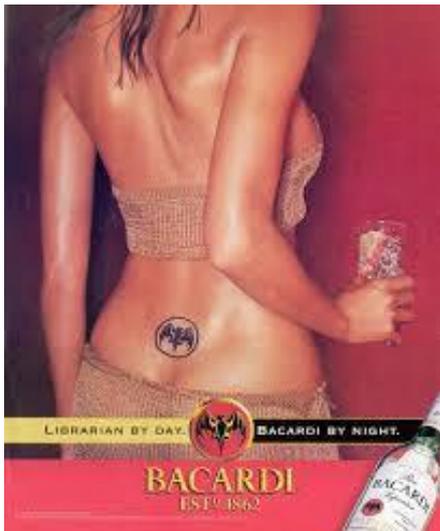
Figure 15 Bacardi 2002 campaign

Figure 14 WAD magazine 2009 anniversary campaign

as objects to the point where the advertised object is eventually replaced with a female body itself (Figure 15, p. 70; Figure 14, p. 70). Thus, women, Kilbourne (2010) argues, are transformed from a subject to being an object. This kind of representation of femininity and a female body, Kilbourne (2010) points out, creates a dangerous relationship not only between a woman and her own body but also with media image viewers – men. A woman learns to accept her body as an object, while a man is taught to view and treat female bodies as mere objects.

A sexual object to be gazed at

A number of researchers have extensively discussed the objectification of female bodies in the media: hypersexualisation of female bodies in contemporary culture (Levy, 2006), 'mainstreaming of sex' (Attwood, 2007), 'pornification of culture' (Paul, 2005). van Zoonen (1994:87) observes that 'a core element of Western patriarchal culture is the display of woman as a spectacle to be looked at, subjected to the gaze of the (male) audience.' The objectification of female bodies in current media advertising campaigns, where a female body is used as a mere tool to sell just about anything from

cars to TV games, van Zoonen (1994) argues, is equivalent to the genre of pornography. However, the current objectification of women is sold to women as female empowerment and women's privilege (Gill, 2018). The display of (un)dressed bodies by women themselves should be situated in ideologies of neoliberalism, in particular, the rhetoric of individualism and choice, and postfeminists demands for women's rights. Thus, displaying her (un)dressed body is wrapped with slogans of women's 'freely chosen' methods to show off her body as a means of her agency and power over her body.

Figure 16 Bella Hadid 2016 at Cannes

Figure 17 Bella Hadid 2017 at Cannes

Moreover, Harvey and Gill (2011) point out that cultural discourses of female sexual subjectification and technologies of sexiness produce a new model of femininity organised around sexual entrepreneurialism. Harvey and Gill (2011) note that sexual subjectification sells the display of female sexiness as a means to female empowerment, and concepts of the technology of sexiness (Radner, 1993) position a female to express subjectivity that is skilful in a number of sexual conducts and continuously portraying sexual agency. Harvey and Gill (2011) argue that the contemporary feminine subject is not only required to express self-improvement and hyper-consumption as a sign of fulfilment of neoliberal rationalities but also, the contemporary female is demanded to be compulsory sexy and always 'up for it' (meaning sexual encounters with men), while continuously upskilling her knowledge on sex. This obligation to show herself as sexy is disguised through neoliberal rhetoric and postfeminist sensibilities, such as the female choice to use her sexual power.

Levy (2006) argues that in contemporary media and culture, the pornification of the female body is translated through the figure of the sex worker. In other words, a stripper, a glamour model or a porn star is now portrayed as the ideal female and a figure of aspiration. A recent example can be taken from Bella Hadid's choices of outfits for the 2016 and 2017 Cannes film festival (Figure 16, p. 71;

71

Figure 17, p. 71), an extremely popular model among teenage girls. Likewise, Kim Kardashian (Figure 18, p. 72), one of the most 'Followed' female celebrities on social media (Ipsos MRBI, 2016), frequently portrays herself online utilising the figure of a glamour model followed by slogans of empowerment and choice. It is important to mention that Kim Kardashian is not necessarily the ideal that young girls are actively seeking to emulate. Kardashian is a figure who thrives on attention seeking and scandal, to retain her prominence and fame. She is the deviant who exists to indicate what is 'too far', and what kind of female conduct is deemed to be transgressing the norms, and thus where the boundary of 'appropriate' femininity lies. Accordingly, young girls want to be entrepreneurial and sexy, but within the boundary of 'appropriate'.

Figure 18 Kim Kardashian 2016 Body positive motherhood selfie

The sexualisation of women throughout media representation, and particularly of young girls, has been extensively documented (Banyard, 2010; Orbach, 2010; Rosewarne, 2010; Walter, 2010; Durham, 2009). From music videos to advertising campaigns, studies have shown that women are continuously portrayed in a sexual manner (Reist, 2010). Female expression of sexiness becomes established as a new form of regulatory technology in contemporary culture (Radner, 1993). Consequently, portraying sexiness and sexual availability becomes established as a norm and prerequisite for women to constitute as a female (Gill, 2008a).

The decline in power of the Catholic Church in Ireland, and the 'liberation' of women, in the light of the above discussion, is hardly liberation at all. Indeed, it could even lead one to reflect again upon the subordination of Irish women in the past, and redemptive elements compared to the present. The duty of the Irish Mother can be contrasted with the narcissism of present models, the humbleness with entrepreneurialism and assertiveness, the subordinate - but secure portion of social honour that was

offered to women, compared to the incitement to permanently play upon an open stage displaying oneself with all the insecurities that entail.

Agentic female figure

Current media content analysis studies (Jackson et al., 2012; Gill, 2008b, 2007) show that there is a new shift in female representation within contemporary media discourses: she is young and confident, she pleases herself by consuming goods and transforming her body, she deliberately plays with her 'sex' power, and in doing so she is having fun. Gill (2008b) points out that the development of the shift of female representation in the advertisement was in correspondence with feminist demands for female empowerment, the emergence of 'girl power' discourse (Taft, 2004) and the opening of laddish subjectivities for women (Ringrose, 2006, Jackson, 2006) available for female subjecthood.

Figure 19 Wonderbra 1999 campaign

As women gained more financial independence, Gill (2008b) asserts, that advertisers needed to rethink modes of female representation to target the newly emerged buying power. Such a shift illustrates how the concrete forms of patriarchy, based on actual social relationships, are transformed into an abstract form of power of liquid patriarchy. To this point, the beauty industry and advertising campaigns were criticised by 'second wave' feminist for normalising the unhealthy body image for women, which they argued led to women's oppression (Bordo, 2003, Wolf, 1991). On the other hand, 'the third wave' feminist and post-feminist have reclaimed female beauty practices as empowering for women, enjoyable and self-chosen (Jervis et al., 2006). Appropriation of feminist rhetoric throughout advertising campaigns (e.g. L'Oréal '*because you are worth it*') where the female is portrayed as powerful and agentic through utilisation of her body and sexual power, publicly

celebrated feminist ideas simultaneously neutralised and subverted the need to critique such female representations (Douglas, 1994; Goldman, 1992).

Figure 20 Beyoncé 2016 Lemonade video

Gill (2008b) argues that contemporary media advertising reshapes the understanding of femininity according to neoliberal and postfeminist ideas. Gill (2008b) asserts that now in advertising the female is portrayed as agentic and liberated: she is pleasing herself and her body by being unapologetically sexual, and in doing so she so happens to gain men's attention. Gill (2008b) emphasises that this new configuration of femininity in the form of Midriff figure (Figure 19, p. 73) is based on expressing sexuality and boldness as symbols of female empowerment and agency. '…young women should not only be beautiful but sexy, sexually knowledgeable/practised and always 'up for it' ' (Gill, 2008b:35).

Through appropriation of postfeminist rhetoric, the Midriff figure is presented not as a passive object, but as a narcissistic and playful subject. Moreover, the neoliberal rationalities such as to be 'free' and to 'choose' to achieve an autonomous self-determined subject, run parallel to the postfeminist rhetoric. Therefore, Gill (2008b) highlights that the compulsory individuality is rendered with the compulsory (sexual) agency as an obligatory feature of contemporary postfeminist neoliberal subjectivity. The emphasis on possessing the sexy body is offered as women's main source of identity, and that body is presented as a locus from which the female 'worth' can be judged.

In a similar vein, Gill (2008b) identifies two other female representations that are regulated by the discourse of female sexual agency: the vengeful woman (e.g. recent Beyonce video *Lemonade* Figure 20, p. 74) and 'hot lesbian' (Figure 21, p. 75).

The vengeful woman is portrayed as seeking to punish her (ex)partner who transgressed in some way. Gill (2008b:47) asserts that 'the nastiness of these adverts and women within them is also disturbing and resonates with what we might understand as the 'new cruelty' in popular culture more generally.' She points out that insults and attacks can be seen across entertainment media, from talk shows to makeover programmes. Being mean and violent is sold to women as a form of taking control, breaking through the victimised role, and thus feeling empowered. Such a mode of representation sustains and reiterates gender difference discourse (that women and men are fundamentally different), and simultaneously builds on it by bringing the new truth about women's and men's relationships. Now, the relationship is presented as a battlefield that is based on a constant competition.

The 'hot lesbian' figure, Gill (2008b) observes, is always presented with another woman. Gill (2008b: 50) writes 'the figure never appears alone (unlike the Midriff, for example) but is almost always depicted kissing, touching or locked in an embrace with another woman.' What is important in this configuration is, Gill (2008b) emphasises, that the two women are always extraordinarily attractive, slim yet curvaceous, generally with long blonde hair and flawless makeup. Therefore, Gill (2008b) argues that the way women are represented is entirely aimed at male's thrill, offering a spectacle of sexual intimacy that draws from well-established codes of pornography. On the other hand, one could argue that lesbianism/lesbian fantasies/lesbian images could provide a space to imaginatively escape the male gaze and male domination for women while still being coded within the heteronormative female attractiveness.

Figure 21 Burberry 2014 perfume campaign

The technology of confidence and 'loving your body'

Scholars (Gill and Orgad, 2015; Thompson and Donaghue, 2014; Evans et al., 2010; Radner, 1993) argue that the prescription of sexiness and boldness as a new regulatory technology for women is being replaced with the technology of confidence. Having body confidence and publicly displaying self-confidence is presented as a new imperative for women in contemporary culture. Developing self-confidence is constructed as the ultimate solution to all female problems. Moreover, Gill and Orgad (2015) note that embodying confidence is constructed as a new form of feminism. In other words, women are called upon to fight structural inequalities by developing individual self-confidence. The culture of confidence re-signifies feminist demands. It turns the attention away from collective responsibilities to fight structural inequalities and suggests that the main method to tackle gender injustice is to develop self-confidence through the diligent transformation of one's psyche by methods of self-surveillance and self-regulation.

Throughout the media platform, the technology of confidence is widely evident in the recent advertising campaigns predominantly directed at women who utilise a language of self-love and body love. Gill and Orgad (2015) observe that love your body advertising campaigns have been keenly welcomed by women as the messages throughout the campaigns appear to address the injustice inflicted on women in patriarchal societies. Love your body discourse (LYB) has emerged in recent decades as a backlash to media advertising that glorified female bodies that were unanimously represented by young and skinny female models that portrayed Western beauty standards (Lynch, 2011; Murphy and Jackson, 2011; Marwick, 2010;). LYB first started on social media (e.g. No makeup selfies) and has been quickly taken up by the mainstream media (e.g. TV show *How to look good naked)* (Rodrigues, 2012; Lynch, 2011; Johnston and Taylor, 2008).

> Love your body discourses are positive, affirmative, seemingly feminist-inflected media messages, targeted exclusively at girls and women, that exhort us to believe we are beautiful, to 'remember' that we are 'incredible' and that tell us that we have 'the power' to 'redefine' the 'rules of beauty'
>
> (Gill and Elias, 2014:179).

LYB discourse aims to disrupt the normalised female representation and regulation of female bodies. Previously media advertisers utilised the 'pedagogy of defect' (Bordo, 1999): highlighting female flaws as faulty and unacceptable and thus in need of fixing. However, contemporary LYB discourse uses the rhetoric of acceptance, while also emphasising the positives that the female already has (e.g. Dove Real Beauty Campaign Figure 22, p. 77) (Gill and Elias, 2014). The language throughout LYB advertising is focused on encouraging women to develop a positive relationship with their bodies and

their embodied selves. Consequently, throughout LYB discourse female neediness and insecurity are constructed as unattractive (Gill, 2009). LYB discourse presents a female that is proud of her own body no matter the size or shape with a purpose to challenge the computer retouched unrealistic images of women in the media. However, Murphy and Jackson (2011) note that women in LYB advertisements are always on display: they are un-dressed or nude as a sign of female celebration and acceptance of one's body. In addition, one could argue that since men power was signified by their uncovered chest as a sign of male dominance, contemporary female nudeness in advertisement appears to be 'just' like men by revealing their bodies in confident and assertive ways.

Murphy and Jackson's (2011) study looked at 301 articles in women's magazines and concluded that the naked (half-naked) female body nowadays had become almost an icon of a positive body media statement. The researchers assert that the female body in LYB advertisements is constructed as a mere visual image – as an object to be looked at. However, being addressed by the contemporary culture of confidence as a new technology for self-invention, the display of women's bodies is said to be portraying female confidence and love for her body. Murphy and Jackson (2011:27, original emphasis) state that a

> …woman who loves her body is proud and willing to show off this body – she is attractive and loveable because she is confident. …a woman who loves her body is willing to show off this body to *men*, and she is confident in *the bedroom*.

Figure 22 Dove 2004 Real Beauty campaign

Similarly, Murray (2012) in her analysis of the *Dove Real Beauty Campaign* that employs LYB discourse, asserts that the 'real' women in the LYB advertisement suggest themselves as objects to be looked at for audience pleasure (as mostly those women are in undergarments or nude) to promote 'real beauty' philosophy and above all sell goods. Moreover, Murray (2012) observes that 'real

77

beauty' campaigns aim to persuade the audience that female equality and feminist demands are being achieved. However, Gill and Elias (2014:187) point out that '…the apparent "democratisation" of beauty and "diversification" of body types, sizes and ages represent only a tiny shift from the normative ideal of female attractiveness seen in most adverts …'. Nevertheless, the rhetoric of 'real beauty', 'real bodies' and 'real women' are continuously utilised throughout the media landscape. LYB discourse emphasises that female bodies represented in media advertising are 'real' and without digital alteration. The 'real women' in the media are now identified as women of average weight, with a body that has curves or some minor flaws (Brown, 2005). Consequently, to appear 'real' (that it to appear in undergarments or/and partly dressed) becomes established as a new form of technology of the self.

Moreover, Murphy and Jackson (2011) note that the naked body, which is said to be unretouched by computer programmes to show a 'real' and 'natural' female body, is often aligned with statements of 'bearing' the 'truth' about the body. Murphy and Jackson (2011) argue that LYB discourse persuades the viewer that for the female appearing naked or unretouched becomes equivalent to telling the truth, and thus displaying the naked/half-dressed female body is constructed as a form of confession. 'The "Naked Truth" simultaneously conveys the idea that a particular kind of image of the body can tell the entire truth of that body, or that reality is wholly available via the image' (Murphy and Jackson, 2011:24).

Furthermore, Gill and Elias (2014) problematise the concept of 'real' in advertising campaigns. Even though advertisers are claiming that women in the advertisement images are not retouched by computer programs, Gill and Elias (2014) point out that 'real female beauty' in the advertising campaigns is still constructed under special studio lighting and professional makeup. More importantly, LYB discourse recites the hateful discourses about women's bodies by reinstating the idea that the female body is inherently difficult to love. Moreover, Gill and Elias (2014) highlight that LYB discourse utilised in advertising continuously suggests that women 'do this to themselves' (hate and publicly criticise their bodies), and thus it is up to individual women to choose to stop hating their bodies. The researchers argue that the result of LYB discourse establishes a new form of regulation of women. They state

> No longer is it enough to work on and discipline the body, but in today's society the beautiful body must be accompanied but a beautiful mind, with suitably upgraded and modernised postfeminist attitudes to the self. … Beauty becomes 'a state of mind', not in a feminist sense that involves a rejection of and liberation from patriarchal appearance standards, but in a way that represents an intensification of pressure and its extensification from body work to psychic labour

(Gill and Elias, 2014:190).

The material residue of media messages on women's lives and their bodies

Literature (Bordo, 2003; Wolf, 1991) highlights that the regulation of a female body has not only intensified, but also has become more difficult to critique as media advertisers utilise feminist rhetoric, supported by neoliberal rationalities and neoliberal governmentalities (Sender, 2012), such as choice, female empowerment and individualisation (McRobbie, 2009; Gill, 2008). Throughout contemporary media culture, the objectification of women and their bodies has been transformed. The literature emphasises that the regulatory power over women's bodies shifted from objectification to subjectification (Winch, 2013; Roberts, 2007; Currie, 1999). As a result, the surveillance of women's bodies becomes an act of self-directed gaze, and the female is produced as a self-surveilling subject (Currie, 1999). In her study on adolescent magazines and their readers, Currie (1999) notes that as women's magazines promote self-surveillance as symbols of female empowerment and a source of celebration, the female makes herself into a self-policing subject, who commits to a relentless habitus of surveilling one's makeup, hair, wardrobe, and caloric intake.

Female surveillance of her body, literature highlights (Halliwell and Diedrichs, 2012), can be illustrated by the increase in female dieting and changes in female's attitudes towards diet (Fawkner, 2012). International research indicates that teenage girls are routinely engaging in dieting behaviours (Levine and Murnen, 2009; Clark and Tiggemann, 2006; Roberts et al., 2001) leading to a number of harmful effects such as low self-esteem, eating disorders, dissatisfaction with one's body and symptoms of depression (Slater and Tiggemann 2010, 2002; Dittmar 2009; Spear, 2006; Gabhainn et al., 2002). Gabhainn et. al. (2002:457), in an Irish based study indicated that 'while a minority of pupils (12% of girls, 4% of boys) reported that they were on a diet to lose weight, a substantial proportion (28% of girls, 18% of boys) said that they should be on a diet'.

Similarly, O'Connell and Martin's (2012) study on Irish adolescent body images found that girls expressed considerably higher dissatisfaction with their body image than boys (26% of female and 10% of male). In addition, the study revealed that girls were more preoccupied with their appearance (85% of female and 54% of male), 'and almost two-thirds of girls (60%) said that they put a lot or some emotional effort into their appearance (such as planning, worrying, thinking about) as opposed to just one-third of boys (34%). More girls (11%) than boys (8%) smoke as weight control and more than half of girls (53%) compared with only two in five boys (41%) put some or a great deal of effort into their eating habits' (O'Connell and Martin, 2012:19). Likewise, McNicholas et al. (2009) study

highlighted that Irish teenage girls were more dissatisfied with their bodies (33.7% female, 7.1% male) and expressed a significant drive to be thin (16.9% female, 2.9% male).

Surveillance of one's body through regimes of diet or food control in a contemporary culture becomes established as a norm for women. For instance, De Brún et al. (2013) in an inductive thematic analysis of Irish newspaper articles revealed that dieting was portrayed as being an exclusively female issue. Moreover, dieting and talking about weight issues was represented as just 'something that women do.' The study concluded that the Irish media exposed thinness as ideal, linking being slim to success and femininity, whereas excess weight was reflected as undesirable. Likewise, Nichter's (2000) longitudinal mixed method study on American teenage girls' narratives about their habits of dieting illustrates the normalising effect of diet and diet habits for contemporary women. Nichter (2000) highlights that the majority of teenage girls within her sample did not restrain from food intake but rather participated in, what Nichter (2000) calls, 'fat talk – the way women deliberately criticise one's body when having a conversation with others. Nichter (2000) argues that engaging in the 'fat talk' created a sense of belonging, and solidarity among the female group.

Scholars observe that female surveillance of her body reached new modes of expression (Elias and Gill, 2017; Winch, 2013; Bordo, 2003). Until now women were called upon to transform their bodies through diet, exercise, 'right' choices in fashion (e.g. dress for your body type) and 'right' consumption of beauty products to meet the cultural beauty standards. However, now a female is not only called upon to engage in habits of diet and consumption but also change her body by undergoing plastic and/or cosmetic surgery. The acceptance of plastic surgery for women as a means to achieve the authentic self has been fuelled by the reality makeover shows, which Marwick (2010:252) defines as 'body culture media' - 'a genre of popular culture which positions work on the body as a morally correct solution to personal problems.'

Marwick (2010) notes that the reality makeover shows shift the understanding of plastic surgery from being an aesthetic procedure to standing for a self-regulating moral procedure. As the makeover shows represent the transformation of ordinary people (mostly women), the moral imperative to transform one's body becomes universal (Sender, 2012). Studies show that there has been a significant increase in the number of people undergoing plastic surgery in Western countries (Sarwer and Crerand, 2004; Castel et al., 2002). It is precisely women who are using cosmetic surgery procedures in a higher number than men (female-91% of all cosmetic procedures) (Roe et al., 2015; American Society of Plastics Surgeons, 2014). A number of feminist authors point out that contemporary discourses of freely chosen self-realisation, self-improvement and self-transformation contribute to the normalisation of the use of plastic surgery (Marwick 2010; Bordo, 2003).

Consequently, the female choice to improve her body is viewed as taking active control of her life and thus said to be indicating female empowerment (Sender, 2012).

Can we blame the media?

A significant number of studies point out that media viewers, including teenage girls, are not passive recipients of the media messages to which they are exposed (Vares and Jackson, 2015; Malson et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2010; Ringrose, 2009; Morley, 1980). A young girl does not automatically take on media discourses of represented femininity and apply these to her subjecthood (Duits and van Romondt Vis, 2009; Lowe, 2003;), making her into a docile and obedient subject. On the contrary, a female critically engages with media messages of appropriate femininity and in her personal reading of that message constructs her own version of feminine subjectivity (Currie et al., 2009). Nevertheless, as argued earlier, Kilbourne (2010) observes that current media messages about femininity and womanhood are consistent and pervasive.

Numerous studies point out that media advertising tells us that slim, fragile, thus feminine, bodies are the ticket to success, whereas fat bodies are morally deficient (Foxcroft, 2011; Orbach, 2010; Wolf, 1991). As a result, contemporary women's bodies are transformed into objects, and the practice of surveilling the female body becomes normalised. Moreover, female bodies are continuously scrutinised for the symbols of femininity, whereby 'appropriate' femininity endures being organised regarding bodily appearance, including crucially, the quest for slenderness (Stagi, 2014; Malson et al., 2010; Malson et al., 2009). In addition, female bodies, which are most visible throughout the media landscape, are usually portrayed by white (conforming to the Western beauty standards) middle-class women, who are continuously engaging in the practises of 'looking after their bodies' through diet, exercise, consumption of beauty goods and cosmetic procedures (Bordo, 2003; Wolf, 1991). Through the process of normalisation, the benchmark that women are asked to aspire to is set by media messages. Thus, what we understand to be feminine and 'appropriate' for women is strongly regulated by the messages delivered throughout the contemporary media landscape.

The media's impact on the female body, her sense of self and her levels of happiness related to her appearance has been extensively studied (Galdi et al., 2013; Bell and Dittmar, 2011; Grabe et al., 2007). Some of the researchers argue that there is a direct link between 'body perfect' media messages and the effect it has on a female viewer (Tiggemann et al., 2005). Groesz et al. (2001) conducted a meta-analytical review of twenty-five international studies on the main effects of mass media slender images and concluded that the results support the sociocultural perspective that mass media circulate a thin ideal that results in an individual's body dissatisfaction. More recently Grabe et al. (2007)

replicated the above study in the UK and once again confirmed that 'body perfect' media images were strongly correlated with higher dissatisfaction with one's body among teenage girls. Similarly, a Swiss study (Knauss et al., 2008) reported that perceived pressure to conform to thin body ideals strongly correlated with body dissatisfaction and body surveillance among teenage girls. Moreover, the study identified that teenage girls received more pressure from the media (12% female, 9% male) and consequently were more dissatisfied with their bodies in comparison to teenage boys (48% female, 37% male). Likewise, an Irish study (McNicholas et al., 2009) concluded that the media portrayal of 'body perfect' images was correlated with eating disorders amongst teenage girls (10.9% female, 2.4% male). Viewing advertising featuring thin models, some studies point out (Harper and Tiggemann, 2008) leads to increased female self-objectification. More importantly, studies indicate that advertising that portrays women as sexually agentic is more damaging for women as it intensifies female self-objectification (Halliwell et al., 2011).

Of course, the media alone cannot be held responsible for shaping our understanding of what it means to be a woman. A number of studies point out that teenage girls' parents (Lowes and Tiggemann, 2003), her peer friendships (Mackey and La Greca 2008), her ethnicity and race (Roberts et al., 2001) are some of the factors in contributing to the development of teenage girls' sense of identity, her relationship with her body and appearance. For instance, Chithambo and Huey (2013) study found that Black-American women were more satisfied with their bodies despite their higher body mass index (BMI) in comparison to White-American women. While white women associated attractiveness with BMI, black women did not report making such a direct link. International Body Project (Swami et al., 2010), which surveyed 7,434 individuals in ten major world regions about body weight ideals and body dissatisfaction, highlighted that ethnic and racial minorities were less influenced by the Western media images of 'appropriate' women's body size and more disposed to social and race-specific values when evaluating their appearance. Nevertheless, the study emphasised that in high socioeconomic countries (countries that embrace Western beauty standards, and function under capitalist regime) body dissatisfaction and desire for thinness was commonplace across world regions regardless of the individual's race or ethnicity.

On the other hand, since human actions are more than merely stimulus-response reactions, literature highlights (van Zoonen, 1994; Morley, 1980; Hall, 1973) that the reading of the media message is not a simple chain of a sender and a receiver. On the contrary, David Morley (1980) in his now classic study *The 'Nationwide' Audience* shows how the same media message is encoded differently by media viewers. Applying Stuart Hall's (1973) *Encoding/Decoding* model, Morley (1980) analysed the data from twenty-nine different groups that viewed the BBC's *Nationwide* programme. He

concludes that the media reading, as Morley defines it, is a problematic 'work'; and the media reading itself varies according to the media audience. Morley (1980:10) summaries his argument by stating

- The production of the meaningful message in the TV discourse is always problematic 'work'. The same event can be encoded in more than one way.

- The message in social communication is always complex in structure and form. It always contains more than one potential 'reading'. Messages propose and prefer certain readings over others, but they can never become wholly closed around one reading. They remain polysemic.

- The activity of 'getting meaning' from the message is also a problematic practice (…). Messages encoded one way can always be read in a different way.

Ultimately, Morley argues that the interplay between a viewer's social position and access to discourses determines the reading of the media message. He (1980:134) states

> …it is always a question of how social position plus particular discourse positions produce specific readings; readings which are structured because the structure of access to different discourses is determined by social position.

Similarly, Dawn Currie (1999) in her work on teenage girls' reading of women's magazines argues that the reading of teen magazines cannot be analysed as constituting an effect but rather the social context directs the way teenage girls will engage with the magazine text. In her findings Currie (1999) highlights that the cultural texts, as a discursive formation of femininity, is not taken up by teenage girls as a legitimate truth and consequently embedded as a set of rules to express girls' female identity, but rather, the 'social', such as school, home and/or social groups, shape how teenage girls embody the discourse on femininity that is displayed in women's magazines.

Nevertheless, throughout her work Currie (1999) has emphasised that the subject cannot be viewed as *a priori* the discursive. Thus, the social context, which directs how teenage girls read the cultural text, is inevitably embedded within the discursive formations of gender, sexuality and 'normative' femininity and feminine behaviour. Therefore, Currie (1999) views women's magazines as being equivalent to social texts that organise how one thinks of and perceives femininity. Currie (1999:16) states 'as a social text that mediates discourse surrounding femininity, women's magazines are part of the process of signification through which the female body, as a signifier, is invested with characteristics which are culturally read as 'feminine'.'

A more recent study by Wulf et al. (2010) highlights that for young people the media is a realm of learning and experience that shapes the way adolescents socialise and form their social practices. The researchers argue that the media provides children with practical knowledge as a foundation for

establishing a peer group identity. Nevertheless, they point out that children do not merely imitate media messages; on the contrary, young people are 'active' recipients of media messages. In other words, children continuously adapt and rework media messages, and in doing so, they establish their identity.

However, the study emphasises that after being invited to perform in front of a video camera with no specific agenda for that performance all children used the media, such as commercials, chat shows or music clips, as a reference point to construct their acts. Wulf and colleagues (2010) argue that this suggests when children are in front of the recording medium they construct their performance according to their practical knowledge of what is an acceptable media performance. 'No games of schools or shops are performed, but what we found was commercials, news feeds and chat shows' (Wulf et al., 2010:108). As for girls, Wulf et al. (2010) highlight that they chose to present makeup and beauty related commercials where normative female behaviour was expressed through the aid of the cosmetic industry.

How do teenage girls read media messages about 'appropriate' femininity?

Being addressed by a multiplicity of discourses, from patriarchal representations to agentic female images, studies (Jackson et al., 2012; Currie, 1997) show that teenage girls critically engaged and sometimes rejected media messages. However, as some of the studies (Press, 2011; Kehily, 1999) indicate, teenage girls used media messages as a benchmark for self-regulation and self-correction of their behaviour. Recent research (Jackson and Vares, 2011; Malson et al., 2010) shows that the process of 'Othering' through utilisation of the figure of 'slut' and expression of disgust is frequently used by young girls when engaging with media discourses on contemporary femininity. Moreover, discourses that surround the regulation of girlhood, such as sexualisation of childhood, impacts the way teenage girls read media messages of 'appropriate' femininity (Jackson et al., 2012). Being addressed by a variety of discourses that regulate not only the construction of femininity but also, governance of age-appropriate behaviour obscures the critique of structural inequalities rendering them into individual responsibilities. Subsequently, studies (Press, 2011; Kehily, 1999) show that teenage girls, while being critical of media messages, rarely openly critiqued the structural order of gender representation. Such teenage girls' media reading patterns are evident over a decade.

For instance, in her study conducted in 1997 on teenage girls magazine reading habits, Currie (1997) points out that even though teenage girls' engagement with magazines was motivated by the desire to know about themselves, their everyday problems, and their social world, the magazine text was

not accepted without girls' critique. Teenage girls critiqued magazine context if it did not resonate with their perceived reality or their lived experiences. Furthermore, Currie (1997:471) adds that

> although participants freely acknowledged that magazines are "only" texts, motivated by economic interest, girls in this study engaged in a manner of reading that brought their construction of self, rather than magazine discourse, into question. …many young readers compared themselves to constructed texts.

Furthermore, Currie (1997) notes that when the magazine content was portraying ideological themes of romantic love and motherhood, teenage girls always accepted the text. In addition, when discussing the advertisements, girls in the study frequently linked feeling good about themselves to 'looking good'.

Similarly, Kehily (1999) in her study on teenage girls' reading of sexual messages in the media found that teenage girls were not only critical media readers but also engaged with the media text in productive ways. The readings of media messages were never done in isolation as teenage girls drew from their social context of friendship groups and personal experience to make sense of media texts. Nevertheless, Kehily (1999) points out that magazine texts framed girls' personal experiences, and thus young women were self-regulating their actions to correspond to the portrayed media gender normalcy. Since teenage girls in the study read magazines as a collective activity, Kehily (1999) notes, the established femininity was continuously produced, defined and enhanced.

More recently Press (2011) looked at postfeminist media culture as a source for female identity construction. The study explored how teenage girls read the TV show *America's Next Top Model*. The show, Press (2011) emphasises, utilises postfeminist rhetoric and encourages the female participants to love their bodies and become the best version of themselves through the 'makeover' of one's appearance and consumption of products. Overall, the study indicated that girls enjoyed consuming media images. Nevertheless, girls were critical of the media context. Press (2011:136) states that

> The show's overt feminist rhetoric, criticizing eating disorders and including larger-sized women, does not convince the girls: winners are almost without exception impossibly skinny, beautiful and otherwise flawless, for the most part. Despite the ever-present theme of transformation which promises that any girl can attain such perfection, the girls notice the flawlessness of the winners, and the unhealthy, unnatural ways in which it must be achieved.

Moreover, teenage girls in the study frequently pointed out that the contestants in the show had 'problems' related to social class issues. Thus, teenage girls highlighted that the show suggested that a solution to the class related problems was to take on white middle-class heterosexual values, and

above all become disciplined bodies that engaged in a neoliberal consumer culture. Older participants in the study (19-24 year-old college girls), Press (2011) notes expressed similar views to younger teenage girls (12-14 year-olds) but with a more intense look and examination of their and other's bodies. In other words, the intensification of surveillance, and in particular self-surveillance, was strongly linked with being identified as a woman.

Jackson et al. (2012) looked at the ways teenage girls negotiated contemporary postfeminist meanings of femininity marketed to them in fashion. The researchers set out to explore the ways girls engage/disengage from postfeminist identities constituted through 'girlie' and 'sexy' clothing. Teenage girls critiqued 'sexy' media messages utilising repressive, classed, regulatory discourses (whereas a slut referred to working-class femininity and 'good girl' was indicating middle-class femininity). In addition, Jackson et al. (2012) highlight that teenage girls in their study were distancing themselves from the 'sexy' media messages using discourses of child sexualisation, which positioned girls to be responsible for protecting themselves from victimisation by not dressing in a 'sexy' manner. As a result, teenage girls did not engage in criticising cultural configurations of femininity but rather identified themselves within the individualisation (neo-liberalism) discourses. Moreover, to reiterate their subject position teenage girls in the study continuously resorted to the techniques of 'Othering'. The girls frequently stated that other girls were influenced victims of media messages, which was evident from other girls' 'sexy' dress. 'Such "othering" seemed to work not only to shore up girls' positioning as "not-influenced", but also to position them as stronger, more mature and "better" informed than (some) other girls' (Jackson et al., 2012:158).

Likewise, Jackson and Vares (2011) longitudinal study looked at the ways pre-teen girls in New Zealand make sense of the contemporary popular culture of hyper-sexualised femininities. The researchers explored teen girls' narratives on the celebrity culture of the (un)dress and identified that girls in the study frequently used the 'slut' figure to reject the sexualised portrayal of the female celebrities. Jackson and Vares (2011:139) note that

> …the 'slut' provides a strategy for the girls to carefully separate their own subjectivity from the 'sluts' they watch. Such separation may assume particular importance for the girls in the context of adult/parental concerns that girls will emulate the sexual dress of pop celebrities.

Notably, the utilisation of the 'slut' in girls' talk was referring to displays of female celebrities' bodily flesh rather than celebrities' sexual behaviours (e.g. body movements, sexual simulation, self-touching). In instances when the 'slut' figure was used to critique celebrities' sexual behaviour, that sexual behaviour was breaking down the established heterosexual gender norms. For instance, a Lady Gaga video where the pop star was dressed in 'slutty' clothing while wriggling sexually in a paddling

pool, was rejected by teenage girls by expressing disgust. However, when the video was showing Lady Gaga in a simulated sexual scene with two men, teenage girls did not draw any attention to the scene. Similarly, when teenage girls were discussing a Katy Perry video, during which the celebrity unapologetically states '*I kissed a girl and I liked it*', indicating the 'lipstick' lesbianism, Jackson and Vares (2011) point out that teenage girls rejected Katy Perry's performance by bringing the attention on the sexy clothes the pop star was wearing, and not the sexual meanings being produced in the activities of two women. Jackson and Vares (2011) argue that through the expression of '*ew*' as disgust towards such sexual performances, allowed girls to position themselves as belonging to the heterosexual matrix. It is important to note that sexuality is heavily policed across various societies. As such, dramatically identifying individuals and incidents where a line has been crossed is not particularly unusual. However, in every culture control of sexuality finds its own particular expression, and in Western societies, this control is discharged in the form of neoliberalism.

> Positioning self as heterosexual assumes particular importance in girls' everyday lives where in Western societies, unlike in popular culture, their sexuality continues to be policed and regulated within constraining heteronormativity
>
> (Jackson and Vares, 2011:141).

Girls' utilisation of the 'slut' figure, Jackson and Vares (2011) point out, could be read as a resistance and simultaneously as a regulation: resistance to the 'hyper-sexualised femininity' pervasive in the postfeminist popular culture and regulation through a discourse of binary femininity of 'good girl/bad girl.' For instance, when girls in the study negotiated (un)dressed images of Miley Cyrus, teen girls not only critiqued Cyrus' (un)dressed status as being slutty; but more importantly, identifying Cyrus as a 'slut' figure was based on Cyrus' presented image as Hannah Montana – 'a good girl'. 'Her "naked" pose in "real life" accordingly signified a violation of that status, deeming her to be, in some girls' perspective, a "bad influence" on young fans' (Jackson and Vares, 2011:142). Thus, in girls' views, Cyrus not only broke down the femininity norms but also age-appropriate norms. Moreover, one could argue Cyrus is trying to construct herself as a figure of scandal, playing a functional role of placing herself as the figure through which the community will discuss what 'appropriate' femininity is. Jackson and Vares (2011:143) note that 'despite the rhetoric of Girl Power sexual freedoms, in practice, girls' sexuality continues to be under surveillance and regulated.' Jackson and Vares (2011:143) continue by stating

> Miley should be able to do what she wants but she is constrained by expectations of conformity with notions of 'good girl' femininity. In posing 'naked', Miley is seen to have abdicated her responsibility of being a 'role model' for girls and cast her as the 'good girl' turned 'bad'.

The rejection of postfeminist media representations of women was also evident in the Malson et al. (2010), which explored how young women made sense of the sexually agentic Midriff figure in the advertisement. Women in the study recognised the appeal of the Midriff figure, but at the same time they were often critical of the images and distanced themselves from that particular sexually agentic female representation. The researchers state (2010:79)

> participants frequently constituted the midriff (and also the target audience of midriff advertising) as the other of 'normal' women and of themselves, not only because the midriff looked 'extra beautiful' but also because 'she' (and 'her' target audience) were (interpreted as) appearance-oriented and, in one way or another, at the beck and call of men.

On the contrary, when participants viewed Midriff figure as less oriented to men the advertisement was interpreted as representing more 'normal' and 'natural' women. Nevertheless, Malson et al. (2010:95) concluded that consistently young women read the Midriff figure as being beautiful and sexy, but simultaneously as 'slutty' and incompetent because she dressed to please men rather than herself. Furthermore, as the Midriff figure was always identified with her body, research participants viewed the Midriff woman as someone who ' "hasn't got anything apart from her body really" and whose independence and success is, therefore, illusory and/or trivial in that it is a consequence only of her heterosexual attractiveness' (Malson et al., 2010:95).

In Ireland, while there were studies conducted looking at teenage boys' media consumption and film viewing practices (Ging, 2005) to date, there are no published studies conducted exploring how teenage girls make sense of media messages about contemporary femininity. On the other hand, a recent study by Stokes (2014) looked at how Irish women locate themselves in relation to the popular media culture, in particular, the Raunch culture. Stokes (2014:416) states

> This includes the prevalence and the influence of the raunch culture's sexual rulebook, which imposes a set of rules and standards that are rigid in their definitions of 'sex', 'sexuality', 'empowerment', 'femininity' and 'masculinity', and which are enforced through social stigmatising, labelling and judgment of those who do not adhere to them.

Stokes found that the ideals of Raunch culture were continuously utilised in women's talk, which was evident through the narratives of the ways women self-regulated and self-corrected their decisions about sexual encounters. Women in the study expressed that they felt they needed to please the man, display pleasure and in-depth knowledge in sexual encounters, and above all not to refuse sex since being sexual was perceived as women's empowerment. Nevertheless, one needs to highlight that first and for most, 'women' are not a homogeneous group; they intersubjectively choose their sexual partners and do not necessarily accept every sexual offer that has been proposed to them. However,

Stokes (2014) highlights that women in the study felt the inner conflict between the value of being perceived as sexually 'empowered' and as 'embarrassing sex' and simultaneously being afraid of being labelled as a 'slut'. They felt forced to choose to perform the sexually agentic figure and that there was no room to embrace women's autonomy, choice or agency. Moreover, rather than choosing to critique the current cultural configuration, women in the study self-regulated and self-corrected their behaviour to comply with the Raunch culture. Subsequently, not only Raunch culture regulated women's heterosexuality, but it also reinstated patriarchal gender norms. Stokes (2014:417) states

> The young women involved have been forced to make sexual decisions based not on their own sexual gratification, satisfaction or pleasure, but on achieving the least damaging outcome of a sexual situation, e.g. in consenting to unwanted sex to avoid being labelled 'prudish' or to ensure that their sexual partner will not be angry or upset.

Stokes (2014) concluded Raunch culture acted as an oppressive force for Irish women's empowerment, rather than liberating women through the rhetoric of sexual empowerment and liberation.

Conclusion

This chapter section focused on exploring the representation of women in contemporary media culture. The way contemporary culture addresses women throughout the media landscape allows us to grasp subject positions that women are called upon to occupy. Current media content analysis studies show that women are represented in a myriad of ways (Jhally et al., 2010; Jhally, 2009; Gill, 2008b). She is a fragile, submissive and caring housewife (Gunter, 1995), she is an agentic sexual Midriff figure (Gill, 2008b), and she is a woman that 'oozes' confidence by displaying her 'real' undressed body (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011). Throughout advertising, women are called upon to become important to themselves through surveillance of their body that is often expressed in female practices of monitoring their diet, makeup, or levels of daily exercise (Halliwell et al., 2011; Marwick, 2010; Hargreaves and Tiggemann, 2003). However, in contemporary society, it is not enough for a woman to monitor her physical body, she needs to labour her psyche to meet the prescribed beauty standards (Gill and Elias, 2014). Beauty for women now is understood not only as a possession of a beautiful body but also having a beautiful mind. This beautiful mind is said to manifest through woman's newly discovered confidence that she portrays through displays of her 'real body' – a body in undergarments and commonly just nude (Murphy and Jackson, 2011).

Current representations of women must be understood in relation to the deep hold of postfeminism and neoliberalism over contemporary culture, where choice, individualism and individual freedom

are constructed as paramount values, where a display of the female body is sold as female empowerment and the means of expressing her agency (Gill, 2008a). Wrapped in slogans of female choice, privilege and empowerment, the process of surveillance over women's bodies is reconfigured from objectification to subjectification (Gill, 2018). However, these new concepts about femininity are partly constructed on the previous understandings about womanhood and 'appropriate' female conduct. In popular media culture, femininity and female bodies were continuously represented as objects to be consumed by the male gaze, whereas contemporary women are no longer strictly positioned to please the male gaze but rather to become an object for self-consumption. Similar patterns of relating to themselves based on previous cultural constructs of femininity are evident in studies exploring Irish women's lived experiences. Thus, girls' construction of their femininity is not exercised in isolation but is a product of local historical and cultural heritage as well as global discourses about 'appropriate' femininity.

Consequently, the question arises as to *how teenage girls construct their online identities drawing from the local and the global concepts of 'appropriate' femininity? How teenage girls translate this new neoliberal and postfeminist rhetoric of self-realisation on social networking sites? Do teenage girls embody same or different forms of feminine displays while being on social networking sites? What technologies of self-realisation dominate teenage girls online displays and why so*? These are some of the questions that will be explored in the following chapter sections.

IV. TEENAGE GIRLS' CONSTRUCTION AND PRESENTATION OF THEIR SUBJECTIVITY ON SOCIAL NETWORK SITES (SNSS)

Introduction

Pioneering cyber scholars (Turkle, 1995; Haraway, 1991) anticipated that online space would be the new space for identity construction that would not be bound by historical roots or cultural discourses due to a disavowal of corporeal body and gender, as well as increased individual anonymity. It has been stated that for teenagers SNSs created a new space, where teens could 'hang out' (Ito et al., 2010), express their identities and re-imagine new ones (Marwick, 2011; Miller, 2010; Livingstone, 2008). Social media, in particular, has been conceptualised as a new space where women could influence established discourses on femininity and shift power dynamics by telling their lived experiences and thus claiming their own voice (Scott-Dixon, 2004).

However, the blurred line between the online and offline identity presentation problematises the way teenage girls are subjected to display their identities on social networking sites (Marwick, 2013; boyd, 2011). Showing themselves as sexual to fulfil the postfeminist media advertising images while simultaneously avoiding being identified as a 'slut' (Ringrose, 2011; Elm, 2009), dismantles the idea that female identity performances are liberated from cultural and structural constraints. Research (Gardner and Davis, 2013; Weber and Mitchell, 2008) shows that in producing content for social networking audiences, teenage girls are subjected to present themselves as objects to be gazed at and simultaneously gaze at their own productions to enhance and modify their unified authentic selves. Such types of self-presentation on social media, studies (Woods and Scott, 2016; Best, et al., 2014; Meier and Gray, 2014) indicate, lead to teenage girls' higher levels of anxiety and depression, as well as weight dissatisfaction, drive for thinness, thin-ideal internalisation, and self-objectification.

This chapter section follows Rose's (1999) conceptualisations about governing the modern subjects. Rose (1999) asserts that through technologies of self-inspection, self-problematisation, self-monitoring and confession, we are continuously evaluating our identities per the criteria provided to us by others.

> The irony is that we believe, in making our subjectivity the principle of our personal lives, our ethical systems, and our political evaluations, that we are, freely, choosing our freedom
>
> (Rose, 1999:11).

Participation on social media is always inevitably linked with practices of confession. However, due to algorithm structures on social networking sites, the confessional practices demand to be gazed at and evaluated by the 'networked audience' (Lupton, 2016; Rettberg, 2014; Marwick, 2013; Deuze, 2011). Thus, being identified with a quantity for one's social media post becomes a key indicator of one's identity not only in the online but also in the offline world. Therefore, social media users seek surveillance over their online productions, and in turn being under surveillance becomes a new norm (Bauman and Lyon, 2013). Moreover, as the 'networked audience' (Marwick, 2013) moves across various social networking sites, one is positioned to present a coherent unified and marketable SNSs identity to be acknowledged as being authentic. While self-presentation on social media involves an extensive and intense emotional labour, participation on SNSs is narrated as freely chosen as an expression of one's individuality. In addition, being subjected to the current dominant cultural discourses that identify girls as subjects of capacity (McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004), position teenage girls to repress any complaints. One could argue that such contradictory ethics of self-realisation result in rising numbers of teenage girls' self-harm and suicide rates (UNISEF, 2013).

As for teenage girls, studies (Fuchs, 2014; Awan and Gauntlett, 2013; Bollmer, 2013; Gardner and Davis, 2013; Tene, 2013) show that being subjectified by the neoliberal and postfeminist values (Gill, 2008; Rose, 1996), young girls aim to portray themselves on SNSs as entrepreneurial through the utilisation of their sexualised bodies (Kapidzic and Herring, 2014; De Vries and Peter, 2013; Ringrose, 2010; Siibak, 2009; Manago et al., 2008). Parallel to teenage girls' sexual SNSs displays, laddish female presentations are emerging of wild, risky and forms of conspicuously deviant behaviours as a sign of female pleasure and the example of the strong female friendship bonds (Dobson, 2015, 2014; William and Merten, 2008). Nevertheless, both teenage girls' SNSs presentations maintain their displays within the codes of heterosexual female attractiveness. Thus, one could argue that teenage girls' displays of their bodies on SNSs are translated as a celebratory practice due to SNSs functions of 'Likes' and 'Hearts', which in turn normalise female objectification on social media. Consequently, the objectification of female bodies on SNSs become even more concealed and thus suppressing one's resistance to external powers in relation to one's identity construction.

In conclusion, as discussed in previous literature review sections, in Ireland girls' lives have always been shaped by power dynamics that restrained and controlled concepts of womanhood and 'appropriate' female conduct. However, in contemporary society, there is a new process of power dynamics where power has shifted from being expressed in personal and concrete relationships, such as the Catholic Church or the medical professions, to a situation where power becomes impersonal

and disembodied. This shift involves a change from the power of the father/priest/doctor, to media/advertising firms to a most recent of social media algorithms. Thus, resistance to the disembodied power becomes more challenging and difficult. When power becomes impersonal and invisible to a point when one cannot observe or articulate the power structures – one comes to be more powerfully shaped by external forces than ever before.

SNSs as a physical space for teenagers

The pioneering scholars on young people's engagement with social media observed that for teenagers social networking sites became 'their' space, where teens could perform their identity to different audiences through 'Wall Post', 'Photos' and 'Comments' (Livinsgtone, 2008). boyd and Marwick (2011) argue that social networking sites are the new equivalent of malls or street corners that previously teens used as a space to socialise without adult surveillance and thus maintain their sense of community which is based on interest, values and norms. Moreover, boyd (2011) argues that due to their inbuilt features, social networking sites are equivalent to public spaces, which she defines as networked publics. Thus, boyd (2011:39) argues that networked publics function in the same manner as other types of publics have, stating that

> they allow people to gather for social, cultural, and civic purposes, and they help people connect with a world beyond their close friends and family.

On SNSs, boyd (2011) highlights, the structures of profiles, 'Friends' list, public commenting tools, and stream-based updates illustrate the ways social networking sites are equivalent to public spaces. All of those SNSs elements indicate users' social connections and also give a sense to the users of their publics. Self-presentation on SNSs is usually done for this imagined community. Nevertheless, boyd (2011) emphasises that networked publics differ from other types of publics due to technologically mediated participation. Moreover, it is precisely social networking sites' ability to continually monitor and surveil their users that distinguishes online spaces from any offline publics.

Some of the authors theorise social networking sites as a space equivalent to teen bedrooms (Livingtone, 2011; Robards, 2010; Downs, 2010; Hodkinson and Lincoln, 2007). Using the 'digital bedrooms' metaphor Livingstone and colleagues (2011) highlight that social networking sites mark a space where teens draw boundaries of their private space and forbid outsider (adult) intrusion to successfully manage their identity displays. However, recent statistics (Mascheroni and Ólafsson, 2014; Livingstone et al., 2011; O'Neill et al., 2011) indicate that a significant number of teenagers

(15-16 year-olds) have their SNSs on public (27% EU; 15% Ireland) or semi-public (EU 31%; 26% Ireland) privacy settings allowing their profiles to be visited by a diverse and broad audience.

While the majority of teenagers' SNSs profiles are still on private (42% EU; 59% Ireland), with teenage girls setting their SNSs profiles on private more than boys (EU: girls 50% vs boys 39%; Ireland: girls 69%), studies (Awan and Gauntlett, 2013; Tyma, 2007) show that young people easily accept online 'Friend' requests even though they might not be friends offline. boyd (2011:44) notes that 'in choosing whom to include as 'Friends', participants [teenagers] more frequently consider the implications of excluding or explicitly rejecting a person as opposed to the benefits of including them.' As for teenage girls statistics (Mascheroni and Ólafsson, 2014) show that 25% of teenage girls accept a 'Friends' request if they know the person while 49% of teenage girls accept a 'Friends' request if they have 'Friends' in common. Consequently, the line between the online and offline social circle becomes blurred and thus problematises teenage girls' identity presentation on SNSs.

SNSs algorithms and digits and identity presentation

Literature (Lupton, 2016; Rettberg, 2014; Marwick, 2013; Deuze, 2011) highlights the importance of SNSs algorithms that structure users' identity presentations on social media. Thus, SNSs is viewed as a space that is essentially based on digits making its users present themselves as 'data bodies' (Rettberg, 2014). For instance, Rettberg (2014) points out that one's confessional practises on Facebook, such as posting status updates, pining ones' present location and uploading personal photos, transforms one into a quantifiable entity that is evaluated in terms of numbers. Therefore, self-presentation and self-expression on SNSs, Rettberg (2014) highlights, is filtered and altered through computer algorithms that allocate quantifiable value to one's identity presentation.

In 2013, with the introduction of new Facebook algorithms, the quantification of oneself on SNSs became paramount. The new algorithms are based on a ranking system for the News Feed display on the individual Facebook user's 'Wall'. The News Feed is essentially a display of all actions that one's Facebook 'Friends' did on a Facebook platform. With the new algorithm, only top-rated stories reach individual Facebook users which are based on three factors:

1. Affinity: how 'connected' the user is to the person producing that story (based on how frequently one 'Commented' and 'Liked' that person's Facebook content, how close the displayed relationship (sister, boyfriend, mother etc.) one has with that person etc.)
2. Story's weight: how many 'Likes' and 'Comments' that story has received already (the more 'Comments' and the more 'Likes', the more likely the story is to be placed at the top of the News Feed)

3. Time decay: how old is that story (the longer the story has been on Facebook, the less likely it is to be placed at the top of the News Feed)

The new Facebook algorithms not only imply that the Facebook user is not able to escape one's past identity, but it also complicates user's agency when aiming to represent a particular identity online. Tene (2013), for instance, observes that SNSs users have less and less control in choosing how to represent their identity on SNS.s Tene (2013:16) states that

> …many other decisions remain in the sole domain of SNS operators with very little transparency for users. This includes the handling of "meta data" concerning users' interaction with the SNS; whose profiles a user viewed; whom she was tagged with; how long she lingered on a page; which links she "liked" or clicked through; what content she was interested in; which devices she used; and what locations she visited. It also includes deciding which information will be promoted and featured prominently for others to see and which pushed down and therefore relegated to oblivion.

