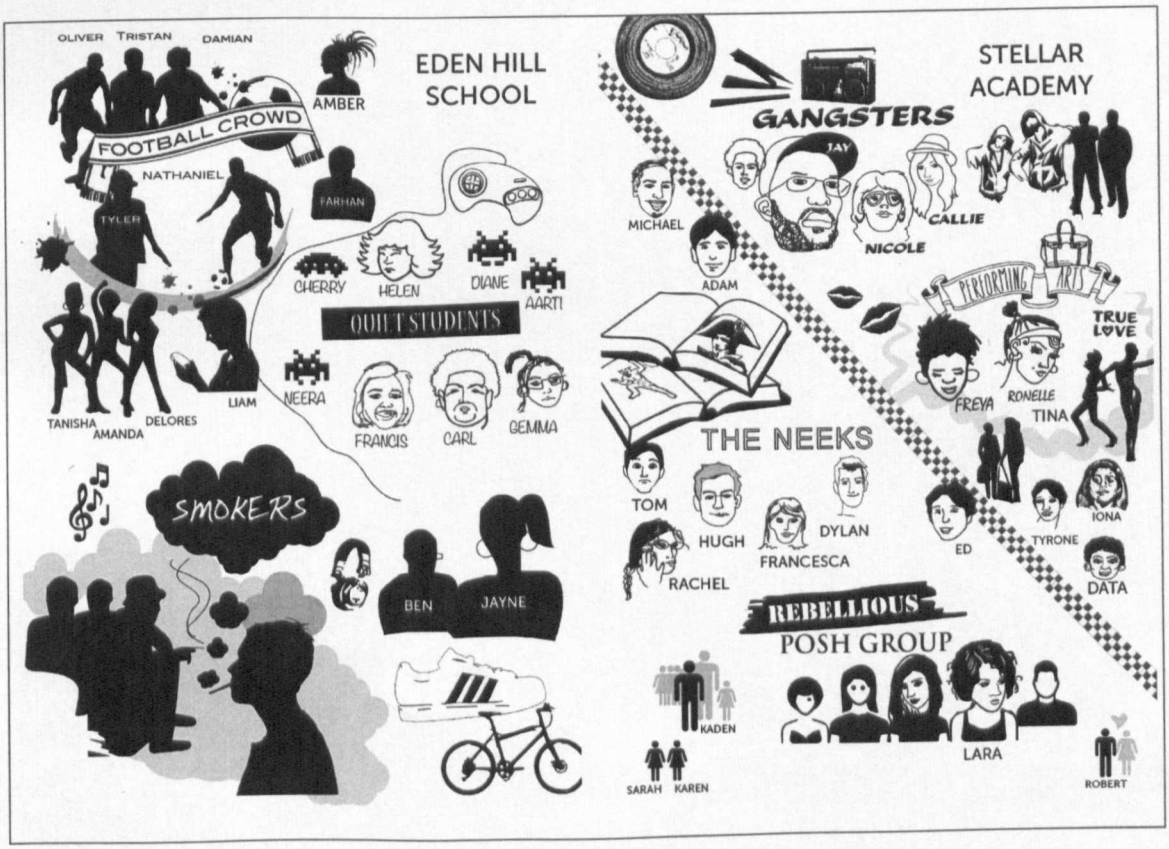
Sumi Hollingworth

A sociological exploration of social mixing: young people's friendships in urban schools



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There are more places to be desired than those guaranteed by the centre [...] the centrifugal pull of dominant meanings, in their turn, provokes the creation of other cultural configurations capable of generating alternative, subversive and contesting desires and discourses.

(Valerie Hey, 1997, The Company She Keeps, p.126)

Abstract

This thesis begins with the question of whether socially and ethnically mixed schooling leads to mixed friendships. Located within a policy agenda promoting community cohesion and the benefits of mixed communities, this thesis examines the urban school as a key site of social mix, critically exploring mixing amongst urban youth. Challenging policy rhetoric's static concept of mixing and cohesion, a key contribution of this thesis is to explore mixing as a social process, attending to social class and gender as well as race in shaping young people's evolving friendship-making. Drawing on small-scale, discursively informed, interview-based, research with 16-19 year olds in two socially and ethnically mixed London schools, this thesis aims to examine the patterns of young people's friendships. This thesis investigates the socio-spatial, institutional and discursive processes which lead to differentiation, stratification or mixing in these friendships.

The overarching contribution of this thesis is to understand friendship-making as a classed process. I argue that social mixing is a form of social capital/resource accumulation, a process in which some classed, raced and gendered bodies have more exchange value than others. To begin, I show how different demographics of schools constrain and enable the discursive production of the school as space for social mixing, and moreover how this is intimately connected to academic inclusivity or exclusivity. I then show how urban school-based subcultures are implicated in the production, maintenance and regulation of gendered, classed and racialised identities, which constrains the possibilities for mixing. Exploring the located, micro-politics of social mixing in urban schools – of those who mix across borders and boundaries of class and race- I show how certain favoured learner identities allow the acceptable minority ethnic Other more easily into privileged White middle class friendship groups in the school, while Black working class students are more constrained in sustaining White middle class friendships and hence, the promise of social mobility. Finally, through analysis of the 'misfits' -students who are outside of subculture in the school- I argue that, while a space of exclusion, this is a space of non-normative productions of race, gender and social class and is the hidden space where there is potential for 'real' mixing to take place. Here, I propose that, in this transgressive space of mixing, use-value comes to the fore, and has potential for the production of an alternative kind of self.

