Exploring narratives of exclusion from school: How adolescent boys and educationalists negotiate schooling, family and gendered discourses

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my children, Alexander and Nathalie and to my beloved wife Linda, whose constant support and encouragement sustained me through this educational journey.

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Abstract

This thesis explores constructions of masculinity, deviancy and educational failure through an examination of policy and the discursive accounts provided by teenage boys, all of whom had been excluded from school, and educational practitioners working with such boys.   This topic is of interest because the exclusion of boys with behavioural problems has been of significant concern to schools and policy makers for some time. Although the numbers of exclusions has reduced recently it remains a significant social justice issue because permanent school exclusion is directly related to deviancy and unemployment and disproportionally affects those who are already disadvantaged, such as the poor working-class and those with Special Educational Needs.

This thesis contributes to understanding how boys' peer interactions contribute towards perpetuating particular myths about masculine behaviour and its domination over females and alternative masculinities. It shows how some boys through drawing on discourses of hegemonic masculinity and gender binary asymmetries construct themselves in ways that contribute towards school confrontation. The voices of practitioners show how they contribute towards tensions and how education policy is considered as prohibiting staff from working effectively with some boys.

Consideration was given to literature discussing the social construction of parenting, childhood, and children's "needs". Literature regarding the persistence of the role model discourse as both a cause and solution to boys' problem behaviours in school is also investigated.   Literature examining hegemonic masculinities was drawn on to further understand how it is performed and enforced through peer interaction, resulting in problematic behaviours which dominate particular constructions of masculinity.

The theoretical framework used for this study draws on the work of Foucault (1970 , 1977 , 1980) who theorised that people construct truth through the dominant discourses which they draw on. It also explains how and why power is afforded to one discourse at the expense of another. The methodology adopted for this research utilizes this theoretical framework. 35 narrative interviews were undertaken and examined using discourse analysis as discussed by Gee (2011) and Taylor (2001). The data collected was contrasted with literature to further understand the discourses respondents employed in their discursive constructions.

This thesis exposes the challenges that boys and practitioners face as they negotiate the dominant masculine discourses at large in both school and home. It also shows that respondents' understandings of masculinity rely on outmoded discourses of masculinity, essentialist gender binaries and constructions of childhood, which contribute towards problem behaviours in school. Tensions in school are also exacerbated by policy discourse and practitioners' constructions of childhood. However these normative discourses are challenged by respondents' acknowledgment of alternative versions of masculinity and the coexistence of gender heteroglossia.

A list of abbreviations

ADHD	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
BESD	Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CPAG	Child Poverty Action Group
DfE	Department for Education (2010 to present)
DCSF	Department for Children Schools and Families (2007 to 2010)
DfES	Department for Education and Skills (2001 to 2007)
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment (1995 to 2001)
EBD	Education Behavioural Disorder/Difficulties
FSM	Free school meals
LEA	Local Education Authority
LAC	Looked After Child
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NICE	National Institute for health and Clinical Excellence
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Ofsted	Office for standards in education
SEN	Special Educational Needs
TDA	Training and Development Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund (formally United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund)

Chapter 1
Introduction

Exploring narratives of exclusion from school: how adolescent boys and educationalists negotiate schooling, family and gendered discourses

... exclusion is a distressing and damaging experience for all concerned
(Steer, 2005 page 53)

In the period 2011 to 2012 over 5000 pupils were permanently excluded from schools while in excess of 300,000 pupils were subjected to temporary exclusion. Boys made up the majority of these exclusions being three times more likely to be excluded than girls (DfE, 2012). Despite years of intervention and government rhetoric, boys' behaviour and their exclusion from schools remains a longstanding issue for policy makers and education practitioners. The number of exclusions have recently reduced but this matter remains a significant social justice issue not least because permanent school exclusion is directly related to long-term deviancy, unemployment and crime, while in addition it disproportionally affects those who are already significantly disadvantaged, such as the poor working-class and those with Special Educational Needs (Reid, 2005 , Anderson, 2007 , Berman, 2009 , Colman *et al*., 2009 , Cotzias, 2014).

There is an abundance of academic literature regarding boys' behaviour and exclusion from school some of which is discussed in chapter 3.   However the voices of excluded boys and of educational practitioners, working with such boys, are underrepresented in research. This study seeks to rectify this. By engaging in a qualitative study, the aims of this research are to explore the narratives of boys and educational practitioners and give voice to their opinions and constructions of matters relating to exclusion

Drawing upon the literature review, the focus of this research will be to explore the discourses participants utilise in their narratives relating to the following:

- To investigate how all participants explain the behaviours of boys who construct themselves in opposition to school.

- To understand how boys' and educational practitioners utilise discourses of masculinity in their constructions of boys' behaviours.
- To consider the implications of peer pressure on boys' behaviours.
- To consider boys' and practitioners' constructions of gender binary asymmetries.
- To consider how respondents implicate parents, families and parenting skills in their discussions about boys' behaviours.
- To consider how power asymmetries between teachers and pupils are implicated in discussions about behaviour.
- To explore the role model discourse and how it is considered as both a cause of and solution to boys' problem behaviours.
- To consider the social constructions of childhood and children's needs and how these constructions potentially contribute towards tensions in schools.
- To review how educational practitioners consider educational policies to assist in and impinge on their activities as teachers working with boys constructed as problematic.

In investigating these discourses the aims of this study are to show:

1. How particular discourses are afforded more power than others and marginalise alternative discourses.
2. How commitment to particular discourses contributes towards "problematic" behaviours.
3. How contradictory alternative discourses have the potential to challenge essentialist constructions of gender binaries and constructions of a unitary superior masculinity.

The theoretical framework used for this study draws on the work of Foucault (1970 , 1977 , 1980) who theorised that people construct truth and knowledge through the discourses they draw on and how one discourse is afforded greater power than another. This theoretical framework is discussed fully in chapter 2. The methodology adopted for this research was chosen because of its compatibility with Foucault's theoretical framework and is discussed further in chapter 4. 35 interviews were undertaken and examined using discourse analysis as discussed by Gee (2011) and Taylor (2001). Analysis of these interviews exposed the normative dominant discourses invested in by respondents to construct and make sense of tensions in school. The data collected were compared and contrasted with literature to further understand the discourses respondents employed in their discursive constructions of childhood, boys' behaviour, school policy and then how they attributed responsibility, cause and blame.

This thesis contributes to understanding how boys' peer interactions contribute towards perpetuating particular myths about masculine behaviour and its domination and superiority over females and alternative masculinities. It also shows how some boys, through drawing on discourses of hegemonic masculinity and gender binary asymmetries, construct themselves in ways that contribute towards school confrontation and alienation. Significantly it also shows that school staff may contribute towards such tensions. It also illustrates how education policy potentially prohibits staff from working effectively with such alienated boys.

This thesis shows that the roots of this social justice issue lie within the dominant discourses drawn upon by respondents to form truths. It also exposes the challenges that boys face as they negotiate the dominant masculine discourses at large in both school and home. It explores the challenges educational practitioners face as they try to make sense of some male pupils while also negotiating matters such as classroom discipline, Ofsted inspections and target setting. It reveals that educational practitioners and boys draw on similar essentialist discourses of hegemonic masculinity to justify, normalise and naturalise particular boys' behaviours. However boys also illustrated how the peer pressures in operation in schools significantly contributed towards perpetuating their hegemonic construction of male behaviour. The normality of these constructions is fractured by some respondents' acknowledgment of the existence of alternative versions of masculinity and the coexistence of gender heteroglossia. Boys also highlighted how conflict in school is exacerbated by policy discourse and practitioners' constructions of childhood. Some respondents' understandings of these matters was shown to be lacking, indicating that they relied on outmoded discourses of masculinity and constructions of childhood, which potentially contribute towards exacerbating some boys' problems with school. However this thesis shows that respondents' alternative understandings have the potential to be profitably drawn on to develop more effective ways of engaging with boys' behaviours constructed as problematic.

Chapter 2
Theoretical framework

**... there is scarcely a society without its major narratives ... and ritualised
sets of discourses
(Foucault, 1970 page 56)**

The core of this research involves exploring the social construction of meaning through discourse and in particular understanding the competing and contradictory discourses that people draw upon in relation to boys and school. Therefore this research adopts a Foucauldian perspective.

Exploiting Foucault's lens allows for a critical exploration of "power" and "knowledge", the "normalisation" and "truths" attributed to boys' school engagement and behaviour in school, and ultimately the "discourses" which people draw upon to "construct" boys as deviant and badly behaved. The interview data in this research will be explored through discourse analysis. There are a variety of forms of discourse analysis but Foucault did not contribute towards these (Hook, 2001). I draw upon the expertise of Gee (2011, 1999), Miles and Huberman (1994) and Wetherell (2001) to undertake discourse analysis.

The work of Foucault is the subject of numerous academic discussions. In this chapter I shall explain terms such as "power", "knowledge", "truth", "social construction" and "discourse" and then how I shall be using these terms in this research to explore boys' behaviour and their exclusion from school.

2.1 Discourse

As Foucault 's work is central to this thesis, it is first necessary to understand what he meant by the term discourse. The term discourse may be understood and used in a variety of ways.   Acknowledging this, Foucault said that his definitions of discourse, "... do not conform with current usage: linguist usually give the word discourse a quite different meaning ...". He then added, "... the term discourse can be defined as the group of statements that belong to a

single system of formation ..." (Foucault, 1972 p121). Importantly, discourse integrates what we say and also what we do.

Foucault discusses different forms of discourse, such as clinical discourse, economic discourse, and the discourse of natural history. Elaborating on this, Kendall and Wickham (1999) say that discourses are productive and give examples: "... medical discourses ... produce the mentally ill, penological discourses produce the criminal, discourse on sex produce sexuality ..." (Kendall and Wickham, 1999 page 34). Foucault explains that these examples of discourse have an author or authors. However in an earlier work Foucault also discusses those discourses where the author cannot be determined. He said:

> ... there exist all around us plenty of discourses which circulate
> without deriving their meaning or their efficacy from an author to
> whom they could be attributed ... (Foucault, 1970 page 58)

Foucault argued that it is within such a range of discourses that people construct "knowledge" and ultimately "truths". All members of a society are implicated in preserving specific discourses. This is because we, both knowingly and unknowingly, use and exploit unproven, indistinct cultural and historical rules and behaviours to support certain discourses, thus effectively, affording the discourse power and knowledge. I shall discuss power and knowledge more thoroughly at 2.2.

Various authors have discussed discourse. For example Hewitt defined discourse as:

> Broadly speaking, the ... characteristic ways of conceiving, speaking
> and writing about things ... Such texts always conceal an ideology, a
> set of beliefs that are not based on any empirical evidence, but only on
> the interests and preferences of those who hold them. (Hewitt, 1976
> page 27)

For this research, discourse is then understood to be the limiting and accepted ways of discussing and referring to things. Reinforcing Foucault's description of discourse, Prado (2000) reiterates that while discourse is an integrated set of things we say, it also includes things that we do. This suggests

that discourse is not just about the culturally permitted ways in which we are allowed to speak about things but the customary and normalised ways in which we are to act in particular circumstances.

Other authors also make reference to particular types of discourse, examples being: policy, media and common discourse. Ball (2008) for example, makes reference to "policy discourse" which may originate from schools but also stems from government educational policies, which he suggests make some ideas "true". Macdonald (2003) discusses media discourses and refers to forms of publishing including television, radio and newspapers, suggesting the, "… notion of the media reflecting reality" (Macdonald, 2003 page 12). While Garfinkel (2003) refers to common discourses, referring to the established, accepted and normalised manner of discussions and casual utterances. What Garfinkel explains here is that there are a range of discourses, deriving from official and unofficial sources, which people draw upon as truth to engage in a range of conversations, with the understanding that those engaged with them will understand, agree and accept the normalisation of the utterances.

For this study, the discourses operating in schools are of particular interest. In schools we might, for example, consider the manner in which pupils and teachers interact. The language used and the physical interactions between pupils and teachers are constructed by both government and school policy discourses and influenced by media and common discourses. Operating together these discourses discursively construct and normalise particular etiquette between pupils and teachers. Where a teacher or a pupil is constructed as behaving outside of this discourse then he or she is constructed as deviant.

The normalisation of beliefs and behaviours through discourse and the way in which things can be said and thought are of particular importance for this research. This highlights the difficulty that a person might have if they were to contest a particular discourse, not just because of the possible challenges to their thinking, but perhaps more significantly, because of the repercussions and responses of others to their critical comments or behaviours. Arguing against or

behaving outside the dictates of a particular discourse may be both testing and risky. As Hook acknowledges, to do so is, "… to be mad, to be beyond comprehension and therefore reason" (Hook, 2001 page 2).   As will be discussed at 3.2 in the literature review and investigated in chapter 5 in the boys' narratives, for some boys, in certain circumstances, challenging masculine dominant discourses is acutely problematic.

Of particular interest for this study is the manner in which discourses define what can be said, thought and done. Discourses defining gender are a part of this, and, as will be discussed and explained at 3.1, socially constructed gender differences are a significant element of this study. Therefore Lawler's (2008) comment about discourse and gender is particularly pertinent. She says:

> In the Foucauldian sense, gendered persons, and gender itself, are categories 'made up' within discourses. Further, it is in the heterosexual encounter that gender gets 'consecrated' … The notion of heterosexuality, we might say, 'produces' … two distinct genders which are kept apart conceptually. (Lawler, 2008 page 117)

Jupp and Norris contend that Foucault did not regard discourse "as a resource to explain the world but as an object of inquiry in its own right" (Jupp and Norris, 1993 page 39). This point is particularly significant for this study because, as will be shown, understanding the discourses which people draw upon allows investigation into how "right and wrong" are constructed within different places, by different people, within varying cultures and in different institutions. So what is considered "wrong" in one place may not be so in another and likewise what is deemed 'correct' within a culture, place or institution may be considered inappropriate at another.

Children coming to school will draw upon a variety discourses in relation to socialising, attitudes towards learning, eating, play, anger management and various other behaviours predominantly learned at home and within their own communities. If the discourses pupils draw upon are at odds with those of other pupils or staff in the school, then conflict might arise. But this will depend upon,

what Jupp and Norris (1993) refer to a the hierarchy of competing discourses and significantly how the credibility of one discourse over another is established and accepted.

The issue of competing discourses is important in this study. Of particular significance is how one discourse is more powerful than another, resulting in conflict or the subjugation of one discourse over another. Thus in questioning what actually counts as truth Foucault says:

> 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. (Foucault, 1980 page 131)

2.2 Power, knowledge and truth

During discussion about discourse, several references to power, knowledge and truth have been made. This is unsurprising because, as Foucault states, " ... truth[s] are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false" (Foucault, 1980 page 118).   And further to this Foucault also says, "... power produces knowledge" [and] "... power and knowledge directly imply one another" (Foucault, 1977 page 27).   Carabine, discussing Foucault's work, concisely explains his perspective:

> ... knowledges are socially constructed and produced by effects of power and spoken of in terms of 'truths'. Foucault argues that power is constituted thorough discourses. Thus, power is important in the construction of knowledge and what counts as knowledge. (Carabine, 2001 page 275)

The implication that there are links between power, knowledge, truth and discourse is very significant for this study. Discourses are regularly drawn upon as a source of knowledge and presented and relied upon, as true. As such, certain actions and behaviours of people are often explained as natural and normal, with people drawing upon discourses to present an argument of truth.

Understanding why and how this occurs and understanding the fragility of particular claims is fundamental to this research.

To begin with it is necessary to understand what Foucault meant by 'power.' Kendal and Wickham say of Foucault's philosophical formations, "Power is a strategy concerned with relations between the sayable [and] … the visible" (Kendall and Wickham, 1999 page 55). While this explains that power defines what can be said and done under particular circumstances, it does not fully explain how power operates in all circumstances. Prado (2000) offers some clarification when he says that power:

> … is the complex network of acts of domination, submission and resistance. Power constrains actions, not individuals. Power is a totality made up of individuals being dominated, coerced, or intimidated; of individuals submitting to domination, coercion, or intimidation; and of individuals resisting domination, coercion, or intimidation. Power is all about people acting in ways that blindly and impersonally condition the options and actions of others. (Prado, 2000 page 37)

Therefore, by drawing upon particular 'discourses' and arguing that the statements in that 'discourse' constitute something desirable and good, people in positions of power and domination promote those particular discourses which are beneficial to them. For example, in a classroom it might be considered 'good' to be quiet and listen to the teacher, particularly from the teacher's point of view. This correlates with Nietzsche (1913) who discussing 'good and evil and good and bad' argues that 'good' is reasoned by those in positions of power and importance. They determine what is 'good', based upon their views and the use such 'good' might be to them. This argues that the 'good', or the 'statement' made within a discourse, is constructed by the person or institution with 'power'.

Power is central to the production of knowledge and truth. Of this Smart acknowledges that, "… where power is exercised … knowledge is produced" (Smart, 1983 page 65). As such, discourses produced within an institution may be drawn upon and used as truth. As an example of this, commenting on the

power afforded to the media and the influence that the media has on public opinion, Mills and Keddie warn that:

> The media is not a harmless commentator on public events. It works to construct the realities of which it writes. (Mills and Keddie, 2010 page 440)

This acknowledges that the media is afforded power, which enables its discourses to be considered as truth. However the power and authority of government also enables their statements to be considered as true and thus can also be subsumed as discourses. The power afforded to school, government and media discourses and the belief in the truth of these discourses is particularly important for this research because determined within a discourse are suggestions that it offers a particular truth or particular truths.

There is much academic debate about natural and normal behaviour and child development. MacNaughton (2005) for example discusses and challenges theories of "normal" child development and concepts of "normal" parenting, while authors such as Thorne (1993) discuss the social pressures upon boys and girls to behave and play in particular ways so as conform to gender norms. This research investigates how respondents draw upon discourses of truth, sourced from institutions of power, to explain and justify actions and beliefs, using normative discourses to socially construct some boys as deviant, failing or disruptive and their parents as feckless and/or poorly skilled. In this study, investigating the discourses drawn from such social constructions will further add towards understanding the issue of boys' exclusion from schools.

The relationship between power and knowledge is important for this study. By challenging the truth in a statement it is also possible, and necessary, to challenge the power afforded to it. The difficulty for individuals attempting to do this will be considered in the analysis of interviews in chapters 5 and 6.

2.3 Social constructionism

Having considered Foucault's (1980) argument that knowledge is produced within sites of power and how such knowledge may be normalised as reality and become discourse, it is now possible to explore how discourse and social constructionism are interwoven.

Referring to reality, Berger and Luckman argue that, "… reality is socially constructed …" (Berger and Luckman, 1966 page 13).   By this they mean, that which is taken-for-granted as true and real, is an interpretation, a ranking and evaluation, defined and agreed by people, drawing on discourse. Gergen refers to this process as, "… the result of an active, cooperative enterprise of persons in relationship" (Gergen, 2003 page 15). He adds that how people come to "… describe, explain or otherwise account for the world …" defines social constructionism.   This explains that what we define as right or wrong, and how we describe good and bad, and indeed how men and women are characterized, is done through social agreements and by drawing upon particular discourses. These discourses may have been formed around arbitrary standards, historical cultural norms or designed to serve the purpose of an institution or person(s) of power. Such discourses and social constructions have one thing in common, they are,   "… things that exist only because we believe them to exist. (Searle, 1995 page 1). This dismisses essentialist conceptions of identity, childhood and gender as being fixed by biology.

Academics such as Cannella (1997) and James and James (2004) argue that childhood is a social construction formed within cultural discourses but also shaped by government policy.   Johnson (1997) and Connell (2005) illustrate how gender is also an example of a social construct, utilizing binary discourses of behaviour, attitudes and abilities.

Education policy discourse also contributes towards particular constructions of normality. An example of this is education policy determining the minimum educational achievements required for 16-year-old pupils (DfE, 2011a , DfE, 2014e). This has the effect of constructing normalised pupils who

achieve the minimum standards and in doing so also constructing those not achieve the minimum standards and in doing so also constructing those not achieving as failures. Pupils who differ from socially constructed norms such as school achievement may therefore potentially be socially constructed as abnormal or deviant, even when such standards are considered to have been reached arbitrarily, as Ball (2006) argues.

The connection of power and social construction is most important because, as Vance (1995) explains, social construction is the manner in which people, or an institution, define, label and categorise someone or something. As was discussed earlier, power affords knowledge and truth, therefore the constructions made within positions of power are harder to contest. The concept of dominant masculinity as normal is a significant issue for some boys and schools: from the boys' perspective as being obliged to accommodate and mimic such behaviour, and from the perspective of the school and staff as having to handle resulting behaviours constructed as disruptive. Understanding how discourses and social constructions establish normality is fundamental to this research and will be considered throughout this thesis. I believe that by using this theoretical framework to unsettle such discourse and social constructions, it will be possible to understand their formation and test out their validity. As Burr (1995) argues, if we take a:

> ... critical stance towards our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world ... It invites us ... to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world. (Burr, 1995 page 3)

2.4 Discourse analysis

Having considered how Foucault explained the interrelationships of discourse, formations of power and knowledge and social construction, it is now possible to theorise how this information will inform the analysis of interview transcripts which is fundamental to this study. In this study I shall be exploring how and why certain discourses are drawn upon and accepted as dominant, more important and powerful than another. The investigation of this

phenomenon will be approached through discourse analysis of transcribed interviews.

Although Foucault did not contribute directly towards theorising about discourse analysis, his writing and discussions directly relate to and support this process. Wetherell explains this when she says that discourse analysis addresses how reality is constructed and what emerges as a result. She contends that people reach conclusions about normality or abnormality by drawing upon what Foucault called "a theory of knowledge". Wetherell adds:

> Discourse analysis addresses both 'how' and 'what' questions in relation to the construction of reality – how reality is constructed and the institutions, modes of representation and cultural/material discursive regimes which emerge as a result. (Wetherell, 2001 page 393)

Discourse analysis therefore assists in understanding how people form their conclusions about reality and truth.

Navarro (2005) and Robson (2005) describe how qualitative interviews can be used to understand how people do this, and suggest employing discourse analysis to explore what people have said in interviews, the discourses they have drawn on, and the constructions they have made in doing so.

Discourse analysis is concerned with nuance, contradiction, ambiguity and areas of vagueness (Osgood, 2012). Burr (1995) suggests that the process of discourse analysis appears to be a largely intuitive and interpretive process and thus is difficult to explain thoroughly. But while the process might be intuitive she explains the purpose is to analyse a piece of text in order to reveal either the discourses operating within it or the linguistic and rhetorical devises used in its construction. As already mentioned, in this thesis I shall be seeking to examine the discourses operating in the transcripts of interviews.   Gergen (1985) argues that to begin analysis one has to suspend commonly accepted categories or understandings. This may be more difficult to do than it seems, even though MacNaughton optimistically suggests:

We are able to unmask the regimes of truth that govern us precisely because it is we who hold them in place and reproduce them. (MacNaughton, 2005 page 39)

Gergen and Gergen (2003) argue that our commonly held assumptions about good and bad serve as anchors for our daily activities. These anomalies need to be teased out.   Such truths and anomalies are contained in what Garfinkel (2003) refers to as common discourses. He explains that where these discourses are drawn upon users assume that they are universally accepted and understood. Garfinkel suggests that there is an:

> ... anticipation that people *will* understand, the occasionality of expressions, the specific vagueness of references, the retrospective-prospective sense of a present occurrence, waiting for something later in order to see what was meant before, are sanctioned properties of common discourse. (Garfinkel, 2003 p 12)

What is being suggested here is that such expressions and assumptions should be searched for within the texts of interviewees. Considering this, and the comments of Foucault (1980) and Gergen (1985), it can be seen that the suspension of one's own beliefs is an essential part of discourse analysis in order to pursue and understand how respondents rely upon their normalising discourses and the assumptions that go with them.

The purpose of discourse analysis is to understand and explain how respondents are using, accepting and normalising common discourses. It is necessary to engage a number of strategies to do this. Firstly, taped interviews should be transcribed using a 'naturalised' style as discussed by Bucholtz (1999) and Oliver *et al.* (2005). Such transcription is compatible with Gee (2011) who suggests that during interviews, when assumptions and common discourses are employed, the respondents often speak in a particular manner believing that what they are saying is understood and accepted. Gee discusses clues to unearth this. He suggests looking at where words are left out of sentences. This is often done because of the assumption that the listener knows what is coming next, because of a supposed shared cultural knowledge. He also suggests that one

should expose phrases that include binaries or judgements such as "good" role model or "bad" behaviour and attempt to clarify what the respondent is assuming is understood by these terms. Such nuances help to analyse the assumptions, the common discourses drawn on, and the social constructions that the respondent has and is making. In light of this Gee suggests that when looking at data one should try to understand what the speaker is trying to do, not just say.

Foucault's (1972 , 1980 , 1970) focus was on questioning how some discourses become "truths" and as such have come to dominate how we define and organize our social world and ourselves. Therefore using a Foucauldian lens to analyse interviews enables the following:

It allows for an exploration of what the respondent is presenting as a truth and/or a norm.

It allows an understanding of how the respondent constructs this truth and in doing so one is able to consider if this truth is problematic or not.

It allows exploration of what is being normalized, and in doing so what is being pathologized.

It allows for exploration of why and how a discourse is dominant while another is marginalised.

It also allows for an understanding of whose interest is being served in the discourses being drawn upon and the constructions being made.

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion the theoretical framework adopted is informed by social constructionism as discussed by Burr (1995) and Fraser *et al*. (2004), with transcripts evaluated through discourse analysis, using techniques discussed by Gee (2011) and Oliver *et al*. (2005). This approach seeks out Foucault's logic because it views behaviour as being shaped by social and cultural influences, which are in turn affected by power and knowledge (Foucault, 1970 , Foucault, 1972 , Foucault, 1980).

In relation to boys' interviews this theoretical perspective will be particularly valuable to reach new understandings of the dominant masculine behaviours adopted, promoted and displayed by some boys, and perhaps especially by boys who have been constructed as having behavioural problems. As Pattman and Kehily (2004) argue

> There are many different social constructionist perspectives on gender. However they all share the idea that becoming male or female is a social process that is learned through culture: in the family, in school and in social interactions more generally. (Fraser *et al.*, 2004 p.132)

With regard to the educational practitioners included in this study, social constructionist theory will enable an understanding of how a range of educational practitioners comprehend and make sense of particular boys' behaviours. Discourse analysis reveals the discourses drawn upon, details of the constructions made and how interviewees variously construct truth and knowledge.

Chapter 3
Literature review

This literature review provides an overview of the main factors relating to constructions of boys' difficult behaviours at school. Firstly, consideration is given to the academic literature on masculinities, peer interactions and the means by which various authors discuss and construct boys' behaviour. Connected with this is a review of literature discussing the origins of the role model discourse and how it is variously referred to as a universal remedy to those boys' behaviours constructed as problematic. This is followed by a review of academic literature examining how parenting, parenting skills and poverty are often attributed to influencing boys' behaviour and attitudes towards school and education. Two final areas are investigated. Literature relating to school accountability such as targets and league tables is examined to explore the implications for boys' experience of education and how boys' behaviour is constructed in relation to this. While finally literature discussing SEN and issues of mental health are examined to explore how these matters might be involved in boys' education and behaviour in schools.

3.1   Normalisation of masculinity and gender differences

In our society there are preferred versions of masculinity that are considered to be normal and natural and which are used to construct the characteristics and attributes of men and women as distinctly different. Disputing the normality of such gendered behaviours, Connell maintains that these versions are produced through discourses, which define what "true" masculinity is and is not, and how men should and should not behave. While such essentialist definitions of masculine behaviours continue to be considered by some as natural and normal, academics such as Butler (1993), McGuffey (1999), Reay (2002), Paechter (2007), Fine (2010) and Francis (2012) argue that masculinity is a performance, learned, rehearsed and enforced through culture, peer groups and families. Thus Connell explains, " ... gender must be understood as a social structure. It is not an expression of biology…"(Connell, 2009 page 9).

The fragility of essentialist hegemonic discourses which supports the superiority of male over female and normalises particular male behaviours is well documented by authors such as Diamond and Quinby (1988), Thorne (1993), Kehily and Nayak (1997), Renold (1997), Francis and Skelton (2001) and Connell (2009) among others. They discuss how boys, families, teachers and the media promote discourses that normalise dominant masculinities and marginalize and denigrate females and those boys who do not conform. Discussing gender binaries and constructions of what Mills (2001) refers to as the "ideal man", authors such as Delgardo (1995), Johnson (1997), Haywood (2003), and Connell (2005) list the attributes and behaviours that the "ideal man" displays. These include strength, control, competitiveness, sexual competence and risk taking. Women are constructed in opposition to these characteristics.

Volman and Dam (1998) suggest that the normalisation of hegemonic masculine behaviours and the construction of gender binary asymmetries is a historical product. Explaining this further, Johnson suggests that, "Given thousands of years of patriarchal history, it's easy to slide into the belief that things have always been this way" (Johnson, 1997 page 224), and therefore will remain so. This historical normalisation and the accompanying male violence is referred to by Mills as a "prehistoric tradition" (Mills, 2001 page 55).

Similar to Connell, Timimi argues that Western culture is driven by masculine macho ideals, which she claims are driven by discourse, "including the powerful influence of the media" (Timimi, 2005 page 87).   Illustrating this view, various popular, media and policy discourses frequently normalize aspects of boys' behaviour and claim that boys are naturally different from girls. Newspaper articles such as *Ministers tell nurseries to allow boys toy guns* (Woolcock, 2007) and government documents such as *Confident, capable and creative: supporting boys' achievements* (DCSF, 2007) have the potential to contribute towards constructing certain boys' behaviour as natural, reinforcing gendered binaries.

Neuropsychologists such as Gurian (2001), Baron-Cohen (2003), Sax (2005) and Knickmeyer (2005), appear to draw upon such essentialist discourses, arguing that boys' thinking, development and behaviour are biologically and naturally unlike those of girls. In particular they contend that men's brains are 'wired' differently to women's and thus they have particular abilities and behaviours. These assumptions are now widely challenged by authors such as Lawrence *et al.* (2004) Titus (2004), Lorber (2005) and Fine (2010).

Discussing male violence, Mills suggests that there is an assumption that there is a, "unitary masculinity which serves as a blueprint for normal masculinities" (Mills, 2001 page 53) and that this masculinity is the preserve of boys and men. This is disputed by authors such as Halbersham (1998), and Paechter (2007 , 2006a , 2006b). While particular behaviours, such as aggression, strength and competitiveness continue to be constructed as uniquely masculine, Francis (2010 , 2012) draws attention to "gender heteroglossia", the coexistence of male and female behaviours in men and women, and in doing so further challenges the construction of hegemonic masculinities being uniquely male, natural or normal. However despite evidence to the contrary, dominant masculine discourses remain powerful within particular communities, among some boys, and in the media and government policy. How boys and educational practitioners draw on such discourses will be explored in the interview analysis.

3.2 Disruptive and incompatible boys' behaviours in schools

Although academics dismiss the normalisation of hegemonic masculine behaviours, Epstein (1998), Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) and Arnot *et al.* (1999) acknowledge that some boys' construction of themselves within this dominant discourse influences their attitude to education and authority. Discussing how this affects their behaviour in school, Francis says a "social constructionist argument [is] that pupils' constructions of gender produce different behaviours which impact on achievement" (Francis, 2009 page 646). Connell (2009), Mills (2001) and Pattman *at al*. (1998) suggest that boys' gendered acts are often

demonstrated through what are determined as disruption, aggression and violence and it is these performances which schools construct as incompatible and are often cited as contributory factors leading towards boys' exclusion from schools (Arnold *et al.*, 2009 , DCSF, 2009 , Pirrie *et al.*, 2009). Investigating the discourses which contribute towards these behaviours makes up part of this study.

Government policy and advisory reports frequently give guidance to schools on matters of pupil behaviour. A 2005 DfES report placed emphasis upon schools developing "Codes of conduct" (Steer, 2005), while current DfE advice to schools stresses the maintenance of "good" pupil behaviour (DfE, 2014a). The implementation of "codes of conduct" and "good" behaviour relies upon the power and authority of staff. Where boys draw on hegemonic masculine discourses, or what Halberstam (1998) and Reay (2002) refer to as working-class masculinities, it would appear that confrontation in school is inevitable not least because as Foucault argues "Where there is power, there will be resistance" (Foucault, 1976 page 95).   Boys' resistance to the disciplinary regime of schools is well documented by authors such Archer *et al.* (2005) and Timimi (2005).

Lareau (2003) suggests that one of the major reasons for confrontation in schools are that they are organised around middle-class ideals and values, which include negotiation and non violence, attributes which are at odds with some working-class families. Peal (2014) discussing poor behaviour in schools draws on data from the *Elton Report* (1989) which suggests that most teachers rely on negotiation and non punitive methods when dealing with discipline problems. Such middle-class approaches may be at odds with some boys' constructions of discipline, particularly those who draw on discourses of hegemonic masculinities to make sense of themselves and construct how they should respond towards authority, confrontation and peers.

3.3 Masculinities, peer interactions and teachers

Authors including McLean (1995), Mills (2001) and Chambers *et al.* (2004) argue that interactions between boys can contribute towards problematic displays of physical and verbal behaviours. It is argued that some boys engage in policing, peer pressure and bullying to encourage other boys to comply with dominant masculinity within environments such as schools. Green (2007) notes that there are two types of bullying in schools, physical and verbal.

McLean (1995) argues that physical strength is considered by some boys as one of the major signifiers of manhood and therefore to be constructed as a man by peers and oneself, some boys perceive the need to display and prove that they are physically strong. This often results in physical bullying. Green (2007) says that 89% of physical bullying in schools is perpetrated by boys upon other boys.

In addition Chambers *at al.* (2004) discuss verbal abuse, which includes misogynist and homosexual insults, to encourage male peers to conform to particular versions of hegemonic masculinity and to denigrate those who do not.

Authors such as Kane (2011), Sherriff (2007), Smith (2007) Holland (1993) and Thorne (1993) highlight the pressure of such bullying upon boys to adopt and engage in hegemonic behaviours. Discussing this, Connell (2009) argues that not only is there pressure upon them to conform but additional pressure placed upon men and boys who cannot or will not conform. Explaining the physical and verbal violence which often accompanies bullying and masculine performances, Mills says:

> … violence by males against males, which is often interpreted as boys being boys or as bullying, is indeed gender based. Such violence is often a form of boundary policing, usually with a homophobic edge, which serves to both normalise particular constructions of masculinity while also determining where a boy is positioned within a hierarchical arrangement of masculinities. (Mills, 2001 page 4)

While it is claimed that peer interactions have the potential to adversely affect the choices and behaviours boys engage in, authors such as Barnes (2012), Haywood and Mac-an-Ghaill (2003) and Francis and Skelton (2001) and others suggest that some teachers' actions also have the potential to exacerbate and encourage what Connell (2005) refers to as hegemonic masculinity. They do this through discipline methods, competition and encouragement of particular peer group interaction. Barnes' (2012) study indicates how male teachers use hegemonic masculine behaviours and "laddishness" to keep boys in order or to get them on their side. In an earlier study, Francis and Skelton (2001) discussed how male teachers use homophobia and sexism to enhance their position and as a means of discipline. This suggests that influences upon boys to adhere to forms of dominant masculinity come not just from other boys but from some teachers as well. As Haywood and Mac-an-Ghaill argue, teaching styles and discipline methods influence boys' formations of identity. They add:

> ... disciplinary regimes of schools create specific kinds of men ... tough teachers make tough boys ... schools that adopt violent teaching practices generate schoolboy masculinities based upon competitive machismo. (Haywood and Mac-an-Ghaill, 2003 page 64)

So while middle-class discipline values (discussed at 3.2) may be at odds with working-class boys, it is also argued that teachers who display what might be determined as hegemonic masculinity may exacerbate or reinforce dominant masculine discourses in some boys, therefore possibly influencing some boys' attitudes to school and learning.

3.4 Laddishness in schools

With literature about peer pressure in mind it becomes possible to understand the reasons why some boys might reject education if it is perceived as feminine and as a challenge to their constructions of masculinity. It is also suggested that some boys may reject classes in which they feel unable to succeed and avoid tasks if they are likely to be ridiculed by friends for engaging in them. Archer *et al.,* (2005), Jackson, (2003 , 2002), Covington (2000) and Archer and Yamashita (2003) argue that dismissing education, having a laugh, challenging teacher authority, being disruptive and so on are considered by some boys to be indicators of masculinity and therefore worthy attributes to possess. These behaviours may be described as "laddishness", used to display aspects of dominant masculinity but also as a tactic to avoid engaging in school, risking failure or being perceived as feminine.