The introduction of the ranking system on Facebook implies that to become visible on SNSs one needs to have an extensive network of online 'Friends', gain a significant amount of audience attention through 'Likes' and 'Comments' and continuously produce new SNSs content. Gerlitz and Helmond (2013) note that with the introduction of the Facebook 'Like' button on external websites a 'Like' economy was created. Gerlitz and Helmond (2013:2) note that 'the 'Like' economy instantly metrifies user engagement and affects into numbers on button counters, which can be traded but also potentially multiplied and scaled up.' For instance, the 'Like' economy is increasingly becoming prevalent within the current social media influencers scene. Social media users that come from a common background transform themselves into micro-celebrities due to the numbers of their 'Followers' and 'Likes' on their social media content.

Thus, self-presentation that is determined by algorithms, Rettberg (2014) argues, alters how one sees oneself as well as the way others view and relate to him/her. On social networking platforms, it is numbers and quantities that become important as they now hold value not only online but also offline (Lupton, 2016; Gerlitz and Helmond, 2013). Not surprisingly, current research (Zhao et al., 2008) findings indicate that SNSs users, in particular, Facebook users, are more likely to indirectly display their identity through quantifiable and visual elements, such as 'Friends' list, 'Photos' and 'Wall Posts', rather than describing themselves in the designated sections, such as 'About me' or 'Bio'. In other words, it is the quantifiable 'showing about me' rather than personal and emotional 'telling about me' that carries value on SNSs.

Therefore, on SNSs individual identity presentation becomes evaluated by metrics: metrics of how many 'Friends'/'Followers' one has, how many 'Likes'/'Hearts'/'Comments' one received for one's

post, how many times one's story has been shared or retweeted. Those metrics, scholars argue (Gerlitz and Helmond, 2013; Marwick, 2013), indicate one's popularity and social standing by allowing one to publicly display the size of one's social connections (e.g. number of 'Friends', 'Comments' and 'Likes') and one's offline social network (e.g. photos of social events with different peer circles). Moreover, some of the research (Seidman and Miller, 2013; Kleck et al., 2007) points out that SNSs audiences make a direct link between the high numbers of SNSs 'Friends' with the SNSs profile owner's degree of popularity, pleasantness, heterosexual appeal, and possession of confidence.

Likewise, Lupton (2016) emphasises that a set of numbers publicly displayed on an individual's SNSs construct a particular type of individual identity, and thus to a high degree, structures how others respond to that individual. Quantification of one's identity, Lupton (2016) adds, simplifies complex individual qualities to a singular digit creating new understandings of what a normal human experience should look like. For instance, 'fun times with 'Friends' are now measured in terms of how many 'Likes' and 'Comments' the event received on SNSs rather than if the person had a good time and lots of laughter. Deuze (2011) asserts that the contemporary habitus of streaming everything about one's life makes everything filtered and altered through the media. Media technologies, Deuze (2011) argues, are becoming increasingly invisible resulting in modification of one's sense of identity, stating that

> The moment media become invisible, our sense of identity, and indeed our experience of reality itself, becomes irreversibly modified, because mediated

(Deuze, 2011:140).

In fact, a number of scholars (Lenhart and Madden, 2005; Howe and Strauss, 2000) assert that this generation of teenagers (Millennials) is the first generation that grew up with the media technologies as part of their everyday life. Irish statistics (O'Neill and Dinh, 2015; O'Neill et al., 2011) indicate that young people (15-16 year-olds) in Ireland go online every day. Gardner and Davis (2013) define the current generation of teenagers as the 'App generation': a generation of kids that see their reality as an ensemble of apps. They argue that this new view of the world constructs teenagers' identity as an 'app identity': multifaceted, highly personalised, outward-facing, and structured by the functions and the design of the app. Interestingly, O'Neill and Dinh (2015) point out that teenage girls in Ireland are more likely to use SNSs (76% compared to 68% for boys); post videos, photos or music to share with others (29% compared to 7%). Consequently, teenage girls' lives in Ireland seem to be more mediated by new technologies and social networking sites in comparison to teenage boys. Thus, the question arises what parts of their lives teenage girls decide to display on their SNSs sites and how this mediation of their lives structures their identities.

The democratisation of feminine identity presentations on SNSs

Before exploring how teenage girls construct their identities on SNSs, it is important to unravel the debates about gender and age-specific identity presentations on social media to understand the overarching regulatory techniques that structure online self-presentation. Online media has been conceptualised as a new decentralised and a more democratic space where the audience is not a passive recipient of media messages but rather an active user and producer (Horst, 2012; Senft, 2008). Such a new relationship to media, scholars (Ito et al., 2010) argue, reconfigures audience ability to reject and negotiate media messages and in effect distance themselves from the power of the media ideology. Many pioneering social media scholars (Scott-Dixon, 2004; Turkle, 1995; Haraway, 1991) conceptualised SNSs as a new avenue for women where they could transgress and subvert the established cultural gender norms and co-construct new identities. For instance, Turkle (1995) in the early days of cyberspace research was envisaging that broadly available digitised media would enrich opportunities for self-exploration and identity production. In addition, cyberfeminists (Scott-Dixon, 2004; Haraway, 1991) were hoping that digitalised media would empower women to subvert stereotypical (in accordance with patriarchal gender structures) female representations in the media.

Scholars (Senft, 2008; Fernandez et al., 2003) argued that women, since being provided with the new space to construct different and more comprehensive definitions of what it meant to be a girl, would shift dominant discourses about girlhood and femininity. Therefore, Haraway (1991) argued that with the emergence of digitised technologies the socially constructed binaries, for instance, man/woman, which sustained oppression and discrimination, would be disrupted. Thus, Haraway (1991) imagined a new sort of human existence online that was not bound by corporeal body or gender. Furthermore, other scholars (Mazzarella, 2008; Turkle, 1995) theorised that due to greater anonymity on cyberspace the possibilities of bending gender norms were more widespread. Social media, in particular, has been conceptualised as a new space where women could influence established discourses on femininity and shift power dynamics by telling their lived experiences and thus claiming their own voice (Scott-Dixon, 2004).

As for teenage girls, some authors argue that cyberspace allows teenage girls to bend, even temporarily, the boundaries of established gender performance (Currie et al., 2009). Consequently, cyberspace has been conceptualised as empowering for teenage girls (Takayoshi et al., 1999). The online space was said to be a secure arena for young girls: girls were now able to access public and unsupervised environments from the safety of their homes or schools (Livingstone, 2008; Marwick,

2011). Thus, scholars (Marwick, 2011; Miller, 2010; Livingstone, 2008) argued that SNSs created a new space, where teens could 'hang out' (Ito et al., 2010), express their identities and re-imagine new ones. Moreover, a number of social media theorists (Awan and Gauntlett, 2013; Stern, 2008;) state that while being online girls could experiment with their displays of gendered identity and test the limits of the established gender norms with lesser social risks than while being offline.

For instance, the study of Currie et al. (2009) on teenage girls' identity performance online found that online spaces allowed girls to briefly 'escape' the gendered dynamics of their local peer culture. On the other hand, Currie et al. (2009) pointed out that even though online spaces allowed girls to transgress gender expectations when displaying their online identities, girls who displayed femininity in the conventional ways were more successful in being accepted in the online communities. Similarly, Kelly et al. (2006) noted that teenage girls in the study felt that they were able to rehearse different ways of being a girl before trying out a new girlhood performance offline. The study documented the ways teenage girls were transgressing established gender boundaries (particularly traditional ways of emphasised femininity) online by taking on assertive roles when communicating with the opposite sex in chat rooms and IM boards. Kelly et al. (2006:22) state that while being online teenage girls were '…bending and switching gender to improvise nonconformist femininities and learning to express parts of themselves (e.g., aggression, sexual desire) that they had been made to feel were taboo offline.'

On the other hand, current research (Bailey et al., 2013; Ringrose, 2009) that explored young women's engagement with SNSs emphasises that the online space is increasingly becoming regulatory and surveillance orientated in regard to identity construction, rather than accommodating gendered identity experimentation. A number of studies (Renold and Ringrose, 2011; Ringrose, 2011; Elm 2009) indicate that transgressing established gender boundaries online is much harder than complying with the heteronormative gender performance rules.

For instance, Elm's (2009) study argued that the acquisition of female identity is a tricky balancing act that must be executed at a right level to pass as a genuine gender performance. She explored how teenage girls in Sweden negotiated contemporary discourses of femininity when creating their personal weblogs, concluding that on their personal online pages, teenage girls mostly portrayed a mask that was cautiously created as a performance for the online audience. The teenage girls carefully elaborated their self-presentation online to display femininity that was '… at the right level – not too little, nor too much' (Elm, 2009:258). Significantly, online space was found out to be more restraining than offline space when teenage girls wanted to transgress the established gender norms. Girls' higher degree of consciousness and reflexivity involved in displaying online self-presentation were the main factors that worked against the gender transformation (Elm, 2009).

Similarly, Ringrose's (2010) study on teenage girls' SNSs profiles indicated that teenage girls felt pressure to display a sexually knowledgeable identity online while simultaneously avoiding being identified as a 'slut' offline. Consequently, the teenage girls continuously expressed the struggle of balancing online identity displays, as the

> demands to present the self as 'sexy' online create discursive contradictions for girls in negotiating an acceptable sexual identity in 'real-life'. Demands around visually desirable heterosexual femininity online lead to 'real-life' anxieties, conflicts and violence in their relationships at school

> (Ringrose, 2010:171).

Thus, various scholars (Ringrose et al., 2012; Livingstone, 2010; boyd, 2007) note that for young people the boundary between online and offline is increasingly becoming blurred raising issues about one's identity presentation since it is simultaneously regulated by the offline and online audience.

SNSs audience

Thus, it is important to explore who the audience is on SNSs, what techniques they employ to regulate gender presentations online and in what way online audience constructs a particular female subjectivity. Marwick (2013), for instance, problematises the use of public networks (boyd, 2011) for self-presentation on social networking sites. Marwick (2013) views self-presentation as a continuous information upload on social networking sites, which she defines as 'lifestreaming'. 'Lifestreaming is the ongoing sharing of personal information to a networked audience, the creation of a digital portrait of one's actions and thoughts' (Marwick, 2013:208), for instance, what one had for breakfast in the form of Instagram photos. It is vital to highlight that while streaming one's lives is not a primary activity on social networking sites; it is an important element for creating content on these sites. Moreover, lifestreaming is usually conducted with an audience in mind. In other words, the lifestreamer uploads information that one thinks would be of interest to one's audience. Therefore, Marwick (2013) proposes to view the lifestreaming audience as the networked audience and not as networked publics, suggested by boyd (2011). Networked publics suggest a set of people engaging through one communication platform (e.g. Twitter), whereas the networked audience moves across various social networking sites. Furthermore, the networked audience is not any audience, but a set of people that are interested enough to view user's digital performances.

A number of scholars (Cover, 2012; Buckingham, 2008; Liu et al., 2006) assert that producing content on social networking sites is equivalent to Goffman's (1969) theorisation of impression management. Teenagers' identity presentation on SNSs has been conceptualised as the performance of the self for

a particular audience, usually for their peers (Siibak, 2009). Similar to everyday impression management, which is maintained through dress-code, body language and speech, teenage girls' identity representation on SNSs was theorised looking at utilisation of profile photos, SNSs graphic decorations and texts (Dobson, 2013; Jackson et al., 2012; Ringrose and Barajas, 2011; Mazur and Kozarian, 2009).

However, a number of scholars (boyd, 2014; Thumin, 2012) problematise the application of Goffman's theory to SNSs. For instance, Thumin (2012) points out that the degree of consciousness and reflexivity involved when displaying online identity is much more intense on SNSs in comparison to face to face (offline) interactions. Similarly, boyd (2014) raises the issue of, what she defines as 'context collapsing'. boyd states (2014:554)

> a context collapse occurs when people are forced to grapple simultaneously with otherwise unrelated social contexts that are rooted in different norms and seemingly demand different social responses.

As a result, boyd (2014) notes that on SNSs teenagers must continuously negotiate and navigate their identity displays to maintain the integrity of their self-presentation, not only for a mixed audience – wanted or unwanted – but also, for online as well as offline 'Friends'.

Moreover, literature (Dobson, 2015; boyd and Ellison, 2008) highlights that the contemporary structure of SNSs is no longer about networking, but maintaining and performing identity for the established offline network. boyd and Ellison (2008:210) note that

> "Networking" emphasizes relationship initiation, often between strangers. While networking is possible on these sites, it is not the primary practice on many of them, nor is it what differentiates them from other forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC). What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks.

In turn, viewing SNSs as an arena where already established offline social network is 'hanging out' (Ito et al., 2010) and observing each other (Marwick, 2011), raises questions about the democratisation of gender performance online and thus problematises conceptualisation about teenage girls' identity representation on SNSs.

Production of the subject on SNSs

SNSs and surveillance

To understand how teenage girls construct their identity on SNSs, it is crucial to consult current research that explores how SNSs users present themselves on these networked publics (boyd, 2011). A number of scholars point out that SNSs act as space where the 'subject is produced' through the techniques of regulation, discipline and constant surveillance (Maghrabi et al., 2014; Cover, 2012; Westlake, 2008). The idea of Foucauldian disciplinary power observable in post-modern times is not novel. However, what is new is the transformation of the power on SNSs, as various scholars assert (Kelsey and Bennett, 2014; Bauman and Lyon, 2013; Jurgenson, 2013; Jensen, 2007) that disciplinary power on SNS operates simultaneously as Panopticon, Synopticon and Omniopticon models of surveillance and power. In other words, SNSs are not only spaces where the few watch the many (Panopticon) and the many watch the few (Synopticon) but also spaces where the many watch the many (Omniopticon).

On SNSs the surveillance of one's self-presentation becomes normalised and to a high degree desired and wanted (Bauman and Lyon, 2013). Bauman and Lyon (2013) note that now people using SNSs do not fear to be under surveillance but fear to have a lack of surveillance over their online self-presentation. They state

> …with the old panoptical nightmare ('I am never on my own') now recast into the hope of 'never again being alone' (abandoned, ignored and neglected, blackballed and excluded), the fear of disclosure has been stifled by the joy of being noticed

<p style="text-align:right">(Bauman and Lyon, 2013:26).</p>

Even the SNSs inbuilt functions transform surveillance of one's self-presentation as celebratory in terms of 'Likes'/'Hearts' and 'Comments' transforming silence online as the new regulatory technique (Scott, 2015). Thus, to exist on SNSs one by definition agrees to be gazed at, monitored, evaluated and judged for one's self-production by continuously externalising parts of one's private life. A number of authors (Kelsey, 2015; Marwick, 2013) highlight that living in cultures based on Omnioptic surveillance affects one's construction of subjecthood: from one's agency, awareness and use of space, regulation of one's actions to personal feelings and emotions.

Marwick (2013), for instance, emphasises that social media is a new form of governmentality of subjecthood that is primarily based on neoliberal market capitalist values. She explored how the 'tech' scene in the Silicon Valley uses social media platforms to establish online and offline status within

their community. Consequently, the study argues that social media teaches its users to present and create their identities to achieve a 'micro-celebrity' status. 'Micro-celebrity' status was achieved by research participants by utilising advertising and marketing techniques of attention seeking and establishing a wide network of visibility of one's online productions. Subsequently, the study argues that social media '…has brought attention economy into everyday lives and relationships of millions of people worldwide, and popularized attention-getting techniques like self-branding and lifestreaming' (Marwick, 2013:10).

While users are positioned within social media structures to present themselves as self-marketers, self-promoters and a continuously adaptable and self-inventing brand, social media companies utilise the discursive language of 'being yourself' and 'being authentic' online. Thus, the discursive language of 'authenticity' became a marketing strategy for social media companies that require frequent ongoing emotional labour from social media users (Marwick, 2013). Moreover, to sustain one's online self-presentation as authentic, social media users must continuously maintain offline identity and status within the lines of the established SNSs identity. While this study's research participants stated idealising openness, transparency and creativity when displaying their online identities, Marwick (2013:110) emphasises that these ideals are possible only through '…participation in entrepreneurialism, capitalism, work-life integration, heavy social media use, and the inculcation of large audiences.' Accordingly, Marwick (2013:17) concluded that '…social media has come to promote an individualistic, competitive notion of identity that prioritizes individual status-seeking over collective action or openness.'

SNSs and visibility

Externalising an authentic unified identity on SNSs

Scholars (Fuchs, 2014; Gardner and Davis, 2013) assert that SNSs are becoming increasingly structured around displays of a coherent, unified and stable identity through the expression of the authentic self online. Moreover, the demand to display the 'real/true self' and express authenticity on SNSs became paramount for social media users in recent years (Awan and Gauntlett, 2013; Bollmer, 2013; Tene, 2013). Tene (2013), for instance, highlights the importance of the introduction of the single sign-on system across various SNSs platforms, arguing that the effect of the system intensify the development of unified aggregated online identity. He writes 'I am identified as the same user across numerous websites and platforms; it is not "me, myself and I" but rather just "me" ' (2013:11).

On the other hand, Stern (2008) asserts that young people display 'an authentic self' online because they seek social validation from the online audience. Craving for social and self-acceptance is a

normal developmental adolescent stage. Thus, '…if their self-presentations are inauthentic, feedback from site visitors is irrelevant, if not meaningless' (Stern, 2008:108). However, a number of scholars (Stagi, 2014; Lynch, 2011; Clarke, 2008; Muratore, 2008) point out that it is not the adolescent developmental stage that drives teens to confess their 'real self' online. On the contrary, it is the current cultural, economic and political configurations, which utilise the values of neoliberalism, postfeminism and consumerism, which govern the new construction of subjecthood (Gill, 2008; Rose, 1996). As has been discussed in previous chapter sections, in all spheres of contemporary society, the person is presumed to be an autonomous and active individual, who is making the right choices for one's life and destiny. 'The language of autonomy, identity, self-realization and the search for fulfilment forms a grid of regulatory ideals' (Rose, 1996:145) that extend throughout all formal and informal institutions.

With regard to SNSs, Gardner and Davis (2013) assert that it emphasises the importance of displaying one's identity as being marketable and also individualistic. They argue that a highly popular SNSs app amongst youth called 'SnapChat' illustrates the emphasis on constructing one's identity governed by the values of individualism and a 'packaged self'. The SnapChat app allows users to take videos or photos that can be enhanced with drawings or texts and afterwards sent to other users for a specific length of time before the photo/video disappears without a trace. It is precisely the apps' structure that positions the user to display continuously '…a mini-performances for an audience of one' (Gardner and Davis, 2013:73). That performance is usually carefully crafted, packaged and emphasises the importance of externalising the self to others.

Furthermore, on SNSs young people now 'appear to regard themselves increasingly as objects that have quantifiable value to others…' (Gardner and Davis, 2013:66). Thus, on SNSs young people aim to present themselves as socially desirable. Particularly on Facebook, young people display a polished version of the self (Gardner and Davis, 2013). Young people expressed that by presenting a more polished version of themselves on SNSs would act as insurance towards succeeding in gaining social approval in future employment or further education. Therefore, young people strategically choose to highlight, downplay, exaggerate, or leave out entire information about themselves when creating their SNS profile. Thus, while presenting themselves online as authentic and individualist, their online presentations were continuously worked upon, modified and reshaped. In sum, to a great extent authenticity online is a mere product that one constructs for the consumption of others.

The contradictory rhetoric of authenticity as a project was evident in Dobson's (2015) study. Dobson discovered that young girls' (18-21year-olds) identity presentation on their SNSs profile was projected through the utilisation of the textual mottos that were frequently updated, edited and rewritten with the audience in mind. These textual 'mottos' were projecting a continuous self-creation

and DIY self-making narrative while displaying an authentic and youthful heteronormative femininity. Dobson (2015:104) writes

> The mottos commonly displayed by young women in the SNS profiles advocate active choice-making vis-à-vis the self, and responsibility for one's own self, life, and emotions, these textual self-representations construct the profile owner's identity as an ongoing project, available for constant monitoring and revision… .

On the other hand, paradoxically self-representation on SNSs profiles had to be constructed to portray the interior self that was truthful and authentic. 'The self and identity is then positioned not as something *wholly* chosen or created, but also as a hidden interior, the "truth" of which must be told and made "transparent" ' (Dobson, 2015:104, original emphasis).

Analysing young girls' SNSs profile texts that indicated their likes, dislikes and their personality traits, Dobson (2015) observes that those texts were constructed as a stream of consciousness and appeared as random information. It is precisely by utilising randomness that young girls were portraying their online authenticity and uniqueness, as

> …authenticity is constructed in these textual self-representations as the ability to publicly articulate random interiority made up of whims, desires, preferences, aversions, and emotions

(Dobson, 2015:105).

Thus, being 'transparent' to the SNSs audience by revealing one's interiority through the textual mottos, allowed young girls to negotiate conflicting demands for their digital self-presentation by appearing authentic and individualistic simultaneously expressing utilisation of the postfeminist sensibilities, such as a sense of confidence and self-acceptance (Dobson, 2015).

Sexual female SNSs self-presentation

Marwick (2013) previously stated that marketing techniques of attention seeking and visibility are the primary regulatory principles on social media. Therefore, it is important to explore what teenage girls define as marketable on SNSs and what kind of implications it has for teenage girls' online identity. A number of researchers (Kapidzic and Herring, 2014; De Vries and Peter, 2013; Siibak, 2009; Manago et al., 2008) note that young girls' identity displays on SNSs are expressed through the display of their commodified and beautified bodies that portray happiness, confidence and sexiness. Presentation of the self online through the display of images of the self (e.g. selfies) acts as a powerful regulatory technique that structures one's identity. For instance, Cruz and Thornham (2015) urge one to view online images of oneself – selfies – as a re-articulated sociotechnical act that

expresses how one's embodiment simultaneously shapes and constitutes the possibilities of one's identity presentations online.

Research indicates that on SNSs young girls are more likely to post 'selfies' with their heads being tilted as a sign of submissiveness and heterosexual appeal (Kapidzic and Herring, 2014; Selfiecity, 2014), they only upload images of themselves looking attractive (Kapidzic and Herring, 2011; Peluchette and Karl, 2010;), they publicly comment to indicate support or agreement, and they write more personal and emotional status updates (Guiller and Durndell, 2007). In other words, stereotypical female representations to a great extent structure teenage girls' self-presentation on social media. Research (Woods and Scott, 2016; Best, et al., 2014; Meier and Gray, 2014) shows that teenage girls' appearance exposure on social media leads to weight dissatisfaction, drive for thinness, thin-ideal internalisation, and self-objectification, as well higher levels of anxiety and depression.

However, situated within the modern calls of self-realisation that are based on neoliberalism and postfeminism (McRobbie, 2009; Gill, 2008a; Rose, 1999, 1996), stereotypical self-expressions on SNSs are depicted as the new feminine power and female entrepreneurship (Ringrose, 2011). As consumption and production become intertwined on SNSs, women now are viewed as having the power to control the gaze (in particular the male gaze) directed at their online productions (Attwood, 2013). Thus, display of their heterosexually coded bodies that must be made visible for SNSs audiences public consumption (through 'Likes', 'Hearts' or 'Comments') is constructed as a personal female choice that empowers and gives self-pleasure to women.

Ringrose (2010), in her study of teenage girls' displays of their identity on SNSs 'Bebo', argues that when creating their online profiles teenage girls utilised their sexual subjectivity as a sign of their entrepreneurship. The study found that teenage girls' Bebo sites' displays intensified, and simultaneously normalised illustrations of the sexual commodification of the feminine body. In comparison to displays of teen masculinity

> Femininity in contrast is epitomized through approximating a sexually commodified body, performing as (scantily clad) sexual object, and occupying the position of sexually desirable 'baby girl'

> (Ringrose, 2010:173).

In addition, the very structure of the Bebo site positioned teenage girls to display their bodies in a sexualised and commodified manner. The applications in the form of games and quizzes on Bebo, such as a 'Celebrity look-alike', *What type of kisser are you*?' or *'Are You Sexy, Flirty, Or A Slut?*', continuously normalises the sexualisation of female bodies. As teenagers themselves did not create

the above applications, the Bebo site encouraged teenage girls to relate to online audiences by displaying their bodies as sexual commodities that stood as signs of empowerment and agency. Nevertheless, the prerequisite to display entrepreneurial sexual subjectivity online was challenged by offline regulations of gender norms with labels such as 'slut' and 'whore'. Thus, while teenage girls in the study were condemning over-sexualised female identities in their 'real life', at the same time those teenage girls were positioned to utilise the sexually knowledgeable subjectivity for their online identity displays (Ringrose, 2010). This tension between two contradictory discourses of self-presentation resulted in a continuous everyday teenage girls' struggle when negotiating their identity expressions online.

Similarly, Bailey et al. (2013:91) conducted a study that explored how young women (18-22 year-olds) navigate their gendered identity presentation on Facebook, finding that '…stereotypical kinds of self-exposure by girls are markers of social success and popularity.' These stereotypical female representations on SNSs included displays of female sexualised images that aimed to gain male attention. The research argues that girls' self-exposure acts as a currency in the commoditised Facebook environment that potentially ensures popularity and a wide network of 'Friends'. Nevertheless, girls' online performances were tightly policed and regulated by the online audiences (Bailey et al., 2013). They explain that:

> While our participants indicated that a mediatized celebrity culture inculcates girls with messages that they must be attractive, have a boyfriend, and be part of the party scene, girls are much more likely than boys to be harshly judged for emphasizing these elements in their online profiles. Girls are also open to harsh criticism for their degree of publicness

<div align="right">(Bailey et al., 2013:91).</div>

The regulatory techniques of shaming a girl by calling her a 'slut' for having an open profile, too many 'Friends', or posting too much information not only governed girls' Facebook profile content but also, in effect, Bailey et al. (2013) argue, limited girls' ability to subvert the established gender performances.

Ladette female SNSs self-presentations

Some of the literature (Niland et al., 2014; Dobson, 2013, 2014b; Griffin et al., 2013; Redden and Brown, 2010; Jackson and Tinkles, 2007) argues that the current demands placed on young girls to balance the two contradictory extremes of femininity – agentic simultaneously sexual, 'up for it' (Gill, 2007) but not a 'slut'(Ringrose, 2011), materialised in a new form of young women's self-presentation online. This new self-presentation depicts wild, risky and socially deviant female

behaviours (Williams and Merten, 2008), which are mostly portrayed as celebratory and pleasurable experiences that deepen friendship bonds among peer girls' groups (Niland et al., 2014). Dobson (2014a), drawing from McRobbie's (2009) theorisation of the new sexual contract (Refer to: Late modernity and young women: subjects of capacity, beneficiary and privilege, p. 55), argues that a certain type of laddishness became compulsory for contemporary women to maintain their feminine identity as normal and appropriate.

> the carefree, uninhibited, gratification-focused and sexually 'up for it' (Gill 2007) 'laddish' persona can be seen as a requirement of contemporary normative feminine gender performance in the post-feminist and post-girl-power era

> (Dobson, 2014a:144).

Performing a ladette subjectivity online (referring to how girls' sociality is becoming increasingly similar to boys' behaviours when socialising), Dobson (2014a) highlights, is represented as a sign of the change in gender relationships and young women's obtainment of equal rights to men.

Dobson (2013) looked at young women's MySpace profiles to explore the ways young females represent their online identities through celebratory narratives of 'shameless self-exposure.' In order to balance the double standards of female gender performance, where too much of 'sexy' could gain a girl the label of the 'slut', girls strategically chose not to display themselves as 'sexy', but rather they used 'sexy' decorations and 'sexy icons' on their profile pages, for example, using Playboy Bunny logos.

On the other hand, girls' MySpace photo albums portrayed 'ladette' subjectivities, in particular when displaying social relationships and female friendships. Drinking and partying was an important element of SNSs profiles; and it was usually displayed as wild, risky and excessive. Dobson (2013:105) states that

> In these texts and photo galleries, carefree, fun time together with one's close friends is plentiful, and young women's time spent together is portrayed as not just 'fun' but wild, crazy and 'random': that is, as exciting, as inclusive of risky behaviour, and as potentially full of unexpected events and surprises.

Moreover, young women on their SNSs profiles continuously chose to reveal their perceived flaws, weaknesses and sources of suffering. Dobson (2013) defines these kinds of mottos of proud imperfection and self-acceptance as 'shamelessness performance'. She claims that such a performance acts as a protective shield when displaying the agentic hypersexualised 'up for it' subjectivity (Gill, 2007) and simultaneously acknowledging the judging public gaze by adults and

peer groups, with the message 'that the profile owner does not care what others think of her; that she is being true to her sense of self on her profile' (Dobson, 2013:108). Performative shamelessness could be understood as one of '… few options available to young women, living in the cultural terrain of post-feminism, who wish to engender some sense of self-definition' (Dobson, 2014a:164). However, young women's laddish self-presentations is not an example of resilience to the traditional femininity performances but a new form of feminine performance that emerged as a result of the new gender regime (McRobbie, 2009). As noted by Whelehan (2000), the contemporary laddish female performance always remains heterosexually coded. In other words, the ladette, while portraying masculine behaviour, presents herself within the limits of a heterosexual male desire.

Problematisations of teenage girls' SNSs presentations

Succeeding the discussion on the relevant literature regarding teenage girls' identity presentation on social media, and following Foucault's (1984, 1982, 1980, 1978) conceptualisations on the production of the subject, one needs to raise a number of problematisations related to the processes of teenage girls' online identity construction. Firstly, the regulation of female identity and the exercise of power on social media it appears has shifted. The defect pedagogy (Bordo, 1999) of the advertising campaigns that constructed female identity and in particular the female body as always 'lacking' and 'in need of improvement' (Gill and Elias, 2014; Jhally et al., 2010), appears to be subverted on SNSs by making the public judging (thus regulating) gaze directed at the female images as a reward for women's self-production (Ringrose and Barajas, 2011). Thus, female identity online, which is mainly expressed through the display of a heteronormatively attractive female body (Kapidzic and Herring, 2014, 2011; Peluchette and Karl, 2010), is now understood in terms of value (or its lack) awarded by the public judging gaze in a form of 'Likes' and 'Comments'. A woman becomes a mere object that needs continuous externalisation of one's inner self. In turn, female objectification through the act of self-subjectification is normalised and viewed as unproblematic. Therefore, it becomes more difficult for a feminist critique of power imbalances on SNSs to arise.

Furthermore, the cultural understandings of what appropriate femininity should look like become altered and made habitually intelligible through the quantification of the self and digitally displayed social relationships (Lupton, 2016). However, these digits are mostly awarded to girls for their sexually agentic online self-presentation (Bailey, et al., 2013; Ringrose, 2011). On the other hand, these online sexual self-presentations are condemned during teenage girls' offline interactions causing constant personal emotional tensions for young women when uploading content for their SNSs pages (Ringrose, 2010, 2011; Dobson, 2014c). Nevertheless, since the female self-presentation online is constructed as a female choice (Attwood, 2013), teenage girls are positioned to self-manage

their identity displays without any complaints. Indeed, the neoliberal entrepreneurial rhetoric of managing risk, continuously striving to optimise one's performance, improve, change and adapt to new economic situations (Bauman, 2000; Beck, 1992), directly informs female online identity presentations. The demand directed at girls to present themselves at the 'right' level (Elm, 2009) positions them to engage in everyday emotional labour. While the girls are subjected to navigate their inner emotional tensions, they are asked by the dominant cultural discourses to identify themselves as subjects of capacity (McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004) and thus not raise any complaints. Such contradictory ethics of self-realisation could be argued, result not only in teenage girls' eating disorders and hatred of their bodies (Galdi et al., 2013; Halliwell et al., 2011; McNicholas et al., 2009; Tiggemann, 2005), but are also evident in the rising numbers of teenage girls' self-harm and suicide rates (UNISEF, 2013).

Moreover, Weber and Mitchell (2008) argue that for teenage girls being 'watched' and 'commented on' regarding their status updates and/or photos, positions teenage girls to construct their identity displays as a collaborative product. This kind of identity construction is defined by Weber and Mitchell (2008) as *identities-in-action*. The researchers highlight that teenage girls mediate and reshape their identity presentation online according to built-in response mechanisms or simply their audience feedback. Furthermore, Weber and Mitchell (2008) point out that not only does the audience play a part in re-shaping the presentation of teenage girls' identity online, but also, that teenage girls themselves become an audience for their personal web pages. During their research, Weber and Mitchell (2008) found that teenagers not only revisited their own personal sites to update them but also, to evaluate what happened to them in terms of 'hits' and responses. Thus, Weber and Mitchell (2008:27) state 'there is reflexivity to this process, a conscious looking, not only at their production (themselves) but at how others are looking at their productions.

Thus, teenage girls' identity and more importantly their sense of who they are, how they and others should relate to them, is always under continuous creation. Contemporary teenage girls' reality appears as being continuously constructed; thus, never stable, solid or transformative (as to transform one needs to have a primary form to change it). The regulatory power over women's subjectivity disguises itself even deeper. Consequently, it firstly raises issues about the extent of the female online agency and availability of choices presented to women to disrupt the regulatory norms of the heteronormative gender performances online. Secondly, it problematises the grip of the patriarchal power on SNSs. One could argue that SNSs is a new platform for the patriarchal power to discharge itself. Since the advertising campaigns that employed a pedagogy of defect (Bordo, 1999) lose their hold over women's subjectivity, because now women are defined not by what they cannot do but by what they can do (McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004), could it be that the online pedagogy of positivity

(in the form of 'Likes' and 'Hearts') becomes a contemporary regulatory technique for young women's online as well as offline identity presentation and construction?

Conclusion

This chapter section aimed to explore the ways teenage girls are subjected to construct their social networking identities. It was shown that due to the algorithmic nature of SNSs, the surveillance over the female body on social media is subverted as celebratory and desired through the functions of 'Likes' and 'Hearts' (Lupton, 2016; Rettberg, 2014; Marwick, 2013; Deuze, 2011). Consequently, objectification of female bodies is translated as not only self-driven but also something to be proud and happy about. However, on SNSs women are mostly rewarded with 'Likes' and 'Hearts' for the images displaying heterosexually attractive female bodies (Kapidzic and Herring, 2014; De Vries and Peter, 2013; Ringrose, 2010; Siibak, 2009; Manago et al., 2008), resulting in a continuous prevalence of the patriarchal power (Ringrose, 2011; Elm, 2009). This patriarchal power is a new transformed power as it does not have a clear authoritative figure – it is disembodied, abstract, algorithmic type of power. Thus, resistance to disembodied patriarchal power becomes more difficult as one is not able to articulate or observe such powers in one's identity constructions. As a result, new contemporary conditions emerge where people's lives are shaped by external powers in an intense force, and simultaneously people are narrating their lived experiences as expressions of the individual choices, freedom and authenticity.

Moreover, since the SNSs audience is now becoming a 'networked audience' (Marwick, 2013), the self-presentation on SNSs becomes problematic to sustain a coherent and authentic self-image online. While female sexual displays are rewarded online, they are condemned in offline interactions causing young girls to internally and continuously negotiate their identity presentations (Ringrose, 2010). However, female sexual representations were always problematic within the Irish context (Inglis, 1998; O'Connor, 1998). Thus, one needs to pose a question: *what kind of self-presentations do teenage girls in Ireland choose to display on SNSs*? *How are those types of self-presentations regulated by the online and offline audience*? Lastly, *how do such kinds of regulations manifest in teenage girls' everyday lived experiences*?

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Interpretivist paradigm

Research is never neutral (Abram, 2014; Kitzinger, 2004; Walkerdine et al., 2002; Haraway, 1988). It is always contextualised and structured by the ways researchers question reality and methods that have a potential to reveal that reality. In other words, it follows a particular kind of research paradigm. Willis (2007:xx) defines research paradigms in the following statement

> A paradigm is a broad conceptual framework that addresses foundational questions such as "What is the nature of knowledge?" "What sources of knowledge warrant our attention?" "How confident can we be that we know something?" and "What should the relationship between research and practice be?"

A paradigm acts as an agenda that addresses researcher's stance on ontology (what kind of being is there? What is the nature of reality?), epistemology (how/in what way we can obtain knowledge of that reality? How can we come to know the world?) and methodology (what are appropriate methods to explore the nature of reality?) (Lincoln et al., 2013). This study focused on exploring individual teenage girls' understandings and meanings attached to their feminine identity and its co-construction. Literature indicates that while existing in the world regulated by discourses which are expressed in language, teenage girls develop their own worldview therein perceiving reality from their particular standpoint (Currie et al., 2009; Elm, 2009). Consequently, an interpretivist paradigm was the most appropriate framework to employ to explore individual teenage girls' perceptions of reality.

An interpretivist paradigm dismisses positivists' belief in the homogenous objective reality and views reality as relative and multiple (Blaikie, 2007). Reality, from the interpretivist viewpoint, is constructed by the production of meaning about the phenomenon (Willis, 2007). Reality is relative, it is not just 'there' to be discovered but is subjectively experienced and thus made real on an intersubjective basis. We, of course, do not exist in a world of continuous and meaningless flux (Gergen, 2015), as our culture produces language that stabilises the meanings and thus gives a structure to a phenomenon (Gergen, 2015; Burr, 1995; Berger and Luckman, 1966). Hence, van Manen (1990) highlights that the interpretivist paradigm is inevitably concerned with philosophies of hermeneutics as well as phenomenology.

> Hermeneutic phenomenology tries to be attentive to both terms of its methodology: it is a *descriptive* (phenomenological) methodology because it wants to be attentive to how things appear, it wants to let things speak for themselves; it is an *interpretive* (hermeneutic) methodology because it claims that there are no such things as uninterpreted phenomena
>
> (van Manen, 1990:180, original emphasis).

Consequently, taking into account that the interpretivist paradigm is phenomenological as well as hermeneutical, this research project aimed to explore a two-folded issue: how teenage girls experienced what it meant to be a girl in contemporary Ireland while being subjected by the global and local discourses of neoliberalism and postfeminism.

Phenomenological hermeneutics

Phenomenological hermeneutics has emerged from the work of European philosophers, such as Heidegger (1953/2010), Gadamer (2004) and Ricoeur (1978), who point out that our understanding of the world is always structured by our embodiment, language and social relationships; and that our present interpretations and understanding are built on previous interpretations. Research that follows hermeneutic phenomenology acknowledges that our interpretation of the phenomenon is built on previous interpretations (hermeneutics), at the same time, that interpretation is directed by our being in the world – the immediate lived experience (phenomenology) (Laverty, 2008). Heidegger (1953/2010) emphasises that our interpretations of a phenomenon are not the acknowledgement of what has been understood, but rather our interpretations are based on what is possible to understand. Heidegger (1953/2010:144) states:

> In interpretation understanding appropriates what it has understood understandingly. In interpretation understanding does not become something different, but rather itself. Interpretation is existentially based in understanding, and not the other way around.

In other words, the existence of the phenomenon *as* that particular phenomenon is already interpreted based on previous understandings. Heidegger (1953/2010) observes that to see things '*free of the as'* requires a kind of reorientation in understanding.

Meaning, following the interpretivist standpoint, is never static because meaning is rooted in practice rather than in a phenomenon itself (Taylor, 1987). In other words, the meaning is given to a phenomenon by people who interpret that phenomenon and consequently define the qualities of the phenomenon. Taylor (1987), for instance, highlights that the interpretivist paradigm views reality as practice and meaning of a phenomenon as intersubjective. Consequently, my research aims to explore teenage girls' practices of doing a girl in the times of neoliberalism and postfeminism. Exploring the ways teenage girls 'do' the female may deepen our understanding of how the meaning of contemporary femininity is established, sustained and regulated. Meaning, Taylor (1987) states, is rooted in the context. Therefore, meaning is always relational, it does not reside in isolation but is constructed by structures expressed in actions (practice) that produce the object.

> The meaning and norms implicit in these practices are not just in the mind of the actors but are out there in the practices themselves, practices which cannot be conceived as a set of individual actions, but which are essentially modes of social relations, of mutual action
>
> (Taylor, 1987:57).

Furthermore, the interpretivist paradigm is also phenomenological because it is concerned with gaining a deeper understanding of the subjective meanings of a person's lived experiences (van Manen, 1990). Research that follows the phenomenological ethos asks, '*what this particular lived experience is like for a person?*'. Thus, phenomenological research is interested in understanding the internal meaning structures of lived experience that make the phenomenon for what it is (Langdridge, 2007). Even though phenomenological inquiry is interested in descriptions of lived experience, it is focused not on gaining factual information but instead aims to pose the question of how that lived experience is meaningful to a person (van Manen, 1990). Consequently, this research was interested in understanding the ways an individual teenage girl experiences contemporary femininity in her local and global context, online and offline world.

Social constructionism as epistemology

Given the phenomenological hermeneutic ontology, my research is situated within social constructionist epistemology for several reasons. Firstly, it pays attention to the constructive power of language. Secondly, it dismisses the grand theory as a primary recourse to explain individual lived experiences. Lastly, it emphasises that meaning is socially constructed, thus acknowledging the importance of one's speaking position when making claims about truth, as well as, highlighting the malleability of meaning as it is sustained in human interactions.

Social constructionism emerged as an extension of postmodernist ideas (Blaikie, 2007; Burr, 1995). Blaikie (2007:173) states that

> Postmodernists … reject the opposition between absolute and relative knowledge, arguing that all knowledge is contextual and historical. They deny that there are any standards for establishing truth and falsity, and argue that there are no absolute foundations for knowledge.

Burr (1995) points out that social constructionism, as an epistemological standpoint, is based on several premises. These premises also address issues surrounding research axiology. Axiology is concerned with researchers values and ethics (Mingers, 2003). Axiology guides the researcher when making claims about the nature of the phenomenon, and thus directs the researcher when one is producing knowledge (Mertens, 2007). Following a phenomenological hermeneutic philosophy, it is

through our interpretations and our orientation towards the phenomenon that we define the phenomenon *as* this or that. Therefore, axiology acts as an anchor when making interpretations during research interviews as well as about the research interviews. Axiology acts as a guide to ones' orientation in the world – how one enters the world and thus understands it. Axiology for this research project was based on the following premises.

Premise 1

Social constructionist epistemology takes a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge. In other words, assumptions about the world should be considered as constructions and not descriptions of the essence of a phenomenon. Social constructionism, Burr (1995:3) states, 'invites us to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature to us, to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observations of the world.'

Premise 2

Knowledge is historically and culturally specific. Thus, Burr (1995) highlights that while making interpretations of people's accounts of their lived experiences, the researcher must analyse one's understandings and assumptions (for instance, through the process of reflexivity). I would argue that acknowledging the historical and cultural specificity also evokes the need for the hermeneutic circle. This emphasises that to understand the whole, one needs to understand the part of the whole, while simultaneously interpreting how that part operates within the whole (Heidegger, 1953/2010). It is a subjective practice of 'zoom in and zoom out', seeing the particular in the general and vice versa. Therefore, people's accounts of their lived experiences must be located within the broader context of their culture and historical time.

Premise 3

The social process sustains knowledge; thus, knowledge is socially constructed. Knowledge gained in this type of research is co-constructed between the research participant and the researcher. Therefore, there is no 'right' or one method or procedure to follow to gain knowledge about the phenomenon. Research, Burr (1995) notes, is not about asking the right set of questions in the hope of revealing the 'truth' about the phenomenon. The focus of social constructionist research is to explore how particular forms of knowledge are achieved and sustained by people's interactions and practices.

Premise 4

Knowledge and social action go together. Socially constructed knowledge invites different kinds of actions from human beings, simultaneously that knowledge sustains some patterns of social actions

while excluding others (Burr, 1995). Thus, for a change to take place in teenage girls' lives and their patterns of the construction of femininity, the practice of discovering meaning need to be changed, too.

Power of context and language

As context always binds meaning, thus our ability to understand our lived experiences is always bound by our culture and structures of language (Gergen, 2015; Burr, 1995). Therefore, research that is guided by an interpretivist paradigm pays close attention to the power of language. This type of research acknowledges that methods used to gain knowledge about the phenomenon are socially constructed through shared culture and language. Language, in this case, is conceptualised as referring to the processes of interpreting the phenomenon and giving it a meaning. Hence, language is not constituting the reality but is constitutive of that reality (Berger and Luckman, 1966). Following phenomenological hermeneutic philosophy, language is viewed as constructing the way a phenomenon reveals itself, the way a phenomenon is brought into presence, and how it persists in presence in that form (Olafson 1987; Heidegger, 1971). Therefore, during my research process, I pay close attention to the language that teenage girls use in describing their experiences, and also to the discursive knowledge that is expressed in that language. Moreover, I am aware of my own use of language and the power that language has in constructing teenage girls' subjectivities. I follow a feminist standpoint that urges one to be careful when claiming the power to produce knowledge without acknowledging that knowledge is always situated and structured by available discourses and language (Hekman, 1997; Haraway, 1988; Smith, 1988).

Feminist standpoint

Feminist standpoint theory argues that knowledge and its claims to truth are produced through multiple speaking positions/standpoints, and thus knowledge is perspectival and should be conceptualised as situational rather than universal (Hekman, 1997; Haraway, 1988; Harding and Hintikka, 1983). Therefore, knowledge became viewed as a result of the exercise of 'power', rather than something to be discovered or a process with which to engage. Hence, feminist standpoint theory arose as part of the new paradigm shift that was departing from modernism (Hekman, 1997). Modernism emerged from the Enlightenment period, during which reason, objectivity and rationality became viewed as superior methods to address ontological questions (Romanyshyn, 2013). During the Enlightenment period, reality came to be understood as universally experienced, and thus discoverable through empirical methods that prioritised rational thought over subjective bodily

feelings. The Cartesian dualism, the split between mind and body, became a paramount scientific method that was viewed as most valid when claiming true knowledge about reality (Romanyshyn, 2013).

On the other hand, feminist scholars emphasised that rational knowledge did not come into being from 'no location' (Haraway, 1988). Feminist standpoint theory argues that researchers cannot escape occupying a speaking position that is regulated by discourse as well as concrete individual lived experiences (embodiment) (Smith, 1988). Therefore, knowledge for a feminist researcher is always produced through the subjective interpretations and understanding or in other words, through a particular speaking position/standpoint. Feminist scholars argue that historically men were in a privileged position to define reality on their terms, and to legitimise their version of events to maintain their position of power (Smith, 1988; Hartsock, 1983). Women's experiences were excluded from the male version, thus becoming trivialised, distorted and denied.

Consequently, feminist theory aimed to blur the boundary between the Cartesian split of the mind and body and argued that mind, that is rational thought, is not superior in understanding the world (Haraway, 1988). On the contrary, they posited that mind and body are intertwined. Feminist theory, in agreement with phenomenological hermeneutics, conceptualises knowledge as emerging from human actions and interpretations (Fisher, 2010). However, feminist standpoint research expands phenomenological hermeneutic inquiry by emphasising the role of power in the process of knowledge production. To reveal the play of power, the feminist researcher poses the following questions: *Who is speaking for a particular group? Who is viewed as having the superiority and authority to the claims of truth? Whose lived experiences are excluded from the dominant discourses?*

The researcher, who follows feminist standpoint theory, is encouraged to continuously question one's own position/standpoint during the research process and analyse how one authorises one's claims to truth. Feminist standpoint research acknowledges that knowledge is always partial, and shifts according to moves of power when producing discursive knowledge (Haraway, 1988). Therefore, feminist standpoint theory urges one to consider the diversity of lived experiences within one social group (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). For instance, research that explores women's lived experiences cannot claim to speak for all women's lives as women are not a homogeneous group; women come from different social, racial and ethnic backgrounds, as well as bringing individual life experiences, that structure the concrete realities of women's lives. Thus, when drawing interpretations and conclusions, I not only considered my own standpoint through the process of reflexivity but also ensured to include teenage girls' stories that did not conform to the emerging patterns in teenage girls' narratives.

The concrete realities, Dorothy Smith (1988) argues, are the actual material and local lived women's experiences that are not necessarily expressed in dominant discourses; the concrete reality is the world as one actually experiences it. Smith (1988) argues that concepts/discourses do not represent the actual lived women's experiences because Western knowledge and discourses are the products of masculine thought since the Enlightenment period. Hence, feminist standpoint theory is focused on exploring concrete women's lived experiences. Those experiences, feminist standpoint theory argues, are embodied, intersubjective and contingent, as well as regulated by discourses. The masculine through seeks control and domination, and since social media is increasingly becoming surveillance and control orientated, it was vital to focus on interview methods that would empower teenage girls not only during the interview process but also through the process of reflexivity on their lived experiences.

To gain understanding of women's lived experiences, feminist standpoint theory urges one to see the world from those women's speaking position/standpoint. While doing so Donna Haraway (1988), an acclaimed feminist standpoint theorist, urge one to be attentive to the experiences that are not yet articulated in the dominant discourses, feelings that are concrete but not yet spoken in language. Haraway (1988) in her classical paper *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective* argues that feminist theory should commit to an embodied sensory system when making claims about reality.

She emphasises that Western science is continuously prioritising eyesight as the only sense to gain knowledge (viewed as the most objective of the senses), which results in maintaining the Cartesian binary of the mind and body. That eyesight is represented as coming from nowhere, as transcendent and neutral. Haraway (1988) claims that this type of perception aims to maintain white and male power by claiming the power of seeing others and simultaneously dismissing the possibility that the 'seer' is seen and thus influenced by the other. Therefore, Haraway (1988) argues that feminist researcher should acknowledge that our ability to know does not come from objective vision but that it comes from embodied sensing; the body in its sensory system's totality. Acknowledging that bodies know through the sensing system, Haraway (1988) states, allows feminists to account for their production of knowledge, the knowledge that is always situated and limited from ones speaking location. Therefore, within my analysis, I illustrate (in handwritten sections of the interview extracts) the teenage girls' body language, their tone of voice and immediate social environment (when relevant) to account for knowledge production through bodies.

Understanding through bodies

From the phenomenological hermeneutic perspective, one's way of interpreting a phenomenon depends on one's standpoint on the epistemological issues of understanding. In other words, one's stance towards sources, which one considers as having the potential to contribute to understanding the phenomenon, is a vital element in the production of knowledge about the phenomenon. Following Haraway's (1988) discussion on the bodies that know the world through the sensory system in its totality, the need for the feminist researcher to acknowledge one's speaking position that encompasses the sensing knowing body when producing knowledge brings forward the necessity to pay attention to how physical bodies contribute to one's way of understanding. Therefore, the research epistemological groundings of social constructionism needed to be widened to include knowledge produced through embodiment.

Kearney (2015), for instance, argues that hermeneutic interpretations, defined as carnal hermeneutics, begin in our flesh - interpretations are always carnal. Kearney points out that our being in the world is sensing otherness or difference across gaps, negotiating sensitively between other embodied beings, responding to solicitations, and orienting oneself accordingly. Thus, Kearney (2015:23) states that 'perfection of intelligence comes down, in the end, to the perfection of touch.' Touch in this sense is understood not necessarily as a physical act of touching but more as tactful sensing of space and people/things around us. A tactful touch, is a touch that remains open while sensing the others in the space, and therefore it is always moving in relation to others, it always adjusts and readjusts our orientation towards others.

> To touch and be touched simultaneously is to be *connected* with others in a way that enfolds us. Flesh is open-hearted; it is where we experience our greatest vulnerability

> (Kearney, 2015:21, original emphasis).

Therefore, the researcher who follows the hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy is encouraged to develop a particular philosophical and ethical orientation during the research process and towards research participants to allow the phenomenon to come forward. Hence, phenomenological hermeneutic research acknowledges that methods, while being constructed to encompass openness to be executed in relation to each individual research participant, are just one tool that gathers data. Consequently, our bodies and our bodily orientation in the research room play a big part in constructing what is available to be understood.

Heidegger (1977) in his writing '*The age of the world picture*' talks about phenomenological orientation in the world. He evokes the image of the Greek man as the example of the phenomenological orientation. Heidegger (1977:127) states

> Greek man must gather (*legein*) and save (*sozein*), catch up and preserve, what opens itself in its openness, and he must remain exposed (*aletheuein*) to all its sundering confusions.

Heidegger (1977) argues that by embodying the phenomenological orientation (e.g. Greek man), the world cannot become a picture. In other words, the world cannot become static and rigid in its representations. On the contrary, embodying phenomenological orientation ensures that the world is open to coming into being in many forms. van Manen (2007) in turn defines this type of orientation as pathic knowing.

> Pathic knowing inheres in the sense and sensuality of our practical actions, in encounters with others and in the ways that our bodies are responsive to the things of our world and to the situations and relations in which we find ourselves

(van Manen, 2007:11).

van Manen (2007) points out that theory 'thinks' the world, while practice through developing pathic knowledge 'grasps' the world. Pathic knowledge, van Manen (2007) argues, is relational, situational, corporeal, temporal, actional; and thus, allowing pathic knowledge to guide us through research, opens the space for the phenomenon to come forward in forms that we have not imagined. Consequently, during the stages of data collection and data analysis, I paid close attention to our bodies in space – bodily movements and orientations, and non-verbal language. Thus, it enabled me to explore how teenage girls negotiated power and concepts of 'appropriate' femininity in the research space.

Standpoint of curiosity

Acknowledging the importance of *being* in the research space – where carnal bodies are always sensing and moving in relation to each other – challenged me to be creative with the methods I utilised to explore the meanings teenage girls had about femininity in contemporary Ireland. Interpretivist research that follows phenomenological hermeneutic philosophy advocates for the use of methods that are not rigid in their application and execution (van Manen, 1990). It argues that applying rigidly prescribed methods limits phenomenon's ability to come forward (Gadamer, 2004). In other words, using one homogenous method to explore different individual lived experiences restrains our ability to discover new narratives; it sustains the phenomenon within the existent boundaries and restrains

the phenomenon to reveal itself only in the forms that the researcher considered (Marion, 2002). Therefore, this type of research encourages the use of methods that have the capacity to be relational and responsive to each individual research participant.