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Tables and figures

Declaration

In accordance with London Metropolitan University regulations for the submission of PhD thesis, I herewith declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Sumi Hollingworth

Date 19/2/14

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisors, Carole Leathwood, Diane Reay and Kim Allen for their encouragement, support, critical feedback, and ultimately their faith in me. I am also extremely grateful to Ayo Mansaray for his theoretical insights and generosity in working with me and my data to produce an article in *Sociological Research Online* (Hollingworth, and Mansaray, 2012)- which went on to win the British Sociological Association/ Sage Prize for Excellence and Innovation, 2012- and for his time to provide valuable feedback on the final draft as 'internal' reader at London Metropolitan University. I am also grateful to other colleagues at London Metropolitan University who provided yearly feedback on my progress as a postgraduate student, and my colleagues in IPSE for their support.

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Introduction

> *It was hoped that mixing children from different social class backgrounds in the same school would lead to a lowering of barriers between classes and a reduction in class antagonism and class differences [...] We now live in a multicultural society that is increasingly harshly divided by class and ethnicity. Social mixing gives at least some possibility for mutual understanding and greater equity.*
>
> *(Pring & Walford, 1997, p. 3)*

> *It is really difficult because I think in some ways it is quite idealistic to say that every school should have a perfect mixture of different classes and different races. I think it does cause problems. I don't think by sticking lots of different people together in one place it gets rid of the difference- it just intensifies the conflict. I think it just makes people from, like, unfortunate backgrounds—I don't think they appreciate having other people that have come from more privileged backgrounds. I don't think they think: 'Oh, that's really good of them to come and mix with us'. I think it is almost as if it is rubbed in their faces.*
>
> *(Jemma, White middle class girl attending a London comprehensive school, in Hollingworth & Williams, 2010, p. 60)*

This thesis began as an investigation into claims about the role of socially and ethnically mixed schooling in breaking down barriers in British society. Pring and Walford (1997) quoted above from their book *Affirming the Comprehensive Ideal,* hailed the comprehensive school as a fertile site for mixing between classes, reducing antagonism and increasing understanding between different cultures. Indeed, the idea of social mixing underpinned the rationale for comprehensive schooling, seen as a leveller of class and ethnic differences (Ford, 1969). The second quotation is from an interview I conducted in research I was involved in, in 2005-7 (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010; Reay et al., 2007). Jemma[1] a white middle class girl, attending a socially and ethnically mixed London comprehensive school, gives a less celebratory insight into how this social mixing might play out in young people's lives: drawing attention to the inevitable workings of power and privilege.

[1] All research participant names used in this thesis are pseudonyms.

My interest in this topic began with my involvement in this research mentioned above: an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded research project on urban White middle class parents and school choice (Reay et al., 2007), for which I was one of four research fellows on the project[2]. In the context of an increasingly stratified education system, and a demonisation of urban schools by the gentrifying middle class populace, this research focused on White middle class families who - choosing 'against the grain'- sent their children to the urban multi-ethnic, working class comprehensive schools that many other urban White middle classes avoid. That research centred on the motivations of parents committed to socially mixed comprehensive schooling. While it began with hopes for new insights into possibilities for promoting collectivism, social cohesion and the public good, what it subsequently revealed were difficult tensions involved in making ethical choices from a position of privilege. This research revealed that while the social mix of a school was something sought after by parents, social mix did not necessarily lead to social *mixing*: amongst these White middle children at least. Mixing appeared to be superficial and their friendships appeared to be fairly homogenous. Analysing the London data from this study in particular, while there appeared to be some mixing occurring in school, this was partial and mixed friendships outside of school were less common. Furthermore, these students were set apart from their multi-ethnic working class peers by their extra-curricular and cultural practices, and persistent educational success, which enabled them a position of privilege (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010; Reay et al., 2007). In a paper I wrote from this project I thus speculated: does White middle-class choice of urban comprehensive schooling level out inequality, or is inequality being reproduced in a mixed environment? (Hollingworth and Williams, 2010).

While that ESRC study, and a growing body of research (e.g. see Ball, Rollock, Vincent, & Gillborn, 2011; Butler & Robson, 2003b; Van Zanten, 2003), gives attention to parents' and adults' perceptions and experiences of social mixing, little attention has been given to how this plays out for children and youth, or what goes on inside schools. Furthermore, much of this research on the urban context explored the gentrifying, predominantly White middle classes' perspectives, and there is little known about social mix and mixing from the perspectives and experiences of the minority ethnic and working classes (but see Ball, et al., 2011 on the Black middle classes). My doctoral thesis thus sets out to delve into the setting of the socially and ethnically mixed London school and explore diverse young people's narratives and experiences. Explicitly, this study seeks to explore the complexities of social mixing, holding in tension social class, race, and gender differences in this process.

[2] The team included Prof. Diane Reay; Prof. Gill Crozier; Prof. David James; Katya Williams; Fiona Jamieson; Phoebe Beedell and myself. More information about the project can be found at: http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/downloads/ESRCFinalReportWhitemiddleclasses.pdf

In the rest of this introduction I set the scene and the wider context for this research. I then outline my particular approach to social mixing as a topic of study, and set out the parameters of my research: the aims, research questions and broader methodology. I then provide an outline of the rest of the chapters in this thesis.