Jackson (2002 , 2003), Covington (2000) and Francis (1999) explain that by drawing on particular discourses, some boys construct intelligence and learning as an attribute that ought to be innate for men. They consider that academic success should come naturally to men, and therefore no effort is required or can be demonstrated. This is reinforced through discourse and peer pressure. They construct working hard academically as both feminine and as a sign of masculine weakness and therefore refrain from showing any signs of applying themselves academically to their peers.   In addition, Arnot and Miles (2005) add that a competitive performance school system further encourages "laddish" culture, while Covington (2000) and Jackson (2002) argue that because some boys view education as competitive they will not try for fear of not coming first. Covington and Teel explain that "some students are motivated to avoid failure by not participating at all" (Covington and Teel, 1996 page 3).

In summary it is argued that laddishness is therefore a defence, a self-worth protection strategy, to protect against accusations of failure, lack of ability and being seen as feminine. As some boys' identity is based on their masculine status, "laddishness" allows them to cope with the fear of academic failure by utilizing

discourses of hegemonic masculine behaviours, which are accepted and admired in some masculine peer groups.

3.5 The role model discourse and boys' problem behaviours

Media and government policy at various times simplistically suggest that providing schools with additional male staff would be a straightforward way of dealing with boys' educational performance and behaviours constructed as problematic. It assumes that male staff would act as role models for troublesome and underachieving boys because there are no adequate role models at home. These suggestions are based on discourses which construct single mothers as deficient and absent fathers as feckless while also arguing that parenting skills of working class are ineffective and detrimental (Cohen, 2002 , Westwood, 1996).

The simplicity of this male role model proposal is explained by Clarke and Kitzinger who argue that it is:

> so well embedded in our cultural common sense, that arguments about the necessity of male role models require little explanation or justification. (Clarke and Kitzinger, 2005 page 148)

To understand the implications of this I will now discuss the origins of the role model discourse. It will be shown that the male role model proposal is ill conceived and based on ideas, which fail to consider the intricacies of role modelling. It is first necessary to understand where and how these proposals emerged.

Merton first proposed his role model theory in 1957 with further work in 1960s, 70s and 80s (Merton, 1957 , Cohen and Short, 1961 , Merton, 1986 , Holton, 2004).   Merton's original work was a study of medical students where he argued that in seeking to define themselves within their chosen career, student physicians appraised themselves against established doctors of medicine. Merton theorized that people create "reference groups", consisting of numbers of others, from whom characteristics are observed and chosen to emulate. In doing so "... they adopt a role model" (Merton, 1957 p 137).

There is a great deal of academic work that dismisses popular discourses around male role models as a solution to boys' difficulties at school (Mills *et al.,* 2004 , Bricheno and Thornton, 2007 , Cushman, 2008). While many of the arguments put forward may appear credible, none address the issue from Merton's position. Merton argued that people choose role models, which suggests that role models cannot therefore be enforced.

The government and media proposal to engage more male staff in schools to act as role models to disaffected boys is questioned by a number of academics. Mills *et al*. (2004) argue that current discourse for the recruitment and retention of male teachers is based on an assumption that men can offer something that women cannot. Jones (2003) and Cushman (2008) suggest that the "something" men can offer is hegemonic masculinity. Mills *et al.* (2008) refer to "an imaginary teacher who, "will act as a disciplinarian with unruly students, in particular boys" (Mills *et al*., 2008 page 80).

It might be supposed that the government proposal for more male staff in schools would be based around the idea of offering boys the opportunity to observe men who *do not* construct themselves within a dominant masculine discourse and *do not* therefore present aggressive, hegemonic masculine behaviour.   However in a 2011 speech, Gove, the then Secretary of State for Education said:

> We need more male teachers – especially in primary schools – to provide children who often lack male role models at home – with male authority figures who can display both strength and sensitivity. (Gove, 2011 page 7)

Mills *et al.* and Cushman argue that proposals such as Gove's have the potential to reinforce hegemonic masculinity while additionally marginalising female staff by constructing them as inadequate disciplinarians compared to men. Cushman concludes that the whole proposal is "grounded in unsubstantiated theories" (Cushman, 2008 page 133).

Policy shaped by male role model discourse inadvertently argues that schools require such dominant masculinity to educate and control male students, and that only men have the ability and skills required to "do masculinity". However Smith (2007) argues that such behaviour is not limited to male staff and that some females are equally able to act in a masculine dominant fashion. This relates to literature on gender heteroglossia discussed at 3.1.

While some argue that the male teacher role model discourse might prove counter-productive, other authors dismiss the current government discourse for other reasons. Bricheno and Thornton's (2007) research showed that pupils do not regard teachers as role models but instead look upon sportsmen, cinema actors, footballers and relatives for inspiration. They add that boys wish to emulate role models who have stereotypical characteristics, such as those who display strength, aggression and other hegemonic masculine behaviours. Statistics also undermine the role model proposal. Bricheno and Thornton (2007) indicate that only 2.4% of pupils interviewed referred to a teacher as a role model. While the work of Carrington *et al.*(2008) indicates that the gender of a teacher does not affect grades, attitude or achievement.

Gauntlett (2008) though not referring to Merton's work, contends that boys choose who they want as a role model based upon the discourse in which they position themselves. Hence a role model needs to offer something desirable. This further suggests that the policy of promoting male teachers as role models is based upon a popular discourse, which is without evidence or foundation.

3.6 Boys' behaviour, parents and parenting skills

A relationship is often drawn between the behaviour of boys and what are constructed as parenting skills. Government reports such as Steer (2005) and DCSF (2008) emphasise the involvement and responsibility of parents in their children's behaviour in school but reports also seek to demonise and blame the parents of children whose behaviour falls below that deemed adequate (Scott *et*

al., 2010 , Mayer, 2001). In exploring the responsibilities of parents it is necessary to understand what is meant by the terms child and children's "needs".

While it is determined that a child is anyone below the age of eighteen years (NSPCC, 2012), academics such as Cannella (1997) argue that the term child is a social construction. The western social construction of childhood and parenting, constructs children as vulnerable and dependent upon their parents. James and James (2004) argue that this view is founded upon a social and political construction of, and normalization of, children's "needs". How boys consider the construction of themselves as children will make up part of this study.

Attending school is one of these "needs", with government policy defining where, when and how the child goes to school. In relation to these "needs", MacNaughton (2005), referring to Foucault, argues that ways of seeing, thinking and feeling about childhood have become developmental truths, which have become authoritative discourses. Woodhead (1997) adds that these discourses are so generally accepted that they are rarely questioned, adding that the "needs" of children, and what parents are responsible for, depends upon the social and cultural position of those making assumptions and judgements. Assarsson and Aarsand (2011) add that constructions of good parenting do not take into account the effects of culture. Katz *et al.* (2007) also argue that particular parents may be judged as good parents in their community but judged as inadequate against middle-class norms. Mayer (1997) explains that because (economically) poor parents are at the bottom of the social hierarchy, their "norms, values and behaviours" are constructed as dysfunctional in the "dominant culture". This suggests that working-class "parenting" may therefore appear abnormal to middle-class parents and to some educational practitioners, particularly as middle-class values dominate schools (Lareau, 2003).

There is a lot of academic work which argues that the skills and ability of parents directly affects welfare and behaviour of children. Discussing this, Uprichard (2008) argues that a child is an "adult in the making" and it is the

skills of the parents that will "shape" the child into a good or bad adult. Others support this construction of parenting. Lopez *et al.* (2008) draw a relationship between boys' behaviour and what they construct as "poor parenting". Similarly a DES report by Scott *et al.* (2010) refers to what they determine as "negative parenting" influencing children's behaviour at school. These constructions of parenting draw a relationship between what is constructed as inconsistent discipline and/or harsh and aggressive parenting, which result in behaviours incompatible to school. Parental violence is also widely considered to affect children's behaviour at school. Herrenkohl *et al's.* (2000) research argues that children are socialised by their parents and where children are raised in what they construct as violent homes then they are more likely to be violent themselves, with the resulting confrontation at school.

Liabo and Richardson (2007) Morrell and Murray (2003) maintain that boys are particularly vulnerable to what is constructed as "poor parenting". Lykken (2003) and Hess (1995) agree that where parents do not give their children what they construct as adequate and consistent guidance, then they are more prone to seek and rely upon their peers for support and thus be influenced by their values and beliefs. As some boys' peer relationships often revolve around performances of dominant aggressive masculinity, resulting peer influences have the potential to exacerbate behaviours associated with hegemonic masculinities, which in turn may lead to behaviours constructed as disruptive in school. This argument is particularly significant if, as Crosnoe *et al.* (2008) argue, peer pressure does not weaken with age. Recent exclusion statistics indicate that older boys are at greater risk of exclusion than younger pupils and girls (Cotzias, 2014).

Discussing boys' behaviour further, Titus (2004) and Westwood (1996) argue that there is a moral panic about fatherless boys and what is constructed as feckless parents who are failing to raise their children well. Media discourse such as Doughty (2013) and government discourses such as Gove (2011) argue that parents, particularly fathers, should act as role models and advocate, as discussed at 3.5, that male teachers could act in a compensatory role to boys.

However Clarke and Kitzinger contend that a father's importance and contribution to a family is an assumption which is "... simply taken-for-granted" (Clarke and Kitzinger, 2005 page 147). Donovan (2000) adds that the absent fatherhood debate is based upon patriarchal discourses which construct fathers as economic providers and disciplinarians to children. These authors' arguments suggest that media and government discourses seek to undermine the skills of single mothers and reaffirm a patriarchal dominant masculine discourse, one that appears at odds with schools.

However Cohen (2002) suggests that there has been a deliberate construction of an atmosphere of distrust, which has resulted in the demonising of unemployed parents as "welfare cheats" and "dole scroungers". Authors such as Jones (2011), Tyler (2008), Titus (2004) and Westwood (1996) explain how single mothers, the poor working-class, absent fathers and unemployed, are constructed by some academics, politicians, political policy makers and the media as inadequate and irresponsible in their relationships with and parenting of their children.

Assarsson and Aarsand (2011) argue that a single representation of good parenting across ethnicity, gender, generation, social class is problematic. What remains is a complicated and somewhat vague definition of the "needs" of children and of parenting skills, generated through discourse. Literature confirms Foucault's argument, that power forms discourse and therefore determines what is to be constructed as good and desirable. In particular it enables those with the most power to legitimise and normalize (Foucault, 1980 , Foucault, 1982). This is reflected in media and policy discourses which demonise and blame the parents of children whose behaviour is constructed as problematic and then, as Gewirtz (2002) and Ball (2008) argue, desires to turn working-class parents into middle-class ones.

Understanding that childhood and children's needs are social constructions allows for the exploration of the relationship between the practices and skills of parents and boys' behaviours in schools. To explore this further the discourses

which educational practitioners and boys employ will be examined in the interview analysis, which follows in chapters 5 and 6.

3.7 Poverty and boys' problem behaviours at school

Using free school meals an indicator of poverty, government statistics consistently show that poor pupils are four times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion than others (Cotzias, 2014 , DfE, 2013 , DfE, 2012b , DfE, 2011b). Academic writing, such as Kane (2011), Evans (2010) and Sodha and Margo (2010) draw a similar relationship, while Bowen *et al*. (2008), writing for the Home Office, draws a direct link between poverty, crime and boys' antisocial behaviours. Literature presents three arguments which may be used to explain why poverty might affect some boys' behaviours in school.

Ball (2008) and Citizensadvice.org.uk (2007) suggest that poverty makes some children feel "socially isolated" from school. This is because they are unable to integrate and participate as well as the children from more financially affluent homes who can afford adequate school uniform and the costs of school trips. It is also argued that some children are stigmatised for receiving free school meals.

Secondly, Katz *et al.* (2007) reporting for The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, argue that poverty causes parental stress, which disrupts what they construct as "effective parenting". This hypothesis is supported by Mayer (1997) who argues that having a low income reduces parents' ability to be "good parents", because poverty decreases the quality of non monetary investments. Constructions of parenting skills were discussed at 3.6.

While these two explanations offer understanding and sympathy, Jones (2011), Tyler (2008) and others highlight that the demonization of the poor working class remains a powerful discourse, with those living in poverty being blamed for their situation constructing them as, "lazy, spendthrift" and lacking aspiration, (Jones, 2011 page xii). Such attitudes, it is argued, impact on boys' behaviours and attitudes in school.

These explanations represent three competing poverty discourses. Therefore where respondents raise poverty as an explanation for boys' behaviours and how they draw on these discourses will make up part of the analysis which follows.

3.8 Targets and league tables: perceived affects on schools

The current system of school accountability began in the 1980s when fundamental changes to the education system took place under the auspices of the Conservative government. Kane (2011) and Rendall and Stuart (2005) argue that the abundance of educational reforms and the introduction of accountability directly resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of exclusions. Graph 1 details the exclusion trend from 1997 to 2013.

Number of permanent exclusions 1997 to 2013
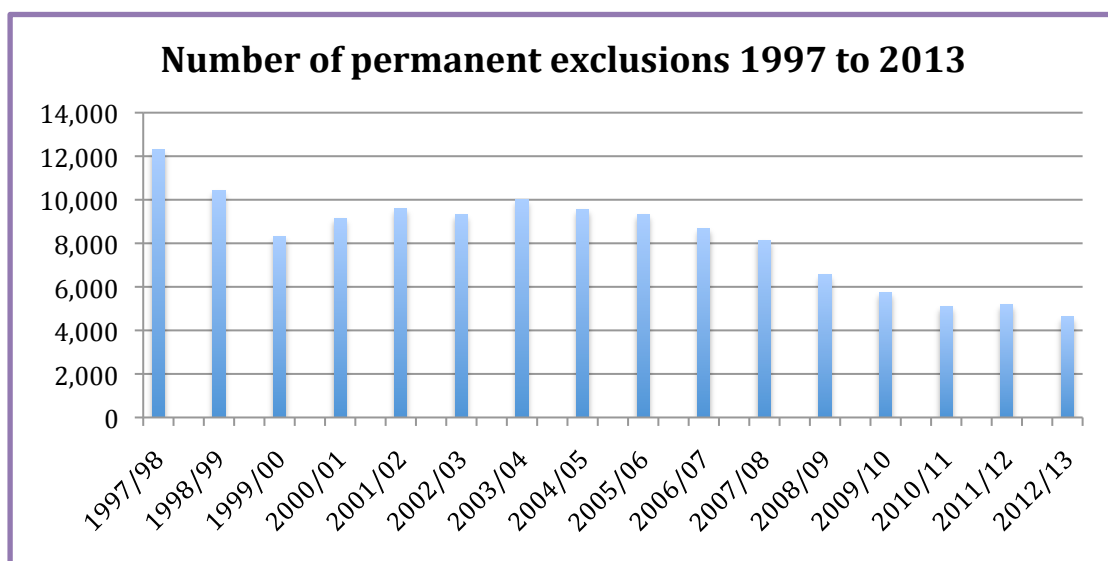
Graph 1: Exclusion data (DfE, 2014d)

The publishing of league tables was also introduced as part of what Ball (2006 , 2003) refers to as this "system of improvement" which resulted in the status of schools and teachers being at stake. Commenting on this, the Former Education Secretary, Estelle Morris, said:

> ... when school reputation matters more than ever, it must be just too tempting for some heads to get rid of the pupils who could hold the school back. (Morris 2008 page 2)

As pupil achievement and behaviour, are both used to measure what has been constructed as the efficiency of a school, it appears that Ball and Morris are both suggesting that schools may have been motivated to exclude problematic and underachieving pupils in order to enhance that status of the school. This is a view supported by Tomlinson (2001).

Government data taken from current DfE exclusion statistics indicates that the number of students excluded increased after the introduction of accountability policies, suggesting that such policies and the increases in exclusions are interrelated. These exclusion figures, reproduced in Graph 1, also show that the number of exclusions have reduced significantly from the high of 12,670 during the 1996/97 academic year (DfE, 2014d). However prior to 1990 pupil exclusions were much lower than they are now. In 2012, 5170 children were excluded, while Donovan (1998) says that only 2900 were excluded in 1990, indicating that current exclusion numbers remain high.   In addition authors such as White (2013), Parkes (2012) and Osler *et al.* (2001) argue that fixed term and unofficial exclusions are high and are masking the true numbers of children currently being excluded from school. This appears to throw into doubt government claims that exclusion numbers are falling (DfE, 2014d).

What these various representations of exclusion statistics indicate are how the numbers are themselves social constructions and are therefore unreliable. What will be examined in the analysis of respondents' interviews are their constructions of this issue and how, and if, they perceive exclusion to be related to policies of school accountability.

3.9 SEN and issues of mental health

For schools to carry out the task of meeting current academic and behaviour targets laid out by DfE, there is an expectation that boys should

perform according to a constructed normalised standard, which includes constructions of behaviour (DfE, 2012a) and achievement (DfE, 2014c). Where pupils are constructed as unable to reach certain standards then they may be considered as having a Special Educational Need. The DfE (2014b , 2014f) defines SEN as those things which may inhibit a child's ability to learn. These include:

1. Behaviour
2. Reading and writing
3. Ability to understand things
4. Concentration levels
5. Physical needs or impairments
6. Mental health

Where one or more these is identified as deficient or problematic then this may result in the local authority issuing a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which makes recommendations about the type of school and any additional support that the pupil might need.

Government statistics consistently indicate that pupils with SEN are more likely to be excluded than other pupils (DfE, 2013 , DfE, 2014d). These statistics are illustrated in Graph 2. However, the reasons why pupils may be excluded are dominated by what are constructed as disruptive behaviours and dominant masculine behaviours such as verbal and physical aggression towards other pupils and adults. This is illustrated in graph 3.
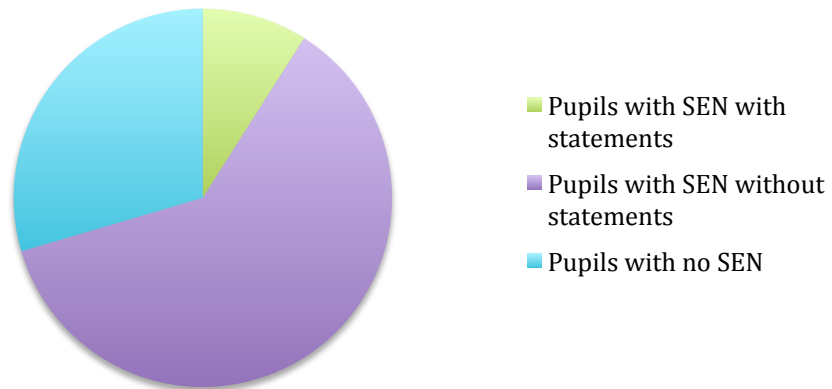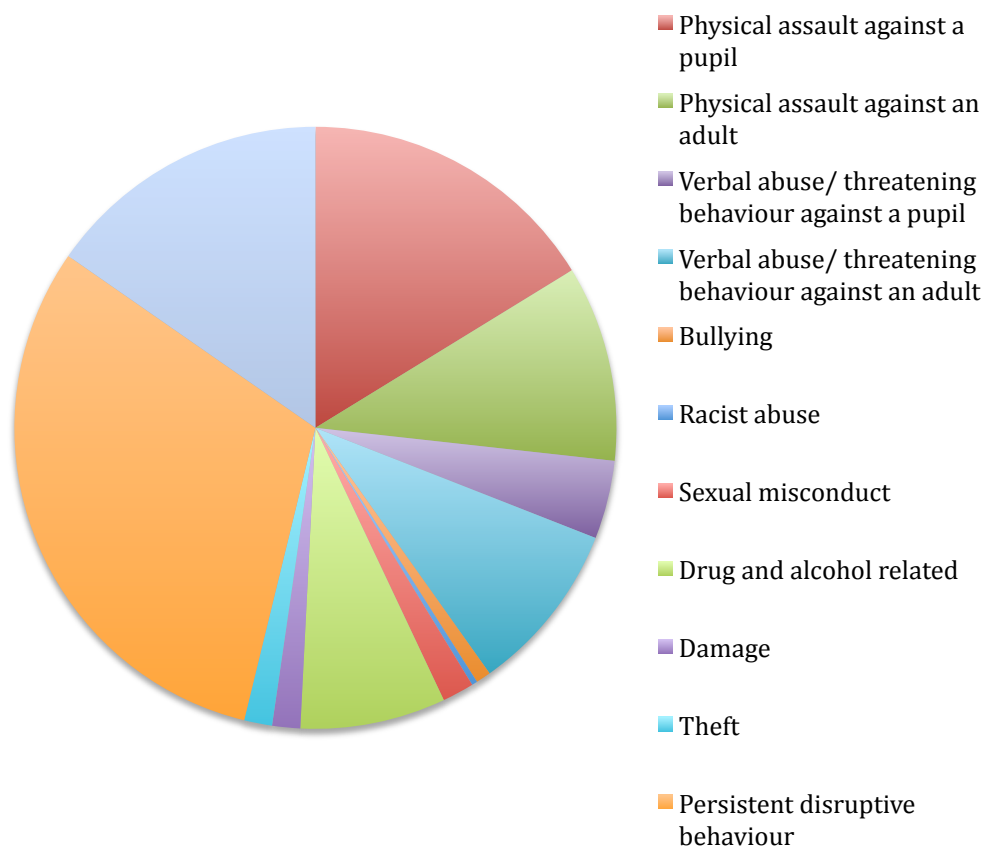
Graph 2 (DfE, 2014d)

Graph 3 (DfE, 2014d)

There are two prevailing conceptualisations of SEN. Terzi (2007) describes these as the "social model", which includes some behavioural issues and which places responsibility upon the school and the "medical model", which places the problem within the child, and may be defined as a mental health issue. Some authors such as Rutter and Smith (1995) Rose *et al.* (2006) and Teplin *et al.* (2007) support an essentialist viewpoint which considers mental illness to be tangible and thus real. However Walker (2006) and Boyle (1990) argue that mental illness is a social construction, based upon comparisons against and with, "normal" behaviours. Drawing on Foucault, Boyle explains that, "the label mad is applied to those whose behaviour is incomprehensible, who violate social norms" (Boyle, 1990 page 18).

This therefore implies that schools' judgements of SEN, mental health and "good" and "bad" behaviours are constructed in conjunction with the various "normalative" discourses which they employ. This has implications for how schools construct deviant behaviour and mental illness and will be investigated in the analysis which follows in chapters 5 and 6.

3.10 Summary and conclusion

In trying to explore and understand discourses pertaining to boys' exclusion from school, this chapter has examined a range of post-structuralist and feminist literature. This suggests that much boys' behaviour is closely related to their alignment within discourses of hegemonic masculinity. This is a dominant discourse afforded power through the media, government policy and cultural and peer influences. The literature illustrates how some boys who construct themselves within this dominant discourse may present behaviour that is judged to be disruptive, aggressive and alienated from education. They may also adopt "laddish" behaviours distancing themselves further from education and learning. Through peer pressure these behaviours are often normalised, encouraged, reinforced and exacerbated. Such behaviour potentially reinforces

gender binary asymmetries which further normalises hegemonic masculine behaviours and attributes.

Certain discourses are frequently called on to construct role models as both a cause and solution to boys' behaviours constructed as problematic in school. Research indicates that the compensatory teacher role model discourse is ineffective and based upon spurious ideas about how role models actually operate. Parenting is entwined in the role model discourses, with parents of those boys constructed as disruptive being blamed for being "poor role models" while their "parenting skills" are constructed as wanting. Poverty is also sometimes brought into discussions about boys' behaviour and exclusion with government statistics indicating that exclusion and behavioural difficulties are more prevalent in areas of poverty (Cotzias, 2014 , DfE, 2013 , DfE, 2014d). Literature regarding targets and league tables argues that discourses of accountability influence the patience and sympathy of educational practitioners and results in the reconstruction of some boys' behaviours as unmanageable and incompatible to school. Finally literature also indicates that discourses of boys' behaviour, SEN and mental health are complexly entwined with discourses of normalised behaviour, school discipline, poverty and parenting. Government statistics such as DfE (2013) and DCSF (2009) also illustrate that pupils with SEN are more likely to be excluded than other groups.

The range of post-structuralist and feminist literature, together with government policy and media literature, shows a range of dominant and divergent discourses pertaining to this study. What the literature examined fails to explore are the voices of excluded boys or those of educational practitioners who have worked directly with such pupils. The methodology chapter which follows will explain how this research has been designed to listen to these unheard voices, and examine the discourses they draw upon and compare and contrast the constructions they make as they construct understandings, place blame and find solutions to boys' behaviour and exclusion.

Chapter 4
Methodology

To begin this discussion about the methodology I refer first to Jupp and Norris who state:

> Theory defines what is problematic and also provides prescriptions as to how such problems are to be conceptualised. In turn, this generates guide-lines as to the unit and level of analysis, the form of data to be generated, the questions to ask of such data, the form of analysis and interpretations to be adopted. (Jupp and Norris, 1993 page 39)

In chapter two, the theoretical framework for this research was discussed followed in chapter three with the literature review. As Jupp and Norris suggest, both of these chapters will inform the methodology used in this research.

This qualitative study explores various constructions of boys' behaviour, particularly those who account for exclusion from school. These constructions include attitudes to school and what are judged aggressive and disruptive behaviours. As discussed in chapter two, this study explores common, media and policy discourses, which contribute to the social construction of some boys as deviant and disruptive, while also looking at how educational practitioners and boys draw upon such discourses. In particular it examines participants' constructions of masculinity and how some boys consequently understand themselves in opposition to school and education. Foucault (1972, 1980) argued that people draw upon discourse to normalise particular behaviours and where behaviours appear to deviate from this normative discourse they may be constructed as deviant or mad.

In order to identify and explore the discourses drawn upon by participants and then the various constructions made, the methodology for this research is based upon interviews, transcribed and then examined through discourse analysis.

4.1 Research aims

The aims of this study are to explore how boys who have experienced exclusion from school and educational practitioners involved in working with such boys draw upon a variety of discourses to explain educational disengagement and disruptive behaviours. To accomplish this will involve investigating, as Foucault (1970 , 1980) says, constructions of "truth and knowledge" in relation to boys' behaviour and exclusion from school. This study will identify tensions, contradictions and similarities in the discursive accounts offered by boys and educational practitioners. In particular it seeks to identify:

• how particular discourses are afforded more power than others and marginalise alternative discourses;
• how commitment to particular discourses contributes towards "problematic" behaviours; and
• how contradictory alternative discourses have the potential to challenge essentialist constructions of gender binaries and constructions of a unitary superior masculinity.

This study contributes towards the current body of knowledge by exploring the underrepresented voices of excluded boys and educational practitioners working with such boys.   It shows that the roots of this social justice issue lie within the dominant discourses drawn upon by respondents to form truths. It also exposes the challenges that boys face as they negotiate the dominant masculine discourses at large in both school and home. It also explores the challenges educational practitioners face as they try to make sense of some male pupils while also negotiating matters such as classroom discipline, Ofsted inspections and target setting. Finally, in exposing the outmoded discourses which contribute towards conflict in schools, this thesis also illustrates the alternative discourses which could be employed to challenge behaviours which lead to exclusion.

4.2   Literature review

Analysis of a range of literature was undertaken and discussed in the previous chapter, together with the theoretical framework discussed in chapter 2, this informed the design of interview schedules (see appendix VI and V). Drawing upon literature, particular areas for discussion were identified for the interviews and the analysis and are itemised in the interview schedules outlined in the appendix.

4.3   The research instruments

As the focus of this research was to explore the discourses that individuals draw on in relation to boys' exclusion, it was decided to engage in individual interviews with teachers, support workers and teenage boys who had been excluded. Thus the approach adopted was through qualitative in-depth interviews, as discussed by Marshall and Rossman (1989) and Miles and Huberman (1994). Marshall and Rossman explain that:

> ... qualitative in-depth interviews are much more like conversations than formal, structured interviews. The researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participant's meaning and perspective. (Marshall and Rossman, 1989 page 82)

Considering Marshall and Rossman's explanation (above), an interview schedule was drawn up itemising questions and subjects that were deemed important (appendix IV & V). These schedules were then used as a guide during the conversations with the participants. Conversations were loosely structured to encourage interviewees to talk about dominant masculinity, aggressive behaviour, and explanations about why there appears to be a disproportionately higher number of boys excluded from school than girls.   It was hoped that analysis of these conversations would then expose the discourses drawn upon and the social constructions participants made. Conversations were allowed to develop and flow, as Marshall and Ross suggest, with the schedules used to monitor and ensure that all or most items were covered in the conversation. Drawing upon Andrews (2008), Robson (2005) and particularly Rapley (2004),

schedules were designed which attempted to avoid asking explicit questions but instead encouraged interviewees' conversation and opinions.

Although I was reluctant to ask direct questions it was not practical to not engage with the interviewees at all.   As Rapley says, "Interviews are, by their very nature, social encounters …" (Rapley, 2004 page 16). As such it was necessary to participate with respondents in order to show interest and encourage their conversations. Not doing so had the possibility of participants believing their comments were uninteresting or irrelevant, leading to unintentionally silencing them.   Where certain topics in the schedule were not covered prompts were used to provoke conversation. The prompts used included the use of a variety of newspaper headlines. Examples are shown in appendix VI.

The interview schedule was developed from the theoretical framework and the literature review. However two schedules were developed to enable an understanding of the particular and unique position of educational practitioners and boys within schools. Thus the narratives produced insights into the different, corresponding and conflicting discourses that boys and adult respondents variously drew upon, how they then constructed deviancy and educational failure, defended their own positions, apportioned blame, cause, responsibility and offered mitigating circumstances.

4.4   Research location

This research was carried out in a semi-rural deprived area of the South East of England. Compared with the national average, unemployment is high. There is limited manufacturing, but some farming, retail and other mixed employment. Further more detailed description of the area would enable it to be identified. The area was chosen because I had previously worked nearby and had professional connections, which gave access to schools for the research. Knowing the area also meant that I was aware of schools' acute difficulties with boys with behavioural difficulties.

As was discussed in the literature review, government statistics (Cotzias, 2014 , DES, 2012 , DfE, 2013) reflect a range of links between poverty, deprivation, educational attainment and pupil behaviour. In particular these statistics may be used to draw a relationship between "disruptive" behaviours and the numbers of pupils excluded from school (Sodha and Margo, 2010). Such statistics are important in judgements about the location of this research. While I consider that the area is demographically reflective of exclusion statistics, allowing for exploration of poverty, behaviour and gender, it had limitations. As the population of this area is predominantly white British, it was not possible to explore issues of race. This is a significant issue because statistics indicate that a disproportionate number of 'black Caribbean' boys are excluded from school (DfE, 2013). While this research has produced interesting and significant data, the area in which it took place was not intended to be in any sense representative of the whole of the UK or of England.

4.5 The sample

Discussing "Qualitative Research" Miles and Huberman say that:

> Qualitative researchers usually work with small numbers of people, nested in their context and studied in depth. (Miles and Huberman, 1994 page 27)

Taylor (2001) explains that because of the intensive nature of this type of research it is important that the number of interviewees is representative and manageable. As a lone researcher the number of interviews undertaken was agreed with tutors to ensure that the research was manageable, would fit the objectives of the study and would fulfil the theoretical framework.

Considering this, interviewees were selected based on their various experience of the issue and therefore on the 'knowledge' that they might hold. Interviews were conducted with white 16-year-old boys, all of whom had experienced exclusion from school, and educational practitioners who had a variety of experience and responsibility working with such pupils. These practitioners included teachers, behaviour managers, LEA education advisors

and therapists. Boys were a particularly difficult group to locate and encourage to participate, while the educational practitioners were an easier group to find and engage. As Miles and Huberman also discuss, one interviewee can often lead to another similar person. This avenue was exploited successfully with regard to adult participants.

Having to access pupils via schools was in itself a significant obstacle, especially when staff seemed reluctant to help. They appeared to act as 'unofficial gatekeepers', deciding if, who, and when pupils might be available. This difficulty was not dissimilar to that experienced by Reynolds, who had difficulty gaining access to interviewees for her PhD research:

> The actions of these community members can be likened to that of 'gatekeepers', controlling my access to the older mothers. Traditionally used in professional and organizational settings, gatekeepers work to protect the interests of their particular organization, professional body or in other instances the vulnerable groups in society ... unofficial 'gatekeepers' also exist in various group settings to ensure that their particular group or community is being represented in the best light. (Reynolds, 2002 page 301)

For my research, the reason for the reluctance of school staff to recommend boys as participants, yet were willing to be interviewed themselves, was never fully explained or understood. It might be surmised, that similar to Reynolds' observation above, school staff were keen to have their school "represented in the best light" and thus may have been concerned by the focus of the research: boys' exclusion from school.

In all 33 people were interviewed consisting of 15 boys and 18 educational practitioners drawn from five schools, two LEA offices and the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). I considered that, within the area that I had access to and had chosen to work, these 33 participants satisfied the suggestions of Taylor (2001). They represented a unique balanced sample, which provided a useful but manageable number of transcripts for analysis. Details of participants are shown in the table I and II below.

Table I
Details of educational practitioners

pseudonym	gender	age	occupation
Andrew	male	early 40s	Therapist
Donald	male	late 50s	Therapist
Anne	female	early 50s	Teacher (Prince School)
Francis	female	early 50s	Teacher (Queen School)
Gail	female	late 50s	Teacher (Centre School)
Georgina	female	mid 30s	Teacher (Lords High)
Henry	male	late 40s	Teacher (King School)
Lucy	female	early 50s	Teacher (Centre School)
Simon	male	late 40s	Teacher (King School)
William	male	mid 40s	Teacher (Prince School)
Johnny	male	late 50s	Local Education Advisor
Eileen	female	mid 30s	Local Education Advisor
Grace	female	late 50s	Local Education Advisor
Michelle	female	early 50s	Local Education Advisor
Olive	female	late 50s	Local Education Advisor
Dave	male	early 50s	Behaviour Manager (King School)
Mick	male	early 50s	Behaviour Manager (Queen School)
Thomas	male	mid 40s	Behaviour Manager (Centre School)

NB: While the class of these participants was not fully explored, there is an assumption that the teachers, education advisors and therapist were middle-class. The behaviour managers had moved from manual employment and may therefore represent working-class.

Table II Details of boys			
Pseudonym	Exclusion status	Current school attendance	Interview participation
Bob	Permanently excluded from previous school	Prince school	Full with recording
Roger	Permanently excluded from previous school	Prince school	Full with recording
Harry	Permanently excluded from previous school	Prince school	Full with recording
David	Permanently excluded	Not attending school	Full with recording
Horace	Permanently excluded	Not attending school	Full with recording
Andy	Several temporary exclusions	Lords High school	Full with recording
Dan	Several temporary exclusions	Lords High school	Full with recording
Fred	Several temporary exclusions	Lords High school	Full with recording
Graham	Several temporary exclusions	Lords High school	Full with recording
John	Permanently excluded from previous school	Lords High school	Full with recording
Charles	Several temporary exclusions	Centre School	Refused to be recorded
Chas	Several temporary exclusions	Centre School	Full with recording
Peter	Several temporary exclusions	Centre School	Refused to be recorded
Sid	Several temporary exclusions	Centre School	Refused to be recorded
Terence	Several temporary exclusions	Centre School	Refused to be recorded

NB: Prince School is a private EBD School funded by the local authority. It specialises in working with pupils permanently excluded from local authority schools. Lords High and Centre School are both local authority mainstream secondary schools.
While it is acknowledged that middle-class as well as working-class boys are excluded from school, the boys interviewed all appeared to be from a working class background

To locate participants, I began by speaking to a colleague in the LEA who suggested a list of names to contact within the LEA services. I also contacted local schools and asked for their help. In all five LEA schools and one independent fee paying EBD School agreed to participate, where teachers and classroom assistants volunteered to be interviewed. The chart above illustrates boys' experience of temporary or permanent exclusion from school with several being permanently excluded resulting in transfer to another school or non-attendance.

Interviewees were selected based on the following criteria. The educational practitioners were selected based upon their experience of working with boys who had been excluded. Teachers all had experience working with disruptive boys. Some described themselves as having worked with a mixture of pupils, ranging from compliant to disruptive, while others explained that they worked specifically with excluded and/or disruptive pupils. Behaviour managers were

principally involved with excluded pupils and 'troublesome boys'. LEA Education Advisors worked with schools, dealing with SEN pupils and/or dealing with excluded pupils. Therapists worked with a range of adolescents but had also experienced regularly working with boys who were having behaviour difficulties at school and/or who had been excluded from school.

The boys were a particularly difficult category to locate and engage with, not least because of underage pupils requiring parental permission. For that reason it was decided to interview boys aged 16 who were about to leave school and who therefore were able to make their own decisions about participating. It was also considered that boys of this age, having finished formal education, had experience, which would be enlightening. The boys were introduced to me via the educational practitioners discussed above. Interviews took place in a variety of locations depending upon the availability, preference and comfort of the interviewee. Interviews with boys took place either at their school or at their home. Further reflection of the interview venue is discussed at 4.6 and chapter 7.