McNamee and Gergen (1999), for instance, advise paying attention to relational responsibility. According to McNamee and Gergen (1999), relational responsibility involves shifting one's focus on the process of co-constructing meaning in dialogue with each other, rather than focusing solely on the finished product. Relational responsibility urges us to value a continuous process of comprehending, adjudicating and adjusting within relationships; and by doing so, McNamee and Gergen (1999) argue, we will develop a sensibility that sustains relationships and creates possibilities for meaning to be continuously open. Furthermore, Marion (2002) argues that if there is more reduction, there will be more givenness. In other words, how the phenomenon would unfold depends on how much reduction the research applies when discovering the phenomenon. The givenness of lived experiences can only be captured through the reduction of methods that are inevitably structured by preconceived understandings. Marion (2002) urges one to use such methods that would not restrain the phenomenon to reveal itself; a method should not foresee or predict a phenomenon and thus produce it. The phenomenological method should act as a tool that clears away any obstacles which limit the phenomenon to reveal itself.

On the other hand, acknowledging that bodies have the potential to know pushed my standpoint on the beliefs about the issues of femininity and contemporary womanhood. I was aware that my embodiment that corresponded to my understandings on the issues of contemporary femininity (which had the potential prejudice how participants responded) would seep into my bodily orientation, would creep into my flow of intuitive questioning. In other words, I was aware of my framework of making sense of what was happening in the interview room.

While I ensured not to impose my beliefs on the teenage girls who took part in the research, I needed to find a starting point, a philosophical and an ethical orientation that would encompass teenage girls' accounts of their lived experiences and at the same time include my lived experiences that inevitably directed my understanding. To pose questions I had to have a starting point, which meant posing questions that used a previous understanding of the phenomenon. On the other hand, feminist standpoint theory, as discussed previously, emphasises that one cannot escape one's speaking location – one's standpoint when producing knowledge. This speaking position shapes and limits how one understands the world, and thus it regulates what kind of knowledge one produces. Therefore, it was essential to maintain the balance between my standpoint while allowing the phenomenon to come forward unrestrained by my initial understandings and use of language.

My educational background in social care practice introduced me to systemic family therapy and its methods of *being* in the therapy space (Tomm, 1985; Selvini-Palazzoli et al., 1980). Consequently, an orientation of curiosity (Anderson and Goolishian, 1992; Cecchin, 1987) seemed to hold both teenage girls' and my lived experiences equally. While I acknowledge that research is not a therapy session, curiosity as an orientation towards people acts as an ethical, corporeal and philosophical stance that allows one to respect the presence of the Other, and appreciates people's accounts of their lived experiences without challenging them. Challenging people's accounts is not necessarily done intentionally: it is carried through our use of language, the way we project our body language, and also how (depending on our social location) we access and utilise discourses that shape our worldview. Cecchin (1987) in his classical paper *Hypothesizing, Circularity, and Neutrality Revisited: An Invitation to Curiosity* argues that curiosity creates neutrality. Cecchin (1987:405) states

> Curiosity leads to exploration and invention of alternative views and moves, and different moves and views breed curiosity. In this recursive fashion, neutrality and curiosity contextualize one another in a commitment to evolving differences, with a concomitant nonattachment to any particular position.

Curiosity as an orientation allowed me to acknowledge my prejudice without forcing myself to hide it or fake any other beliefs. At the same time, embodying a stance of curiosity allowed me to continuously move in relation to each individual teenage girl's story about their lived realities as a young woman. Curiosity does not aim to find a cause and effect relationship but instead views people's actions as part of a system that follows a personal logic (Cecchin, 1987). Cecchin points out that by being curious, we open up a possibility for multiple stories to be heard. Moreover, curiosity as an orientation empowered me to be vulnerable and exposed, and during the moments of uncertainty embodying a stance of curiosity allowed me to move with that feeling rather than ignore the girls' stories, and consequently end up reinstating the researcher's position of power (Kitzinger, 2004).

Moreover, following feminist standpoint theory, I aimed to understand teenage girls' stories from their standpoint, to share their speaking location when making sense of data. While the orientation of curiosity allowed me to initiate interview questioning, placing myself in the same standpoint as the teenage girls allowed me to understand their worldview. Feminist standpoint theory urges one to share a standpoint of the research participants if one is aiming to produce knowledge for that group of people. Cain (1993), for instance, argues that it is unavoidable to occupy a personal standpoint when producing knowledge. However, Cain (1993:88, original emphasis) points out that 'to produce knowledge for a group of people it is necessary to share their site – to convert your own site into a chosen *standpoint* for the production of knowledge.' This is vital, Cain (1993) highlights, to discover the pre-discursive women's experiences that had not yet been spoken in the dominant discourses.

II. RESEARCH PROCESS

Sample

The sample for the study was selected from two schools within Transition Year girls (15-17 year-olds) within the South-East of Ireland. The research participants varied in their geographical location (urban/rural), social status and educational settings (School No. 1 – single-sex Catholic religious and School No. 2 – co-educational non-Catholic religious). The selection process for taking part in the research was based on a voluntary and a 'first come first served' basis. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that this type of sampling is beneficial for inductive research that is concerned with theory building analysis rather than focusing on generalisation and representation of the data.

In total, I interviewed twenty teenage girls, whom I met for interviews on three consecutive occasions. In School No. 1 thirteen teenage girls took part in the research project. Thus, interview phases were divided into two groups: Group No. 1 consisted of eight girls, and Group No. 2 consisted of five girls. As Group No. 1 and Group No. 2 participants were from two different classes, it was decided not to move the teenage girls to another group for the purpose of even numbers in the focus group discussions. As was highlighted before, the research aimed to explore the ways teenage girls made sense of contemporary femininity and negotiated that meaning in the peer groups within which they interacted daily. In School No. 2 seven teenage girls took part in the research project. Therefore, it was decided to conduct only one focus group discussion.

As the study's goal is to focus on individual lived experiences, it was decided to interview the teenage girls three times so the researcher would be able to get a sense of their subjectivity and their worldview as well as to feel the atmosphere of the space they shared with each other every day. Understanding the teenage girls' worldview and their school environment enabled the application of the hermeneutic circle (Heidegger, 1977). It allowed contextualising their lived experiences within the wider social context in which they interacted, simultaneously situating the teenage girls' accounts within the local school culture (Refer to: Table 8 Phases of data collection, p. 275). Moreover, meeting research participants on three consecutive occasions facilitated building a relationship with the teenage girls so the stories they shared would be built on trust and understanding. Abram (2014:36) notes that building trust allows researchers to create '… meaningful, personal relationships that may enable us to understand complex situations.' Trust and understanding allowed me to hold multiple perspectives and have multiple standpoints while listening to stories that the teenage girls shared with me; it also allowed me to acknowledge my prejudice and simultaneously deal with it.

In time, having conducted interviews in two schools, which were distinctly different from each other, the point was reached where data became rich in its quality as well as quantity. The literature on qualitative research methods (O'Reilly and Kiyimba, 2015; Braun and Clarke, 2013; Fossey et al., 2002; Morse, 2000) advises considering sample size on several bases. Firstly, information that needs to be gathered should have depth. Secondly, that information should be useful in relation to the initial research question. Lastly, the researcher should be aware of available time and resources. Stories the teenage girls shared unravelled the initial research questions, which were concerned with the processes of establishing the meaning of a girl in contemporary Ireland. Moreover, at the end of Phase Three of interviews, themes that had similar patterns started to emerge. Some of the qualitative research literature advice recommended ending interviews at this point as saturation had been reached (Ryan, 2006; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). While I did not feel that it was possible to reach data saturation using phenomenological hermeneutic inquiry, I wanted to be realistic about my time and ability to analyse more than sixty-three hours of interviews.

The timeframe for data collection

Interviews were carried out in two phases: interviews in School No. 1 were conducted in Spring of 2013, and interviews in School No. 2 were conducted in Spring of 2014 (Refer to: Table 7 Time Frame of Data collection, p. 274).

Data collection in School No. 1 was done within five months, while in School No. 2 it took three months. Several reasons impacted this. Firstly, the teenage girls' schedule and availability determined how quickly interviews could be arranged. Secondly, in School No. 1 the number of teenage girls taking part was bigger than School No. 2 (School No.1 – 13 participants; School No. 2 – 7 participants). All of the interviews lasted an hour depending on the participants' willingness to share their lived experiences and engage.

During this timeframe (February - June 2013 and February - April 2014), I could get a sense of the school, which allowed me to contextualise the teenage girls' stories that were shared during interview-talk (Kitzinger, 2004). Rapley (2004), for instance, pushes for the need to analyse interviews as consisting of two interlinking elements. Interview-talk is a trajectory of talk that has elements of cultural meanings (discourse) as well as elements of local interactional context. Both elements shape the circumstances of the production of the interview-talk. In a similar vein, it was the application of the hermeneutic circle – seeing the particular in the general and vice versa.

Furthermore, this timeframe of data collection was partly led by the schools' timetable and the time it took to negotiate access with gatekeepers. On the other hand, this timeframe enabled me to listen,

re-listen and sense initial themes from the first round of interviews before going into the field again. However, as I was following phenomenological hermeneutic inquiry, I was aware that initial themes should act as a guide when entering a new interview space because those themes had great potential in obscuring the teenage girls' stories that I was about to hear. Thus, initial themes acted more like an opening, as a guide for entering the teenage girls' standpoint and their worldview, so I could better understand what it meant for teenage girls to be a girl through the use of SNSs in contemporary Ireland.

The rationale for utilising school setting

Recruiting the sample within the schools was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, school is the space that teenage girls enter every day and spend a substantial amount of their time. The school setting shapes how teenage girls are able to construct their identities in accordance with the presence of other people, and schools' rules and regulations (imposed by adults and also exercised by teenage girls' peers, for example in slut calling, refer to: Ringrose, 2011) define whom teenage girls are allowed to be and also to become. Currie et al. (2009) from their research with teenage girls observed that schools were a key institution that mediated the regulations of girls' identity practise. In sum, school space is where global and local discourses of femininity and appropriate girlhood are regulated, established and negotiated at a local level. Secondly, recruiting the sample within schools enabled the researcher to access the teenage girls' groups that have their established practises, allowing the exploration of how meanings of contemporary femininity are sustained in practice amongst teenage girls themselves, and what kind of subjectivity teenage girls are allowed to construct. I approach subjectivity in a similar manner as Wendy Hollway (1984), who states that subjectivity is expressed '…through meanings and incorporated values which attach to a person's practices and provide the powers through which he or she can position him or herself in relation to others' (Hollway, 1984:1). Lastly, schools provided support systems in instances when there was a need to refer or debrief the research participant (e.g. disclosure of eating disorders).

Steps of data collection

STEP 1: Negotiating access

Gatekeepers (School No. 1 – Transition Year teacher; School No. 2- Transition Year coordinator) opened the access to the research sample. In School No. 1 access was negotiated within a week in January of 2013. The gatekeeper in School No. 1 was a Transition Year teacher, who was an

acquaintance of mine from previous employment, thus accessing the sample was quick because the gatekeeper knew me as a trustworthy person, and was familiar with my qualifications in childcare as well as social care. After forwarding the information about the research project, the gatekeeper approved the access to the sample.

In School No. 2 I contacted the gatekeeper through the information provided on the school's website, and thus access was negotiated within two weeks in January of 2014. Negotiations with School No. 2 gatekeeper were conducted through the phone and emails outlining my qualifications, research aims and the working contract between me and the gatekeeper. Before approving the access to the research sample, School No. 2 gatekeeper asked to have a brief meeting with me in person, to discuss the practical details and timeframe, show me around the school and introduce me to some of the staff who worked with the teenage girls in the school. In both schools, gatekeepers asked for my Garda vetting clearance and Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) Ethics approval letter.

STEP 2: Initial invitation meeting

After negotiating access with gatekeepers, a brief invitation meeting was arranged with the teenage girls and the gatekeeper, during which I outlined what the research was about and answered any questions that the girls had. The questions they posed to a great extent showed me the way the teenage girls understood the importance of their opinions when speaking with adults. For instance, in both schools, they asked me if they were allowed to say 'anything' during the research interviews even after I stressed the importance of their voices for this research project.

After all the questions had been answered, I showed a short video (that I made myself: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJhbGLYH4CU) which explained my research. By showing the video, I wanted to communicate that my intention was to enter the school space with a feeling of enjoyment, relaxed atmosphere and appreciation for the teenage girls' voices. The video was a medium that transmitted my stance towards the research space that I chose to invite the girls to enter. In addition, I wanted to use new technologies (iPads, smartphones, apps) in my initial encounter with them to enter their space with a gesture that I sensed would be familiar to them – a gesture that I hoped opened up the space indicating that I was willing to enter their standpoint.

At the end of the meeting, I distributed consent and assent forms that needed to be signed and returned to the gatekeeper if a teenage girl and her parents agreed to take part in the research project.

STEP 3: Gaining consent and assent

It was agreed with the gatekeepers that after six signed parental consent and teenage girls' assent forms were returned to the gatekeeper, I would arrange the first focus group. In School No. 1 there were thirteen consent/assent forms returned, and thus two groups were conducted that were divided by the class attended. In School No. 2 there were seven consent/assent forms returned to the gatekeeper. Subsequently, one focus group discussion was formed.

Drawing from research with teenage girls (Ryan, 1997) and from my own experience conducting a focus group with *adolescent girls*, I learned that to gain in-depth conversations and at the same time create a space where each girl's voice is heard, the number of participants within the group should be between five and seven. At the end of each focus group discussion, each girl was invited to take part in the first stage of the individual interview. For the second stage of individual interviews, research participants were invited once again to take part voluntarily. Even though consent and assent forms were signed, I sought the teenage girls' verbal agreement to take part in the research before each interview. It not only ensured that ethical requirements were followed but more importantly, it aimed to emphasise for the girls that they have the agency and power to make decisions in this research project.

STEP 4: Creating the interview setting

One could argue that interview space is a vital player in co-constructing the trajectory of the interview. Elwood and Martin (2000) emphasise that the interview setting plays a vital part in research participants' positionality, power relations and interview-talk itself. School No. 1 allowed the interview to be conducted during class times, whereas School No. 2 allocated interview times between class breaks. In some cases (School No. 2), I interviewed girls after school time but still within the school setting. While there was no significant difference in the quality of the interviews due to allocated time, the actual interview length was slightly longer in cases when interviews were conducted after school time.

Space, which the research participants and I agreed to enter, created an atmosphere that regulated what stories could be shared and what lived experiences would be pushed back. Consequently, I paid close attention to the objects I brought into the space; objects that inevitably screamed 'Research' and thus had the potential to evoke the feelings of power by naming who was in charge. During my first two interviews in School No. 1, I observed that the teenage girls were continuously distracted by recording devices, such as Dictaphones and video cameras, whereas iPad and smartphones were never

noticed (for the purpose of sound quality and a possibility of one device failing I recorded on multiple devices). As a result, for the following interviews, I deliberately decided to record the interviews on iPad and smartphone as those devices seemed to be less 'unusual' for teenagers; those objects blended in rather than disturbed the space. Also, I brought sweets as a gesture of invitation and hospitality.

STEP 5: Phase 1 of data collection - Focus groups

Focus groups formed the key methodological tool for Phase One of the study. Wilkinson (1998:111) asserts that focus groups as a method are beneficial to employ when the researcher wants to gather '…high quality, interactive data: and offering the possibility of theoretical advances regarding co-construction of meaning between people.' Starting with group discussions allowed me to explore how the teenage girls made sense of contemporary femininity being present with people they encountered every day. Focus group discussions allowed me to explore how the teenage girls made sense of contemporary femininity being surrounded by other teenage girls' subject positions, and how the meaning of contemporary femininity was held in practice amongst the teenage girls' peer group. Moreover, the focus group method enabled the exploration of the way in which the girls, as an established social structure (the participants in each focus group were from the same class bringing their own hierarchical social structures), negotiated global and local meanings of contemporary femininity.

Meanings sustained in practice not only consisted of a discursive talk about contemporary femininity but were also expressed in bodily movements and seating arrangements. Therefore, at the stages of data analysis, I paid particular attention to seating arrangements, bodily movement in the space and towards each other as they were essential elements that shaped the interview trajectory and the shifting meanings of contemporary femininity. From the phenomenological hermeneutic perspective and in lines with carnal hermeneutics, we orient our bodies in response to our surroundings. Thus the way we make sense of the world is inevitably linked with people, objects and spaces that we find ourselves in that particular moment.

Moreover, working with a group, which had its social structure outside the focus group setting, allowed me to observe how the teenage girls collectively made the meaning of appropriate femininity and what discursive knowledge they applied when negotiating media messages of contemporary femininity. Kitzinger (1994:108, original emphasis) notes, focus groups accommodate the researcher to see participants' 'hierarchy of importance, *their* language and concepts, *their* frameworks for understanding the world.'

Secondly, the focus group method allowed me to minimise power differences between the researcher and the participants as the group interaction was mostly led by participants' conversation (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999). To start the discussion and reduce my impact on the structure of the group interaction, but simultaneously guide the discussion towards my research questions, I used props, such as celebrity Facebook profile pictures (Refer to: Appendices Props used, p. 267). Speer (2002) asserts that using props allows one to gather spontaneous talk between research participants on the research topic without imposing the researcher's analytical categories. Themes, which the teenage girls highlighted as relevant to them were incorporated/followed on in further steps of my research design (One-to-One interviews).

The focus group method has been widely used with teenage girls to explore the topics about young girls' online and offline identities (Jackson and Goddard, 2015; Ringrose et al., 2012; Ringrose and Barajas, 2011; Manago et al., 2008). While using focus groups allowed researchers to capture opinions from a large sample, it does not enable the grasping of individual lived experiences. Feminist standpoint scholars (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002) argue that to be able to account for different female experiences, one needs to pay attention to individual female stories. Therefore, individual interviews were employed to explore the teenage girls' experiences online and offline.

STEP 6: Phase 2 of data collection - The First Stage of individual interviews

The first stage of the One-to-One interviews focused on a more in-depth exploration of the teenage girls' personal meanings of their feminine identity. In addition, this stage of the interviews aimed to explore the ways individual teenage girls experienced girlhood and how it was to be a young woman in contemporary Ireland. Even though the most common practice in qualitative research is to employ semi-structured interviews, staying true to phenomenological hermeneutic philosophy, this phase of interviews was designed to allow the teenage girls' stories about their lived experiences as a girl to come forward without any preconceived boundaries, such as preconceived researcher's questions.

Therefore, a method of a 'day routine clock' activity was used. By asking the girls to guide the researcher through their day (weekday and weekend, from the time they wake up to the time they go to sleep) it was anticipated that attention would be taken away from preconceived research questions and the researcher's role as a facilitator (Kitzinger, 1994). This method not only facilitated a reduction in the power imbalance (Elwood and Martin, 2000) but also allowed the structure of the interview schedule centre on the themes relevant to each particular girl. As Speer (2002:785) notes themes and categories should be considered as relevant '…only if they are procedurally consequential for, and

oriented to by the participants themselves.' From a phenomenological hermeneutic perspective 'A day clock' activity allowed the phenomenon, that is the teenage girls' lived experiences, to come forward in a way that the girls wanted to narrate their lived experiences rather than the narration being structured by preconceived researcher's questions.

This stage of the interviews aimed to deepen the understanding of the ways the teenage girls experienced being a girl in their everyday life, and how local meanings of appropriate femininity were sustained in practice. Currie et al. (2006) in their study of teenage girls' every day practises of 'doing a girl', suggests that in order to unravel teenage girls' personal meanings of 'appropriate' femininity, the researcher needs to direct its focus on teenage girls' everyday habitus of body surveillance and modification, and aim to explore the choices and limits that girls face in their lives when embodying a specific feminine subjectivity.

Furthermore, while paying attention to the language the teenage girls utilised when narrating their lived experiences of being a girl, I paid attention to the girls' body language. I tried to sense if those stories were told with feelings of happiness or annoyance, if their bodies were at ease or retreating into themselves. Doing so allowed me to develop pathic knowing (van Manen, 2007) and thus continue with the trajectory of the interview that was in relation to the teenage girls' orientation and embodiment.

Moreover, not only did this interview stage allow me to build a better relationship with the research participants (teenage girls, gatekeepers and school staff), it also allowed me to attain a better sense of each girls' perceived realities in order to contextualise interview-talk within a wider social and cultural context in which the individual teenage girl engaged outside her school; a process of hermeneutic circle (Heidegger, 1977). Understanding the teenage girls' wider social and cultural context allowed me to explore the interplay between the local school environment and the teenage girls' broader context. In other words, this phase of interviews allowed me to explore what subject positions each girl could occupy when representing her feminine subjectivity within her immediate local school environment and also on social networking sites that incorporate both global and local audiences.

STEP 7: Phase 3 of data collection - The Second Stage of individual interviews

The second stage of One-to-One interviews focused on the ways the teenage girls used Social Networking Sites (SNSs) to represent and construct their feminine identity; what choices they made when representing their virtual identity for a public or private eye, and how teenage girls' virtual

identities interwove into their local social reality. This stage of interviews aimed to explore their perspectives on what kind of online practices constituted 'appropriate' femininity. The main aim of this phase of the data collection was to explore the way the teenage girls' subjectivity was governed on SNSs.

Exploring SNSs experiences at this stage of data collection was designed purposely for several reasons. Literature indicates that teenagers view SNSs as their space, space where teenagers feel they can 'hang out' without adult supervision (Livingstone et al., 2011; Marwick and boyd, 2010). Therefore, I was mindful of a possibility that the teenage girls could experience me as an intruder who asked to be let into the space which they shared only with people they 'accepted as a 'Friend' (e.g. Facebook Friends). I anticipated that at this point of the research process the teenage girls and I would have built a relationship, a relationship of trust and understanding; that at this point we would know the habitus of our speech (e.g. not finishing sentences, thinking out loud), habitus of our orientation in the research process (e.g. looking away when thinking). It allowed getting a sense of each other's worldview about the research process, and facilitated an appreciation of the standpoints that we each occupied in accordance with the research project.

Being able to see from each other's standpoint eased our presence with each other. For example, at the beginning of Phase Two of data collection, the teenage girls were timid and expressed shyness when stating their opinions. This was observed in research participants' body language, as well as frequent checking with me by saying '*is this ok what I am saying*'. In the following stages of Phase Three of data collection, those patterns did not emerge. Hence, at this more advanced point of the research, being able to see from each other's standpoint enabled us to have an open conversation about SNSs and its related practices, which, as mentioned before, is a space in which teenagers often hide from the supervision of grown-ups. As we both created a trusting relationship, power imbalances between the researcher and the researched, the observer and the observed, shifted. This enabled the teenage girls to view the researcher not as a threat that came to supervise and judge their online practices but as someone who tried to understand the teenage girls' world from the teenage girls' standpoint.

Semi-structured interview questions guided this phase of the interviews. However, posing questions were structured following McNamee and Gergen (1999) advice on relational responsibility. In this sense, semi-structured questions were designed to be open and more importantly, to be in relation to each individual research participant. In other words, this semi-structured interview schedule was executed in a way to stay in tune with the stories that the girls shared at that particular unique moment. At this point of the study, interview questions were more of a dialogue that used discursive language (preconceived semi-structured interview schedule) but only in relation to what was happening at that

present moment. From the information sheet gathered during the focus group discussions, I knew which SNSs an individual teenager girl used most. Thus, I aimed to start the interviews something like this: '*You said you use Facebook most, can you tell me a little bit about how you use Facebook?*'

In the cases when a teenage girl's SNSs was set on 'public' (Instagram: School No. 1 – 3 teenage girls; School No. 2 – 5 teenage girls; Twitter: School No. 1 – 3 teenage girls, School No. 2 – 4 teenage girls), I invited her to share the content of the page and guide me through her posts. The purpose of looking at the girls' SNSs posts was not to compare their online content with what they told in the interview, but rather those SNSs posts acted as a visual illustration of their individual stories shared during the interview. Thus, the teenage girls' stories of their lived experiences while being on SNSs were the main focus of this phase of the data collection. In other words, this stage of interviews aimed to explore the girls' meanings and understandings of feminine subjectivity construction on SNSs rather than prioritising the researcher's observations on the research participants' SNSs content in alignment with interview data.

Moreover, even though online research has now been done for nearly a decade (Boellstorff, 2010; Turkle, 1995), the issues around ethics and participants' consent conducting online observations are still debatable (Richman, 2007). I wanted to be mindful and respectful of the teenage girls' privacy, agency and power during the research process. At a theoretical level, I was inspired by feminist standpoint theory which advocates for research for women that are empowered by the research process rather than being observed and thus objectified (Harding, 1987). Research for women is not only about enabling women to have agency in the research process, but it also includes the power to actively be allowed to make decisions on the production of knowledge that relates to how women experience the world (Haney, 2002; Haraway, 1988; Smith, 1988; Smith, 1974). Accordingly, the SNSs settings as private or public were an indicator for me what the teenage girls were willing to share with the public world. Thus, I did not want to disrespect that privacy for the purposes of the research.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis

Girls throughout history have been governed by practices of surveillance and categorisation and normalisation. Thus, this research project consciously sought to counter this, by adopting a contrasting way of collecting, handling and interpreting the information that has been collaboratively created in the research process. Utilising the phenomenological hermeneutic approach for this research project, it was most appropriate to employ Thematic Analysis (TA) for the data analysis. TA is a widely-used method in qualitative research that allows researchers to identify, analyse and report patterns/themes within the data set (Spencer et al., 2014; Braun and Clarke, 2013). TA has been extensively implemented in the current research with teenage girls on topics such as the way they make sense of their appearance (De Brún et al., 2013; McCabe et al., 2006), their negotiations of celebrity images (Vares and Jackson, 2015; Lamb et al., 2013) and their negotiations of contemporary culture of sexualisation of women (Jackson and Goddard, 2015).

TA was the most appropriate method of analysis for this research project for several reasons. Firstly, TA allows inductive research (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Inductive research is focused on building theory from the data rather than applying theory to the data (Blaikie, 2007). For this study, TA enables the researcher to prioritise themes that the teenage girls highlighted as relevant during the interviews. Secondly, TA allowed the researcher to situate interview-talk within the context that it had been produced. Hearing what the teenage girls brought forward as being relevant to them about the topic of feminine identity construction, had the potential to be simultaneously located within the broader context of that particular interview trajectory. This enables the exploration of the ways the teenage girls' stories were co-constructed within the interview setting, how our dialogue produced a particular trajectory of talk which co-constructed a specific version of reality (Rapley, 2004; Speer, 2002). Being aware of these co-constructions of reality within the interview space deepened my reflective ability, which was vital to enter the teenage girls' standpoint. In addition, the awareness of how particular interview-talk was co-constructed widened the transparency of the research when producing knowledge about teenage girls' lived experiences and realities (James, 2014; Gerson and Horowitz, 2002).

van Manen (1990:79, original emphasis) notes that making sense of people's accounts of their lived experiences is a process of insightful thematic interpretation where 'phenomenological themes may be understood as the *structures of experience*'. As interpretation is always subjective, TA is not a rule-bound process. Heidegger (1977), as discussed previously, urges the embodiment of qualities of

the Greek person who always remains exposed and vulnerable to the world that is continuously evolving so as not to construct that world into a static picture. Accordingly, TA is not based on rules but rather acts as a tool allowing the researcher to manage the data and have some order when one needs to describe and write about the individual (and thus diverse) people's lived experiences. TA is a tool that incorporates imaginative analysis while following a specific system/steps to draw patterns. For the purposes of this research, Spencer et al. (2014) description of TA as consisting of four stages was utilised. These stages are as follows

1. Familiarisation
2. Constructing an initial thematic framework
3. Indexing and sorting
4. Reviewing data extracts

STEP 1 Familiarisation

Even though, Spencer et al. (2014) define clear stages of TA, interpreting and making conclusions of what the teenage girls shared during interviews was viewed as a continuous process that was built-in to the whole research process. For instance, after each focus group discussion I would try to make sense of what happened and what was said in the interview space, and thus in the following One-to-One interviews, I would ask the teenage girls to help me to make sense of my interpretations. Consequently, familiarisation with the interview data was a collaborative process.

After conducting all the interviews, I read and re-read interview transcripts according to the sequence of data collection timeframe while listening to the audio recordings. At this stage, the aim of the analysis was to understand the interviews in their totality, to get a sense of what was said (and also what was not mentioned by research participants but discussed as important in the relevant literature), what were the themes that came forward again and again from the teenage girls' stories. At the same time, attention was paid to the individual statements, sentences and words while posing the following question '*what does this statement, sentence, word or phrase reveal about teenage girls' lived experiences as being a girl in contemporary Ireland?*' Subsequently, I made notes of my initial thoughts, understandings and interpretations. In addition, summaries of each individual interview were made outlining key elements, which are as follows: a brief description of what topics a research participant discussed most, the whole interview story as a 'whole', and my initial observations and interpretations. While this step eased the management of the data, it was important to stay open to possible interpretations emerging later that could divert from the initial observations.

While making notes, I documented comments on my feelings, emotions and personal reflections that were present during the interview space and at a time of listening to the interview recordings. From a feminist standpoint, it was important to locate my personal orientation within the interviews as that particular orientation inevitably played a role in the process of making sense of the research data (Maynard, 1994; Harding, 1992). Researcher's personal standpoint in the research project traditionally is left to the chapters on reflexivity. However, from the phenomenological hermeneutics perspective being aware of one's embodiment and standpoint plays an integral part when one is making interpretations that are essentially one's understanding. Since this research followed feminist standpoint theory, it was important that the Cartesian split between mind and body would be avoided so as not to exclude women's concrete lived experience. Also, following carnal hermeneutics (Kearney, 2015) the study acknowledged that our interpretations begin in the flesh, that we know with our bodies, the research paid attention to embodied experiences when generating themes.

STEP 2 Constructing an initial thematic framework by listening for the voice of 'I'

As the main questions of this research project were to explore teenage girls' subjectivity and its construction in contemporary Ireland, it was important to analyse the way research participants addressed themselves and their relationships with others. As discussed previously, for this project subjectivity is conceptualised as a practice that has personal meaning and values, and that practice determines the way one is able to position oneself in relation to others (Hollway, 1984). Therefore, listening to how the teenage girls talked about themselves and their relationships that were sustained in personally meaningful practice with other people was an important step in order to unravel issues of the teenage girls' subjectivity and their subject positions. To achieve that Mauther and Doucet (1998) suggest shifting our listening ear towards different voices in the interview transcript.

In their article Mauther and Doucet (1998) discuss the use of a voice-relational method in their analysis of qualitative interviews of women's lived experiences of domestic violence. Voice-relational methods view people as interconnected and that our relationships construct our sense of self-identity. Therefore, interview analysis is carried out with the focus on relationships: '…individual's narrative accounts in terms of their relationships to themselves, their relationships to the people around them, and their relationships to the broader social, structural and cultural contexts within which they live' (Mauther and Doucet, 1998:127). Mauther and Doucet (1998) propose four readings to make sense of what had been said during the interview. These readings are as follows:

Reading 1 consists of two elements: reading for the overall plot and story that the research participant had told; while trying to grasp the overall plot the researcher needs to read herself in the text '*how the researcher is responding emotionally and intellectually to this particular person?*'.

Reading 2 is focused on listening to how the research participant relates to oneself – the voice of 'I': *how the research participants speak about themselves, experience themselves and feel themselves?*

Reading 3 focuses on listening to how the research participant narrates interpersonal relationships.

Reading 4 aims to situate the research participants' accounts of their lived experiences within the broader social and cultural context.

While these stages of reading acted as a guide for my own reading of interview transcripts, I found myself interchangeably tuning my ear towards hearing how a teenage girl narrated her relationship with herself while situating that narration within the broader context simultaneously paying attention to my own feelings and interpretations. However, I found that reading for the voice of 'I' gave me a solid starting point to try to make sense of how the meaning of appropriate femininity was produced, sustained and regulated within social practice. While hearing the teenage girls' voice of 'I', I raised the following questions to bring focus to the analysis '*what social practice produced the teenage girl's 'I'?* And *what were the links of relationships the teenage girls highlighted as significant that produced their lived experiences of their identities?*'.

STEP 3 Indexing and sorting

For data management purposes, data analysis assistance software MAXQDA was used. The software enabled me to index and sort the interview transcripts by allocating codes to interview segments. The analysis of the data started with focus group discussions, then the Phase One of the One-to-One interviews, and the last Phase Two of One-to-One interviews. While the sequential pattern was followed according to the data collection timeframe (starting with the data from School No. 1 Group 1, then Group 2, lastly data from School No. 2), when drawing conclusions, it was important to take into consideration the different school settings where interviews were conducted and where the teenage girls constructed their subjectivity.

Managing focus group data

The focus group method aimed to explore how global/local meanings of femininity were constructed through the production of the established peer groups. Therefore, the analysis of focus group discussions was done by looking at the whole group while paying attention to individual participant's

input in the discussions. It allowed the exploration of how research participants as a group brought forward the topics that they considered important for the concept of femininity. At the same time, it enabled the mapping out of each research participant's engagement within the group and how participants located themselves within that group allowing the tracing of group dynamics and hierarchies.

Data from the focus groups were firstly sorted by the topics discussed according to the sequence in which they emerged. Illustrative extracts were used to identify topics, and a summary of key dimensions was outlined (Refer to: Table 5 Analysis template for data of Focus Groups, p. 273). Under each topic, the process of negotiation (e.g. disagreement, conflict, affirmation) was documented. It was important to trace the way research participants negotiated the meanings of global/local femininity to see patterns that sustained/rejected the meanings of contemporary femininity. Afterwards, each teenage girl's engagement was analysed by looking at the level of their participation in the discussion and in non-verbal communication. This step helped deepen the understanding of the negotiation process as it highlighted hierarchies within the group and also traced how language was supported/rejected in the body language.

Moreover, the atmosphere within the room and among the group members was recorded in relation to each illustrative extract. By doing it was possible to contextualise the discussion. In addition to that, notes were made looking at the way other participants of the focus group who did not contribute to the illustrative extract oriented themselves in the discussion. All of the above steps enabled the evolution of the negotiation process to be visualised, and the way views and meanings shifted and transformed. Furthermore, as the purpose of focus group discussions was to explore how the teenage girls negotiate meanings of femininity among themselves, it was important to observe the researcher's engagement in the discussion as it had the potential to impact on the evolution of the group's negotiation.

Managing One-to-One interviews data

Stage1 of One-to-One interviews were analysed first, followed by Stage 2. While those data sets were analysed separately, the end conclusions drawn from the data sets were contextualised within the whole data (focus groups, Stage 1 of One-to-One, Stage 2 of One-to-One). By doing so, it enabled the researcher to see patterns and connections that did not emerge from individual data sets. To manage the data of both Stage 1 and Stage 2 One-to-One interviews the following steps were taken.

First, interview transcripts were sorted sequentially according to the topics discussed in the interview. Under each topic, I paid attention to the way a research participant was addressing oneself and one's

relationships, what body language a research participant was portraying at a particular moment, and how I was orienting myself during that particular moment. The illustrative extracts were highlighted, and a brief summary of key dimensions discussed in the extracts was formulated (Refer to: Table 6 Analysis template for data of One-to-One interviews, p. 273).

When all Stage 1 and Stage 2 interviews were coded according to topics (labelled), the interview segments corresponding to each interview stage were isolated in accordance with their designated label. As the data set of both stages encompassed forty individual interviews, this step assisted the exploration of the connections of individual teenage girls' stories of lived experiences under one labelling system to form categories, subthemes and then themes. It also enabled a visualisation to emerge of what kind of topics each individual research participant discussed in more depth and which ones were not as relevant during the interview.

However, the interview segments were not analysed in isolation. Therefore, situating the labelled interview segment within the whole text along with the information gathered from previous interviews was a vital part when forming codes, subthemes and themes. Furthermore, while reading the interview transcripts, it was essential to simultaneously listen to the audio recording to have a holistic sense of the data as the speech-act. For instance, the tone of the voice, raised voice, pauses and slowing down to think, or stretching the word (recorded in the segments of non-verbal communication) were all part of the experience of the interviews.

STEP 4 Reviewing data extracts

When an overarching theme or category that explained the teenage girls lived experiences was formed, the theme was questioned by reflecting on the cases that 'did not fit'. In his classical book *Sociological imagination*, Mills (1959) urges researchers to think of extremes to develop insights. To do that, Mills (1959) suggests developing a variety of viewpoints that consider a multiplicity of explanations before coming to a conclusion. In a similar vein, Gadamer (1975/2004) makes observations about the art of questioning. Gadamer (1975/2004) points out that the art of questioning is only valuable when one preserves one's orientation towards openness. This openness consists of considering other opinions, other possible truths and explanations. Consequently, Gadamer (1975/2004) notes that by applying the art of questioning one is following the art of testing. Moreover, when determining the definite themes, van Manen's (1990) suggestions on using a process of, what he defines, 'free imaginative variations', was employed. van Manen (1990:107, original emphasis) explains this process in the following statement:

In determining the universal or essential quality of a theme our concern is to discover aspects or qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is. … In the process of apprehending essential themes or essential relationships one asks the question: Is this phenomenon still the same if we imaginatively change or delete this theme from the phenomenon?

Considerations of research validity

Consequently, the research project does not claim that themes, which were constructed through the researcher's interpretations and understanding, are homogenous essential themes that can be applied to the 'average' teenage girl. On the contrary, the research themes are a reflection of the process of accomplishing a certain 'truth' at that particular interview. Therefore, the validity of the study lies in its transparency of data collection and processes of drawing conclusions from that data. For instance, Seale (1999) argues that the criteria of reliability and replicability in qualitative research can be achieved by showing the reader in detail how the procedures of a research project led to a particular set of conclusions. Being committed to following the phenomenological hermeneutic philosophy, I aimed not only to illustrate my conclusions with 'thick' quotations but situate those quotations within my embodied experience in the room. Back (2007) argues that sociological listening is always bound with the art of description that is not only 'thick' but shows one's embodiment in the research space.

In addition, Braun and Clarke (2013) point out that qualitative research shows its trustworthiness, in other words, its validity, by being transparent in its application of systematic procedures and 'thick' descriptions of illustrative quotations, applying member checking during or after interviews, and implementing triangulation by using multiple sources of data, methods and theoretical explanations. 'Thick' descriptions refer to a process of contextualising people's (sample) experiences with a cultural and social context to provide a detailed and non-judgmental account of their conduct. In the section of the discussions of data analysis, the systemic procedures for the analysis of the data were clearly identified, as well as the utilisation of the triangulation process (Refer to: STEP 4 Reviewing data extracts, p. 138). Member checking, which refers to the process of validating the researcher's understanding by asking for the feedback from the research participants, was built into the research process itself. For instance, I would start each One-to-One interview by having a conversation with the teenage girls about topics, issues and suggestions from the previous interviews (e.g. *you mentioned during the last interview that…; am I right in thinking that this means….);* and I would end the interview with an invitation that sounded something like this '*Is there anything else we should talk about that we didn't get a chance to cover*?'.

In addition, engaging in the reflective process contributed to the transparency of the systemic procedures followed when forming end conclusions from the data. This was done by being aware and acknowledging in writing my orientations during the interview space as well as my orientation when analysing the data. Furthermore, Etherington (2004) argues, that transparency can be achieved by stating in writing the researcher's own subject position. Therefore, I ensured that my subject positions, such as being a woman, a feminist, and a researcher, would be included in the final document.

Considerations of the processes of reflexivity

As qualitative research is always faced with the interconnected dilemma between 'knowledge' and 'knowledge production' (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009), reflexivity became paramount throughout my own research inquiry. Gouldner (1970) observes that reflective sociology acknowledges that sociological knowledge is always bound by the sociologist's knowledge of oneself and one's position in the world. Reflective sociology, Gouldner asserts, confronts an issue of value-free sociology by transforming the researcher's relationship to one's work.

Gouldner (1970) urges one to focus on awareness as a means of seeing the relationship between the person and the information. Information is then viewed not as a fact but as an experience.

> In knowing conceived as awareness, the concern is not with 'discovering' the truth about a social world regarded as external to the knower, but with seeing truth as growing out of the knower's encounter with the world and his effort to order his experience with it

> (Gouldner, 1970:451).

Gouldner (1970:451) notes that the process of reflexivity involves the 'knower's knowing of himself' and at the same time knowing 'others and their social world'. To me, being reflective meant being aware of my personal values, ethics and beliefs that structured my orientation in the research process. Reflection did not stop when I left the interview space but was embedded in the analysis, writing up and stages of dissemination. Reflection became a safeguard when I jumped to conclusions, when my personal 'baggage' unconsciously tried to 'close' my listening ear, I did not fool myself – I knew that processes of projection, displacement and transference play a part when we meet other people (McLeod, 2003). Therefore, during the research process, I continuously asked myself *what are the premises of my thoughts, my observations and my use of language?*' My orientation towards reflexivity during the research can be summed up by Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009:269) statement:

> Reflexivity, in a research context, means paying attention to these [thoughts, observations, language] aspects without letting any one of them dominate. In other words, it is a question

of avoiding empiricism, narcissism and different varieties of social and linguistic reductionism.

On the other hand, Adkins (2002) calls into question the researcher's authoritative speaking position, which is constituted through the reflective writing. Drawing from May (1998), Adkins (2002) differentiates between endogenous and referential reflexivity. She argues that referential reflexivity, which refers to 'the consequences that arise from a meeting between the reflexivity exhibited by actors as part of lifeworld and that exhibited by the researcher as part of a social scientific community' (May, 1998:3), is undermined on the basis of endogenous reflexivity '…which positions the researcher as able to 'speak' (and be viewed as 'correct') via a particular figuring of identity', such as researcher's gender, social class or age (Adkins, 2002:340). Therefore, Adkins (2002) urges one to take a critical stance when making conclusions based on the knowledge which is informed by the processes of reflexivity.

Accordingly, throughout my work, I try to analyse my position to the knowledge that is being produced and, at the same time, recognise that the teenage girls' speaking position and their reflective accounts of their 'lifeworld' are true for the 'speaker'. Taking such a reflective turn allows me to be aware of my presumptions about social reality. More importantly, it privileges teenage girls' accounts of their lived experiences without dismissing these accounts on the basis that they emerged from my subject position (e.g. my age, gender, social class) in the research. It was important to outline my orientation and standpoint within the research process to show the validity of the study. Acknowledging my orientation and standpoint was used to contextualise interview-talk and knowledge produced, rather than using it as a benchmark for the validity of the research participants' shared stories.

Skeggs (2002:349) asserts that reflexivity should turn away from the self-telling practice to '…paying attention to research practice and research participants.' She (2002:349, original emphasis) notes that *doing* reflexivity in practice should be differentiated from '…claiming reflexivity as a resource of authorizing oneself (*being*).' Skeggs observes that the process of reflexivity became a one-sided story which privileged the researcher's story.

> Their story is based on their identity, which is usually articulated as a singularity and takes no account of movement in and out of space, cultural resources, place, bodies and others but nonetheless authorizes its self to speak

> (Skeggs, 2002:360).

Therefore, Skeggs (2002:369) urges … a 'return to reflexivity as practice and process as a matter of recourses and positioning; not a property of the self.' In the practice of my research, it meant that I was aware of my bodily orientations in space, power relationships between me as an academic and the teenage girls as socially constructed, not yet capable of making rational decisions for themselves, as well as methods I chose to narrate the teenage girls' stories. In this sense, reflexivity was not about telling my life story, but engaging with the research process in a reflective way.

In a similar vein, Smart (2014) asserts that social inquiry should not be limited to reflexivity alone, but that the researcher's frame of mind should be built around sociological attentiveness when dealing with the lives of research participants. To become an attentive sociologist, Smart (2014) suggests, one needs to listen and immerse oneself in the lives of others openly. According to Smart, this kind of attentiveness encompasses developing empathy, intuition and intellectual awareness.

> If the concept of reflexivity provides rigour for the sociologist in the process of interpretation and analysis, then the concept of attentiveness provides an appropriately sensitive frame of mind for dealing with the lives of research participants

(Smart, 2014:136).

For me during my research process, this attentive frame of mind allowed me to shift my listening position as a researcher and hear the teenage girls' stories from their standpoint. To me it meant living through those stories, feeling the emotions of those stories, and embodying those stories. It was an emotional journey that to some extent enabled me to imagine what it was like to be a teenage girl in contemporary Ireland. At the same time, being attentive meant I had the responsibility to explore how cultural and social discourses produced the teenage girls' lived experiences.

Ethical considerations

The research was approved by Waterford Institute of Technology Ethics Committee on 22nd March 2013. As informed by the literature, ethical considerations are incorporated at each step of my research process (Hill, 2005). I follow Les Back's (2007) suggestion that as researchers we need to take the responsibility towards and for people and contexts we research. Moreover, a feminist standpoint theory argues that feminist research should aim not only to be for women by including women in the process of knowledge production and thus empowering women, but also feminist research should aim to do 'good' to improve women's lives (Harding, 1987).

The Ethical code of practice, Stanley and Sieber (1992) note, asks that the researcher when conducting studies with minors, consider the following:

1. Informed consent and voluntary participation
2. Confidentiality and its limits
3. Participants' anonymity

These ethical codes had to be balanced with this research project's standpoint on the researcher's responsibility towards the research participants, the empowerment of women and doing 'good' for women. Finding the balance between the requirements of ethical codes and ethical research values demanded thorough consideration when they needed to be implemented in the research practice.

For instance, some of the literature points out that minors should be considered belonging to a 'vulnerable group', and thus ethical issues of power and disempowerment become of vital importance (Stanley and Sieber, 1992; Kelly and Ali, 2004). Consequently, throughout this research process, an inclusive approach was adopted while interviewing the teenage girls. Nind (2014:3, original emphasis) defines inclusive research in the following statement:

> Inclusive research can be usefully thought of as research that changes the dynamic between research/researchers and people who are usually researched: it is conceived as research *with*, by or sometimes for them, and in contrast to research *on* them.

Similarly, Stanley and Sieber (1992:123) note employing the philosophy of research *with* children has the implication for ethical considerations '…since it emphasizes that children are competent and knowledgeable respondents.'

Gaining consent from the teenage girls was of vital importance to empower them in claiming their agency when making decisions about how and with whom they wanted to share their voices. Even though the teenage girls' assent was not sufficient to proceed with the research (thus, I obtained parental/guardian consent), taking into account the inclusive practice, I ensured that the teenage girls' assent forms would be viewed as just as significant as their parents/guardians' consent forms. Moreover, an information leaflet was distributed to all research participants outlining research aims, methods, data storage and potential research's outcomes in a teenage-appropriate language. Harwood (2010) notes that gaining informed consent from children should be an ongoing process when conducting multiple interviews. Therefore, even after receiving signed parental consent and the teenage girls/assent forms, before each interview I obtained the teenage girls' verbal consent to take part. In addition, I clearly stated that if at any stage girls wanted to stop the interview or withdraw from the research they had a full right to do so without any negative consequences.

On the other hand, ethical codes of practice to a great extent set clear boundaries when it comes to empowering minors during the research process. For instance, Stanley and Sieber (1992) note that

researchers working with children must be aware of confidentiality limits. During this research, while I promised the teenage girls that the interview-talk would not be shared, except with myself and my supervisor, I clearly outlined my obligation to report information that in my view might raise concerns related to child protection and welfare issues. However, the rules prescribed by ethical codes of practice had to be balanced with the ethos of inclusive research that aimed to empower girls. Therefore, I informed the teenage girls that the disclosure process would be a collaboration/negotiation between myself and them and that we would both make a decision on how best to inform the authorities.

Lastly, even though some research argues that one of the ways to empower vulnerable groups involved in the research is to allow participants to choose their own pseudonyms (Hockey, 2014; Smith et al. 2012), I designated random pseudonyms myself. Being aware of the changing nature of teenage girls' friendships and teen dramas I felt that it was the most responsible practice for this research project to assign pseudonyms without girls' knowledge. As the sample was formed from a relatively small city, there was a great potential that other teenage girls would identify research participants. Furthermore, for my dissemination of the results, I anticipated going back to local schools with the final findings. Therefore, assigning pseudonyms to research participants myself, strongly guaranteed that confidentiality and anonymity were ensured.

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS

List of the research participants

School No. 1 — All girls public religious (Catholic) school				School No. 2 — Co-educational fee paid school based on Quaker ethos (provides boarding services)			
Pseudonym	Age	Urban/Rural	Ethnicity/Nationality	Pseudonym	Age	Urban/Rural	Ethnicity/Nationality
First Focus Group				*Third Focus Group*			
Aime	16	Rural	Irish	**Millie**	15	Urban	Irish
Aine	16	Rural	Irish	**Monika**	16	Urban (Boarder)	Irish
Tonya	16	Urban	Irish	**Brigid**	16	Rural	Irish
Laura	16	Urban	Irish	**Violet**	16	Urban	English+Irish
Kate	16	Urban	Irish	**Helen**	16	Rural	Irish
Shelly	16	Rural	Irish	**Andrea**	15	Rural (Boarder)	Irish
Holly	16	Rural	African+Finish+Irish	**Lisa**	15	Urban (Boarder)	Spanish
Sue	16	Urban	Irish				
Second Focus Group							
Sophie	16	Rural	Irish				
Rose	16	Rural	English+Irish				
Saoirse	16	Rural	Irish				
Marian	16	Urban	Irish				
Cara	17	Rural	Irish				

Table 1 List of the research participants

I. FOCUS GROUPS

A. CONSTRUCTING MEANING THROUGH CARNAL AWARENESS

Introduction

The focus group interviews aimed to illuminate how girls negotiated power and discourse. Of course, it involved stepping into a field of power in the school setting. Girls sought to achieve status and honour within concrete settings of friendship groups and school, by creatively playing with the symbolic resources that are at their disposal from the cultural foundations of their society, and also global youth culture. All of these were in play in the focus group setting.

The literature (Currie, 1999; Morley, 1980) argues that the reading of media messages is structured by one's social environment and one's access to discursive knowledge. During the focus group discussions, it became apparent that teenage girls co-constructed the meanings of 'appropriate' femininity not only through the process of verbal negotiation of the discursive 'truth' (Foucault, 1984) about femininity but also through their carnal awareness (Kearney, 2015a). Frequently teenage girls indicated their position towards a particular femininity display through their body language before revealing their personal opinion to the whole group. Moreover, when entering the interview space, it seemed that teenage girls sensed the atmosphere of the room and accordingly oriented themselves within the interview space. For instance, the seating arrangements, which will be discussed further, were emblematic of teenage girls' carnal awareness of power hierarchies within the room. Thus, when analysing the focus group interviews, it was vital to include the teenage girls' body language since it played a significant role in the establishment of the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity.

Consequently, to guide the process of analysis, I utilise Kearney's (2015) discussion on carnal hermeneutics, which I discussed in detail in the earlier section on '*Understanding through bodies*' (p. 119). Kearney (2015) argues that carnal awareness is always about the 'tact' - the ability to 'touch' the space through the body and its senses. Thus, 'tact' is about being sensitive: being attentive, careful and tentative in the space while being in-tune with all of one's senses. Nancy (2015) observes that when one enters a shared space, the bodily presence sends a motion that moves others within that space. The presence of the body acts and reacts at the same time. From the focus group data, it became evident that teenage girls related to each other and negotiated the meanings of 'appropriate' femininity through the awareness of their bodily orientation within the room. During focus group interviews, first and foremost teenage girls utilised carnal awareness to test the boundaries of power

and authority within the interview space, and oriented themselves and their bodies according to the dynamics of power before revealing their opinion on a particular femininity display.

Furthermore, Haraway (1988) urges us to pay attention to the embodied ways of articulating 'not yet spoken' meanings, to be attentive to the experiences that are not yet articulated in the dominant discourses. Recognising that bodies 'know', Haraway (1988) states, allows a feminist standpoint researcher to account for one's production of knowledge. Therefore, I pose a number of questions to guide the following discussion: *how did teenage girls orient themselves within the focus group discussions and use their bodies to show what was 'not yet spoken'? What kind of discursive subject positions did teenage girls embody within the focus group interviews? How was my own 'tact' of 'empowerment and curiosity' sensed by teenage girls? How was the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity established during the focus group discussions with teenage girls?*

Carnal awareness as a source of power for establishing meaning

On various occasions, I observed that the ways teenage girls 'made sense' of the interview space was through their carnal awareness: sensing the space through their bodies. Before each focus group, I purposely invited the teenage girls to arrange the room for the interview. They did not know my exact seat as I never claimed one. Nevertheless, the seating arrangements had a similar pattern across all of the three focus groups. The dominant girl(s) was always facing the researcher, and the other girls were orienting themselves according to the dominant girl(s)' seat. There are several ways of reading such seating arrangements. Firstly, it could be argued that when I took a seat, my bodily orientation and my standpoint positioned the girl in front of me to take a dominant girl role; other girls sensed the dynamic and oriented themselves accordingly. On the other hand, it could be argued that before I even took a seat, the dominant girl sensed my 'tact' and bodily orientation within the space and thus oriented her own body so as to face me. In both readings, it is the carnal awareness that guided the teenage girls to enact a particular role within the group. They never struggled to find their seats – their way of deciding who sits where, was always smooth but simultaneously brisk. The smooth seating arrangements could be read as the teenage girls' carnal awareness of the space and the other girls' 'tact' within that space. It also could be interpreted as being directly guided by already established hierarchical positions amongst the teenage girls.