Setting the scene

When I began this research in 2008, 'social integration and community cohesion' was a major policy focus for local and national governments in Britain (Cantle, 2001; Home Office, 2007). At the same time there was a drive for the promotion of socially mixed neighbourhoods, particularly in urban contexts (see DCLG, 2010). Segregated communities were viewed as problematic and mix was assumed, not only to generate mixing, but to bring about 'cohesion' and improved social 'wellbeing' (Fortier, 2010; Lees, 2008; Moore, 2012). Yet the way in which these ideals were framed in policy, and approached in much of the psychological and quantitative research on the topic, irked me. Cohesive communities were framed as a somewhat static, cardboard cut out. The 'good' or the 'right' mix (Byrne, 2006), or 'cohesion,' was never really defined (Moore, 2012; Lees, 2008; Vertovec, 2006), merely presented as utopian end state to be achieved. The subtle emphasis was on minority ethnic groups and their need to 'integrate' (Janmaat, 2009; Joppke, 2004; Kundnani, 2002; Wessendorf, 2010): 'if only they would mix we would be happy' (Ahmed, 2007). Whiteness and middle classness was treated as the unproblematic norm ('no problem here') and in neighbourhood mix policy the presence of middle classes assumed to bring about social benefits that would 'trickle down' or 'rub off on' those working classes whose neighbourhoods they newly inhabited (Lees, 2008). At the same time as a promotion of the value of the (White) middle classes to social cohesion, we have witnessed a growing pathologisation of the working classes in the media and policy, positioned as feckless scroungers (Haylett, 2001; Lawler, 2005; Skeggs, 2004) and we have seen the poorer areas of the inner cities racialised through the lens of gang crime (Reay et al., 2007; Archer et al., 2010).

In such a context of 'panicked' (Noble, 2009) discourses of troubled mixing; 'allergic hunkering down' (Back, Sinha, & Bryan, 2012) and fears of society having 'lost its social glue' (Ahmed, 2007), riots erupted across urban areas in England in 2011, during my writing of this thesis. While everyone had an opinion on the causes of these riots- and this is beyond the scope of this thesis (see Taylor, et al., forthcoming)- speculation about 'problematic' youth abounded. Black youth in particular bore the brunt of indirect blame via historian David Starkey's infamous comment that the youth are 'becoming Black', positioning anti-social and criminal behaviour as innate to Black 'gangster' culture (Phoenix & Phoenix, 2012; Quinn, 2011). Furthmore, following the riots we

witnessed the increasing 'circulation of caricatures of condensed hate' (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012, p. 474), in the figure of the 'chav' (Tyler, 2013; Taylor et. al, forthcoming), aimed at White working class youth.

In 2012, in the holding of the Olympic games in London, we saw an erasure of the riots and a U-turn from panicked discourses, to celebratory discourses of the 'happy smiling multiculturalism' (Ahmed, 2007) of Britain's population, where the city was marketed and promoted as a successful multicultural city, where 'everyone gets along'. In 2013, problematic social class mix is the talk of London, where White urban middle class youth and young professionals- in the guise of 'the hipster'- attract increasing media blame for urban gentrification and displacement (the Economist, 2013; Bolton, 2013; Martin, 2013; Anon, 2013; and see Greif, 2010; Greif et al., 2010; Hung, 2012; Mande, 2010). The way in which diversity and mix gets denigrated and celebrated for different purposes, points towards the power of these productive and performative discourses, but also raises questions about who represents the 'good' or the 'bad' mix. These dilemmas and contradictions are crucial to this thesis.

London schooling: the terrain

Urban schools occupy a pivotal role in relation to social mixing. The debates on comprehensive schooling and social mixing are somewhat unfashionable in the 2010s, yet, at the time of my fieldwork, schools were charged, under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, with a 'duty to promote community cohesion.' Schools were expected to manage society's social and racial inequalities, as places of happy smiling, celebratory diversity.

In London in particular however, the social divide in urban schooling has been publically acknowledged and has been the source of debate. In 2003 Tory MP Oliver Letwin's comment that he would sooner 'go out on the streets and beg' than have his son educated at the secondary school nearest his South London home (BBC, 2003), and outrage at London-based Black Labour MP Diane Abbott's choice to send her son to a fee-paying private school (The Mirror, 2010), set the scene for a government focus on improving London schools. The New Labour government's investment in education, and relentless focus on school standards inevitably saw a rise in educational achievement nationally, and particularly in London. The spotlight on the relative low standards in education in the capital gave rise to a pan-London strategy to improve 'underperforming' London schools. London Challenge saw £80 million spent over eight years (2003-2011), in which attainment in London schools rose dramatically, with year on year improvements topping those nationally (Hutchings, 2012). It is believed that such rise in standards in London schools has seen an increase in middle class families sending their children to London

state schools (for example see Clark, 2012; Paten, 2012)[3]. Nevertheless the education system is highly differentiated, with some schools (for example Church schools and Grammar schools) operating selection, inevitably achieving higher results, and non-selective and comprehensive schools inevitably affected by this 'creaming' (West, 2003). Furthermore, while we have witnessed higher numbers of students staying on in education past the age of sixteen and into post-compulsory education, some argue this has led to a new tertiary tripartism (Ainley, 2003) with students channelled into different schools, colleges and universities, where vocational qualifications are still perceived as inferior. Furthermore, with the pressures on school standards, we are witnessing an intensification of 'ability grouping' practices within schools, which further separate and channel different social groups, impacting drastically on life chances (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Hutchings, 2012; Youdell, 2004).

The introduction of parental school 'choice,' creating a quasi-market in education, has exacerbated this differentiation, particularly acute in London (Ball, Bowe, & Gewirtz, 1995; Ball, 2003; Gewirtz, Ball, & Bowe, 1995; Whitty, 2002). This has produced a school landscape in which some schools are very mixed in terms of ethnicity and social class, while others have over half of children in receipt of Free School Meals (used as an indicator of poverty), and some have more than 90% minority ethnic children (Reay et al., 2007). Research has found that children are actually more segregated in their schools than in their neighbourhoods (Burgess, Wilson, & Lupton, 2005; Johnston, Wilson, & Burgess, 2004). Thus, while the school landscape is constantly shifting, London schools tend to witness a clustering of middle classes in higher performing schools. Such clustering inevitably affects the opportunity to mix.