4.6 Participants and power

Social constructionists consider interviews as an arena where meaning is mutually co-constructed (Jacobsson 2012). I was also aware that the power relationships between the participants and myself as researcher had the potential to be problematic. I therefore wanted to alleviate these issues as much as possible. Discussing such matters, Robson (2005) suggests that research is the "powerful" researching the relatively "powerless". The difficulty that this presents for research is explained further by Wetherell *at al*.(2001) who suggest that the interviewer's identity may influence an interviewee's willingness to participate. They say:

> The researchers' identity is also relevant to data collection ... It can affect the interview in several ways ... A participant may feel ill at ease with an interviewer who appears, older, younger, more confident, or richer. (Wetherell *et al.*, 2001 page 17)

There is much discussion about the power relationship between researcher and the researched. For example Mellor *et al.* regarding interviewers says:

> … we all inhabit positions which work to both shut down and open up discussions, regardless of the participant we are interviewing. (Mellor *et al.*, 2014 page 141)

Considering Wetherell *at al.* and Mellor at *al.*, I was aware that my position as a white, middle-class, male, head teacher had the potential to intimidate interviewees. Acknowledging the potential of these issues to influence participants, particular attention was given to making interviewees feel as comfortable as possible with the purpose, procedure and venue of the interview. To do this I initially contacted adults by 'phone and boys in person to discuss their participation. I introduced myself to them and explained the purpose of my research explaining why their contribution was invaluable. I emphasised that their interview would be completely confidential. The venue was then mutually agreed.   Before each interview commenced I reiterated that the interview would be confidential and I also explained that I expected the interview to last between 40 to 60 minutes. Finally I asked for their agreement for the interview to be recorded.

Brinkman and Kvale argue, "The rationale of research is to lend a voice to that which is other than oneself …" (Brinkman and Kvale, 2005 page 179). While this does not ignore the principle that narratives are co-constructed and therefore my influence was unavoidable, I envisaged that the methodology adopted would allow participants the freedom to speak and would alleviate some of the possible influences and difficulties between them and me as researcher.

The methodology was particularly important in relation to the young people interviewed. While I do not consider these teenagers to be immature or incompetent, they all defined themselves as "boys", distancing themselves from parents, teachers and other adults to whom they referred. Heath *et al.* (2009) argue that young people represent a distinct group who are relatively powerless compared to others. It was therefore thought necessary to empower these boys

by treating them respectfully, putting them at ease as much as was possible and making them feel valued and engaged in the research. Fraser *at al.* (2004) and Punch (2002), discussing children and young people and research, highlight two points. Fraser at al. argue that one should do research "with" and not "on" young people, while Punch emphasises the importance of researchers not imposing their views and unintentionally putting pressure on them to give the "right" answers. While acknowledging, as discussed earlier, that interviews are seen as conversations in which meaning is composed between people (Jacobsson and Akerstrom, 2012), I believe that the methodology used in this research addresses Fraser *at al.* and Punch's concerns as much as is possible.

The purpose of the interviews was to give a voice to all participants. As Andrews (2008) suggests, narrative research is the listening and investigation of stories told to the researcher. For the boys interviewed this was particularly important because, as France (2004) argues, historically research has marginalized the voice of young people. However I acknowledge that in the analysis, which follows in chapters five and six, not all participants are heard by quotation. This is because they repeated other respondents' comments and therefore to use them would not have added any more to the analysis. Where participants fully engaged in the interview process their interviews were considered to have been successful, regardless of whether they were used by quotation or not. All 18 adult interviews are considered to have been successful and many have been heard by quotation in the final analysis. However there were some anomalies with the boys interviewed. Four boys (Charles, Peter, Terence and Sid) when asked if the interview could be recorded refused. It was therefore necessary to make notes of the interview afterwards enabling some of what these boys said to be used in the analysis.

Discussing the relationship between researcher and interviewee, Karnieli-Miller *et al.* argue that while the power of the researcher over the interviewee needs to be considered, they add that participants also have power through their willingness to participate or not (Karnieli-Miller *et al.*, 2009). This power was

exercised by Peter, Charles, Terence and Sid, who limited their participation by refusing to have their interview recorded.

Discussing unsuccessful interviews Nairn at al. suggest that in qualitative research we, "… privilege what is said rather than what is not said", (Nairn *et al.*, 2005 page 222), arguing that one should consider why an interview appears to have been unproductive. As an explanation, and similarly to Robson (2005) above, they suggest that power relationships between researcher and the researched should be assessed:

> … especially in relation to adults researching in schools where students are often understood to be relatively powerless in relation to teachers/adults. (Nairn *et al.*, 2005 page 222)

Considering this I compared the participation of some interviewees against others. Firstly I believe that the four boys' refusal to be recorded might have been linked with a teacher who remained at the far end of the room during the interview. Although apparently out of audible range, the presence of this teacher may have been intimidating for the boys.   I also thought it possible that a boy's experience of school, particularly the number of times they had been excluded and where they were currently attending school, might correlate to their willingness to participate. The boys who had been permanently excluded from mainstream school and who were now attending a private EBD school or who were not attending at all, appeared to be more able/willing to participate, than those attending a local authority school. The permanently excluded boys by comparison presented themselves as more confident whereas the reluctant interviewees tended to be quiet, withdrawn and possibly intimidated by the process. I also noted that all of the successful interviews took place in isolation. The permanently excluded boys also appeared eager to participate, perhaps viewing the experience as an opportunity to give their side of the story. The four unrecorded interviews were boys being given a 'second chance', returning to school after temporary exclusion. Having a member of staff present may have undermined their confidence that the interview was confidential.   However it is acknowledged that as only a limited number of boys were interviewed, it is

difficult to draw conclusions confidently about why some interviews were more successful than others.

4.7 Transcription and analysis

After each interview the recording was immediately transcribed. This ensured that the transcribing workload did not become overwhelming. More specifically it also enabled, as Miles and Huberman (1994) advise, initial data analysis and the reconsideration of the interview schedule, appraisal of the interview itself and consideration of further adjustments to techniques and schedule.

In the pilot study a secretary transcribed the interviews. However, considering the conclusions of Miles and Huberman (1994) it was determined that the data collected from interviews was better understood and more thoroughly analysed by personally transcribing all interviews. This proved very productive. The recorded interviews were transcribed using "naturalised transcription" as discussed by Bucholtz (1999) and Oliver *at al.* (2005). "Naturalised transcribing" enabled not just comprehending what was verbalised by the respondent but also included "idiosyncratic elements of speech" (Oliver *et al.*, 2005 page 1273), including intonations, gestures and hesitations. These behaviours gave additional value and clarity to what was being said, what was meant, the discourses being drawn upon and the social constructions being made by the interviewee. As Gee (2011) states, discourse analysis is not just about what a person says but about what they are also trying to do. This is further elaborated by Wooffitt who states:

> … analysis begins with the assumption that no interactional events can be simply dismissed as unimportant or irrelevant, however trivial they may appear: false starts to words, minor gaps between words and turns, and even the simple act of drawing breath can have real consequences … it is necessary to try to capture the detail of interaction in transcripts of data recordings; and this means not only transcribing what was said, but the way it was said. (Wooffitt, 2001 page 61)

To begin the analysis, all the transcripts were read through several times to identify any similar themes consisting of patterns, concepts, issues and questions similarly to the process described by Miles and Huberman. These sections of text were than read again and analysed further in order to reveal the discourses operating within them.   This then enabled an understanding of how speakers drew upon particular discourses to construct truths and knowledge. By initially identifying groups of themes, it was possible to examine the similar discourses drawn upon and the comparable constructions made by respondents.

This process was very time consuming because, as Burr (1995) argues, discourse analysis is an intuitive process with limited structure. It was possible to note agreements and consistency between respondents and to highlight similarities among the discourses drawn upon and constructions made. It was also possible to make connections with debates in the literature. Of significance were the contradictions and conflicts between the discourses drawn upon and the constructions made by respondents. Of particular interest was how respondents drew on similar discourses and then made similar constructions often with the same contradictions and confusions. The role model discourse is a particular example of this.

As there were two interview schedules, producing different perspectives, it was decided that the analysis of interviews would be written in two broad sections, consisting of an analysis of the boys' stories followed by the analysis of the educational practitioners' stories. Similarities and conflicts are discussed in chapter seven. While the research produced some interesting and valuable data it is acknowledged that this research also had limitations and flaws. These issues are also discussed in the final chapter.

4.8 Ethical issues

This research was carried out within the guidelines of the London Metropolitan University, Ethics Policy and Code of Good Research Practice, outlined in the appendix. However there were also ethical concerns which affected the methodology used in this study.

At the beginning of an interview, the interviewee was reminded that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. They were further assured of their anonymity and that material collected would be handled confidentially and be kept safe and secure.   It was because of the possible sensitive nature of some of the material discussed and collected that emphasis was placed upon assuring respondents that information would be anonymised, with pseudonyms used for respondents, organisations and people and places mentioned.

Ethically I had concerns about whether it was appropriate to ask respondents questions regarding parents and teachers, particularly if respondents were to criticise or insult them. I also decided to avoid, as much as was possible, asking boys direct questions about parents, as this might also be hurtful and alienate them from participating in the interview. However, I concluded that although I could control what I asked, it was not possible for me to fully control what respondents said. I concluded that if respondents used inappropriate, insulting or over critical comments about others, the anonymity put in place and the pseudonyms given to places and people would sufficiently address such ethical concerns, masking the chances of others knowing or recognising participants. I also decided that such material would only be used if it contributed something significant to the research.

Miles and Huberman (1994) discussing the possible harm to people involved in qualitative research, suggest that harm can come, "… in many varieties: from blows to self-esteem or "looking bad" to others" (Miles and Huberman, 1994 page 292).   Because of this I also had some apprehension about asking boys, many of whom had failed at school, to reflect upon their school lives and behaviour. I planned to alleviate this by trying not to ask direct questions that might be considered as judgemental or critical of their achievements and behaviours.

4.9 Weaknesses and limitations of methodology

The methodology chosen and adopted for this research has produced interesting and informative data. However, I also conclude that the methodology is not without flaws.

Most conversations were very fluid and produced substantial transcripts but a few boys' interviews were limited. As discussed, the venue and having a teacher present may have inhibited some boys but it is also possible that being interviewed alone was also inhibiting for some. As discourse is co-created, focus groups have the potential to contribute further to this study. Using focus groups rather than individual interviews has the potential to empower those boys who were reluctant to participate. It would also have been informative to observe a variety of boys interacting in discussion about behaviour and exclusion. This suggestion is enlightened by the work of Barnes(2012) and the Exploring Masculinities Programme in Irish schools. This work describes the relative position that boys take during discussions about masculinities. Her observation of boys' verbal interactions in class and the varying dominant and passive positions boys adopt during discussions about masculinities suggests that focus groups may have produced enlightening data for this research. However, focus groups also have some limitations. As Barnes observes in her work, groups of boys operating together have the possible consequence of silencing some boys through peer pressure and verbal intimidation. Individual interviews have the capacity to allow these silent voices to emerge. While the methodology of individual interviews was not perfect, I believe that it has produced interesting data. I therefore conclude that using focus groups for this research project would make an alternative comparative study.

An important premise of this research was to limit the influence that I as interviewer had upon the participants. To attempt to achieve this, an interview schedule was drawn up to track each respondent's conversation. This caused a number of unforeseen difficulties, some of which were not fully appreciated until the process of analysis was fully engaged in.

Firstly it became increasingly clear that it was not possible to not ask questions or not to respond to participants. As mentioned earlier in 4.3, interviews are social encounters and as such almost all participants needed to be prompted along during their conversations, needing encouragement to keep talking or encouragement to expand upon their views. This meant that I had to engage with them and therefore unintentionally and unwillingly had an influence upon their responses.

Secondly when analysis began I saw that there was a lack of structure within the participants' transcripts. While this is somewhat unavoidable, I believe that it was exacerbated by using an interview schedule rather than a list of questions. Not having a structured list of questions meant that information in the various transcripts was irregular.   Taylor (2001) discussing discourse analytical research explains that it involves a small sample and is labour intensive. While agreeing with this statement, I believe that if the interviewing had been conducted using a structured set of questions then the interview transcripts would likely to have followed this structured pattern. This would possibly have made it less intense to analyze but in particular easier to cross-reference from one transcript to another.

Using an interview schedule also caused a further difficulty. By allowing the conversation to be led by the interviewees, not all topics were covered to the same depth by all participants. I found it quite difficult to monitor the conversation, listen to the participant, encourage their conversation and ensure that the schedule was completely adhered to.   The length and depth of the interview schedule may have contributed to this. Possibly a shorter schedule might have been more manageable. Alternatively a short list of questions may have been more productive.

The location chosen for the research could be open for criticism. While boys make up the majority of those excluded from school, recent exclusion statistics offer other data, indicating that Traveller of Irish heritage, black Caribbean and gypsy/Roma ethnic groups are more likely to be excluded than any other group

(DfE, 2013). In this research I did not interview any educational professionals who had opinions about such ethnic diversity nor did I interview any boys from such cultural groups. This was because the research was carried out in semi rural area of England with limited ethnic and cultural diversity. In addition the area, while being considered deprived, with high levels of unemployment, does not reflect inner city tensions.   Thus the area of this research and the ethnicity of the respondents is recognised as limited. It also does not reflect the cultural make up of the whole of England and more importantly the ethnic diversity illustrated in government exclusion data (DfE, 2013).

Although this research was limited to one particular area of England and therefore has limitations, which are acknowledged, I contend that the research findings of this study are valid and the limitations of this research are justified. Foucault argued that knowledge and regimes of truth are locally produced (Foucault 1980) therefore as this research was locally produced, this research was carried out within the intellectual framework to which Foucault subscribed and condoned.

Chapter 5

Narratives of Masculinity: Boys negotiating constructions of "neeks" and "geeks"

This chapter is based on analysis of eleven recorded interviews with boys, and notes from a further four. The analysis explores how boys constructed themselves within discourses of dominant masculinity. In addition it also examines how boys drew upon various competing and incongruent discourses to understand, explain and justify a range of behaviours and attitudes that contribute to exclusion from school.

During interviews with male students, all the young men referred to themselves and others as 'boys', thus defining themselves as different from adult staff in schools. Therefore I shall also use this construction to differentiate them from the educational practitioners interviewed. The boys' stories had one main theme that bound discursive constructions together. Their construction of themselves within discourses of dominant masculinity was so pronounced, that this chapter begins with examples of boys' discussion and narratives of masculinity.

5.1 "Showing off": Boys' defence and normalisation of hegemonic masculinity

Yeah, I think it's because with boys I think they like to show off in front of other boys sometimes, so, it kind of bigs yourself up if you do something like hurt someone. (Harry, 16-year-old student)

Harry had been asked to reflect on statistics that indicate that more boys than girls are excluded from school (DCSF, 2009). His explanation appears to draw on discourses to normalise male dominance and aggression. Harry constructs such behaviour as "showing off", designed to impress other boys, demonstrating to them that the actor is physically strong and able, thus "bigging himself up". Harry's brief extract is typical of many of the boys' explanations of disruption in class and their constructions of masculinity, with some constructing physical strength and aggression as necessary to demonstrate

maleness to adults, peers and themselves. Many of the boys interviewed drew upon similar discourses, which constructed male strength and aggression as more important than other attributes or skills.

Like Harry, several boys used phrases such as "showing off" or "show off". As discussed in the literature review at 3.4, such acts of "showing off" and classroom disruption while performed for other pupils may also be performed as a challenge to teacher authority. Thus some boys may draw on discourses of normative aggression to reinforce a sense of self and to illustrate toughness to peers. For example, Fred, who when asked to explain why so many boys are excluded said:

> JB: Quite a lot of boys get excluded don't they?
>
> Fred: Yeah
>
> JB: Why is that do you think?
>
> Fred: Behaviour
>
> JB: What sort of behaviour?
>
> Fred: Disruptive stuff, fightin'. Spoiling the lesson 'n that.
>
> JB: Oh, why do some people do that?
>
> Fred: They like it or they get wound up 'n that.
>
> JB: They like it?
>
> Fred: Like spoiling it [lessons] and (pauses) You'll be like the show off in the class or something.
>
> JB: The show off in the class?
>
> Fred: So the others will think you're (hesitates) like, something.

In explaining why boys might engage in disruptive behaviour Fred's explanation draws on shared peer discourses to argue that disruptive and aggressive behaviour is enjoyed and performed to seek the approval of others, perhaps so that they might construct the performer as tough and significant and therefore "something". His apparently casual reference to what he constructs as

disruptive behaviour seems to further strengthen how he normalises such aggression and explain how it is used to "show off" and seek peer group approval. This resonates with Chambers *et al.* (2004) argument, (discussed at 3.3) that there is considerable pressure from peers to engage and adopt hegemonic behaviours. Connell (2009) also warns that boys who avoid or depart from such "normalised" hegemonic behaviours often, as a result, themselves become the target for verbal and physical abuse. Thus to avoid being a target one has to "perform" particular forms of masculinity.

Concern about such peer pressure was further illustrated by Andy, who was asked to discuss his behaviour and exclusion from school.

JB: Is that the only time you've been excluded?

Andy: Ah, no once I punched someone in the mouth, they said something about my mum and I just got up out of my chair and give him a punch.

JB: They insulted your mum?

Andy: Yeah and that's how I reacted yeah.

The spontaneous yet casual manner in which Andy uses violence seems to show that he draws upon a dominant masculine discourse to construct such aggression as a legitimate response to taunts and insults. However, it may also be that he is responding to peer expectations about how men should respond to insults and therefore how he should defend his mum's reputation. This is clarified in the following extract.

Andy: ... But, but some people just wind you up so they know you'll get in trouble.

JB: Oh, so your classmates irritate you?

Andy: Yeah, all the time, they can't control themselves or they wanna be show-offs in class.

JB: Why is that?

Andy: To be (pauses) I dunno, be top, standout or something.

JB: So whose fault is it when there's trouble in class?

Andy: Teachers. They need to sort it out and that.

JB: How can they do that?

Andy: (shrugs and frowns) It's their job.

When pressed further, Andy draws on a self-defence discourse, to legitimise his behaviour, arguing that the other boy was taunting him. This may additionally illustrate Andy believes, as Connell (2009) discusses, that he has been selected as a "target" for bullying or teasing by his peers. However in a further move, Andy then legitimises teachers' authority and responsibility to handle pupil confrontation. In blaming the boy *and* the teacher this further distances him from responsibility.

Like Fred and Harry, Andy also used the "showing off" discourse to explain the reasoning behind some boys' disruptive behaviour in class. All three boys then similarly argue that such behaviour is done to enhance peer positioning with Harry saying it "bigs you up", Fred explaining they do it so others will "think you're something" and Andy suggesting they do it "to be top, standout, or something".   All three explanations appear to relate to gendered acts, discussed at 3.1 and 3.3. These acts of masculine disruption, aggression and violence require a great deal of determination and effort to initiate and maintain, which is what the boys are discussing when they talk about "showing off" in order to prove manhood and impress peers.

While many boys appeared to want to normalise aggressive and defensive acts, peer pressure and peer friendships remained a significant feature in their discursive constructions. Much if this is illustrated in the following extract, where Roger, who had experienced frequent school moves, was talking about the difficulties of fitting in at a new school.

Roger: Obviously I'm not a quiet kid, I like to fit in and, but it didn't happen so (pause)

JB: Who do you like to fit in with?

Roger: Kids, mates.

JB: What sort of kids, the quiet ones?

Roger: That's hard, because I don't like quiet ones, cos I'm not a quiet lad, I like, like going out (pause) like doing stuff, not   staying in, like all day, playing XBox or somethink like that (pause) I like to get out and roam.

JB: Ok, so who do you think, if you were at school, you would mix with, would you mix with someone who is quiet and studious or somebody who wants to play football and....

Roger: Yeah.

JB: What about fighting?

Roger: Nah, obviously I got out of that now I'm not a fighter but obviously if it comes to it and I'm self-defending myself I have to.

Although Roger draws on what might be determined as a masculine construction of interests and behaviours, he is also acknowledging the existence of alternative masculinities when constructing and then rejecting boys who are quiet and who might wish to stay in. Roger's comment, "I like to fit in", illustrates the importance he attaches to peer relationships and as Mills (2001) says, being a "good mate". As discussed in the literature review at 3.3, some boys draw on a repertoire of hegemonic masculine behaviours to impress their peer group. These behaviours may include fighting, risk taking and other shows of aggression and toughness designed to fend off any suggestions that they lack masculinity (McGuffey and Rich, 1999). It may be that this is what Roger is doing. Earlier in the interview he had admitted that he did once engage in shows of aggressive masculinity but now he claims not to involve himself in fighting unless he has to. This indicates that similar to Andy, Roger draws on a self-defence discourse, to defend himself from the aggressor wanting a fight but also from criticism and the threat of isolation from his peers should he not respond and defend himself as they expected.

In this next example, Bob's construction of himself in a dominant masculine discourse is enveloped within references to threats from others and challenges to his reputation and thus, similar to Roger, links with discourses of peer pressure.

JB   Ok, so what were your fights about?

Bob   My fights were if someone basically disrespected me..

JB   Ok

Bob   (pause) or done something that I thought deserved a bang really.

JB   Ok

Bob   Obviously if someone's gonna hit you, someone's cussing you saying, oh yeah I bang your mum, I bang my mum, then you gotta show them that they can't really init, respect the way it is around here like. It's like your, your, rep is basically like, basically like when you go for a job interview you take your CV init.

JB   Yeah.

Bob   So that's how they know you, but for us kids we've got our rep basically like.

JB   You'll have to explain that to me, so what's rep?

Bob   Like reputation like, school, like when I was in Prince School, obviously like, I was one of the bigger boys that, like if I got one of the pussier boys saying like, yeah I bang him up, I bang him up then I got to tell him that he won't, I got to show him that he won't if he carries on saying that obviously cos I can't be going round school now, with people thinking that I'm a pussy when I'm not, so that's rep like you gotta tell em like.

Here Bob aligns himself directly within discourses of dominant masculinity by constructing the need to use aggression, violence and sexualised vocabulary in response to what he considers as threats and intimidation. Like Andy, Roger and Graham, Bob is concerned about what his peers might think of him. This he constructs as his "reputation", suggesting that his experience, skills and qualifications are constructed within his peer group by what he does and how he

responds to taunts and jibes. The conversation with Bob suggests that his reputation has to be perpetually refined, defended and nurtured.   Because of this Bob is unable to ignore misogynist insults, such as being called a "pussy" or insults directed at his mother. To maintain his masculine reputation with his peer group he has to regularly defend his masculine reputation and perform confident aggression.

The discourse of masculinity Bob utilizes and the constructions Roger adopted later in his school life are subtly different from the "showing off" behaviours discussed earlier. They are engaging in what Butler (1993) defines as gendered performances discussed at 3.1. Bob's performance seems not to be "showing off" because "showing off" appears to be linked with masculine acts designed to gain status whereas Bob's actions are about maintaining an already established status within a volatile but established peer group. Marginally different, Roger is performing a construction where he has to be strong and able but only when he needs to defend himself against aggressors. While there appears to be a fine line between the earlier constructions of masculinity, all three boys are engaged in performances that nevertheless reiterate a particular set of gendered norms.   The contrast between these boys' constructions of male behaviour is one of choice and contingency. Roger claimed that he might have to be aggressive to defend himself, while Harry maintained that boys choose to be aggressive to gain status. Bob alternatively suggested that it is necessary to defend an already established status.   However, despite the choice available to participants, all three acts have the potential to further endorse aggressive behaviour as essential. Peer pressure is significant because the expectations of peers has the potential to further normalise aggressive behaviour, particularly if peers expect demonstrations of aggression and defence, as discussed at 3.2 and 3.3.

Reflecting the view of several boys interviewed, Bob said that there was considerable conflict between male students in schools. He was asked to elaborate:

Yeah, cos you always get the people like, you got your popular people haven't you? And you got your stronger people. (pause) Then you got your "Geeks" and "Neeks" and stuff like that. Obviously like bullying and that goes on and like, obviously like, if there was no rules for fighting (pause) obviously, if you're getting bullied you're gonna whack them back … (Bob, 16-year-old student) [1]

Bob draws on a taken-for-granted discourse to construct "popular" boys as having strength. He then draws on peer discourse to construct two alternative forms of masculinity, "Geeks and Neeks". These terms, "Geeks" and "Neeks" are reminiscent of the boys in the work of Martino (1999) and Willis (1978) where teenage boys created names for those who they constructed as weak and different from themselves. Asked to elaborate these terms Bob says:

Well a Geek is obviously like, someone like, basically a Geek is a smart person, someone who chooses the right way basically and they're the ones who like get on with their work, they do their … they wanna get through school easy so they're doing, they're following the rules init. That's what we call a Geek. (Bob, 16-year-old student)

While Bob appears to construct himself within a normalising dominant masculinity discourse, contrarily here he draws on an alternative masculine discourse to construct "Geeks" as "smart" and choosing the "right way". This is in contrast to studies such as that of Martino (1999) and Francis (2009) who discuss how some boys marginalise and "other" boys who are considered to work hard at school. Bob's comments are also in contrast to "laddish" behaviours discussed at 3.4 where boys purposefully distance themselves from schoolwork. As Bob's recognition of "geeks" potentially undermines the discourse of dominant masculinity in which he ascribes himself, I asked him to elaborate further.

JB: OK, I'm gonna take you back to what you said just now, you said about the geeks are someone who is bright, yes, who does   "the right thing" you said,   what does that mean?

Bob   Like, gets on with their work, follows the rules and that.

---

[1] It is clear from the whole of Bob's transcript that when he says people, geeks and neeks he is talking about boys. In other parts of his conversation when referring to girls he makes this distinction clear.

JB: So is that the right way to be at school?

Bob   Well yeah, obviously, but thinking back to it now that should have been the way I was cos you know, I'm pretty fucked, I haven't got nothing now. (Bob, 16-year-old student)

In clarifying what a "geek" is Bob appears to be drawing on what Ball (2008) defines as a neoliberal discourse, to construct himself as a failure because he had an unsuccessful school career, with no qualifications and few prospects. Consequently the behaviours he is constructing as negative are dominant masculine behaviours which moments before he was revering and normalising. Several of the boys interviewed made similar critical remarks about their behaviour and their resulting position. For example, towards the end of Horace's interview I asked him, given the opportunity, what he would change in his life. He said:

(Sigh), I would change how my mum (pause), if I could I would change it, I'd change how my mum brought me up, I'd change the environment that I was brought up in, I'd probably, I'd probably not want to be the guy who wanted to impress everyone and making people laugh and be the one who stood out. I'd rather just put my head down and work and actually achieve something. That's the only way you achieve something. (Horace 16-year-old)

Similar to Bob, Horace also draws on a neoliberal discourse to condemn his own behaviour and to write himself off as a failure. However before he does this, Horace seems to mitigate his behaviour when he draws on a feckless single mother discourse (Hey and Bradford, 2006) to construct his mother's parenting skills as inadequate. He also briefly infers inequalities in his environment as contributory factors in his behaviour too. Parenting discourses will be investigated further in 5.3.

Boys who construct themselves within a dominant masculine discourse, frequently insult or denigrate others to enhance their status and promote their particular constructions of themselves as men. In the interviews this was often demonstrated during boys' discussions about boys they perceived either as inferior or who had challenged them and failed. Earlier Bob had referred to

"Geeks and Neeks". In explaining what a "Neek" is Bob continues his derogation of those he considers weaker and inferior to him.

> Bob: A Neek, a Neek is someone like basically someone that don't do what they're told and tries to, basically tries to be what they're not basically, that's a Neek, someone that, basically … a Neek is a Geek trying to be something he's not.
>
> JB: So a bright kid who can work, but tries to be tough?
>
> Bob: Yeah or like a bright kid that can get on with his work doing what he is trying to do like, basically, like, if he's a pussy like, a proper like fraggle, nothing like, he's a little minstrel basically trying to be something that he's not, like trying to tell everyone like oh yeah, yeah, that I'm this, I'm that, then obviously he's a Neek because he's not, he's not that person, and he's trying to be that person.

In this extract Bob's tone appears to reflect anger and resentment. Unlike "Geeks", "Neeks" are to be despised because they are pretentious. Drawing upon a dominant masculine discourse Bob abuses "Neeks" with misogynistic and other insults. Much of Bob's rhetoric relates to discourses of bullying and what Mills (2001) describes as "boundary policing" discussed in the literature review at 3.3.

Bob's commentary also demonstrates the normalising discursive techniques in which he appears to envelop aggressive and dominant masculine behaviour. He emphasises his obligation of his commitment when he says, "I got to show him … obviously". This may also illustrate the lack of choices available to Bob, particularly as he constructs himself as having failed at school. It would appear that his commitment and construction of himself within a dominant masculine discourse is all that is available to him. The use of "obviously" may be two-fold, being directed at me, with the assumption that I (and all men) would unquestionably agree with him while also used in an attempt to normalise his views to construct young men as naturally tough, aggressive and dominant.

While it has been shown that dominant masculine discourses appear to shape boys' initial discussions about behaviour, what has also been demonstrated is how, as conversations unfold, boys drew on a range of

alternative discourses to explain, mitigate and distance themselves from responsibility for behaviours leading to exclusion.   A further example of this was given earlier by Andy, when he drew on discourse to construct teachers as responsible for dealing with conflict in school, saying "…Teachers. They need to sort it out … It's their job…" Distancing himself from his aggression, Andy blamed the teacher for not dealing with the situation in class. Although he does not say he would ask for teachers help his comment poses questions about how he might have reacted to the taunts from peers if the teacher had intervened earlier. Would a teacher's early intervention have enabled Andy to avoid using aggression and yet preserve his dignity and status in front of his peers?

When other boys were asked if they would request the help of teachers to resolve conflict many rejected the idea, in particular arguing that this would likely damage their reputation and peer position. In this next extract I inadvertently ask Graham a leading question which appears to direct him to talk about teachers that he did not like rather than discuss the helpfulness of staff. Despite this, Graham seems to indicate that he would not ask staff for help. He also draws upon an essentialist gender discourse (as discussed at 3.1), constructing boys and girls as naturally different

JB: Graham tell me, you are not fond of teachers are you?

Graham: Teachers? No, not many. Take Mrs Stone. She picks on us. It's like, the people that are like, been horrible to her in the past, that's who she mainly picks on. Yeah.

JB: She picks on pupils who have been horrible to her?

Graham: Yeah. (pauses) No. She, she don't like kids and picks on them.

JB: I see. So you can't talk to her?

Graham: No, you're joking.

JB: Can you talk to any teachers?

Graham:(shrugs)

JB: Tell me Graham, what would your friends think, if you had a difficulty, would your friends think it was odd if you were telling the teachers?

Graham:(sighs and laughs) Yeah and if you done it too much they would probably rule you out like. Girls, they go to the teachers but (pause) nah.

JB: They would rule you out?

Graham:(inaudible) you'd be, like, (pause) They'd take the piss. Sorry I swore.

JB: It's ok.

Graham: Sorry.

While Graham indicates that he does not like this teacher and cannot talk to her, it is my question about what his friends might say which prompts him to draw on a discourse of peer disapproval. This extract is similar to several boys' comments about not engaging teachers to help with difficulties in school. All refuted the idea, stating that they had to independently defend themselves, presumably to maintain their masculine status within their peer group. Graham draws on peer pressure discourse when he states "They'd take the piss".   As peer pressure and boundary policing are often exerted through verbal insults, Graham is acknowledging such pressures upon him to conform to discourses of dominant masculinity as defined and discussed in the literature review.

For Graham the relationship with his class teacher is particularly relevant to his attitude towards her. In addition (and similar to Andy) peer pressure to conform within a dominant masculine norm also appears to contribute towards preventing Graham from asking a teacher for help. However neither boy seems to dismiss the idea completely. It is possible that teacher intervention may offer the opportunity for peer pressure in the classroom to be lessened and consequently the related acts of masculine aggression to be minimised. The discourse of teachers as classroom disciplinarians and boys' constructions of their relationships with school staff will be explored further in the analysis, which follows in 5.4.

In contrast, in the following interview John makes a different observation. Hoping to lead him into a conversation about peer pressure and relationships with teachers I asked him:

JB: Can we talk about exclusion a bit more? How could exclusion be prevented?

John: I don't (pauses) it depends what people do I suppose.

JB: Yeah. Ok, like what?

John: I just think that you should stop and just think about what you're going to do and if you are going to do it, think about the consequences. If I had the chance to I'd go back and do it all again, I'd (pause)

JB: You'd what?

John: Just, do something different.

JB: Such as?

John: Just get through and get to college.

JB: College?

John: College, 'cause there, they (inaudible) they, respect you.

JB: Really?

John: Yeah you're like an adult, grown up. You can smoke and go out of the premises. Like go to Mac Donald's, you know, you know just do, be like an adult. It's not like school where you're, you're not, you're not (pauses) like you are like in a cage, like, although it's on this side of the fence rather than on the public side. You know in school, the (inaudible) is blocked off, like you got to be in the playground. Can't go where the trees, not allowed in the bike sheds and then, then (pauses)

JB: So are you saying that you have more freedom at college or ...

(Interrupts)

John: No I mean that you're an adult. You are treated with respect (pauses) not like here, or any school.

Initially John appeared to be making the same fatalistic criticism of himself, in the way that Bob and Horace did. He seemed to be drawing on discourses to construct his behaviour as incompatible to success in school. However when questioned further he draws on alternative discourses to construct the school as prison like. From a Foucauldian perspective, John discursively constructs school as a site of constant surveillance under a "normalizing gaze" which is judging and examining his every behaviour (Foucault, 1977). John's narrative highlights the disciplinary technologies which characterise a school, particularly those of regulation, containment and surveillance and as such relate to the thinking of Foucault who argued that factories, schools, barracks and hospitals all resemble prisons (Foucault, 1977). Foucault's comparison of school with prison is particularly evident in John's account when he states he feels he is in a "cage". John also seems to object to the hierarchical positioning of himself as a child requiring adult containment. This is discussed at 3.6. John sees going to college as the way to escape his imprisonment. Drawing on a popular peer discourse he constructs college as a haven where he believes he will be allowed freedom, choice, but will be treated with respect and as an adult. This poses the question that if schools were less rule-bound, would boys like John be able to perform masculinity differently? However such a situation would seem to be in opposition to the views of other boys, who appear to be seeking additional discipline from teachers.

This examination of interviews with excluded boys' supports much current academic research which argues that some boys' behaviours are constructed within discourses of dominant masculinity. It has been shown that a range of other discourses also have the potential to exacerbate and encourage boys' investments in dominant masculine discourses. Disciplinary technologies that characterise schools, teachers' classroom management, boys' home environment and parenting skills were also highlighted as contributing to boys' performances of masculine behaviours. However, while some interviewed boys attempted to normalise hegemonic masculine behaviours they also offered a set of explanations which destabilises the construction of a single normalised, unitary masculinity. Some boys were able to be reflective, deconstructing their actions

and setting them sensitively against the views and the behaviours of others, including teachers and "neeks and geeks". The willingness and ability of these boys to do this is much more complicated and nuanced than the way in which it is often portrayed, showing their awareness of the institutional constraints and norms by which behaviour is measured and socially constructed as normal.

Feminist theorists discussed at 3.1 argue that dominant masculinity has been supported and justified through binary oppositions that give superiority to males over females. The section, which follows, will explore the discourses boys drew upon as they attempted to explain and justify their constructions of gender binaries.

5.2 Constructing and normalising essentialist gender discourses

There's more violence in males though isn't there? (Dan, 16-year-old student)

In this section I shall consider how boys discussed male and female behaviours and in doing so drew on particular discourses to reinscribe essentialist gender binaries.

Many boys echoed Dan's view above. As was discussed in 3.1 and 3.2, some boys normalise male violence, strength and aggression by drawing on popular media discourses that contribute towards the construction of essentialist gender binaries. Dan did the same when asked to explain boys' aggressive behaviours further.

Dan   There's more violence in males though isn't there?

JB   Why's what?

Dan   I dunno, it's more masculine.

JB   What's that got to do with it?

Dan: I dunno (mutters) just the way boys think different to girls, don't they?   (pauses for a moment and then laughs) Have you ever seen two girls in a boxing ring? (laughs). (Dan, 16-year-old student)

Dan's hesitation and use of the expression, "I dunno" is employed twice, perhaps to give him the opportunity to think how to respond or possibly he assumes that the answer is obvious and therefore does not require explanation. His attitude and his answers, like those of many other interviewees, suggest that he may not have been previously asked to explain or defend such comments. Alternatively it is also possible that my perhaps abrupt interview technique may have briefly disturbed him. However he appears to recover and then draws further on taken-for-granted gender discourses such as those discussed in section 3.1. Dan's simplistic defence is that boys and girls are naturally different, saying "it's more masculine" and therefore requires no further explanation. However when challenged further he pauses again before drawing on an essentialist gender discourse, similar to the arguments put forward by Gurian (2001 , 2005) and Sax (2005) (discussed at 3.1) who maintain that boys and girls think differently. It appears that Dan assumes this to be universally understood and may therefore expect me to agree when he adds the rhetorical question, "don't they?" As I do not respond, he attempts to defend this discourse further, his amused question seemingly designed to denigrate females and thus prove his point, "Have you ever seen two girls in a boxing ring?"