However, from all of the three focus groups, I observed that the hierarchical positions amongst the teenage girls would always occur no matter whether they brought them to the interview space or co-created them by sensing the other girls' 'tact.' Thus, the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity was

always produced by the exercise of power - not only in the context of the broad cultural discursive field, and the setting of the school, but also the hierarchies of the girls' groups. However, for teenage
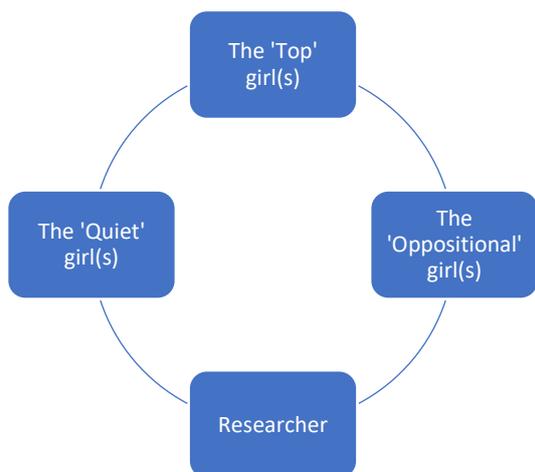
Table 3 The third Focus group seating arrangements
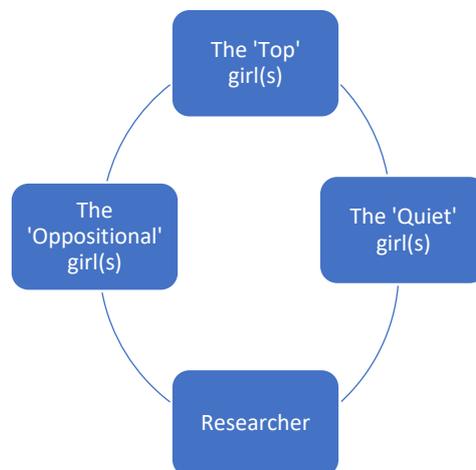
Table 4 The second focus group seating arrangements
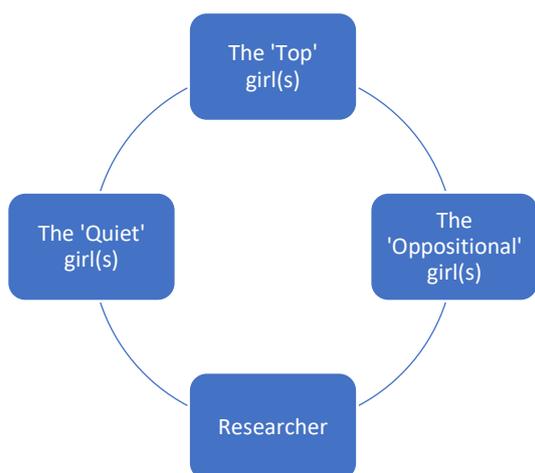
Table 2 The first focus group seating arrangements

girls, the source of power was not in claiming the 'truth' about the subject (Foucault, 1984,1977) but being carnally aware of space and others 'tact' within that space. The teenage girls first and foremost oriented themselves according to other girls' tact' so as to occupy a position of power when establishing the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity. Their carnal awareness and their bodily orientation enabled them to define the boundaries of 'appropriate' femininity. However, only through reading the transcripts I was able to identify the hierarchical positioning as during the actual interviews I never felt that the girls were orienting themselves according to established group hierarchical order. In other words, the hierarchical structures I refer to above were not overtly present

or experienced in the room from my position as the researcher. The subtlety of arranging themselves into a hierarchical structure highlighted to me that the teenage girls were able to judge the space and people in it by sensing the room.

The 'Top' girl(s) during the focus groups were most dominant: engaged in most of the talking and acted as a central figure for the other girls in the focus groups. By enacting the 'Top' girl(s) role, the dominant girl(s) oriented other girls to correspond to her position. Some of the other girls in the focus groups continuously sought 'Top' girl(s)' approval before/during their own time to speak. The dominant girl(s) was always able to face the researcher. The face to face positioning could either be interpreted as confrontational and claiming equal authority as the researcher, or it could also be viewed as embodying equal authority to the researcher by bodily positioning within the interview space. The 'Quiet' girl(s) ones who did not speak a lot during the focus groups, and the 'Oppositional' girl(s) those who tended to disagree (and expressed their disagreement out loud) with the 'Top' girl(s)' opinion, structured their seating arrangements around the 'Top' girl(s).

The hierarchical structures were visible not only from bodily orientation within the interview space but also throughout the structure of the girls' talk. When the group was posed with a question the 'Top' girl(s) would be the first to answer, thus leading a conversation in a particular direction. The 'Oppositional' girl(s) would try to disrupt the pattern of the talk by stating a different 'truth' about the subject being discussed. However, if the 'Oppositional' girl(s) received no support from other girls in the group, the nature of the conversation established by the 'Top' girl(s) would continue. Looking through the focus group transcripts, I noted that the talk was structured by the teenage girls' ability to sense silences and pauses. For instance, when a 'Top' girl paused to gather her thoughts, the 'Oppositional' girl(s) claimed her voice. The only exception was when it came to discussions related to the Beyoncé Pepsi advertisement (Figure 25, p. 161). Only then all of the girls unanimously supported each other's ideas and filled-in each other's sentences. The image of Beyoncé, closely resembling the Midriff figure (Gill, 2007; Figure 19, p. 73), united the girls as a group. At the same time, teenage girls sustained the discourse of Midriff as the teenage girls themselves never challenged this particular female subject position. Overall, the focus groups provided a 'part/whole analysis' (Scheff, 1997) of power - by showing how girls negotiated the hierarchies of the micro level, of the classrooms and friendships groups, as well as a stranger-researcher who was asking them to articulate their lifeworld - and how this was mediated by the wider setting of the school, and above this information technology in the form of SNSs, and above this, the colliding discourses of global popular culture and the cultural foundations of Irish society.

Testing the boundaries, identifying authority and power

When entering the focus group interview space, the teenage girls, first of all, tested the boundaries of the authority and power. It seemed necessary for them to evaluate the setting so as to feel safe opening up and sharing their stories without a sense that their subject position was being challenged. The girls never verbally stated that they felt the need to take charge, it was through my immediate sensing and later through reflections on transcripts that I recognised their actions as an attempt to draw the limits of power and authority. Firstly, to claim their power, the teenage girls needed to establish the norms and rules that I as a researcher/authority created. For instance, when I asked the girls to look at celebrity photos and talk about them, the girls always inquired about the rules for reading the image: '*do we just look and talk, or do we talk after all of us have looked at the pictures*?'.

When I explained that only after all of the girls had seen the pictures would we discuss the photos, unanimously the teenage girls engaged in private conversations with the person sitting next to them while looking at the photo. Even though they actively sought to clarify the rules, they consciously broke them. It seemed to me that the girls were indicating their subject position that they wanted to occupy during the research process. Researchers (Pomerantz et al. 2013; Currie et al., 2009; McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004) note that young girls are positioned to view themselves as subjects of capacity since the dominant discourses address them as winners in the current economic climate. It became evident that during the research process itself, the teenage girls continuously aimed to position themselves as subjects of capacity: leading the flow of the focus group, taking charge of the established rules and claiming the interview space by subtly eliminating the researcher's power over the interview process.

Frequently before starting the focus group interviews, I could sense the way the girls were actively expressing that they were in charge of the interview process. Before each focus group interview, I observed how all the girls were enthusiastically involved in their group conversation: there was no division among them, they were all in it; the only person left out was me = the researcher. Thus, it seemed that the girls were showing their power by actively constructing the interview space. Only later I learned that not all of the research participants got along. However, to establish power positions between them and the researcher/authority, all of the teenage girls in the focus group engaged in the conversation so as to be able to exclude the researcher.

At first, the teenage girls' actions were perplexing since the interviews were conducted in the girls' environment with careful attention to and elimination of authoritative objects brought into the interview space. Thus, it raised questions about the way the teenage girls sensed the power within the

interview space. It seemed that the girls were carnally aware of authority within the interview room, and that they sensed my standpoint within the research process. At the beginning of the fieldwork, I was hoping to empower young girls with my research, not only through its findings but through the process itself by allowing them to claim a space where their voices would be heard and respected. While I employed the standpoint of curiosity (Cecchin, 1987), I was hoping for empowerment and change in the girls' lives. I realise now that my initial standpoint was in direct opposition to the girls' subjectivities. While my intentions were noble, they challenged the girls' position as subjects of capacity by locating them as 'not empowered' or 'not able' to claim space for their voices. Consequently, the teenage girls resorted to the games of claiming power during the focus group interviews, constantly orienting their conduct to maintain their position of 'subjects of capacity'.

Following the focus group interviews, asking questions like '*why did you decide to take part?*' or '*what attracted you to the research?*', allowed an understanding of the teenage girl's initial subject position that she decided to occupy when entering the interview space. Consequently, by knowing the girls' initial subject position, enabled me, the researcher, to create a space where their subject positions and speaking standpoint were not challenged. Moreover, it became evident that the standpoint of curiosity (Cecchin, 1987) allowing my own preconceived ideas to be held, while pose interview questions in relation to teenage girls' stories, was not enough to create an open and safe environment for the interviews. It was vital to be aware of the teenage girls' standpoint within the research process so as not to challenge their subject positions.

Sensing the stranger

When reading the focus group transcripts, I observed that not only did the teenage girls sense the interview space, but I too was also 'in touch' and 'sensing' the room. When reading the focus groups' transcripts, I noted that certain words/phrases appeared more frequently than others. On reflection, the phrases acted as a tool to structure the interview space and establish the relationship between the researcher and research participants. However, it was only when I **read** the transcripts I noted the patterns; when I was present in the interview space, I did not **hear** (I do not rationally recall hearing them) the phrases the teenage girls adopted within their speech. My response was 'felt-sensed' rather than seen, heard or thought through. I was astonished at how frequently the girls used the word 'like', how staccato the structure of their sentences was, how often they jumped from one point to another with no clear flow. However, during the actual interviews, I did not overtly experience that. It was my carnal awareness that 'made sense' of the space. The speech *acts* were interpreted by the body (sensing and being impacted by the space) and thus the teenage girls' speech *acts* made no sense

when they were interpreted through reason as the researcher in my initial analysis of focus groups' transcripts.

As I continued reading through the focus group transcripts, I noted that at the start of the focus group discussions the girls continuously utilised the '*I don't know*' phrase even when making a statement. '*I don't know*' was not used as doubt or hesitation towards their opinion. At that time, it appeared to me, without actually hearing the phrase, that '*I don't know*' drew the boundary between 'the teenage girls' group' and 'a researcher'. At this point, I could sense that the girls were testing the interview space and the boundaries of the authoritative/researcher's power.

By saying '*I don't know*' when making a statement a girl expressed a one down position. '*I don't know*' felt like a shield in case of an attack on a girl's statement; in other words, if a girl did not make a claim she did not need to defend it. In addition, by using '*I don't know*' the girls achieved not being probed or asked to explain their opinion by the researcher, thus on reflection, I see that the teenage girls' claimed and exercised power over the interview space and structure, and to a great degree were interviewing me – not by using reason – but by sensing my disposition towards their subject positions. Moreover, '*I don't know*' allowed the girls to conceal their subject positions until they felt safe: giving too much information about the topic had the potential to reveal the teenage girl's subject position.

On the other hand, while reading through the transcripts, it emerged that the phrase '*you know what I mean?/you know*' most frequently appeared at the middle stages of the focus group interviews. At the time of the focus group interviews, I sensed that '*you know what I mean?/you know*' (once again I never rationally recall hearing the actual words) acted as an invitation. It seemed to me that the teenage girls were taking a position of inclusion. The placement of '*you know what I mean?/you know*' regularly corresponded with the topics that related to the insights about teenage girls' lives and subculture. To add, '*you know what I mean/you know*' was mostly used when the girls struggled to explain their opinion or reasoning, for example in Kate's speech:

> she is kinda like she is kinda like naturally beautiful. Like you know she is kinda like you know she does look similar to other people like obviously she is Beyoncé but yeah...

Therefore, I could sense that '*you know*' acted as an invitation from the teenage girls to join their circle. Simultaneously, the phrase was highlighting that at this point of the interview the teenage girls viewed me as worthy to be a part of their group. Since previously they aimed to exclude me by sensing my standpoint of wanting to empower them, I wondered what changed for them to want to include me. Reading through the focus group transcripts, I noted that my own way of using language had

shifted. Throughout the interview I unintentionally started speaking in a similar manner to the girls: my sentences did not follow my usual grammatical structure or coherence, and I continuously resorted to '*like*' that they used to punctuate their thoughts. On reflection, embodying the teenage girls' manner of speaking allowed me to shift the identification of my subject position from a researcher to being a participant in the focus group. It also enabled me to experience their speaking position and their standpoint. Haraway (1988) notes that to gain understanding about women's lived experiences, the researcher needs to see the world from those women's speaking position/standpoint. Embodying the teenage girls' manner of talking allowed me to enter their reality. Subsequently, it enabled me to produce knowledge that is relational and thus accountable.

Conclusion

From the focus group data, it became evident that face to face research is always faced with the body: the body that senses, moves and attunes itself to the interview space and others within that space. Such processes were evident during the focus group discussions not only in the way the girls oriented themselves in the interview space but also in the way I instinctively moved with the flow of the interview. Thus, the data from the focus group interviews show that carnal awareness (Kearney, 2015b) plays an important part when establishing the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity. By sensing other girls' 'tact' within the room, the teenage girls oriented themselves to claim the power in the production of the meaning of femininity. Furthermore, the focus group data suggest that the knowledge being produced through the focus group method is two-fold. Firstly, there is knowledge led by reason (rational). This knowledge in my research emerged mostly when reading and seeing the interview transcripts. On the other hand, there is knowledge produced through 'sensing' (carnal awareness). By acknowledging that both ways of producing knowledge can exist and be held in the interview space, the qualitative researcher is able to create a space where young girls (and not only them) feel safe to share their lived experiences.

B. TEENAGE GIRLS READING AND REGULATING THE DISPLAYS OF 'APPROPRIATE' FEMININITY

Introduction

This data analysis chapter section explores how the teenage girls read and negotiated femininity displays within their established peer groups through the photo-elicitation method. To do so, I focus on the discursive language that the girls employ to regulate female representations through the rhetoric of celebrations or rejection and disgust. At the same time, I contextualise their process of negotiation within the context of its production since their body language, and their tone of voice illustrated their position towards a particular feminine display, in particular when they struggled to verbalise their opinion. By doing so I was able to account for 'not yet articulated' (Smith, 1988), and highlight the concrete lived teenage girls' experiences.

The process of negotiation is mediated by the symbolic resources that the power structures, such as school, media and local socialisation agents, provide teenage girls with. These power structures also construct the dispositions which the girls have acquired and thus produce the interpretive horizons that the girls are exercising their agency within. The findings of this data analysis chapter section suggest that the teenage girls employed 'can-do' and 'at-risk' (Harris, 2004) femininity qualities as a benchmark for defining 'appropriate' femininity. Through the utilisation of language such as 'too', teenage girls were able to draw the boundaries of 'appropriate' female displays. 'Too' was emblematic of the 'at-risk' femininity: being in excess, out of control and thus a victim due to the female need for help. 'Can-do' femininity, on the other hand, was illustrated by the image of Beyoncé: in charge of her own representations, playful and self-pleasing, '*gorgeous'* looking while being a mother and a wife. From the focus group data, it became evident that the reading of the images was a result of the collision culture. When reading the images, the teenage girls utilised contemporary discourses of femininity, as the subject of capacity, merged with stereotypical patriarchal female representations as expressed through the roles of a 'beautiful and gorgeous looking' mother and a wife.

Moreover, collision culture was evident when the girls discussed 'sexy' female representations. When negotiating sexualised female representations, even though the girls were eager to discuss 'sexy' and were not embarrassed to claim space to explore their discussions, they repudiated 'sexy' femininity displays. Such patterns mostly emerged when female sexuality directly threatened gender relationships and claimed dominance and power over men. On the other hand, when 'sexy' was executed to express female authenticity and individuality, the teenage girls applauded such female

representations. Overall, the focus group data findings show that due to the collision culture the teenage girls interpreted that it is not enough to display a sexy (Radner, 1993), or confident (Gill and Orgad, 2015) or agentic (Gill, 2008b, 2007) female body to be considered as presenting 'appropriate' femininity. The female body now needs to be marked with female authenticity and creative individuality, as well as female agency and motherhood. This research findings show that when negotiating 'appropriate' femininity displays, women are judged not only on the visual surface but also on their role in society and their ability to embody values of neoliberalism (e.g. individualism) to determine the levels of 'appropriate' femininity.

Thus, it could be argued that within the Irish context due to the collision culture the regulation of female bodies appears to be much more intensely governed and surveilled than international scholars anticipated (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011; Radner, 1993). Overall, the findings suggest that the girls are subjected to multiple, contradictory and conflicting discourses, which they must try to reconcile. Thus, the girls are faced with a difficult task of navigating their identities through anomic culture. While Catholic Ireland was offering extremely rigid channels for women to realise themselves, the contemporary context is anomic, with multiple contradictory ideals presented to the girls simultaneously. Thus, the solid powers that governed women's subjectivity in Ireland are being transformed into invisible, anomic powers, transforming regularity powers over women's identity into a disembodied power. Such disembodied power was most evident in the teenage girls' reading of the Dove advertisement campaign. Since Dove campaign incorporates the critique of 'skinny', the teenage girls were unable to identify the regulatory powers of such media images. Therefore, undressed or half-dressed female bodies were viewed as unproblematic and to some degree celebratory.

'It's too'

During all the focus group discussions, the teenage girls constantly resorted to the word '*too*' when negotiating the limits of 'appropriate' femininity. Utilising 'too' enabled them to draw the boundary of 'appropriate' femininity: femininity at the right balance vs femininity in excess. Not surprisingly, the girls continuously stated two contradictory qualities when defining the 'appropriate' femininity display: natural but flawless, elegant but strong, in charge but feminine, young but a woman, submissive but dominant. At a time when the girls struggled to find words to express their disapproval of the feminine displays on the pictures that were shown for discussion, saying 'too' enabled them to indicate their position in relation to the image. Moreover, while listening to the girls during the focus group interviews, it seemed that it was enough to state '*it's too*' to simultaneously express disapproval, rejection, critique and disgust about the particular feminine display.

Furthermore, when resorting to 'too', the girls' body language recurrently expressed disgust and disapproval: rolling their eyes, wrinkling their nose like they smelled something bad, making disgusted faces. The atmosphere also changed in the room: shifting to a more contemplative and thoughtful one, with the teenage girls pausing to think before they spoke. During the second focus group discussion, the teenage girls, while somehow struggling to critique the advertisement in reference to Taylor Swift, the girls continuously utilised 'too' so as to express their views on the boundaries of 'appropriate' femininity. 'Too' indicated excess that was evaluated as undesirable and repulsing.

Figure 23 Taylor Swift 2011 perfume campaign

Girls' body language is reserved. Unusually for to the group's way of talking, during this interview extract, the girls politely wait for their turn to speak and do not interrupt each other.

Sophie: I don't think it's nice. I think she is too done up (Figure 23, p. 157). Her makeup it's too... (*pauses to think*) there's too much like…there's bright yellow and then like bright red on her lips and her nails and then she has like really smokey eyes. I don't think it's nice. It's too... (*pauses to think*).

Saoirse: (*suggest a word*) Much (*looks at Sophie*).

Sophie: Yeah (*agrees with Saoirse*) Too much colour.

Saoirse: (*in a rushed voice*) Too much glamour.

Rose: She looks really grown up as well (*makes a statement*).

Saoirse: I love the way we all attack her (*in a sarcastic voice*).

Cara: Well I think she looks really pretty (*looks at Rose and Saoirse*).

Rose: Yeah, she looks pretty and she is pretty (*stresses the word 'is'*), but like... (*pauses to think*).

Saoirse: (*comes to suggest a thought*) It's not natural (*in a disgusted tone*).

Irena: So she is pretty, but she is not natural? (*in a tone of inquiry*).

Cara: Yeah ... (*agrees while inspecting the picture*). Yeah she is not (*gathers her thoughts*).

Rose: (*comes to suggest a thought*) Not naturally pretty (*makes a statement*).

From the above interview extract, it appears that the teenage girls' talk in itself does not say much especially if one is to count words. However, taking into account their body language, pauses and shifts in the room's atmosphere, it is evident that this particular way of talk utilising 'too' was more expressive among the established teenage girl's group than using long sentences. It not only allowed the girls to express verbal disapproval towards a particular feminine display but more importantly, it accommodated the girls in expressing their subject position in an embodied way. Thus, while teenage girls surveil feminine expressions, negotiate and verbally object to the boundaries of 'appropriate' femininity, they also embody the negotiation in their physical expressions within the focus group.

Moreover, the emotional intensity channelled through the girls' bodies seemed to unite the group, which is evident in the way the girls did not talk over each other, supported each other's thoughts and suggested words to finish each other's thinking. Thus, the teenage girls' bodies became a primary tool for expressing their disposition towards 'appropriate' and inappropriate feminine displays.

Interestingly, at the start of the discussion around the above interview extract, the teenage girls employ 'too' as the only description about the Taylor Swift images, and only later unanimously agree that the image is not portraying '*naturally pretty*'. It appears that by utilising 'too' they first evaluated each other's bodily disposition before revealing their opinion about the Taylor Swift image. It seems that the teenage girls' differentiation between 'too' and '*naturally pretty*' is emblematic of the Love Your Body (LYB) media discourse (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murray, 2012; Murphy and Jackson, 2011). While showing images of flawless women, LYB discourse encourages females to embrace their natural beauty. Thus, effortlessly beautiful stands as a new imperative for contemporary womanhood. Thus, a woman who appears to disengage from excessive beauty routines is positioned as more powerful and more pretty. Since Taylor Swift is being associated with 'too' – putting too much effort into her looks – the teenage girls identify such kinds of female displays as inappropriate.

'Too skinny'

During all three focus groups, 'too' constantly appeared in conjunction with 'skinny'. Moreover, the teenage girls involved judged and evaluated 'appropriate' femininity displays against the benchmark of 'skinny'. The girls critiqued and rejected 'too skinny' as it indicated being unhealthy and unnatural. It seemed that teenage girls rejected female displays that showed 'at-risk' (Harris, 2004) femininity, for instance, girls who appeared as having an eating disorder. Consequently, the teenage girls applauded female displays that expressed 'can-do' female qualities: assertive and powerful because of her '*curvy*' and '*naturally pretty*' body, '*having fun*' and displaying her body for her own amusement.

During the first focus group, the teenage girls discussed the Gucci advertisement (Figure 24, p. 160). In the advertisement one of the female models displays a submissive pose – lying down on the table, gazing without a breath at the viewer, while the other female model is portraying male body language - sitting with her legs wide open and confidently staring at the viewer. While both models in the advertisement represent very different femininity, the teenage girls evaluated the advertisement by focusing on the models' body composition rather than comparing the individual portrayal of femininity.

Figure 24 Gucci Spring-Summer 2012 campaign

Irena: First thoughts?

Aime: They are very scary looking, aren't they? (*looking at all the girls in the group*)

Girls in chorus: Yeah!

Aime: They look like they need to go to McDonald's or something (*giggles*).

All girls laugh timidly.

Tonya: Like no one's thighs are that skinny!

Laura: No! (*in a shocked voice)* They are the same size as my upper arms!

Aime: Yeah

Tonya: They are not even pretty like (*makes a statement*).

Laura: No they are not (*makes a statement*).

Tonya: They look like .... (*does not finish the sentence as other girls start speaking all at once)*

Sue: It's horrible (*makes a statement*).

At this point, girls become emotionally involved in the discussion: they talk over each other, raise their voices to make their points heard.

Kate: They have sunken faces (*in a voice of disgust*).

Holly: They are so sunken (*stresses the word 'so'*).

Girls in chorus: Yeah!

Tonya: They look like sick or something (*in a voice of disgust*).

Aime: They are just too skinny (*makes a statement*).

The girls reject the advertisement because it portrays 'at-risk 'femininity: '*sick*' '*sunken faces*', '*too skinny*' and '*scary*' looking women. The teenage girls' discussion needs to be situated within the current media backlash against the representations of women who are extremely skinny. Since the teenage girls are able to draw from the dominant critique in the media of 'skinny' female images, during the discussion, the teenage girls' voices and body language are continuously expressing disgust. Consequently, by repudiating the display of 'at-risk' femininity, they are able to reiterate their subject position as 'can-do' females. Consequently, during the discussion, there is no disagreement in the group's opinion; they contribute to each other's thoughts rather than challenge them.

Celebrations of 'She is curvy. She is not too skinny'

Figure 25 Beyoncé 2013 Pepsi ad

On the other hand, images of Beyoncé in Pepsi's advertising campaign (Figure 25, p. 161) were applauded by the teenage girls from both schools as representing '*natural*', '*real*' and '*curvy*' female

qualities. The girls admired Beyoncé's poses as they viewed those poses as expressing '*having fun'* and '*not being serious'*, as well as '*portraying her personality'* and '*not being fake'*. Beyoncé was regarded as choosing to pose the way she wanted rather than being staged by advertisers and photographers. While they agreed that Beyoncé was airbrushed, the girls unanimously stated that it

Figure 26 Rihanna 2013 Facebook photo

was probably not a personal choice of Beyoncé's. Overall, Beyoncé's image was viewed as portraying 'can-do' femininity: in charge of her own representations, playful and self-pleasing, '*gorgeous'* looking while being a mother. In both schools, teenage girls emphasised the significance of Beyoncé's role as a mother and a wife. The girls admired that even though Beyoncé was a mother, she looked and acted like a powerful woman.

For instance, during the third focus group discussion, the teenage girls compared two female singers – Beyoncé and Rihanna – who presented very different qualities of femininity (Figure 26, p. 162; Figure 27, p. 163). Rihanna was critiqued for displaying '*hotness*', being self-centred and inauthentic. On the other hand, Beyoncé was admired for her motherhood, portrayal of authenticity and flawless but natural beauty. In the following interview extract, Violet and Andrea capture the essence of the groups' position towards Beyoncé's and Rihanna's portrayal of femininity.

Violet: But Beyoncé feels like a natural woman (*stresses the word 'natural'*)

Andrea: But she is married and has a baby (*in a tone of admiration*) but she is still like really cool (*stresses the word 'really'*) and she is not trying to be all like gangster, like Rihanna (*in a tone of disgust*).

Since, Beyoncé does not break the stereotypical heteronormative femininity boundaries, but somewhat expands on them by portraying an image of successful and empowered good-looking
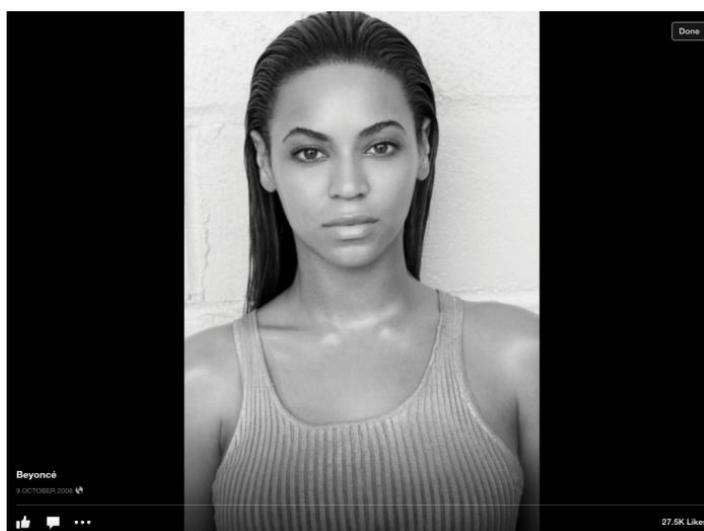
Figure 27 Beyoncé 2013 Facebook photo

mother and a wife; the teenage girls commend Beyoncé's display of femininity. Rihanna, on the other hand, breaks the stereotypical heteronormative femininity performance, not only is she single but also she actively positions herself within the masculine traits, as Andrea expressed '*being a gangster like*'. Thus, the girls repudiate Rihanna's display of femininity. Although, Harris (2004) notes that one of the ways girls could express their participation in the 'can-do' femininity is by choosing to delay motherhood, for the teenage girls from this study, being identified as a '*gorgeous*' looking mother, indicated ultimate 'can-do' femininity. It seems that the teenage girls merged Irish values of

femininity as being associated with the roles of a mother and a carer (Inglis, 2003; Byrne, 1999; O'Connor, 1998), with the entrepreneurial 'can-do' female qualities (Harris, 2004).

A similar reading of Beyoncé's displays of femininity was evident in the first focus group discussion. During this discussion, the teenage girls positioned Beyoncé as a 'can-do' female by utilising '*too skinny*' as a sign of 'at-risk' femininity and '*gorgeous*' mother as a sign of 'can-do' femininity.

> **Shelly**: She just looks gorgeous (*in a voice of admiration*). And she is not really. She is curvy. She is not too skinny (*says 'skinny' with disgust*). She is just (*gather her thoughts*)-she is lovely looking (*stresses the word 'lovely'*).
>
> **Laura**: She is gorgeous (*in a voice of admiration*).
>
> **Girls in chorus**: Yeah!
>
> **Aine**: And she has a child! (*in a shocked voice*)
>
> **Girls in chorus**: Yeah Yeah! (*in shocked voices*)
>
> **Tonya**: Well she (*gathers her thoughts*) she doesn't look fake!
>
> **Holly**: Her hair is fake (*makes a statement*).
>
> **Tonya**: Well apart from her hair (*in a rushed voice*). But like … she looks like a normal person (*makes a statement*). She is not say like other models who are stick skinny (*in a voice of disgust*). She doesn't look like that (*makes a statement*).

Interestingly, when Holly opposes Tonya's statement about Beyoncé not looking fake, Tonya restated her position by highlighting the importance that Beyoncé did not embody '*skinny*'. Thus, it appears that being identified with '*skinny*' is the ultimate female quality that denounces one's 'can-do' female subject position.

Moreover, in both schools, none of the girls raised an issue with Beyoncé's outfit as being revealing or sexual. Likewise, when discussing the Dove advertising campaign (Figure 22, p. 77), teenage girls did not problematise or even notice undressed female bodies. A number of scholars (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murray, 2012; Murphy and Jackson, 2011) note that advertising campaigns that utilise the Love Your Body discourse normalise undressed female representations as a sign of female confidence and acceptance of her body. Therefore, while evaluating the Dove advertisement, the teenage girls employed celebratory rhetoric praising the Dove company for their inclusion of different body sizes and ethnicities. The girls regarded women in the Dove advertisement as '*happy*', '*healthy*' and '*real*'. When negotiating the advertisement, they stated that they viewed female happiness as deriving from being at ease with one's body and accepting one's looks. Interestingly, none of the teenage girls critiqued the advertisement for being produced by professional lighting and makeup, even though the

girls emphasised the airbrushing techniques when evaluating all other images. Moreover, none of the girls mentioned the fact that all the models were young, had able bodies and embodied western standards of beauty. It seemed that since the Dove advertisement was in direct opposition to the popular media representations of '*skinny*' female models, the teenage girls unanimously applauded and admired the Dove image. By incorporating the critique of skinny in their advertising campaign, Dove advertisement eliminates the possibility of any outside critique. Even though women in those ads are still policed and regulated, the governing of female bodies becomes invisible and disembodied, transforming regulatory powers over women's subjectivity into disembodied powers. Not surprisingly, the teenage girls are not able to critique and reject the half-dressed female images that stand for the new female power and confidence.

Sexy and Dominant 'Kinda dominant but still kinda like elegant'

'Sexy' was another use of language that served a regulatory function when the teenage girls drew the boundary of 'appropriate' femininity. 'Sexy' according to teenage girls indicated being sexually available or sexually suggestive. Moreover, they viewed 'sexy' as being cheap or looking like a prostitute. It could be argued that this particular reading of 'sexy' reflect Irish moral values on sex and female sexuality that were highly problematised and policed by the Catholic Church (Hill, 2003; Inglis, 1987). In Ireland over the decades, being sexually active, even talking about sex was viewed as a sin that brought shame and guilt to the girls' family and community (Inglis, 2003, 1998; McCafferty, 2010). However, during the focus group discussions, when talking about 'sexy' female representations, the teenage girls did not verbally nor in their body language show guilt or shame.

On the contrary, teenage girls were very articulate and expressive when talking about the examples of 'sexy': their body language became more expressive, they used hand movements more frequently not only to express their emotional involvement in the topic but also to occupy more space; they actively voiced their opinions on 'sexy' and raised their voices to make their points heard. There was no reserve or hunching - in body language, as even the quieter girls in the group proudly expressed their opinions on 'sexy'. Furthermore, there was no shame in their voices, or even mutually-agreed uncomfortable silence when discussing 'sexy'. Overall, during the three focus groups, the teenage girls expressed a great deal of emotion and passion when talking about 'sexy'.

It seems that the ease with which the girls talked about 'sexy' allowed them to indicate that they were knowledgeable about female sexuality. Literature (Gill, 2008, 2008b) notes that current media advertising constructs female sexiness and women's display of their sexually knowledgeable

subjectivity as a new expression of female agency and power. Gill (2008b) argues that due to the rhetoric of neoliberalism and postfeminist sensibility, contemporary women are called upon to display female sexual agency as a sign of their individuality and their embodiment of postfeminist neoliberal subjectivity. Thus, it seemed that by showing their knowledge on the topic of 'sexy', the teenage girls aimed to indicate having agency and power. Moreover, since talking about 'sexy' with ease and eagerness stood in direct opposition to the traditional Irish female ways of addressing the topic of sexuality, the teenage girls were able to position themselves as more powerful and agentic than the previous generation. Indicating a continuous progression and self-development are vital elements when claiming one's position as a modern rational neoliberal subject (Lupton, 2012; Rose, 1999, 1996).

Even though the teenage girls were eager to discuss 'sexy' and were not embarrassed to claim space to explore their discussions during all of the three focus groups, 'sexy' was not conceptualised as being appropriate for female representations. However, instead of conceptualising 'sexy' as something to be ashamed of and feel guilty about, the teenage girls expressed 'sexy' as repulsive and disgusting. It could be argued that teenage girls are just beginning to grapple with their own sexuality, and thus presumably are not completely comfortable or confident with it yet. During all three focus group discussions, I noticed that rather than expressing their disapproval of 'sexy' in words, teenage girls expressed their disapproval of 'sexy' in their tone of the voice and body language, for instance, making disgusted faces.

For example, during the second focus group, the girls engaged discussed a picture of Jessica Alba (Figure 28, p. 166), where the actress appears in an elegant gown with a low-cut cleavage embodying

a manly pose. The actress is portraying dominance while unapologetically staring at the viewer mixed with highly stylised qualities of femininity. When reading and negotiating this particular image, teenage girls verbally and through their body language disapproved of Jessica Alba's portrayal of 'sexy' and 'manly' qualities.

> *While looking at the picture Rose and Cara are smiling, Sophie is wrinkling her nose as to express disapproval. Furthermore, Sophie looks at the picture as being puzzled by it, tensing her eyesight and looking confused about the image.*

Irena: First thoughts? What did you think?

Cara: Too done up! (*states in a rushed tone)*

All of the girls are contemplating. Sophie jumps into the conversation.

Sophie: Really weird pose (*stresses the word 'weird'*)

Marian: Yeah it's kinda… (*showing confusion and disapproval in her face expression*)

Rose: (*jumps to suggest a word to Marian*) manly (*smiles while looking at the image. The smile comes across as disapproval and ridicule*)

Marian: (*talks at the same time as Rose*) too suggestive or something really (*makes a disgusted face*)

Cara is smiling all the time while looking at the picture that I hold for all the group to see. Her smile resembles Rose's earlier smile.

Marian: (*looks at Rose*) Yeah manly.

Cara: Yeah.

Saoirse: It's very like...ahmmmm (*gathers her thoughts*).

Rose: (*suggests a word to Saoirse*) sexy (*laughs out loud but not of shyness as her body language remains strong and assert, but more to express her disapproval of the image*)

Marian: Yeah (*makes a disgusted face*).

Cara makes a disgusted face too as an agreement with the group's opinion.

The teenage girls from the second focus group reject the image because it not only portrays a woman as being 'sexy' but also a woman who embodies 'manly', thus not natural, body language. First of all, the girls from this focus group identified Alba with 'too', thus at risk. Therefore, Alba's portrayal of sexiness becomes problematic. Alba does not portray embodied or natural 'sexy' but her sexiness is viewed as forced, and presumably forced to gain male attention and not just for the purpose to please herself.

Similar ways of reading the image were expressed during the first focus group discussion. However, the teenage girls from the first focus group while critiquing Jessica Alba's 'manly' pose, viewed the image as still displaying 'appropriate' femininity. It became evident that the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity was always ambiguous and highly dependent on the initial discursive truth suggested to the group (mostly by the dominant girl).

During the first focus group discussion, when initiating the discussion on the Jessica Alba image, the girls first and foremost described her as *'gorgeous'*, *'elegant'*, *'soft'*, *'flawless'*, *'young looking'*, *'feminine'* and having a *'nice figure'*. Only afterwards Holly disrupted the unanimous group opinion by pointing out the way Jessica Alba was sitting.

> **Holly**: It's kinda weird the way she has her leg up, like a man (*in a tone of inquiry*).
>
> **Girls in chorus**: Yeah yeah (*enthusiastically agreeing*).
>
> **Holly**: You have to like "*What's this about*?". And then you see … it's kinda like a man's pose (*in a tone of inquiry*)
>
> **Girls in chorus**: Yeah.
>
> **Aime**: But still she manages to look good (*with a tone of admiration*).
>
> **Kate**: Well I suppose it's kinda like something, like you know, that she can still be in charge (*with a tone of admiration*). I suppose, kinda dominant but still kinda like elegant (*with a tone of admiration*).

As the teenage girls from the first focus group did not define the image with the portrayal of 'sexy', Alba's 'manly' pose is viewed as a sign of feminine dominance and being in charge for her own pleasure. Overall, the girls from this group positioned Alba as being in control and powerful while displaying herself as feminine. Interestingly, since Alba's portrayal of the feminine dominance through '*manly*' pose was viewed to be self-pleasing rather than directed to dominate or control anyone, in particular, the teenage girls did not repudiate female portrayals of dominance. Also, since Alba's '*manly*' pose is counterbalanced with the feminine decorations – elegant dress and portrayal of grace and beauty in her face, her attempt to display the 'masculine' power are not rejected. Thus, as long as a female portrayal of power was not posing a threat to masculinity and its domain of power, the teenage girls accepted displays of female dominance. McRobbie (2009) notes that due to the new sexual contract, a postfeminist masquerade emerges as a new domain for patriarchal power to discharge itself. McRobbie (2009:67) states that 'the successful young woman must now get herself endlessly and repetitively done up, so as to mask her rivalry with men in the world of work … and to conceal the competition she now poses …'. While McRobbie (2009) views the new governmentality

of women as deriving from the beauty and fashion industry, in this study the teenage girls themselves surveilled, regulated and controlled the performances of 'appropriate' femininity. Thus, the regulation of 'appropriate' femininity while being exercised from a top-down position, is sustained by synopticon powers of surveillance (with many watching the few), normalising the surveillance over female bodies.

On the other hand, when female dominance disrupted the stereotypical gender relationships, the teenage girls rejected and critiqued such female representations. For instance, during the second focus group discussion, teenage girls repudiated the Jeans advertisement (Figure 29, p. 170) where a woman wearing body-covering clothes was displayed in a dominant position while posing with a man who appears to be disengaged and somehow powerless.

Saoirse: She looks like she is advertising herself (*in a tone of disgust*).

Marian: Like she is draped over him (*in a tone of disgust*).

Cara: Yeah, she looks like she is all over him (*in a tone of disgust*).

Saoirse: Oh she is really irritating!

Sophie: It kinda "Yeah, I know I'm gorgeous! I know he wants me!" (*in a sarcastic voice*)

Saoirse: If she was not wearing the conservative top, it would be sex appeal again.

Girls in chorus: It's still is! (*passionately*)

Saoirse: It's the pose and the way the hand—it's like (*gathers her thoughts*) I don't know

Cara: (*suggests a thought to Saoirse*) she is so all over him! (*in a tone of disgust*)

Sophie: But clothes don't make her very skinny so she looks pretty (*in a tone of inquiry*)

Girls in chorus: Yeah (*timidly*).

Rose: She looks very dominant (*makes a statement*).

Cara: It is irritating! (*in a tone of annoyance*). I hate the way she is just throwing herself at him (*in a tone of disgust, makes a statement*).

Figure 29 Paige jeans 2012 campaign

The girls from the second focus group reject the female representation in the Jeans advertisement (Figure 29, p. 170) by positioning the woman in the advertisement as sexually needy and easy, simultaneously narcissist and dominant. Since her portrayal of dominance is executed to gain male attention, the teenage girls judged it as being powerless. Once again, during the discussion, the girls utilised 'sexy' and 'skinny' as the benchmarks of 'appropriate' femininity. The woman in the advertisement is disowned for being sexy, while appearing not '*very skinny'* redeems her as being pretty, thus reinstating her within the boundaries of 'appropriate' femininity. Therefore, rather than utilising postfeminist Midriff advertising discourse, where sex and sexual power is sold as female empowerment and agency (Gill, 2007), the teenage girls rejected such reading of the media by utilising 'sexy' to draw the boundaries of 'appropriate' femininity. Situated within the current critique of the sexualisation of women in the media and overuse of pornography in the mainstream culture, it appears that teenage girls draw from these critiques to reject the images being discussed. 'Sexy' frequently was understood as aiming to gain male attention and viewed as portrayed for the male thrill. Being subjected by the neoliberal and postfeminist rhetoric, where a woman is called to be individualistic and use her body for her own please, the girls not surprisingly distanced themselves from such female representations.

Sexy as a female individuality and authenticity 'She is not putting sexy'
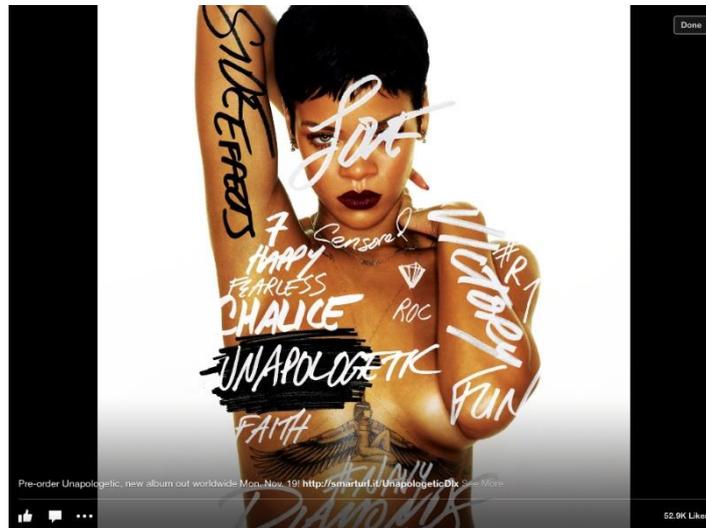
Figure 30 Rihanna 2013 Facebook photo

A similar reading of female sexuality was evident in the third focus group discussion. The teenage girls from this group not only utilised 'sexy' to differentiate 'appropriate' femininity presentations, but also emphasised the importance of women's self-pleasure and agency. The female displays of

Figure 31 Lady Gaga 2013 Facebook photo

'sexy' for the self-pleasing purpose were admired and applauded because the teenage girls read such types of female displays as expressing individuality and authenticity. On the other hand, 'sexy' female displays that were viewed as performed to gain popularity and attention from others were repudiated and critiqued.

Irena: So what do you think about the Lady Gaga pictures (Figure 31, p. 171)?

Millie: (*talking at the same time as Helen*) I think she is scary looking! (*lifts her arm as in answering a question at school and giggles after she finishes her statement*)

Helen: Something about Lady Gaga in those pictures seems to be O.K. because it's Lady Gaga (*stresses the words 'Lady Gaga'*)

Andrea: Yeah (*looks at Helen and agrees with her*)

Girls in chorus: Yeah yeah! (*girls' voices are rising*)

All girls are smiling in approval of the images and the points that Helen made. Teenage girls sit straighter and readjust their bodily position as to express assertiveness and dominance.

Violet: Just go back to the first picture (*instruct Irena*). And this is what I was saying right? She is naked! Like if that was anyone else (*raising her voice*) you would be like "*Oh that's ridiculous!*". I really like the picture (*says in a calm and assertive voice as to unapologetically express her position*)

Meanwhile, Andrea is making a disgusted face.

Andrea: (*in a low voice without much of emotional expression*) I think it's weird.

No one seems to hear Andrea or acknowledge her point.

Violet: (*speaks at the same time as Andrea*) I love it! (*says it in a high voice*)

The group discussion becomes more emotional. Teenage girls start to express their opinion talking over each other. However, the atmosphere feels supportive and inclusive rather than argumentative. Even though, teenage girls are not given space to finish their thoughts it sounds as though they are contributing to each other's thoughts.

Helen: (*jumps into the conversation*) She is not being.. (*does not finish her thought as Brigid starts talking over her*)

Brigid: (*talks over Violet*) It's not like she's like full of like Rihanna (Figure 30, p. 171) (*does not finish her thought as Millie jumps into the conversation*)

Millie: She is not putting sexy.

At this point all of the girls express more exaggerated body language than usual: hands are moving, talking over each other in a supportive way, moving in their chairs as to occupy

more space. Each girl is expressing hand movements - imitating the sexy and afterwards disapproving it in making a disgusted face.

Helen: It's not like she is cool like you know Rihanna (*in a tone of disgust and irony*).

Millie: She is not like "*All sexy*!"

Andrea: Yeah, she is not trying to be sexy (*makes a statement*).

Since Rihanna's sexual self-presentations are viewed as being inauthentic and performed, the teenage girls reject such female displays. Interestingly, when teenage girls negotiate the picture of Beyoncé, where the singer is displaying a hypersexualised femininity (Figure 32, p. 173), they do not repudiate the picture even though it closely resembles the earlier picture of Rihanna (Figure 30, p. 171). The girls evaluated Beyoncé's bodily exposure as agentic, freely chosen and channelling being in charge of her own body, and by utilising her body Beyoncé was regarded as making the 'right' entrepreneurial choices. Beyoncé is regarded as utilising male attention in order to successfully navigate her career as a female entrepreneur. For instance, during the third focus group discussion,
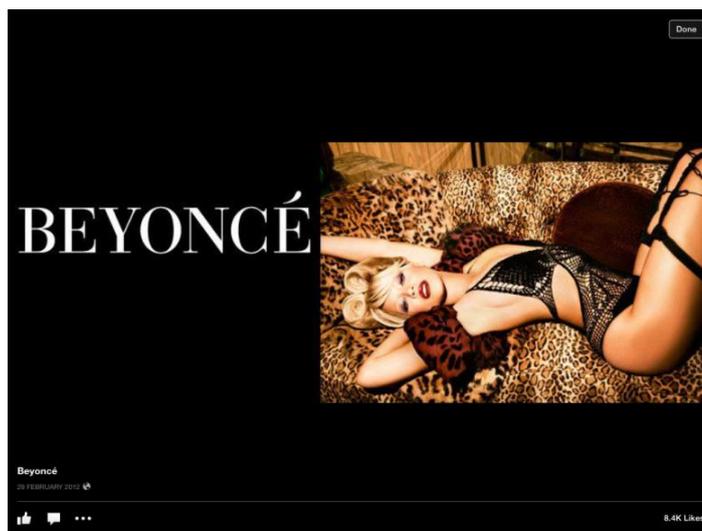
Figure 32 Beyoncé 2013 Facebook photo

the girls argued that in order for her music to be liked by men, Beyoncé made a right entrepreneurial decision to expose her body.

Irena: Why do you think she does that kind of picture?

Millie: To appeal to men (*makes a statement*).

Irena: O.K.? (*in a tone of inquiry while looking at the rest of the girls*).

Andrea: Yeah. Because you know, her music is like for women. And if she does all kinda *'Oh I'm really sexy'* (*in a seductive voice while she imitates 'sexy' with her body language*) so they will like her music (*makes a statement*)

Surprisingly, when the teenage girls discussed Rihanna's performance of 'sexy' for the purpose of promoting her music, Rihanna's performance was repudiated. Rihanna's sexual self-presentation is rejected because the singer does not fulfil the entrepreneurial femininity, or as Lisa expressed '*doesn't even work hard.*'

> **Monika**: She exploits, in my opinion, women about "*This is how you promote stuff*". You promote things with your body if you are good-looking like. She promotes her music with her image (*in a voice of repulsion and disgust*).
>
> **Lisa**: Yeah! She doesn't even work hard! (*in a tone of anger*).
>
> **Monika**: Her photo with her album names on her naked… she is exploiting her body to promote music, which I don't think (*interrupted by Lisa*).
>
> **Lisa**: Yeah! That's all she has (*stresses the word 'all'*). She doesn't work for anything… everything she wants it's "*Oh, I show you my body – that's how it looks like*" (*in a sarcastic voice*).

Since Rihanna is defined only with having a 'sexy' body and no other 'can-do' femininity qualities, her entrepreneurial sexual femininity is critiqued and rejected. Similar ways of reading sexually agentic female images were evident in Malson et al. (2010) study that showed the way young women repudiated sexy female representations as it associated female power with possession of a sexy body. Moreover, teenage girls from this study narrate Rihanna's 'sexy' self-exposure as resembling the behaviour of a prostitute. Utilising such imagery enables teenage girls to position Rihanna as being powerless. Nevertheless, during all focus group discussions, the teenage girls viewed that for a woman to have a heterosexually attractive 'sexy' body was vital to become successful. Scholars (Harvey and Gill, 2011; Levy, 2006) argue that throughout contemporary media advertising the sexual entrepreneur is presented as the ideal female and a figure of aspiration; she is not only sexy but always 'up for it' and continuously upskilling her knowledge on sex. Literature (Dobson, 2014; Evans, et al., 2010; Gill, 2007) notes that wrapped in the rhetoric of neoliberalism, female sexiness is narrated as new female agency and power.

However, this study's findings show that it is not enough for a woman to present a sexy body as a sign of success and power. In order for the 'sexy' representation to be accepted, the female body needed to be marked with can-do femininity qualities, such as female authenticity and creative individuality, as well as female agency and motherhood. Consequently, the regulation of female

bodies appears to be much more intensely governed and surveilled than scholars anticipated (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011; Radner, 1993). It is not enough to display a sexy (Radner, 1993), or confident (Gill and Orgad, 2015) or agentic (Gill, 2008b, 2007) female body to be considered as presenting 'appropriate' femininity. This research findings show that due to collision culture when negotiating 'appropriate' femininity displays, women are judged not only on the visual surface but also on their role in society and their ability to embody values of neoliberalism (e.g. individualism) determines the levels of 'appropriate' femininity.

Conclusion

This data analysis chapter section explored how the teenage girls read and negotiated femininity displays within their established peer groups by focusing on their body language and their use of the discursive language to regulate 'appropriate' female representations. The focus group findings show that due to the collision culture as well as due to regulatory power transforming itself into a disembodied power, the surveillance of female bodies seems to reach new modes of governance. For a woman to be identified as embodying 'appropriate' femininity she needs to be a mother and a wife that is sexy, agentic, beautiful and self-pleasing. Each quality has to be performed at the right level so as not to be identified as a female 'at-risk' (by utilisation of 'too'). McRobbie (2009) argued that with the establishment of the new sexual contract, a number of female subject positions were produced: a postfeminist masquerade, a well-educated working girl, a phallic girl, and a global girl. Each of those subject positions demands a different femininity performance so that a woman would be identified as a subject of capacity.

However, the findings from the focus group data indicate that due to the collision culture 'appropriate' femininity is not contained within one female subject position and performance, but rather a merge of those performances determines the levels of 'appropriate' femininity. According to the teenage girls, a woman needs to be powerful and simultaneously to mark her body with qualities of heteronormative female attractiveness, she needs to be sexy and at the same time hard working, and she needs to be a mother and a wife while pleasing her individual needs. Surely, these practices could be read as teenage girls' expressions of playfulness with the established gender norms, their ability to merge and bend local and global values of femininity. However, the key focus on the female body, her appearance and traditional female social roles remain intact. Thus, while teenage girls could view themselves and be viewed by others as agentic since they are bending the established norms of femininity, their agency is still limited within the boundary of stereotypical femininity qualities – she has to simultaneously appear as not 'too' excessive and dominant, and not 'too' passive. While such 'appropriate' femininity was narrated by teenage girls as an individual female choice, a choice of the

'right' entrepreneurial decision under the regime of neoliberalism and postfeminism, the female subjectivity was tightly policed and regulated. The regulatory power transformed itself into the disembodied power. Since the regulatory power disguised itself with the narratives of individualism and self-pleasure, the teenage girls were not able to reject or critique the new form of powers.