Despite steady research over the years suggesting the importance of school composition or social mix on school effectiveness, or overall attainment (Willms, 2010, Glatter, 2012; Thrupp, 1995), there has been little evidence of systemic or structural change to the English school system in terms of fostering a mix. While the racial 'de-segregation' of schools formed the most radical policy move in the history of schooling in the USA (Clotfelter, 2006), the UK clings tight to, what Dorling (2007) unforgivingly refers to as, a rigid, archaic reinforcement of the class system through schools structuring. Further, differentiation in the system due to the introduction and expansion of Academies and Free Schools, to increase 'parent choice', sees us potentially moving in the opposite direction to addressing school mix (Academies Commission, 2013).

In this landscape of sharp differentiation in the school marketplace; increasing numbers of middle classes using London schools; and the imperative placed on schools to manage this mix to positive

[3] This process is also deemed to be driven by rising private school fees, in a time of economic austerity.

ends; this thesis asks what happens in London schools that are socially and ethnically mixed? Does mix lead to mixing, and what are the potential consequences of this? Through this thesis then I want to reignite 'old' debates about the value of socially mixed schooling; I want to explore gentrification and social mix through the experiences of young people being schooled together in cities, and I want to the challenge the policy literature on community cohesion and mixed communities by bringing a sociological approach to this topic. Below I outline my approach to do this.

Outline of my approach

My thesis draws on four quite diverse and separate sets of sociological literature in order to explore this topic methodologically and theoretically. I review these literatures in detail in chapter one, but I outline them here:

1. Living multiculture and social mixing
2. Gentrification and social mixing
3. Youth formation and subculture
4. Schooling and identities

The literature on the urban, multiculture and social mix brings together important analyses of the everyday conviviality of ethnic mixing in the publics of the city and a conceptualisation of urban culture *as mixed* as a consequence of this (e.g. see Gilroy, 2004; Kesten et al., 2011; Rampton and Harris, 2003; Wessendorf, 2010). Yet the literature on gentrification brings a counter analysis which points to more problematic urban relations when social class is brought to the fore (e.g. see Byrne, 2006; Butler and Robson, 2003; Reay et al., 2007). While the studies of multiculture emphasise the fluid, shifting and performative nature of racialised identities, the research on gentrification and class relations point to the stubborn solidity of social class hierarchies, revealing self segregationist tendencies among the urban middle classes, and fierce strategising to ensure social class reproduction. Specifically the gentrification literature points to the pivotal role of the urban school. However, the gentrification literature presents predominantly parents perspectives, but lacks a focus on young people and their everyday experiences. Thus the third and fourth bodies of literature- from youth studies and education studies- provide the conceptual and methodological focus on young people. The traditional literature from youth studies highlights the importance of youth subcultural affiliations as a site of sociological study (e.g. Clarke et al., 1981; Hebdige, 1988) and more recent approaches to subculture calls for a move to 'bring structure back in' (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006) to understand how social divisions still structure youth

formations in new ways. Griffin's (2011) paper on social class beyond the Birmingham school is pivotal in beginning this work, by applying a cultural class analysis. Feminist education research on identity brings a useful compliment to this subcultural literature to understand social mixing, in bringing together an analysis of gender, social class and race. This literature is important in its examination of the school as a site of in the production and maintenance of identity, but specifically gender and sexuality (e.g. see Epstein & Johnson, 1998; Francis et al., 2010; Renold, 2005). Friendship studies in education enhance my analysis of social mixing by providing me with a lens to see the collective operations of identity work and the role of the friendship group in regulating classed, raced and gendered identities, within the constraints of the school as a regulatory institution (e.g. See Epstein et al., 2002). Hey's (1997) ethnographic work on girls' friendship is central in informing this theoretical work. With this diverse literature comes a complex task in a coherent theorisation of social mixing. I set out this task here.

In order to foster a better understanding of the dynamics and potentials for social mixing, drawing on the work of Amin (Amin, 2002 p. 960), Vertovec (2006) calls for an anthropology of 'local micropolitics of everyday interaction', or a 'located politics of difference' (Jacobs & Fincher, 1998, p.9). Such work calls for attention to multiple categories of identity, and to 'superdiversity'. Thus a deeper, more politicised, and spatialised account is needed, which theorises the relationship between identity, power and place- how people define their differences in relationship to uneven material and spatial conditions (and see also Vertovec, 2006). My thesis then intends to provide a deeper analysis of the located micropolitics of identity and mixing in schools.

In developing a contextualised account of mixing, we need to consider how differences get constructed through *discourse*- through images, representations, practices and events (Rampton & Harris, 2003), and how local discourses of difference connect to, or diverge from, wider government, policy, media and academic-informed discourses circulating. Furthermore, how people define their differences in uneven material and spatial conditions, and how we talk about such differences are deeply affective processes. This thesis pays critical attention to the emotions generated by discourses of 'social mix' or 'community cohesion', and how certain mixes come to be seen as positive or negative, or bringing about 'good' or 'bad' feelings (Ahmed, 2007), and how these are mobilised to different ends.

A focus on social relations from a sociological perspective is needed to better understand the possibilities for social mix to lead to social mixing. Research in the field of community cohesion or neighbourhood mix tend to take the community or the neighbourhood as the unit of analysis (Bunnell et al., 2012), where the analytical focus is often on the 'conviviality' of interactions

between relative strangers. However, in terms of understanding young people's possibilities for social mixing, an analytical focus on friendships provides a deeper understanding. Friendships may appear to be an individualised psychologised phenomenon but, they are deeply embedded in, and reproductive of social structures (Hey; 1997; Bottero, 2005).