What Dan, and earlier Bob, illustrated is how misogynist and sexual name-calling are used by males, not just to insult and denigrate females but also to reinforce discourses of dominant masculinity and strengthen and normalise gender binaries. In doing this Dan firstly normalises violence, indicating that for boys to "underperform" in this context, would be a sign of weakness. He then draws on an essentialist discourse to construct boys and girls thinking as naturally different, through which he constructs violence as something that boys do, but girls do not. He then reinforces this social construct with a misogynist remark. As was discussed in 5.1, Graham indicated his fear of underperforming resulting in his friends "ruling him out" and or "taking the piss". It seems that for boys like Dan they will do all they can to avoid being constructed as weak and in any sense feminine.

Peter (whose interview was not recorded) said that he had been excluded from school "for fighting". When asked to explain why he had so many fights in school he said that boys like him "got bored", whereas "girls did not". He made a particular point of emphasising that boys should be "tough and stand up for themselves" and were "weak" if they did not. Throughout the interview Peter appeared to be drawing upon a simplistic essentialist discourse to characterise boys and girls as distinctly different, with boys being rebellious, aggressive and tough. It appears that Peter demonstrates such constructions of masculinity through performances of aggressive and confrontational behaviours, which have resulted in his exclusion from school.

Similar to Dan, when Bob was asked why more boys were excluded than girls he immediately drew on a biological discourse, similar to neuropsychologists Baron-Cohen (2003) and Knickmeyer (2005) (discussed at 3.1) to construct boys' and girls' behaviours as naturally different, an explanation that he uses throughout the following narrative.

> Because more boys, they've got testosterone and all that and boys all want to like, muck about, they always want to like just be like, they've got to show off more see, like, a girl if she's in a school, it's all about looks init, so they just have to look pretty, they don't care about that being naughty and that, but boys it's all about who's the funniest, who's the hardest, who's, who's got the most friends and most being like, most people like a funny person. If you're funny you're gonna have more friends that someone who's a moody prick really so, like, you try and be funny, you try and be the class clown and that, you get kicked out and you just don't get nowhere like that really, but that's the way it is in schools, that's the way kids are init. But with the girls, obviously they just have to look pretty, they don't have to act up they don't have to tell, they don't have to swear at the teachers and that, swearing at a teacher ain't gonna make their hair look any better is it? (Bob, 16-year-old student)

From this narrative it is possible to put together a list of what Bob constructs as normal and necessary male behaviours and attributes. These range from being tough, naughty, popular, funny and being able to challenge a teacher's authority. "Showing off", discussed earlier, is also highlighted. Bob is flippant about girls, reinforcing essentialist gender binaries with his simplistic references

to girls "just have to look pretty". However while demeaning girls, his comments also illustrate that Bob believes that boys are under significant pressure to perform a particular range of behaviours. He accepts this despite his acknowledgment that such behaviour leads to exclusion and lack of achievement. Such an acknowledgment may indicate the strength of pressure on Bob to comply. Significantly he constructs masculinity as something boys have to do but girls do not. Bob's narrative suggests that he feels he has little choice about how to behave, while girls are under no obligation to comply and are therefore constructed as weak and inferior. As has been discussed, peer pressure, together with possible peer teasing and bullying, has the potential to significantly encourage boys' engagement with performances of dominant masculinity. Fears of not being considered masculine, together with fears of being rejected and ridiculed by peers, contribute towards exacerbating and normalising essentialist gender binaries and associated dominant masculine discourses which contribute towards boys' exclusion from school.

However, these gendered discourses are not necessarily stable. In the following narrative, Roger had been talking enthusiastically about boys' behaviour and fighting for some time. I asked him why he thought it was that more boys were excluded from school than girls.

> JB: Ok, here's something that might interest you, more boys are excluded from school than girls, why is that?
>
> Roger: I reckon one is cos boys always fight, boys can fight and girls can't (laughs).
>
> JB   Or girls don't.
>
> Roger: Yeah, girls don't (sigh). (Pause and silence)
>
> JB   What about their attitude in lessons, I mean, you've been to lots of schools.
>
> Roger: You see you get, you get these stupid kids that are bored and then they like think, like, oh let's throw a pen at the teacher or the kids and, cos a girl won't do that she, like, she, I reckon if she ain't finished her work she'll go back to last lessons work or something like that

(pause) but yeah (pause) I reckon that a kid will just get so bored they just do something to get excluded.

Similar to other boys, Roger begins by drawing on gender discourses, which construct boys' and girls' behaviours, thinking and abilities as naturally different. He does this when he laughs at the idea that girls could fight or be as aggressive and tough as boys. His commitment to the discourse that normalises male aggression and structures gender binaries is similar to that of Bob, Peter and Dan. However when challenged, when I suggest that girls choose not to fight rather than being unable to, Roger hesitates saying "yeah" in apparent agreement, he then pauses before seemingly agreeing "girls don't" and then he falls silent. Although Roger may be accepting my correction, it may also be that my interview style may have contributed towards Roger's agreement by quelling his enthusiasm and reducing him to silence. To test this I ask him a further question about pupils' attitudes in class. Roger draws on a boredom discourse to construct the tedium of school contributing to "stupid" behaviour. He then, rather than insulting girls, praises their efforts and classroom abilities. This indicates that Roger sees reward in studious behaviour and the 'waste' disruptive behaviour brings.

Although Roger appeared to construct boys' behaviour as superior and want to normalise and comply with essentialist gender binaries, he also shows hesitation and doubt in this belief. What Roger may be describing in his narrative are his observations of dominant masculine behaviours among boys, behaviours that are endorsed through peer pressures. Roger's hesitative reaction to my questioning may indicate the anxiety that accompanies the negotiation of competing and overlapping discourses.

While many boys also seemed to be attempting to construct and normalise gender binaries, one interviewee (while also promoting and normalising masculine dominance and male violence) suggested that girls also engaged in aggressive behaviours. These comments occurred during discussion about rivalry between secondary schools.

David: And all the schools, like most of the schools would not walk on the same side if they, if they think their school's got a problem like if they knew our school was after their school they would not walk on the same side of the road cos they would always jam outside the Red Brick Café init yeah on the benches yeah and there was a lot of them and almost all of them would walk across the other side which was a smaller pavement as well with the (pause).

JB: So there was a lot of rivalry then, between schools?

David: Yeah, but our school (pause).

JB: Amongst boys or girls?

David: Both, you'd see the girls having a good tear as well like, I remember yeah a girl called Lily she was like one of the fittest girls in my school init yeah, this girl, black girl, come down to bang her up and she was mixed race init, the girl grabbed her yeah and threw her like that yeah and then, I can't remember, Lily did something init yeah and was like come on then yeah and then fucking the girl come at her and Lily grabbed her hair and started banging in her face in front of everyone.

David appears both amused and pleased by Lily's behaviour, complimenting her by saying she is 'fit'. This presumably indicates that he considers her to be attractive and thus affirms that he is constructing Lily within a feminine discourse. However, while he had previously been promoting, defending and normalising the uniqueness of aggressive behaviour as a male attribute here, in contradiction, he is now celebrating a girl who also behaves in an aggressive masculine manner. As such, David is describing what Halberstam (1998) and Paechter (2006a) define as "female masculinity". As David includes the compliment of feminine attractiveness, he is by default referring to what Francis (2010 , 2012) refers to as gender heteroglossia, the coexistence of both femininity and masculinity (discussed in 3.1). The normalisation of aggressive male behaviours is accomplished by constructing it in opposition to femininity and by constructing it as something only men and boys do. David's illustration of and acceptance that girls can also perform masculinity inadvertently contradicts the normalisation of gender binaries, used to construct men as dominant, aggressive and violent and women as compliant, peaceful and passive.

This fragility of essentialist gender discourses is further illustrated in the interview with Horace. He began by accepting and normalising boys' aggression but then as the interview progressed he drew on alternative discourses to make sense of gendered behaviours in school.

JB: So why aren't girls as violent as boys then?

Horace: Well, as the generations, as the generation's changes they are, they are getting a lot, lot, worse, the girls. But boys, they fight, boys have always learnt to fight, at young ages having a little fight. It's just what boys do really, boys will be boys, but (pauses).

JB   So it's natural?

Horace: It is sort of, it's, obviously I ain't saying it's like stabbing people and shooting people, cos that's not natural.

JB   Right.

Horace: But having a little, turn up with one of your friends because you never had a go on the football as many times as he did, it's just natural, because you're kids, you don't know hundred percent, right from wrong and you just do it and that's why you learn from your mistakes and that's why life is about experiences, that's what life is, that's what makes life, a lot of experience that makes, life. So, girls they're a bit, I want pretty flowers and I want a nice (pause). As long as they got that then they're happy.

JB   (laughs) Right, ok. Were they born like that then?

Horace: I don't know, some boys are born more manish than men, you do get some women that are born very manly but then you get very lady, lady, very womanly, so I supp (pause).

Similar to other boys, Horace often appeared to want to normalise male aggression and construct boys and girls as essentially different. However in this narrative he challenges this logic. When asked to explain why he considers girls less violent then boys he unexpectedly draws on a masculine-femininity discourse to argue that girls can be aggressive and that their behaviour is changing and becoming more aggressive. This supports David's views on female aggression. However drawing on a historical discourse Horace then disallows women from such behaviours by constructing aggression and fighting as

something that boys have always done, normalising it with the proverbial "boys will be boys". While many of the boys interviewed constructed themselves as adults or were striving to become adults, here Horace draws on a childhood developmental discourse (James and James, 2004), describing it as a time of learning and thereby constructing the fighting boys engage in as part of their learning experience. However the innocence that Horace constructs in relation to aggressive behaviours, unwittingly aligns with academic debates, discussed in chapter 3, which constructs dominant masculine behaviours as something learned, rehearsed and performed and therefore not "natural".

Horace's reference to girls and flowers is a further example of how by subjugating women, he is constructing masculinity in opposition to what he constructs as femininity. However, it appears that my questioning leads Horace to renegotiate the competing discourses about masculinity and particularly the gender binaries, which at times he appears to want to support and normalise. When I ask him, "Were they born like that?" he gives a very thorough explanation. Rather than drawing on gender binaries he acknowledges the coexistence of a range of gendered performances, describing dominant masculinity, masculine femininity, feminine men and feminine women. Far from supporting essentialist gender binaries, Horace's narrative demonstrates a nuanced understanding of how identities are socially constructed. He also shows an understanding of how gendered identities are dependent upon the circumstances and particular social interactions at any given time.

Many of the boys interviewed attempted to normalise gender binaries, structuring their arguments upon hegemonic discourses which authors such as Francis and Skelton (2001), discussed at 3.1 have illustrated as fragile. During questioning, when these discourses were challenged, several of the boys resorted to humour and misogynist comments in an attempt to support their claims. However in the interview, which follows, Graham's response is unexpectedly aggressive. While talking about differences between girls and boys he joked about girls crying but then became angry when questioned further. This extract begins with a conversation about girls talking more than boys.

Graham: No, no look. Girls talk more then boys, you know? They talk to the teachers and stuff.

JB: What and boys don't?

Graham: I don't.   It's like I wouldn't go telling a teacher what has happened before that.

JB: Why not, why wouldn't you?

Graham: I don't like speaking to teachers like Mr Chalk. He's (pause)

JB: Why what's wrong with him?

Graham: He don't listen, he only sees what he sees, you know what I mean? And he's just (inaudible) rude. Talks down to you, like you're, you're, something.

JB: But can the girls talk to him?

Graham: They don't like him either. (laughs) They just ended up crying anyway.

JB: Boys don't cry?

Graham: You fucking (pauses).

JB: I'm sorry did I offend you?

Graham: That was a joke right?

It is not entirely clear why Graham responded to my comment as aggressively as he did. He may have found my interview technique offensive. Alternatively, he may have misunderstood my remark, which was not directed at him but was a counter to his suggestion that girls cry but boys do not. While the reasoning behind Graham's behaviour is unclear, what this extract appears to indicate is how sensitive and significant it is for boys like Graham to position themselves within a unitary construction of masculinity. As indicated by Horace, they appear to do this by drawing on a particular discourse to normalise gender differences thus constructing masculinity, as Francis (2000) argues, in opposition to femininity.

This analysis of interviews with boys indicated the fragility of the gender binary discourse. What is particularly striking is how boys, despite showing the instability of this discourse and illustrating an understanding of gender heteroglossia, continued to draw on discourses of gender binaries in order to try to defend and countenance their dominant masculine behaviours. They did so despite the contradictory discourses they inadvertently illustrate that they are aware of. Some boys seem to understand that there are a range of masculinities and femininities and that these are not exclusive to boys/men or girls/women. While my questioning may have caused some boys to renegotiate their thinking, the pressure and power afforded to peer discourses, constructions of gender binaries and dominant masculine discourses seemingly draws them back and away from alternative constructions.

5.3 Exclusion from school and parenting discourses

... because I was brought up with it, it was err, the norm (Horace, 16 year old student)

In this section I shall be looking at the reasons boys gave for their exclusion from school and then how they included and implicated parents in their accounts.   Although almost all boys interviewed constructed aggressive behaviour as normal for males, when conversations took an autobiographical tone they often supplemented this discourse by drawing upon other contributory factors. In particular the behaviour of adult figures and parents in the home were frequently referred to, with several boys drawing upon and merging popular role model and parenting discourses to validate their claims.

During discussions with Horace about his home life when he was younger, he described his mother's boyfriend as a role model, saying,

Horace: He's just a poor excuse for a human being and I had to live with him, I had to (pause) have him as a role model, what couldn't role model a dog.

JB:　　Why do you say he was a poor role model?

Horace: He never worked, he never went to school when he was young. He was in care and all that sort of stuff. He's a gambler, he takes drugs, he, he don't do nothing for the house, if he lived there, he wouldn't put food in the fridge, he wouldn't paint a wall, he wouldn't put carpet down, he wouldn't do nothing, he'd just sit round, smoke fags, leave ash on the floor, live like a slob (Horace, 16 year old student).

Now 16 years old, Horace constructs this man's behaviours as unacceptable, suggesting that when he was younger he was the only example available to him and thus referred to him as a role model. In addition his critical description draws on a working class patriarchal discourse in which the father is both provider and maintainer of the home. He begins this next extract by talking about his mother's drug and alcohol abuse.

Horace: Well there's, she's obviously, she, she was in the wrong place at the wrong time and when I was living at home, she wouldn't care, for not going, for not going to school (pause) but err, she blames that, err her addictions started over being raped, she says she got raped and she was, not saying I disbelieve her, obviously, but she says she got raped when she was about 9, something like that and that's when she started alcohol she never told me when I was younger, she only told me when I was getting older, to know, what I wanna know is why, why she was such a crap mum to be honest, that's I wanted to know the answers, but obviously she got raped then and she started drinking to, to deal with it, to push the problems, she didn't tell none of the family and she had to deal with the situation on her own, so she started drinking and one thing led to another and she started taking drugs she started drinking (inaudible) she just, the ball out of the cycle hasn't stopped and it just got worse and worse and her health has decreased constantly.

JB: And when you were a child living with this, what did you think?

Horace: (pause) well living with it, because I was brought up with it, it was err, the norm. Getting brought up with it was just, the just, the norm it was just, it was just, it was just what you do it weren't nothing out of the ordinary …

Here Horace considers his upbringing through a normalising middle-class lens to draw on a poor parenting discourse, similar to Scott *et al*. (2010) and Lopez *et al.* (2008) who construct a correlative relationship between parenting

skills and children's behaviours. This was discussed at 3.6. Significantly there is a very distinct contrast between Horace's construction of his mother and her partner. Horace refers to his mother as "a crap mum" but moderates this by drawing on a child abuse discourse to explain that her parenting ability was affected by abuse and her subsequent dependence on alcohol and drugs. In contrast he is highly critical of his mother's partner, even though he also abuses drugs and alcohol. It may be that Horace is simply using his mother's boyfriend as a scapegoat for his family's situation and his attitude towards school and subsequent exclusion. However there is an alternative view. In criticising his mother's partner, he continues to draw on a working-class patriarchal discourse and lists a range of responsibilities that he constructs as indicators of an effective father and husband. Further in drawing on this discourse and excusing his mother, Horace is both constructing men as dominant and women as weak and dependent. Thus Horace is releasing his mother from responsibility but in doing so he appears to also be dismissing the possible influences of his mother's parenting and behaviour. His final comments are also pertinent. When asked what he had thought about his home-life he draws on a discourse of childhood innocence. This further constructs his mother and partner as inadequate and therefore responsible for his behaviour.

In an earlier conversation with Horace, he discussed how, when he was younger, he had not been able to concentrate or comply with rules and authority at school but now at 16 wishes that he had. He also constructed these shortcomings at school on his upbringing, saying:

> I was quite a naughty child, I weren't, I weren't, weren't very well behaved, my upbringing weren't very good, more dragged up than brought up … I never had a, never had a stable environment, I weren't, I never had a routine, I never had no structure it was just all by ear and everything went by ear and what would happen tomorrow, I dunno (pause) I'm still confused in what happened today (pause) so I just, I just, I didn't know what I was doing from tomorrow, basically. I didn't know if I was going to school, I didn't know if I was going to stay at someone, random's house, I didn't know what I was doing, so going to school was just like a playground, if you see what I'm saying, that it err, never really, just showed me a lot of kids and because I was missing days here and I was missing days there, obviously it weren't

my fault cos obviously I wasn't old enough to take myself to school, but I was missing days here, I was missing days there I was behind … (Horace, 16 year old student) [2]

Horace begins by blaming himself, drawing on what Timimi (2005) might determine a "naughty boy discourse". Although constructing himself as "naughty" he then adds that he was "dragged up" not "brought up". These expressions appear to have been drawn from routine public discourses that routinely pathologize working-class parents, constructing them as lazy, negligent and inadequate, an issue debated by Titus (2004) and Westwood (1996). Horace's comments also reflect the middle-class discourse of "poor parenting" or "adverse parenting" discussed by Liabo and Richardson (2007). Such issues were discussed in the literature review at 3.6 and 3.7. By drawing on these discourses, Horace further positions his mother and her partner as responsible for his behaviours and achievements.

It is significant that although in this conversation with Horace he criticised his stepfather, he did not openly condemn his violence, instead he referred to him as "a slob" criticising his cleanliness, lack of DIY skills, gambling, drug taking and work ethic. Earlier in the interview he had said:

my mum … she was constantly having arguments and fights, with her boyfriend, well me being, (pause) I dunno not a mummy's boy, but I do love my mum, like there's no tomorrow, so I'd always stick up for her even if she was in the wrong, so I'd always end up fighting him. Like I was only what, 10, 11 and I was fighting and trying, but he'd fight back cos I was, I was a big boy and I would have to hit him or something, so it was quite a rough house to be honest   (Horace, 16 year old student).

Throughout Horace's narrative he is drawing on multiple and competing discourses as he attempts to explain and make sense of his educational experiences and his relationships with his mother and her partner. In this

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[2] [NB: Horace was a very keen participant being talkative and forthcoming. The full transcript of his interview is included as appendix VII. Horace introduced the discourse of role models without prompt.]

extract, seemingly in an attempt to protect his mother from criticism, Horace attributes the blame for the violence in the home on his mother's boyfriend. However, although condemning his mother's partner in many ways, he does not condemn the aggression and violence displayed by himself or by her. This appears to reaffirm his commitment to a discourse of normalised aggression constructing violence as a useful and valid resource. Horace combines this with an apparent commitment to the dominant male discourse. Reinforcing his construction of himself within this discourse he states that he was a "big boy", not small and inferior, and therefore not weak. In doing so it seems he is further affirming the superiority and normality of his own aggression and physical strength. Following this Horace hesitates when he says that he loves his mother, possibly viewing this an admission of weakness. He may see potential in the accusation of being "a mummy's boy" as a challenge to his own masculinity and so adds that, even though he was young, he could fight a grown man. So while Horace constructs and condemns particular male behaviours as being detrimental to his own development and behaviour, contrarily he gives the impression of defending the dominant masculine discourse, promoting male aggression and strength as normal while rejecting personal misogynist insults such as "mummy's boy".

Horace's narrative illustrates how the power of one discourse can overwhelm that of another. His experiences and the range of discourses to which he seems to align, appears to reinstate and strengthen the already powerful discourse of masculinity, a discourse which limits the options available to Horace and eliminates the possibility of him 'doing' masculinity differently. Horace invests in a range of discourses at various moments to make sense of his educational experiences, his upbringing and relationships with his parents. In doing so he is attempting to determine some truths. This illustrates, as Foucault (1980) explains, how people produce truths within discourses. However, the efficacy of Horace's truths are undermined because as he seeks to explain and apportion blame he holds on to contradictory and outmoded discourses of aggression, patriarchal dominant masculinity and gender binaries which are at

odds with middle-class constructions of parenting skills, behaviour and school achievement.

Horace was not the only boy to attempt to form links with various parenting and role model discourses. In the following interview, Harry began by discussing bullying and school uniform. This then moved on to statements about the home influencing a pupil's behaviour at school.

> Harry: ... there are a lot of kids who maybe don't have the privilege of some other kids of the money they get and the clothes they wear, they might wear the same clothes for a couple of days in a row and people would embarrass some people who would take the mick out of that.
>
> JB: Yeah.
>
> Harry: That's not, you can't help that, it's like (pauses)
>
> JB: Because you haven't got a lot of money and so on?
>
> Harry: Yeah it's not their fault it just makes them a target really for people to pick on.
>
> JB: Right, is that kids who come from homes that don't have a lot of money, does that cause other problems as well for them?
>
> Harry Yeah I think a lot of, they've got a lot of stuff, if they've got problems at home I think it's all inside, like all keep inside and not telling anyone, coming to school and release their anger in ways that you shouldn't.
>
> JB: What sort of things?
>
> Harry: Like lashing out or something, to someone who's not even being that bad to them, not being horrible to them, they end up saying stuff that they regret or hit and that is one of the reasons they get excluded as well.
>
> JB: What's happening at home that's causing that?
>
> Harry: Well it could be, there's loads of stuff that could happen, it could be like, your parents hit you, or they (pause) smoke drugs or there's they just neglect, they don't look after you the way they should, they don't feed you the nutrition you should have or anything. So it, it's not a very good way to be brought up and it could lead you

> like in the wrong direction. Because when you are at home you're not
> seeing any good role models really, aspiring to be like ...

Harry began this conversation drawing on a poverty discourse to argue that being poor can result in teasing and becoming a possible target for bullying at school. This concurs with observations of Ball (2008) discussed in the literature review at 3.7.   When asked if such poverty might cause other problems at school Harry abruptly moved his conversation on, seemingly drawing on a parenting discourse to construct pupils' difficulties and exclusion from school being caused by problems in the home. Harry's argument is somewhat different from that of Horace. Horace said his upbringing did not equip him for school. Harry argued that problems at home might result in outbursts of anger, which may lead to exclusion. Harry also loosely used the term "neglect", an expression used by Rutter and Smith (1995) and others who draw links between constructions of parental neglect and educational failure.

Despite the subtle differences in the two boys' versions of their experiences, both seem to be drawing upon a normalising parenting discourse similar to that which appears in the media. Assarsson and Aarsand (2011) argue that this construction of parenting takes no account of cultural diversity or social inequalities, such as poverty. By drawing on this discourse, Horace and Harry classify and condemn, constructing particular poor working-class parents as responsible for their children's behaviour and exclusion from school, despite the inequalities that accompany poverty and the assumptions of truth contained within this discourse.

In the literature review at 3.5 the work of Merton (1957, 1986) was discussed and consideration given to his particular role model hypothesis. Both boys draw on the popular and simplistic role model discourse, with Harry in particular arguing that parents should be role models and inspire their children and that where they do not problem behaviour may result.   In contrast to Merton, Horace argues that where there are no alternatives then the only available adult will be copied regardless of the quality of their behaviours and

thus will become a role model by default. Using these intersecting discourses both boys appear to be further pathologizing working-class parents and in doing so they construct them as responsible for some boys' difficult behaviours at school.

The parenting skills discourse also featured in other boys' narratives. Similar to Horace, Peter (whose interview was not recorded) briefly discussed this in relation to his ability to concentrate at school. He said that he often truanted from school because he got bored. He was asked what his mother thought of his truanting and he appeared dismissive, shrugging and not answering. However without prompting, a moment later, he added that he could not concentrate in school when there were lots of children about. When I asked why this was he said that he often worried about his family at home in case they were in danger. He then added that he needed to be part-time at school so that he could go home and check on them.

This appears to relate to Harry's earlier comments about children having problems at home and keeping it "all inside". What Peter appeared to indicate is that things happened at home that so disturbed him that he was worried and unable to concentrate at school. Further questioning did not reveal what it was that worried Peter so much. However, earlier he had talked about fighting and being tough and felt that this was acceptable and normal saying that boys should stand up for themselves and were weak if they did not. Although Peter's interview was short and not electronically recorded, the information gathered implies a boy who draws upon a dominant masculine discourse and who also constructs himself as responsible for his family. This is in contrast to the Western social construction of childhood that views children as dependent on parents, a matter variously discussed by Timimi (2005), Katz (2007) and Uprichard (2008) and considered throughout section 3.6.

The discourse of parenting was also illustrated in the interview with David. Much of David's interview was dominated by his discussion about fighting, aggression and defending himself. When I asked him if he could remember

when he was very young he continued to discuss his aggression and fighting but then he gradually shifted to reminisce about his early childhood.

JB: Ok, now the last bit, do you remember when you were very young (pause) very, very young?

David: Yeah some, some bits of my life.

JB: Ok what was life like?

David: (Pause) well it was kinda hard, to be honest, like cos mum was by herself init yeah, my dad had fucked off and like, like there was like even, even, first school for me yeah like cos I remember them years quite well yeah (pause)

JB: Mmm Mmm.

David: Like I got into like two fights in the whole of the first school yeah, which is three years and that was it yeah and then it just, as everyone got older it just escalated init like, but when I was young, even before that nursery or reception like first even two fights apart from that, that was nothing out of all those terms init.

JB: Mmm mmm.

David: And like I, I ... got more violent init but it was the only way that I was gonna show people that, I'm not a prick like that, cos people these days are like you back down the first time and say, I can't be arsed yeah, those do it again, that's the thing so but I remember back in the, I used to be a good kid (laugh) when I was very young, like when I was in nursery yeah I remember yeah the first day I went there yeah, I didn't want to go there init and I went there and I was behaving and I used to help out tidy up and things like that.

JB: Mmm and you can remember that?

David: I remember as well this one day yeah, like I don't know how I managed to remember it yeah, even my mum turned round and remembered it yeah, I remember yeah when I was living with my mum ages and ages before ... like there was this one picture that I cut out and it was a cat init, a tabby cat init and um, like it was a proper photo init (pause).

JB: Mmm, Mmm

David: They must have taken init and brought it in and they were letting kids cut them up and things.   I remember I touched it one day yeah like I was looking at all my shelf, like I used to have bookshelves

in a row and like there were flowers on top yeah like fake ones from when I was born yeah

JB: Yeah.

David: And I saw this photo and I picked it up init yeah and I looked at it I couldn't remember where I got it and later on a had a dream that I remembered actually cutting up I remember the teacher when we sat down on the floor and she was like um, she was like, so what has everyone been doing today, has everyone been doing that yeah, then like we were like yeah we been doing cutting and all this yeah and I went out I wasn't sure if that actually happened yeah that it was a bit weird that dreamt about it and I thought, I went and asked my mum and she goes yeah cos that was, that was my first day of being there before she come to pick me up and she saw me doing that.

JB: And is that a nice memory?

David: Yeah, I still remember that one.

JB: Did your mum do things like that, cutting out?

David: Not really, she, to be honest, mum didn't really have enough time for like me mainly like.

JB: Why not?

David: Cos I was the one always getting into trouble and things like that, like I'm basically like the black sheep of the family init …

This extract appears to confirm David's alignment with dominant masculinity and his construction of the need for boys to display aggressive defensive behaviours. Similar to other boys, this narrative also shows that David draws upon a western social construction of childhood and parenting, constructing children as vulnerable and dependent upon their parents. This was discussed in chapter 3.   In addition, and similar to Horace, David also appears to draw on a patriarchal parenting discourse discussed at 3.6, constructing a specific, irreplaceable role for fathers with their sons.   David illustrates this through sympathy for his mother, who was left alone to raise the family when his father left. Such discourse has the potential to further enforce constructions of gender binaries particularly those who construct specific parenting roles for mothers and fathers while also constructing women as weak and inferior to men. Such constructions appear to compound David's resentment of his father, which

is illustrated by his use of aggressive vocabulary, such as that used when he explains that his father "fucked off".

While David appears to maintain his construction of himself within a dominant masculine discourse and an alignment with a gender binary discourse, in contrast he also appears to briefly discuss what Francis (2012) refers to as male femininity. This is illustrated when David recollects early memories of cutting out a picture of a cat, which is placed, on a shelf in his room with some flowers. Reflecting on the incident David is calm and apparently content at engaging in, what might be constructed as a feminine activity and thus in opposition to what Mills (2001) describes as "images of the 'ideal man'" discussed at 3.1. David's narrative is in contrast to that of Horace who earlier used comments about flowers as a means of belittling girls and thus demeaning feminine activities.

While much of David's narrative is dominated by his construction of himself as tough and masculine, here he refers to a brief period in his life when he was "good" thus potentially accepting and further constructing his fighting and current behaviours as "bad". This section of David's narrative appears to show that he has some understanding of alternative masculinities and is also able to align and construct himself within such alterative feminine/masculine discourse, however briefly he does so.   Together with constructing himself as "bad" this suggests that David is also able to align with discourses which construct dominant masculinity as problematic.

The narrative of both Horace and David indicates that while constructing some of their behaviour at school as inappropriate and blaming themselves for it, they also draw on popular parenting discourses to construct mothers, but particularly fathers, as responsible for providing appropriate guidance and support to children. Mayer (2001) and Scott *et al.* (2010) (see 3.6) similarly construct the need for particular skills to be nurtured at home by parents. Additionally, academic, political and media discourses (discussed at 3.6) often constructs absent fathers and single mothers as irresponsible and unskilled at

caring for their children. While Horace and David appear to do the same, their criticisms are constructed by drawing on a working-class patriarchal discourse, enabling blame to be placed on absent fathers or stepfathers rather than mothers. The boys' continued construction of dominant masculinity and gender binary oppositions supports their construction of working-class patriarchy, which in turn enables them to both criticise but also mitigate what they construct as their mothers' inadequate parenting skills.

5.4 Exclusion and teacher discourses

It's not all down to students. It's how teachers deal with it (Andy 16-year-old student)

While boys discussed parents and parenting, they also implicated teachers in causing or exacerbating boys' difficult behaviours at school, as suggested by Andy in the quote above. This will be the focus of this section. Earlier (at 5.3) Harry had mentioned bullying in schools; the following interviews expand upon this discussion.

It is significant that the next three interviewees, Terry, Sid and Peter refused to have their conversations recorded. All had a Statement of Special Educational Needs based on their behaviour, having previously been temporarily excluded for aggressive behaviours towards staff and other pupils. The three boys voiced similar concerns about bullying and the lack of action teachers took to deal with it. While it might be supposed that because of their aggression, these boys construct themselves within a hegemonic masculine discourse, they all claimed that they had to defend themselves because they were bullied and no action was taken. They had been allowed to return to school but were aware and fearful that any further acts of violence might lead to their permanent exclusion.

The boys' refusal to have their interview electronically recorded together with their willingness and keenness to be back in school indicates that they acknowledge and draw on a discourse that values education but also on a discourse of hierarchical positioning between staff and themselves. They also

acknowledge the power afforded to the school as the "institution of correction" and the "normalizing gaze" to which they are subjected (Foucault, 1977). While such scrutiny leads to the boys' compliance and self-regulation, it is also accompanied by anxiety and distrust, possibly exacerbated by the teacher seated in the corner throughout the interviews. Explaining to me that they were bullied in school, all three boys drew on a discourse of teacher responsibility, manifested in the need for them to care and intervene in pupil confrontation. This construction is similar to Andy's comments in 5.1 who was aggressive to a pupil when the teacher did not intervene on his behalf. Like previous interviewees who construct parents as having responsibilities to care and nurture their children, these boys seem also to have expectations that teachers should care for them in school.

While the boys accepted their subordinate place in the hierarchical positioning of power, they seem also to have developed distrust structured around the repressive discourse of school discipline, which did not allow them to defend themselves. Maintaining a passive compliant position is the challenge for these boys. While they are under the constant scrutiny of teachers, so too it seems are teachers by students. The boys construct teachers as having responsibilities to care for them. If they fail, then the behavioural discourse the boys attempt to adhere to may again be discarded as they then draw on an alternative discourse of defensive hegemonic masculinity to protect themselves against bullies and the perceived inaction of teachers.

This tension between boys and teachers is further illustrated through the following interview with Graham.

> Graham: No, like (pause) um I got um, threw a chair at a teacher once but (pause)
>
> JB: Why was that?
>
> Graham: Just the way they were talking to me and treating me and I didn't like it.
>
> JB: Can you explain?

Graham: Like I said, they, they talk rude to you and then when you're rude back they don't like it and then there's trouble and you get excluded.

JB: What do you mean by rude?

Graham: They, they look down on you, you know (pauses) They talk to you like you're some, some, I dunno, like you're below (pauses) small, nothing and that's rude, like you're nothing. Like, they say, "Oi Smith", they don't say, "Graham or please, excuse me", they just shout rude at you. If you don't say Mr or Mrs then, then they're, wow! (pauses) S'not right.

While Graham's behaviour may be constructed within a hegemonic masculine discourse, it is further explained within Foucault's description of the disciplinary techniques in operation in institutions such as schools. Foucault argues, the acceptance of discipline brings into play the, " … subordination of one group of people by another …" (Foucault, 1977 page 223).   Unlike the three boys above, it appears that Graham is unwilling to be subjected to such subordination. Drawing on a discourse of mutual respect, he constructs the teacher's attitude toward him to be disrespectful. His construction of himself within a hegemonic masculine discourse is further at odds with his construction of the teacher as rude, demanding an aggressive masculine response to show the teacher and his peers that he will not be treated disrespectfully.

David's reaction is similar to Graham's.

JB: So what was the problem with the teacher?

David: I can't even, I can't, like his name was Mr Christie init and he like was boying me off one time init, like, he tried like.

JB: What does that mean, boying you off?

David: Tried to make me look small init.

To explain the teacher's rudeness David chooses the expression "boying me off". While this might be understood as a generic expression of belittlement, it also suggests being referred to as an immature child, or more specifically a boy

rather than a man. The teacher concerned might draw on a discourse of the undeveloped child, as explained by Cannella (1997) and discussed in 3.6, defining children as lacking and therefore requiring adult intervention. David objects to such a construction, considering it to be an insult designed to ridicule him, constructing him as childish and unmanly. As discussed in 3.1, masculinity is defined by what it is not. David and other boys consider themselves neither childish nor unmanly, therefore being constructed as a boy undermines the discourse of hegemonic masculinity associated with manhood, in which they invest so heavily.

This is an interesting objection, at odds with boys' previous constructions. At the beginning of this chapter, I noted that most male student interviewees constructed themselves as boys, thus distancing themselves from adult school staff. Following this, several boys, including David, drew on parenting discourses to discuss parenting skills and responsibilities. In making such constructions they appear also to be drawing on an essentialist discourse to construct childhood as real, where children are constructed as vulnerable and dependent upon adults, a matter discussed at 3.6. However it appears that *teacher* references to childhood are considered by some boys as demeaning and insulting, particularly when used for the subjugation and disciplining of pupils.

Concern about teachers' discipline skills was raised by other boys who thought that teachers should be more sensitive and proactive in handling incidents and behaviours in school.   In the following narrative, Andy discusses this, and refers to himself as a student, distancing himself from childlike constructions associated with boys.

JB: How could exclusion be prevented?

Andy: (Yawns and stretches) It's not all down to students. It's how teachers deal with it. Like, like, what they do to get a student to calm down and that.   Or, or if they have wound you up in the first place.

JB: Really?

Andy: Because nine times out of ten it's not the actual thing event that gets you excluded it's how you talk to the teacher after, because you're that wound up, (pause) they don't like help you calm down, you're just like, er, don't want to talk to you right now and that's usually what gets you excluded because it all builds up if you know what I mean?
(Stands up).
I think the best way to prevent something is do actions before it actually happens say like, if your getting wound up by the teachers and that, if you just go to someone and say look I'm not going into that class, she's gonna wind me up, I'm gonna get excluded. (Pushes his chair in and makes to leave)

JB: Thank you very much Andy for your time.

Andy: Yeah, thanks.   (hesitates) Sorry I gotta meet someone. But you know (pauses) One thing they do is, my mum used to like, when my mum had been rang up by teachers saying like what I've done and that, because my mum knew I had a short temper and she would be like, all the teachers knew I had a short temper but they still like, they make it sound ten times worse than what it is, like, he started it, we've done this, we've done that, we've said this and this is how you have not finished it, but it's never (pauses and opens door).