Hence, one needs to raise the question: *how teenage girls' understandings of 'appropriate' femininity play out in individual teenage girls' lives?* The following data analysis chapter section (*II. FIRST Stage One-to-One Interviews*) will explore how teenage girls' understandings of 'appropriate' femininity are embodied in teenage girls' everyday conduct.

II. FIRST STAGE ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEWS

A. THE TEENAGE GIRLS NEGOTIATE 'APPROPRIATE' FEMININITY IN THEIR EVERYDAY LIFE

Introduction

This data analysis chapter section explores the teenage girls' 'daily routine clock' accounts, and analyses teenage girls' everyday lived experiences to unravel what 'appropriate' femininity means to an individual teenage girl. The 'daily routine clock' was utilised as a methodological tool to enable the teenage girls to narrate their daily experiences of 'doing a girl'. Thus, the 'daily routine clock' acted as an entry point into teenage girls' worldview of the regulatory techniques that governed their subjectivities. Therefore, the chapter section focuses on analysing the choices and limits that the girls' experienced in their everyday life rather than identifying everyday routine of an individual girl. While the focus group data illuminates how teenage girls as a group establish definitions of 'appropriate' femininity, it was important to explore how the individual teenage girls negotiate understandings of 'appropriate' femininity without the influence of group dynamics and power hierarchies that influence the construction of meanings.

This data analysis chapter section explores how teenage girls narrate the subject positions that they are allowed to occupy: how teenage girls understand their choices and limits when presenting their feminine identities in everyday interactions. Primarily, the chapter section seeks to unravel the regulatory techniques and regimes that structure teenage girls' lives. In addition, this chapter section aims to illustrate how teenage girls situate themselves in relation to current discourses of late modernity, postfeminist sensibility (Gill, 2007) and neoliberalism. Thus, this chapter section asks *what value framework and discursive structures are employed when teenage girls negotiate meanings of 'appropriate' femininity*. Consequently, I pay close attention to the discursive language teenage girls employ when narrating their choices and limits presented to them in contemporary Irish society.

The literature review chapter illustrated that there has been a movement from engulfment in the social groups of community and family for women; to alienation, whereby they have come to a situation where they achieve honour, mainly through their bodily performances, to fluid audiences, with these performances shaped by the models contained in global youth culture. Therefore, there has been a shift in the nature of power relations from engulfment by concrete groups, to alienation with abstract, impersonal systems of power, transforming solid power into a disembodied power. Central to navigate this field successfully are the practices of self-control and self-discipline, to navigate a path

in a competitive field, based on continual mutual observations, and permanent, high levels of visibility.

Similar to the focus group data, the findings from this first stage of the interviews show that individual teenage girls understood 'appropriate' femininity as interchangeably linked with the female body, making the female identity interchangeable with the female body itself. Thus, teenage girls interpreted body related issues as something in the female nature. The teenage girls self-educated themselves to love their bodies through practices of exercise, diet, makeup, and narrated such practices as choice and empowerment. However, self-love was usually expressed through intensification of self-surveillance and continuous striving for self-transformation. Overall, throughout teenage girls' narratives, it became evident that disembodied power regulated their everyday conduct. Wrapped in the rhetoric of postfeminism and discourses of body confidence (Gill and Elias, 2014; Gill, 2007), self-controlling, self-monitoring and self-regulating practices were viewed by teenage girls as indicating their empowerment, their ability to manage risks through making 'right' choices and their embodiment of confidence. Moreover, throughout teenage girls' stories, it was evident that the objectification of their bodies reached new levels of surveillance: from spaces in town to school spaces, resulting in even tighter self-control and self-monitoring of the teenage girls' every day habitus. However, since this new regulatory power became invisible, anomic and disembodied, the teenage girls were unable to identify such power and thus critique it. This disembodied anomic form of power positioned the teenage girls to consciously be self-doubtful while not being able to publicly raise any doubts; also, while experiencing worry, disgust for themselves when not wearing makeup, the girls continuously strived to present themselves as 'flawless in their naturalness'.

Moreover, during this stage of the interviews, it became evident that the teenage girls' lives were constructed due to the collision culture. The merge of local and global values, old and new ethics of self-realisation resulted in a peculiar understanding of 'appropriate' femininity. The teenage girls' bodies were constantly policed and regulated, which reflect the traditional forms of power (The Catholic Church, the medical profession, The Irish State) over women' subjectivities. However, such regulation was narrated by the girls not as an obligation but as a choice and expression of autonomy and self-love. Moreover, the girls' sexuality, while previously regulated to maintain family's and community's honour, was self-regulated to gain individual pleasure rather than indicate compliance. Similarly, peer male attention acted as means to individual ends rather than a source of legitimising girl's existence. Due to the collision culture, sociability became strategic: incorporating local values of community and kinship simultaneously utilising market principles when participating in different friendship groups.

Femininity as a bodily property

During the first stage of One-to-One interviews, the teenage girls mostly referred to femininity and womanhood as being signified by women's appearance and bodies. In other words, women's identity was understood as deriving from women's physical body. A number of research highlights (Gill and Elias, 2014; McCleary, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011; McRobbie, 2009; Gill, 2007) that in contemporary Western society, female identity is no longer exemplified by her relationships with community and family, but rather the highly visible female body stands for contemporary women's identity. The teenage girls' identity as interchangeably linked with their bodies was evident in their narratives. First of all, the girls understood 'appropriate' femininity as expressed through possession of the athletic female body. Also, when filling in their 'daily routine clock', the girls regularly narrated that spaces they used involved vigilant attention of female bodies. Consequently, the girls were positioned to continuously and with an expanding intensity associate their female identity with their body. Thus, the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity as a bodily surface was sustained in the teenage girls' everyday practice: a teenage girl was socialised to relate to herself through the body, simultaneously others related to her as a bodily surface.

'Appropriate' femininity as 'can-do' body: *'I like her. She is really pretty'*

Focus group data illustrated how teenage girls negotiate media messages of 'appropriate' femininity in their peer circle. The data showed that the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity was negotiated not only as a discursive language but also through their carnal awareness. Thus, it was important to explore the way the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity was negotiated intersubjectively. Therefore, this chapter section starts with individual teenage girls reading and understandings of 'appropriate' femininity.

During the first stage of the One-to-One interviews, when explaining their 'daily routine clock,' the teenage girls frequently talked about their hobbies and online activities that involved following female celebrities. The girls stated admiring female celebrities for being not too skinny, executing the right balance of pretty, or just keeping a unified image. Overall, similarly to focus groups' discussions, the structuring framework that was applied when reading and negotiating the images of the female celebrities, corresponded with the values of postfeminist sensibilities (Gill, 2008), technologies of body confidence (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011) and the qualities of 'can-do' femininity (Harris, 2004). The idealised female celebrity was always admired for her good looks, for

her ability to be self-reliant and self-inventing, for her good choices and effort, also for her unapologetic manner in showing off her body as a sign of her agency.

Nevertheless, above all, it was celebrities' bodily appearance that teenage girls first and foremost noted. Consequently, those bodies were judged and evaluated in accordance with values of 'can-do' femininity, postfeminist sensibilities and technologies of body confidence. Ultimately, these female celebrities acted as a benchmark of 'appropriate' femininity for the teenage girls' identities. The following interview extracts with Lisa and Holly illustrate the way the teenage girls primarily focused on the female body when differentiating the celebrities whom they admired.

> *During this extract, Lisa's voice is somehow timid, and she giggles more than usual when making a statement.*

> **Irena:** Okay. Eh, who would you aspire to? Like, you look at somebody and you say, "I would love to be like that when I grow up."

> **Lisa:** Jennifer Lawrence [*giggles*] Yeah, 'cause like she's … I think she's pretty and she's … Like she's not really skinny but like she has like a good body and then she's so fun and she's so natural and yeah. [*pauses*] I don't know, like yeah [*giggles*].

> *Holly's voice is casual and relaxed. When mentioning 'pretty', Holly makes a clear statement without hesitation or giggle.*

> **Irena:** Would she [Alisha Dickson] be one of your celebs that you like?

> **Holly:** Yeah, I think she's really pretty; because she's really like … and she's kind of like my colour as well [*giggles*]. She's really like yeah, I think she's really pretty.

Throughout the teenage girls' accounts of female celebrities, the discursive language of postfeminism and love your body rhetoric always operated parallel with the same regulatory intensity. For instance, in the interview extract with Lisa, and similarly in the following interview extract with Kate, they stressed the importance of being '*naturally pretty*', looking casual and not too done up while maintaining the standards of 'pretty'. For the teenage girls appearing natural and not relying on makeup indicated female participation in the love your body discourse, for instance, being confident in your own natural body. At the same time, postfeminist values were sustained by emphasising how important it was for powerful women to possess a '*pretty*' body.

Throughout the teenage girls' narratives, they repeatedly utilised the discursive language of postfeminist sensibility and love your body discourse. Postfeminist sensibility discourse emphasises that the female power derives from the female body (Gill, 2008; 2007), while love your body

discourses advocate for female confidence in her 'natural' beauty and body size (Gill and Elias, 2014; McCleary, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011). Gill (2007) in her discussion on the postfeminist sensibility noted that contemporary media advertising associates women and women's power deriving from possessing a 'sexy body', consequently regulating women with the technology of sexiness (Radner, 1993). Moreover, in contemporary culture, the literature (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011) argues, body confidence is presented as a new imperative for women. However, this research data show that the technology of sexiness (Radner, 1993) and the technology of body confidence (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011) was merged resulting in the technology of pretty that allowed the teenage girls to encompass participation in multiple discourses currently governing available female subject positions. The solid forms of regulatory power have been transformed into a new form of disembodied power: from a technology of sexy and technology of confidence into a technology of pretty. Situated within the neoliberal capitalist regime discussed by Beck (1992) and Bauman (2000), 'pretty' allowed the teenage girls to express their ability to manage risks; the risk of appearing 'too' excessive, the risk of being interpreted as not loving herself or not being confident, the risk of being objectified.

The requirement for women to portray the 'naturally pretty' body is also emblematic of the regulation of 'can-do' and 'at-risk' femininity. However, this regulation is invisible and disembodied rendering any critique from the outside difficult. For instance, in the interview extract with Kate, she emphasises the importance of '*naturally pretty*': maintaining the right balance of looking good but not '*done perfectly*'. The teenage girls, including Kate, admired female celebrities who self-managed and self-regulated just the right balance of bodily displays. While being aware that women are presented with a multiplicity of available female subject positions in the current society: from patriarchal submissive housewives (Jhally et al., 2010; Jhally, 2009; Lindner, 2004) to sexually agentic Midriff figures (Attwood, 2007; Gill, 2007; Levy, 2006; Paul, 2005), women who appeared to balance all of the available female subject positions at once were the ones who were admired by the teenage girls. Moreover, these female celebrities were viewed as capable of balance, in staying away from the extreme: too skinny or too perfect, or as Kate expressed '*over-the-top*'. Entering the position identified with the extreme indicated that women were 'at-risk': at risk of developing an eating disorder (too skinny), at risk of not loving her natural body (too perfect).

> *When explaining her choice of celebrities she admired, Kate's voice is full of assurance and determination. In those cases, Kate makes definite statements, which was not evident when she talked about preferences, for example, fashion.*

Kate: Um, well I like Laura Whitmore. She's a presenter for, um, MTV. Like, I think she's from Ireland too, so I like her. I think she's really … I think she's really like naturally pretty, you know?

Irena: Oh when you say naturally pretty as, um?

Kate: She's not like … she doesn't seem to wear a lot of makeup, and her hair isn't kind of like, you know, she's on some base. It's not always done perfectly. Sometimes it's kind of like, um, kind of a nice messy, do you get me? Kind of, it's not always like perfectly styled or perfectly, like, brushed and stuff.

Later in the interview

Kate: I like Selena Gomez.

Irena: Why do you like her?

Kate: I think she's kind of … I think she's kind of naturally pretty, you know, she kind of doesn't really, you know, she doesn't, kind of, go out with a … a load of makeup. She doesn't wear the kind of clothes that are … she wears clothes that are age-appropriate. She always looks … she always looks well without looking kind of over-the-top, kind of, you know, like she kind of looks casual but then always does it pretty, you know?

Irena: Mm.

Kate: And then also I think she's kind of like a good role model, like compared to … compared to some, um … to some, like, celebrities who came from Disney. She kind of hasn't really, like, lost it, you know. She's kind of kept, like she knows what she wants to do, and she'll do it, d'jo know?

In the second interview extract, Kate stresses the interconnection between good female choices and the definition of 'appropriate' femininity. For instance, Selena Gomez is admired for her good choices in makeup, good choices in age-appropriate clothing, good choices in feminine conduct to maintain her Disney image. Most importantly, Selena Gomez is viewed as making good choices in sustaining 'naturally pretty'. Hence, Selena Gomez is identified as someone who is capable of maintaining the balance between two contradictory demands: natural but beautifully flawless. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter section, Harris (2004) argues that in a risk society, good choice, ambition and effort alone define 'can-do' femininity. Thus, Selena Gomez is narrated as an ideal late modernity (risk society) subject due to her ability to make 'right' choices.

Similarly, in the interview with Rose, Rose emphasised that she admired Kim Kardashian for the qualities of 'can-do' femininity: her curvy figure as opposed to 'too skinny', being 'pretty' as an example of maintaining the balance between 'natural' and 'done up' female beauty, and wearing nice clothes as indicators of Kim Kardashian's good choices in fashion. Ultimately, Kim Kardashian's

body, highly visible and marked with good choices, stands as a reason for her fame. Overall, Rose admires Kim Kardashian's ability to make 'right' choices and most importantly make those choices visible on her body. In other words, female 'right' choice is understood not as 'being' but as 'looking/appearing'.

Rose's voice is determined and strong during this extract. She speaks in precise statements, without any long pauses or stretching the words to gather her thoughts. The only time there is a doubt in Rose's voice is when she questions the reason Kim Kardashian was famous. However, the doubt is replaced with a tone of admiration when Rose highlights the curvy figure that Kim Kardashian has.

Rose: And I like Kim Kardashian and Kanye too. Very much (*giggles*)

Irena: Okay. What do you like about her?

Rose: I don't know, I've always liked her, you know? This program, *Keeping up with the Kardashians*.

Irena: Uh huh.

Rose: Always watched them. [*laughs*] I just love her. I think 'cause you know she's like, she's like again, she's like not stiffen, she's really curvy like. Um, but I don't really get why she's famous but … [*laughs*]

Irena: aha.

Rose: Like, she's just really famous and … I don't know. I just really like her. She's very pretty too. And always wears really nice clothes.

Even though all of the female celebrities the teenage girls talked about portrayed very different femininity, unanimously they were first and foremost admired for their body and appearance. In addition, appearing 'pretty' acted as a regulatory technique differentiating females who were admired and the ones who were excluded. 'Pretty' was understood as the main source of female power that enabled women to be famous, noticeable and thus admired. While current research (Malson et al., 2010) shows that young girls critique and distance themselves from media representations of women when those images portray female power as primarily deriving from a female body, this study's findings show that teenage girls admire female celebrities first and foremost for their bodies that visually display the 'right' female choices: self-managing and self-regulating their bodies in accordance with contemporary female beauty standards simultaneously governing themselves in effortless and 'balanced' manner. The female body and her subjectivity were tightly policed and regulated. However, this regulation was invisible and in disguise making it into a new form of disembodied power.

Womanhood as a disciplined body: 'I'd say about 15 years-old, you're kind of … you're a lot more strict with yourself'

The above section explored how teenage girls negotiated the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity intersubjectively. This section will focus on exploring how the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity was sustained and established in the teenage girls' daily practice. 'Daily routine clock' accounts revealed that the teenage girls understood that to enter womanhood and reach maturity, they needed to engage in even more intense self-surveillance and self-monitoring of their bodies. Intensification of self-surveillance of female bodies was viewed as a prerequisite of 'appropriate' femininity and womanhood. Overall, becoming body conscious, investing in one's body and most importantly correcting that body in accordance with prescribed beauty standards were understood as necessary practices when becoming a woman. Located within the contemporary media discourses that continue to associate women, womanhood and women's worth with the female body itself (Hargreaves and Tiggemann, 2003; Lindner, 2004; Tiggemann, et al. 2005; Thorpe, 2008; Goodin, et al., 2011; Ringrose, 2011), the teenage girls' narratives come as no surprise. Various scholars (Gill, 2018, in press; McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004) point out that the contemporary regime of neoliberalism, late modernity and postfeminist rhetoric position women to become a self-policing subject; and their self-surveillance and self-monitoring are constructed as a female privilege and the main source of female power. Thus, the intensification of self-surveillance and self-discipline of female bodies are established as normalcy, and thus a requirement when entering womanhood.

Intensification of body consciousness involved developing an innate need to discipline their bodies so as to meet the current beauty standards were the primary qualities that the teenage girls associated with becoming a woman. Not surprisingly, beautifying their bodies and self-transforming their looks, for instance by wearing makeup, was understood as essential conduct for womanhood. In the interview with Kate, she emphasised that makeup was unnecessary when a girl was twelve-years-old, and only when a girl reached fourteen/fifteen, according to Kate, would it be the appropriate age to wear makeup. Kate's choice of words was particularly interesting in this extract. Kate referred to practices of wearing makeup for older girls as a 'need' - '*And you don't really **need** to, at 12, you're still like only a child*' – indicating the expectations put on women by others and women themselves when they enter womanhood.

> *During this interview extract, Kate's voice is full of determination and clarity.*

Irena: What do you think would be an appropriate age for kinda getting the makeup and all?

Kate: Like I think kinda of about 14 (*makes a statement*). Because … or 15, because I remember when I was younger like, some of my friends wore makeup, and then …I went in to the chemist like to see if I could get some, and she was like, "*Look, don't! Honestly, wait till you're 14 (makes a statement)*". I think when I started wearing proper foundation when I was 15. (*makes a statement*). I think that kinda of like if you started off wearing it like when you're 12 and stuff, you're just going to ruin that later, you know? And you don't really need to (*stresses the word 'need'*), at 12, you're still like only a child, d'jo know?

Irena: If you had a sister who's 12, would you say don't?

Kate: No. 'cause one of my sisters- - she was onto me, she was like kinda like to me "Oh will you pluck my eyebrows?" and I was like, "No. I am not going to do that, because if you do it now, you're going to have to keep doing it, d'jo know." I was like 'Wait till you're a little bit older,", you know. And she just wanted to do it because I was doing it, d'jo know. and I was like, "Just wait, you don't need to do it now.

These findings are in agreement with international research (Press, 2011) which found that young girls associated intensification of self-surveillance as directly linked with being identified as a woman. Press (2011) noted that 19-24-year-old college girls exhibited stronger tendencies to surveil other girls' bodies simultaneously increasing self-surveillance of their bodies, in comparison to 12-14-year-old girls in the study. However, this study shows that the teenage girls associated becoming a woman with when a girl reached puberty (approximately 15 years-old). For instance, Helen stated that becoming body conscious and developing body awareness was expressed as becoming '*strict with yourself'*. As a result, teenage girls' habitus became structured around self-monitoring and self-transforming their bodies mainly through practices of physical exercise and diet.

Irena: Do you think it was a little bit different [putting on makeup in the morning] when you were younger? So like say, two years ago or so.

Helen: Um, well, yeah. (*makes a definite statement*). I think… two years ago, you wouldn't worry as much about it. I think, um, two years ago … that's second year (*self-talk*). No, yeah. No, in the second year, we wouldn't of. Like I … you wouldn't have been as conscious about your weight (*stresses the word 'conscious'*). You wouldn't really have cared. You know, you …obviously you … you wouldn't like eat loads and loads. You wouldn't make yourself fat (*stresses the word 'fat'*). But like you wouldn't like, when it gets to maybe like 15, I'd say yeah, I'd say about 15 years-old, you're kind of … you're a lot more strict with yourself (*makes a statement*). And you're a lot more kind of … you'd be like, "*Okay, I'd go for a run twice a week and then I do this.*" But when you're like … when you're maybe 13, you wouldn't like … you wouldn't like (*in a voice of disbelief*) even think of trying to lose weight, you know, if you didn't need to.

I don't think. Well, that's how I was thinking but I [*laughs*] don't know anyone else but like I … I … that never like came across my mind to maybe go out for a run and to go and to lose or whatever. But then, in, um, when you reach like 15, you kind of think, "*Oh yeah. I might want to ...*" (*her voice slows down*)

It is essential to locate the teenage girls' narratives within the contemporary cultural configurations that position teenagers to become self-policing subjects, who are called to constantly surveil their conduct so as to display their participation in the values of late modernity, in particular, the value of rationalisation (Tait, 2011; Harris, 2004). For the teenage girls, the rational and mature subject was associated with becoming a disciplined body that was being transformed in accordance with the prescribed female beauty standards. Thus, the discipline of their bodies was viewed as a choice and freedom, as expressed by Helen '*Oh yeah. I might want to'*. In other words, Helen did not view the prerequisite to transforming her maturing female body as an obligation, but rather something she might choose to do. Rose (1999) notes that in late modernity, being subjected by the regime of neoliberalism, people are 'obliged to be free' to choose to monitor, record and judge their development so to become rational and independent subjects. Consequently, shifting their focus to their bodies, self-monitoring and self-transforming their bodies enabled the teenage girls to be identified and identify themselves as becoming rational and mature women. Also, such processes illustrate how neoliberal rhetoric are embedded and embodied in the girls' everyday lives, and thus how regulatory powers are experienced as something innate and natural, resulting in disguising such powers and transforming them into disembodied forms of power.

Some of the literature (Mischel et al., 2002; Baumeister, 1999) argues that one's self-control is one of the most powerful indicators of success. All of life is based on regulating one's behaviour to allow one to do well in group life. It obviously takes a toll, and the demands sometimes and in places can be damaging. However, high awareness of social pressures could be seen as something that will allow the girls to do well in life. They understand the landscape of rewards and dangers, and they are articulating the path they must navigate between the pitfalls of excess and excessive control. While such conceptualisations about self-control allow viewing the girls as successors and winners in the current climate, these conceptualisations focus on the immediate social context without considering the broad historical and cultural perspective. It is crucial to locate teenage girls' lived experiences within the broader context so to unravel how contemporary discourses, such as 'can-do' girlhood, play out in teenage girls lives. Girls are subjected to navigate their identities within the regimes of neoliberalism and postfeminist sensibility, disguising the regulatory powers of those regimes over female bodies and their subjectivities. Girls might be successful and empowered navigators in these regimes, but they are not given any other avenues to carve their identities in different ways; ways that are not in alignment with the neoliberal and postfeminist body confidence regimes. Once again, the regulatory power becomes disembodied making it difficult to dismantle or critique.

Against the beauty regime: It makes us feel like, "Do we have to be conscious of our weight because the others are?"

The teenage girls who did not participate or agree with the requirements for women to self-monitor and self-transform their bodies through practices of diet and exercise became doubtful in their femininity and female identity. Since the regulatory power is now transformed into a disembodied power, the teenage girls felt compelled to question themselves and their choices rather than questioning the structure that governs women's lives. During the interviews, the teenage girls frequently mentioned the judging public gaze directed at the female body. The objectification of female bodies, in other words treating women's bodies as objects, has been widely discussed by various scholars (Banyard, 2010; Orbach, 2010; Attwood, 2007; Levy, 2006 Berger, 1972). The data from this study reveal that the process of objectification of women extensively governed the teenage girls' identity construction. Analysing the teenage girls' 'daily routine clock' accounts, it became evident that the objectifying gaze directed at the female and female body greatly regulated the teenage girls' daily habitus. In particular, they expressed that the gaze always operated with vigilant attention to teenage girls' engagement in practices of a beauty regime, such as makeup or keeping up with current fashion styles. Thus, the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity as always associated with the beautified female body was sustained: the teenage girls were socialised to accept the gaze and relate to themselves as objects to be gazed, subsequently others responded to the teenage girls as a bodily surface.

The gaze towards female effort in beautifying themselves

Girls' effort that focused on improving their appearance indicated their ability to make 'right' choices and thus acted as a regulatory technique that differentiated teenage girls that were admired from those who were 'Othered' through being identified as queer or failures. In her discussion about late modernity citizenship, Harris (2004) argued that good choice, effort and ambition alone were the qualities that differentiated between women from 'can-do' girls and women from 'at-risk' girls. While Harris' (2004) study was mainly focusing on the spheres of female labour, education and recreation, this study indicates that displaying the effort to self-control the body stood for a female identity per se and her ability to occupy 'can-do' subjectivity.

For instance, in the interview with Helen, she stated that many girls in her school aimed to become skinny. However, Helen said that she did not take part in female practices of worrying about her weight. Nevertheless, disengaging from this practice evoked new worries for Helen that brought into

question her feminine identity. In this interview extract, Helen contemplated on the current femininity norms - '*to be conscious of our weight'*, *'we have to try and lose weight'* - and questioned her own actions in accordance with the established normalcy. Helen's choice of words '*conscious'* and '*try'* illustrates the profound grip of late modernity values, and particularly values of risk society (Beck, 1992): rationalisation, good choice, individual effort and ambition. Firstly, being conscious and making conscious decisions showed that a girl was participating in becoming a rational subject. Secondly, continuously trying to make their bodies complicit in accordance with female beauty standards indicated showing the teenage girls' ambition and effort; in other words, making 'right' choices in risk society. Overall, female bodies stood as a sign for the girls' ability to successfully navigate their identity project in risk society.

> *Helen is talking about her school's culture and current teenage girls' practices that includes worrying about their weight and looks to attract boys' attention. Helen's voice in this extract is filled with worry, particularly when she says 'it's scary'.*

> **Helen:** But (*pauses to think*) a lot of the girls would (*stressing 'a lot'*). You know, cause it's … it's … I think it's one of the main things in teenage girls (*stressing the word 'main'*), um, just the weight, just big thing. You know, it's … it's kind of … of it's all pressure like a bit (*stresses the word 'pressure'*).

> **Irena:** Mm-hmm. And how does that make you feel?

> **Helen:** Well (*stretches the word*), see I was talking about this with another friend like we're both, um, um, kind of, we … we're … we're not like that. We're not like, you know, we're not too conscious of our weight. But. There's a lot … it kind of makes us feel worried, it makes us feel like, "*Do we have to be conscious of our weight because the others are?*" You know, is … *is that something that we have to do now*? You know, *that we have to try and lose weight because everyone else is doing it?*. But then, we were saying, you know, but everyone that's doing it is over-the-top and getting, you know, too skinny and they're starting to … it's starting to be dangerous, you know.

> So, like we were saying, you know, I'd prefer to be a little bit overweight than a little bit too skinny, you know. So, um, but that's our point of view but I know that most girls aren't like that, you know. Like they're not … like a lot of girls would be always conscious of their weight (*stressing the word 'always'*). So, it … it's scary, you know. It's not like (*pauses to think*) … it's scary to think that there are people you know that … that are just … that are quite, um, kind of getting to a point where [*giggles*] they're trying to lose too much weight.

By positioning other girls as putting themselves 'in danger', Helen was able to distance herself from the need to engage in the practices of making herself skinny. Moreover, just before this extract, Helen stated '*I would be more like, um, I wouldn't be too self-conscious of my weight for the guys but I'd be self-conscious of my weight for myself. You know, I'd kind of … I'd like to look good myself, you know.'* By utilising the language of postfeminism such as engaging in practices of self-monitoring

and self-transformation for her own pleasure, Helen positioned herself as not affected by the issues of female body weight. Subjectifying their own bodies as an expression of female liberation and empowerment is emblematic of the profound grip of postfeminist sensibilities over contemporary women's identities (Gill, 2007). Throughout the teenage girls' accounts, control and discipline of women's bodies were constructed as the expression of female agency and choice. It became evident that disembodied power strongly governed teenage girls' everyday lives. Even though female body self-surveillance was expressed in the exact same daily practices, the meaning of this practice held a very different value. Girls who disciplined their bodies for 'themselves' and also appeared to occupy 'can-do' femininity (e.g. not obsessed with weight) were admired. On the other hand, girls who were identified as being at risk due to their practices of diet, and girls who aimed to lose weight to gain male attention, were repudiated.

Values of individualism versus patriarchy

Self-control and self-discipline of the female body were understood only as an issue when it was executed to gain boys' attention. In other words, when girls participated in the patriarchal values of femininity, self-control and self-monitoring of their bodies were critiqued. Similar reading was evident during the focus groups' discussions, for instance when the teenage girls negotiated the image of Jessica Alba. Alba's image was admired when it appeared to be self-pleasing and 'sexy' for her own desire. Some of the scholars (Inglis, 2003; O'Connor, 1998; Byrne, 1997; Inglis, 1987), argue that in Ireland the construction of femininity and womanhood are strongly regulated by patriarchal structures, however, in contrast, the teenage girls' accounts repudiated complying with the values of patriarchy. Moreover, the girls did not view themselves as being affected by values of patriarchy. Furthermore, a number of studies (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004; Inglis, 1987) that explored the construction of femininity within the Irish context argue that values of community, solidarity, bonding and belonging play a vital role in the construction of Irish women's identities. However, this study indicates that the teenage girls viewed local values of femininity as not playing such a significant role in the construction of the teenage girls' offline identities. Instead, values of late modernity and neoliberalism, such as individualism, hedonism and authenticity, appeared to take over values of solidarity and belonging. Since the regulatory powers transformed from solid patriarchy to a disembodied patriarchy, the teenage girls were only critical of solid forms of patriarchy as such forms were visible and available for critique (due to postfeminist media advertising backlash against patriarchy).

Self-regulation and self-governing of the teenage girls' bodies were executed to gain individual pleasure rather than comply with values of community or family honour. Thus, when the girls self-

judged, self-monitored and self-transformed their bodies to please themselves, it was viewed as a non-problematic female practice. This study's findings show that patriarchy did not disappear but disguised itself in a new rhetoric of individual self-choice, self-pleasure and female agency, transforming this form of patriarchy into a disembodied form of power. Being addressed by the current discourses as subjects of capacity (Pomerantz et al. 2013; Currie, et al., 2009; Harris, 2004), in other words regulated not by what girls cannot or ought to do, but more about what they can do (McRobbie, 2009), enabled teenage girls to engage in the practice of subjectification, thereby identifying themselves as winners among their peer group. McRobbie (2009) argues that because women now are addresses as the subject of capacity and beneficiary, their identity is no longer linked with family or kinship. On the contrary, women's highly visible bodies stand for contemporary women's identity. Taking into consideration Irish cultural meanings of femininity, such as being a mother, a carer, a wife and a child-bearer (Inglis, 2003; Byrne, 1999; O'Connor, 1998), it seemed unlikely that contemporary understandings of femininity as primarily deriving from the female body would have any significant hold over teenage girls' lived experiences.

Nevertheless, during the interviews, the teenage girls stated that now to signify as a girl, they felt that they needed to show efforts to transform their bodies so as to fulfil the current female beauty standards. The teenage girls' effort to self-transform was conceptualised as their ability to manage risk by making 'right' choices. However, girls' efforts were not valued for doing well socially, or even academically. It appears that concrete and solid forms of power, such as The Catholic Church, the State and the medical professions, are being replaced with the disembodied forms of power (such as media discourses, celebrities, SNSs) that regulate the girls' identities. In the interview extract below, Shelly explained the current pressure put on teenage girls to be preoccupied with their looks and body so as to maintain their feminine identity.

> *Shelly's voice during this extract is full of passion, mainly when she is speaking about women's choice not to care about their looks.*

Irena: And what if some people couldn't care less about fashion and makeup and-

Shelly: I know some people (*stressing the word' some'*) wouldn't mind that she ... doesn't care about … it's her own business (*makes a statement*). But other people would be like "*Oh, my god! Did you see her? She is not keeping up styles, like, look - she does not put any effort in, she should put the effort in*".

Irena: Okay and when you say she should, what's the … (*stopping to think*), why should she (*in a voice of curiosity and confusion*)?

Shelly: Ah- some people just kind of ... (*gathers her thoughts*) are so obsessed (*stresses the word 'so'*) with all of this, that they feel ... it must be done (*makes a statement*). Like, they have to do everything like this (*stresses the word 'have to'*).

Irena: Okay (*prolonging the word as an inquiry and encouragement to continue*).

Shelly: They have to have perfect hair and perfect makeup. So, I suppose it's all really judgmental. And I suppose, basically they have been brainwashed by (*pauses to think*) magazines, celebrities, internet into thinking that natural isn't good - you have to look (*stresses the word 'have to'*) like the celebrities, you have to do (*stresses the word 'have to'*) all this. It's almost like it's compulsory (*in a voice of disgust*).

Irena: Um-hmm. And if the girl didn't do it?

Shelly: That's kinda controversial I'd say. I say some people, like I wouldn't care if the girl didn't wear makeup or whatever, like it's her own business. She shouldn't have to (*stresses the word 'shouldn't'*) if she doesn't want to. But then other people are like "*No! she has to like (stresses the word 'has to'), she is such ... (pauses to think) a boy say like. She should be putting in more effort if she is a girl*" (*a voice of anger and frustration*).

Once again, Shelly stressed the importance of the judging gaze that governed and constructed female identity. Overall, during all of the interviews with the teenage girls, it became apparent that the female body was under continuous scrutiny from peer boys as well as peer girls simultaneously by the public/society. Regardless of the source of the gaze, it was primarily the female body that was gazed at, judged and valued. Female bodies were applauded and admired when they fulfilled the values of neoliberalism. Since the regulatory power became disembodied, the teenage girls' practices of self-transforming their bodies for individual pleasure were commended; and teenage girls themselves felt empowered by focusing on beautifying their bodies so as to be identified as successors in their own right. There were no narratives about the value of community or solidarity amongst the female group, individual needs and individual competition between girls were the governing structures in the teenage girls' lives. Throughout the teenage girls' narratives, their sociability was narrated as instrumental and strategic, their participation in community and friendship groups as a means to reach individual ends. Due to collision culture, solidarity, community and kindship merged with contemporary demands of individualism, authenticity and progress.

Shifts of patriarchal power: *'Loud, out there and outgoing'*

The girls who did not participate in the beauty regime, needed to occupy other subject positions, such as mentioned in the following extract with Brigid as '*loud, out there and outgoing'*. This position resembled some of the qualities of phallic girls (McRobbie, 2009) and laddish girls (Dobson, 2014; Jackson, 2006; Ringrose, 2006), who are imagined as transgressing the established gender norms by

embodying behaviours associated with masculinity and male power, such as sociability usually marked by loud and proud engagement in dangerous behaviours (e.g. drinking, criminal activity), and active and non-apologetic engagement in sexual encounters (Dobson, 2014).

In the interview with Brigid, she stated that occupying the '*loud, out there and outgoing*' female subjectivity presented teenage girls with an option of refusing to participate in the female beauty regime. This form of subjectivity seemed to embody contemporary values, such as individualism and hedonism; the very opposite of the traditional Irish female subjectivity. Firstly, displaying such a counter to the traditional concepts of female identity indexed that teenage girls disavowed patriarchy. Secondly, it situated teenage girls' lived experiences within the current discourses of girl power (Taft, 2004), successful girls (Pomerantz et al. 2013) and postfeminist sensibilities (Gill, 2008). '*Loud, out there and outgoing*' female subjectivity enabled teenage girls to construct their identities as agentic and powerful, and to also identify themselves as winners in the current cultural configurations. Since this subject position was in direct opposition to solid forms of patriarchy, the teenage girls admired '*loud, out there and outgoing*' femininity.

> **Brigid**: like it kinda depends on who you are like. If you are, you know, quite shy (*stresses the word 'shy'*) and you are not … like as loud (*stretches the word*) and you wear like … loads (*stressed the word' loads'*) of makeup. Or you wear no makeup. People would think differently of you to people who are loud, and you know, out there and outgoing. Like if they don't wear makeup or if they wear makeup some days. Like some girls who are really outgoing and they wear loads of makeup one day and the next they wear absolutely nothing and nobody really treats them any differently (*in a voice of being puzzled, a tone of posing a question*). But then...others would... one day wear loads of makeup and people would be '*Oh you look really nice'* and then the next day they don't wear as much they kinda treated a bit differently 'cause they don't look as good.
>
> **Irena**: what do you mean by treated a little bit differently?
>
> **Brigid**: People like … like don't make as much as an effort with them (*in a voice of disappointment*). Like people who don't really know you they always (*stresses the word 'always'*) go towards the people who look nice rather than people who do not look as nice and it's kinda... and if you know if you are meeting someone new you have to make (*stresses the word 'have to'*) sure you look nice cause they won't pay any attention to you or be harder to get to know them even cause they just like. it's like. it's like the nicer you look the more accepted you are. And it's kinda bit doggy (*in a sad voice*).

As '*loud, out there and outgoing*' female subjectivity was imagined escaping the beauty regime, the non-laddish girls had no option but partake in beauty regime so as not to be ignored by the peer group. During the interviews, the teenage girls regularly referred to themselves as being agentic and powerful when making decisions about their looks and bodily appearance: they dressed according to their mood, they choose clothes for the upcoming party that made them feel good about themselves, they

styled their uniform with necklaces and earrings to maintain their style and personality. At first glance, it appears that the top-down surveillance and control of female bodies that have been executed for decades by the Catholic Church, the Irish State and the medical professions (O'Connor, 1998; Byrne, 1997; Inglis, 1987), is no longer relevant to contemporary teenage girls' lives in Ireland.

Since '*loud, out there and outgoing*' female subjectivity appeared to resist solid forms of patriarchy, such girls were able to escape the demand to constantly engage in the beauty regime. Moreover, not partaking in the beauty regime, '*loud, out there and outgoing*' female is able to indicate that she loves herself and is confident in her looks, and thus she does not need to wear makeup. Nevertheless, the ideal female body shape that all teenage girls aimed to achieve for their own pleasure to a high degree resembled the heterosexual male fantasy. Thus, it became evident that the regulatory power did not disappear even for the '*loud, out there and outgoing*' female position, but rather this power disguised itself making it into a disembodied patriarchal power. Similarly, McRobbie (2009) observes that even the phallic girl while being allowed to enjoy her new sexual freedom has to conform to the codes of femininity: to be young and attractive, invested in her appearance and follow current fashion trends. In the interview with Shelly, she insightfully described the current image of the ideal female body.

> **Irena:** So, what is the ideal body like these days?
>
> **Shelly:** Big boobs, skinny waist, big bums, skinny arms, thight gap (*naming each quality as a list*)
>
> **Irena**: okay (*in a tone of inquiry*)
>
> **Shelly:** and that's about it. (*in a voice of disappointment; makes a statement*)

What Shelly describes as an ideal female body appears to be an unattainable and impossible female body composition. Being subjected by media messages that continuously represent 'normal' women as always retouched by computer programmes (Jhally et al., 2010), it seems that teenage girls internalised those images as a benchmark for 'appropriate' femininity. Since the regulatory power over female identities are transformed into a disembodied power, instead of defining a prerequisite to possess a heterosexually attractive body as regulation and obligation, teenage girls stated that they felt empowered to work towards an 'ideal' body. This work involved an intense self-surveillance through continuous monitoring of their diet, exercise and consumption of beauty products.

Gill (2007) notes that now due to the postfeminist media advertising campaigns, women are encouraged to become self-policing subjects. In other words, from being treated as objects to be looked at, women are called to engage in self-objectification. Moreover, within the media advertising campaigns, female self-objectification is presented as a female privilege and power. However, Gill

(2007) notes that while exercising her 'new' power the image that the female is asked to construct must closely resemble a heterosexual male-arousing the pornographic female image. Thus, wrapped within the rhetoric of self-objectification as female power, the male gaze, Gill (2007) observes, becomes internalised and thus more difficult to be critiqued.

Thus, while teenage girls distanced themselves from the values of patriarchy, the governing power of patriarchy did not fade away. On the contrary, in her discussion on the postfeminist masquerade McRobbie (2009) observes that now the patriarchal power discharges its duties to the commercial domain so as to maintain the regulation of women and their bodies. Moreover, this new patriarchal power is disembodied rather than deriving from one concrete source. Even though contemporary women are becoming more and more emancipated and gain equality (and sometimes outperforming their male peers) in spheres of labour and education, the demand for the self-control and self-discipline of the female body are becoming more intense and widespread. Furthermore, while McRobbie (2009) views postfeminist masquerade functioning when women enter the space associated with masculinity and male power, this study's data show that now girls are required to participate in postfeminist masquerade consistently regardless of what spaces girls enter, which will be addressed in the following discussion.

The focus on teenage girls' bodies in different spaces: *'Oh, she has an unreal body'*

During this phase of the interviews of 'daily routine clock', the girls frequently expressed that their bodies were the main and only attribute that others noticed about them. Even in different spaces that were structured to focus on different teenage girls' abilities, for instance, school space as a space for academic abilities, party space as a space for social skills and town space as a space to show ability to consume, it was precisely teenage girls' bodies and their appearance that was in focus. Teenage girls' peer boys, as well as peer girls, were evaluating and judging teenage girls' bodies in accordance with the prescribed current beauty standards. Overall, being identified primarily through and by their bodies, positioned teenage girls to experience constant pressure when managing demands to 'look good' simultaneously adhering to the norms and rules when entering different spaces.

School space: 'You feel like they are talking about you'

While being in the school space, the teenage girls never mentioned competing for better academic performance in school. While the pressure to upkeep their homework and school marks were created

by the school teachers, within the peer group, it did not have any value (good or bad; it was insignificant). This is not surprising given the current understandings of what it means for women to be successful. Scholars (Gill and Elias, 2014; McRobbie, 2011; Murphy and Jackson, 2011; McRobbie, 2009) note that in contemporary society female success regardless of her age, class or ethnicity to a great extent is associated with the possession of a skinny and athletic body that has to be marked by endless self-transformation and rigid self-management. Furthermore, Irish media context analysis studies (De Brún et al., 2013) highlight that the Irish media messages continuously link being slim with success and ideal femininity. Therefore, academic success for teenage girls did not have any immediate significant impact within their social school circle.

On the contrary, teenage girls' appearance and body shape defined the level of success for girls. Thus, when I asked the teenage girls what they found the hardest about being a teenage girl, all of the girls from both schools highlighted the importance of looks and appearance. Even within the school space, girls' looks were the main source of worry. The following interview extract with Shelly illustrates how girls' appearance was regulated in the school space.

> *In this extract, Shelly's voice sounds disappointed and frustrated.*

> **Shelly:** I'm – hmmm, I suppose it's kind of … (*gathers her thoughts*) pressure to put on us. Say like the school pressure, then say like to fit into groups kind of pressure like say, styling your appearance.

> And like say it could be the girls in the school, or whatever, and like they just be … You know, they just kind of look at you like, you know that way? (*indicating meanness*). It's kind of like … I think just because we all wear the uniform and none of us had makeup on. So, some of them are kind of judging.

Consequently, to fit into the school's social culture, the teenage girls needed to style their appearance, as Shelly mentioned in the above extract, or to possess an 'unreal body', as Tonya stated in the following extract.

> *Tonya's tone is full of disappointment and disbelief.*

> **Tonya**: Yeah, like I … We even say … A girl in our school, like, we'd be like, '*Oh, she has an unreal body.*' (*stresses the word 'unreal'*) Like we -- That's how … like, girls even say that as well, but like, even if a girl isn't exactly like, pretty, you'd be like, '*Oh, yeah, but she has a good, great body.*' You know, that kind of thing. So … it's not always about the look, it's about the body too. 'Cause sometimes boys would go body over, like, what your actual face looks like (*in a tone of disappointment*).

The girls' experiences could be interpreted as a symptom of their developmental stage that is marked by stress and anxiety due to one's identity discovery (Rathus, 2010; Friedman, 2000). However,

considering the historical and cultural context, it seems that the girls are beginning to become aware and have to consider how they will have to deal with a wider culture of sexist definitions of their identity. Teenage girls' narratives indicate their initial encounter with sexist culture, but as the literature (McRobbie, 2011; Ringrose, 2010; Gill, 2007) shows, this is not a phase, but a feature of women's biographies in general.

In both schools within which the research was conducted, the teenage girls expressed that their bodies and their appearance were always up for judgment. In the following interview extract, Brigid expressed that teenage girls were positioned to be always '*on guard*' because of the inner feeling of being gazed at and judged by the people in their schools.

> *Brigid's voice is emotionless. In this extract, she makes definite statements, which will be not evident in the further interview.*
>
> **Brigid**: you know them [people in the school] by their names and stuff but you don't talk to them, but you feel like they are talking about you like (*gathers her thoughts*) ... ahh…like it keeps you like on guard (*makes a statement*).

Interestingly, in this extract, Brigid did not question her school's environment, but factually stated how it worked without a tone of frustration or disappointment. The majority (School No.1 – 10 teenage girls; School No. 2 – 4 teenage girls) of the teenage girls when talking about being objectified in their school environment spoke in a similar manner to Brigid. Being subjected by the current discourses of neoliberalism (Gill and Scharff, 2011; Gill, 2008), Successful Girls (Pomerantz et al. 2013) and Girl Power (Taft, 2004) narratives, positioned teenage girls to abandon any critique or complain of structural inequalities. This confirms previous studies' results (Scharff 2011, 2012; Baker 2010; Baker 2008; Rich 2005) that girls chose to disavow feminist critique in order to maintain their identities as non-victims and able managers of their lives (Scharff, 2012), also being nice and agentic (Pomerantz, et al., 2013). Consequently, teenage girls were evaluated not by their ability to criticise gender injustice but by their ability to self-manage the structures of gender inequality. Consequently, teenage girls became self-policing subjects that were always, as Brigid said, '*on guard*'.

In sum, in the school space 'looking good' guaranteed social acceptance and popularity. However, at the same time 'looking good' evoked female antagonism. During the interviews, the teenage girls repeatedly told me about the competition between girls that was exclusively focused on judging how girls participated in the current fashion trends, also how girls self-managed and self-transformed their bodies and appearance in accordance with contemporary beauty standards. In the following extract, Holly explained this process in more detail.

Holly: there's always competition between girls, like there's always (*stresses the word 'always'*), you can't get rid of it so (*makes a statement*).

Irena: A competition for… (*gathering thoughts*) what?

Holly: Oh (*in a voice of annoyance*)! Like you know, who's skinnier, who like looks the best? Who has the longest hair, 'cause now it's all about having like long hair. Who has the nicest hair, who's like the prettiest? Who has like the nicest makeup, like the nicest body? (*naming each quality like a list*) Who has like, who's like … I don't know. There's always competition with girls, like I think who looks better and better.

Through the engagement in competition between girls, the teenage girls regulated each other's bodies. Also, competition ensured that the girls were participating in the regimes of neoliberalism and postfeminist sensibility, such as the girls' continuous engagement in transformation and endless creation of 'better version' of their bodies. Scholars (Ringrose, 2013; Winch, 2013; McRobbie, 2009) observe that throughout current popular media culture female antagonism is normalised by employing the celebratory rhetoric of individualism and 'girl power' (Taft, 2004). In addition, Ringrose (2013) notes that female meanness expressed through judgment and grading of each other's bodies and looks is constructed as a middle-class female privilege. While teenage girls did not identify meanness as a fight for class mobility, female meanness and competition were understood as normalcy and something that is exclusively innate in the female nature. Regulation and control of female bodies were understood as unproblematic since this regulation was invisible and narrated as innate and natural female quality. This 'naturalness' of competition amongst girls sustained the grip of disembodied power because girls did not aim to critique structures but rather accepted such structures. However, bonding and solidarity among girls were created when teenage girls deliberately put themselves down by engaging in 'fat talk' (Nichter, 2000).

Female solidarity and bonding - *'Oh I'm so fat'*

'Fat talk' is an exclusively female practice of critiquing their bodies while being with others, which is utilised as a method to sustain solidarity within a female group or to establish relationships with others (Nichter, 2000). However, teenage girls viewed 'fat talk' as only appropriate when confessing bodily insecurities that had an emotional discharge and did not threaten the established gender roles. Nevertheless, teenage girls stated that their peer girls frequently used 'fat talk' for various reasons. For instance, in the interview with Andrea, she explained different ways teenage girls engaged in the practice of 'fat talk' while being present with peer boys or peer girls. According to Andrea 'fat talk' acted a symbolic tool to gain power: utilising 'fat talk' in front of boys gained their attention, whereas

'fat talk' among the peer girlfriend groups was a two-folded action – seeking power or seeking social bonding.

> *Just a few minutes into the interview, Andrea explained to me about teenage girls'*
> *insecurities and how teenage girls expressed those insecurities while being with boys and*
> *girls. Being puzzled by this practice, I asked Andrea to give me an example.*
>
> **Andrea**: well like if the girl is like '*Oh I'm so fat*' (*in a dramatic tone*) or something and the guy '*No. you're not. Shut up.*' (*makes a definite statement*) like you know. It's kind of like … (*gathers her thoughts*) … you know like … kinda of approval (*in a tone of disgust*), like it's kind of something... (*does not finish the sentence*)
>
> I would never do that! I don't know. It's just something that I would never do that in front of a guy (*stresses the word 'never'*). I know few girls that kinda like … say things like that all the time in front of guys (*stresses the word 'all'*) so just to get their attention.
>
> **Irena**: And if you say that among your teen girls?
>
> **Andrea**: Well like no. It depends like. I mean, if you just like complaining like you know you are like '*I don't like this I don't like that*'. But if you are actually talking about like, you know, your insecurities (*stressing the word 'actually'*) and like the way you feel about yourself (*stresses the word 'feel'*) so it's kind of different. It's kinda talking (*makes a statement*). You know, seriously as opposed to looking at yourself in a mirror complaining while other girls are there … making them feel bad, you know (*giggles*).

Most of the teenage girls understood female insecurities related to the issues of bodily fat and appearance as something inherited in the female nature. For example, in the extract with Andrea, she never questioned why girls judged their bodies by engaging in 'fat talk'. In other words, the female was understood as fundamentally insecure in her appearance and thus in need of approval from others. This is not surprising given that over decades media advertising campaigns continue to focus on female bodies that are portrayed as unruly (Jhally et al., 2010; Bordo, 2003), in need of improvement (McRobbie, 2009; Wolf, 1991) and most recently, in need of being loved (paradoxically suggesting female bodies are inherently unlovable) (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011).

However, critiquing one's body in front of boys was negatively perceived by the teenage girls because it indicated that a girl was looking for approval and attention from the boys. In the extract with Andrea, this is evident from the way Andrea's tone changed when she talked about girls' practice of 'fat talk' in front of boys. Engaging in the practice of 'fat talk' in front of boys so as to gain their attention was criticised as it indicated participating in the patriarchal values, such as values associated with the female identity and sense of self as needing to be legitimised by the male. As a result, Andrea immediately felt the need to state her position by saying '*I would never do that!*'. Thus, Andrea

distanced herself from such kinds of practices, so as to show that she did not need male approval and hence that she did not aspire to the values of patriarchy.

On the other hand, when it came to 'fat talk' amongst the teenage girls themselves, two different strategies were highlighted. Firstly, 'fat talk' was used as a strategy used to structure power positions amongst teenage girls. Secondly, 'fat talk' was used as a method to develop an intimate emotional connection with other girls. The differentiating factors in both practices were female body weight and the nature of intention to confess one's insecurities. If teenage girls confessed their bodily insecurities with the intention to reveal, in Andrea's words, '*the way you feel about yourself*', self-critiquing their bodies was interpreted as positive female conduct. However, 'fat talk' was critiqued when it was used to establish power hierarchies among girls. Later in the interview, Andrea explained the issue in more detail.

> **Irena**: and what do you do if, for instance, one of your girlfriends says '*Oh god I look so fat*'?
>
> **Andrea**: So when my friends say something like that so I try to make her feel better (*stresses the word 'feel'*). ahmmm... but if she is like really really skinny, like sometimes really really skinny girls, like *'Ah I'm so fat.'* (*in a dramatic voice*) I'm just like *'Shut up. No, you are not!'* (*giggles; in a voice of annoyance*).

Participating in 'fat talk' was appropriate for girls who did not conform to the standards of '*really really skinny*' body no matter how the girl felt. In sum, 'fat talk' acted as a bonding practice (through seeking approval, encouragement, or making others feel better) between girls when those girls' bodies were identified as not conforming to the contemporary standards of female body weight.

Town space: 'Oh I don't look nice at all and they look lovely'

Teenage girls regularly emphasised the importance of going to town or hanging out in town. However, town space, similar to school space, focused mainly on governing teenage girls' bodies. 'Looking nice' was the main quality that was required for teenage girls when entering town space. Teenage girls did not mention their consumer capacity as having any significance in this space; similarly, the number of friends that they 'hang out' within town did not have an important value. These findings are in opposition to the current studies (Woo, 2011; Harris, 2004) which argue that the levels of consumption and production are key requirements for young people when they enter public spaces. While the teenage girls mentioned buying hot chocolate in cafés with their friends or going shopping for clothes, these activities were not narrated with any importance or emphasis. On the contrary, worrying about their outfits, makeup and appearance were the main concerns for the girls when they were entering town space.