Contrary to much community cohesion policy, rather than seeing ethnicity or 'race', as some kind of essential characteristic, we need to look at this process of how cultural activity becomes categorised/ divided up and institutionalised (for example as 'Black culture') (Rampton & Harris, 2003) and to explore what the pertinent dimensions are along which different identities are expressed or represented (Jacobs & Fincher, 1998). What are the differences which make a difference in urban schools? Thus a key tool I use is to explore identity as it is *performed* in specific local contexts (both through embodied enactments but also through discourse). For example what does it mean to perform 'Black' and 'White' in the city (Dillabough & Kennelly, 2010), in urban schools? This attention to discourse and the performative elements of identity, leads me to a conceptualisation not of race and ethnicity as fixed characteristics, but instead to processes of racialisation (Ali, 2003b; Dillabough & Kennelly, 2010; Rollock & Gillborn, 2011): how certain ethnic communities and cultures come to be constructed and codified in certain ways.

At the same time as recognising the fluid and socially constructed nature of racial identities, we need to be aware of the structures of racism and the constraints this places on agency. We need to recognise that race is an organising principle of the state, where 'multiculturalism, citizenship and cohesion has served to divide up people across the imaginary fault line of race, frequently deploying the language of 'culture', 'ethnicity' or 'community' in its place' (Nayak, 2012, p. 462). At the same time as minority ethnicities are racialised, Whiteness is normalised and becomes the social norm through which others are judged (Bonnett, 2000; Bonnett, 2005; Frankenberg, 1997; Garner, 2006; Nayak, 2012). This study then takes a social constructionist approach to race, with attention to Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) to understand the power relations involved in processes of racialization which I detail in chapter two.

Fundamentally what is missing from the community cohesion policy literature is any kind of class analysis. With intergenerational social mobility the most stunted it has been for centuries (Blanden & Machin, 2007; Dorling, 2007; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009), claims about the death of class (Pakulski & Waters, 1996): seem misguided. As Louis Weis (2008) argues:

> *With a clear turn in the global economy, one accompanied by deep intensification of social inequalities, the need for serious class based analysis of schooling [....] and social structure could not be more pressing' (Dillabough & Kennelly, 2010, p.14)*

Social and ethnic mixing in today's cities is taking place in very uneven material and spatial conditions. Given that socio-economic background is the biggest predictor of educational success (ONS, 2005; Reay, 2006), attention to how these uneven conditions play out for young people, and the role of schooling in this, is pressing. Thus this thesis seeks to provide an analysis of how social inequalities structure schooling in the city, and inform and constrain young people's opportunities to mix.

Crucial in our contemporary understanding of class is the way in which class is not purely enacted through the economic realm, but through culture. This is something particularly visible in youth culture (Archer, Hollingworth, & Halsall, 2007; Harvey, Ringrose, & Gill, 2013). That is not to say that class is no longer economic, but to understand the ways in which cultural (and social) resources accrue economic value. Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical tools (Bourdieu, 1997(1986); Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), and contemporary applications (Hey, 1997, 2002, 2005; Griffin, 2011; Reay, 2004c, 2005; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011; Skeggs, 1997; Skeggs, 2004), which I elaborate on in chapter two, are thus fundamental to this thesis, particularly understanding the way in which the education system is key in this circulation of cultural and social resources. In this thesis then, a cultural class analysis is deployed–with attention to the circulation of cultural resources of different value, and the more hidden, implicit ways in which this forms hierarchies of distinction (Skeggs, 2004). Attention to these classed processes is fundamental to understanding social mixing and its relationship to social mobility in this thesis.

Very little, if any, attention has been paid to gender in policy on community cohesion, nor in policy on mixed neighbourhoods. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the formal and informal segregation of men and women is so naturalised that it is not even considered questionable. In Britain certain public institutions and activities- from dressing rooms to toilet facilities; to schooling and sport- are gender segregated. Furthermore the labour market segregation of men and women, the segregation of leisure activities and indeed the historical gendered division between the 'public' and the 'private' realm is to some extent normalised and naturalised (Hey, 1997), despite gradual moves to undo these divisions led by feminist claims to equality. There is still a strong social consensus about spaces where implicitly men or women are more or less welcome. Indeed one could argue that to conceive of 'happy' cohesive communities relies on a certain level of gendered segregation, where women know their place. Puwar (2004) for example has written eloquently about (minority ethnic) women's experiences in the houses of parliament, the church and the executive board room- spaces traditionally reserved for certain (White) masculinities. Through her research she writes about how these are fundamentally uncomfortable

experiences of discordance, disorientation, exclusion and alienation, which are embodied experiences: 'bodies out of place'. Moreover, as she highlights there is a racialised dynamic to this, where Black, or minority ethnic bodies face a double exclusion. What is important here is an implicit hierarchy where Whiteness and masculinity (and middle classness) have higher status and thus face fewer barriers to occupying privileged spaces.

Schools are key sites of this gendered regulation, where girls and boys come to know their place through gender segregated practices, activities and expectations (Francis & Skelton, 2001, 2005). Underpinning the invisibility of gender in social mixing debates, is a conceptualisation of the biological basis of sex, and the essential nature of gender. A widespread belief that men and women are essentially different, and that sex and gender are natural classifications and categorisations underlies a justification for a certain level of segregation. This, I argue, impinges on our capacity to conceive of the different possibilities for gendered mixing. In this thesis, drawing on Butler's (1990, 1993) work, and others' application of it (for example Francis, 2010), however, I disrupt this comfortable conceptualisation by emphasising the socially constructed nature of these naturalised divisions, and instead explore the ways in which gender is performative and constantly brought into being through discursive practices. This helps us to better understand social mixing by drawing attention to the (re)production of categories and classifications of difference.