JB: Thank you Andy

Andy: Brilliant. (leaves room)

While it might appear that Andy's narrative is but a simple criticism of a teacher's handling of confrontation between two pupils, it suggests more than this. Like David, Andy draws on discourses of masculinity and adulthood to construct himself as an independent adult male requiring minimal adult support. This is further supported by Andy's construction of himself as a student not a boy. He also draws on affectivity discourses to normalise anger and legitimise his right to express irritation at someone else's actions. However the authority of the teacher undermines his discursive constructions. Similar to other boys, Andy objects to the power afforded to teachers, their scrutinising disciplinary gaze and their construction of students as children. Andy particularly objects to the lack of autonomy offered by the childhood innocence discourse, because this prohibits him from being an adult and denies him freedom to deal with conflict and his anger and emotions. Andy further objects to teachers' hierarchical positioning, enabling them to observe and criticise students and report their judgments to

parents. Such power further enforces the socially constructed binaries of student and teacher and of adult and child to which Andy and some other boys object.

Not all boys were critical of teachers. In this next extract Horace compliments teachers who have been patient and have helped him with his aggressive and violent behaviour in school. He explained:

> I've had quite a strong bond with a few teachers throughout the years with my schooling, mainly in a weird way, the head, the main, the main person in a way because, well primary school, there was Mr Oliver and he always, always took to me, always, if there was any activities or, say for instance there was a year 5 was going on an activity and I was in year 6, right, it would only be a year 5 trip but I'd get an invite.

> JB: Ok. So why did you like him?

> Horace: (pause) because he weren't, he tried, he actually tried, to make a difference, he actually pulled his finger out and thought how's he gonna help …

> JB: And in secondary school?

> Horace: Secondary school, ah, my head of year, when I beat up that boy, Robert, I, I, my head of year come down and said 'we need to have a chat'. Miss Davies her name was, so I remember, remember the names, Miss Davies, she sat me down and said we need a chat. I said I know what you're on about the fight bla, bla, bla, bla, well I just said (inaudible) her, yeah I had to do that for these various reasons, as I, as I said it today it's karma with that and it's literally about five minutes after the fight. I weren't angry, I weren't 'yeah I told him didn't I' I never done none of that, I just said, 'well it had to be done', and she said she'd never, ever, ever, seen a kid, so calm, relaxed about violence, she said, she said, it's a good thing, because you're not angry, you're not, but then it's a bad thing because it isn't like you flipped and didn't know what you was doing, because you wasn't, you was calm. She said but, you're quite mature, because you never started kicking him when he was down, you've given him his whack, for what he needed and left it, you was a man who walked off, sort of thing, sort of, I reckon she liked me, from a weird thing really, but it was just how I dealt with the situation, I didn't start shouting and saying 'No, I'm not in the wrong, I'm not in the wrong'. I said, you know, I'm in wrong, shouldn't have done it, but I did (pause) so if you see what I'm saying, but after that, she sort of took to me, that's why, to be honest, I would have been kicked out, with me just running around the school, I beat up that kid, I was swearing at teachers and that, I should have

been kicked out before I had a fight with the teacher, right, but
because of Miss Davies, she kept me in, she put me on half a day, she
done me a report card, whatever lesson I went into, I had to report.
So, she kept me there as long as she, as long as she could literally drag
it out.

In this narrative Horace constructs the behaviours of Mr Oliver and Miss
Davies in stark contrast to other boys. David and Andy constructed teachers as
disciplinarians and judgemental, objecting to the "subordination" that Foucault
(1977) argues is required within disciplinary regimes such as schools. However
Horace does not construct these two teachers in this way. Although both
teachers were monitoring his behaviour, he does not object to their "gaze" but
instead draws on discourses of caring and compassion to construct their
observations as trying to help him rather than disciplining him. At 3.6 parenting
discourses were discussed and in particular at 3.2, how working-class discourses
of behaviour are often considered at odds with middle-class discourses
employed in schools. Earlier at 5.3, Horace, drawing on middle-class discourses
of parenting and childhood, indicated how parents should meet the needs of
children. Likewise it appears he also constructs Miss Davies through these
middle-class discourses, understanding her as wishing to help him. This is in
contrast to Horace's alignment of himself in working-class constructions of
hegemonic masculinity.

Academic debates (discussed at 3.5), while dismissing teachers as role
models, argue that teachers' behaviours and disciplinary regimes (see 3.3) have
the potential to contribute towards the behavioural choices that boys make.
This is significant in relation to Miss Davies responses to Horace.   Horace
reported that Miss Davies did not criticise his fighting but instead praised his
self-control. Using both a middle-class and working-class lens Horace constructs
fighting as wrong but also something he had to do. This self-appraisal appears to
illustrate that while Horace constructs himself within a working-class discourse
of dominant masculinity, through a middle-class lens he also sees the limitations
that such a construction has on his school life and education. Further to this, if as
Horace reports, Miss Davies did say to him that he was a "man" and was "calm"
and "mature", this had the potential to mitigate his behaviour and reinforce

Horace's construction of hegemonic masculinity by supporting the association of aggression with calmness, control, manliness and maturity. This resonates with Mills (2001) "blueprint for normal masculinities" and the attributes and behaviours the "ideal man" displays, discussed at 3.2.

Although Horace praises some teachers for being compassionate, ultimately their guidance does not help him because eventually he is permanently excluded. Horace's narrative illustrates the tensions operating between competing discourses but also how dominant discourses have the potential to prevail resulting in the perpetuation of behaviours constructed as disruptive in school.

In this next extract Harry is also complimentary about teachers and other adult help but also clear about what they should not do.

> JB: ... what do you think of the teachers in your school, in your previous schools, the ones you were excluded from, what were they like?
>
> Harry: Um, there was a mixture, there was a lot of strict teachers but there was a lot of teachers you could talk to if you had a problem. But there were other teachers, they weren't teachers they were like people who were there for children with bad behaviour, who were always there to talk to, they were really kind but most teachers are really good at their job, but mainly didn't know how to speak to the children in the best way.
>
> JB: Ok and what sort of things did they say that wasn't good?
>
> Harry: I think raising your voice to a child who is usually naughty, is one of the worst things you can do, because the kid likes to assert authority, then he's obviously going to raise his voice back and he's going to get told off for it. I think if you talked to him calmly or her then they will talk calmly back to you and I think you have like a better relationship really. It will be easier to communicate, because if you shout and everything your gonna be shouting over each other trying to get the last word.
>
> JB: Has that happened to you?
>
> Harry: Yeah loads of times, when a teacher shouts at me I always shout back quick. I always seem to get on with the teachers that are

more (um) (pause) quieter, not quiet, but don't shout at you because they are always understanding but even though they know something's wrong they will give you a telling off but they see it from your point of view as well not just they won't just, they won't just go down like one .... Will be like this is happening like, shout at you, they will explain things.

Harry begins this narrative by privileging a mentoring discourse to construct listening and guiding pupils as a necessary responsibility for teachers. He then, like Horace at 5.3, uses a middle-class discourse of the "naughty" child, as discussed by Timimi (2005) to further construct some pupils as lacking and therefore needing adult correction, support and help. This appears to indicate that Harry acknowledges and accepts the hierarchical position of teachers in schools. It also seems to indicate that he accepts the "disciplinary regime" of school and the judgemental role of teachers who might "...give you a telling off". While Harry's response looks submissive, it is not. Although Harry indicates that he may accept and yield to the authority of teachers, this acceptance and positioning of school is done by drawing on a discourse of mutual respect between pupil and teacher.

In the literature review at 3.4, consideration was given to the manner in which boys demonstrate and prove their masculinity to peers by challenging a teacher's authority. This is not what Harry is discussing. Like John at 5.1 and Graham earlier in this section, he is drawing on a discourse of respect to construct some teachers' actions as discourteous. Unlike some other boys Harry appears to accept his position within a hierarchical, disciplinary and judgemental school environment but only when constructed through his lens of fairness and respect. Therefore when confronted with teachers that shout Harry finds their attitude demeaning, aggressive and a challenge to his construction of himself within a hegemonic masculine discourse. Consequently he shouts back.

Harry's comments and behaviour echo the beliefs and constructions made by several other boys interviewed. Bob, who was likewise critical of some teachers' attitudes towards pupils, also presented this topic when asked if he could remember anything about Primary school.

I can remember some of it, just normal stuff, just getting on, like, doing what you have to do really. But when I was younger I used to get on because you're scared of the teachers then, because if someone shouts at you then that's scary but like, obviously when I get a little bit older, someone shouting at me, I just laugh at them, so if someone shouts at me now, it's nothing, if someone raises their voice I can raise my voice back to them. But I could go one ahead and give them a slap for shouting at me … (Bob, 16 year old student)

While echoing Harry's criticism of teachers that shout at pupils, Bob also illustrates how the relationship between pupil and teacher is actively reconstructed as boys grow and mature. In suggesting that younger pupils are scared of teachers, Bob is constructing primary schools not just as disciplinary and regulatory (Foucault, 1977), he is also objecting to the hierarchical structures in school. Drawing on a discourse of subordination he constructs some teachers as controlling and dispassionate and argues that the obedience of primary pupils is achieved through fear determined by a pupil's age and immaturity. Applying a social construction of the child as immature and weak, as discussed at 3.6, Bob argues that with age this changes, the child matures and with this maturity comes enlightenment to the subordinating and disrespectful behaviour of some teachers.

This unfavourable construction of primary schools is formed through Bob's subjectivity within a discourse of hegemonic masculinity, a construction which demands performances of independence, strength and aggression. As such, the subordination that Bob claims exists in schools is in opposition to this and confrontation therefore seems inevitable. In addition boys' disruptive and aggressive behaviours are sometimes performed not only as a challenge to the authority of teachers but also to appeal to peers by showing how tough and independent the actor is. This was examined at 5.1 where boys discussed masculine behaviours and constructions of "showing off" in class.

In boys' narratives at 5.1 Bob and others express their unwillingness to accept disrespect from teachers or other boys. This sometimes resulted in

aggressive confrontations. Being treated with respect, or as others put it, being treated as an adult male, was an expectation expressed by several boys. While Bob and Harry appear to be exploiting parallel discourses by demanding respect from teachers, there the similarity ends. Harry appears to be willing to comply with teachers' expectations as long as he is treated with respect, but in contrast Bob may also use the opportunity for confrontation with teachers to "show off" to peers and thus further demonstrate his manliness.

In this chapter I have so far examined a range of discourses, which potentially shape boys' choices and their behaviours towards teachers. However it appears that the discourse of hegemonic masculinity remains dominant in shaping boys' behaviours in school, subduing alternative discourses and determining how they construct and implicate teachers in their behaviours. Foucault (1977 , 1980) argued that control in institutions is achieved through, surveillance and promotion of "normalising" discourses.   While some boys seemed willing to accept the regulation and control of school, they did so only when this was accompanied by respect. Other boys were unwilling to relinquish their autonomy and constructed teachers as disrespectful, confrontational and unskilled in the management of bullying and peer disputes. Thus for some boys, their relationships with school staff remains volatile and unpredictable. The relationship between boys and teachers remains the focus of the next section in which teachers as role models will be considered.

5.5 Boys and teachers as role models

... you put someone in front of me with a suit trying to tell me that this is going to be your role model, I'll laugh at you (Bob, 16 year old student)

In the literature review at 3.5, I discussed the debate about employing more male teachers to act as role models to boys constructed as problematic. In this section I examine how boys variously responded to this idea. The boys interviewed in this study had all been excluded from school and thus variously constructed by schools as disaffected, aggressive and troublesome and therefore problematic. As such these boys are among the pupils that policy makers regard as likely to benefit from having more male staff. I therefore considered it appropriate to seek their views on male staff as role models.

Merton's role model theory suggests that it is the character, class and behaviour of a person that contributes towards them being admired and copied (Merton, 1986 , Merton, 1957). In the following interview, it is possible to consider this construction by exploring how Harry explains what a role model is and whom he aspires to be like. In 5.3 Harry and Horace appeared to merge parenting skills and the role model discourse, but when pressed Harry was able to differentiate these. In developing his discussion about parental neglect he defines his construction of a role model.

> JB: Who do you aspire to be like?
>
> Harry: Um, (pause) a sports person.
>
> JB: Yeah, which one?
>
> Harry: Cesc Fabregas ...... He's an Arsenal mid fielder ..... He's just really good at what he does. (pause) it's not like (pause)
>
> JB: When you leave school are you going to be a footballer then?
>
> Harry: I'm not good enough to be a footballer, I would love to be a footballer, it's just one day, you dream about it (Harry, 16 year old student).

Harry, although dismissing his own football skills, still constructs Fabregas as a role model. He states, "He's just really good at what he does", this signals that it may be Fabregas' expertise in his profession that inspires him to want to emulate an adult who is committed, talented, hardworking and the embodiment of sporting masculinity. Having dismissed his own football skills, the question is whether Harry can translate such commitment and ambition to an alternative career. As discussed in the literature review at 3.1, Mills warns that such, "… images of the 'ideal man' … forms the basis of hegemonic masculinities" (Mills, 2001 page 23). Harry's construction of a role model may therefore do just this, by reflecting and embracing discourses of masculine fitness, strength and fame he might be understood as embracing discourses of hegemonic masculinity. This in turn has the potential to reinforce gendered career aspirations, and to resist and reject school, as Jackson (2002) argues and was discussed at 3.4.

Even though Harry considers that he cannot aspire to become a footballer like his role model Fabregas, he is still vulnerable to the hegemonic masculine discourse that Fabregas and other footballers embody. Thus, as Mills (2001) and others argue, Harry, like other teenagers, is vulnerable to popular media discourses (discussed at 5.1) and particularly peer discourses promoting dominant forms of masculinity as normal. These matters were discussed throughout chapter 3. As such, a boy's construction of the "ideal man" and therefore the "ideal" role model have implications for schools considering employing men for such a compensatory task.   In addition, and as was shown in the previous section 5.4, a number of young male interviewees appeared to express their dislike, disapproval and distrust for some teachers. It seems doubtful that the character, class and behaviour of a disliked person would lead to them becoming part of a "reference group", then used by the young person as a model and for inspiration. How boys' view the prospect of male teachers to act as role models will be the focus of the rest of this chapter.

David, a 16-year-old student, discussed at length his confrontational relationships with teachers. At the beginning of his interview he was asked to recount his exclusions from school.

And um, there was a teacher there, called Mr Brown init, and like, no one liked him init yeah, he was a proper arsehole like and that, and um one day he tried shouting at me yeah, I told him to shut up and then um, he goes, 'Oh you insolent little child,' and all this yeah, grabbed me from like the collar of my shirt yeah, picked me up yeah and I got mad yeah and started booting him yeah and told him (pause) punch shit and I got expelled for doing that (David, 16 year old student).

David begins by saying that no one liked Mr Brown and to give further credibility to his statement he constructs him as "… a proper arsehole", a stupid, irritating and contemptible person (OED, 2014). David does not discuss what he had done prior to Mr Brown's actions. David is drawing on both a discourse of teacher competence and a discourse of children's rights to further construct Mr Brown's actions as unprofessional. David's narrative suggests that Mr Brown's behaviour, in shouting and grabbing him, may have been viewed by David as a challenge to his masculinity thus provoking him to respond violently and physically. Although not selecting him as a role model, Mr Brown's aggressive behaviour has the potential to further reinforce David's alignment with dominant masculinity, thus illustrating as, Haywood and Mac-an-Ghaill were quoted at 3.3, "… tough teachers make tough boys …" (2003 page 64).

As was shown in the previous section, many of the boys interviewed echoed David's expectations about the behaviour of teachers and their responsibilities towards them. With regard to the proposal that teachers might act as positive role models to boys, Bob, a 16-year-old student, had even clearer views about this.

JB   Right, now, I asked you about teachers now and this one is actually about that, the article says 'please sir we need more like you' they suggest that if there were more men teachers things would be better.

Bob   No, I don't agree with that, but see because in school yeah, like, it's different really like, in Princes like, I would work for Smithy because she was always smiling, always happy there was always a happy mood in the classroom and then, I would work for Sally because it's the same thing there's always a smiley thing, but then you

got to Katharine's class, where I wouldn't work because she's a mood …. well she's moody but basically like she just fucking, she just gets on our nerves, but then you got like people like (pause) Mike like, you would work for Mike cos he's always in a happy mood, say like you'd work for someone you had respect for, like Tim, he ain't always that bubbly and that but you'd work for him cos you had the respect for him. (pauses)   Same as that would be for Bill or someone, you'd have the respect for them so you'd work for them, that's the same with John A [teacher]   like (laughs) it weren't because his classroom was always bubbly it weren't cos you had the respect for him it was cos he was a funny bastard and you would just work for him anyway.

JB: Right ok.

Bob: And David always made his classes fun like but Katharine always just said well yes this is what you got to do, this is the explanation, do it. That was it, like you don't want that, like if that's the way, you gonna think well, this is boring, I'm gonna make it more fun, let's annoy the teacher (pause).

In this extract I introduced a Daily Telegraph newspaper headline to Bob (Balchin, 2006), which suggests that more male teachers would be helpful to boys. Bob dismisses this but instead draws on what appears to be a teacher competency discourse to construct the ambience teachers create in the classroom as a determinant of whether he will participate in lessons or not. This construction of a teacher's ability and skill appears to centre on their attitude, approachability and the enjoyably of the lesson. Bob also seems to place particular emphasis on humour facilitating pupil teacher relationships which then determines whether he will respect the teacher or not. Bob's use of the term respect is different from previous constructions, at 5.1 and 5.4, where boys demanded respect from teachers and other boys, expecting to be spoken to in a particular manner and treated as they constructed equally and fairly.   While it was the policy of the Princes school for pupils and teachers to use first names, Bob's use of the surname "Smithy" is a further indicator of his approval of this teacher and his construction of an enjoyable lesson.

Bob says that he "respects" teachers that are "funny, happy and bubbly". As such he appears to be aligning himself with what are considered as "laddish behaviours" as discussed at 3.4, which are considered to account for some boys'

disruptive and evasive behaviours in school. Further to this at 3.3, the research of Barnes (2012) is relevant to an analysis of Bob's account. Barnes argues that some male teachers use forms of "laddishness" such as having a laugh, to get boys on their side and as a means of maintaining classroom order. This appears to be what Bob is seeking, receiving from some teachers and "respects". While this approach might appear harmless, male pupil and male teacher relationships constructed through "laddish behaviour" have the potential to reinforce rather than challenge discourses of dominant masculinity and as a consequence may perpetuate challenging and disruptive boys' behaviour.

Continuing his discussion about teachers making classes fun, Bob says:

Bob: But obviously, if the teachers like, making it fun you're gonna think, oh this is (laughs) a funny class, let's do what you gotta do.

JB: So the lessons need to be enjoyable?

Bob: Yeah.

JB: So it doesn't matter if it's a man or a woman?

Bob: Nah (pause) to be honest yeah, if it's a man I'm more likely to take the piss out of him in the classroom (pause) because it's a male but like females, I'm not gonna do that to because I have the respect to like, not to do that to a female.

Previously, in section 5.1, Bob had affirmed his position within a dominant masculine discourse. He does this again when asked about his preference for a male or female teachers, saying that he would be more likely to "… take the piss" and thus challenge, a male teacher than a female because he has "respect" for females. In stating this Bob is indicating how he is further drawing on discourses of gender binaries to construct female teachers as weaker and more vulnerable than men and therefore unable to withstand his ridiculing. However a moment earlier he had criticised the teacher Katharine for being moody and irritating and that he might engage in disruptive behaviours to enliven the lesson and annoy her. This indicates that while Bob attempts to maintain a construction of himself

within a "respectful" patriarchal working-class discourse of masculinity, his "laddish behaviours" have the propensity to undermine this.

In the final part of this interview with Bob, he is asked to reflect on another newspaper article that I show to him.

> JB: This article here, this newspaper says, 'Male teachers for role models', it suggests that boys need men as teachers because you will copy them, copy their behaviour.

> Bob: No (laughs) no that ain't the way, you put someone in front of me with a suit trying to, err, tell me that this is going to be your role model, I'll laugh at you and tell you I'm not gonna dress like a stiff basically (Bob, 16 year old student).

Similar to other boys, Bob does not refer to social class by name, but appears aware of the significance of the social class differences between himself and teachers. Thus he laughs dismissively at the suggestion that male teachers would be a role model to him, seemingly identifying their dress as an indicator of social class. His use of the term "stiff" is not just used in reference to middle-class values and modes of dress but also suggests someone who is boring, inflexible and formal. Being in opposition to role models characterised by class asymmetries is illustrated when Bob retorts, "no that ain't the way", suggesting that the idea of the imposition of male role models is a simplistic and naïve solution to those boys' disengaged from schooling, which is a position supported by literature and discussed at 3.5.

In the next interview extract, the issue of smoking in schools was raised. As was discussed in the literature review in 3.6, some boys may rely upon their peers for guidance rather than their parents. As a result some may engage in activities and behaviours, many of which are constructed as deviant by schools. Smoking may be considered one such activity. Milton *et al.*(2008) suggest that some young people associate smoking with their transition to adulthood. Therefore, some boys may view smoking as part of their transition into manhood. Dan discussed the relationship between smoking and teachers acting

as role models. He begins by discussing being late for a lesson because he was finishing a cigarette.

> Dan: Yeah but (pauses) look, in school, because, if one small thing happens and then you can't, in fact you might be late into lessons because you've been caught out of bounds and then you're all aggravated and you go into your teacher who say's one thing and that's it there's a row.   But the teachers smell of smoke or they stand out and they're having a fag and they accuse people of smoking and they actually were smoking, just because they know you smoke.

> JB: So teachers smoke but you are not allowed to?

> Dan: Yes. And I'm (pauses) what it was, when I turned sixteen, you're sixteen, you're allowed to smoke, if your parents say you're allowed … (Dan, 16-year-old student).

Echoing discussion covered in section 5.4, Dan utilizes narratives of freedom and independence to angrily object to the constant "scrutinising gaze" to which he is subjected in school.   He considers this to limit his freedom of movement and restricting the choices he is able to make, one of which is smoking. He also constructs school policy as ambiguous and contradictory because teachers are allowed to smoke but he is not. Thus drawing on a discourse of equality and justice he believes the pupil smoking ban to be unfair. Dan constructs himself as an adult free to make his own decisions and choices therefore like other boys in this study, Dan considers teachers' actions hypocritical and patronising because they construct him as a vulnerable child requiring the nurturing and control of adults, as discussed at 3.6. A teacher who smokes may appear rebellious and therefore appealing as a role model to teenage boys, but this is not the case for Dan. Instead he disidentifies these teachers because of the authority they have over him and in particular for what he constructs as their hypocrisy.

In this section consideration was given to the recurring proposal that teachers might act as role models to boys. In the literature review at 3.5 it was illustrated that much academic debate rejects the idea. In this research boys also considered and rejected the idea. However the notion that male teachers might

act as role models to boys remains a powerful taken-for-granted discourse taken up in policy and reinscribed in media debates.

In section 5.4 I discussed the views of male students and the part they considered teachers to play in exclusion. Drawing on a range of discourses, boys praised some teachers but they also variously joked, ridiculed or expressed their dislike of other teachers, particularly those the boys located within discourses of disrespect. These teachers were considered confrontational, disciplinarians and subordinating. Excluded boys tend to frequently display behaviour to construct themselves within discourses of dominant masculinity. Acting in opposition to those in authority is a feature of this, particularly when confrontational behaviour is used as a demonstration of masculinity to peers. As such, it is therefore not surprising that research, such as that of Bricheno and Thornton (2007), confirms that few pupils consider teachers as role models. Dismissal of and contempt for teachers challenges the hegemony of the "teacher as role model" discourse, particularly where teachers' age, class and masculine performances are considered incongruent to those valued by boys.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has explored how boys negotiate a range of complex and contradictory discourses as they manage the expectations of school, their behaviour, their peer group and particularly their constructions of masculinity. Analysing their narratives through a Foucauldian lens has made it possible to understand how some boys' constructions of truth and knowledge are informed by a mixture of discourses, miscellaneously validated by teachers, parents, media and predominantly by their peers. Foucault (1972) argues that powerful discourses create knowledge and ultimately truths. Discourses of masculinity described and discussed in the literature review, and drawn upon and discussed in this chapter, provide a powerful illustration of the ways in which hegemonic ideas about gendered binaries, adult and child relations and class asymmetries become embedded within schools.

As the literature and this analysis show, male investment into the hegemonic masculine discourse affords it power and thus longevity. For boys in school the strength of this discourse is furthered by peer pressure and self-policing. In their discussions boys discussed and implicated a number of directly and indirectly related discourses in their constructions and understandings of themselves in school and their behaviour therein. These alternative discourses were subjected to scrutiny but they were repeatedly marginalised as boys returned to the prevailing dominate discourse of masculinity for its apparent explanatory potential. It appears that investment in alternative discourses has the potential to destabilise boys' construction of a single normalised unitary masculinity thus leaving them exposed and vulnerable to the likelihood of being constructed as childlike and non-masculine.

Thus what the analysis of boys' narratives revealed was how the persuasiveness and pervasiveness of the hegemonic masculinity discourse, makes resisting it or contemplating accepting alternative discourses problematic. The analysis shows that some boys are drawing on a particular "regime of truth" (Foucault, 1980) in their construction and normalisation of hegemonic, dominant discourses of masculinity and this has the potential to limit their choices about their behaviour, relationships and ambitions and accounts for some boys' challenging behaviour and resistance to school. This also highlights that if taken-for-granted dominant masculine discourses, continue to be left unquestioned, the normalising discourses that act to subjugate some boys, will prevail and will continue to have implications for behaviours and attitudes in school. Therefore in the next chapter the narratives of educational practitioners will be analysed to examine the discourses drawn on and to consider how their constructions align with, contradict or challenge the hegemonic masculine discourse and constructions of the boys interviewed.

Chapter 6

Reconciling boys' disruptive behaviour with school: discussions with educational practitioners

What will be examined in this chapter is how educational practitioners drew upon their professional and autobiographical experiences to make sense of boys' behaviour and exclusion. This chapter examines these narratives and will compare and contrast them with the explanations and experiences of the boys in chapter 5.

In all, 18 educational practitioners were interviewed, with a range of experience and responsibility, drawn from five schools, two LEA offices and the local CAMHS (Table I in 4.5 includes further details of the adult participants).

6.1 Educational practitioners' constructions of dominant and aggressive male behaviours as normal

... it's inbreeded into boys, and they want to show off in front of girls and in front of other boys as well, I would think perhaps it goes back to, well, back to, probably back to hundreds and thousands of millions of years ago, when they wanted to, like I'm the man, I go out and I provide the food
(Dave, Behaviour Manager)

Discussing exclusion figures, which indicate a disproportionally larger number of boys excluded than girls, Dave, a Behaviour Manager in a secondary school, draws upon a similar normalising and popular discourse as some of the boys, discussed at 5.1, suggesting that boys "show off" in front of other pupils to impress and demonstrate their masculinity. Academic literature discussed at 3.1 refutes the normalisation of these behaviours but agrees that they are performances designed to demonstrate manliness to peers. However Dave further justifies and normalises his construction of such male behaviour by drawing on a historical discourse suggesting that such behaviours are instinctive, the result of "millions of years" of evolution. This discourse was discussed by Mills (2001) and others at 3.1. Similar to some boys' opinions, discussed at 5.3, Dave also seems to draw on a patriarchal discourse, "gendering work" as Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2003) discuss, to normalise and construct men as

the providers of food and security for their wives and children. This draws upon essentialist gender discourses, further discussed at 3.1, constructions which academic theory challenges.

Other educational practitioners used similar discourses to offer comparable accounts, echoing Dave's normalising construction of particular boys' behaviours. For example Mick, a Behaviour Manager said:

> I get the impression that boys we've had five thousand years of society where boys have been leaders and boys have got to be shown, they've got to show themselves, they see other men as being as like the leaders in society and they need to kind of do things to kind of emulate that and show they're kind of like in charge, I would guess. I mean, ok, these things have changed over the last ten years I suppose, but the girl kind of culture, because you often kind of often the girls, seem quite bad, but that is, the boy trying to be in charge of the situation I think it's kind of like the default setting … (Mick, Behaviour Manager)

In this narrative, Mick utilises four discourses. Firstly, and similar to Dave, he draws on an historical discourse, to construct particular boys' behaviour as inherent and thus normal. He then contradicts this by adding that boys are "shown" and "see other men" behaving in a dominant manner. This explanation suggests that male behaviours are observed, imitated and learned and therefore this aligns with some academic explanations discussed at 3.1.   This discourse therefore undermines the truth and normality Mick promotes in his first explanation. However he follows this by suggesting that girls can also act "quite bad".   This observation implies concepts of gender heteroglossia discussed at 3.1. Some boys also made comparable references at 5.2.   The concept of female aggression coexisting alongside male aggression undermines the often taken-for-granted assumption of the normality of male hegemonic masculinity by showing that aggression is not unique to men. However having briefly introduced these two contradictions, Mick returns to a normalising discourse by drawing on a popular "truth", stating that boys' dominant behaviour is the "default setting". This further illustrates how the power afforded to this hegemonic masculine discourse has the potential to dominate contradictory and alternative

explanations that might be used to describe and explain boys' problematic aggressive behaviours.

While constructing boys' hegemonic masculine behaviours as normal, some educational practitioners paradoxically also criticised the behaviour, constructing it as damaging and destructive. Such criticism appears incongruent with constructions that accept this behaviour as normal. In this next transcript Georgina, a secondary school teacher, begins by acknowledging the anguish that such boys' behaviour can bring about but then, like Dave and Mick, draws on a historical discourse to normalise boys' aggressive behaviour.

> Georgina: but I just think boys' behaviour tends to be the brash (pause) physically violent and causing distress to others and to teachers and to other pupils and to teachers.
>
> JB: I think a lot of people would agree with you, I'm just wondering why they behave like that.
>
> Georgina: I don't know, I think we're going back to caveman aren't we? (pause) Back to role models, you know, girls' role models are people like, I was going to say Cheryl Cole but she is a really bad role model because she smacked someone round the face as quickly as anything (laughs), I think it's to do with socialisation, isn't it? (Georgina, secondary school teacher)

Having constructed boys' "brash" and "physically violent" behaviours as problematic Georgina then attempts to normalise these behaviours by drawing on three alternative discourses. Firstly she states, as Dave and Mick did, that such behaviours have their roots in prehistory, she pauses after this and then offers an example of role models, which she dismisses before finally suggesting, "it's to do with socialisation, isn't it?" Both the role model and socialisation discourse undermine the historical discourse by suggesting that masculinity is learned and copied and therefore not innate. The role model discourse is itself not without anomalies and will be discussed further in the next section 6.2.

At 5.1 it was shown that some boys interviewed also responded with claims about the normality of boys' aggressive behaviours but some also recognised the

influence of family and peers upon boys' behaviours, thus indicating (as Georgina does) that socialisation plays a part. As was discussed at 3.1, academic research argues that boys' aggressive behaviours are learned, thus challenging the normalisation of dominant masculinity and aggression and its supposed connection with "prehistory".   However the fragility of the historical discourse and the normality of male aggression is further destabilized by Georgina's reference to Cheryl Cole hitting "… someone round the face". Such behaviour is another example of "gender heteroglossia", or female masculinity. While not referring to this, Georgina's dismissive laugh illustrates that she acknowledges the weakness in this argument.

The interview with Georgina indicates the fragility of the discourse that she, Dave and Mick and some boys draw on to normalise particular boys' behaviours. As was discussed in chapter 3, male aggressive behaviours and masculine domination have been supported and justified through a range of discourses that grant superiority to male over female. While these three educational practitioners have unintentionally revealed the weakness of these arguments, by ignoring these weaknesses and in subscribing to and accepting such dominant normalative discourses, they may themselves be re-inscribing narrow ideas about subjectivities available to boys in school.

6.2   Male role models: responsible for, and a solution to, boys' behavioural difficulties

… there aren't enough men out there, there are too many women in teaching
(Grace, Education Advisor)

In this section I shall examine how educational practitioners variously discussed male role models as both a cause of, and a solution to, boys' behaviours constructed as problematic in school. The boys interviewed also referred to role models arguing that parents and sportsmen both acted as such. In the literature review I argued that the role model discourse is frequently misinterpreted. However, featuring as it does in the media and endorsed by politicians, this discourse is deeply entrenched in debates about boys and schooling. It is

therefore unsurprising that it was drawn upon so readily during interviews. But, while boys dismissed the idea of teachers as role models, educational practitioners did not.

Most of the educational practitioners interviewed drew upon popular discourses which constructed particular boys' behaviours as problematic. They argued that problem behaviours were caused by a lack of "good" male role models and being subjected to "poor" role models. To combat this some then drew upon discourses that advocated schools offering positive male role models to boys to address behavioural issues.

Grace, an Education Advisor, was shown newspaper articles advocating more male teachers in schools. She responded by seemingly agreeing with the newspaper articles, drawing on media and government policy discourses which argue that there are too many women in teaching and that there is a need for more men in schools to compensate. However as the interview continues so her stance changes.

> JB: … one says 'Please sir we need more like you' and the other one say's 'Male teachers for role models'
>
> Grace: Yes there aren't enough, there aren't enough men out there, there are too many women in teaching (pause) (sigh).
>
> JB: Do you think so? Why?
>
> Grace: Well because I think, I think there aren't enough men out there being you know (pause)
>
> JB: What sort of men would you like teaching?
>
> Grace: (pause) just, I mean, I think, I actually, (pause) experience goes for a lot in teaching and you know, and an experienced teacher, you can't knock it, but there is something about young, vibrant teachers, that are really important, you know, all that old adage if you do, do, and if you can't teach or whatever but you know (pause)
>
> JB: Yeah.

> Grace: I don't know. (pause) I think there has to be a range of people and a range of sexes, a range of ages, a range of types, you know I don't go in with the fact that every teacher has to be fantastic, you know, not everyone is fantastic but you know I just think you have to have a range and I think you have to have a nice mix which reflects society really in terms of sex and you know and ethnicity and stuff ... (Grace, Education Advisor)

Grace initially appears to readily agree with the newspaper headlines, saying that there are too many women and not enough men "out there". This indicates that she is drawing upon popular and powerful media discourses, discussed in the literature review at 3.5, which construct female teachers as inadequate and a lack of male teachers in schools as responsible for boys' poor achievement and behaviour. However she does not elaborate on this and when pressed further she hesitates and reappraises her thoughts. When Grace is asked directly what sort of male teachers she would approve of she hesitates again before advocating something slightly different. Holding on to a role model discourse she suggests experience, enthusiasm and youth matter more than the gender of a teacher. She then pauses again before explaining further that schools would benefit from a range of staff reflecting age, gender and ethnicity. What appears to have happened here is that, to begin with Grace yields to the power of the popular discourse arguing for more male teachers in schools, however when pressed to elaborate her answer she appears to realise the weakness of this discourse and so rejects it.   She then seeks something more significant. Grace does not withdraw her statement that there are "too many" female teachers but draws on a variation of the role model discourse arguing for a diverse teaching force, representing a range of age, race, ethnicity and class, so that school staff might reflect society as a whole.

Grace's initial acceptance of the male role model discourse and her subsequent hesitation and deliberation illustrates, as Foucault (1970 , 1980) explained, that dominant and powerful discourses create knowledge from which people construct truths. It also illustrates that such discourses are difficult to contest or resist.   Grace's change of mind may also show that she thinks that there may be an alternative to the male role model discourse. While popular,

media and government discourses appear to be dominant, academic literature on role models and boys' behaviour, as discussed at 3.5 in the literature review, is dismissive of the suggestion that male teachers provide a simple solution to the 'problem' of boys' behaviour in schools. Cushman (2008) argues that schools should promote a range of male teachers and thus male behaviours; this reflects much of what Grace eventually advocates. Although Grace's new proposal unknowingly highlights the simplicity of the male role model discourse, what she eventually suggests is a diverse staff, which will promote an assortment of behaviours.

Other interviewees also commented on this issue, so I shall now examine four further examples where role model discourses were drawn upon. Dave the secondary school Behaviour Manager, commented in the same way as Grace did, on the ratio of female and male teaching staff. As with some other interviews, his discussion was developed using newspaper headlines.

> JB: What about this? [showing the newspaper cutting] There's '*Please sir, we need more like you'*. What they are suggesting in another article too is that boys need male role models in school.
>
> Dave: Yeah I agree with that, but then I'd have to (pause) because I'm male, but, but, I, I, noticed one thing, yeah?
>
> JB: Mmm.
>
> Dave: Um yeah, I would have to say that's one thing I was quite surprised about with the er, male minority of staff, be it teachers or supporting roles (inaudible) I'm in..
>
> JB: Mmm.
>
> Dave: Are, are in school, I was quite surprised with that actually.
>
> JB: In what way do you think it would help then?
>
> Dave: Um (pause) I think it would do, because they would look on …. they're um …. a lot of them do not see their father, not all of them, because some are out at work and all that and well I do work with, I do a lot of projects, once a week and when you turn round, one or two of them (pause) turn round and say to me, I don't talk to my dad like I

talk to you or, and they done it to me a couple of times (Dave, Behaviour Manager).