As teenage girls' bodies were on display for public judgment and evaluation, 'looking nice' or 'not looking nice' were the qualities that differentiated teenage girls. Those who were identified as 'looking nice' were evaluated as agentic, powerful and in control. Moreover, they were the ones who received admiration from peer boys and peer girls. Girls' good looks became a valuable commodity under the neoliberal capitalist regime disguising the control of the female body through the narratives of empowerment and agency. In the following interview extract with Saoirse, she explained how town space worked in more detail.

> *Saoirse is explaining to me the dress-code for teenage girls when going into town. Saoirse is thoughtful and reflective; her tone of voice is slow and contemplative simultaneously she makes definite statements rather than questioning or being frustrated with the regime directed at girls in town space.*

> **Saoirse**: There's got to be people in town that you don't want to look like … (*gathers her thoughts*) not nice, you don't want to look like a slob (*stresses the word 'slob'*), you know, going to town because … town can be boring, but it is kind of the main place, and so when you go to town you want to look nice because there's gonna be loads of people (*stresses the word 'loads'*) and loads of … like … (*gathers her thoughts*) … the girls need to dress up in case they see like guys that they know, and they be like *'Oh my God, I have no makeup on'* (*imitating being terrified*) … and if there're other girls and they be like *'Oh I don't look nice at all and they look lovely'*.

First and foremost, the teenage girls viewed town space as space where they could present and display their beautified bodies so as to be evaluated by their peer boys and peer girls. When entering town space two regulatory powers intersected: disembodied patriarchy and Omniopticon surveillance. Girls' bodies needed to be presented as beautified bodies to be consumed by public gaze. However, the girls narrated such powers as something 'normal' and 'acceptable', which is emblematic of the disguise of the regulatory powers. The town was a space of passage allowing teenage girls to present and display themselves to a broader audience: to people outside their school and friend circle (who were a part of teenage girls' online world). Being seen by the wider audience (in town) not only had the potential to increase their number of 'Friends' online but also instigate intimate relationships. Sophie explained how the dating scene among teenagers operated in relation to town and online.

> *Sophie's voice is calm and collected as if constituting the facts.*

> **Sophie**: in town if they [peer boys], say, if they see a girl who they think is pretty, they'll ask their friends *'what's her name?'*, then they'll add her on Facebook that night and start talking to her, and then they'll get to know each other through Facebook and then … they meet up (*makes a statement*).

Scholars (boyd, 2011; Livingstone, 2008) point out that in contemporary society, where social networking sites are developed to be part of an everyday habitus for young people, the boundary between online and offline becomes blurred. Consequently, previous one-space-bounded audiences spread into multiple spaces and multiple contexts. As a result, researchers (boyd, 2014; Thumin, 2012) argue that online self-presentation becomes a meticulous negotiation and navigation of identity displays for mixed audiences (online or offline). As the online and offline context collapsed, teenage girls felt the pressure to look 'nice' all the time in all the spaces. However, the teenage girls' accounts point out that due to the blurring boundary between online and offline, negotiation of female identity displays in the offline spaces, primarily through the self-presentation of beautified female bodies, became intensified. Hence, more than ever before female bodies became a locus of public control and regulation. However, by utilising contemporary discourses that address young girls as subjects of capacity and agency (McRobbie, 2009) the control and regulation of female bodies in town spaces were transformed into self-regulation and self-control. Nevertheless, teenage girls' self-regulation and self-management of their bodies were always in accordance with society's prescribed female beauty norms.

Party space: 'Be the best you can be and kind of mingle with people first'

The teenage girls spoke a great deal about the importance of attending house parties organised by their peer friends. As in school and town spaces, it was the teenage girls' appearance and body that were the main focus at a party space. 'Looking nice' not only ensured that a girl would be admired by others (peer girls as well as boys), but girls' good looks regularly substituted for their social skills, as Saoirse expressed in the following extract.

> **Saoirse**: I suppose … it was a lot of kind of competition between girls (*stresses the word 'girls'*), I suppose because if they're people you don't know then you will be like, '*Oh, my Gosh, she's so much better dressed than me or prettier than me or whatever*'. So, you want to kind of present yourself … and be the best you can be and kind of mingle with people first.

Party as space and a social activity held vital importance in the teenage girls' lives. In this space, a girl could interact with boys and gain their attention; also, intimate relationships could emerge in this space. For the teenage girls, gaining boys' attention showed that a girl was identified as 'good-looking', or 'hot', or having an 'unreal body' – all the qualities of contemporary ideal and 'appropriate' femininity. Boys' attention became the means for individual girls' ends. Boys' gaze becomes an accessory that allows the girl to be identified as 'beautiful' and thus gain higher status

among her peer circle. Thus, a girl is positioned to seek boys' attention to legitimise her 'good looks' and her status. While repudiating patriarchy, the girls participate in patriarchal values but in a disembodied disguised form of patriarchy. Now the boy does not legitimise girl's existence, but boy's gaze and his presence reaffirm individual characteristics that a girl possess (e.g. she is good looking). Overall, boys' gaze is not for boys' pleasure but for girls' individual status. Therefore, under the regime of neoliberalism and postfeminist sensibility, patriarchy becomes indivisible and disembodied nevertheless holding a tight grip over girls' subjectivities.

Interestingly, the teenage girls from School No.1 (girls only school) talked about parties with much more excitement as well as emphasising the significance of attending the party: from getting ready to self-observing and self-controlling their conduct during the party. On the other hand, teenage girls from the co-educational school (School No. 2) could interact with boys in their school. Thus the party space did not hold such importance for them. Even though the girls frequently narrated not being regulated by the ethics of patriarchy, peer male attention and peer male gaze directed at their bodies held a significant value. This is not surprising considering that in Ireland throughout history patriarchal ideals organised and regulated Irish societal structures (Inglis, 2003; O'Connor, 1998; Byrne, 1997; Inglis, 1987). While the teenage girls frequently distanced themselves from the values of patriarchy, the ideals of patriarchy maintained its governing power over contemporary cultural imaginations of what it means to be a woman in Ireland. From solid forms of patriarchy girls are governed by the disembodied forms of patriarchy.

Furthermore, the party was a space where teenage girls' bodies were judged, evaluated and rated by other girls. During the party gaining the title of a 'good-looking girl' ensured that the girls climbed the social hierarchy ladder; the girl would be surrounded by admirers thus expanding her social influence and social circle. In sum, the party space very little to do with having fun but rather mainly focused on the games of displaying one's body for public judgment also judging other girls' bodies and appearance. None of the teenage girls engaged in a critique of such practices or talked with frustration or irritation about the established norms and rules that were associated with entering the party space. Being identified as 'fun', approachable and 'nice', all the opposites to the qualities of feminist critique, regulated female subject positions in a party space. As did the school space or town space, party space positioned teenage girls to reject any feminist critique (Scharff 2011, 2012; Baker 2010; Baker 2008; Rich 2005).

Dealing with inflicted flaws on female bodies through self-transformation: *'You have lovely skinny legs'*

Throughout this stage of the 'daily routine clock' interviews, the teenage girls emphasised that their bodies become a platform to connect and establish relationships with others. Being addressed primarily through their bodies, caused them to experience feelings of disappointment and confusion, which were transformed into self-doubt. In addition, it positioned the teenage girls to intensify the monitoring of their own bodies and conduct. Being subjectified by the contemporary discourses of neoliberalism, postfeminism and late modernity it comes as no surprise that the teenage girls felt compelled to self-transform themselves as a way of dealing with inflicted feelings of disappointment and confusion.

Bauman's (2000) argument on the importance of continuous speedy self-invention and self-making (DIY) in the times of late modernity could explain teenage girls' experiences. In late modernity, the rhetoric of entrepreneurship and DIY self-making become exemplary of the expressions of individual autonomy, freedom and choice. Moreover, scholars (Gill, 2008; McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004) argue that in late modernity speedy self-transformation and self-invention is presented as the primary method to tackle issues related to gender injustice. Hence, teenage girls automatically chose to solve their feelings of confusion and disappointment by identifying themselves as a problem that had to be transformed, for instance, through the intensified practices of self-monitoring.

In the interview with Brigid, she highlighted the pressure for teenage girls to become skinny as the primary solution to becoming successful. When asked why she thought it was like this, Brigid explained the way girls' bodies were a locus of public judgment and public concern that positioned girls to focus on their bodies.

> *Brigid was explaining to me about the current trends for teenage girls to become skinny. Brigid's voice sounds frustrated and confused at times.*

Irena: like in your opinion why is that (referring to teenage girls wanting to be skinny)?

Brigid: ammmmm (*gathers her thoughts*) it's like, it's like just how we were brought up like (*makes a statement*). Not even like intentionally but like … like whenever I go to see my grandparents, who live up North, they always … they like the first thing they'll say '*oh you like … you've lost a lot of weight'* … or *'she has gained loads of weight'* (*frowns her eyebrows in an expression of disgust*) or '*she is not really good at the minute'* and you know if like they said to my sister you know '*you are looking really skinny'* (*in a voice of admiration*), you know, '*you look great*!'. And then they say '*oh, you look the same'* (*in a flat emotionless voice*) to me.

It's kinda like ahhhhhhh (*indicating being deflated/disappointed*) ... you know?... '*She probably needs to do some laps or something, you know*' (*giggles*)...

(*stops to gather her thoughts; the tone changes from frustration to sadness*) But then like, when you are little, like you don't really think about … you don't really think about it 'till you are probably 10 or something. And then you really start to think '*Oh I really want to be skinny*'. But when you are little you don't (*makes a statement*).

And if, you know, if you have an older sister or your mum and like you might be watching them, and like watching my mum getting ready to go out or something. And she like '*Oh do I look fat in this*?' You know, '*Does this look alright and everything?*' and then they be like '*Oh you have little legs*', you know, like '*You have lovely skinny legs*' (*stressing the word 'skinny'*) and you just like '*Hmmm, what's so good about that?* (*making a confused face*).

And then you kinda learn - you want to be skinny (*makes a statement*). 'Cause that … that's the goals in life – is to be skinny (*makes a statement*). And it's just kinda like fed to girls when they are born to like (*gathers her thoughts*) … for ever (*in a sad voice; making a statement*). It's just skinny (*makes a statement*). It's just like you should be skinny and then you be successful (*she shakes her head in disagreement*)

Brigid's tone when she was illustrating the way her grandparents addressed her's and her sister's bodies was very significant in highlighting the regulatory techniques aimed at female bodies. The body that was skinny or working towards becoming skinny received a tone of admiration; and the body that was not marked by the effort to become skinny, as Brigid expressed previously saying '*Oh, you look the same*', received a tone of disappointment. Looking the same, in other words not changing, is emblematic of the regulatory technologies of late modernity and neoliberalism, which emphasise speedy and continuous self-invention and self-making as the primary methods for one's identity construction (Bauman, 2000; Beck, 1992). In other words, in late modernity, one's engagement in the practice of perpetual change represents one's ability to be a rational responsible and independent modern subject. Thus, as female bodies now stand for female identities, the perpetual change of their bodies or continuously expressing an effort to change their bodies become a measure of girls' ability to self-invent and obtain rationalisation.

Furthermore, during this phase of the interviews, while experiencing feelings of antagonism towards the current female beauty standards portrayed in the popular media culture, the teenage girls expressed that self-transformation (accepting one's flaws, loving one's body as it is, learning to be confident with one's looks) was the best solution to deal with the societal pressures directed at women. The teenage girls lived experiences were exemplary of what Gill and Elias (2014) noted in their discussion of the love your body advertising campaigns. Gill and Elias (2014) argued that being addressed by the current media discourses of the love your body advertising campaigns positioned women to believe that female pathologies (mostly created by contemporary society) could and should

be solved by educating girls to love themselves and develop confidence. While Gill and Elias (2014) viewed this type of education delivered by societal organisations (e.g. schools), during the interviews the teenage girls stated that girls needed to self-develop love for their bodies and their flaws. Thus, while the girls were critical of media messages, their concrete lived experiences were structured by values of neoliberalism, such as independence and self-reliance. Consequently, showing their ability to self-educate to love their 'inherently unlovable' bodies allowed them to display their embracement of neoliberal values. Self-love indicated girls' ability to invest in themselves and their bodies, to display to others that they regarded themselves to be important for themselves. This, in turn, intensified self-surveillance of their bodies while being disguised by the rhetoric of love and acceptance.

Conclusion

This data analysis chapter section focused on exploring the regulatory techniques and regimes that structured teenage girls lives. The teenage girls' narratives revealed that disembodied form of patriarchal power regulated teenage girls' everyday conduct. The findings show that individual teenage girls understood 'appropriate' femininity as interchangeably linked with the female body. However, self-controlling, self-monitoring and self-regulating practices were narrated as empowering and displaying female confidence. Such teenage girls' narratives are emblematic of neoliberal and postfeminism and discourses of body confidence (Gill and Elias, 2014; Gill, 2007). Since such regulatory power disguised itself through narratives of female empowerment and agency, and became a disembodied patriarchal power, the teenage girls were unable to critique or reject this power. Moreover, throughout the teenage girls' narratives, it became evident that the objectification of their bodies reached new fields of surveillance: from spaces in town to school spaces, resulting in even more intense self-control and self-monitoring of their everyday habitus. The teenage girls monitored, transformed and self-objectified their bodies so those bodies could be judged and gazed by peer boys. However, gaining boys' attention became an accessory that enabled the girl to gain higher status. Due to the collision culture, traditional values of sociability became utilised for individual aims resulting in sociability as a strategy rather than deep emotional bond and connection. At a party, in school or in town, the teenage girls displayed themselves and their bodies so to expand and gain a wider social group but not for the purpose of bonding but rather for individual ends (e.g. popularity and higher status). Hence, the following data analysis chapter section will focus on exploring three dominant self-control practices of teenage girls and the issues of contemporary female surveillance as female privilege.

B. FEMININITY AS A BODILY PROPERTY IN GIRLS' DAILY PRACTICES: PRACTICES OF SELF-MONITORING, SELF-SURVEILLANCE AND SELF-TRANSFORMATION

Introduction

In the previous data analysis chapter section, I explored the way the teenage girls individually understood and negotiated definitions of 'appropriate' femininity. In this analysis chapter section, I aim to unravel how their understandings of 'appropriate' femininity operate in their daily practice. Previous data analysis chapter sections illustrated that the teenage girls understood 'appropriate' femininity as always being associated with a female body that is continuously self-monitored, self-regulated and self-controlled; and such practices were interpreted by the girls as a sign of female empowerment. Therefore, I am interested in exploring the way understandings of 'appropriate' femininity are experienced and translated into the teenage girls' construction of their female identity. Also, I want to explore how the girls sustain or resist the appropriate femininity construct and what discursive language they employ to do so.

I look at three daily practices of teenage girls, which are as follows: doing their makeup, exercise and diet. Not only were these daily practices carried out by each teenage girl in the study, but also these practices are highlighted by the girls as the key sources of feminine identity. I utilise Foucault's (1984) term, 'regime of truth' as a conceptual tool to explore how the meaning of appropriate femininity is constructed and established. Thus, I aim to unravel how the regimes of makeup, beauty and staying fit play out in the teenage girls' daily lives. To guide my analysis, I pose the following questions: *what kind of truth is said about the practice of makeup, female beauty and female exercise? What kind of discourses are employed to make claims about these matters? How do those discourses differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate female practises of makeup, beauty and fitness?*

The girls in the interviews were seen to be struggling with their emancipation into a very ambivalent form of freedom. Through the rhetoric of neoliberalism and 'can do', they had internalised an agentic self-identity. However, there was tension between this and the high demands that this placed, in terms of having to negotiate the travails of self-construction, in the absence of cohesive, concrete group and a lack of supports - other than evanescent friendship groups. It was revealed that the girls struggled with the stress of this situation, of lacking supports, and being awash in a sea of discourse and abstract societal expectations.

During this stage of the interviews, the teenage girls' narratives revealed that the 'can-do' and 'at-risk' feminine identity was the main framework applied when executing the 'appropriate' femininity. 'Can-do' femininity was marked by the qualities of neoliberal and postfeminist rhetoric: she is in charge of her own destiny, in control and managing the risks, capable and not complaining, not problematic and thus not a burden on anyone. Whereas 'at-risk' femininity is the girl that is problematic, a burden, victimised and in need of help, and unable to solve risks on her own. Teenage girls' bodies and their physical appearances determined if a teenage girl belonged to the 'can-do' or 'at-risk' camp. Located within the current cultural understandings and representations of women (and their worth) and always linked with their bodies and their looks (Jhally et al., 2010; Orbach, 2010; McRobbie, 2009; Gill 2008b; Ringrose, 2006; Bordo, 2003; Wolf, 1991), the teenage girls' accounts appear to echo the contemporary society's values.

Consequently, the teenage girls expressed feeling empowered to continuously self-surveil their bodies, 'freely' choosing to endlessly transform their physical appearance through makeup, exercise or diet. Wrapped in the rhetoric of postfeminism and neoliberalism self-surveillance of their bodies was understood as indicating effort in loving themselves. On the other hand, newly emerged advertising campaigns which encourage women to love their natural and real beauty (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011) created inner tensions and contradictions when the teenage girls aimed to fulfil the 'appropriate' feminine identity. Since these regulatory powers over the teenage girls' subjectivities were disembodied and invisible, the girls were unable to criticise this new disembodied form of patriarchal power. Practices of physical exercise were narrated by the girls as a choice; paradoxically the image that girls 'choice' to mould highly resembled heteronormative male desire. Similarly, practices of makeup were narrated as empowerment and the girls' choice to display 'their real beauty'. However, that 'real beauty' always had to be flawless, perfect and just at the right balance. While practices of diet were experienced as a burden, the girls questioned their choices of food rather than critiquing structural constraints imposed by the culture. Overall, disembodied patriarchal power discharged itself through the teenage girls' narrative of self-love and empowerment. The girls' bodies were highly regulated and monitored, and such practices were narrated as a choice and expressions of their self-love, resulting in even tighter and intensive self-surveillance and self-policing.

Knowing the rules of female beauty 'Like who got it right, who got it wrong'

During this stage of the interviews, it became apparent that all the teenage girls knew how to do makeup, what products to use and what they considered to be the best beauty products for their skin type, eye shape and so on. In addition, the girls had a strong sense of what kind of makeup looks suited them best, what kind of hairstyles according to them looked best on them, what fashion style complimented their body shape and expressed their personality. Moreover, they had an extensive knowledge of how to dress up the female body to make it comply with the current beauty norms.

When the teenage girls talked about makeup, recurrent discursive narratives emerged: makeup as a symbol for girls' efforts towards making themselves '*look nice*', and makeup as indicating that girls took time and effort to look after themselves. The following interview extract with Brigid illustrates the symbolic meaning of makeup.

> **Brigid**: Because I was like if I go to school without makeup then people would be like '*Oh, she not even bothering to look nice!*' (*in a voice of disbelief*) She is just kinda, you know? … looking the way she does. It feels like you are kinda expected to try (*collects her thoughts*) even though you are going to school.

Thus, makeup, while being imposed by the mass media consumer culture, became a tool for the teenage girls allowing them to publicly display their effort in improving and progressing not only their looks but their identity per se. Moreover, wearing makeup indicated that they considered themselves to be important and interested in themselves. On the other hand, girls who did not engage in practices of makeup were positioned as having a lack of pride and showing their vulnerability. Makeup became a source of the girls' honour and shame.

Consequently, the teenage girls who had an extensive knowledge about the contemporary norms of female beauty were able to take up a more powerful subject position among their peer girlfriends. First, teenage girls who had knowledge about makeup, as well as knowledge about what clothes suited different female body shapes, legitimised their critique and judgment of other female bodies and looks. In the following interview extract, Aine's narrative is emblematic of the contemporary media entertainment programmes targeted at the female audience, for instance, *What not to wear* TV program. These programmes encourage women to surveil other female bodies as a means of establishing social status, which eventually result in female antagonism (McRobbie, 2009; Roberts, 2007).

In this extract, Aine's voice is more confident and assured in herself in comparison to all of the interview.

Aine: I think it's interesting to see what they wear. (*gathers her thoughts*) like if the Oscars [movie awards in Hollywood] were on, you always want to see like what everybody is wearing. So I would go to see who is wearing what, like who got it right, who got it wrong

Irena: and how do you know when they got it 'right' or 'wrong'?

Aine: (*laughs*) ammmmm... 'right': they look nice (*makes a statement*). You know like … they look nice and the dress would look nice. 'Wrong': they just look (*gathers her thoughts*) like...like Lady Gaga sometimes she gets it wrong. Like you know like her crazy outfits *'Like what was she thinking?'*

Secondly, having an in-depth knowledge of makeup and being aware of the current rules regarding female beauty, enabled the teenage girls to feel authentic and individualistic. Consequently, the girls understood female authenticity as expressed through modification, beautification and transformation of a female body. They appeared to express a view that their reality is a continuous construction and in a state of flux, which is emblematic of Bauman's (2000) discussion on liquid modernity and its effects on individual identity. Female bodies became the main tool and a female asset in displaying one's embrace of the of perpetual change. Female bodies stood as a sign of a girls' ability to successfully manage the current cultural climate of hostility and individualism.

For instance, in the following interview extract with Tonya, she reasoned why certain coloured clothes did not suit her. When Tonya referred to wearing a yellow top, her choice of words illustrated the desire to display authenticity and individualism through the female beauty regime. At the same time, to display her authenticity and individualism, Tonya narrates that she needs to participate in a more intense self-surveillance ensuring that her feminine displays are meticulously refined and sophisticated through her application of knowledge about contemporary rules of fashion. While Tonya narrates her experiences as freely chosen it is evident that the disembodied patriarchal power structures her life.

Tonya's voice is determined and precise. During this extract, she makes definite statements.

Tonya: My hair colour wouldn't suit that because of the greeny-yellowy colour, or … Like, I don't think I can wear yellow, because of my hair (*giggles*) I don't know, I think yellow looks … My hair is ginger so I think yellow looks weird and kind of ginger … Just my opinion, I think yellow looks weird on gingers and then because my hair is kind of a yellowy colour at the end, I think my hair just blends in a little bit. You know? Kind of like, because it's kind of a blondish colour. But yeah, I know, I think some hair colours can't wear certain colours, and or like … So I think with dark brown hair, I think reds and blues not really good … I think like, people with blonde hair, I think like, bright blues, and like, I think red, again, looks good on them, you know? It's just kind of my opinion. I just think that. (*makes a statement*).

209

Likewise, in the interview with Shelly, while identifying herself as occupying a position of not following the current female beauty regime, she stated that girls' personality was expressed through the external female qualities: female body and her fashion style rather than female conduct. Focusing on styling girls' appearance was reasoned to express not only girls' sense of style but more importantly, represent girls' opinion. Above all, styling their bodies was understood as enabling girls to show themselves as they really are. It seems that the fashion and beauty industry ethos that persuades women to continuously beautify their bodies as a sign of empowerment (Jhally et al., 2010; Gill, 2007; Bordo, 2003), became internalised by the teenage girls and in turn narrated as a self-chosen practice. Once again, the disembodied patriarchal power was evident in Shelly's narrative.

> **Shelly:** Yeah. I think the best way to dress is for yourself (*stresses the word' yourself'*). Because like the way you dress expresses your personality and your style, your opinion, say. And if you were to dress a certain way to impress other people, that's not really you then (*in a disappointed voice*). So I feel you should dress the way you want to dress (*stresses the word 'you'*) because at the end of the day it really only matters to you..

In sum, knowledge about the rules of makeup and female fashion styles indicated that the teenage girls were interested in themselves. Moreover, knowing how to use makeup represented the girls' sense of self. Consequently, their identities were directly linked with girls' bodies that had to be marked with the possession of knowledge about the female beauty norms. These teenage girls' practices are exemplary of the power of contemporary media advertising campaigns that encourage women to become important to themselves through expressions of self-surveilling conducts, such as dieting, exercise and endless consumption of beauty products (Gill and Orgad, 2015; Thompson and Donaghue, 2014; Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011). Moreover, as noted by Gill (2008b), current media advertising campaigns make a direct link between females' bodies and females' worth, positioning women to associate their value with the possession of slim, sexualised and continuously beautified bodies. Overall, this stage of the interviews revealed that the teenage girls had a deep understanding of the hostile contemporary culture that women need to navigate. Thus, the girls viewed themselves as the only source of security and stability, and could only rely on themselves.

Practices of makeup 'Gosh, I should put my makeup on'

When reflecting on their daily routine, the teenage girls stated that they engaged in the daily practice of doing their makeup. Moreover, the everyday habitual activity of putting on makeup was understood as a personal choice and a practice that gave them the confidence to feel good about themselves for

themselves. On occasions when they did not wear makeup, they stated feeling disgusted with themselves, worried and anxious about their looks. Thus, while narrating their independence when engaging with practices of makeup, non-conformity to such practices resulted in inner personal emotional distress. Interestingly, the teenage girls from the co-educational school (School No. 2) stressed the importance of makeup when entering the school space in comparison to girls from a girls' only school (School No. 1). It could be argued that the postfeminist masquerade (McRobbie, 2009) was more significant to teenage girls who entered the school space which was shared with their peer boys. Being identified as the winners in the educational sectors by the dominant discourses (Pomerantz, et al., 2013; Harris, 2011; Currie, et al., 2009), teenage girls were 'obliged to be free' (Rose, 1999) to emphasise their feminine habitus within the shared school space so as to maintain their feminine identity and not to appear as a threat to their peer boys.

Overall, when narrating the practices of makeup, the teenage girls interviewed in this study utilised the 'can-do' (Harris, 2004) female subject position, the discursive language of postfeminism and neoliberalism (McRobbie, 2009; Gill, 2007). For instance, in the interview with Brigid, she expressed that she did not feel obliged to wear makeup, for example, when entering the school space. Nevertheless, not wearing makeup evoked personal feelings of disgust and, as Brigid stated, '*wouldn't feel great*'.

> *Brigid's voice sounds sad in this extract. When talking about the skin on her face, Brigid's tone is full of disgust and self-judgment.*

> **Irena**: how would you feel if you didn't wear makeup?

> **Brigid**: ammmmm... about I'd say half a year ago I probably like never ever wear makeup (*stresses words 'never ever'*). 'cause my skin was quite bad, well it wasn't even that bad (*stresses the word 'that'*) but I felt it was really really bad (*stresses the word 'bad'*). So I'd felt really just disgusting like all day (*stresses the world 'all day'*), you know, having no makeup on. Now it's not … I could go to school without my makeup but I mean … you know … I wouldn't feel great (*stresses the word 'great'*) but I wouldn't feel like '*Gosh, I should put my makeup on*.' (*giggles*)

As postfeminist rhetoric emphasises that the female power emerges from the female body (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011; Gill, 2007), refusing to engage in practices of beautifying the female body resulted in Brigid feeling disgusted with herself and her appearance. At the same time, being addressed as subjects of capacity and as beneficiaries by the mainstream media discourses (McRobbie, 2009), positioned Brigid to view herself as a capable and empowered young woman when deciding to wear or not to wear makeup.

Thus, while making their bodies complicit with the prescribed heteronormative female beauty norms, these types of practices were narrated by the teenage girls as a personal choice, resulting in the disguise of the patriarchal powers. On the other hand, the girls who did not participate in the beauty regime were governed by emotions of self-disgust. Kilbourne (2010) notes that media advertising persuades young girls that to constitute as a female, young girls need to aim to be beautiful. Thus, from an early age, a female learns that she needs to spend an enormous amount of time, effort and money to strive to achieve the 'beauty' image and feel guilty and ashamed when she fails. Overall, it became evident that media images constructed the teenage girls' everyday lived experiences.

The collision of Love Your Body discourse and postfeminist sensibilities

Moreover, the teenage girls often expressed the struggle between balancing the values of love your body discourse (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011) and the values of postfeminism (Gill, 2007). As the rhetoric of love your body discourse urges girls to love themselves as they are without a need to beautify themselves (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011), the teenage girls' daily practise of putting on makeup resulted in inner tensions and conflicts. Such an anomic culture positioned the teenage girl to be constantly self-doubtful. This struggle was evident in Helen's accounts about her experience of makeup. During the interview, Helen continuously emphasised that she was confident in her looks. Nevertheless, when it came to makeup, Helen stated that she felt contradicted about this female practice.

> *In this extract Helen's voice is more than usually timid; also, she stopped to gather her thoughts more frequently.*

Irena: And do you like feel any different when you put on makeup?

Helen: Umm it does kind of, I dunno it's umm, like I don't like saying this because I know that like it's not like uh, like it does kind of make you feel a little umm more umm okay about yourself (*stresses the word 'okay'*). You know it kind of makes you look, "*I have makeup on*", I look a bit better. You know it's okay like I don't have to worry about myself but then when you don't have makeup on I feel a little bit more self-conscious

Irena: You say 'I don't really like saying that'? (*in an inquiring tone*)

Helen: Oh like I don't … I don't like saying that if I feel like I'm self-conscious without makeup. Umm no I, I, like I don't like saying that '*I feel self-conscious without makeup'*. Like I don't like, like it's not, I kind of umm if someone else says that, I would be like '*Why*?', you know? But it does. Like it's true, you know. I don't like saying that it is true but it is true that it makes you feel self-conscious like when you don't have makeup on.

Helen's choice of words '*I don't like saying this*' is particularly revealing in illustrating the collision of contradictory discursive values aimed at the contemporary female subject. On the one hand, addressed by the current love your body discourses, Helen is encouraged to embrace her natural body. On the other hand, located within postfeminist and neoliberal values, which advocate that the female body and the display of a continuous effort in making the female body comply with the heteronormative female beauty standards stand for female identity per se (McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004; Bordo, 2003), and positions Helen to experience personal feelings of worry for not taking time and effort to beautify her body. Thus, while the pressure to transform their bodies through practices of makeup originates from the contemporary society and its values, situated within values of neoliberalism, mainly its focus on individualism and individual responsibility, positions the teenage girls to experience personal feelings of worry or disgust when not participating in the beauty regime.

The 'Just-right' look

During this stage of the interviews, the teenage girls frequently stated that it was important for them to strike the right balance between having '*too much makeup*' and makeup that was *Just-right*'. The emphasis on '*Just-right*' makeup is emblematic of multiple and simultaneously contradictory discourses aimed at the contemporary female subject (Murphy and Jackson, 2011; Jackson and Westrupp, 2010; Gill, 2007). A female is asked to beautify her body through the consumption of cosmetic products (Jhally et al., 2010), while on the other hand the same female is encouraged to embrace her natural beauty and bare it all (Murphy and Jackson, 2011; Gill and Elias, 2014).

Thus, the '*Just-right*' makeup looks were frequently narrated by the teenage girls as being the '*natural look*'. Ironically, the '*natural look*' was never about being natural. The '*natural look*' had to adhere to the contemporary heteronormative female beauty standards. Specifically, the requirement for girls to display flawless beauty (Gill and Elias, 2014; Jhally et al., 2010). Kilbourne (2010) highlights that media images are continuously being photoshopped or constructed through computer programmes to erase any model's flaws. Nevertheless, women are persuaded that through the right consumption of beauty products they will be able to attain the image on the screen.

Moreover, looking flawless was frequently conceptualised by teenage girls as being the real you. For instance, in the interview with Lisa, she expressed that she liked when girls showed their real beauty, as Lisa said, '*how you really look*'. However, Lisa emphasised that she would not go out without makeup on the occasions when she had '*loads of spots*' or her skin was '*really red*'. Thus, wearing makeup was obligatory for those girls who did not meet the female beauty standards of flawlessness. Such teenage girls' narratives are not surprising given the current media advertising campaigns aimed

at women. Models in these media advertising campaigns, for instance, *Dove Real Beauty Campaign*, are said to represent real women and their natural beauty that all women are encouraged to aspire to (Murphy and Jackson, 2011; Gill and Elias, 2014). However, Gill and Elias (2014) highlight that 'real female beauty' in these advertising campaigns is still constructed under special studio lighting and with the use of professional makeup. Consequently, young girls are persuaded to believe that real and natural female beauty is the beauty that is flawless.

> **Irena:** Do you feel any different when you wear makeup?
>
> **Lisa:** Not really, like … I don't know, like I … I don't know if suddenly one day I'm really red or I have loads of spots I'm like '*Oh my god! I am putting makeup on'* (*in a voice of panic*) But I feel like, I don't know … not really, it's not like I am more confident or not. I think I am the same with makeup or without it.
>
> **Irena:** Do you think it's important for the girls to wear no makeup?
>
> **Lisa:** I don't know. I think like everybody should know how you are like, I feel like, I mean, everybody should know how you look ... I don't know how to say. There is nothing wrong with wearing makeup. It even looks so nice (*stresses the word 'nice'*).

As a result, being dominated by the need to be 'flawless' in their 'naturalness', the teenage girls experience hatred and disgust for their bodies when those bodies do not meet the represented 'real' images of female beauty.

Negotiating the Beauty regime

At this stage of the interviews, it became apparent that the negotiation of the beauty regime was very diverse. However, three key subject positions became evident from the teenage girls' narratives: mastering the 'natural look' position, 'looking nice' but not 'done up' position and lastly 'self-same' position.

Some teenage girls in the study negotiated the regime of makeup by showing their effort in mastering the skills so as to achieve the 'natural look'. Executing the 'natural look' allowed them to actively display their effort in balancing the contradictory discursive values aimed at the female beauty standards, such as being flawless but not 'done up', displaying interests in themselves and their bodies but not being obsessed with their appearances. For example, in the interview with Lisa, Lisa highlighted the importance of having the skills to execute the 'natural look'. When narrating her experience with makeup, Lisa constructed the 'natural look' as something to be admired and commended.

Lisa: I think that people are also beautiful without makeup. Like you are natural, that's the way you are. and I think-, I don't know. I like that, you know? when you show how you really look, you know-you are natural. I don't know … (*giggles*)

Other teenage girls engaged in the regime of makeup by displaying their effort in making themselves '*look nice*' while not being '*too done up*'. For instance, in the following interview extract with Sophie, she emphasises the importance of '*natural skin*' at the same time ensuring to put effort and time into '*looking nice*'. Interestingly, by positioning other girls as being dependent, thus powerless, without having a full face of makeup on, Sophie is able to view her own practice of makeup as non-problematic, and to some degree celebratory.

Sophie's voice is calm and collected. Her tone changes when she mentions her friend's experience of being without makeup.

Sophie: I'd rather be happier with my own natural skin than have to feel like I need to cover it up to be pretty. And some of my friends would be really dependent (*stresses the word 'really'*) on their foundation and they wouldn't, they would refuse to go to town (*stresses the word 'refuse'*) or anything if they didn't have makeup. And if we were in school and then boys were there the first thing (*stresses the word 'first'*) that would come into their head was, "*I'm not wearing any makeup I don't want them to see me*! (*in a panicked voice*). And they wouldn't even say hello you know, if we … if we knew them or anything.

Um, so I … like I would wear eye makeup and you know I'd … I like getting ready and I like kind of making an effort into looking nice (*stresses the word 'nice'*) and then do my hair um and pick accessories and then yeah, I'm ready to go.

Lastly, other teenage girls occupied a 'self-same' position. Millie, for instance, during the interview frequently stated that she found it easier to do the same makeup, wear the same clothes to school, have the same look when going into town. Millie's choice of word '*easier*' is particularly interesting in the following interview extract. Millie's narrative and her emphasis on the word '*easier*' indicate what it means to be a girl in contemporary Ireland and the pressures it brings. Consequently, Millie actively decided to habitually execute the same beauty routine so as to avoid negotiating daily the female beauty regime.

Irena: how do you make decisions about like '*I'm going to wear this eyeliner today*'?

Millie: I just do the same makeup every day (*in a flat voice; making a statement*). I just find it easier instead of trying something different.

In sum, even though the teenage girls stated being able to occupy different subject positions (that depended on the immediate context, the girls' access to discourses and the girls' ability to claim space in knowledge production) when engaging with the female beauty regime, the female body was always

in need of regulation and transformation. The female body appears to be continuously conceptualised as in need of improvement and enhancement, which is emblematic of the current media representations of women and their bodies (Gill and Orgad, 2015; Thompson and Donaghue, 2014; Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011; Jhally et al., 2010; Jhally, 2009).

Practices of exercise 'Just trying a little bit to keep fit'

During this stage of the interviews, all the teenage girls stated that they were confident in their looks and were happy with their body size. Nevertheless, most teenage girls' daily routine involved some form of exercise or self-disciplined physical activity. When asked for the reasons they exercised, they resorted to the discursive language of postfeminism and neoliberalism, such as narratives of doing it for their own pleasure, to feel good about themselves, '*to be fit*' or '*not to become fat*'. For instance, in the interview with Shelly, she said that she exercised six days a week because she found it relaxing.

> *Shelly's voice is confident and determined. She makes clear statements without questioning her choices for exercise even though throughout the interview she frequently questioned people's conduct.*

> **Irena:** So, how many – how many days per week do you exercise?

> **Shelly:** ammm I'm dancing three days, then gym three days as well (*makes a statement*).

> **Irena:** That's a lot, isn't it? (*surprised voice*)

> **Shelly:** Yeah. I enjoy it like. Relaxing, no stress. just... I enjoy it. (*makes a statement*)

Interestingly, Shelly feels the need to state 'no stress' as to reiterate her position of 'can-do' femininity and avoid being challenged or questioned about her practice of physical exercise.

Similarly, in the interview with Cara, staying fit was understood as a positive daily female habitus. It also allowed Cara to position herself as a 'can-do' female subject rather than a subject 'at-risk', or as Cara expressed it *'obsessed with fitness'*. Even though Cara's week included a daily exercise activity, Cara herself viewed it as not doing '*much exercise*'. Once again, identifying oneself as not doing too much exercise allowed Cara to position herself as a subject that is '*not obsessed*', thus not 'at-risk'.

> **Cara**: ammmm... I'd actually watch fitness ammm videos. Yeah... I kinda like. I probably do exercise. I would do this one on YouTube and it's like exercise it's like for your abs and I watch that and I'd do it myself just like maybe three days a week. Just to keep fit, you know? I'm not obsessed with fitness or anything. Just... I do that. I play sports. I play tennis, I play like every Wednesday. Like I have a group lesson and every second Saturday I have a private lesson but apart from that I don't do much exercise. Just trying a little bit to keep fit

Many teenage girls stated that they exercised to be fit. The teenage girls understood the practices of exercise as self-chosen daily habitus rather than a regulatory gender regime. Their desire to stay fit appeared to be a part of the regime of becoming a rational subject (Rose, 1999); in this case, a subject who makes rational decisions for one's own body and health. Thus, engaging with the regime of staying fit allowed the teenage girls to participate in the discourse of Successful Girls (Pomerantz et al., 2013) and Girls as Winners in the current culture (McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004). Consequently, it allowed them to occupy the 'can-do' female subjectivity (Harris, 2004), which continuously was reasoned by them to be the 'appropriate' femininity. From the teenage girls' narratives, it appears that the pressure for self-control and self-regulation is not only expanding but also intensifying. Self-surveillance not only seeps into different spaces but also the girls themselves need to spend more time during the day to engage in self-surveillance.

Consequently, when participating in the regime of staying fit, recurrently the 'can-do' (Harris, 2004) female subject position enabled the teenage girls to view themselves as being more powerful than other girls. For instance, in the interview with Holly, she differentiated between girls who chose to be fit ('can-do') and girls who felt obliged to be fit ('at-risk'). The girls who '*had to exercise; couldn't eat this or that*' was positioned as being obsessed and crazy, thus problematic and irrational. On the other hand, girls who freely chose to '*tone it up*' were positioned as unproblematic and to some degree celebratory. In other words, for teenage girls, executing self-control has to be done not only through self-regulation of their bodies, but performing this self-regulation as effortless relaxation. Thus, the regulatory power becomes even deeper disguised making this power into a disembodied form of power.

> **Irena:** And would there be other girls that would say, "*I'm not bothered by it* [staying fir]?"
>
> **Holly:** Yeah, like there is me and maybe like one or two of my other friends that would be like '*pfff I'm not really bothered,*' you know?
>
> It's just, it's not really a big deal to like lose so much weight and you know go to the beach and stuff like that, but then there are some girls that would look completely fine they wouldn't even be fat or chubby or anything like they call themselves. But they'd be obsessed with you know, '*Oh I have to stay on my diet, and I have to*' … you know like exercise.
>
> And I suppose maybe it's - maybe it's because I already like you know go for walks and run. You know maybe it's because I already like I'm already kinda active that I don't really care for that kind of stuff you know.
>
> **Irena:** And if you weren't running? Would you think you'd kinda go, "*Oh, I should do something*?"
>
> **Holly:** Um. I suppose if all my friends were around me were going on about you know like exercising and stuff like that, then yeah I probably would. But I wouldn't be like crazy about

217

it like, '*Oh my God like I have to you know like I can't eat this, I can't eat that you know.*' I wouldn't be like that. I would just you know do it maybe to like tone up or just get like fit for the summer I suppose.

Interestingly, only teenage girls from School No.1 (girls only school) told me that the regime of staying fit intensified coming towards Summer. Several teenage girls from School No.1 (eight teenage girls) talked about '*the Summer Body*' or '*Beach Body*' that their girlfriends and themselves were aiming to achieve. When I inquired about this female practice in School No. 2, I received blank or confused faces from the teenage girls. The girls from School No. 2 did not seem to partake in or be aware of this kind of practice. On the other hand, the girls from School No. 1 revealed that having '*the Summer Body*' was an essential element when entering the beach space. Since the girls from School No.1 did not engage with peer boys daily, the beach space became a new space where they were seen and gazed at by the opposite sex.

Thus, while narrating the regime of staying fit as a personal choice, having '*the Summer Body*' ensured that the teenage girls would attract boys' attention and consequently be admired by them. The pressure to attract boys' attention once again was narrated as a choice and something that girls freely chose to do so. The teenage girls' narratives were emblematic of the prevalence of the disembodied patriarchal power in their everyday lives. Similarly, to the party space (p. 201), at the beach space boys' attention acted as an accessory to gain individualist ends, but it still constructed teenage girls' subject positions even though the girls narrated their lived experiences as liberated and unconstrained. While the teenage girls did not emphasise the demand to express sexiness (Gill and Orgad, 2015; Thompson and Donaghue, 2014; Evans et al., 2010; Radner, 1993), the desire to possess a fit, slim and beautified body appeared to be paramount. Located within the context of the current media advertisements and their rendering of postfeminist and neoliberal rhetoric (Gill, 2008b, 2007), subjecting their own bodies and continuously aiming to transform them coincidently in accordance to heteronormative male-arousing images become constructed as a normative and celebratory female practice. Through such practices, the patriarchal power transforms itself into a disembodied form of power.

For instance, during this stage of the interviews, Holly stated that she viewed the practice of staying fit as a personal female choice. The regime of staying fit was understood as freely chosen, and fit female bodies just happen to gain male attention. Nevertheless, Holly highlighted that the pressure to stay fit was more intense for girls than boys. However, positioning the teenage girls as in charge of their sexuality to attract male attention, Holly was able to sustain the idea that girls were the winners and successors in the current society rather than being governed by the patriarchal ideals. In sum, Holly's account revealed the prevalence of the collision culture: the way contemporary discourses of

individualism and postfeminism (McRobbie, 2009; Gill, 2007, 2008) were intertwined with the traditional Irish values of patriarchy (Inglis, 2008, 1998; O'Connor, 2008, 1998; Byrne, 1997).

> **Irena**: Do you think it's the same pressure for girls and boys [to be fit]?
>
> **Holly**: No (*makes a statement*)
>
> **Irena**: Who has more?
>
> **Holly**: Girls have way (*stresses the word 'way'*) more pressure on them like to look a certain way, you know, to dress a certain way, act a certain way (*in a voice of disapproval and anger*). Just like, you know, especially, you know, while, they're young because … yeah, just because, you know, like you're young. You're obviously not married. You know if you are to impress guys you have to be attractive and stuff like that, there are certain things that, you know, you would do to make guys attracted to you so, yeah… (*her voice became sad and disappointed*).

The collision of these contradictory ethics resulted in the teenage girls feeling anxious, sad and disappointed sometimes even angry (evidently seen in their tone of voice when narrating their experiences). While experiencing all this range of emotions the girls appeared unable to express their frustrations explicitly. Their 'inability' to express a complaint could be due to popular narratives about young girls. These popular narratives persuade young girls that they have nothing to complain about and to a great degree should be grateful for the support they have received (Pomerantz et al., 2013; Scharff, 2011, 2012; Baker, 2010; McRobbie, 2009; Baker, 2008; Rich, 2005). This study's findings are in support of the previous studies (Pomerantz et al., 2013; Scharff, 2012), which concluded that being addressed as subjects of capacity and beneficiary, positions young women to abandon any feminist critique to maintain the 'can-do' identity.

Practices of diet - 'It's like twisted really'

During this stage of One-to-One interviews, the regulatory regime of diet was highlighted by many teenage girls. In comparison to the regime of staying fit viewed as a personal female choice, the regime of diet was experienced as a burden. Nevertheless, being aware that the female conduct and female bodies were always judged and evaluated by the public gaze (Banyard, 2010; Jhally et al., 2010; Orbach, 2010; Attwood, 2007; Levy, 2006), the teenage girls expressed that they felt obliged to participate in practices of self-control through monitoring what and how much they ate.

In the following interview extract with Brigid, she illustrates the pressure for girls when it comes to eating in the school's dining room. Brigid narrative, like many teenage girls in the study, illustrates how the girls are positioned to carve their daily habitus under the regime of liquidity and ambiguity. Moreover, her narrative shows the ever-changing meaning of 'appropriate' femininity, and thus the

need to avoid defining the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity for this study. Brigid expressed the confusion and frustration that girls experienced being positioned by different values of 'skinny'. On the one hand, monitoring one's food intake was seen as problematic because it potentially suggested having an eating disorder. On the other hand, not restricting one's food intake positioned teenage girls to be questioned and critiqued for not controlling one's body size and shape in accordance with the contemporary standards of female slimness. Thus, when it came to practices of diet, female subject positions of 'can-do' and 'at-risk' (Harris, 2004) femininity intertwined, resulting in what Brigid insightfully observed as '*it's twisted*'.

> **Brigid**: Like if I'm in the dining room having lunch with people like I always like, I'm not one of the skinny people in the year, you know I'm just kinda normal. So, if I'm in the dining room and I have like you know the main thing, dessert or soup and bread and everything- people will be like '*Why is she doing that? She's gonna get like really fat!*'. You know. But then there be a girl beside me, who's eating the exact some but she is skinny and they all be '*Oh, she is so lucky.*' You know? And then there be people that are like skinny and they'll eat just like a bowl of soup and people will go '*Oh god! She is definitely anorexic or something*'. Maybe she is just having a bowl of soup, like it's perfectly normal for lunch is to have soup, but then it's … you must eat loads or else you are … you got an eating disorder or if you eat too much and you are not skinny then '*Oh you need to watch your weight! You should probably like go and do few laps and then go to the gym*', you know?. And then say if there is someone who is maybe a little overweight and then they go and they just like you know ...maybe like their main thing and soup people will think '*Oh god! Why? Why is she eating so much?*', you know?, when really she is not. She is just eating like and that's ok. So, it's like twisted really.

Existing in the regimes of ambiguity, where multiple and contradictory discourses coexist, where stable forms are replaced with invisible and anomic forms, positioned the teenage girls to become self-monitoring self-surveilling subjects who are continuously preoccupied with their physical bodies and their appearances while experiencing feelings of frustration confusion and disappointment.

Eating disorders - The collision of 'can-do' and 'at-risk' femininity

During this stage of the interviews, the collision of 'can-do' and 'at-risk' (McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004) femininity was most evident in the teenage girls' experiences with eating disorders. While none of the teenage girls who took part in the research identified themselves as having eating disorders, I was shocked that nearly half of the sample (six teenage girls) stated being directly impacted by their friend's or family member's eating disorder. Witnessing their friends or sisters struggling with eating disorders, they stated they experienced feelings of constant worry, annoyance (mostly with the contemporary pressures directed at women to become skinny), sadness, confusion and despair. The

following interview extracts with Lisa and Aime illustrate some of the emotional narratives the teenage girls shared about their friend's eating disorders.

Lisa's voice is full of sadness. During the extract, she was holding back the tears.

Lisa: It's like really annoying cause again [In my country] as well I kinda have a really good friend and she went through all of this and she was in a, how do you say? In a hospital like for a- for one month and everything (*stresses the word 'month'*). And then she [a friend in Ireland]- again (*stresses the word 'again'*) and like it just really annoys me (*stresses the word 'annoys'*) how people are now, you know? (*holding back the tears*) like not annoy me obviously though. It's terrible, like, everybody is, like they think, I don't know, (*giggles with nervousness*) like the body is much more important than everything else, like, and I just don't share that opinion and I think it's really sad (*stretches the word 'sad'*).

Aime's voice is calm and reflective.

Irena: Are you worried?

Aime: Yeah, we were worried for a while like me and my friends were (*making a statement*). Yeah, it is cause you're just like … you don't know what to do (*in a voice of confusion*).

However, being addressed by current discourses of postfeminism and neoliberalism as subjects of capacity and beneficiary (Pomerantz et al. 2013; Currie et al., 2009; McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004) positioned teenage girls to manage the risk of eating disorders among themselves rather than seek adult help. Consequently, eating disorders became a self-managing risk so as to maintain the identity of 'can-do' (Harris, 2004) femininity. Therefore, monitoring, observing and watching other girls' conduct – from eating habits to changes in other girls' body size – became a daily practice amongst teenage girls' groups. Aime, for instance, stated that while being worried about her friend's eating disorder for some time, resorted to deal with the situation by observing and monitoring the friend's conduct.

Aime sounds relieved and in control.

Aime: but now like I think she's like … I've seen her eat more and stuff so you know. … and if I did see it getting anywhere worse, like I'd definitely go (*stresses the word 'definitely'*) and say it to her, talk to her.

Similarly, Lisa narrates her way of dealing with the friend's eating disorder by engaging in practices of '*watching*' the friend and her eating habits.

Lisa: And now, like, we like, every time she like she felt like bad, like I, I told her, '*If you have a problem and if you feel like talking, come to me. I'll try to make you feel better*'. And

she hasn't-well she didn't throw up and like and then every time she'd eat a lot or anything, she came to me and I was, '*Well, it's fine then. Look, I'll watch you and if you want me I'll tell you stop eating that cause you've eaten so much'.* (*starts to cry*)

These types of observational practices were understood as allowing the teenage girls to maintain a friendship and support the girlfriend with the eating disorder rather than identify that girlfriend as a problem. The following interview extracts with Lisa and Violet illustrate the way 'can-do' (Harris, 2004) female subjectivity could be stripped from a girl with an eating disorder. For instance, Violet's choice of language was unusual when she mentioned revealing her sister's eating disorder during the family dinner. Violet stated: '*Audrey has something she should say'.* Audrey, Violet's sister [names are changed], was positioned from wanting to say, in other words 'can-do' (Harris, 2004) femininity, to '*should say'.*

> *Violet is holding back the tears.*

> **Irena:** You mentioned about that you asked your sister to tell your parents? How did that happen?

> **Violet:** She was … kind of said it, almost accidentally that she … she, you know, she doesn't want (*stresses the word 'want'*) to eat. And I … I said to her '*She had to tell her parents. She had to tell our parents'* (*makes a statement*). She was kind like, '*I know I do, yes, okay.*' Anyway, we were at my house I … she didn't say it, so I said it, after the dinner. I was like, 'Audrey has something she should say' (*in a flat voice*).

Similarly, Lisa revealed that her friend with an eating disorder felt '*embarrassed*', '*stupid*' and out of control about her habits of eating; all the qualities that were in opposition to the 'can-do' (Harris, 2004) female subjectivity.

> **Lisa**: Yeah. Like she tells me that she feels so embarrassed. She's like, '*This is so stupid.*' But '*I just kind of like can't stop thinking about it and stuff*'. She feels so embarrassed and she obviously wants to stop it like. It's not like she doesn't think about it … she says like she wants to stop doing it.

Moreover, for the teenage girls revealing their friend's eating disorder to adults was a formidable option. In the interview with Aime, she referred to an occasion when her friend's eating disorder was revealed to a teacher. This act not only destroyed the girls' friendship but also left the other girls in a situation of limbo, one of not knowing about the progress of the girl with the eating disorder. Thus, to Aime revealing a friend's eating disorder firstly meant losing a friend. It also meant losing control of being able to help and manage the risk of a friend's eating disorder. Therefore, revealing a friend's

eating disorder potentially had double consequences: not only eradicating the friend's 'can-do' identity but also destroying one's own identity as 'can-do'.

> **Aime:** another one of my best-friends used (*stresses the word 'used'*) to be friends with another girl who was definitely anorexic (*stresses the word 'definitely'*), she said. And she went and told the teacher … and now that girl and her are not friends anymore (*in a voice of disbelief*) but … and the girl … we don't know does she … is she still anorexic now (*in a worried voice*)

On the other hand, while being positioned to provide the circle of support and simultaneously manage the risk of eating disorders amongst themselves, evoked feelings of guilt on occasions when the teenage girls did not notice the emergence of eating disorders in their social circle.

> **Violet**: I didn't realise! (*in choked voice*), and it makes me feel kind of guilty, like I should have realised! (*in a voice of confusion*) because this has happened before I should be able to see it, and I just don't (*in a sad voice*) and then you feel bad about it. But then again, sometimes I'm like, is it real, is it not? It's hard to tell (*in a flat but sad voice*).