A sophisticated analytical attention to the interaction and interrelation of race, social class and gender is woefully absent in existing policy approaches to community cohesion and neighbourhood social mix. In academic social science scholarship, conversely, theoretical attention has been given to 'intersectionality,' (Archer et al., 2001; Yuval-Davis, 2005; Valentine, 2007) whereby it is asserted that we cannot understand processes of racial exclusion without attention to gender or class or other markers of difference. This thesis takes on a bold challenge to do justice to intersectional theorising in understanding social mixing.

Research questions and aims

Conceptualising mixing in terms of the performative nature of identities and within hierarchies of power, I examine the cultural practices of youth friendship-making as classed process. The aim of this thesis is to explore further this question of the possibilities of mix leading to *mixing* in the socially and ethnically mixed environment of urban schools, this time from the perspectives of a range of students from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds. This thesis has four key objectives:

1. To examine the patterns of young people's friendships in two urban schools as a lens to explore social mixing among urban young people
2. To explore the role of the school and wider institutional processes in facilitating or constraining social mixing among its students
3. To examine the discursively informed practices and processes which lead to differentiation and stratification in urban young people's friendship groupings
4. To investigate the processual nature of social mixing through attention to the socio-spatial contexts and moments in which social mix leads to social mixing

In meeting these objectives, this thesis aims to contribute to new and emerging theorising on intersecting identities of social class, race and gender and the mixing of these identities. The attention to the micro-politics (Amin, 2002), and to discursive constructions of identity, thus informs this study's use of indepth, qualitative, interview-based research. My interest, and expertise in urban youth and the importance of educational transitions in structuring young people's lives, frames the focus on students aged 16-19 years old. This age is in many ways a pivotal point at which students can reflect on friendship continuities and disjunctures, following the transition from compulsory to post-compulsory education.

Overview of methods

The research took place over three academic terms in 2010-2011, in two mixed gender London secondary schools, which I have named Eden Hill School and Stellar Academy. The schools were carefully selected, crucially, for their socially and ethnically mixed demographics, but also for their divergence in terms of sixth form course 'offer.' This enables exploration of the importance of educational transitions and trajectories. The research involved a situated 'case study' of each school, involving analysis of published and unpublished materials; interviews with key members of staff; and an element of unstructured observation during the time in the field. I conducted indepth, one to one, interviews with a purposive sample of a total of thirty young people attending these schools, focusing on their discursive constructions of friendship affiliations in their schools, using a participatory method of 'friendship mapping', or 'sociograms' to elucidate their own friendship networks. This was supplemented by four focus group discussions with groups of friends in each school.

Crucially this thesis explores social mixing at different levels: from the institutional to the group to individual biographies. In this study I explore the way in which schools are discursively constituted (Hollingworth & Archer, 2010), thus providing the spaces of possibility for mixing. I explore the

importance of cultural process of distinction-making among young people, as classed process. I look at how these come to construct differentiated classed, raced and gendered subcultures, and I explore the located micropolitics of how these differences get negotiated, leading to different possibilities for mixing.

Overview of the chapters

This thesis is divided into four parts with two chapters in each. In the first part, in chapter one I review the existing research and literature which informs this study. Specifically, I draw on four bodies of sociologically informed literature, on living multiculture and social mixing; gentrification and social mix; youth studies on (post)subculture and feminist education research on friendship and identities. In Chapter two I outline my theoretical framework in more detail; set out my research design; give an account of my fieldwork, my methodological choices, and analytical tools.

Parts two to four explore my empirical data. In Part Two, through analysis of discourses of mixing in the two schools I explore the affective, institutionalised processes of mixing. Chapter three focuses on Eden Hill school, and chapter four Stellar Academy and through each of these chapters, using Ahmed's (2004; 2006a; 2007) work I explore the circulation of good and bad feeling through discourses of the 'good mix' (Byrne, 2006a) at Eden Hill, versus 'inclusion' at Stellar Academy. I explore how negative affects attach to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and working class bodies who represent the 'undesirable' learner, and 'good feeling' attaches to White middle class bodies and the acceptable high achieving Black and minority ethnic Other. I show how value is attributed to the White middle classes as emblems of educational success, and the Black working classes come to embody the unhappy, value-less repository of academic failure.

In Part Three, drawing on performativity theory, and Bordieusian theoretical tools, I explore the classed processes of valuing inherent in young people's subcultural friendship formation. Chapter five focuses on Black working class subcultures –the 'Football Crowd' and the 'Performing Arts girls', and chapter six, on White middle class groups- the' Neeks' and the 'Smokers'. Within these chapters I argue that school-based subcultures are key sites for the normative production of classed, raced and gendered identities. I illuminate how these different identities attract different resources and have different value in the context of the urban school. Crucially I demonstrate how White middle class identities and subcultures become legitimated in the school context, which constrains opportunities for mixing.