Like Grace's initial comments, Dave also refers to the ratio of male and female school staff thus supporting popular discourse that advocates employing more male staff as compensatory role models (see 3.5). In doing so he draws on the media moral panic discourse, discussed at 3.6, which constructs the unemployed, single parents and absent fathers as feckless and inadequate and therefore responsible for the failings of their children in school. These constructions are similar to the parenting discourses raised by some boys in their discussions about parents and boys' behaviour in school, discussed at 5.6.

In contrast to Grace and to Cushman (2008), Dave significantly seems to be constructing men, including himself, as having something to offer that female staff do not possess.   As discussed in the literature review at 3.5, writers such as Mills *et al*. (2004) and (2008) argue that this belief is illogical and unsubstantiated. Although boys also rejected male teachers as role models they contrarily used gender binary discourses to construct male attributes as different and superior to those of women.

Dave also stated that he had to agree with the proposal to employ more male staff, because he is male. This appears to indicate that Dave so firmly constructs himself within a dominant masculine discourse that to say anything contrary to the newspaper proposals would, to him, be irrational and a challenge to his own construction of masculinity and gender binaries. If this is so, Dave's statement also indicates the fragility of these discourses, not least because his comments highlight the fear among males of not appearing masculine, discussed at 3.1, 3.3 and 3.4. When Dave says, "I have to because I'm male", this may show his recognition of the peer and cultural pressures upon him and other males to behave in a dominant masculine manner. This obligation to perform is also reflected in boys' constructions of peer discourses in operation in schools, and in particular their discussions about "showing off" discussed at 5.1.

Writers such as Connell (2005 , 2009) and the analysis of boys' narratives in chapter 5, indicates the investment boys give and the power they afford to the dominant masculine discourse. Dave is illustrating much the same and in doing so is showing how the strength of this discourse is furthered by peer pressure and self-policing. For some boys, and it appears some men like Dave, the dominant masculine discourse is so embedded within popular culture as to appear unquestionable.

At the end of Dave's comments about role models he added that a few boys had said that they did not talk to their fathers like they did to him. I asked Dave to elaborate upon his understanding of what the boys were saying.

> Dave   Perhaps because they don't, they don't have, like their dad, they say I never do this for my dad, or I never talk to my dad like this and it's really sort of thinking, have I achieved something here and to me personally, I have, you know, although, you know, a couple of times, they say, I wish you were my dad and that gets, like (pause) tear at the heart strings as well.

> JB   Mmm.

> Dave   Well I know some of them have only got or they (pause) you know, don't live with their dads or whatever, haven't got (pause) they don't have their father shall we say and it makes the job all worth while.

Here Dave seems unsure of his opinions because he begins his response by saying "perhaps". His hesitant speech suggests that he is trying to make sense of the relationships and work he does with boys. However, similar to Horace and David in 5.3, Dave appears to be drawing upon a popular parenting discourse, as discussed at 3.6 and 3.7, where single mothers and absent fathers are constructed as feckless and the role of a father figure is constructed as essential for boys. In doing this he is further affirming the discourse of male teachers as role models. This affirmation was common among adult interviewees and is additionally illustrated in this interview with Michelle, a local authority Education Advisor.

JB: Here's two articles, one says "Male teachers for role models" and "Please sir, we need more like you".

Michelle: Yes I think with some children, (pause) do make, some make really good role models and, and I know of children that are purposefully put in a male's class, especially primary school.

JB: Especially primary school?

Michelle: Yeah because they are missing their dads, isn't it? (pause) Or that they've never known their dad.

Michelle begins her answer saying, "Yes I think with some children" and then pauses. The break presumably refers to male staff, but is omitted, perhaps because there is an assumption that the proposition is understood and accepted. She completes her explanation with a rhetorical question, applying a common parenting discourse to argue that male role models in schools will compensate for what she constructs as ineffective and/or absent fathers. Michelle's comments appear to illustrate, as debated in the Literature review at 3.5, that the strength of the male role model discourse is such that it is, " … embedded in our cultural common sense…" (Clarke and Kitzinger, 2005 page 148) and therefore Michelle considers that it requires little discussion.

In this final example Simon, a secondary school teacher, discusses how his school utilized a range of adults, male and female to work with disruptive boys at risk of being excluded.

What we try to do is prove to them that they are worth something and most of these actually (inaudible) worth something to themselves. And staff that are here and they build a really good bond up with some of the staff, sometimes too close, um. Sometimes it's, you know, it's almost like an older person (sneezes) who is um unemployed, in their late sixties and who is like a grandma and she will give them a hug which I know is totally inappropriate and sit there, but it is, some kids lack that physical contact. We have another lady who is like an old fashioned mum who you know, checks they've had something to eat, make sure they, you know, everything's ok at home etcetera, etcetera. And we have quite a few male role models um, learning mentors who um, give them ideas i.e. most of our kids come from backgrounds where they haven't got two parents, most of them are single parent families um they have never had male role models and we try a lot of

male role modelling i.e. um, that's, we talk about, how to treat women, how to treat their children, what their expectations be to their children and that sort of thing ... (Simon, secondary school teacher)

In the boys' analysis, at 5.1, examples were given of boys who drew on discourses of neoliberalism, to construct themselves as failures. Simon describes a similar group of disruptive boys in his school who also construct themselves as failures and therefore worthless. In defining these boys, and similar to other educational practitioners, Simon draws on a popular discourse, discussed in chapter 3, which constructs the parenting skills of single mothers as inadequate and absent fathers as irresponsible. Of particular importance is Simon's statement, that " ... they have never had male role models". This specifically constructs the blame and remedy within boys' understandings of themselves as men and their constructions of masculinity. In chapter 5 some boys drew on similar discourses to construct parenting and particularly fathers as essential and responsible for some boys' behaviours in school. While some academic research such as Clarke and Kitzinger (2005) and Donovan (2000) questions such discourse, others such as Herrenkohl *et al.* (2000) and Liabo and Richardson (2007) draw a similar conclusion as Simon.

While Simon's work tackling boys' difficult behaviours might appear admirable it may also be problematic. Simon begins this extract by drawing on maternal discourses to describe and construct the work that female staff engage in with these troubled boys. He then draws on a patriarchal discourse to define the compensatory "role modelling" work that male staff undertake. By aligning the work of staff within these gendered discourses, this denies women the possibility of challenging boys' constructions of dominant masculinity and may contribute towards reaffirming the dominant patriarchal ideology of such essentialist discourses. Academic research at 3.1 and the observations of boys at 5.2 suggests that what are determined as masculine behaviours are not unique to men but Simon's work has potential to disprove this. As such Simon's work is in opposition to that of Grace, at the beginning of this section, who dismissed the compensatory male role model discourse and instead advocated for a range of staff to work with boys.

These interviews with educational practitioners illustrate the power afforded to the male teacher role model discourse and how embedded this discourse remains in professional discourses. However, what Simon and other educational practitioners appear to be advocating is not role modelling as defined by Merton (Merton, 1986 , Merton, 1957) but a discursive reconstruction. The incongruence of this popular male role model discourse potentially contributes towards its continued inappropriate endorsement. Grace advocated that schools should have a range of staff to reflect the age, gender and ethnicity of society. This would offer boys the opportunity to observe a range of alternative masculinities and would also be complementary with the discourses of mentoring and counselling approved of by some boys.

6.3 School, parents and families

... they grow up in families, what do you expect? (Donald, therapist)

In chapter 5 boys drew links between parenting and role model discourses. In the previous section 6.2, some educational practitioners advocated that male teachers as role models might compensate for "adverse" parenting. In this next section I shall further explore respondents' constructions of parenting and their perceptions of the affects upon boys' behaviours leading to exclusion.

The discussions with educational practitioners, while often normalising displays of hegemonic masculinity, also criticised it and readily attributed unacceptable boys' behaviour to "poor" parenting as discussed at 3.6. In 5.3 boys also drew on a parenting discourse forming a link between the "quality" of parenting and boys' behaviour constructed as problematic.

In this next extract, without prompting, the therapist, Donald, introduces conversation about what he considered as bad behaviour constructing a relationship between this and the affluence and prosperity of England compared with poorer areas of the world.

Donald: A lot of bad behaviour here is caused by a failure of people to realise how lucky they are. The forces of envy in England are if anything worse than anywhere else in the world.

JB: Why?

Donald: Greed and envy! Because appetite breeds disorder. There is excess but you want more. You're never satisfied with what you've got. This dynamic is very important both national and locally, I think with education too. In so thinking I'm lucky to have a school not to mention that I've so much food that I'm invariably fat nowadays. The doctors tell me off so that I complain that I've not got my needs met. I've not got the latest iPod, I've not got the special needs teaching, I never look that, I'm lucky to have a teacher period!

JB: But if you live in poverty, how does that view …

(Interrupts)

Donald: Well you live less long and so you got less time.

JB: But if you live in poverty in this country?

Donald: It's relative. That's my whole point and the differential is even greater in the third world. And that's how poverty is defined here. I haven't seen many starvers here.

JB: Because we don't allow people to starve?

Donald: Because there is over feeding.

JB: And people aren't hungry or cold or homeless?

Donald: And we tell people what their rights are. There is an arrogance based on a lack of appreciation of what one has, fuelled by greed and envy. There is an arrogant violence, which is rampant in England. It's one of the biggest taproots of the problem of bad behaviour in children and their relatives.

Throughout his rhetoric, Donald, appears to reflect discourses of disapproval and the demonising of the unemployed as outlined at 3.6 and 3.7 by Cohen (2002), Jones (2011) and others. In doing so he constructs the parenting of some adults as inadequate. This relates to the comments of Harry above (in 5.3) who said that parents should inspire their children and set an example to them. Drawing on particular neoliberal discourses of parenting, Donald says that

certain unemployed parents rely on the state, and are lazy and greedy. At 5.3 Horace spoke at length about his mother's partner being lazy and a poor example to him. Donald is also constructing such adults as uninspiring to children. Ignoring my questions about poverty he draws further on an "inadequate" parenting discourse to further construct such parenting as contributing towards, what he constructs as "bad behaviour in children and their relatives".

Throughout this narrative Donald utilizes a common media discourse, discussed by Jones (2011), constructing the working-class poor as selfish, and ungrateful. As discussed at 3.7, government data, such as Bowen *et al*. (2008) and Cotzias (2014), construct a relationship between poverty, boys' behaviour and exclusion from school. What these statistics do not highlight are the social inequalities linked with poverty, which are also considered as potentially detrimental to parents and their children. Donald seemingly dismisses these matters. Drawing on discourses of greed, laziness and welfare dependence, he demonizes some parents constructing them as inadequate, ineffective and therefore unable to be what he and common discourses construct as "good parents".

During his interview Donald categorised all excluded boys into a single group, designated as "this mob". While condemning poor unemployed parents for their lack of parenting skills, the use of this expression suggests that he is also condemning these boys for their inadequate school behaviour. Constructing both parents and boys at fault appears to be a contradiction, which is reflected, in the following extract where Donald is asked about the purpose of exclusion. In his response he uses the expression "this mob" twice.

> Donald: The purpose of exclusion is to drive this mob further down into a position where they will be even more tiresome and dangerous. So I think it's a very useful step to take on the way to damning them (pause) and they will take few down with them, won't they? It's a real get lost step, isn't it?
>
> … interruption …
>
> JB: What about their ability to have relationships with others?

Donald: They've got very good relationships with a lot of people this mob, actually but the fact that it's perverse is another issue. But they're very strongly bonded to society, they're thorn in its flesh. How closer can you get than under the skin of someone else? Isn't that wonderful? It's absolutely brilliant. They won't go away.

JB: And they choose this way of life?

Donald: Choice? They are driven rather than choosing.

JB: How are they driven?

Donald: By impulse. By instinct. It's that basic.

JB: So it's not choice? They don't have a choice?

Donald: Now we go into free will. That's philosophy but from a clinical point of view, these guys and some girls, they are on automatic pilot, there's a semblance of thinking and indeed discussion, is possible but any thinking or feeling is almost entirely self centred. So we are not having a dialogue here. We have not altruism or hardly any.   They have very strong allegiances but that is dependent on having the same instincts. A herd instinct. They've a very strong peer group, the anti-socials.

As well as referring to these school pupils as "the mob", in Donald's final comments he also refers to these boys as "the anti-socials". These comments appear to indicate that he draws on popular and media discourses to construct these pupils as slovenly and irresponsible

When asked to define the purpose of exclusion Donald draws on discourse which constructs exclusion as derisory and detrimental, explaining that its purpose is to "drive" them (the excluded boys) further down. It appears therefore that Donald, while condemning parents and boys, is also expressing his disapproval of the sanction of exclusion. He then explains that the consequences of being excluded from school exacerbate an already poor situation and result in them "herding" together into a robust self-reliant peer group, with no hope, prospects or empathy for others.

In the literature review the strength and importance of male peer groups was examined. In particular it was discussed that hegemonic masculinity tends to dominant male peer groups and within them peer pressure is used to encourage boys to conform and participate in acts of dominant masculinity. Mills (2001) argues that this explains why violence features so prominently among certain groups of boys. Donald draws on parenting discourses to condemn certain parents and construct them as contributing to the behaviour of their children. This relates to academic research such as Lykken (2003), which argues that boys who have what are constructed as "poor" or "inadequate" parents are then more vulnerable to the influences of peer groups and perhaps to the "herding" to which Donald refers.

In one of my final questions to Donald I asked him if he could account for the boys who construct themselves within a hegemonic masculine discourse. At this point Donald makes a short statement, "Home is where it all begins, they grow up in families, what do you expect?" And then he paused waiting for me to respond to him.   While this statement might be construed as aggressive and dismissive, alternatively it further confirms that Donald is drawing on common sense, taken-for-granted parenting discourse to express his belief that home and family create behaviours which are constructed as incompatible to school. However, rather then responding to his question, "what do you expect?" I ask Donald to explain why 80% of those excluded are boys? This led to a further development in Donald's reasoning:

> Donald: Why? Because they are idiots.
>
> JB: They are idiots because?
>
> Donald: What you see is what you get. You see I think girls are more devious, it's a difference and it's there. Boys get caught more readily than girls, they're less smart. What I know is that, from a detection point of view, boys are less clever at concealment. That's my broad-brush impression. I think that male aggression is more striking, (pause) A metaphor. I think that girls are more poisonous ...

As Donald had began his answer by constructing "the home" as the cause of

boys' problem behaviour, there was an expectation that he might draw further on parenting discourses but he does not. Instead he draws on what appears to be an essentialist discourse of gender binaries, constructing a natural difference between boys and girls, with girls being described as "devious" and boys as physical, "idiots" and "less smart".   Neuropsychologists such as Baron-Cohen (2003), discussed at 3.1, use biological discourses in constructing and normalising differences in the behaviours and aptitudes of boys and girls. These discourses are in opposition to those of Connell (2005 , 2009) and others who construct particular boys' behaviours as learned. While the boys interviewed and discussed at 5.2 also appeared to draw upon an essentialist construction of gender, they did not define themselves as "idiots", although some considered that their behaviour had been foolish and had led to their failure at school.

In assessing boys' behaviour, Donald draws on a normalising discourse of school behaviour through which he compares and then constructs the behaviour of some boys as inappropriate. Foucault argues that behaviours that are considered to violate discourses of social norms may then be considered incomprehensible and therefore constructed as "mad". This was discussed at 2.1 and 3.9. Although Donald does not quite construct these boys as "mad", referring to them as "idiots" demonstrates his and others construction of these boys' behaviours as foolish, bewildering and incompatible to school. What is particularly striking is Donald's contemptuous dismissal of the young people that he is supposed to be helping, further illustrating how he blames them for their predicament.

Analysis of Donald's narrative has revealed that he draws on a range of differing and competing discourses to explore and explain boys' behaviours in school. These included blaming parents for their selfishness and ineffective parenting, blaming the boys for choosing to behave inappropriately and drawing on essentialist gender binaries to differentiate girls from boys and naturalise some boys' behaviours. In chapter 2, I explored how the power of discourse shapes peoples' views and contributes towards constructing norms and defining truths. What will be shown next is how the discourses that Donald draws on,

while seemingly incompatible and contradictory, reflect the views of other educational practitioners interviewed and therefore illustrate Foucault's contention that truth is endorsed and approved through discourse (Foucault, 1980 , Foucault, 1970 , Foucault, 1982).

Johnny, an Education Advisor, was introduced to a newspaper article in which David Cameron had promised extra powers to head teachers to deal with troublesome pupils. Considering this, Johnny introduced discussion about the influences of home life upon children. Similarly to Donald, Johnny constructed the family home as the source and cause of boys' difficulties. However while Donald blamed parents for being greedy and lazy, here Johnny appears more understanding about parents' difficulties.

> Johnny: ... Um, you see if you look at our authority and when it re-designated its special schools, seven, about seven, six years ago, it decided that there would be [3][a small number of] behaviour and learning schools of [between 80 and 120] children spread across the county, taking no account of the need in certain areas such as ours with a very strong, high level of deprivation, special need, unemployment, whatever.
>
> JB   Does that affect it then?
>
> Johnny   (pause) Well yes it does. There are greater number of special needs children in those areas and you see, and I was quite rightly told by an Ofsted inspector, that I was trying to point out the raw material, quiet rightly told to stop whinging and get on and the kids, the kids you know, they're the blank canvass that you can do what you will with them. You can't obliterate where they are coming from, you can't you know, you can't obliterate where they've come from in the morning and where they go home to afterwards.
>
> JB: So why, what makes it more difficult for the unemployed and poverty and so on?
>
> Johnny: Because a lot of them had um, (sigh) if people's spirits broken, it's very difficult to go on showing enthusiasm for something that, to engage in whole heartedly, perhaps you had a bad experience of education, that many of these people had, so you've got those coming back to haunt you. You've also got um the fact that your circumstances I think, don't, are not conducive to you being able to

---

[3] Numbers obscured to preserve anonymity

support your kids um on a daily basis. (Johnny, Local Education Advisor)

Drawing on discourses of deprivation, poverty and effective parenting, Johnny constructs being poor as disabling an adult's ability to parent their children adequately. These constructions concur with those of Katz *et al.* (2007) and others, discussed at 3.6 and 3.7. Johnny also uses an SEN discourse, to argue that Special Educational Needs are more prevalent in areas of deprivation. This corresponds with government statistics, discussed at 3.7 and 3.9, which draw a relationship between, poverty, SEN and the number of exclusions. The relationship between exclusion and SEN is particularly relevant, because some behaviours, constructed as incompatible to school, are contrarily constructed as a Special Educational Need. Therefore it is apparent that a number of the SEN pupils to whom Johnny is referring are pupils with behavioural difficulties (see graph 1 and 2 at 3.9).

After his confrontation with an Ofsted inspector Johnny makes a particular construction of a child as a "blank canvass", at the will of an adult. This appears to position children within a Foucauldian hierarchical discourse where the child is the obedient, willing and "docile" novice (Foucault, 1977). This is a discourse, which several of the boys interviewed rejected and resisted, considering it disrespectful and a cause of confrontation. However, having formed this construction, Johnny abruptly employs a discourse of parenting saying, "you can't obliterate" the influence of the home upon children. This sudden emotional statement suggests that Johnny is further constructing particular parents as contributing towards pupils' behaviours that are not conducive or compatible to school. Such a construction agrees with Donald's comments, some boys' observations at 5.3 and academic literature such as Lopez *et al.* (2008) at 3.6. However Johnny then concludes that schools cannot compensate or compete against the influences of deprivation or of such inadequate parenting. So while Johnny has empathy and understanding for unemployed and poor parents, he also seems to be fatalistic about the prospects of schools helping these children.

Other practitioners also made observations about parents, in particular employing a parenting discourse to construct them as responsible for preparing and equipping their children for school. During discussions about what is constructed as disruptive boys' behaviour, Lucy, a teacher at a local secondary school, was asked how boys know how to behave in school.

> Well a lot of the time (pause) it can be choice that usually a child that from the cradle has witnessed how to make those choices, it's very difficult in the education um establishment (pause) with academic professionals that, let's face it, have put a lot of time and effort into their education and their qualifications to come into schools to pass that knowledge on, (Pause) and the child with the hidden disability, i.e. if mum gets out of hand, dad gives her a slap. So if my teacher tells me I've got to do something because if not I won't pass my exam, I might threaten, because this is how I've learnt to deal with the world. Um if siblings are allowed, (pause) out of control, I've found to abuse each other physically, verbally. When a child starts school, they present that behaviour to all the children around them because mother's never said stop, she's too busy playing online bingo or watching Jeremy Kyle, so as long as they're occupied. Okay? (Lucy, secondary school teacher)

At the beginning of this passage Lucy employs a parenting discourse to argue that children construct their behaviour and the choices they make by drawing upon their experiences. While a child will have had experiences outside of the home, Lucy is referring to those in the family because she mentions experiences witnessed "from the cradle." Such a construction is similar to other educational practitioners and relates to academic literature at 3.6 where I discussed the discourse of parenting skills and how parents are variously constructed as competent or not. Lucy also makes a judgment about parents' daily activities, disapproving of particular television programmes and the playing of bingo, thus making use of a negligent, feckless parenting discourse to condemn and demonise working-class parents. At the beginning of this extract Lucy's tone appeared to be suggesting an understanding of, and sympathy for, some pupils' behavioural "choices". But her sympathy then appears to shift to instead align with teachers, whom she constructs as professionals, trying to do their job, which is hindered by certain pupils. However, using a disability discourse, Lucy now additionally constructs some boys' physical and verbally aggressive behaviour as

a "hidden disability". This construction appears to support Johnny's comments where he constructed those with behavioural problems as having a Special Educational Need.

In her narrative what Lucy appears to be doing is constructing two sets of victims. Firstly she constructs those boys who have "hidden disabilities" as victims of inadequate parenting. Secondly she also constructs teachers as victims unable to do their job properly and who suffer at the hands of their unruly disruptive pupils.   In constructing parenting as responsible, Lucy, like other educational practitioners, appears to be making broad assumptions, drawn from popular and media discourses about working-class families (Cohen, 2002 , Westwood, 1996) to construct working-class parents as lazy, negligent and inadequate.   A newspaper article by Frank Field[4] (2010) is an example of this discourse. The title of the article "*The biggest crisis facing Britain? Too many parents don't have a clue how to raise children*", concisely reflects the constructions above.

While also constructing parents as responsible in the following extract Andrew, a therapist, offers a slightly different perspective on this matter. When asked how exclusion might be avoided Andrew says:

> ... the main problem I see (pause) schools will tend not to address the issue and that's why we often get the um, the very difficult referral at the age of twelve or thirteen because the junior schools have tried to contain the child, as long as he doesn't go too over the top (pause) contain the child, until just before they get to secondary school. Then suddenly we start hearing about, you know, there's a boy who, you know, in school who might get referred to us, secondary, we might get the referral, my god and yeah, when you start going at that point, it's fire-fighting in its worse form, because by that time, the kid, you know, say twelve of thirteen, the child's had twelve to thirteen years of poor parenting, twelve of thirteen years of, you know, very, very

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[4] [Frank Field is a well-known Labour Party politician who has been the Member of Parliament for Birkenhead since 1979. He was a Director of the CPAG from 1969 to 1979. He writes for the pro-freedom of speech magazine Standpoint].

poor role modelling, twelve to thirteen years of poor education. (Andrew, therapist)

Similarly to Johnny, Andrew begins by using a compensatory education discourse but specifically to construct primary schools as negligent by not "addressing" problem children quickly enough. In Andrew's final comments he also appears to resort to popular taken-for-granted discourses, saying by the time he sees the child they have been subjected to poor parenting, poor role models and poor education. In this respect, the blame that Andrew constructs is unlike other educational practitioners because it does not rest with parents alone. However, similarly to Johnny, Andrew's comments appear to be without hope because he suggests that when the referrals arrive it's too late and "it's fire-fighting in its worst form".

The varying comments of educational practitioners such as Donald, Johnny, Lucy and Andrew, while not completely unanimous, illustrate how discourses of parenting are readily employed to construct a parent's role as crucial in preparing a child for school. In particular when things go "wrong" parents are then constructed as responsible for those behaviours that are considered as incompatible or confrontational to school. As discussed at 3.6, many of the discourses of parenting and behaviour relate to what are determined as middle-class values. This is further illustrated in the following narrative with Lucy, who introduced discussion about discourses of good manners. Throughout Lucy's interview she insisted that parents needed to prepare their children for school, concluding her argument by constructing some students as having an additional disability of having no etiquette because their parents had not taught them.

> A lot of students that come to us, they have no manners, it isn't their fault, they have never been taught. They've not been nurtured and polished by their nearest and dearest, they've been like weeds in the wind (pause). (Lucy, secondary school teacher)

Lucy's social construction of some pupils' etiquette as non-existent highlights the gulf between schools' middle-class values and those of the working classes. In blaming parents for not "polishing" children, Lucy is constructing their

parenting as inadequate and their children as "weeds", failing because they have been left to their own resources.   Her beliefs about good "manners" are founded on what she "accepts and makes function as true", (Foucault, 1980 page 131). Similar to other educational practitioners, she uses particular authoritative and dominant discourses, to construct 'good' and 'bad', with an assumption that these constructions, judgements and values are true and universally accepted. In doing so Lucy, like other educational practitioners, is demonising alternative working-class forms of parenting and consequently condemning pupils who do not behave and perform within the discourses of normal behaviour that she employs.

6.4 Poverty and parenting

I think that you never can believe that you can work your way out of poverty
(Anne, EBD teacher)

During discussions with educational practitioners there were several unprompted references to poverty, with interviewees drawing a link between parenting skills, poverty and boys' behaviour at school. In the following section, I shall examine two representative views of educational practitioners.

Anne taught in an EBD school and specialised in working with boys who had been permanently excluded from mainstream schools. Discussing their various behaviours she said:

> Poverty is such a, mmm, (pause) it overrides everything. If you live in poverty you get used to a certain standard of having to make do, and I think that you never can believe that you can work your way out of poverty. When they found out how much they could earn if they stayed on their mechanic course and became a mechanic they were really quite impressed with that, that they could make a living and make a very good living, out of it. Some of the poverty especially where we are down in [Eastshire], it's on the index of deprivation. These kids are not being fed, these kids are not being kept warm, some of the housing that these kids live in is questionable. (Anne, EBD teacher)

Anne initiates a conversation about poverty and then pauses, apparently in a melancholy manner, before she reflects and says that "it overrides everything".

Her seemingly sad interjection emphasises the importance that she appears to place upon the impact of life with limited finances. Unlike other interviewees, such as Donald at 6.3, Anne does not draw on discourses to construct the unemployed as lazy, instead she suggests that the struggle to "make do" is all consuming, such that people have little drive, ambition or belief in their ability to get out of poverty. Anne's comments appear similar to Johnny's explanation in 6.3, who referred to people's broken spirit as disabling. So while Anne might herself make use of a discourse of social migration, she indicates that the families and boys she worked with did not. Drawing on a commonsense discourse to construct education as a means of escape from poverty, Anne struggles to resolve why when "they found out how much they could earn" as a mechanic they could not engage in pursuing this career.

In the boys' interviews at 5.5 some suggested that the aspirations passed on by some parents and families were uninspiring and lacked ambition. This comment is similar to the observations of Donald discussed at 6.3. While popular discourse such as that discussed by Jones (2011) and debated at 3.6 and 3.7 has the potential to demonise and place blame on parents, Anne does not do any of this. Instead she appears more sympathetic, arguing that the level of poverty that her students were subjected to was "on the index of deprivation", claiming they are deprived of adequate food, warmth and shelter. In making this statement, Anne appears to be reappraising the effects of being poor and seemingly reconciling the social inequalities that also affect those whose lives are overwhelmed by poverty to the point where they believe they can never "work their way out of poverty" and therefore acknowledge but reject the opportunity for social migration through education.

Other respondents similarly constructed poverty as a factor harmful to male students. However some did not thoroughly explain why they believed this to be so with their responses appearing simplistic, with apparent assumptions that the discourses drawn on were universally accepted and understood. An example of this is provided by Olive, who at first discussed the complexities of

educational failure and behavioural problems, but then when asked to expand her views said:

> Poverty does feature, it really does, background features, partly because there is a, a lack, there's a lack of commitment to education with some parts of society and that is usually passed down to the children, so that they don't actually value education (pauses) and they don't want to participate in, it's a bit hard, they don't have to do it (pause). Some, some don't get encouragement at home. Some have role model who are themselves anti establishment and that makes it very difficult for that child. (Olive, Local Education Advisor)

Olive begins by using a simplistic discourse to argue that poverty does "feature" in some boys' commitment to school. Having said this, and assuming it understood, she swiftly appears to dismiss this discourse and instead draws upon an alternative discourse to construct society, culture but particularly parenting as responsible for boys' behaviour, underachievement and distance from schools. In doing this, Olive appears to be utilising a popular media discourse, discussed at 3.6 and 3.7, to construct and pathologize poor working-class families as responsible for some boys' behaviours and disengagement in school.   This abrupt U-turn aligns with the constructions of other educational practitioners at 6.3 and some boys in chapter 5, at 5.1 and 5.4, who made comparable statements about parents' lack of investment in education.

In trying to understand the effects of poverty and make sense of some boys' behaviours in school, the dominance of particular blaming discourses is of concern. Not only does their employment ignore alternative and competing discourses but it also leads to the strengthening of the construction of the working-class poor as lazy, unmotivated and their parenting as deficient. This further marginalises the social inequalities associated with poverty, particularly the relationship of poverty with underachievement and educational disengagement.

6.5 Special educational needs and mental health

**... well I think mental health, is one of the most underrated problems
(Simon, secondary school teacher)**

Foucault (1970 , 1980) suggests that dominant discourses become the process by which truths are established. In the following section this is demonstrated by Simon who insists that mental health is real but "underrated" and consequently not fully appreciated or taken into consideration.   In drawing on the powerful discourse of mental health, Simon offers schizophrenia as an example of the reality of mental health issues. Drawing on a Foucauldian perspective Boyle (1990), considering schizophrenia, argues that mental health is socially constructed by comparing behaviours against and with "normal" behaviours.   This is a useful analogy and will be used when considering the educational practitioners' views, which follow.

Above, Simon, a secondary school teacher, reflecting the opinions of other interviewees, appears to draw on a "mad" discourse, (as discussed at 2.1 and 3.9) when he determined that the mental health of some pupils was a significant contributor towards their inability to behave and engage in school activities. For Simon and other respondents, this occurs when behaviour is considered incompatible to the school's expectations and therefore outside of their constructions of "normal". Such a view relates to Foucault's analysis of the social construction of "madness" discussed at 2.1.   Simon argues that "mental health" is "most underrated". This appears to show that he considers that it is neglected as an explanation for some boys' confrontational behaviour in school. He develops his argument further by giving an example of a boy who was later diagnosed as schizophrenic.

> Simon: Um, and when he came to us in year 7, he used to hear voices etc, and this has been, he has been like this every since he's five or six um he tried to set light to himself, tried to set light to a room um he, we, we, did the CAHMS referral, we had an emergency psychiatrist come over um, and that boy went through the next four years without a proper diagnosis and it's not until, (pause) because, in, you know, and what amazed me as well, many, many, many meetings about this young person and everybody agreed, 'I think he's got schizophrenia.'

But because it can't be medically diagnosed until he's eighteen, you know, but everybody knew, but he wasn't going to treat him for it. He's now, you know, he now takes the drugs or whatever and he leads a fairly normal life but that young person went through hell for many years and I, it's that sort of thing, that always concerns me um and we, as um a school we always get um, I'm not saying we, we diagnose, I think that's wrong but we sometimes have a greater understanding of these young people, than sitting in front of a psychiatrist for a 20 minute session and sometimes kids can be, for want of a better word (pause) normal. (Simon, secondary school teacher)

Simon's dialogue illustrates the tension between school staff and CAHMS arguing that CAHMS do not have sufficient time to assess a young person. In this respect he constructs the "gaze" of the school as more effective than that of the psychiatrist. However this assertion fails to take into account the varying discourses employed by institutions to construct "normal". It also fails to account for the possible incompatibility of these constructions between parties. Thus CAHMS construction of "normal" behaviour may not be the same as a school, which in turn may conflict with the views of the boy being observed. Foucault insists that the behaviour of the "observed" is influenced by the "scrutinizing gaze" of an establishment (Foucault, 1977). While boys attending CAHMS might have been constructed as behaving cooperatively, in school some may have been oppositional to the hierarchical supervisory "gaze" therein.

In chapter 5 some boys discussed their objection to school hierarchy and the perpetual scrutinizing gaze to which they were subjected. This accounted for some of their behavioural difficulties. The influence of school upon pupils is considered further in the narrative that follows, in which Donald was asked to comment about psychiatric problems among school children.

JB: So is it possible that there are a number of children in schools who have psychiatric problems?

Donald: Yes. (pause) Often the school causes them.

JB: How?

Donald: Vicariously, through inadequate anti bullying policies. I'm not referring to the boys who will end up being excluded, I'm referring

to people with deliberate self harm, and suicidal despair, caused by ill managed or badly managed bullying. So on from that point to yours it could be said that, roughly speaking, that the school has caused the bullying.

We also have the schools with the best intentions in the world, pushing them into excelling academically, and children feel valued in proportion to how well they comply with the ambition of the teachers, as you know, being a teacher yourself, it feels very good when your pupils have done well. So we get the academic exam time as now, with people getting in a panic over exam results, and they get a little bit psychiatric, so on that level you could say that education is bad for your health (laughs). But joking aside, this is not about boys being excluded this is a broader picture. There are, of the children being excluded, there is, at the retro-spectroscope, which is always a useful instrument, in cases that I've seen and cases that I've prevented/helped, where the exclusion is more or less predictable. When one considers the failure to secure a statutory assessment of special educational needs (pause) Complex children, with complex developmental delays, or failures or deficits, neurological deficits, pass below the radar, usually more so in Primary school, and sent to secondary school are absolutely not suited to the mainstream environment, and then progress, through bad behaviour, to the exit, they exclude themselves. Had they been statemented or had staff cottoned on to the fact that they had extremely unmet special needs, then the exclusion wouldn't occur would it? Because they would have been busy receiving, you know, a much more intense appropriate special needs package. (Donald, therapist)

In this extract Donald makes use of a discourse of mental health, in the same way as Simon, to construct it as real. In addition, throughout this narrative Donald also draws on a discourse of compensatory education to construct school as responsible for meeting a range of pupil needs beyond the academic. However not only does Donald construct schools as responsible to meet Special Educational Needs, he also argues that schools exacerbate or cause mental health problems in some boys. Such constructions are in contrast to Donald's earlier comments at 6.3, where he stated that the home and parents were responsible for causing and creating problems. Some other educational practitioners, such as Lucy, did much the same.

Donald constructs two examples of mental health. His first involves his construction of the failure of school policies to prevent bullying and keep particularly vulnerable pupils safe, resulting in their "self harm" and "suicidal

despair". As was discussed at 3.3, verbal and physical bullying is common among some boys, principally used to enforce and demonstrate dominant masculine attributes. In chapter 5 attention was given to boys' constructions of bullying and peer pressure and how some boys considered this to contribute towards encouraging disruptive behaviour resulting in exclusion. As with Donald's contentions at 5.1, a number of boys also discussed teachers' inaction, complaining that they did not intervene appropriately or quickly between pupils' conflicts. This appears to relate to Donald's assertion that schools "cause" problems by not having effective "anti bullying policies".   This also links to discussion at 5.4, where three boys, Terry, Sid and Peter, argued that they were victims because teachers did not help them when they were being bullied. Like these three boys, Donald appears to be utilizing a school policies discourse to argue that schools need to monitor and intervene in peer interactions.

In Donald's second example he draws on a mental health and developmental discourse to construct the pressure of the school curriculum as damaging. He also suggests that some boys require additional support at school to compensate for their "complex developmental delays, or failures or neurological deficits". In saying this Donald appears to be drawing on a developmental discourse to construct "normal" levels of achievement for pupils which in turn are related to "target setting" in schools. This was discussed at 3.8 and will be discussed further in section 6.6.   Donald then appears to be arguing that what he constructs as "developmental delay" can be compensated for through additional school support. He further argues that a school's inaction and failure to meet a "special need" leads to "bad behaviour" and exclusion. While it is evident that Donald is constructing the school as responsible he is also explaining how a boy's defensive and consequential retaliatory behaviour may be reconstructed as "bad" and result in exclusion. This was a view variously constructed by some boys in chapter 5.