Violet previously expressed that due to teenage girls' practices of 'fat talk' (Nichter, 2000) or periodic episodes of dieting, Violet felt it was '*hard to tell*' when eating disorders became a 'real' threat and needed to be disclosed to adults. The threshold between the 'real' eating disorders and 'not real' eating disorders was left to be negotiated by individual teenage girls even though they had no clear guides as to what a 'real' and a 'not real' eating disorder is. Consequently, while experiencing feelings of worry, anxiety and despair, the teenage girls were positioned to monitor other teenage girls' eating conduct. This resulted in sustaining the perpetual circle of surveillance: monitoring and continuously evaluating other teenage girls' habitus to sustain the 'appropriate', in other words 'can-do' (Harris, 2004), female identity.

Conclusion

This data analysis chapter section aimed to explore how an understanding of 'appropriate' femininity operated in the teenage girls' everyday lives through the analysis of some key themes revealed in their 'daily routine clock' interviews. Three key female practices that all teenage girls performed each day were examined: doing makeup, practices of exercise and practices of diet. All three practices were sustained and established through utilisation of postfeminist and neoliberal rhetoric, where the 'can-do' female identity was highlighted as the ultimate ideal. However, being addressed by the multiple and contradictory discourses by the mainstream media created inner tensions in the teenage girls' lives. Thus, while the girls went along with the pressures to continuously beautify their bodies even though they felt frustrated, angry and disappointed, they did not critique the current cultural arrangements. The solid forms of power that regulated women's lived experiences in Ireland are now being transformed into disembodied forms of powers: practices of physical exercise and practices of makeup were narrated by the girls as a choice, a choice that had to resemble the female image of the heteronormative male desire. Practices of diet, even experienced as a burden, were not rejected as the teenage girls questioned themselves and their food intake rather than critiquing structural constraints imposed by the culture. Overall, disembodied patriarchal power disguised itself through the new discursive language of female self-love and empowerment. Nevertheless, the findings in this chapter section show that for the teenage girls to speak up against the dominant discourses potentially meant destroying one's identity as the 'can-do' female. Hence, the findings suggest that the 'can-do' feminine identity needs to be inverted from 'managing risk on your own' to 'managing risk by developing a critical outlook and speaking up'.

III. SECOND STAGE OF ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEWS

TEENAGE GIRLS NEGOTIATE 'APPROPRIATE' FEMININITY ON SNSS

Introduction

To start the analysis of the third stage of the interviews, I firstly focus on describing how the teenage girls understood and navigated individual social media platforms. It is important to explore these elements to grasp how teenage girls intersubjectively experience the regulation of their identity displays on Social Networking Sites (SNSs). Moreover, the purpose of focusing on the way teenage girls describe various SNSs is not to measure their knowledge about the social media platforms or if the teenage girls' understandings of SNSs settings are true. On the contrary, it is vital to get a sense of the girls' online worldview so as to identify which SNSs elements they view as regulatory for their online identity displays. Thus, in this data analysis chapter section, I pose the following questions to guide my process of analysis: *how do teenage girls narrate regulations of 'appropriate' feminine displays on SNSs? What kind of discursive language do teenage girls employ to narrate their SNSs experiences? What kind of a female subject is produced due to SNSs norms and regulations? What kind of power operates on SNSs in relation to female identity displays?*

I contextualise the teenage girls' narratives within the contemporary dominant discourses of late modernity, in particular, neoliberalism and postfeminist sensibility (Gill, 2007), that provide morals and ideals for one's identity realisations. I situate the teenage girls' SNSs experiences within Bauman's (1995, 2001) 'liquid modernity' and Beck's (1992) 'risk society' theorisation of identity construction in response to the current economic climate of uncertainty and globalisation. Hence, modern identities are viewed as a task that becomes an individual responsibility. Now entrepreneurial and DIY narratives penetrate people's lives, and people are increasingly asked to be flexible, adaptable and continuously strive to maximise one's capacities. The neoliberal rhetoric goes hand in hand with the postfeminist sensibilities (Gill, 2007) that emphasise the significance of the female body as a new female capital and locus of womanhood. Moreover, Rose (1999) asserts that the modern subject is continuously addressed as an active participant in one's life that is able to self-regulate. Therefore, Rose (1999) concludes that through technologies of self-inspection, self-problematisation, self-monitoring and confession, we are continuously evaluating our identities as per the criteria provided to us by others.

Thus, during this stage of interviews, the teenage girls viewed 'appropriate' female identity displays as expressed through self-managed, self-organised and beautified female bodies that had to be routinely presented in their SNSs confessions. Employing the language of 'can-do' (Harris, 2004) femininity, the teenage girls narrated their SNSs self-presentations as not bound by rules or norms, but freely chosen and executed for their own pleasure. However, the images that the girls presented on SNSs closely resembled the heteronormative male desire resulting in masking the prevalence of the patriarchal power on SNSs. Such processes disguised the prevalence of the patriarchal power from solid forms into disembodied forms of power, where regulatory power becomes invisible rendering any possibility of its critique.

Moreover, on SNSs patriarchal power discharged itself through the pedagogy of the 'Like' button as an affirmative and positive objectification of female bodies, transforming this patriarchal power into disembodied patriarchy. Since quantities and digits became extremely significant in representing one's entrepreneurial abilities on SNSs, the teenage girls sought and appreciated being gazed at, judged and evaluated by the SNSs audience. Thus, the girls' self-objectification on SNSs was viewed as a sign of their entrepreneurial skills; being objectified was desired and celebrated. Furthermore, as the Omniopticon surveillance on SNSs expanded in breadth and depth (many watching many all the time), presenting their SNSs identities required constant and deeply reflective labour so as not to be identified by the online as well as offline audience as a '*Bebo stunner*' – looking slutty and cheap. Due to the collision culture, the teenage girls' sexuality and their sexual presentations were still highly controlled and policed. However, such policing was not conducted for maintaining community's honour and avoiding shame, but rather for individual status and individual identity.

The expansion of Omniopticon surveillance results in, what I define as, 'laserscopic' surveillance – meaning, surveillance that cuts through all layers of the teenage girls' lives controlling and regulating everyday teenage girls' conduct. A laser device emits light coherently, spatially and temporarily through optical amplification enabling the device to cut through multiple surfaces in a very precise manner. Thus, I would argue that the laserscopic surveillance cuts through all layers of teenage girls' lives and their conduct by regulating female bodies through a 'Like' button. Thus, the teenage girls expressed feeling '*paranoid*', '*annoyed*' and '*fearful*' when they needed to present their identities on SNSs while narrating their online experiences as freely chosen so as to sustain their identities as 'can-do' femininity. Once again, the disembodied patriarchal power was evident in the processes of laserscopic surveillance.

The Catholic Irish society placed women in an impossible position, where, due to their engulfment by family, community and the Church, they had to deny their sexuality and agency, while conforming to the ideal of mothers and high fertility (Inglis, 2003; Byrne, 1999; O'Connor, 1998). In

contemporary society, the collision culture emerges, where the traditional and current values blend; and thus now, rather than being emancipated, girls continue to find themselves within a contradiction. Their construction of their self-identity for example on SNSs occurs through exchanging forms of capital (mainly in the form of images and representations of the self that will gain attraction from their audiences), to gain units of social recognition in the form of 'Likes' and 'Hearts'. However, the girls must engage in this artifice, while also maintaining a guise of authenticity. Social connections and girls' sociability become instrumental and strategic. The girls utilised their social relationships (evident though 'tagging') as a means for individual ends. Thus, the traditional values of bonding, belonging and sense of community maintained their importance but rather than being driven by a deep emotional connection, those values were now utilised as market tools echoing neoliberal consumer ethics.

Regulation of 'appropriate' femininity on SNSs

During this stage of the interviews, it became evident that two key factors determined how the teenage girls decided to present their identity on social media. They are as follows:

- The source of surveillance: potential and existing SNSs audience.
- The function and the algorithmic construction (the digital architecture) of the SNSs: how the audience could give its feedback to the teenage girls' SNSs content, what the main purpose of the SNSs platform was, and what the key in-built functions on that SNSs platform were.

Not surprisingly, the content that the teenage girls produced for a particular social media platform was rarely reuploaded on other social media platforms. At the time of the fieldwork (2013-2014), three leading SNSs platforms were most popular among the teenage girls: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (Table 2, p. 149). SnapChat was just in its infancy thus at the time it was not that widespread among teenage girls who participated in the research. Hence, this chapter section will mainly focus on exploring the teenage girls' narratives about Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Teenage girls narrating SNSs audience

Facebook audience as a 'Friends' list

As with the majority of the teenage girls' in the study, Facebook profiles were set on private (or semi-private) (School No. 1 – 12 teenage girls; School No. 2 – 8 teenage girls), and their individual Facebook 'Friends' list was understood as the main audience for their Facebook content. The girls' 'Friends' list predominantly consisted of people from their local social circle. Moreover, they

accepted people to their Facebook 'Friends' list if they knew the person even if they did not get along with that person offline. Occasionally the teenage girls accepted peers whom they saw in town or at a party even if they never spoke to each other.

Even though the Facebook audience functioned differently in comparison to the offline social circles that the teenage girls encountered, to a great extent, the Facebook audience resembled their offline world and the social circle in which they socialised. However, literature (boyd, 2014; Thumin, 2012) highlights that the critical difference on social media is 'context collapse' (boyd, 2014), which, according to boyd (2014:554), develops '… when people are forced to grapple simultaneously with otherwise unrelated social contexts that are rooted in different norms and seemingly demand different social responses.' For the teenage girls in this study, 'context collapse' (boyd, 2014) resulted in the constant negotiation of 'appropriate' identity displays so as to sustain their self-presentation as meeting the neoliberal requirements: coherent, authentic and stable. Correspondingly, the teenage girls stated feeling '*annoyed*' while simultaneously '*fearful*' when it came to their identity presentation on SNSs.

Moreover, the girls highlighted the importance of the potential Facebook audience when creating their Facebook content. They viewed the potential audience as someone who might search teenage girls' Facebook profiles in the hope of becoming 'Friends' on Facebook. Understanding that their digital identity is always traceable positioned the teenage girls to consider what content to upload on their Facebook page carefully. Literature notes that Omniopticon surveillance (Kelsey and Bennett, 2014; Bauman and Lyon, 2013; Jurgenson, 2013; Jensen, 2007) on SNSs, where the many watches the many, alters how one relates to others and oneself. These research findings indicate that teenage girls self-regulated their online presentation since many were watching many, but more importantly their self-regulation was due to the fact that one's SNSs identity presentations were permanently available to be watched by many. However, from the teenage girls' narratives, it became evident that dealing with the online surveillance, this became a habitual and embodied experience for them, resulting in neoliberal ethics being normalised. For instance, many times when I queried the girls about their thought process when uploading their social media content, I received blank or confused faces, or replies of '*I don't think there are so many rules*', '*I don't think about it much*' or '*I upload like and that's it*.'

Furthermore, the teenage girls regularly stated that the potential Facebook audience was not an imagined audience. The potential audience was mostly peer boys from their local social circle rather than strangers from any part of the world. Sophie, as did a number of girls in the study, explained to me how in her town Facebook became a new platform for teenagers to establish an intimate relationship. Such teenage girls' experiences are emblematic of the collision culture: the male gaze

228

plays a significant role in girls' lives. However, now the boys' attention is used as an accessory for individual girls' needs rather than legitimising girls' existence through solid and long-lasting relationships (e.g. marriage).

Sophie's voice is calm and collected.

Sophie: It's kind of different now than it used to be because a lot of relationships start off on Facebook, and yeah. Now people would, around [town name],-they'd see a picture of a girl they thought was pretty, and then they'd add her and start talking to her. Like if they'd never talked, or in town if they say, if they see a girl who they think is pretty they'll ask their friends '*what's her name?*', then they'll add her on Facebook that night and start talking to her, and then they'll get to know each other through Facebook and then … they meet up (*makes a statement*).

Sophie's tone of voice throughout this interview extract is illustrative of the established gender norms among the contemporary teenage group when initiating intimate relationships. Sophie was well aware of how this new practice functioned: boys gazed at pretty girls and girls had to accept that to start a 'friendship'. Accordingly, throughout Sophie's narrative, there were no examples of teenage girls' refusal or objection towards this new gender norm. Moreover, Sophie herself did not question or disapprove of the new practice even though during previous interviews she was critical of current cultural media messages that positioned women as an object.

While narrating their social media experiences utilising the language of 'can-do' (Harris, 2004) femininity, the teenage girls presented themselves on their SNSs in direct correspondence to the heterosexual male desire. It appears that postfeminist masquerade operates not only in the sphere of employment and education, as argued by McRobbie (2009), but it is also prevalent on social media sites. McRobbie (2009) notes that postfeminist masquerade functions with a double movement: it conceals the existence of patriarchy, while the demands of the beauty and the fashion industries positions women as subjects of insecurity and anxiety. Contrary to the function of the beauty and fashion industries, this study's findings show that on social media sites, young girls view themselves as the subjects of capacity who are in charge of their own online image, free to choose their identity presentations and by doing so they indicate being confident in their looks. Consequently, on SNSs the prevalence and operation of patriarchal power are even more deeply concealed, transforming this power into a disembodied form of power.

Twitter and Instagram audience as 'Followers'

Instagram and Twitter audience consisted of people who had the same interests as the teenage girls, making the audience for these social media platforms more diverse: from the girls' local social circle

to people who they admired. However, in comparison to Twitter, the girls viewed their Instagram audience as mainly consisting of females. While Facebook was set on (semi-) private, the teenage girls' Instagram (School No. 1 – 3 teenage girls; School No. 2 - -5 teenage girls) and Twitter (School No. 1 – 3 teenage girls; School No. 2 – 4 teenage girls) accounts were predominantly set on public (S1 - 2 on private). Having those social media platforms on 'public' was based on the teenage girls' understandings of female body privacy. In the following interview extract, Lisa explains how she views privacy on social media. Lisa, as many teenage girls in the study, views that images of her on Instagram or Twitter are not private information, as Lisa put it '*they wouldn't know anything about me*'.

> **Lisa:** like what's on Facebook I wouldn't … I would never have it like public like never (*makes a statement*). But … Instagram it's just like a picture (*in a voice of unimportance and disbelief*), you know um there is like … (*gathers her thoughts*) I don't know. Like there is no information about (*stresses the word 'information'*) about me or a location or you know like. So they wouldn't know anything about me, you know just how I look I think. So I, I wouldn't mind that (*makes a statement*).

Lisa understands photos of her as not containing any personal information. Locating Lisa's experience within the long-standing objectification of female bodies in media representations (Wulf et al., 2010; Bordo, 2003, 1999; Gill, 2007; van Zoonen, 1994; Berger, 1972), Lisa's narrative comes as no surprise. Throughout all of the stages of the research interviews, the teenage girls interpreted the female body as always being gazed at by others, always publicly objectified and thus never private. Therefore, the girls do not view uploading images of themselves on public SNSs personal pages as problematic. Such teenage girls' experiences illustrated the normalisation of female body objectification and the deeper discharge of the patriarchal power, making this power into an invisible disembodied form of power.

Teenage girls narrating SNSs digital architecture

All teenage girls who took part in the study said they had a Facebook account. While Facebook was the most popular SNSs platform, only one teenage girl stated that she preferred Facebook over other SNSs (Table 2, p. 149). Even though Facebook's inbuilt functions encourages users to update their status and upload their photos, the teenage girls stated that they rarely used those functions. Thus, while Facebook was the main SNSs in terms of users, the individual teenage girls' engagement with this platform was minimal. The girls mostly used Facebook to have private chats with 'Friends', observing what other people posted on their 'Walls', tagging and being tagged in photos from various

social events. Tagging allows Facebook users to name people in the photo by directly creating a link (if one accepts the tag) to those people's Facebook profile page.

From the teenage girls' stories, it became apparent that being tagged in photos on Facebook was an important part of the girls' identity displays. Tagging became emblematic of the prevalence of the collision culture: kin and relationships maintained its importance but utilised as market principles. Firstly, it showed that a teenage girl had a wide social circle of people who were willing to display their social encounters with the teenage girl online. Secondly, being tagged in photos indicated that a teenage girl was at various peer-related social events where she was seen by others. Lastly, tagging others in their photos potentially increased the number of 'Likes' and 'Comments' for those photos. boyd and Ellison (2008) note that SNS is not about networking but articulating and publicly displaying one's social network to others. Not surprisingly, the teenage girls viewed Facebook as a social media platform where one publicly displays 'authentic' sociability. Therefore, uploading photos of themselves (selfies) were viewed as staged, thus inauthentic. Hence, on teenage girls' Facebook pages photos showing parties that they attended, also photos of social events and fun time were the main content.

Technologies of SNSs confessions

Moreover, the teenage girls often referred to Facebook as a personal journal that allowed them to store and share their memories (mainly through photos), track their development and record their maturity. Such practices allowed the teenage girls to publicly display their ability to navigate in risk society, to show their skills in successfully achieving the status of a rational and modern citizen. As Rose (1999) notes, the modern subject is now governed through self-regulation, self-inspection and technologies of confession, and so the teenage girls' SNSs identity was regulated and governed through 'freely chosen' public SNSs confessions. On each social media platform, the teenage girls confessed different aspects of themselves. For instance, on Facebook, it was vital for them to show their ability to establish a broad social circle, in order to suggest that a teenage girl was fun and popular and confident to approach people. Due to the collision culture, the community and relationships became means to achieve individual ends.

Thus, it seemed that postfeminist sensibilities in the form of a Midriff figure (Gill, 2007) – young, sexually agentic, confident and self-pleasing – penetrated 'appropriate' femininity displays on Facebook. However, consistently with the international research (Ringrose, 2011; Renold and Ringrose, 2011; Elm 2009), this study's findings show that teenage girls' identity displays were tightly policed (Refer to: Regulatory values on SNSs and teenage girls' identity, p. 237) by the networked audience so as to retain feminine presentations within the stereotypical gender boundaries.

Therefore, due to the collision culture, while presenting themselves online as sociable and fun, teenage girls ensured that they appeared '*decent*' and not '*wild*'. Likewise, the girls avoided presenting themselves as laddish and repudiated other teenage girls' laddish online performances. While Dobson's (2014a) research argues that teenage girls aimed to portray 'ladette' subjectivity on their social media, particularly when displaying social relationships and female friendships, this study's findings show that 'ladette' subjectivity was not viewed as an 'appropriate' femininity display online.

Furthermore, the teenage girls viewed Instagram as a forum to express one's individual creativity by using filters to enhance photos as well as searching for other Instagram users' *'arty'* photos. As Aime explained: '*it's kinda just sharing photos and stuff. Anything interesting you see'*. Thus, Instagram was a social media that the teenage girls viewed as enabling them to express their individuality and their sense of the worldview through images. Hence, values of individualism structured how the teenage girls viewed 'appropriate' femininity displays on Instagram. For instance, when I asked Holly how Instagram works, she emphasised the significance of having control of the image and expressing one's individual artistic sense while simultaneously stressing the importance of receiving many 'Likes' from the Instagram audience. These findings correspond with Gardner and Davis (2013) research findings which show that on social media young people primarily present themselves as being individualist and marketable.

Interestingly, when Holly talks about hashtags, she does not stop to gather her thoughts as she did previously. Hashtags are metadata tags (#) used on social media that allow others to identify and access online content with a specific theme easily. While Holly narrates the expression of individuality on Instagram in a reflective manner, she conceptualises the need to gain a volume of 'Likes' and 'Followers' as a norm. Holly's way of narrating illustrates how capitalist principles and market ideals are becoming normalised when girls present their online identity.

> *Holly's voice is calm and collected. She structures her sentences as statements.*

> **Holly**: It's like you pretty much make an account. And you … say if you took a picture of like (*gathers her thoughts*) a rose or something, just for example, amm (*gathers her thoughts)* you can go and you upload it and then there is different filters to make the picture look different, you know, like maybe like make it a bit darker or make it one part of it lighter and, you know, maybe bring out the blue in it, it's like (*gathers her thoughts*) photo editing. So you do that (*makes a statement*). And then you put a bunch of hashtag things, you hashtag, maybe hashtag 'flower', 'like for like', 'Following' or something like that. And then normally what happens is, when other people click the hashtag it's like a link, so once someone clicks the hashtag, then your picture will come up because you tagged it, so your picture will come up and then if someone sees it they will like it. So people will normally just put a load of hashtags under a picture so that they can get more 'Likes' and more 'Followers' (*makes a statement*).

While Instagram enabled the teenage girls to connect with others through pictures, Twitter was mainly used to connect through short (140 characters) individual confessional statements that the girls viewed as conversations. For instance, Tonya explained how she uses Twitter to get people's opinion and '*get the conversation going*'.

> **Irena:** you know, the way you say about the hair thing "*Oh, I'm not really sure if that color suits me.*" Why would you tweet it, and not just tell it to your friend? (*in a voice of inquiry*)
>
> **Tonya:** (*laughs*) I don't know. I don't know (*with a giggle*). That's was just a really bad example, but people would tweet it, yeah. I don't know, just (*gathers her thoughts*) … Just to have something to tweet and then people would reply to it, or just to get a conversation going. I don't know. It's just … People do. Like, if you go … Even if you go through my tweets, if I went back on my tweets, I would probably say, "*Tonya, why did you tweet that?* (*in a horrified voice*)" You know? Like, if you went through some people's tweets, you'd probably say, "*Why didn't she just ask her friend? Why didn't you just do this? (in a voice of being puzzled)*". But everyone just tweets it anyway (*makes a statement*).

Tonya's account illuminates the way values of individualism and capitalist ethos penetrate the teenage girls' understandings of what it means to connect and relate to others. Tonya, as many teenage girls in the study, views that individual random confessional statements are the key method to connect with others on social media. Similarly, Sue, a passionate Twitter user, explained how she connected through Twitter with people who had similar interests. For Sue, Twitter is a platform to '*talk through your timeline*' by tweeting inner emotional thoughts about issues that are occurring at a particular moment in time, as Sue put it '*what's on*'.

> **Sue:** I don't know, like … Sometimes it's school, then your hobbies, and then, like … If there is football match and everyone is talking (*stresses the word 'everyone'*) about the football match on it. Or in school, like … Every morning everything is about school, every night it's probably all about sports. So, like, the difference, it depends on what's on (*stresses the word 'on'*). Like, you just put up a tweet, and then like, if someone … Like, if it's about sports then someone will answer you back maybe, and then maybe you'll be just talking about the match that's on or something like that. Yeah, basically you just talk through your timeline (*makes a statement*). Like, if someone said "*I hate that class*," or "*School is so long today*," or something like that, like, "*Oh, I have to study and I have this or that*" so, you know, that kind of tweet.

In contrast to Facebook and Instagram, the teenage girls did not emphasise the importance of their tweets to be 'Liked' by the audience. What mattered on Twitter for them was the number of 'Followers' they had rather than how many 'Likes' an individual tweet received. I will further discuss the importance of digits and numbers on SNSs in relation to the teenage girls' identity in the section on the '*Quantifiable self*' (p. 240).

Labour of participation on SNSs 'All social media sites have like different kind of atmospheres'

During this stage of the interviews, the teenage girls frequently expressed that before constructing their own identity displays on social media, they observed what other SNSs users posted on their profiles, evaluated how the offline social circles responded to someone's online identity displays, and what happened to those users' SNSs content in terms of 'Likes', 'Hearts' and 'Comments'. Consequently, the teenage girls' identity presentation on SNSs was not a spontaneous act but intense labour that was based on daily observations of SNSs norms; it became a calculated and strategic participation. Millie, for instance, observes that each social media site has its own '*atmosphere*' that governs 'appropriate' femininity displays.

> **Millie**: all the different social media sites even though they are all social media sites have like different kind of atmospheres to them in a way like Snapchat is very like *'Oh its funny'*, and Facebook is very—(*gathers her thoughts*) very mixed like there would be—(*gathers her thoughts*) pictures of people going out and then there would be people 'likeing' to save the child in Africa (*in an ironic voice*) kind of thing and then there is like Twitter where people just talk to themselves basically and try to sound funny (*makes a statement*). I don't really like Twitter (*giggles)* and then Instagram is like for people who like taking photographs and like making the photos look nice (*makes a statement*).

Interestingly, Millie makes clear statements when describing the function of Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram, and stops to gather her thoughts when describing Facebook. According to Millie, identity presentation on Facebook is more diverse in comparison to other SNSs platforms. Nevertheless, from the teenage girls' narratives, it became clear that a wide array of female identity displays were valued very differently, which I will discuss in more detail in the section on Number of SNSs 'Likes', 'Hearts' and 'Comments' (p. 242). From the above extract, it is clear from Millie's ironic tone of voice that she condemns the charitable, altruistic identity displays, while '*pictures of people going out'* are narrated as something normal and unproblematic. Thus, while social media claims to enable their users to present their authentic self (Marwick, 2013), only certain qualities of identity displays (authentic or not) were appreciated and thus acceptable on SNSs.

Marwick (2013) notes that SNSs self-presentation is a continuous information upload about one's life, which Marwick (2013) defines as 'lifestreaming'. Marwick (2013) argues that lifestreamers not only upload information with an audience in mind but also unremittingly aim to share personal information, thoughts and actions with the networked audience. From the teenage girls' accounts, it became evident that the girls engaged in everyday labour to appear as lifestreamers for their SNSs

displays, simultaneously portraying their SNSs identity as managed and well-put-together. Moreover, a prerequisite of online authenticity positioned the teenage girls to routinely inspect their SNSs self-presentations so as to be viewed by the networked audience as a 'true and authentic' version of themselves. Thus, while online self-presentation was a meticulous calculate act, it was narrated as authentic and freely chosen, disguising the regulatory powers and transforming them into disembodied forms of power.

Prerequisite of authenticity on SNSs

During this stage of the interviews, the teenage girls continuously highlighted the importance of authenticity when deciding on the content for their SNSs pages. The striving to publicly display an authentic self on social media comes as no surprise given the original premise for SNSs. That premise encourages users to connect with the world and others by showing one's true authentic life experiences (Dobson, 2015; Marwick, 2013). Therefore, the teenage girls disapproved of self-presentations online that were staged or purposely performed. For instance, the teenage girls were critical of 'selfies' (photos of themselves taken by themselves) or '*posy posy pictures*'. For the girls from this study, the demand to present themselves as being authentic was a consequence of several conditions.

Firstly, Marwick (2013) notes that the SNSs audience is a networked audience: an audience that migrates between individual SNSs user's different social media profiles. Thus, the teenage girls from this study aimed to present their identities as being authentic not only on the particular SNSs but also across all SNSs platforms. Secondly, the teenage girls' SNSs audience predominantly consisted of people from their offline local social circle causing the girls' online displays to be gazed at and evaluated by the offline groups. Consequently, the teenage girls' online identity needed to resonate with the offline identity presentations so as to be validated by the SNSs audience as being authentic. Hence, as the online and offline worlds merge, the teenage girls' identity presentations become more intensely regulated.

Similarly, while having a volume of SNSs 'Followers'/'Friends' was very significant to the teenage girls, that number had to be validated by their offline identity presentation and social skills. It particularly applied to the teenage girls' Facebook 'Friends' list. As discussed in an earlier section on '*Facebook audience as a 'Friends' list*' (p. 227), Facebook 'Friends' were people that the teenage girls encountered in their local social circle. Thus, having a high number of Facebook 'Friends' needed to be legitimised by a wide offline teenage girl's social circle, her ability to socialise and her portrayal of confidence. Consequently, the teenage girls' presentation of their identity involved

intense everyday labour: from feeling '*paranoid*' about '*bad*' photos of them being uploaded online, to planning and strategising the process of negotiation about '*untagging*' the '*bad*' photo. Consequently, while being offline the teenage girls self-regulated themselves in accordance with the online norms of 'appropriate' feminine display (Refer to: Regulatory values on SNSs and teenage girls' identity, p. 237). Literature observes (Kelsey and Bennett, 2014; Bauman and Lyon, 2013; Jurgenson, 2013; Jensen, 2007) that Omniopticon powers of surveillance operate on SNSs with microscopic surveillance over female bodies (Gill and Elias, 2017). However, this study's findings show that surveillance over girls' identity presentations reaches new modes of regulation: it not only intensified but also widened, and the regulatory power disguised itself and transformed into a disembodied form of power. The online powers of surveillance directly construct the girls' offline conduct, creating, what I define as 'laserscopic' surveillance. Thus, while SNSs are presented as tools to connect, deepen solidarity, and as playful spaces, teenage girls' narratives indicate that SNSs played a very different role in the girls' lives.

Overall, for the teenage girls presenting an authentic self on SNSs was a tricky balancing act. Therefore, while grappling with multiple sources of gazers on SNSs, the girls employed various strategies so as to achieve authenticity on different social media platforms. First of all, they displayed random content on their SNSs pages. For instance, on Facebook, the teenage girls continuously emphasised having random pictures from various social events. Moreover, randomness was achieved by allowing 'tagging' in Facebook 'Friends' pictures rather than uploading pictures themselves. When the teenage girls uploaded content for their Facebook, it had to be occasional and infrequent to be viewed as authentic. Similarly, on Instagram, it was important for the girls to upload random images of their day only a couple of times a week. Twitter, on the other hand, needed constant engagement and content uploading but it had to be random emotional confessions. Overall, randomness indicated that the content for SNSs was not staged, therefore authentic.

Furthermore, while readjusting their own image on SNSs the teenage girls emphasised the importance of displaying random images of various social events with different 'Friends' groups. Such teenage girls' practices were emblematic of the collision culture: community and boding maintained its importance but rather than being a passage for emotional connection and sustainability of the community it became utilised as a means to reach individual ends. Violet, like many other teenage girls in the study, explained to me about '*cleaning*' her Facebook page. While she strategically deletes old Facebook photos and status updates, the information she chooses to leave online is '*bits and bobs*'.

> **Irena:** You said about, you recently deleted photos on Facebook?
>
> **Violet**: Yeah.

Irena: Why is that? (*voice of being puzzled*)

Violet: Because I just decided I wanted to (*gathers her thoughts*)- - there's a load of pictures from things, like, kind of bad photos (*stresses the word 'bad'*), old photos. I just decided I wanted a load of them gone (*makes a statement*). So I just deleted a load of them, and just had – clean up a bit, you know what I mean? Just like deleted a load, and kept on the ones I wanted on there (*stresses the word 'I'*).

Irena: So which ones did you keep?

Violet: umm (*gathers her thoughts*) I kept… I think from last Summer. So I have some from last Summer, and I have some from the last two years, which is like random ones. And then I just put bits and bobs pictures, like random pictures from parties and things. Other than that, I deleted (*makes a statement*).

The research findings correspond to Dobson's (2015) work which argues that by utilising randomness young girls aimed to portray their online authenticity and uniqueness and simultaneously to express their uptake of the postfeminist sensibilities, such as a sense of confidence and self-acceptance. For the teenage girls in this study, randomness enabled them to express their identity as being authentic and unique. Moreover, the utilisation of randomness allowed the girls to be viewed by the networked audience as having a solid, coherent and well-put-together identity.

Regulatory values on SNSs and teenage girls' identity '*A good picture for people to 'Like' it*'

During this stage of the interviews, it became evident that no matter which SNSs platform the teenage girls used most, they presented their identity on SNSs so as to show the best-looking version of themselves while simultaneously portraying themselves as carefree, fun and sociable. Furthermore, on various social media platforms, the girls aimed to construct their identity as marketable, solid and polished. While deliberately constructing a particular kind of identity on SNSs, the teenage girls emphasised the importance of showing how they really are. Such teenage girls' experiences illustrated the transformed powers that regulated their lives: from solid to disembodied invisible forms disguised by narratives of individualism and authenticity. Moreover, the girls regularly referred to social media as their private record that displayed their overall development and progress. Such externalisation enabled the girls to publicly display their ability to successfully manage the travails of entering womanhood and how well they managed the contemporary risks associated with womanhood. For instance, they regularly talked about uploading a new profile picture when it indicated a better and more well-put-together authentic version of themselves. Only photos that illustrated the teenage girls' progression and improvement in their appearance were considered as worthy of representing them in

the profile picture. Considering the current media messages about female worth as deriving from the possession of the female beautified bodies (Jhally et al., 2010; Wulf, et al., 2010; Bordo, 2003, 1999; Gill, 2007) not surprisingly the teenage girls viewed their progression as directly linked with displaying themselves as meeting the contemporary standards of female beauty.

In the following interview extract, Brigid describes her thought process when changing her SNSs profile picture. Brigid's account is emblematic of the disembodied power at play in the online space. Brigid is explaining an intense labour process when changing the profile picture that she stresses has to represent her as '*I look Ok*' and '*I don't look not worse*'. To be viewed as being authentic Brigid, as many teenage girls in the study, emphasises how important it is for SNSs photos of her to be taken and uploaded by other people. Thus, when it came to changing her profile picture, she, first of all, needs to participate in social activities where photos would be taken. Then she needs to '*wait until something good comes along*'. Afterwards, Brigid needs to evaluate if any of those '*good*' photos showed a better version of her than she already has been displaying on SNSs. Concurrently there has to be a change in Brigid's life. Only then does Brigid change her profile picture.

> **Brigid**: ahmm... so 'cause I don't take pictures I just wait until somebody has taken a pic of me and I'm like *'Oh, change the profile picture*! (*in a surprised voice*) *Grand. Ok* (*makes a statement*)'. (*giggles*) You know like? But you know like if … (*gathers her thoughts*) I prefer my normal profile picture, just like even somebody has taken and nothing really changed, I just leave it (*makes a statement*). Well then like. I kinda just wait until (*stresses the word 'wait'*) something good comes along. (*giggles*)
>
> **Irena**: and when you say '*good*' photo, what do you mean by that?
>
> **Brigid**: like (*gathers her thoughts*) I don't know... like I look Ok you know I don't ...I'm not doing some weird things or something (*giggles*) I didn't mean to do or I don't know...like I'm normal. Like the way, I think I look not worse (*stresses the word 'not'*).

While teenage girls needed to negotiate the levels of appropriateness for their SNSs displays continuously, they narrated their SNSs experiences as freely chosen, not bound by rules so as to sustain their identities as 'can-do' femininity. Such teenage girls' experiences illustrates the prevalence of the disembodied power. For instance, Andrea, as many teenage girls in the study, resorted to the discursive language of 'can-do' (Harris, 2004) femininity when questioned about the SNSs norms. When asked about rules she applies when accepting a 'Friend' request on social media, Andrea's tone of voice changes to discontent, her body language and consecutive '*I don't know*' statements express distance and withdrawal. It seems that the question in itself confronts her subject position as a 'can-do' (Harris, 2004) female and thus with her answer Andrea aims to reclaim her position.

Andrea: Oh I don't know I don't really think about it that much (*in a voice of discontent and giggle*) I don't really think there are so many rules to it really (*emphasises the word 'rules'*) I don't know (*makes a statement*).

Even though the teenage girls narrated their self-presentation on SNSs by utilising the language of 'can-do' (Harris, 2004) femininity, their SNSs identity presentation was rarely to do with what they wanted to show about themselves but rather showing their identity in such a way as to gain viewers' attention. The following interview extracts are illustrative of how teenage girls employed various strategies when making decisions for their SNSs pages so as to gain audience attention. Tonya emphasises that the SNSs picture need to be '*pretty*' and a '*good picture for people to 'Like' it*', while Aine ensures to upload a certain number of photos so that all of them would be viewed by her SNSs audience. On the other hand, Holly and Aime stress the importance of not '*boring people*' with their SNSs posts. Thus, they decide to discard uploading content from their personal everyday activities.

Irena: How do you make the decision that that's a good picture for Instagram?

Tonya: If it looks pretty (*makes a statement*). Like, on Instagram it has to (*stresses the word 'has to'*) be, like, a good picture for people to 'Like' it (*makes a statement*).

Aine: amm (*gathers her thoughts*) like I don't put like 300 of like [pictures]... cause people like, you know, nobody is going to look through 300 pictures like (*in a voice of cynicism and disbelief*).

Holly: Before, you know, you go onto *Penneys* and you take a picture and like, "*Oh I'm in Penneys.*" You know? But now it's like "*Who even cares?*" (*in a voice of cynicism*).

Aime: I never put up a status – never (*makes a statement*). I just don't feel … I don't see any point in boring people. I don't want to bore people with my whole *"What I'm doing now, What I'm doing later"* (*in a voice of cynicism*).

The teenage girls' cynical tone of voice is illustrative of power games on SNSs. For instance, Aime in a cynical voice narrates other SNSs users as presenting themselves *"What I'm doing now, What I'm doing later"* simultaneously reclaiming her position as smarter when it comes to SNSs content

upload. While Holly cynically asks '*Who even cares'* positioning herself as wiser because she thinks she is aware that nobody on SNSs cares. Marwick (2013) observes that social media positions its users to relate to others and themselves through utilisation of marketing techniques of attention seeking (e.g. lifestreaming), resulting in transforming audience attention into contemporary marketable goods, as Marwick (2013) defines it 'attention economy'. In opposition to Marwick's (2013) argument on lifestreaming as being one of the key strategies for SNSs users to succeed in an attention economy, the teenage girls in this study repudiated spontaneous, un-reflective and frequent lifestreaming practices to portray one's identity on social media. As argued in an earlier section, when displaying their own SNSs identity, the girls utilised lifestreaming techniques only when presenting their SNSs identity as being managed and well-put-together.

Overall, for the teenage girls in this study, several key values regulated the definition of 'appropriate' SNSs femininity. From the girls' narratives, it became apparent that while continuously claiming to present themselves as being authentic, they utilised values of neoliberalism as the key guiding principle when creating content for their SNSs page. Throughout this stage of the interviews, the teenage girls regularly emphasised the importance of displaying numbers under their SNSs identity displays and ensured portraying themselves as pristine and well-put-together. Consequently, on social media, the teenage girls were positioned to occupy certain subject positions that defined the boundaries of 'appropriate' femininity. These subject positions are as follows:

- Quantifiable self: quantities of 'Likes', number of 'Friends' or 'Followers', number of 'chats' held at once as a measure of the teenage girls' self-worth.
- Ordered self: a managed, unified and well-put-together identity primarily expressed through beautified female bodies.

Quantifiable self on SNSs 'She has so many 'Friends' on Facebook'

When narrating their experience using social media, the teenage girls repeatedly mentioned the significance of numbers. For instance, when explaining Facebook, the girls emphasised the importance of the number of 'Friends' they had, the number of 'Likes' and 'Comments' they received for their Facebook Photos and Posts, the number of Facebook Chats with different people held at once. Even though the girls regularly stated that those numbers did not mean anything to them, astonishingly all of them knew the exact number of 'Friends' or 'Followers' they had on their SNSs. From the teenage girls' narratives, it became evident that being associated with a particular number for their SNSs content automatically indicated a particular kind of female identity.

It seemed that the higher the number of 'Friends' or 'Followers' that teenage girls' social media posts had, the more positively the girls' presentation of the self was evaluated. Thus, SNSs content became transformed into locally valuable goods, creating a similar process to the 'Like economy' (Gerlitz and Helmond, 2013) or as Marwick (2013) defines it as the 'attention economy'. As a result, the laserscopic surveillance emerges that constructs teenage girls everyday lived experiences. High numbers illustrated the teenage girls' ability to demand audience attention and reach out to a wide network of people. In other words, receiving high numbers of 'Likes', 'Hearts' or 'Comments' for their SNSs productions represented teenage girls' social influence and popularity. Overall, the girls' ability to demand high visibility and attention for their SNSs content signified teenage girls' ability to become an entrepreneurial subject that was able to self-invent, self-manage and continuously improve one's identity displays. It is important to locate teenage girls' experiences within the current economic and cultural climate of 'risk society' (Beck, 1992) and 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2001) where self-inventing narratives become emblematic of one's success. It appears that for teenage girls publicly displaying a high number of digits became a tool that indicated their ability to make themselves into an entrepreneurial female subject.

Number of SNSs 'Friends' and 'Followers'

During this stage of the interviews, when asked to explain how particular social media platforms worked, the teenage girls first and foremost mentioned the volume of their SNSs audience before focusing on any other SNSs elements. Such teenage girls' narratives are exemplary of the collision culture: kin and community maintain their importance but now such values are utilised as a tool for individual ends rather than a passage for a deep emotional connection. During the interview with Laura, she explains why a high volume of 'Friends' is important for teenage girls. Laura describes the interlinking relationship between a high number of Facebook 'Friends' and teenage girls' high status among their peer circle.

> **Irena:** Does it matter how many 'Friends' on Facebook one has?
>
> **Laura:** I don't think so. Like I know Shelly [names are changes], she has so many 'Friends' on Facebook (*stresses the word 'so'*) but she has like over a thousand, I think, but she's like really popular and she's really well known and she is in like lots of different things (*in a voice of admiration*) and she just knows everyone (*stresses the word 'knows'*) and she just talks to everyone. But like I don't think anyone kinda notices how many 'Friends' anyone really has any more (*in a voice of questioning and disbelief*).

Even though Laura states that the number of Facebook 'Friends' is unnoticed, before all else she decides to answer the question by emphasising Shelly's ability to gain a high volume of audience

attention, which Laura narrates with admiration. She describes her friend Shelly (one of the research participants) as popular, confident to talk to anyone and to partake in various after-school activities – all the qualities of the neoliberal entrepreneurial femininity. According to Harris (2004:74), 'the girl entrepreneur is the ultimate self-inventing young woman who represents a fantasy of achievement accomplished by good ideas, hard work, and self-confidence.' Harris (2004) argues that the current economic and political landscape emphasises that young girls' success is measured by her ability to display *can-do* girls' qualities, such as being smart, having power and making the most of her abilities to reach self-made financial security. While Harris bases her argument within the domain of economy and rights to citizenship, this study's findings show that on SNSs girls' success is measured per the same 'can-do' criteria. However, on SNSs the teenage girls' smartness, power and success were illustrated by their ability to display their beautified bodies while navigating the '*atmosphere*' of each SNSs while simultaneously grappling with multiple and socially unrelated gazers. Therefore, the meaning of a high number of 'Friends' on Facebook became emblematic of teenage girls' position of an entrepreneurial subjectivity.

On the other hand, as discussed previously, the teenage girls continuously highlighted the importance of their social media displays to appear authentic. Thus, the high number of SNSs 'Friends' needed to be validated by the offline teenage girls' sociability skills for those numbers to be legitimised as being authentic. In the following interview extract, Saoirse explains how the numbers of Facebook Friends had to correspond with teenage girls' offline friendships.

> **Saoirse:** Obviously when we're in like second year, immature, "*Oh, I have more 'Friends' than you on Facebook*." But now, no one really looks at how many 'Friends' you have, it's kinda like, "*Do you know them?*", more so than "*How many you hav*e?".

Saoirse, as many teenage girls in the study, stated that on entering adulthood it became important to have not only a volume of SNSs 'Friends' and 'Followers' but also those numbers needed to reflect teenage girls' offline life. Consequently, teenage girls were positioned to continuously grow a wide circle of offline friendships by partaking in various social activities to be able to increase their SNSs numbers, resulting in the laserscopic surveillance.

Number of SNSs 'Likes', 'Hearts' and 'Comments'

Corresponding to the process of the negotiation of the numbers of SNSs 'Friends' and 'Followers', the teenage girls disavowed the importance of 'Likes', 'Hearts' and 'Comments' on their social media, resulting into the transformation of power into a disembodied form of power. It was evident that teenage girls aimed to narrate their identity presentation as autonomous and not influenced by

outsiders' judgments and evaluations. Nevertheless, while stating to have little interest in SNSs 'Likes', the teenage girls frequently mentioned the precise numbers of 'Likes' they received for their SNSs post. During the interview with Laura, who paradoxically identified herself as '*not using Facebook much*', she explained to me the process of Facebook 'Likes'.

> **Irena:** And what kind of pictures would usually get the most 'Likes'?
>
> **Laura**: Uh mm, I don't know. Like the ones of (*gathers her thoughts*) – because I only post something of me and my friends like, say something that me and one of my friends would look like really nice (*stresses the word 'really'*). Like if it was a photo of a party and we were just off or something or one that's kinda funny, you get a lot of 'Likes' on that as well. So just either of those two. I usually get around the same number of 'Likes' on all my pictures anyway (*makes a statement*). So yeah, it's just my friends … but they'd be like in the picture, but they 'Like' it. So you get 'Like'- and then people I know. I`d say (*gathers her thoughts*) a picture would get like 25-35 'Likes' (*makes a statement*) so it's fine but it's nothing excessive but it's still good like. So it's okay. Like I don't really care about 'Likes' (*makes a statement*).

Moreover, Laura's account illuminates what aspects of teenage girls' identity receive the most attention from the Facebook audience: '*photo of a party and we were just off*' and '*one that's kinda funny*'.

'Like' the funny

Many teenage girls in the study mentioned presenting their identities through utilisation of '*funny*' pictures. In '*funny*' pictures the girls showed themselves as '*messing*', not being serious and making '*funny faces*'. The utilisation of '*funny*' seemed to enable the girls to stretch the established SNSs norms of femininity displays in forms of '*pretty*' and '*done up*'. For instance, Tonya was able to move away from the '*pretty*' feminine online displays and feel more authentic in her identity presentations on SNSs.

> **Tonya:** My profile picture is now, like, me and two friends. We're just smiling (*gathers her thoughts*), but most of the time I kind of like to pick funny ones, because, yeah (*gathers her thoughts*), you know, as much … there's not as much pressure to look pretty in it (*stresses the word 'as much'*). You can, like, look really, like, stupid in it (*stresses the word 'stupid'*). So I do like to use funny ones (*makes a statement*). And I think they … Like, more people will look at it if they're funny (*makes a statement*), because -- Not because it's different, but, like, because most girls put up, like, really pretty ones (*stresses the word 'really'*) that are, like, done up and that but then, I'm like, I will put -- Like, me (*makes a statement*).

Similarly, Millie viewed '*funny*' photos of her as being more authentic, as Millie expressed '*it's not even like we are trying*'.

> **Millie:** I like this one [her Instagram photo] because it's my best-friend and it's not even like we are trying (*stresses the word 'trying'*); we are just being funny in it and it's not serious or anything (*makes a statement*).

However, while going against the '*pretty*' and '*done up*' feminine identity displays on SNSs, '*funny*' feminine presentation was controlled and managed so as not to appear ugly, or as Lisa explained '*you just look off*'.

> **Lisa:** You usually in the pictures you pretend to be funny, like, you make a face (*makes a statement*). But if someone takes a picture of you and you like – you didn't realize and you just look off – like, I would never post that (*stresses the word 'never'*) (*giggles*). Yeah, like I kinda prefer like looking good (*giggles*).

Saoirse, just as many teenage girls in the study, emphasised that '*funny*' pictures where she purposely shows herself as '*ugly*' are not for public social media but only for social media with the audience of one (e.g. Viber or SnapChat).

> **Saoirse:** Sometimes me and my friend would be on Viber and we'd be like looking horrible (*stretches the 'o'*), we're like hair thrown off, just wrecked, and we'd be trying to make ourselves look ugly, you know?, to get a laugh off each other and then we would like "*Definitely don't show them to anyone!*" because we look horrible in them (*stresses the word 'horrible'. Makes a statement*).

Hence, '*funny*' feminine identity presentations acted as an experiment with the established boundaries of the feminine displays on SNSs. Nevertheless, while appearing to make a '*funny*' face for the social media photos, teenage girls ensured not presenting themselves as '*ugly*' or '*horrible*'. At the same time, '*funny*' feminine presentations counterbalanced the mandatory female presentation as '*pretty*' since '*pretty*' and '*done up*' female online displays could be viewed as being staged, thus inauthentic. Consequently, by utilising the '*funny*', the teenage girls' SNSs identity as a whole was viewed as being more authentic. Thus, the utilisation of the '*funny*' transformed the regulatory powers into the invisible disembodied forms of powers.

'Like' the pretty

During this stage of the interviews, the teenage girls never mentioned being applauded in social media 'Comments' on what they did, but rather their good looks and beautified bodies were the focus of attention receiving most 'Likes' and 'Comments'. In the interview with Aimee, she compares the two

SNSs – Facebook and Instagram, while emphasising the importance of the inbuilt 'Comments' function on Facebook. Moreover, Aimee's description of Facebook 'Comments' is illustrative of which aspects of teenage girls' identity SNSs audience rewards most: '*nice*' or '*pretty*'.

> **Aimee**: No one ever comments on Instagram you might get one random comment once. But it would never be like (*gathers her thoughts*). It's more that they 'Like' it and that's it, you know? On Facebook you get comments more. Like my friend uploaded the picture and they like '*Oh that's a nice picture*' or '*You look pretty*', you know?

While being mostly valued for the digital presentations of their beautified bodies, the teenage girls stated feeling happy and proud of themselves. The girls' experiences come as no surprise considering the current cultural emphasis on female beauty and their beautified bodies as the main source of female power and self-worth (Gill and Orgad, 2015; Gill, 2012; Murphy and Jackson, 2011; Jhally et al., 2010). In the following interview extract, Violet explains how the teenage girls' pride is linked with receiving a volume of 'Like' on SNSs.

> **Violet**: every girl wants (*stresses the word 'every'*) to get a lot of 'Likes' in their profile picture because there's something nice in it (*stresses the word 'nice'*). There's something nice when you get, like 50 'Likes' in a photo, you're like, "*Aw*," (*in a voice of joy*) you kind of get proud of yourself.

Similarly, Brigid narrates that SNSs 'Like' is one of the main reasons for girls' happiness and a boost of confidence. Moreover, Brigid highlights that teenage girls cherish SNSs 'Like' even more when it is awarded by '*someone who doesn't have to like it*'. In other words, Brigid is emphasising that teenage girls seek and appreciate public objectification of their beautified bodies, primarily when the source of the objectification is not based on reciprocal and obligatory friendship ties.

> **Brigid**: it's nice when someone 'Likes' it, especially when someone who doesn't have to like it, and you be like "*Oh! That's nice*" (*in a voice of surprise and pride*) Like my friend – she uploaded a profile picture and she got like 60 'Likes' (*in a voice of pride*). And she was really really happy (*stresses the word 'really'*), like you know? Like every 'Like' kinda made her happy (*makes a statement*). It kinda made her (*gathers her thoughts*) … like gave her confidence boost.

Overall, on SNSs teenage girls' identity was mostly represented by quantities of public 'Likes', 'Hearts' or 'Comments'. Consequently, being reduced to a quantity, teenage girls' self-worth was denoted by a digit. That digit not only determined teenage girls' feelings of joy and self-pride but more importantly it publicly illustrated and defined what kind of a female a teenage girl was. For instance, during the interview with Laura, she narrates her fear of the absence of 'Comments' on her Facebook Post. Bauman and Lyon (2013) note that now people do not fear to be under surveillance

but actually fear to have a lack of surveillance over their online self-presentation. As a result, on SNSs the surveillance of one's identity displays becomes normalised and to a great degree desired and wanted. Not receiving any 'Comments', in other words not being under surveillance and not identified with a public digit, causes Laura to believe she is being defined as '*stupid*' - the very opposite of the entrepreneurial femininity.

> **Laura**: Facebook is like, I don't know (*gathers her thoughts*). You can get rejected so easily (*stresses the word 'so'*). Like if you post on someone's wall, and not many people 'liked' it, that would be weird. But if you posted a picture on Instagram and nobody 'Liked' it at all that wouldn't be weird (*makes a statement*). I don't know how it works. But like I don't know, Facebook to me, anyway, maybe it's just 'cause I'm scared of it, but like I don't use it as much because like "*What if I don't get any 'Likes' or something?*", I'll look stupid (*makes a statement*).

From the teenage girls' narratives, it became evident that the objectification of teenage girls' bodies on SNSs was narrated as being celebratory and complimentary. Through the utilisation of the SNSs 'Like' button, as a sign of public admiration and positive affirmation, judgment and public evaluation of teenage girls' bodies become normalised. Moreover, being mostly rewarded with audience attention for their '*good-looking*' photos not only resulted in socialising teenage girls to allow objectification of their bodies but also positioned teenage girls to self-regulate their offline bodies in accordance to heteronormative male desire so as afterwards to be able to display them on SNSs. However, teenage girls constantly stated that they freely chose to publicly confess their life on SNSs to be judged and evaluated through 'Likes' and 'Comments'. In the section '*Facebook audience as a 'Friends' list*, (p. 227)' it was argued that through the utilisation of the rhetoric of 'can-do' femininity (Harris, 2004) patriarchal power concealed itself. Moreover, it appears that due to the pedagogy of the 'Like' button patriarchal power not only conceals but also discharges itself (McRobbie, 2009) on the SNSs platform, transforming this power into a disembodied patriarchal power.

In the above interview extract, Laura, like many teenage girls in the study, highlights the way 'Like' as a public objectification operated differently on various social media platforms. Facebook in comparison to Twitter and Instagram was the most gender strict social media platform due to its digital architecture and the essence of its audience. As noted previously, the teenage girls' Facebook audience is mostly consisting of people from the girls' local social circle. Therefore, the values applied when judging young girls' identity online mirrored the local offline value systems. Being predominantly rewarded with 'Like' for their display of '*pretty*', '*nice*' and '*good-looking*' photos of themselves, illuminates the perseverance of the patriarchal power on SNSs. A number of authors (Stokes, 2014; Inglis, 2008; Keohane and Kuhling, 2004) argue that understandings of 'appropriate' femininity in Ireland are structured by two contradictory ethics: individualism and female sexual

power versus a sense of community and female chasteness. However, this study's findings show that on SNSs due to the collision culture teenage girls negotiate these contradictory ethics by narrating their SNSs displays as freely chosen yet simultaneously ensuring showing themselves in lines of stereotypical (patriarchal) female presentations.