Part Four moves from the group as the unit of analysis to the individual, and explores the located micro-politics (Amin, 2002; Jacobs and Fincher, 1998) and processes of social mixing. Drawing on

Skegg's (2004) work I theorise friendships and mixing in terms of use value and exchange value. In chapter seven I explore the 'exchange value self' through analysis of the friendships stories of four participants, exploring the micro classed, raced and gendered practices at play in attempts to mix into White middle class groups, and I demonstrate the partial and constrained nature of these attempts. Chapter eight, the final chapter, explores the narratives and experiences of students who do not belong to the popular subcultural groupings. The excluded who exclude themselves from that from which they have already been excluded (Bourdieu, 1984), these 'misfits'' failure to embody the enterprising subject of value, locks them outside of exchange value, and outside of the main subcultural groups. However I argue that this provides the potential for more mixed friendships based on use value.

I conclude this thesis by discussing the implications of this study for understanding social mixing more complexly, and pointing to the ways in which my theoretical insights might advance other fields of study on identity, urban schooling and social mix.

Part 1: Understanding social mixing in urban schools

Chapter 1: Urban youth, social mixing, friendship and schooling: the literature

This initial part of the thesis sets the scene for the study of social mixing in urban schools. This chapter outlines and critically engages with the key bodies of literature that inform this study. I draw on diverse literature from sociology, geography and youth studies which provide different lenses for the study of youth, schooling, cities, mixing and multiculture. Substantively I first situate my study in the sociological literature on multiculture and social mixing in the urban context, I then discuss the literature which draws attention to the role of schooling in reinforcing a differentiated city. I then move on to outline key literature from youth studies on subculture and demonstrate how recent calls to advance this field welcome new ways to explore how structural categories of social class and race still inform young people's affiliations, despite the plural and hybrid nature of youth styles. The final body of literature I outline moves into the urban school identifying relevant education studies literature on children and young people's friendships in the context of schooling, particularly how these friendships are intimately connected with learner identities. I conclude by pulling out the key contributions of these bodies of literature to my study and how they provide the basis for the theoretical framework deployed. Before I move onto my first substantive topics, I provide a brief historical context to the sociological study of mixing.

The urban as a sociological topic

Social mix and social mixing have been enduring topics of sociological significance, particularly in relation to the urban context, even though not conceptualised in these terms. In early American sociology, the famous Chicago School- with its roots in European phenomenology- foregrounded the importance of subjective experience of the city. They were concerned with processes of urbanisation in Chicago in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, where growing numbers of arrivals of immigrants was coupled with ensuing rise in poverty, homelessness and crime. Such work was diverse in nature but later informed a substantial body of research in the US concerned with race relations. The move to urban dwelling was seen to bring with it new opportunities to develop a form of subjectivity in a heterogeneous and diverse environment. Benjamin's (2002 [1935]) character of the 'flaneur' is an emblematic figure of modern urban life, an explorer of the city as spectacle, who strolls leisurely –enjoying the rich variety the city has to

offer. However, it has been acknowledged that the flaneur occupies a particularly privileged vantage point on the city (May, 1996).

The city also brought problematic new forms of conflict. Underpinning much of this work, which spanned the Atlantic, was a conception of the city as a superficial and alienating place. This was most notably embodied in Simmel's (1903) work on the *Metropolis and Mental Life*. Simmel's sociological figure of the stranger, later developed by Bauman (1991), exerted a strong influence on the sociological imagination:

> *The Stranger is close to us, insofar as we feel between him and ourselves common features of a national, social, occupational, or generally human, nature. He is far from us, insofar as these common features extend beyond him or us, and connect us only because they connect a great many people.*
>
> (Simmel, 1976 [1903])

The stranger is characterised by a peculiar mixture of physical proximity and social distance. Thernstrom and Sennett (1969) argued that the dense and uncontrollable nature of the city leads the middle classes to construct 'the figure of the "other", the stranger, the foreigner' as a generalised threat from which to seek refuge (and see Horgan, 2012). In the sections which follow I trace how these perspectives have come to inform more contemporary sociological concerns with mixing across social and cultural difference in the urban context.

1.1 Living multiculture and social mixing

In this section I discuss the relationship between notions of cosmopolitanism and multiculture, and their contemporary sociological theorisation in relation to the urban context. Sociological research in this area has focused on the everyday 'conviviality' of urban mix, and indeed a particular conceptualisation of the urban as *mixed* – as creolised and hybrid in nature, but some scholars have also pointed to the hidden paradox of multiculturalism and the racial exclusions at play.

1.1.1 Cosmopolitan conviviality and everyday multiculture

A key sociological literature of relevance to this study has focused on the notions of 'cosmopolitanism' and issues of cultural and social distance (Binnie, Holloway, Millington, & Young, 2006; Bridge, 2006). Cosmopolitanism can be described as 'a worldview characterised by openness towards other cultures' and a willingness to engage with the 'Other' (Hannerz 1992 in Wessendorf, 2010, p. 18). The notion of cosmopolitanism has connotations of well travelled elites.

However, some urban scholars have chosen to emphasise how cosmopolitanism operates in the everyday 'banal' (Noble 2009) and the 'ordinary' (Lamont and Aksartova 2002; see also Werbner 1999 and Wise 2007). Critiquing the policy focus on tensions and conflicts between different groups (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010), scholars have come to conceptualise this variously as 'everyday' (Kesten, Cochrane, Mohan, & Neal, 2011), 'unpanicked' multiculture (Noble, 2009) or 'commonplace diversity' (Wessendorf, 2010). Such scholars emphasise how most urban dwellers live in mixed communities, to some degree, and get on with it on a daily basis. Scholars emphasise a 'pragmatic being-together' (Noble 2009, p.51), where 'everybody feels welcome' (Wessendorf 2010, p. 20). Similarly, Gilroy (2004) offers an account of urban spaces and sites of interaction framed in terms of 'conviviality'. For him, 'conviviality' refers to the coming together of previously unconnected cultures, a bridging of social and cultural distances.