In the following extract, Andrew who is also a therapist, implicates parents in boys' disruptive school behaviours and mental health. Discussing boys who have been excluded from school and referred to his clinic for therapy he says:

The thing that saddens me most about an exclusion of a young person is, that, that's their record of thirteen and a half, fourteen, I think that is so damning of them and a lot of the time it's not, it's not that it's their fault, it's too much, it's too much at a young age. It would be different if they were sixteen and they were wilfully breaking, you know, all the rules, but thirteen and a half, fourteen? Their whole lives are chaotic, they've had poor parenting, they've had poor role models and they've ended up going to school, acting out on that limited poor input and that's it, then suddenly, you're the person that's permanently excluded, (pauses) and we've got you know, young people here who you know, are technically traumatized by the neglect of their parents. (Andrew, therapist)

In this extract Andrew draws on a number of discourses to absolve 13 to 14 year olds for their actions and instead position parents as responsible. In doing so he draws on discourses to construct these boys as vulnerable and with needs that should have been met by their parents. Because these needs have not been met he determines that these boys are traumatized by what he constructs as neglect. This aligns with discourses of parenting and constructions of childhood, children's needs, and parenting skills discussed at 3.6.

In chapter 5 some of the boys interviewed employed similar discourses. In particular Horace discussed how his home life made him unable to focus at school, resulting in behaviour which led to his exclusion. Andrew uses a similar discourse to Horace, expressing an understanding of the trauma inflicted by "neglectful" parents, and how such "poor parenting" can contribute to boys' behaviours, which may lead to exclusion. Drawing on these discourses, Andrew, like other interviewees, condemns particular parents as neglectful and unskilled, an argument discussed at 3.6.

Linked with parenting are constructions of childhood, which describe a child as lacking the competencies of the adult that they will become. It appears that these are conceptualisations that Andrew and others have taken up when they describe the needs of particular young people and the responsibilities of parents. Similar to Donald's earlier condemnations, Andrew describes "neglect" and subsequent "damage" that particular parents inflict upon their children. While Simon and Andrew medicalize particular boys' behaviour to construct

them as problematic, they also construct particular parenting as a contributory cause of such behaviours. In this way the discourse of parenting remains a powerful and dominant discourse in the discursive constructions of all interviewees.

This is further illustrated in the following interview with Thomas, who similarly utilizes the dominant parenting discourse to attribute responsibility for boys' problematic behaviours but in doing so marginalises discourses of SEN and mental health.

> ... Going back to what I said earlier about parents we deal with, a lot of parents I deal with who don't want to take responsibility they always want to blame other people, I've listened to these same parents, say, uh, the reason why little Jimmy's naughty is, is cos, he's got ADHD or he's got Aspergers, oh yeah I get him some Ritalin, yeah, and it's the excuse of, there is a reason for it, it's nothing to do with how I've brought him up (pause) it's because there's a reason. But I think ADHD and illnesses like that should work across the social spectrum, however, it's only from personal experience, but a high proportion of children we deal with, with those diagnosis or more so with family thought processes, is they're still coming from the same areas, they're still coming from the high deprived areas, going back to what I said earlier, benefit dependency and social housing. (Thomas, school Behaviour Manager)

Although in this narrative Thomas draws on a discourse of social deprivation, he appears to disregard this in preference to a parenting discourse, to construct parents as responsible for their sons' poor behaviours at school. Exploiting a popular media discourse discussed at 3.6 and 3.7, he refers to "these same parents" constructing a particular group who are feckless and irresponsible, wanting to "blame other people". Through his references to ADHD and Aspergers, Thomas appears to construct mental health issues and Special Educational Needs as real, however he marginalises this when suggesting that some parents want their children diagnosed with a condition so as to alleviate themselves from blame. In doing this, Thomas appears to be classifying ADHD and Aspergers as social constructions. He is also further pathologizing the poor working-class while ignoring social inequalities linked with poverty. This illustrates how Thomas, like other educational practitioners, appears to rely on

dominant popular discourses to seek understanding and solutions to his interaction with disaffected boys.

Unlike Thomas, other interviewees considered that some disruptive behaviour might be viewed as a Special Educational Need.   Where there were disagreements, these related to how interviewees drew upon other blaming discourses with some interviewees prioritising matters that affected them the most. This is discussed in the narrative which follows:

> ... so where do you go from there? Well I put in Bill's name and I find that he has a statement and I find that his primary need is BESD, yes? And (pause) so it's about communication isn't it? And you've got three sets of kids and you've got three statemented kids but you're teaching four hundred and thirty two kids in all, so the other four hundred and twenty nine are the ones you kind of, I just think, I've hoped over the years that the profile of SEN will get moved upwards but I think whilst the onus [is] on heads to produce, produce academic results, the SEN kids will be overlooked. (Johnny, Local Education Advisor)

Johnny creates a fictitious male pupil to discuss BESD (Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties), which he constructs as a Special Educational Need, requiring the interventional expertise of a school.   However, unlike Thomas and others, he does not undermine the reality of this special need, but instead uses popular and academic discourses to discuss the implications and limitations of a school's ability to offer the help and assistance needed for particular SEN students. In doing so Johnny acknowledges the popular discourse, which is used to construct such SEN pupils as unimportant and a waste of resources. He also highlights the pressure on head teachers to produce academic results, acknowledging that this has potential to limit their willingness to prioritise resources to meet the needs of boys with BESD. So while Johnny draws on discourse to validate BESD, and therefore construct it as real, he also questions schools' ability to work effectively with these students, especially in light of academic priorities and accountability.

6.6 League tables and Ofsted inspections: the influences and consequences of accountability

... schools now devise ways of removing certain groups of the population who are not going to achieve that target   (Grace, Local Education Advisor)

While some boys' behaviour was a notable issue for a number of interviewees, many also maintained that accountability, measured through target setting, Ofsted inspections and school league tables, influenced teachers' attitudes towards boys considered as disruptive. The discourses drawn on to explain and justify their particular beliefs are the focus of this next section.

Interviewees either introduced discussion about accountability or were prompted to do so. Many argued that the various methods introduced to monitor and measure a school's success and effectiveness have had a secondary effect, limiting resources, discouraging patience and constructing intolerance towards boys who display disruptive behaviour. As discussed in the literature review at 3.8, there exists an academic debate which draws similar conclusions. Above, Grace says that schools invent ways to remove pupils that cannot reach certain educational and behavioural standards. Being prompted to discuss this further, she said:

> Grace: Targets generally, targets have um, a magical way of being reached and so therefore (laughs and pauses)
>
> JB: (Laughs) What does that mean?
>
> Grace: (pause) No, I mean obviously um, (pause) if you set a target, it's in everyone's interest to try and reach that target because (pause) not to get there in some sense (pause) is a failure with whatever repercussions that might have. So targets have a purpose.
>
> JB: A good purpose, a useful purpose?
>
> Grace: Yes, yes, yes, I do (laughs) think it sort of distorts you know what goes on, I mean if you have (pauses abruptly)
>
> JB: How does it distort, tell me?

Grace: Um, well you know say for example you've got your minimum ninety per cent attendance target. (pauses)

JB: Mmm.

Grace: Well basically because if it's part of any kind of remunerative package (pause).

JB: Yes

Grace: Then resources will be put in ensuring that that target is reached.

Grace's opening statements indicates an apparent ambivalence towards targets. However using a discourse of accountability she then appears to accept the obligation of a school to meet targets because not doing so would indicate, what she constructs as failure with consequences. While the work of Foucault (1977) may be used to describe the disciplinary gaze of the school over its pupils, now Grace is describing the scrutiny that the school is itself under and how this "sort of distorts". This suggests that Grace employs a particular discourse of education, the value and purpose of which has been challenged and reconstructed by accountability. This concurs with Ball (2003), who refers to this as "the audit culture", where teachers' values and beliefs are contested by government policy. Thus Grace is aware of how targets have reconstructed the endeavour and focus of teachers and schools by redirecting the "gaze" on the school upon itself. As an example of this Grace refers to attendance targets and how the resources of the school are repositioned to achieve this particular construction of success. While seemingly accepting this, Grace does not explain completely what purpose she perceives targets serve other than to avoid the punishment that failure would bring. She appears to be applying policy and media discourses to support target setting and accountability, but without revealing what value she attributes to the measures being set against her own discourse of education. Eventually, after further deliberating I asked her:

JB   It's the repercussions of Ofsted inspections and target setting that concerns me.

Grace: Yes, yes, yes it's as (pauses abruptly)

JB: Does it impact on exclusion?

Grace: Oh yes, it impacts on (pause), absolutely (laughs). I mean yeah, no it really does.

JB: In what way?

Grace: Um, well (pause) I mean, we can just take a really simple target like A to C's percentages of A's to C's and schools now just sort of devise ways of removing certain groups of the population who are not going to achieve that target. (Grace, Local Education Advisor)

We had been discussing targets for some time with Grace appearing to be vague, hesitant and somewhat reluctant with her responses. It is unclear why but at this point Grace looks to suddenly yield and declares, "absolutely" followed by "it really does". Possibly my direct questioning influences Grace's answers, but her acknowledgement that targets can encourage the exclusion of particular pupils is given with a laugh, as if she is relieved to admit to this irregularity. It is also noteworthy that she does this as she moves the conversation from a simple Ofsted target about pupil attendance to a long-standing target regarding students' GCSE attainment. It is at this point that Grace declares that schools remove particular students who are likely to affect these targets. So while using policy discourse to construct achieving targets as beneficial to schools, Grace also acknowledges that some students may be excluded in order to do so.

As was discussed in the literature review at 3.8, the implications of Grace's comments are clear. She suggests that pupils whose behaviour is constructed as disrupting to their own learning and/or that of others may be excluded from school in order that the reputation and the academic and behavioural targets of the school are not compromised.

While Grace did not condemn target setting per se, other educational practitioners did, questioning the pressure and the subsequent effects that accountability placed upon schools and teachers. Simon for example referred to targets as, "like this big axe that's hanging over teachers at schools. You know?" While Anne, who worked in an EBD school, which took excluded boys, argued that schools were scared of league tables and would exclude boys who were

likely to interfere with examination results. Thus both Anne and Simon appeared to be using a discourse of fear, as explained by Ball (2003) to explain teachers' responses to the policy of accountability. Explaining further Anne said:

> I think the schools (pause) had become (pause) terrified of league tables because there were definite peaks when we would get students in and the closer you got to exams and the preparation of league tables , the more schools you'd get. The schools would just throw them out, and say you're excluded because you're violent. (Anne, EBD teacher)

Grace had suggested that failure to achieve a target had "repercussions." Anne is referring to these repercussions when she says schools are "terrified of league tables". However her tone and language suggests that she is drawing on a discourse of social justice to disapprove of the actions of schools in excluding particular boys to improve the status of the school.

The social justice implications of this course of action are made clear by Michelle, an LEA Advisor, who said "… they [teachers] are less tolerant with the children that cause problems, behaviour problems". Michelle explains that pupils constructed by the school as a "problem" were less likely to get attention and help than pupils who display behaviours which were compatible with school ethos, showed educational potential and therefore might maintain or raise the status of the school.

However, while it appears that educational practitioners understood the detrimental implications of accountability, they also seemed unable to combat them. Johnny, for example, discussing his experiences of working with boys considered near to exclusion said:

> Johnny: I am very, very quiet in front of newly trained teachers just because I hope they've got the idealism that maybe I did have, back in the late sixties, I mean I do have it now, I love working with these kids but I couldn't work with children now the way that I would want to work.
>
> JB: Why?

Johnny: The trips that we used to take away, the freedom we had, the flexibility, you can't do those anymore.

JB: Why not?

Johnny: I don't really know what the answer is to that question, but (pauses and falls silent)

JB: What is it, the national curriculum?

Johnny: I used to take (pauses abruptly)

JB: Target setting or...

(Interrupts)

Johnny: That, that doesn't help within the classroom, certainly that doesn't help but I used to teach you know (pauses) I'm reading things about Jim's English is so poor, his literacy standard is so low, we've disapplied him from French or we've disapplied him from Spanish. I think that is so much rubbish. I did Shakespeare and modern languages with kids who've got very low reading ages, because you can do it in so many different ways in which you engage the kids, we had great fun and I don't think there is that flexibility, I don't think people have got the time. (Johnny, Local Education Advisor)

Johnny is asked about the purpose of exclusion but instead of answering this he reminisces about when he taught "difficult boys". In doing this he also appears to employ a discourse of social justice to implicate the current system of education and accountability in failing particular students by restricting the autonomy of teachers to match their needs. Johnny's objection is notably different from other interviewees. While he appears to argue that accountability restricts a teacher's time and the resources available to meet the needs of some pupils, in contrast other educational practitioners such as Anne, Simon and Michelle he considered it limiting a teacher's tolerance and enthusiasm to work with particular pupils. Nevertheless, both constructions have social justice implications. Using discourses of school status and accountability, educational practitioners' observations underline that pupils constructed as disruptive and noncompliant appear to be considered less valuable to a school than those

constructed as compliant and achieving and therefore may be ignored, neglected or discarded.

Further discussion about the value of pupils was provided by Gail, a secondary school teacher. She begins her narrative by initially supporting accountability.

> Well I think there does need to be accountability, there does need to be recognition and a debate on what is it we want to educate our children to do. Um however, I think our focus has moved very much away, (pause) holistic development, from the whole individual, to achievement driven exam targets um and the two are not always compatible. We can have children who have tremendous abilities that aren't recognised within terms of exam success, however, there isn't for me in the system, the balance. I am not going to get as recognised by teachers in school for being brilliant at basketball as I am for coming out with five A stars, A to C including Maths and English, so therefore, that is always communicated, however we think we don't, we do, because it's a fact, at the end of the day that's what the teachers are looking for on their bits of paper. That's what they're judged by so therefore it cascades down. (Gail, secondary school teacher)

Gail's conversation begins by apparently seeing some merit in the current education policy of accountability however she then moves the conversation to evidently criticise it seemingly questioning the policy discourse used to construct the curriculum and then that used to measure pupils' success. Her use of the term "holistic education" draws on a discourse of education which values education beyond attainment and in addressing the needs of all children including problematic boys. This concurs with Johnny's comments and Simon who had said, "… what we should be turning out is, well rounded citizens for the country." Gail concludes that teachers' drive for examination results, "bits of paper", means that the focus in contemporary schooling is primarily academic, which inevitably further disadvantages the already disadvantaged, particularly working-class boys performing hegemonic masculinity. Discussing this further Gail said:

> … there are many merits in that, in terms of some quality assurance (laughs) for sure however, there is a deficit for the nature of the

children that we are talking about, particularly boys because the benchmark of what is perceived to be achievement is not attainable to them so therefore, once they are able to know that and understand that, and I think if they do that at a relatively young age, there is no motivation, there is no point, because they are never going to be as valuable a commodity as the child who's going to get the higher A to C's. And I find it, although this is anonymous, that Every Child Matters agenda and that every child matters is fine, but in my experience, every child matters but it matters more if you're a D and we can get you to a C. (Gail, secondary school teacher)

In this commentary Gail is torn between recognising usefulness in the demands for accountability while also acknowledging the negative impact of academic failure on "particular boys" who cannot reach the "benchmark" of normality associated targets. Like other interviewees, Gail constructs a unique group of boys who are disaffected and have behavioural issues. Not only does she have empathy for them, but she is critical of policy rhetoric, illustrated by her final comments, when she paraphrases government policy discourse (DfES, 2004 , DCSF, 1995-2007), and states, "every child matters but it matters more" if you can get good exam results. These comments further highlight how value may be attributed to certain pupils by schools. While boys did not discuss target setting and accountability specifically they indicated that they were aware of the discourses used in and by schools to construct success and failure. Indeed both Horace and Bob at 5.1 used similar discourse to construct themselves as failures citing their lack of achievement and qualifications as indicators.

Gail's emotive response reflected the responses of a number of practitioners. Many illustrated sympathy for boys constructed as having behavioural problems in school and variously acknowledged that as a group they had unique needs, which prevented them accessing education. Some thought that these boys' needs should be addressed as a priority above academic interests however, within the current educational framework, measured and assessed as it is, the value of these boys to schools is such that there are few resources available for them.

6.7 Summary

The analysis of the interviews with educational practitioners illustrates Foucault's assertion that we create knowledge and truth through discourse (Foucault, 1970 , Foucault, 1972). In exploring the range of discourses educational practitioners draw on, this research has illustrated educational practitioners' vulnerability to the power and dominance of particular media and policy discourses, showing the influences upon their work, opinions and decision making. Practitioners revealed the range of discourses drawn on as they look to manage and understand some boys. These discourses directly contribute towards practitioners' constructions of matters such as boys' behaviour, childhood, and parenting skills while additionally influencing practitioners' constructions of good and bad behaviour and where and how they apportion blame and responsibility.

Literature and the analysis of educational practitioners' narratives shows how practitioners draw on and invest in discourses of hegemonic masculinity to construct particular masculine characteristics as natural and normal. This contributes towards the strength and perpetuance of this discourse and has the potential to contribute towards compromising the work that practitioners undertake with some boys. However in their quest to understand behaviours constructed as incompatible with school, practitioners draw on a range of other dominant discourses within which they search to normalise boys' behaviour and attainment and thus make judgements about right and wrong. These normalising discourses also contribute towards judgements about childhood, boys' behaviour, parenting and SEN. Respondents' narratives show these can have a profound affect upon the work and attitudes of practitioners. While some constructions made are parallel with those of boys, others have the potential to antagonise and exacerbate problems.

In seeking, as Foucault (1977) says, to find truth and make "normalising judgements", practitioners draw upon a range of discourses, some of which are incompatible and contradictory. This suggests that if popular, media and policy discourses continue to be left unquestioned, the particular discourses that contribute towards the pathologizing of some boys will prevail and continue to contribute towards constructions of behaviour that lead to exclusion. To understand this further, in the next chapter I shall review and summarise the main views of educational practitioners and boys, consider how this research has contributed towards the current body of academic knowledge and evaluate the implications of this research for practice.

Chapter 7

Summary and discussion about this research project

This study set out to investigate what male students, who had been excluded from school, and education professionals, working with such boys, had to say about behaviours that lead to exclusion. The concern of this investigation was that the large number of boys excluded represents a significant social justice issue. Undertaking this thesis from a Foucauldian social constructionist viewpoint, the analysis of interview data revealed clarity about how boys and practitioners drew on a range of popular and dominant discourses to variously make sense of exclusion and the related conditions which are readily accepted as contributing to the phenomenon, such as poverty and deprivation, families, peer groups and boys' attitudes towards authority.

The aims of this research were to explore:

- How particular discourses are afforded more power than others and marginalise alternative discourses.
- How commitment to particular discourses contributes towards "problematic" behaviours
- How contradictory alternative discourses have the potential to challenge essentialist constructions of gender binaries and constructions of a unitary superior masculinity.

In summarising and evaluating this research I shall reconsider these aims and in doing so consider the implications of this research for practice.

7.1: Discussion about this research project and consideration of the implications for practice

It appears of particular importance that boys and educational practitioners draw on similar outmoded essentialist discourses to construct boys and girls as fundamentally different while also naturalising particular hegemonic male behaviours. The power afforded to this discourse effectively condones and normalises some boys' school behaviours, behaviours that both boys and practitioners acknowledge and construct as incompatible with school. The power afforded to the discourse of hegemonic masculinity is achieved through cultural and social intercourse, media representations of masculinity, education

policy discourses and peer pressures. Commitment to this discourse overwhelms and marginalises alternative discourses, affecting not just some boys' behaviour but also attitudes to education and achievement, peer groups interaction and the disciplinary regimes in operation in schools. It is only through the challenging of this dominant masculine discourse that changes might be made.

The discourse of hegemonic masculinity contributes toward the construction of a unitary superior masculinity, which prescribes the "ideal man" (see 3.1), the characteristics of which contribute towards the behaviours seen in schools. School disciplinary regimes were raised as problematic by some boys' objections to the "supervisory gaze" (Foucault, 1977) of staff, that teachers treated them disrespectfully and as children and that they lacked the autonomy to make choices and have freedom of movement. In contrast, some boys constructed teachers as having responsibilities to intervene in pupil disputes, but considered that staff often intervened inappropriately. This criticism appears to be also related to boys' constructions of masculinity. Where boys draw upon hegemonic discourses of masculinity and approve of such physical and dominant masculine behaviours, then they may only value adult interventions which mirror such behaviours. Discipline methods involving negotiation and non-punitive methods may be considered as non-masculine and therefore such interventions may be at odds with some boys' constructions and therefore seen as ineffective. In contrast if practitioners were to respond physically this would be likely to reinforce discourses of hegemonic masculinity. This is a particular conundrum for schools and illustrates further the authority afforded to the hegemonic masculine discourse.

In parallel with government data on exclusion and behaviour (Cotzias, 2014), both boys and practitioners drew upon parenting discourses to construct a relationship between parenting skills and boys' behaviours leading to exclusion. This is in line with some academic writing on this subject (Lykken, 2003). While acknowledgement was given to the effects of poverty on boys and parents, this was overwhelmed by popular media discourses which construct

single mothers and absent fathers as feckless and responsible for boys' disruptive behaviours. In addition the discourse of patriarchal hegemonic masculinity was used to construct some male figures in the home as irresponsible and ineffective male role models, further influencing boys' attitudes to education, school and authority.

While some boys acknowledged the positive work and good relationships that they had experienced with some staff they also dismissed the "teacher as male role model" discourse as unworkable. In contrast many educational practitioners believed it to be effective and cited work in operation in schools to illustrate this. However although the work undertaken by educational practitioners was judged to be successful, some of it appeared to draw on dominant masculine discourses and therefore had the potential to reinforce rather than challenge essentialist gender constructions. Of particular importance is that some boys showed an understanding and acceptance of the diversity of masculine behaviours, thus challenging the construction of a unitary superior masculinity. They also indicated an understanding of gender heteroglossia and the passivity of some studious boys. This is in contrast to the majority of educational practitioners who did not indicate this understanding.

As a concept the role model discourse has become diluted and misaligned within parenting discourses and as a result does not now reflect Merton's (Merton, 1957 , Merton, 1986) original ideas (discussed at 3.5). While the role modelling that some practitioners engage in is more akin to mentoring, it is nevertheless an arena in which boys' constructions of masculinity could be discussed and challenged. However the implication for practice is that educational practitioners would themselves have to first have their own understandings of masculinity challenged if boys' problem behaviours and related difficulties are then to be challenged through examples of alternative discourses of masculinity and gender.

The number of exclusions is questioned by authors such as Parkes, (2012), but exclusion remains an ongoing social justice issue. Educational practitioners

indicated that the effectiveness of school interventions to work with problematic boys is hindered by policy discourse of attainment and accountability. SEN statistics (see 3.9) reveal that BESD constitutes a large proportion of SEN and of those excluded. As behaviour is related to a discourse of hegemonic masculinity, this highlights the importance of school interventions to challenge boys' constructions and the normalisations of this dominant discourse. However this cannot be achieved unless government policy makers acknowledge the debilitating influences of discourses of accountability and target setting upon educational practitioners.

7.2 Reflections on research

This thesis contributes towards the body of knowledge about boys' behaviours and their exclusion from school. It has illuminated the arguments about exclusion in particular framed by drawing on Foucault's main concepts. However, although I believe that this research has unearthed interesting and useful information, the research is not without flaws.

To begin, I recognised that some aggressive and abusive parenting can also have genuine repercussions for children subjected to such abuse and neglect. Recent cases of parental abuse are reflected in such reports as Lord Laming's inquest into the death of Victoria Climbié (2003) and the serious case review into the events around Baby Peter's death in 2006 (Haringey, 2009). Although some respondents discussed the effects of aggression and violence in the home, extreme cases, resulting in death, were not raised by respondents and therefore are not considered in this thesis. However the reality of such parental neglect upon the wellbeing of children is acknowledged. The theoretical framework used in this thesis drew upon Foucault and seeks to understanding of how meaning is constructed through discourse; this does not negate the reality of the consequences of abuse and neglect. Foucault, after all, did not deny that things can have a real material existence (Foucault, 1972).

While exclusion happens to middle-class boys as well as working-class boys, it is reported that it is more prevalent in poor working-class areas (Sodha and Margo 2010, Kane 2011). Educational practitioners tended not to refer to class as such but they made inference to working-classness within their explanations and conversations. Some boys' comments appeared to be supportive of working-class identities while in contrast the educational practitioners' comments seemed both sympathetic and critical of working-class lifestyles. This was illustrated though respondents' references to deprivation, poverty and "them", while not mentioning the working-class by name.

Included in the interview methodology was the use of newspaper articles to encourage conversation. Significantly direct references to class did not occur within these newspaper cuttings. There is an explanation for this. Kane (2011) suggests that "in the 1970s and the 1980s … Gender displaced class as the main social category …" (Kane 2011, page 35) thus arguing, that as a result, class is less likely to feature within some discourse. As gender was the main focus of this research it is unsurprising that respondents failed to specifically mention class, as the conversations were motivated towards discussing boys' gendered behaviours. In addition Tyler (2008) argues that acknowledgments of class inequalities have been suppressed within contemporary Britain and that, "… the term 'working-class' has been incrementally emptied of meaning" (Tyler 2008, page 20), while Reay (2010) argues that dominant discourses are moving towards making class invisible. I believe that interviewees in this study reflected these observations. Social class is a social construction, which MacNaughton (2005) argues is used as a form of "Othering" to repress and silence and thus advantage and disadvantage others. Respondents did this using indirect references to working-class to explain boys' problem behaviour in school. However if exclusion happens to middle-class boys and working-class boys, an investigation into the discourses in operation in both social groups would be of significant importance.

If given the opportunity to further this research it would be prudent to diversify the locations in which the research is done. Undertaking research in a

variety of locations including inner city, suburbs and rural areas would enable a diverse catchment and might address the discussed voids of class, culture and ethnicity. It would also be useful to interview boys who had not been excluded to ascertain their constructions of masculinity and to ascertain if their constructions were any different from boys considered to have behavioural problems.

The use of focus groups might also allow for analysis of peer interaction. It is acknowledged that peer pressure plays a significant part in the interaction of boys and influences their responses and behaviours. It is therefore surmised that the responses of "lone" boys in this research may be different from those of boys in peer groups. Therefore I consider that undertaking interviews with focus groups of boys might reveal alternative discourses in operation and in particular a deeper insight into the dominant masculine discourses in operation in peer groups in schools

Although it may be surmised that the research findings and conclusions are based on a limited number of interviews and are unique to one particular area, I argue that the research findings and implications for practice are valid and have relevance and application elsewhere.

Jack Banner June 2015

Personal statement

Boys' permanent exclusion from school is an important social justice issue because among the thousands of students permanently excluded from school each year, the large majority of those excluded are boys, there being eight times as many boys excluded as girls (www.politics.co.uk, 2009 , DfE, 2011b). Boys are excluded from school for a variety of reasons and it is reported that once permanently excluded are much more likely than others to become unemployed, involved in crime and go to prison (Anderson, 2007 , Berman, 2009). As such this is a social justice issue worthy of investigation because of the misery and hopelessness that prison and unemployment are likely to bring.

At the end of 2007 I became a student at the London Metropolitan University engaging in an EdD course. At 56 years old, many of my friends, of similar age, wondered why I was doing so. Some of them were already retired or were considering early retirement while I was starting a new job as head teacher of a BESD school and now also going to engage in further study. My friends could not see the point of it. One of the most common comments was "What's in it for you?" This was awkward to answer, not least because there were questions about male behaviour and boys' behaviours at school that intrigued me but did not intrigue my friends. Significantly, one of the things that I have learned from my studies over the last eight years is why my question about male behaviours does not intrigue others. Male behaviour, particularly aggressive, violent and dominant masculinity, is taken-for-granted. It is assumed to be normal and questioning it brings amusement, denial and quite often ridicule, from females as well as from other men.

I was brought up in the 1950s and 1960s in the East End of London where bullying and other displays of hegemonic masculinity, in the playground and classroom, dominated much of my experience of school. As a result, boys' disruptive and aggressive behaviour has always fascinated me. So as soon as the EdD course began, I had fixed in my mind what it was that I wanted to pursue for my thesis.

Although I had undertaken a master's degree in the late 1980s, it did not introduce to me the subjects that were about to be presented in the first three years of the EdD course. In particular, discourse and social constructionism began to illuminate many of my questions about dominant masculinity.

From the beginning of the course we were engaged in reviewing literature. I found this challenging but a fascinating and particularly skilled discipline and therefore the introduction to this from the beginning of the course was invaluable. Linked with this, from very early on in the course, we were introduced to the wisdom of keeping an annotated bibliography of all readings. Personally this has proved to be particularly rewarding because as I was reasonably clear about the area that I intended to study for my thesis, all the reading I was doing for the modules needed to be collated and kept safe for later use.

The introduction to issues of social justice was also very rewarding. My interest in masculinity has always included concern that something was wrong, although I believe, my early understanding about exactly what it was that I considered to be wrong was unclear. Discussions about social justice enabled consideration of this matter and as reading and study continued I began to realise the social injustice in play within the dominant masculine discourses and the constructions made by boys and adults. Statistics suggests that those permanently excluded from school are more likely than others to face, unemployment, prison and or poverty. In addition boys and men who construct themselves in hegemonic and/or dominant forms of masculinity cause harm not just to others but to themselves too. This is why this is a social justice issue.

The studying of theoretical frameworks introduced me to Foucault, discussions about power and in particular social constructionism. Social constructionism proved to be especially important in further illuminating my comprehension of masculinity discourses and why particular boys construct themselves within these discourses and thus behave as they do. It also began to illuminate the discourses that my adult friends drew upon, the constructions

they made and thus further explained why they did not understand my early intrigue about masculine behaviours.

When the course moved towards engaging in our own study we looked at methodology. Naively I initially thought that interviews were a simplistic and fairly straightforward method of engaging in research, but this proved not to be so. As I examined the interview process further, particular anomalies were exposed. However I remained steadfast to the use interviews for the main portion of my research but reappraised how the questions would be asked. Media discourses have a significant impression upon the public and drawing upon such discourses, members of the public construct opinions and truths. I therefore decided that because of the influence of the media upon discourses, I would, where possible, use the media to encourage discussion rather than using direct questions. In the interviews that followed, this worked very well.

The aim of my thesis was to explore the various constructions of boys' behaviours, particularly those, which account for their educational failure, behavioural issues and exclusion from school. This was done by examining much of the current literature relating to this, followed by interviews with a range of adults, involved in working in schools, and interviews with boys, who had all experienced exclusion from school. The recorded discussions of these respondents were transcribed and then analysed, using discourse analysis. The effectiveness of discourse analysis proved to be particularly pertinent in revealing how adult and boys drew upon a variety of discourses to construct themselves, others and importantly boys within these discourses. In addition discourse analysis also enabled an understanding of how people draw upon common assumptions and expect what they are saying to be understood and unquestionably accepted.   During analysis attention was given to Gee's (1999) ideas about discourse analysis to unearth these common discourses.

What I have discovered during the past eight years and particularly in the last three, is a realisation about how and why some boys and men behave as they do. There is an assumption that there is one form of masculinity which is a

blueprint for all men (Mills, 2001). What is worrying is how widely distributed this assumption is. It is also of concern that this assumption is promoted in media through newspaper articles and through TV and film portrayals of men.

I have to include in this statement how this EdD course has impacted upon my professional practice. This is not a simple statement to write. My understanding has changed and I believe that I am better informed about my questions of dominant masculinity than I previously was. In this respect, in my capacity as Head teacher, when dealing with boys with behavioural issues and disinterest in education I am better informed about why they might be behaving as they do. In addition, through the study and through the understanding of discourse and social constructions, I am better able to consider the actions and behaviour of others, because now I am able to consider the discourses that others draw upon and thus the constructions that they hold when they make their decisions. This inclines me to be less judgemental that I was before. Understanding the discourses that others draw upon allows me to acknowledge their constructions against my own. Thus acknowledging, as Foucault (1980) argues that truths are culturally located.

Sharing this knowledge with others is more difficult. To enable parents and teachers to view things from my position, requires them to construct things as I do too. This means that they need to draw upon similar discourses to me and then construct boys, themselves and others within a similar construction to me. This is more difficult to achieve than originally thought. Because the discourses relating to male behaviour are currently so intransigent, I believe that there is much work to do with adults before we can begin to work earnestly with school pupils.

My intrigue about masculinity is just that, it is my intrigue and not someone else's. I now understand that many of my friends draw upon similar discourses to the participants in my research. They construct much male behaviour as normal and as a result accept, or do not see, the injustice that this behaviour brings.

Appendices and copies of key documents

Appendix (I)   Description of research offered to interviewees

Appendix (II)   Ethical issues

Appendix (III)   Consent form

Appendix (IV)   Interview schedule/questions (educational practitioners)

Appendix (V)   Interview questions/questions (boys)

Appendix (VI)   An example of newspaper/media headline

Appendix (VII)   Interview transcript of Horace

Appendix (VIII)   Interview transcript of xyz

Exploring narratives of exclusion from school: How adolescent boys and educationalists negotiate schooling, family and gendered discourses

The intention of this study is to interview professionals regarding the exclusion of boys from school.

The aims for this study are to explore respondents' views about boys' exclusions, to investigate their knowledge of the issues surrounding exclusion. The qualitative interviews may produce new information about boys' exclusion such as, giving insight into the purposes for boys being excluded from school, clarifying the resources available to those dealing with exclusion, the effectiveness of exclusion generally and the value and success of alternative educational provision.

Jack Banner

Appendix (II)

Ethical issues

It is proposed that this research will be carried out within the guidelines of the London Metropolitan University, Ethics Policy and Code of Good Research Practice.

Anonymity, and confidentiality will be assured to interviewees and it will be clarified to those involved that information gathered will be kept safe and secure.

Information used will be anonymised, with pseudonyms used for respondents, organisations and individuals mentioned. The interviewees will be able to speak freely but they will not need to discuss or mention any of their clients by name. Interviewees will be free to remove any information that they feel uncomfortable about. Anything left will be anonymised. What is being sought are their views about the generalisations surrounding this matter. If, while illustrating a particular point interviewees mention a child or young person by name then they will have the option of removing that information from the interview or anonymising that young persons identity. I emphasise that any data used will be anonymised to enable anonymity for respondents. Respondents will have the option to withdraw at any time and to remove any information they feel uncomfortable about.

Prior to the interviews, the attached consent form, together with the information sheet, will be delivered to participants.

Jack Banner

Appendix (III)
Informed consent form

My name is Jack Banner. I am doing research for an EdD at The London Metropolitan University, Holloway Road, London. Dr Jayne Osgood is overseeing my work and she can be contacted at the university by telephone or by email:
Tel: 020 7133 4020
Email: j.osgood@londonmet.ac.uk
Fax: 020 7133 4219

Thank you for considering to take part in this research, which will involve an interview, which may last for up to 60 minutes, the contents of which will, with your consent, be audio recorded. Before I start, I would like to emphasize that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary
- You are free to refuse to answer any question
- You are free to withdraw at any time.

The interview will be kept strictly confidential; data will be immediately anonymised and kept secure so that my tutor will not know the identity of respondents. This anonymised data will then be available only to my university tutors and myself. Excerpts from the interview may be made part of the final research report but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included in the report.

Please sign to show that you have read and understand the above statement.

--(Signed)

--(Printed)

Date ………………………………………

Please send a report on the results of the research:

  YES   NO   (circle one)

Address for requesting results

(Researcher to keep signed copy and leave unsigned copy with respondent)

Appendix (IV)

Interview sequence/questions (educational practitioners)

1)   Introduction, previous and present experience

2)   General thoughts on boys' exclusion

3)   Statistics suggest more boys and than girls, why is this?

4)   What factors affect boys' behaviour, how do they get to this stage?

5)   Violence dominants exclusion figures

6)   Poverty, Social cultural issues

7)   SEN dominate exclusion figures, Psychiatric, ADHD, mental health

8)   Masculinity, being a man, macho

9)   Views on newspaper articles, demonising, exaggeration?

10)   Government attainment targets, five good GCSEs?

11)   Purpose of exclusion

12)   How could we avoid, prevent?

13)   Access to therapy?

14)   Teacher training?

15)   What's the purpose of school?

16)   School rules

17)   Concentration levels

18)   Is smoking an issue?

19)   Pupils' social skills?

20)   Are there adequate resources

Appendix (V)

Interview sequence/question (boys)

1)   Introduction previous and present experiences

2)   General thoughts on exclusion

3)   Boys are more likely to be excluded than girls

4)   Masculinity/toughness

5)   Parents and home

6)   How could exclusion be prevented?

7)   Why does violence dominate exclusion figure?

8)   What's the purpose of exclusion?

9)   How could we prevent it? What would have helped you?

10)   What do you think about the teachers in your school?

11)   Newspaper reports

12)   School rules, turn taking, uniform

13)   Smoking

14)   Relationships with teachers and peers

15)   Early home life, playing, drawing, reading

Appendix (VI)

Examples of newspaper/media headlines used during interviews

Telegraph.co.uk

Ofsted: Back to basics discipline in school would c
bad behaviour

Schools should adopt back-to-basics discipline methods to curb bad behaviour and im
results among pupils, according to the Government's education watchdog.