Managed self on SNSs 'If there wasn't anything showing that's not meant to be showing'

From the teenage girls' narratives about their experiences on SNSs, it became evident that their identity presentation was meticulously managed and well-thought-out. Teenage girls stated that they uploaded content for their social media systematically and methodically rather than choosing to stream their everyday life spontaneously. As discussed previously the teenage girls repudiated un-reflective self-presentation on SNSs, thus even on Twitter and Instagram, social media apps that encourage its users to stream the present moments, were used by the teenage girls with forethought. When it came to uploading their images on SNSs, the girls evaluated and sorted their photos ensuring portraying a '*good-looking*', '*decent*', '*not in a bikini*', not drinking or smoking, '*not crazy*' and '*not wild*' identity. Such teenage girls' accounts illustrate the prevalence of the collision culture in the girls' lives. The girls still need to present themselves as chaste. However, now the female chasteness is displayed not to maintain communities honour but as a means for individual ends – to gain more 'Likes' and 'Hearts'.

For instance, Sophie told me that she not only reviewed photos before putting them on her social media but more importantly ensured not displaying photos when '*like my top was falling down a bit*' or '*me or my friends in bikinis*'.

> **Sophie:** I upload them [photos] on my computer and I'd flick through them, just to make sure that they are okay, but then any - if I thought … I remember there was one and like my top was falling down a bit, and I said '*No! I'm not putting that on Facebook*' (*makes a statement*) or I wouldn't put any of me or my friends in bikinis or anything.

Consequently, all of the teenage girls stated that they invest a significant amount of time managing the content for their SNSs page. Furthermore, the girls stated that they consciously chose not to change information that represented them frequently, for instance, profile pictures, so as to deliberately maintain a solid identity presentation. When changing their profile picture, the teenage girls expressed readjusting other visual elements on their SNSs profile so as to ensure that the new images representing them would be coherent. Moreover, several of the teenage girls (School No. 1 – 6 teenage girls; School No. 2 – 4 teenage girls) stated how they periodically review their SNSs

content, deleting old posts or '*embarrassing*' photos. From the girls' narratives, it became evident that identity presentation on SNSs was always deeply reflective and well thought out so as to display themselves at their best. In both schools, the teenage girls stated that they meticulously selected photos displaying their managed and beautified bodies. All of the girls carefully selected photos of themselves for SNSs and mostly '*nice*' or '*pretty*' ones were shown on their personal pages.

For instance, Marian's SNSs strategies resonate with Sophie's SNSs experiences. Marian ensured not to portray herself as '*indecent*' or '*drinking*'.

> **Marian:** Say you are on a night out, you just put up, like, every picture *(stresses the word 'every')* from the night out as long as they were half decent, like, I put them up as long as there is like, say, no, like, jerking, you know what I'm saying? Like there's no bottles or cans or anything in the picture. Or like, you know, if there wasn't anything showing that's not meant to be showing *(Laughs)*.

> **Irena:** What do you mean by that?

> **Marian:** Like, say if your top was like, really really low (*stresses words 'really'*), like you know, just, like, indecent things, like, that nobody on Facebook should see (*giggles*).

Similarly, Kate controlled how she is currently presented on social media because she was conscious of her future image. The endurance of surveillance over her social media content became a new regulatory technique for Kate. Thus, Omniopticon surveillance (Kelsey and Bennett, 2014; Bauman and Lyon, 2013; Jurgenson, 2013; Jensen, 2007) gained power not only in width but also in depth: from many watching many, to SNSs productions available for eternal watching by many. Therefore, Kate avoided being seen in photos with people who were drinking so as not to be identified as '*wild*'.

> **Kate:** Say, people who are underage drinking. You know, like, I don't do that, but like some people that you would see would be doing that. And you're like "*Okay, if people see that in the future?*", you know they're gonna be kind of like, "*Oh, well that's what you were like when you were younger,*" you know, you're bit kinda … they might be kind of like, "*Oh, she's kind of wild*" or whatever.

The experiences of the teenage girls who took part in this study are in direct opposition to current research (Kapidzic and Herring, 2014; Bailey, et al., 2013; De Vries and Peter, 2013; Ringrose, 2010; Siibak, 2009; Manago, et al., 2008) which argues that young girls are increasingly (self)-sexualised on social media. It seemed that for teenage girls Irish culturally meaningful understandings of femininity - pure, chaste and asexual (Inglis, 2003, 1998; O'Connor, 2008, 1998; Byrne, 1997) structured the way they presented their identities on SNSs. As the online and offline worlds are rapidly intertwining, resulting in the elimination of the boundary of 'appropriate' feminine identity presentations for discrete online and offline audiences, the teenage girls carefully managed their

identity displays so as not to be labelled as a 'slut', or as Violet expressed a '*Bebo stunner*'. However, now avoiding sexual self-presentations were not aimed to maintain communities honour but rather gain individual ends. It became evident that the collision culture played a vital importance in the teenage girls' identity construction online.

> **Violet**: like girls would wear their hair like … remember the pineapples? (*refereeing to a high ponytail that teenage girls discussed during the focus group*) and they'd wear low-cut tops and they'd kind of wear like—be caked in makeup (*in a tone of disgust*). And then people started calling them Bebo stunners.

Likewise, in the interview with Rose, she explains how teenage girls' sexual presentations online are repudiated by the SNSs audience. Teenage girls' sexual self-presentation online is viewed as not being '*pretty*' and in need of societal regulation and control. Historically regulation and control of female bodies in Ireland was primarily executed by the top-down powers of surveillance, such as the Catholic Church through the regulatory technique of Confessions, the medical profession through institutionalisation of Lunatic asylums, and the Irish State through legislation (e.g. on right to contraception and abortion) (Inglis, 2003, 1987; McCarthy, 2001; O'Connor, 1998; Byrne, 1997). However, now the regulation and control of female bodies are executed through Omniopticon surveillance (Kelsey and Bennett, 2014; Bauman and Lyon, 2013; Jurgenson, 2013; Jensen, 2007), transforming solid forms of patriarchal power into disembodied forms of power.

> **Irena:** Would anybody ever really send a mean comment or something?
>
> **Rose:** Normally hasn't happened to me … but I think I've seen someone's photos like... (*stops to think*) a girl put up a picture of her (*stresses the word 'her'*). but she's in a really low-cut top (*stresses the word 'really'*) and boobs are (*stresses the word 'boobs'*) out or whatever. And people are commenting like "*Put your boobs away, like it's Facebook.*" (*in a voice of disgust*), you know? You would get few people that are just not nice the way they comment. But … I think in a way, like people … not deserve them … but like it's coming … like if you put a picture of you and your boobs out, people are going to say something. Like they are not going to be like "*Oh, that's really pretty*", so they'd be like "*Put your boobs away!*" (*giggles*), There is a girl like, … I won't say constant but like she does put pictures of her in a very revealing clothes on … and people would be commenting like nasty things (*makes a statement*). They shouldn't post nasty comments, but like ... she shouldn't be putting pictures like that (*makes a statement*).

Rose justifies '*nasty comments*' for teenage girls' sexual displays online because she views such self-presentation as being a wrong female choice. Locating Rose's narrative within the broader discourses of neoliberalism and postfeminist sensibility (McRobbie, 2009; Gill, 2008,2007), which address the female body as a project and locus of female power, Rose critiques teenage girls' self-presentation online when it does not show '*pretty*', managed and asexual female body. Thus, when the female

body does not portray the 'right choices', Omniopticon surveillance and its regulation and control of the female body is authorised.

Managed teenage girls' bodies on SNSs

Overall, the teenage girls understood 'appropriate' femininity on SNSs as expressed through the presentation of their life as being glamorous, happy and enjoyable and mostly made visible through the display of their beautified and managed bodies. Aine, for instance, in the following interview extract narrates how she perceived 'appropriate' femininity displays on Facebook as '*somewhere nice*', '*wearing sunglasses*', '*ready for the photo*', '*happy*', '*having a good time*', '*look nice*' and '*enjoy yourself*'.

> **Irena**: and with the profile picture, how do you decide what picture to put up?
>
> **Aine**: I suppose you have to look nice in a profile picture (*in a timid reflective voice*). A picture of you... I don't know... or if you were somewhere... most of my profile pictures are in France or by the sea. In France somewhere nice, wearing sunglasses or something (*giggles*)
>
> **Irena**: when you say a picture is nice, what is the nice picture?
>
> **Aine**: ahm (*pauses to think*). When the person like is ready for the photo (*stresses the word 'ready'*). Like you know, they look nice (*stresses the word 'nice'*), they might not be done up to the last, but they look like happy in a photo as well. Like having a good time, I suppose. Like there are pictures of France, like we were by the beach in one, we weren't done up to the last, you know?, we were just wearing casual clothes. But like everybody looks nice (*stresses the word 'nice'*) cause we all like "*enjoy yourself*", you know?, things like that.

Likewise, when narrating her decisions for her Facebook profile picture, Marian expressed similar views to Aine of what 'appropriate' femininity displays were on Facebook. The Facebook profile picture was the first and thus one of the most important elements of a teenage girls' identity display on Facebook. For Marian '*looking pretty*', '*nice'* and '*decent*' were the key qualities that needed to be displayed in her profile picture.

> **Marian:** so everyone would '*you look pretty*' because (*laughs*), you need to (*stresses the word 'need'*) like, have a nice one, just because … you just want to look nice in your profile picture because this is the first picture that people see of you when they click on to your thing and on to your profile, so you have to kind of look decent in it (*giggles*).

In the interview with Kate, she summarised a reoccurring narrative that the teenage girls employed when explaining their decisions for SNSs profile pictures. Kate, like many teenage girls in the study,

emphasised female bodily qualities that determined if the picture was worthy of becoming a profile picture.

> *Kate's voice is determined and confident.*

> **Kate**: I would prefer to have pictures of me looking kind of like ready and kind of like, you know, looking the way I wanted (*stresses the word 'I'*) to rather than in my school uniform with my hair kind of tied up in a bun or in a ponytail or whatever.

> **Irena:** So which pictures you'd say, "*Yeah, I'm putting it for sure*"?

> **Kate:** So like, say if you were at a party or something, and like, you know, if you're wearing kind of like a nice dress (*stresses the word 'nice'*), your hair was nice too (*makes a statement*).

Similarly, Sue highlights the importance of female bodily qualities when deciding to change her SNSs profile picture. Sue explained that '*when she looks good in a photo*' or her '*makeup looks nicer than it looked*' only then would she change her profile picture.

> *Sue's voice is collected and calm.*

> **Irena:** And then when you say "*you look good in a photo*," like, what's 'looking good' means?

> **Sue:** Your hair probably looks nice (*makes a statement*). Like … Or your makeup looks nicer than it looked, like, last year or something, so you'd just put it up there. If you like your hair and makeup (*makes a statement*).

From the teenage girls' narratives, it became evident that the girls' online identity presentation as interchangeable with the display of their managed bodies that needed to be marked by viewers' 'Likes' and 'Comments'. Thus, the teenage girls' identity on SNSs was primarily represented by female bodies that had to be managed, beautified and made visible for audience consumption. Surprisingly, even those teenage girls who stated being confident in their looks and appearance during the Stage Two interviews, emphasised uploading only the '*good-looking*' and '*nice looking*' pictures on their SNSs page.

Hence, for the teenage girls, presenting themselves on SNSs became an enduring project that demanded their constant daily reflective attention and engagement. Moreover, to participate on SNSs, the girls were required to treat themselves as an object that asked to be looked at and validated by public 'Likes' and 'Comments'. Most importantly, wrapped in the rhetoric of 'can-do' (Harris, 2004) femininity, the teenage girls' bodily display on SNSs were viewed as freely chosen. Accordingly, they were positioned not only to continuously engage in self-subjectification as a sign of 'can-do' subjectivity but also, they needed to seek and accept public objectification. As a result, female

objectification on SNSs, in particular, objectification of their bodies, became established as the new gender norm, disguising the prevalence of the patriarchal power and transforming this power into a disembodied form of power.

Conclusion

The focus of this data analysis chapter section was to analyse the third stage of the research interviews on the teenage girls' experiences about their identity presentation on SNSs. To do so, I contextualised the girls' narratives within the broader discourses of neoliberalism and postfeminist sensibilities that position female bodies as a locus of female capital that needs to be worked upon, managed and improved in order to express female entrepreneurial skills. In this chapter section, I argued that on SNSs the control and regulation of female bodies not only intensified but became even more obscured to critique due to the pedagogy of the 'Like' button, transforming patriarch power into a new form of disembodied patriarchal power. While narrating their online experiences as freely chosen, the girls expressed being subjected to present themselves only as self-managed, self-organised and beautified heterosexually attractive bodies. Due to the 'Like' button function, female self-objectification online was experienced as an act of celebration rather than the exercise of patriarchal power.

Lastly, the chapter section argued that 'laserscopic' surveillance emerges due to the blurring line between online and offline resulting in tighter control of the girls' lives and their bodies. 'Laserscopic' surveillance produced the female subject who is continuously self-disciplining one's body as a sign of 'fun' and empowerment while simultaneously experiencing feeling '*paranoid*', '*annoyed*' and '*fearful.* Moreover, the collision culture structured the available subject positions that the teenage girls were able to occupy while constructing their SNSs identifies. The girls presented themselves as '*good-looking*', '*decent*', '*not in a bikini*', not drinking or smoking*, 'not crazy*' and '*not wild*'. Values of the female chasteness were still prevalent and had a tight control over girls' identity. However, now such values were utilised not to maintain communities honour but as a means for individual ends. Similarly, displays of the girls' social circle were executed to gain individual 'Likes' and 'Hearts' rather than sustain a sense of the community. Due to the collision culture, sociability and social relationships became instrumental and strategic. Overall, the findings from this study suggest that teenage girls' voices and their concrete experiences are continuously being ignored and shut down due to dominant cultural discourses that position girls as the subject of capacity and beneficiary (McRobbie, 2009).

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study sought to explore a two-folded issue: how teenage girls experienced what it meant to be a girl in contemporary Ireland while being subjected by the global and local discourses of neoliberalism and postfeminism. It has been argued that utilising multi-layered qualitative interview methods, methods that avoid a Cartesian split by utilising Carnal hermeneutics (Kearney, 2015), enabled the researcher to unravel the intertwining relationship between cultural scripts of 'appropriate' femininity and teenage girls' identities and their lived experiences. Throughout the thesis, the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity had been purposely not defined, so to indicate that meaning is never static, that it is produced by a multiplicity of discourses, and established by the girls' bodily orientations in the given context. This chapter will briefly discuss the literature in relation to media discourses of 'appropriate' femininity and the teenage girls' offline and online identities. Moreover, key findings of this study will be outlined, and future research recommendations will be identified.

Summary of the Literature review

Contemporary teenage girls are presented with multiple simultaneously contradictory media messages of 'appropriate' femininity: from patriarchal female representations to an agentic and sexually powerful Midriff figure, and more recently, to half-dressed female images as a sign of female self-love and confidence (Gill and Orgad, 2015; Thompson and Donaghue, 2014; Evans et al., 2010; Jhally et al., 2010; Jhally, 2009; Gill, 2007; Lindner, 2004). Research (Gill, 2018; Elias et al., 2017; McRobbie, 2009) highlights that media advertising re-signifies female surveillance as something to be applauded and celebrated. Through the utilisation of postfeminist and neoliberal rhetoric, media advertising normalises control and regulation of contemporary femininity.

While teenage girls are not passive victims of media messages and are able to negotiate and sometimes reject those messages (Vares and Jackson 2015; Jackson et al., 2012; Malson et al., 2010), studies internationally (Press, 2011; Kehily, 1999; Currie, 1997) note that contemporary media discourses structure how young girls choose to present themselves on social media: sexy as a sign of female entrepreneurism (Ringrose, 2010) and laddish as a sign of female bonding (Dobson, 2015). Such femininity displays are in direct opposition to stereotypical Irish understandings of girlhood and womanhood: chaste, caring and community oriented (Inglis, 2003; Byrne, 1999; O'Connor, 1998). However, to date, there is no published research that explores teenage girls' lived experiences in Ireland in relation to their identity presentations on social media. Thus, while teenage girls in Ireland are subjectified by the global media messages, we do not know how teenage girls read, reject and negotiate such media messages when girls need to present themselves on SNSs and offline.

International studies (Gardner and Davis, 2013; Marwick, 2013) show that on social networking sites the values of individualism and authenticity are paramount for young people's identity. In addition, literature (Lupton, 2016; Bauman and Lyon, 2013) notes that to be noticed on SNSs, social media users are subjected to continuously engage in confessional practices so as to gain rewards in the form of 'Likes' and 'Hearts'. Being associated with a certain digit for one's social media content ensures one's popularity and visibility (Gerlitz and Helmond, 2013). Since the media discourses that utilise postfeminist and neoliberal rhetoric make a direct link between the female body and female identity (Jhally et al., 2010; Orbach, 2010; McRobbie, 2009; Gill 2008b; Ringrose, 2006; Bordo, 2003; Wolf, 1991), international studies (Dobson, 2015; Kapidzic and Herring, 2014; De Vries and Peter, 2013; Ringrose, 2011, 2010; Siibak, 2009; Manago et al., 2008) show that on social media girls continuously choose to present themselves as beautified heterosexual attractive bodies. Thus, through the act of self-objectification, the objectification of female bodies online becomes accepted and normalised. Moreover, with the blurring of the line between online and offline lives (Marwick, 2013; boyd, 2008), girls are positioned to monitor and regulate their everyday conduct while narrating such self-regulation as 'freely chosen'. As a result, research (Dobson, 2015; Marwick, 2013; Ringrose, 2011) notes that girls experience constant emotional tensions which are not publicly articulated due to dominant discourses that address girls as the subject of capacity and beneficiary (McRobbie, 2009; Harris, 2004). Consequently, patriarchal powers continue to structure female subjectivity in the current times.

Summary of the Methodological approach

This study employed qualitative interview methods (focus groups and One-to-One interviews) conducted on three consecutive occasions with the sample of Transition Year (15-17 year-olds) teenage girls within the South-East region of Ireland. The sample was recruited within a co-educational, non-Catholic religion school and a single-sex, Catholic religion school. School is an important environment that provides teenage girls with the meanings of 'appropriate' femininity that teenage girls' peer groups sustain in their daily practice. The data were collected in two stages: School No. 1 interviews were conducted in Spring of 2013, School No. 2 interviews were conducted in Spring of 2014. In total, twenty teenage girls were interviewed.

The study followed an interpretivist paradigm guided by the ontological position of phenomenological hermeneutics and a social constructionist epistemology. Since the study aimed to explore the individual teenage girl's lived experiences and girls' understandings of 'appropriate' femininity, it was most appropriate to situate the study within the interpretivist paradigm, which views reality as relative rather than something concrete that can be objectively discovered (Abram, 2014;

Kitzinger, 2004; Walkerdine et al., 2002; Haraway, 1988). During the research process, particular attention was paid to teenage girls' use of discursive language as well as their carnal awareness (Kearney, 2015), since this study views bodies as able to 'know' and 'speak' not yet articulated female lived experiences. By utilising carnal hermeneutics, the researcher was able to include the teenage girls' voices in all stages of the research, and to ensure that the teenage girls were active participants in knowledge production about their own lives. Knowledge is inevitably linked with one's application of the method, knowledge is a product of what it is possible to understand (Heidegger, 1953/2010).

Thus, being informed by the phenomenological hermeneutics and carnal hermeneutics, the study applied methods that aimed to eliminate the researcher's preconceived understanding. Therefore, photo-elicitation was used during focus group discussions, as well as the 'day routine clock' method utilised during the first stage of the interviews, while the second stage of the interviews followed a semi-structured interview guide. The collected data was approached using thematic analysis following Foucauldian feminist theory.

Key themes and findings

Informed by literature review, this study explored two key issues, which are as follows:

1. Teenage girls' lived experiences online and offline of what it meant to be a girl in contemporary Ireland.

2. Teenage girls' relationship with the global and local discourses of neoliberalism and postfeminism.

The exploration of these key issues revealed two core themes that were evident in all stages of the interviews.

Theme 1 Collision culture

The teenage girls' narratives highlighted the significance of the local and global cultures merging in their lives. The girls were caught between the rapidly disintegrating, but still influential cultural foundations of Catholic Ireland, and global youth culture. Such a collision of cultures produces a range of tension in teenage girls' lives. This study shows that this generation of girls are attempting to realise their female identities and transition to adulthood by utilising the symbolic resources and frames that their local and global agents of socialisation have provided to them. In other words, the collision culture provided teenage girls with a definition of 'appropriate' womanhood. However, these definitions of womanhood are contradictory and thus evoke tensions in teenage girls' lives

creating high levels of anxiety. The teenage girls' lives and their sociability became highly strategic: friendship groups and kin relationships utilised as important symbols, though not to sustain a sense of community, but to reach individual ends.

Theme 2 Disembodied patriarchal power

The power structures that regulated and controlled women's lives in Ireland has shifted from concrete forms of patriarchy to disembodied forms of patriarchal powers. Female liberation has amounted to being taken out of an older form of power relation and being placed in a new form of power. This shift in power relationships involves a change from the power of the father/priest/doctor, to media/advertising firms to a most recent of social media algorithms. These new power relationships are even more constraining and indifferent due to power being invisible and abstract, and thus impervious to articulation and critique.

Within these key themes, a number of significant findings arose, which will be discussed below.

Finding 1: Teenage girls utilise 'can-do' femininity qualities when negotiating media messages of 'appropriate' femininity.

During the focus group discussions as well as the first stage of One-to-One interviews the teenage girls evoked 'can-do' femininity qualities to distinguish between 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' femininity. For instance, from focus group data, it became evident that by utilising the concept 'too' teenage girls repudiated femininity that was in excess, while images of Beyoncé, who was narrated as the ultimate 'can-do' female, were applauded and admired by all teenage girls in the study. This study's findings show that teenage girls are strongly influenced by the contemporary media messages when girls negotiate and construct the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity within their peer circles.

Finding 2: 'Can-do' femininity narratives disguise teenage girls' unhealthy relationships with diet, physical exercise and beauty practices.

During the second stage of the One-to-One interviews it became evident that while all teenage girls engaged in practices of diet, daily physical exercise and strict routine of beauty practices, they narrated such practices by utilising 'can-do' femininity qualities so as not to identify themselves as being in danger or at risk. Moreover, the girls were reluctant to report eating disorders to sustain the girl's identity as a 'can-do' female. This study's findings illuminate that body dissatisfaction among teenage girls, as well as eating disorders among this group might be much more widespread than current studies (Galdi et al., 2013; Halliwell et al., 2011; McNicholas et al., 2009; Tiggemann, 2005) show.

Finding 3: Collision between local and global discourses of 'appropriate' femininity produce 'beautiful and gorgeous looking' mother and a wife as the ultimate example of female beauty.

The data from this study shows that when teenage girls negotiate the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity, they apply local and global values of womanhood and femininity. Consequently, the data show that it was not enough to display a sexy (Radner, 1993), or confident (Gill and Orgad, 2015) or agentic (Gill, 2008b, 2007) female body to be considered as presenting 'appropriate' femininity. On the contrary, teenage girls idealised the '*beautiful and gorgeous looking*' mother and a wife as the ultimate ideal femininity. This study's findings show that due to the collision of 'can-do' femininity qualities and patriarchal values, within the Irish context the regulation of female bodies appears to be much more intensely governed and surveilled than international scholars anticipate (Gill and Elias, 2014; Murphy and Jackson, 2011; Radner, 1993).

Finding 4: Due to the blurring line between online and offline, surveillance over female bodies intensify and spread into all spheres of teenage girls' lives.

Throughout all stages of the interviews, it became evident that surveillance over female bodies intensified and spread into all areas of the teenage girls' lives. The girls' narratives revealed that when entering the town, school or party space, girls continuously experienced being gazed upon and judged by others as well as judging each other's looks. The pervasiveness of surveillance over their bodies positioned the teenage girls to engage in self-monitoring and self-transforming practices routinely. However, wrapped in the rhetoric of postfeminism and discourses of body confidence (Gill and Elias, 2014; Gill, 2007), self-controlling, self-monitoring and self-regulating practices were narrated by the girls as indicating their empowerment, their ability to manage risks and their embodiment of confidence. This study's findings show that the prevalence of a postfeminist masquerade argued by McRobbie (2009) as a prerequisite for women when entering the sphere of masculine power (e.g. labour force) became a prerequisite for teenage girls on a daily basis.

Moreover, the teenage girls' stories revealed that their online and offline identities need to correspond with each other causing daily anxieties for the girls. However, while they experienced feelings of fear and anxiety, girls did not publicly voice their emotions. On the contrary, being subjected by the pedagogy of the 'Like' button as an affirmative and positive objectification of female bodies, the teenage girls self-disciplined their bodies as a sign of 'fun' and empowerment. This study's findings show that new powers of surveillance, what I define as 'laserscopic' surveillance, emerged due to the blurring line between online and offline. Laserscopic surveillance cuts through all layers of teenage girls' lives controlling and regulating everyday teenage girls' conduct in relation to heterosexually

attractive female images. Thus, this study's findings illuminate that on SNSs patriarchal power becomes disembodied - discharging itself while being disguised as a 'Like' and 'Heart'.

Limitations of the study and recommendations for future

This study had a broad scope (through utilisation of three consecutive qualitative interview methods) for exploring teenage girls' lived experiences online and offline in relation to girls' identity presentations, enabling the researcher to contextualise teenage girls' narratives within their wide social realities and gain in-depth knowledge about contemporary teenage girls' worldview. However, since the study utilised a three-layered interview approach, one of the study's limitation was the size of the sample, thus the study did not provide generalisable results. Therefore, for future research, it is recommended to expand the sample size while maintaining the multi-layered interview approach when exploring teenage girls' lived experiences.

The study positioned its approach within the phenomenological hermeneutic ontology, thus arguing that methods being applied for researching individual understandings and experiences need to be eliminated from the researcher's preconceived ideas. While photo-elicitation and 'day routine clock' methods enabled entering the interview space without the researcher's preconceived ideas, the second stage of One-to-One interviews were guided by the semi-structured interview schedules partly due to the lack of research with this age group on the topics of social media identities and their relationship with postfeminist and neoliberal rhetoric. Such an approached is viewed as another limitation of the study. Therefore, for future research, it is recommended to develop and apply interview methods that reduce the researcher's understandings of the topic and thus enable individual teenage girls' experiences to come forward without researcher's preconceived discursive knowledge.

Feminist research is always concerned with doing 'good' and raising awareness and advocacy for the rights of women (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). Thus, following feminist ethos and drawing from the research findings, it is essential for policy developers, educators and youth workers to address girls as subjects of capacity in order to initiate any positive change in girls' lives. However, by doing so it is vital not to imagine girls as empowered in the current economic and cultural climate, but rather view girls as capable and able to voice their lived experiences and express their agency. Hence, educators and policy developers should create a space where girls' voices could be heard, and where mutual dialogue could be started. To do so, it is important to enter girls' worldview and rather than challenging girls' subject position to engage in 'curiosity' (Cecchin, 1987). Furthermore, the space where girls are invited to engage in the dialogue should be entered with an appreciation for carnal hermeneutics (Kearney, 2015). Girls' bodily knowing, bodily interpretations and language should be

accounted for and acknowledged. By doing so, one is able to discover not yet spoken but concrete girls' lived experiences, experiences that mould girls' bodies and their subject positions.

Moreover, to enable girls to become critical of disembodied patriarchal power, which this research findings show has a profound grip over girls' subjectivities, it is essential to engage in a conversation with girls about current cultural configurations. It is important to unveil the disembodied power structures, so girls would be able to critique such powers, and thus be able to question, reflect and adjust their subjectivities. To encourage a change in girls' lives should be executed not by changing the girls, but by making the disembodied patriarchal power visible to this generation of girls (and boys) so the change would not destroy girls' identities but aim to destroy the structure that invisibly constructs girls' identities.

Lastly, a move away from the focus on teenage girls' bodies as a 'surface to look at' is needed. Teenage girls need a space to discover their bodies that 'do', 'move' and 'function'. This change should come not only from a shift in teenage girls' attitude towards their bodies, but also it is important to change how society responds to teenage girls' bodies and their appearance. Thus, it is essential not only to educate girls about current cultural configurations but also educate society. To do so, it is recommended to initiate conversation in the public domain about the power of disembodied patriarchy and ways society could eliminate it. Moreover, the conversation should not only be targeted at women but include men; men not as a source of domination but as allies and equal partners.

Contributions

This study shows that academic theorisations about postfeminist sensibilities (Gill, 2007) and its relationship with neoliberalism played a significant role in structuring teenage girls' lives and their identities in Ireland. Thus, the research findings contribute the development of the application of postfeminist sensibility theorisation in practice. The local meanings of femininity and womanhood had not lost its importance. Thus, teenage girls' identities were constructed drawing from local and global understandings of femininity, creating the collision culture that caused tension in girls. The collision of global and local meanings of 'appropriate' femininity results in even tighter control of womanhood: not only the teenage girls defined 'appropriate' femininity as needing to display confidence and sexiness but 'appropriate' feminine women were viewed as needing to be '*beautiful and gorgeous looking'* mothers and wives. Similarly, on social media, the girls aimed to present themselves only as self-managed, self-organised and beautified heterosexually attractive bodies and simultaneously narrating their online experiences as freely chosen.

Furthermore, the study's findings illustrate that surveillance of young girls' subjectivity and their bodies reached new modes of power, whereas laserscopic surveillance becomes a new regulatory technique in governing young girls. Laserscopic surveillance produces a young female subject which is constantly self-disciplining one's body as a sign of 'fun' and empowerment while simultaneously experiencing feeling '*paranoid*', '*annoyed*' and '*fearful*'. Overall, in all spheres of life, this study's findings show, teenage girls are subjectified to self-discipline themselves as a new sign of their empowerment and entrepreneurism. Such ethics of self-realisation are emblematic of the contemporary discourses of postfeminism and neoliberalism (McRobbie, 2009; Gill, 2007). Teenage girls' online and offline identities are blending into each other resulting in tighter control and regulation of girls' bodies and their appearance. However, since the regulatory power has shifted from solid and concrete patriarchy to disembodied and abstract patriarchy, teenage girls are unable to articulate or critique the new power arrangements and the governing techniques over their subjectivities. Mostly due to SNSs 'Like' button, teenage girls viewed their self-objectification as an act of celebration rather than control and regulation. The girls who disagreed with this social media practice were not able to raise any objection due to dominant discourses that position girls as the subjects of capacity – able and capable of dealing with issues on their own (McRobbie, 2009). These findings contribute to recent debates about women's agency and power within the current regimes of neoliberalism and postfeminism. The study's findings illustrate that in order to discuss the limits of girls' agency, it is essential to account for powers that are invisible and disembodied, and simultaneously pay attention to girls' expressions of agency in their bodily dispositions

Central to the study was the inclusion of teenage girls' voices in knowledge production about their lived experiences. Thus, the research paid a close attention not only to teenage girls' discursive language, but also to their bodily dispositions. Following carnal hermeneutics (Kearney, 2015) the research argues that the girls' bodies are a vital and important part when girls negotiate and establish the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity. Bodies play an essential part in knowledge production, and thus the research emphasises that it is essential to account for bodies in the research space. By doing so the researcher is able to be attentive to not yet articulated but concrete lived experiences, and thus include research participants in the process of knowledge production about their own lives. In addition, acknowledging the centrality of the bodies, bodies that sense, move and evoke motion in others, ensures that the researcher avoids entering the privileged speaking position by claiming 'truth' through one's rational interpretations. It enables the researcher to avoid entering the trap of the Cartesian split, and thus stay open to the complexity of the exploration of people's lived experiences. Thus, the study contributes knowledge on how to conduct inclusive research that does not prioritise

one avenue of understanding (e.g. rational-mind), but accounts for rational as well as embodied forms of interpretations and knowledge production.

Moreover, the study argues that when conducting research with young people about their online identities it is crucial to employ consecutive qualitative interview methods; methods that are based on hermeneutic phenomenological methodology. Such methodological framework allows the discovery of the interconnections between the young person's online and offline identity as well as an exploration of regulatory techniques that govern the construction of one's identity. In addition, the study shows that by employing consecutive interview methods, the researcher is able to contextualise young person's online practises within the broader local and global cultural discourses, enabling to unravel the complexity of the way young person's subject positions are produced. By providing a detailed and step-by-step account of the research process, and the application of carnal hermeneutics (Kearney, 2015) when exploring lived experiences, the study contributes significantly to knowledge, methods and practice regarding 'best practice' when undertaking research and/or other forms of engagement with young people. It is evident from this study that my professional training in social care in addition to the research skills gained throughout the duration of this PhD journey will form the basis for my future contributions to the field. Contributions from my uniquely thorough methodological approach and subsequent research findings will be the foundation for my future activist work, research endeavours, academic direction and future positive engagement with young people.

Conclusions

This study sought to explore teenage girls' lived experiences in Ireland and their relationship with contemporary discourses of postfeminism and neoliberalism. Twenty teenage girls (15-17 year-olds) were interviewed within the South-East region of Ireland. This study was set within the context of neoliberal and postfeminist rhetoric that structure every aspect of modern life. Such rhetoric addresses women as the subject of capacity and beneficiary, able and capable to self-transform their bodies as a sign of their new power. A review of the literature highlighted that postfeminist and neoliberal values structured the way young girls presented themselves: from sexual as a sign of female entrepreneurism to laddish as a sign of female friendships (Dobson, 2015; Ringrose, 2010; Elm, 2009). However, since such representations are in direct opposition to Irish understandings of femininity and womanhood (Inglis, 2003; Byrne, 1999; O'Connor, 1998), the study raised a question: *how do teenage girls in Ireland choose to display their identities online and offline?*

Two key themes were generated from the research data: the pervasiveness of the disembodied patriarchal power and the prevalence of the collision culture in everyday teenage girls' lived experiences and their identity construction. From solid forms of power, girls' bodies and their subjectivities are now regulated by the invisible disembodied forms of power. Such a transformation in power renders any critique from the outside, and thus the teenage girls' lived experiences are even more constrained and indifferent. Moreover, the teenage girls' lived experiences and their identities are being carved in the collision culture, where local and global meanings of femininity merge, resulting in tensions and high levels of anxiety in the girls. The girls' everyday lives became highly strategic and exhaustively managed. Their kind relationships became means to gain individual ends, making their everyday lived experiences structured around a continuous competition and acceptance of objectification of their bodies.

The research findings illustrate that we are raising a generation of girls that are positioned to suffer in silence, the generation that is intensely regulated, policed and controlled, but being controlled by the disembodied patriarchal powers, accepts such governing as expressions of self-love and self-care. Under the neoliberal capitalist and postfeminist regime, the real concrete meanings of self-love, of bonding and belonging, of authenticity and individuality are continuously being rendered and subverted, creating schizoid female subjectivities: publicly confident but privately suffering. Thus, we urgently need to create a space where teenage girls' concrete lived experiences could be heard and taken on board. To do so, we need to pay attention to girls' bodily knowing – their carnal awareness. Meaning of 'appropriate' femininity, the research findings showed, is negotiated by the girls with, by and through their bodies. Hence, to change the way girls relate to themselves and others, we need to account for meaning production in bodies. In addition, we need to introduce new possibilities and avenues where girls could have a bodily experience of 'difference': being identified with skills and abilities, not their bodies, being addresses as the 'functioning' and not 'appearing' bodies. By creating such new experiences, we would generate a different bodily disposition that the girls could occupy, and in turn, it would establish a new route allowing girls to negotiate the meaning of 'appropriate' femininity in diverse and different ways.

APPENDICES

1. Consent and Assent brochure

2. Interview schedule

Focus group

What do you think about the images?

What kind of things came to your mind first when you see this image?

Props used

Beyoncé
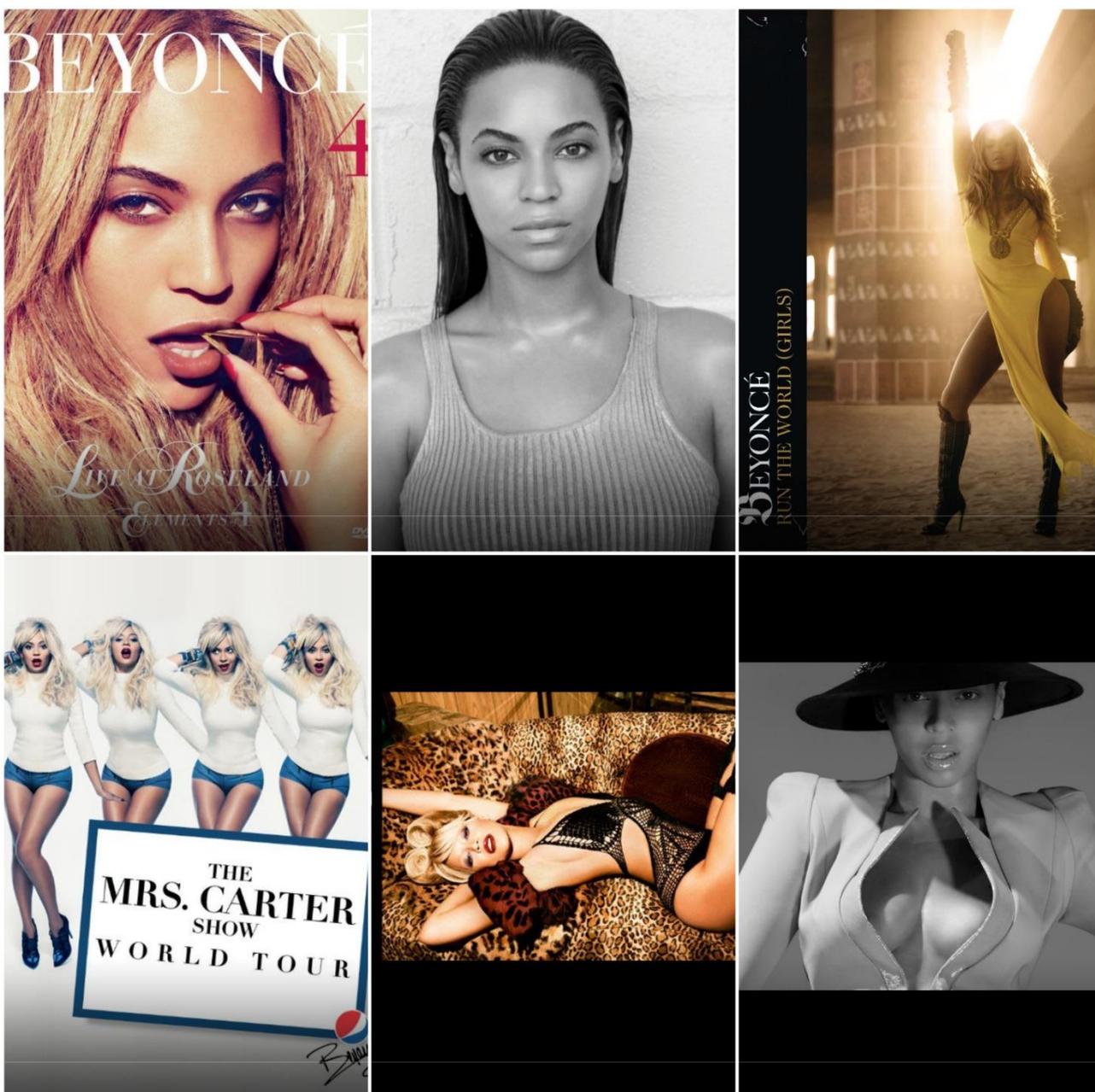
Lady Gaga
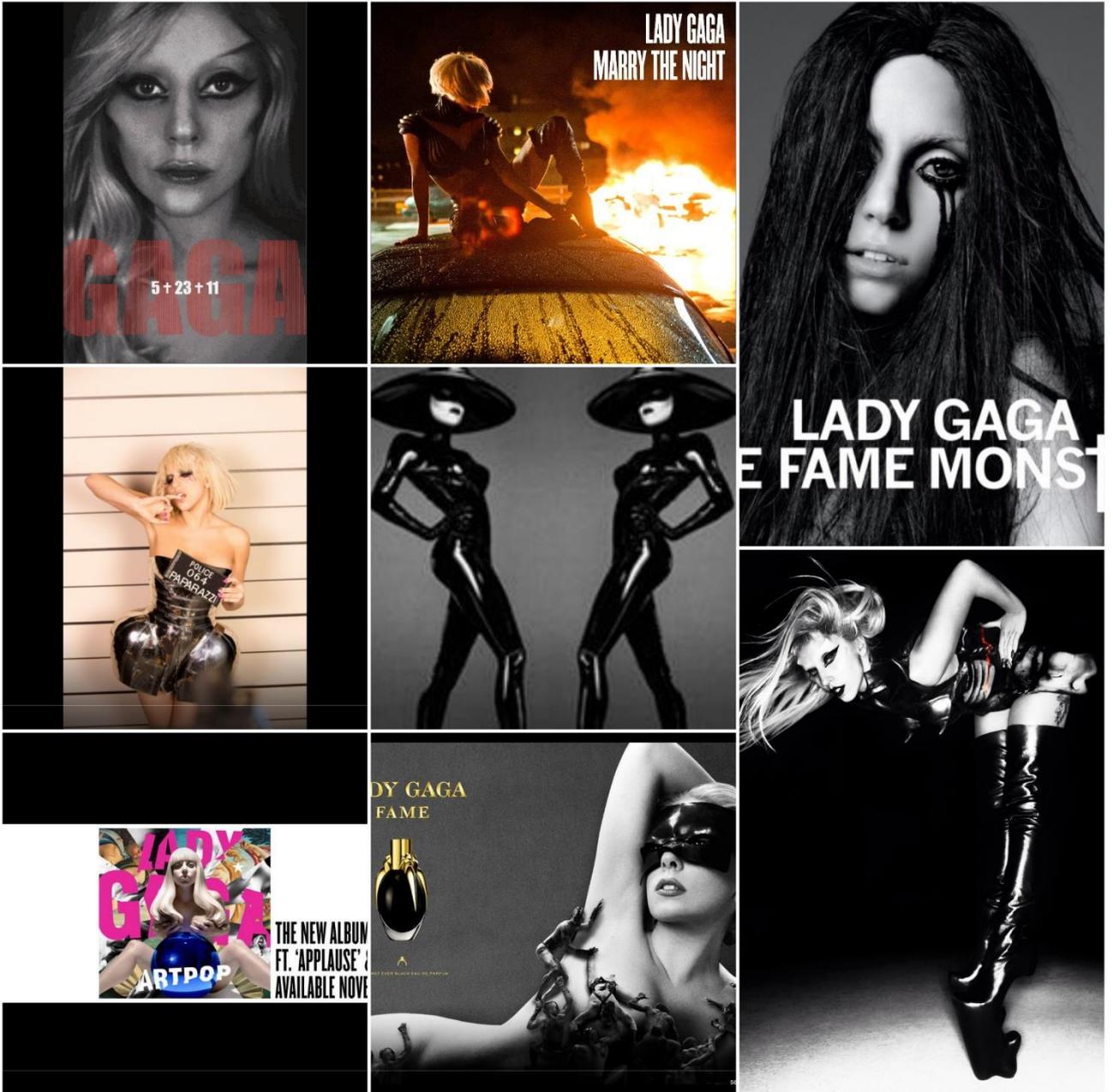
Rihanna
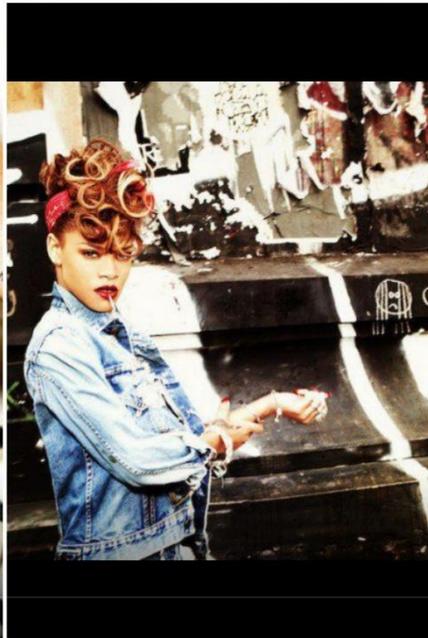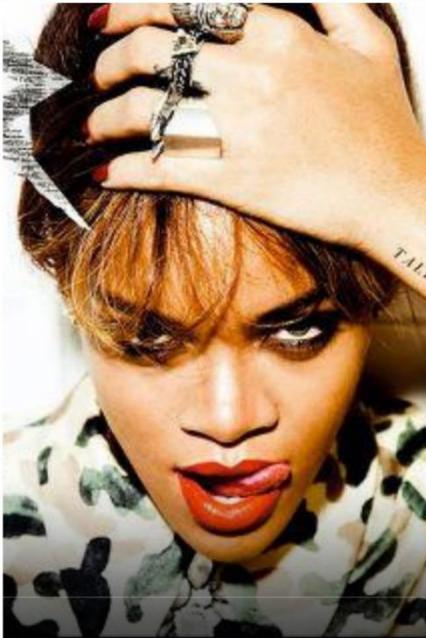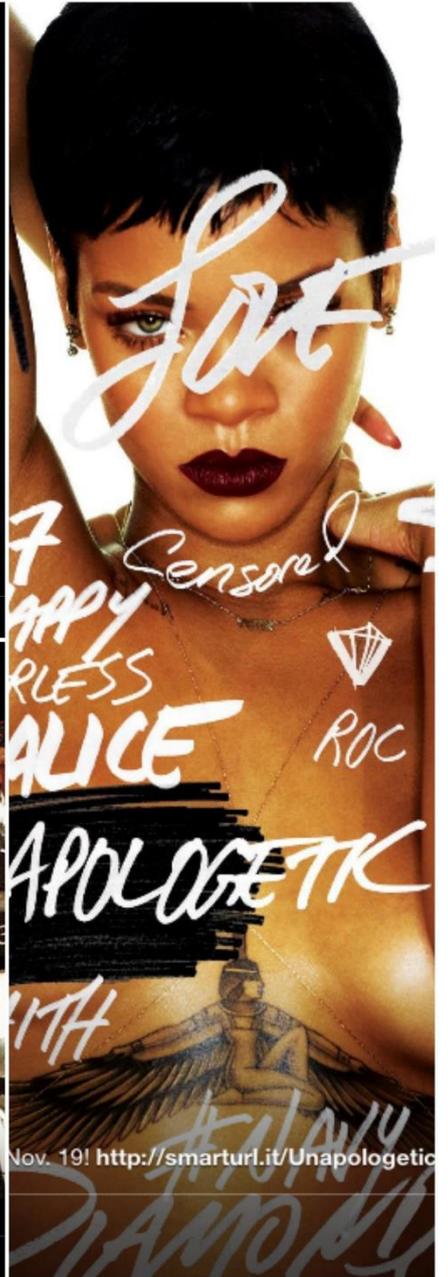
Advertisements
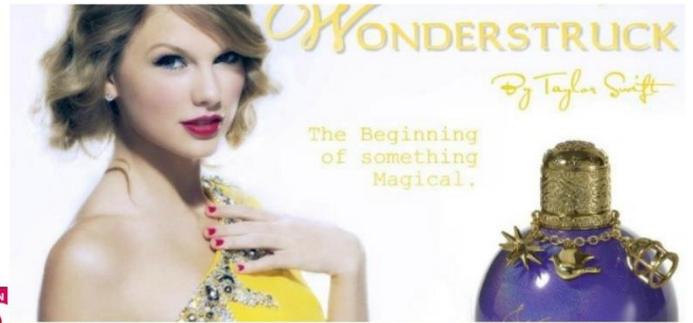
The first stage of One-to-One 'day routine clock'

Tell me about your day:

Wednesday

Saturday
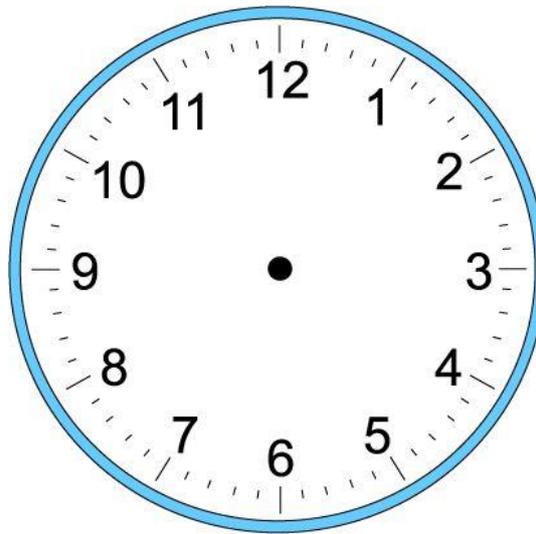
The second stage of One-to-One

RULES; NORMS AND AUDIENCE

- Favourite SNSs
- Age joined
- What usually used it for; reading habits; **fav parts**
- Privacy settings
- Usage: where, when, how (**device**); how **long**
- Num of 'Friends'; how do you select 'Friends'
- Are parents 'Friends'
- Sharing posts

CHATS

- How do you initiate chats?
- Is it different from face to face? How? Why?

PROFILE

- Pics (yes/god no; why) profile pics and cover pics

- Most favourite pictures; what do you try to convey with those pics/post
- Most pictures that represent her
- Family pics?
- How many albums? What are the titles of them? Why?
- Retouching pics
- Accepting/not tagging?
- Who would you like to see your pictures?
- When people look at her wall/profile
  - In your opinion what do they think
  - What would you like them to think?
- What is a bad/good picture?
- Instagram **pics** ↔ FB ↔ Twitter

NO INTERNET

What if I say '*From tomorrow there is no internet*?'

3. The charts

Topic	Illustrative extract	Summary of key dimensions	Negotiation process	Participants from the illustrative extract		Other participants' engagement	The atmosphere of the room	Researcher's engagement and orientation
				Non-verbal communication	Level of participation			

Table 5 Analysis template for data of Focus Groups

Interviewer's pseudo name	Topic	Voice of 'I'		Addressing relationships		The context of the illustrative extract (situating the extract	Research participant's non-verbal communication	Researcher's orientation
		Illustrative extract	Summary of key dimensions	Illustrative extract	Summary of key dimensions			

Table 6 Analysis template for data of One-to-One interviews

Table 7 Time Frame of Data collection

2013 (2nd semester of Year 1 of PhD)

School No1

	January				February				March				April				May				June	
	week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4	week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4	week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4	week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4	week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4	week 1	week 2
STEP 1 Negotiating access				�																		
STEP 2 Initial invitation meeting																						
STEP 3 Gathering consent/assent					For Group1								For Group2									
STEP 4 Creating interview setting																						
STEP 5 Phase 1 Focus Groups						FG1								FG2								
STEP 6 Phase 2 First One-to-One							Group 1 First One-to-One									Group 2 First One-to-One						
STEP 7 Phase 3 Second One-to-One										Group1 Second One-to-One								Group 2 Second One-to-One				
Interview transcription																						
Data analysis																						

2014 (2nd Semester of Year 2 of PhD)

School No2

	January				February				March				April				May				June	
STEP 1 Negotiating access																						
STEP 2 Initial invitation meeting																						
STEP 3 Gathering consent/assent																						
STEP 4 Creating interview setting																						
STEP 5 Phase 1 Focus Groups																						
STEP 6 Phase 2 First One-to-One							First One-to-One															
STEP 7 Phase 3 Second One-to-One									Second One-to-One													
Interview transcription																						
Data analysis																						

274

Table 8 Phases of data collection

LOCAL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

PHASE ONE

Focus groups: exploring how global/local meanings of femininity are constructed through the production of the established peer group

WIDER SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

PHASE TWO

ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEWS using 'day clock': exploring individual teenage girls' accounts about the production of their identity on everyday basis

CONTEXT OF GLOBAL+LOCAL

PHASE THREE

ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEWS focusing on girls' identity on SNSs: exploring individual teenage girls' accounts about the production of their identity on SNS as a product for public consumption simutaniously regulated by local private context

DEEPENING OF UNDERSTANDING: THE PERSONAL WORLDVIEW¶

HERMENEUTIC CIRCLE¶

Table 10 Teenage girls' in the study SNSs usage

Twitter
'Confessing the personal inner now thoughts'

Instagram
'Showing their Worldview'

Facebook
'My pretty sociable body'

Stereotypical female presentation¶

Audience: Public (friends and celebrities)¶
Content upload: daily & frequent ¶
Function: 140 characters tweets (not based on photos)¶
Audience feedback: retweet & favour the tweet¶

Audience: Public & gender specific, based on interest¶
Content upload: <2 a week ¶
Function: Photos only¶
Audience feedback: hearts (not based on comments)¶

Audience: Private (local social circle)¶
Content upload: tagging ¶
Function: mix (photos, status etc)¶
Audience feedback: comments, likes and shares¶

Table 9 The regulation of 'appropriate' femininity displays on SNSs

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