By Graeme Paton, Education Editor
Last Updated: 1:17PM GMT 24 Feb 2009

Traditional rules such as banning children with shaven heads and those wearing designer trainers or gang colours have proved effective in maintaining order at the best comprehensives, according to a report by Ofsted.

Formal assemblies, regular patrols of corridors, frequent school trips, strong values and appointing good teachers are also successful methods of raising standards, the study says.

Mail Online

Classroom chaos: The schools suspending a third of pupils a year

By Laura Clark
Last updated at 12:01 AM on 06th February 2009

More than 125 schools are suspending a third of their pupils a year for violent or disruptive behaviour.

The schools, mainly secondaries, are thought to include some of the Government's flagship academies.

A further 10,400 schools had to bar between one and 30 per cent of pupils, according to official figures for 2006/07 obtained by the Liberal Democrats.

Official figures reveal 127 British schools suspended a third of their pupils during 2006/07 for disruptive or violent behaviour (photo posed by models)

Pupils are suspended for a range of breaches of school rules, including persistent disruption, verbal abuse, physical assaults, drug-taking and racism.

One school in Middlesbrough recently sent home 65 pupils in a day for breaching school uniform rules.

INTERVIEW WITH: …… *Horace*
STATUS: …………… *PUPIL*
DATE: …. *MARCH 2010*

<u>Interview with Horace</u>

JB   Ok, tell me your name.

HORACE   ********.

JB   Ok

HORACE   Yes

JB   So, let's start, just tell me about you, you were excluded from school.

HORACE   Well, (pause), first home, second home, third home.

JB   From the beginning.

HORACE   Well, during, primary school I was probably about what, I'd say, I'd say about eight no, maybe even younger, I was, it was year, it was year 2 and then they took me back at the beginning of year 3.

JB   OK

HORACE   So the best part of a year I was out of school, yeah. (waits)

JB   And why were you excluded?

HORACE   Well, my behaviour, urr, I was fighting at young and had a few, urr, I was fighting I weren't doing work in class I was just saying no, I isn't doing it, I was just being, telling them outright and I let off a firework in school.

JB   OK, why would you not work in school?

HORACE   Ur, you just didn't really work, in the interest of a big, a big, group of kids in one class and I could never concentrate it was, I was, I just, it felt like I was in the middle of I dunna a bomb there was just too much going on, at one, I couldn't concentrate on the teacher, there was just too much going on from, so I couldn't actually (pauses)

JB   So what was the difference between you and another boy of your age who could concentrate?

HORACE   What was the difference? Urr (pauses and is silent)

JB   Why did he cope and you didn't?

HORACE   Urr, I dunno man, I was, I was quite a naughty child, I weren't, I weren't, weren't very well behaved, my upbringing weren't very good, more dragged up that brought up.

JB   What do you think that was…

HORACE   Well yeah, yeah definitely, definitely, cos err,(pauses)

JB   What do you mean by dragged up?

HORACE   It weren't, I never had a, never had a stable environment, I weren't, I never had a routine, I never had no structure it was just all by ear and everything went by ear and what would happen tomorrow, I dunno (pause) I'm still confused in what happened today (pause) so I just, I just, I didn't know what I was doing from tomorrow, basically. I didn't know if I was going to school, I didn't know if I was going to stay at someone, randoms house, I didn't know what I was doing, so going to school was just like a playground, if you see what I'm saying, that it err, never really, just showed me a lot of kids and because I was missing days here and I was missing days there, obviously it weren't my fault cos obviously I wasn't old enough to take myself to school, but I was missing days here, I was missing days there I was behind I was behind from the other kids well, that embarrassed, that really made me feel piss embarrassed as well, cos I was obviously in the lowest group. So that made, that's what knocks you a bit, so that your confidence when that knocks that down a bit, so don't really, don't feel like you want to achieve, you don't feel happy, so.(waving hands about as he talks).

JB   So you felt behind.

HORACE   Yeah, definitely, yeah what, what, very behind, that's what made me, made me just wanna, dunno, done, cos the right thing to do then was not wanting to play and concentrate on my work that, that would be the smart thing to do, but instead I done the opposite to that, I just played up.

JB   And how old are you now?

HORACE   Sixteen, seventeen in March.

JB   And you left school, last July.

HORACE   Yeah

JB   July 2009.

HORACE   Yeah.

JB   So that was primary school, secondary school was no better?

HORACE   Secondary school err, (tut) a little rough back to my family again with my mum and that err (tut)

JB   Do you want to talk about that?

HORACE   (Shrugs) Well, my mum, she was just getting drunk every single day, every day she was getting drunk, she was constantly having arguments and fights, with her boyfriend, well me being, (pause) I dunno not a mummy's boy, but I do love my mum, like there's no tomorrow, so I'd always stick up for her even if she was in the wrong, so id always end up fighting him. Like I was only what 10, 11 and I was fighting and trying, but he'd fight back cos I was, I was a big boy and I would have hit him or somethink, so it was quite a rough house to be honest, I was in quite a stage, I was I was, living in an environment where I didn't want to be in, like to live with someone that who I didn't want to live with, like my mums boyfriend who I didn't want to live with, there's a difference, like you can dislike someone but then you can have hatred which is a very harsh word and I would say I had that, because at the end of that he's just a, he's just a poor excuse for a human being and I had to live with him, I had to, have to, have him as a role model, what couldn't role model a dog.

JB   Why do you say he was a poor role model?

HORACE   (Gesticulates) He never worked, he never went to school when he was young, he was in care and all that sort of stuff, he's a gambler, he takes drugs, he, he don't do nothing for the house, if he lived there, he wouldn't put food in the fridge, he wouldn't paint a wall, he wouldn't put carpet down, he wouldn't do nothing, he'd just sit round, smoke fags, leave ash on the floor, live like a slob. So I didn't, I didn't want to live like that. I was in a bad way, I was in err, Bishop Wood Community School and err, I was there for a year, one year err, I started this is, now this is when it all kicked in cos when I first started I was living with my nan, first started Bishop Wood I was living with my nan, that's when I first started got myself sorted back out cos I went to school from year 3 to year 7 and I was living my nan through that whole period of time.

JB   And what was the difference between living with your mum and living with your nan?

HORACE   (Sits back in chair) My nan was err, old school, she had routine, she had structure, she had rules, if there was, if I done something bad there was a consequence. There was, she wouldn't hit but she would, she would let me know I done bad and she would shout, not shout at

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me but she would talk to me, more or less, literally just talking to me, angry, she angry but she would talk, just talk and talk for the best part of about two hours and tell me that I'm wrong so I'd listen and I wouldn't want to do it again, to be honest, I'd sit there a few times are you gonna hit me, you just punch me on my chin and then I could go away, but I'd rather just have a little slap on the chin, cos she used to really drag it out, but I was fine, I was going to school, at Benedict, I went back, I got back into school, I was going to school and I got back into err I got into Bishop Wood cos of my nan, so I was going there for the first year, then my nan passed away and my mum come back on to the scene, (pause) started living with my mum err, was going to school maybe twice a week, maybe three times a week, if that, you know, then err

JB   What did your mum say when you didn't go to school

HORACE   (Pause) err, it was so long ago, like, but I don't think, don't think, she really fussed to be honest, there wasn't, err, there wasn't (pause) put it this way she weren't looking out for my best needs, she weren't, she wasn't trying to get me an education, she wasn't trying to put, she weren't trying to change my life from hers. I don't reckon from the way life has ended up, to be honest, if I ended up the same, I don't reckon she would actually know or care because of how fucked up she is (sighs).

JB   Just for the sake of the tape, why is she messed up?

HORACE   Well there's, she's obviously, she, she was in the wrong place at the wrong time and when I was living at home, she wouldn't care, for not going, for not going to school (pause) but err, she blames that, err her addictions started over being raped, she says she got raped and she was, not saying I disbelieve her, obviously, but she says she got raped when she was about 9, something like that and that's when she started alcohol she never told me when I was younger, she only told me when I was getting older, to know, what I wanna know is why, why she was such a crap mum to be honest, that's I wanted to know the answers, but obviously she got raped then and she started drinking to, to deal with it, to push the problems, she didn't tell none of the family and she had to deal with the situation on her own, so she started drinking and one thing led to another and she started taking drugs she started drinking (inaudible) she just, the ball out of the cycle hasn't stopped and it just got worse and worse and her health has decreased constantly.

JB   And when you were a child living with this, what did you think?

HORACE   (Looks about him). (pause) Well living with it, because I was brought up with it, it was err, the norm. Getting brought up with it was just the just the norm it was just, it was just, it was just what you do it weren't nothing out of the ordinary it was just like, that was, that was what I lived so waking up in the morning, and there was cans of drink

over the floor, (gesticulates) what, (pause) I'd go to bed and there was a hundred people in my house all taking drugs, what this is life, I never knew different, but to come, I dunno 16 years down the line, to look back on it, it helped me. That's sounds pathetic, that helped me err I been cos obviously I was living in the same area, the same sort of environment, where all the same sort of stuff is going on. So obviously, err, most people like me would normally take drugs so I could deal with the problems, push them to the side so they don't actually have to see their problems through you know, but (pause) the reason like I say, it helped me was because I see, I see family and friends of the family, well my mums friends, if you wanna call them that ill, dying, heart operations, in and out of different fits, constantly crying, not happy with their lives always never got a pound, pot to piss in, sorry, they never got nothing, so I thought that ain't a life instead of having, when they, when they probably started it they was all with their mates, they were all healthy, so your seeing me do whatever drug I'm doing and I'm happy with it and you do whatever drug your doing and your happy with it now alright it's good cos were both happy but now, if there's someone in the background watching us do it and they can see us dying slowly, but they can see us dying, well that persons seen the worse effect before he's had to take it. So you realise that this is not all fun and games before it drags you down, he's already realised this is dangerous and that's what I've, state, learnt from it.

JB   How old were you when you realised that?

HORACE   I'd say about 13, when drugs in London, well my part of London, were very easy to get at, at the age of 13, at 13 I probably could have got the best part of most drugs on the market, especially all the heavy A class ones. But I never wanted to do that because I see what happened to my mum and family and, and, and, them so I always noticed not to do it, really, I see, I see, that there's a very hard life at the end of it.

JB   And you were excluded for the last time when you were, what 13, did you say.

HORACE   Ah what **** **** or ******? No probably **** **** when I was about 12. About 12 I was in year 8 but I was on arr, report, I would always have to report to every teacher (shrugs), they'd have to write in a book. Then, then I went to from err from 12, to 2.30 or 8.30 to 12.30 a day and then I carried on, I carried on misbehaving, naughty, I walked into the school one day with my hat on, one member of staff went to take my hat off me and because he obviously he never knew me, it was a massive school, he never knew my background or what I was like but I, I took it like he was disrespecting me so I just went up to the man and tried fighting him and err, I got kicked out.

JB   So you were excluded because someone tries to take your hat.

HORACE   Yeah pathetic, pathetic.

JB   What other specific incidents can you remember for being excluded?

HORACE   The build up to it, urr, I beat up urr, a boy called Robert.

JB   Why did you beat him up?

HORACE   (stretches, clasps fingers together) Well, what it was, long story, a very long story actually, (pauses) I was in a wrong place at the wrong time and someone's bike got stolen. It wasn't me but I saw who done it, well, I told the kid who done it right, and because I was there I was known as a little scroat basically, I was always (pause) on the wrong side of the police, so everyone thought I was a baddie really so they blamed it on me, it weren't me, well anyway this one boy (pause) Robert said he was, who took the bike and where it is, so I told, I told the older, the older boy who's bike it was, that this boy knows were it is and who done it yeah, that's the reason I spoke to him, so anyway I was thinking this has all got solved, I'm, I'm out of it anyway this other boy he's come to me and said to me you've done it, what, yeah he's just told me, he's told me it was you, aye?, no he was just about to tell you actually who done it, he was like, yeah it's you, what, and he was like, yeah he told me that he might as well come fight you, so basically he got the other boy to come fight with me, but if the other boy come to me and realised I never done it he said well if you wanna fight him then I'll believe that you never done it, so though, oh well whatever, so I beat him up and that was the start of getting kicked out.

JB   So you were kicked out for fighting.

HORACE   Fighting, anger, urr attitude, a whole lot of stuff, I was coming in with jeans and tracksuit bottoms and things like that I weren't going in with proper uniform, I'd bunk, I'd run round the school.

JB   Why wouldn't you wear the uniform?

HORACE   (pause) felt out of place, I felt, I dunno, I thought well the teachers don't have to wear it so why should I, I thought well if teachers are wearing their own clothes then, I'm wearing my own clothes (pause) if it's good for them it's good for me.

JB   That's interesting.. did exclusion help you?

HORACE   No, No way, they never tried, never tried, helping me they just realised I was a bit too, a bit too much to handle so they threw me away,

JB   So what do you think the point of exclusion is?

HORACE   So I don't bring down others who are trying to learn.

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JB   Right.

HORACE   So I err, I'd say don't rebound others who are trying to learn err (pause) get you out of an environment that you can't handle because you wouldn't be excluded if you could deal with the situation, err, that's it I think, I dunno, it must be to help ya but I can't see where it helps to be honest, I can't see from when your thrown from somewhere that your getting taught a little bit, to getting thrown into a block of flats where all your mates are selling drugs, um, scrounging for the rest of their lives.

JB   OK, so you think exclusion might be to help you, but you're not sure what the help is supposed to be.

HORACE   Well, it's , I don't think, I don't think they'd do something (sniff) in a situation, I don't know, don't know, don't know (stutter) why the government would do it to make us fail so they, they must have something for their madness, there must be a reason for their madness but to be kicked out of school when that's were your meant to be, to learn, to get educated your just being shown that when things get too hard, they quit, they don't, they don't, they don't (stutter) put some elbow grease in and try and try.

JB   And what do you think of yourself then? A very difficult time you were in. With your mum who was taking drugs with an abusive stepfather, what could have helped you?

:HORACE   Well (pause), I dunno, err, I'd say (sigh) a, take for instance, I weren't very good in a class, to write down and do work and concentrate, because I always had loads of stuff on my mind I never had the work on my mind, I worked like an average kid who was thinking, I'm gonna go home, I'm gonna eat as many sweets as I can until I'm sick and watch cartoons. I weren't thinking like that. I was thinking I dunno, what am I doing tonight, am I going out with my mates, am I having a few spliffs, or am I gonna rob someone, or am I gonna do this, that's what was going through my mind, who am I gonna rob tonight, who am I gonna do this to, instead there thinking well I can go home maybe have a little run around the park, play on the swings have a few, (hesitates) a packet of Haribos and then, then watch TV for the rest of the night.

JB   Ok, so there, the children?

HORACE   And I was, I dunno, I was a child but not a child. I was a child, in age but mentally I had to bring myself to a much older age to just like, well if I never, I would never have survived.

JB   And what could have helped you, you still haven't answered that.

HORACE   (sigh) I reckon, I reckon in that time, time right there, if they, I dunno I don't reckon they could have kept me at school cos of what type of school it was, it was a mainstream, it's a big school, it's got loads of kids, with one teacher, you got a, it's quite hard to dedicate so much time to one child, yeah so if they have like a school where they got more hands on work or a there's a little, there's a little scheme there's actual goals, goals what they want it, they chose themselves and they want it, they want to get their own goals, they don't want people to come in, for someone who has been kicked out of school for being their own person and there not taking nothing from no-one, but it's not gonna help them to say right, if you hit this goal, you hit that goal that we've just made for you then we'll give you something but say if you met them, actually met them halfway and said I want a, I dunno, I want to be able to do, I don't know, I want to be able to make a brick wall, so high and so many hours they want to make that an achievement so that they can carry on progress or whatever, I dunno, then you pay them back with a trip to (pause) I don't know, Chessington or I'm just giving a random figure, a Chinese shop or just to show them that we are actually trying to help and we are not just here because it's law we have to be educated for law, we are actually trying to help and trying to make it all work really, it's hard, it's hard to explain or put into words.

JB   Oh, ok, let's move on now.

HORACE   (Coughs)

JB   I don't know if you know but there are more boys excluded than girls.

HORACE   How do you work that out?

JB   A lot more, why do you think that is.

HORACE   The dominance of a male, (Inaudible) wants to be boisterous, big, low always hard and to be sick. But if, if your, trying to explain, if you're the kid in school right, no body knows and in school you don't feel, you don't feel like no one cares, no one likes ya, your nobody, no one laughs at the jokes you tell or nothing, then you're a nobody, yeah, at school, even though you are sitting down and doing your work and come, come to the last year and the grades come in and you've got A stars and these other kids are getting all these low or failed alright, you've, you've got the last laugh, but (pause) why you're actually in school, it's good to have friends, and a lot of friends to make when you go there you don't feel bullied or intimidated or nothing like that, you always happy times, like when I was when I was at school I was always the one making people laugh but I wish I never (pause) cos now I'm paying for it now I've got no grades, now I've got no grades to be honest, so (pause) ahhh. (Shrugs)

JB   And are those the things just boys do?

HORACE   No, girls, some girls do it as well, of course, but then it's a bit more for boys, it's a bit more, there a bit more, there um, look at me and also for the girls they do that. They do that for the girls, like look at me, I'm here.

JB   So that girls look at them.

HORACE   Not just girls, but that, at that age you wanna be, you wanna be someone your not really you always want to be a role model or something, you, you, just want to be someone and don't want to be yourself at that particular time and when you get older you want to be more like yourself if you understand what I'm saying, you just wanna, just wanna be hard and noticed.

JB   So that's your explanation for why there are more boys excluded than girls.

HORACE   Nah, err, I don't know really (pause) I…..

JB   Well let me ask you another question then. A lot of boys who get excluded from school it's because of violence. Why is that?

HORACE   (Pause) Now that's going back on to the ur dominant view, like territory, they wanna be the boss, they don't want to be the little one, they don't wanna be the one who's in control who's, who can either power anything, who's got the last say, who everyone comes to if they wanna know something, the main man, basically so, in certain environments to get there, you have to be hard, you have to fight, you have to, have to (sigh) trying to find the right words, you have to just sort of, I dunno ah, it's hard to explain, you just you got to make sure that your character is strong..

JB   I understand that.

HORACE   You're…

JB   Are you born like that?

HORACE   No, course not, personally my ideas are, you're a product of your environment

JB   OK

HORACE   You are definitely a product, you can always change, but your always gonna be a product of your environment because if you lived, if you lived, in an area, or a built up area where everyone of your friends go to oxford, everyone, everyone err of your friends parents drive round in all flash cars and big houses the normal for you to do, is to go Oxford and to study hard and that's what you do. Now, if you was brought up

in an area where looking boisterous, making money, selling drugs, violence and all these different things, having sex at young ages and things like that, it makes you (pause) one of them, if you see what I'm saying.

JB   So why are more boys excluded than girls then, from the same area?

HORACE   Who said that, aah, (pause) well, err, that's quiet a tricky question, I dunno, maybe they're just..

JB   You're saying that you learnt from your environment.

HORACE   Yeah

JB   But a boy and a girl in the same environment, the boy gets excluded..

HORACE   The girl doesn't.

JB   Why?

HORACE   (pause) boys and girls replicate things completely different, replicate things in two different ways now, if I see, if I see a man running down the road completely naked then I'd probably laugh at him and think it's funny, now if a girl done it, a girl see it, she'd probably be disgusted, so I think it may the way, the way we look at, urr, well our opinions of it.

JB   MMM

HORACE   We have a different opinion of it, girls are a bit more (pause), at young ages, I reckon girls are a bit more mature than boys, they're a bit more held together, they breath, they take a few deep breaths and think about it.

JB   And is that their environment that's taught them that?

HORACE   (pause) that I can't answer.

JB   OK

HORACE   I do not know, I do not know, but my personal opinion, is that most people are a product of their environment, people can change.

JB   People can change, you're quite right, um, what did you think of the teachers in your school? Take your primary school first then move to your secondary school, what were they like?

HORACE   (sigh) few years ago now, but, primary school or not, I had a lot, a lot, a lot of teachers if they like it or not, they liked me, if they (stutter) like it or not, they did like me, but, but, I had a head teacher, Mr Oliver

was his name, Mr Oliver and right, a few times he had to take me round to my aunts house, walk me round there and say that he's got to leave for today because he's just not, not dealing with it. He's, um, he'd always take me back, or he would always take me into his office or sort of say, 'what's the matter today, come and have a chat'. So for instance, at playtime all the kids were out running around in the playground, while he's taken me out and said 'do you want to come to ? for an hour'.

JB   MMM

HORACE   So I'd do that, but um, I'd quite, well most places I've bin, I gat along with adults more than child, children, like, so I've had quite a strong bond with a few teachers throughout the years with my schooling, mainly in a weird way, the head, the main, the main person in a way because, well primary school, there was Mr Oliver and he always, always took to me, always, if there was any activities or, say for instance there was a year 5 was going on an activity and I was in year 6, right, it would only be a year 5 trip but I'd get an invite.

JB   Ok. So why did you like him?

HORACE   (pause) because he weren't, he tried, he actually tried, to make a difference, he actually pulled his finger out and thought how's he gonna help, is it gonna help me to run round a playground with a bunch of kids, shouting, screaming, acting like a right lemon and then come back in a try and learn, no it's not. If your gonna put me in a nice quiet environment what I'm enjoying, I was enjoying that,. enjoying that, when I was in there playing games, but I was enjoying that, probably more probably than I would do, running around, out in the cold. So I was all calm, relaxed, happy on the computer, then went back into class, happy again, calm and relaxed. I could learn a bit better like that because I was calm, I was relaxed I weren't all hyped up (sigh) running round and then coming to, to slow down, you can't do it, you can't one minute running around like a lunatic and then just sit down. Because your body, your body is still saying like go, go, go cos it's letting off loads of endorphins.

JB   Mm Mm

HORACE   To say that your happy, so it's a bit hard, so if your running round the playground you can't expect someone to sit down straight away and just behave.

JB   And in secondary school?

HORACE   Secondary school, ah, my head of year, when I beat up that boy, Robert, I,I my head of year come down and said 'we need to have a chat'. Miss Davies her name was, so I remember, remember the names, Miss Davies, she sat me down and said we need a chat, I said I

know what you're on about the fight bla, bla, bla, bla, well I just said (inaudible) her, yeah I had to do that for these various reasons, as I, as I said it today it's karma with that and it's literally about five minutes after the fight. I weren't angry, I weren't 'yeah I told him didn't I' I never done none of that, I just said, well it had to be done, and she said she'd never, ever, ever, seen a kid, so calm, relaxed about violence, she said, she said, it's a good thing, because you're not angry, you're not, but then it's a bad thing because it isn't like you flipped and didn't know what you was doing, because you wasn't, you was calm. She said but, your quite mature, because you never started kicking him when he was down, you've given him his whack, for what he needed and left it, you was a man who walked off, sort of thing, sort of, I reckon she liked me, from a weird thing really, but it was just how I dealt with the situation, I didn't start shouting and saying 'No, I'm not in the wrong, I'm not in the wrong'. I said, you know, I'm in wrong, shouldn't have done it, but I did (pause) so if you see what I'm saying, but after that, she sort of took to me, that's why, to be honest, I would have been kicked out, with me just running around the school, I beat up that kid, I was swearing at teachers and that, I should have been kicked out before I had a fight with the teacher, right, but because of Miss Davies, she kept me in, she put me on half a day, she done me a report card, whatever lesson I went into, I had to report. So, she kept me there as long as she, as long as she could literally drag it out.

JB   She tried to help you.

HORACE   Yeah, she dragged it out, she kept me in there as long as possible.

JB   Did any of the teachers, not try and help you?

HORACE   (pause) well I could see a few teachers who didn't like me, they just didn't take to me, they just, I dunno they must of just thought, he's a nasty piece of work or whatever, they just, they just didn't like me but they never tried breaking me or making me look, in front of anyone or nothing like that, no, cos I'd have made a point of it, I'm quite like that, it someone tries doing that, I'd make a point there and then on the spot.

JB   What you said, off tape, which you haven't said, is being treated with respect.

HORACE   Yeah, well I reckon, right, respect, it comes both ways. If respect is given, it should be received and if it isn't received, it shouldn't be given (pause), like, people in authority, like, in certain situations, it's just their answer, is the last answer, because, cos it is, it is, their answer is the last answer because they have got the authority. But then to not even (pause) ask a question or find out a little piece about the situation, instead of just making, the, formal decision straight away without finding out how the person feels or anything like that, they shouldn't be like that, at all. Because there are certain members of

staff, well was at ******, where you'd say well if we do this, can we do it like that. No, we are not doing it, we are not doing it and this is how it's gonna stay, or it's , oh alright then, I don't want to do it, if you don't, don't want to meet me half way you can meet myself out the door, cos I'm not doing it. So it's quite, (hesitates) I reckon everything should be met half way, to be honest (phone rings).

JB   Not very useful to have the phone ringing while we are recording it, is it.

HORACE   Mmm

JB   So why aren't girls as violent as boys then?

HORACE   Well, as the generations, as the generation's changes they are, they are getting a lot, lot, worse, the girls. But boys, they fight, boys have always learnt to fight, at young ages having a little fight. It's just what boys do really, boys will be boys, but (pauses falls silent)

JB   So it's natural?

HORACE   It is sort of it's (hesitates) obviously I ain't saying it's like stabbing people and shooting people, cos that's not natural.

JB   Right.

HORACE   But having a little, turn up with one of your friends because you never had a go on the football as many times as he did, it's just natural, because your kids, you don't know hundred percent, right from wrong and you just do it and that's why you learn from your mistakes and that's why life is about experiences, that's what life is, that's what makes life, a lot of experience that makes, life. So, girls they're a bit, I want pretty flowers and I want a nice?   As long as they got that then they're happy.

JB   (laughs) right, ok, where they born like that then?

HORACE   I don't know, some boys are born more manish than men, you do get some women that are born very manly but then you get very lady, lady, very womanly, so I supp..

JB   Is that the environment, or are you born like it?

HORACE   I don't, I don't..

JB   Well you had a good standing about environmental factors, so that's why I'm pushing you on it

HORACE   Well, I'd say, I'd say it's probably a bit of both, I'd say, I'd say, well cos obviously, if you was born up, if you was born up, say for instance, obviously you had your mum and dad, you had eleven

brothers and you was the only daughter, well obviously all the boys like all football, like all cars, like all them sort of things and the girls brought up with that and the mum, say, she weren't very girly, a laid, a laid back tomboy sort of girl, now that girl will more than likely end up, growing up as a tomboy. Not hundred percent because then can change in their environment but the percentage is that they will probably be a tomboy because either (pause) they've been brought up, used to it, which is normal, it's just normal. Don't you think if you was brought up with, I dunno, only drinking water and then one day someone gave you a can of fizzy pop, what is that? Like, it's a bit too sweet that is, or you wouldn't be used to it. It's just getting taken out of your environment really, so I reckon, I reckon a bit of both, I reckon it's a bit of both.

JB   Ok, what you haven't mentioned is that, or you haven't mentioned on tape, is drug taking when you were young.

HORACE   Yeah, I suppose, I suppose, that definitely, that definitely, does, cos I've always smoked cannabis and cannabis does give you mood swings, it does make you depressed, depression it (sigh) makes you..

JB   Did it help you cope with school?

HORACE   No, it made things worse.

JB   Right.

HORACE   It made, it made, it made things worse, so instead of (pause) going into school, with a clear head, I'd have had a spliff, I'd have gone into school.

JB   This is when you were a teenager.

HORACE   A teenager and someone was looking at me, no-one was looking at me, but someone was looking at me for the simple fact cos that's what it's doing, the skunk, my mind is telling me, that someone, why are you looking at me like that? Why are you talking to me like that? And it, it doesn't help at all. People say like, yeah I take drugs because it helps me, no it doesn't it makes your problem worse, it makes your problem a lot worse, because when it comes back, it comes back even harder. So people who use drugs as a resort of dealing with problems, are never gonna deal with the problems apart from make it worse. But there are drug takers who do, say for instance, LSD and pills, there do it for just a quick buzz, cos there out having a party and they wont do it again, for another year or you get someone, like myself, who will have a puff now and then to just relax, watch TV and um, just to calm myself down and just, instead of being on the go.

JB   What about when you were at school?

HORACE   Oh I definitely, I definitely not recommend doing it at school to be honest cos then your constantly gonna be thinking someone's saying something to ya (pause) but they're not and you'll constantly have that on your mind.

JB   Right ok, as you know all this is anomalies

HORACE   Yeah

JB   But you don't have to answer this question, if you don't want to. How did you get introduced into drugs?

HORACE   Well, I first got introduced into drugs, well, I was a young kid and it was always in the house there was drugs always, always, always being taken in the house, twenty four, seven but, that weren't got me on it. I got on it probably the same way, ninety nine, ninety nine, per cent of everyone else got into it, their friend, their friends, my friends were doing it, so I done it. Cos it was, well your doing it, so it must be alright, cos your doing it so you're my friend, we all do what each other do, so, I'll do it and because I done it, my friends done it, because, I done it, so it's just (pause), just you drive, drive a car, now I want a drive because you drive, it's the same exactly the same sort of thing, but it's with drugs and that's why people are effing up their lives and you can't learn while smoking, while taking drugs, you cannot learn, at all.

JB   Is it normal in the environment your in, drug taking.

HORACE   Well you could walk through, walk through, the estate smoke a spliff um if I walked through the town centre in London, the central of London, smoking a spliff, I'd have some looks, a few people would give me looks and say 'what are you doing'? but, if you walk through my estate right now, a spliff hanging out of your mouth, no-one would look at you, no one would look at you, the way I look at it, it's just, oh he smoking, it's normal, it is just everyday life. But getting moved out of that environment being in a different environment, seeing different things happening (pause) you can see it ain't normal, there is a lot more in the world to see and instead of just, a block of flats, a bag of weed and a few fights.

JB   I talked to you off the tape about ambitions and so on and you have them now, you've got an idea,

HORACE   I don't..

JB   But when you were younger did you have any ambitions?

HORACE   (pause), I did have, I did have, but the ambitions I wanted then are definitely not the ambitions I want now.

JB   What's the difference then?

HORACE   Ah, well, my ambition then, I always wanted to be a bad boy, a gangster, drug dealer, a lot of money, a nice car, sexy woman, drugs. I just wanted that sort of life but then growing up, moving out of the area, looking in to the area, from an outside point of view, seeing what's going on, I don't want that no more, I don't want that, I don't want to be your stereo type, I don't want to be that average guy, from *******, I don't (stutters), don't want to be it, I want to achieve, I just want, I don't want to be a millionaire, like I wanted to in them days, I wanted to be a millionaire, a drug dealer or whatever but now I want, just a job, mortgage, alright car, wife, kids, settle down, just an average lad.

JB   That change of thought has occurred since when?

HORACE   Since being in ******, to be honest

JB   So that's been, two years?

HORACE   Yeah I'd say it took two years for my eyes to open properly out of the area, it took two years when my eyes opened up and I can say I didn't do it when I moved to ******, I (stutters) could have killed any social, social services person, because everyone had, everyone out of my area, I wanted to move back. Now, if I could turn back the hour of time and change anything, I wouldn't change moving to ******. I would not change moving to ******.

JB   What would you change?

HORACE   (Sigh), I would change how my mum, if I could I would change it, I'd change how my mum brought me up, I'd change the environment that I was brought up in, I'd probably, I'd probably not want to be the guy who wanted to impress everyone and making people laugh and be the one who stood out. I'd rather just put my head down and work and actually achieve something. That's the only way you achieve something.

JB   So how could that effect them, what one thing or more that one thing should have happened when you were younger that would have changed your attitude?

HORACE   (pause)

JB   Or why did a year or so ago change your mind, what happened?

HORACE   I see the bigger picture.

JB   Right, how can you make kids see a bigger picture when they're younger?

HORACE   (pause) well, you got to find out what meets their tastes, what they like, what they like doing, urn, how they live and then show them two ways, show them two ways. Show them a path, somehow you got to show them, but I don't know how, do it on an overhead projector and show them how it leads, show them that their path if they're bad and they behave naughty, show them that the path they're on and where it's gonna end up. Then show them where the crossroads are and they can change over and move on to this road and end up nice, I reckon that would help. If you could open..

JB   When you were I don't know, 12 or 13, if someone would have done that to you what would you have said? If someone got this overhead projector and shown you these different paths, what would you have said to them?

HORACE   I kind of relate it,

JB   Oh right, yeah,

HORACE   I've got it, if I don't relate it I wouldn't care.

JB   Ok so how can you make them relate to what they are saying?

HORACE   A little bit of history on the person, find out a little bit of history, how they've lived, how....

JB   Has that never happened to you?

HORACE   No

JB   With social services, teachers, did no one ever say 'look at this'?

HORACE   Not really (pause)

JB   No one ever did that?

HORACE   Not really. Not really.

JB   Right

HORACE   Not really at all, like, I reckon if someone actually done that or they actually tried and every kid actually took a little, not every kid, but the ones who obviously, the naughty ones, the ones that were getting kicked out, the ones who are always in trouble are always getting in trouble with the police, the ones who are taking drugs, the ones, them sort of kids, if you can take out half hour of your time to find out why they're doing it and then, if you could realise where there roads gonna end up if they carried on and you actually say look, you've done this, you've done this, you've done this and I guarantee you, your gonna do this, this and this you might as well just take it, kick up the balls?

JB   So I've switched the phone off, is that alright?

HORACE   So you say, look you've done this before, you've done this before, you're here right now, if you carry on your gonna do this and your gonna end up here, well what I found out, are 70 percent of kids in care fail and 30 percent of kids in care, achieve and that was round about the sort of time that I pulled my finger out, when I realised that I don't want to be just another statistic, I don't want to be another mark in a book, told you so, I don't wanna be one of them, I wanna be that, you don't really do that, you've changed, you didn't do that, well that's what's making me, I dunno, I wanna achieve to be honest, cos I can't be arsed to sell drugs, I can't be arsed to rob people off, I can't be arsed to run round smoking spliffs, sitting on a street corner with my mate, I can't be arsed with it, it's just a lot of bollocks to be honest.

JB   That is really, very comprehensive and I'm grateful for that and we'll keep the tape running for you to say anything else that you want to say or I should have asked you about.

HORACE   What about kids being kicked out of school.

JB   Yeah

HORACE   Well, (pause) why are they doing it, what are they, are they what you got to find out, is the child, is the child looking for attention, is it a shout out for help (pause) is it, is it, it's the only way he feels secure by behaving like that or..

JB   That's an interesting one, what do you mean by that, he feels secure behaving like that?

HORACE   It's normal, he hasn't been brought up proper, so if he just carries on doing it, it's normal for him, he feels safe. If that's what he normally does he don't feel out of his boundary because telling someone to eff off when they're asking something politely cos that's how he deals with his problem, yeah and oh obviously a little piece of research in family upbringing because if the kids been brought up with not one, not one single piece of urr routine, right, not just, not just, eating and sleeping but err routine for life, a whole routine of you wakeup, you have a shower, you brush your teeth, you eat, you eat your breakfast at such a such a time then you go to school at that time and you come back at that time and you get in the bath at such a such a time, you have your dinner at this time and your in bed for that time. If you keep everything like that, kids, keep it all like that, most kids will achieve. They will achieve, because it's just, it's just that's what I gotta do, that's how I gotta live. You've got say, a parent, I tell you something where I guarantee a lot of kids are in care cos their mums or their dads, well it's mainly single mums, where they've had to look after their brothers and sisters, when they are younger, now they done there

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best at jobs you've got to put your hands up, you've looked after your brothers and sisters that's hard, I've had to do it myself with my little brother but there's coping and there's doing the right, they're surviving and just about scraping and get by than actually achieving and making them, progress, just surviving isn't good enough just by making them do alright isn't good enough and that's what a lot of young parents do, they've looked after their younger brothers they've made mistakes yeah, but, they think it's right because they've learnt so young and they've done it before it's just, you can't, can't teach an old dog new tricks, so they already know about bad habits and they can't get out of it, so when there bringing up there own kids these bad habits are coming back in play, so the kid isn't, the kid, right, kind of weird this is and so obviously the kid picks it up and it turns normal for the kid well then you know what happens, they end up in the wrong ones, they end up in the wrong crowd, they like different types of friends.

JB   Mmm and education is not important.

HORACE   No, Education is, well from where I'm from, education is (pause) well education is place what we shouldn't be in, we think. Wrong, wrong opinion, wrong opinion, because our minds say, well no you should be out there making money, you should be out there doing drugs, doing, that sort of stuff. No one should be able to tell me what I should and shouldn't be doing but personally I reckon, that after your sixteen, you do your GCSE's, I reckon you should do your two years in the army, what's that stuff, that thing called, that place called when you go into the army for two years

JB   When you were called up

HORACE   You have to do it, it was just law, I reckon they should do that again. They should do that again, that's what I reckon.

TAPE END

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