Public spaces feature as a key focus for studies of multiculture as 'meaningful sites of interaction and intercultural engagement' (Wessendorf 2010, p. 22) or as Back (1996) refers to it, spaces of transcultural dialogue. Indeed in parallel, the American sociologist Anderson (2004), inspired by his ethnographic work in a Philadelphia public marketplace, has conceptualised this space as the 'cosmopolitan canopy':

> *A setting in which people of diverse backgrounds come together, mingle with strangers, and gain from their social experience, a critical folk knowledge and social intelligence about others they define as different from themselves. (Anderson 2004, p. 29)*

The 'cosmopolitan canopy' is a protected, enveloping space where people can appreciate, enjoy a sense of being together, and engage in cultural learning from each other. Such contact with others different is seen to break down barriers and provide opportunities for some kind of relations across difference (Amin, 2002). Of relevance to this thesis, I explore the idea of urban schools as such cosmopolitan spaces, and ask to what extent they are characterised by an unpanicked conviviality, enabling cultural learning.

There is a particular body of literature in cultural studies which conceptualises the urban *as mixed.* This literature argues that a conceptualisation of contemporary urban culture as, in and of itself, mixed: exploring hybrid (Bhabha, 1994), creolised (Hannertz, 1989 Barth, 1989) cultures, is more useful than conceiving of fixed, essentialised ethnic cultures. The concept of 'hybridity' has been developed by Bhabha (1994) as a kind of 'third space' of 'inbetweenness,' a straddling of cultures (ibid, 1994). Others have argued that the idea of a third space- an inbetweenness- does not do justice to the truly mixed nature of urban culture. Back, in his work on urban music, uses Deleuze and Guattari's 'rhizomes' - which emphasises horizontal connections (between things which might

have no connection to each other) (Back, 2003 [1995], p. 329). He also uses a musical term *intermezzo* (meaning short dramatic musical performance serving as a connecting link between other pieces of music) to understand new urban cultures that are a fusion between different cultures. Similarly Hewitt, who studied London Jamaican creole language forms and their use by White youth in south London, coins the term 'polyculture' to challenge the essentialist notions of discrete cultures that are coming together in the urban (Hewitt, 2003 [1992], p. 189). In this sense, the urban is conceived of as so mixed that even the term 'multi' does not do it justice.

Both Hewitt and Back imply mixed and hybrid urban cultural forms are facilitated by mixed friendships and mixed social relations (Back, 2003 [1995], p. 335; Hewitt, 2003 [1992]). Such studies, however, have tended to focus on working class cultures, and the multiethnic hybridity of *working class* London life. Thus for these scholars, the urban is so mixed that ethnicity almost ceases to become an important factor in the local urban context (Back, 1996; Rampton & Harris, 2003, p. 3). Such studies have tended to focus on mixed culture itself, as the site of analysis, and the sites where racial difference is reinforced, are less visible. Further, concepts of cultural creolisation, hybridity, intermezzo infer harmonious relations and transactions. But this theorisation does not clearly account for power struggles, nor the relations between different social class groups. An openness to others or even 'habitual contact' is no guarantor of cultural exchange (Amin 2002; Wessendorf 2010; Noble 2009). Furthermore, such contact can just lead to the substantiating of stereotypes (Anderson, 2004), or even conflict (Lees, 2008; Wessendorf, 2010). Mix does not necessarily equal mixing, and mixing is not always positive in its effects.

1.1.2 Critical cosmopolitanism

In his more recent analysis, of new migrant communities, Back and colleagues (2012) emphasise 'new hierarchies of belonging', and 'new racisms', where minority communities are positioned differently in the contemporary, within a 'racial reordering' and 'differential inclusion'. Similarly Yuval-Davis (2005) points out that 'the border is being opened up very selectively while maintaining a strong demarcation and boundaries between the deserving and the undeserving (2005, p.520). Indeed, Critical Race Theory (CRT) shines a spotlight on the hidden, yet institutional ways in which racism operates as a 'permanent fixture' (Gillborn, 2008, p. 27; Ladson-Billings, 1998). In tandem Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) identifies the need 'to move away from the quintessential focus on the 'racial other' and examine instead the institutionalisation of Whiteness and the systemic factors that underscore its continued dominance' (Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005, p. 147). Thus any approach to multiculture or 'polyculture' (Hewitt, 2003 [1992]) needs to take into account that all cultures are not positioned equally, and some

cultural or 'racial' identities carry around an 'invisible' (McIntosh, 1997 [1992]) privilege within the mix.

Indeed, others stress the fundamentally ambivalent experience of city living and mixing: mix as simultaneously desirous and intolerable, attracting and repelling (Back & Keith, 2004; Gilroy, 2004); obligatory but dangerous (Fortier, 2007) and as something that requires (by some) careful control and management of just the 'right' or 'good' mix (Byrne, 2006a; Diane Reay et al., 2007). Bauman refers to this ambivalence in terms of 'mixophilia' and 'mixophobia' (Bauman, 2003, pp. 112-115). He suggests, for some, the city's richness, diversity of its mix, and the opportunities it affords its inhabitants for mixing is *too much*.

However this literature warns that 'racial' and ethnic categorisation is still a lived reality in the global city and racial hierarchies still exist, in which White groups confer invisible advantage. This is perhaps what is at the heart of this ambivalence. Ahmed's (2007) work is useful in understanding the hidden paradox of multiculturalism. She connects debates about the future of multiculturalism with the new, psychologised 'science of happiness'. Exploring the emotional dimensions of multicultural mixing, or more specifically, the circulation of *affects* among diverse bodies, she argues that social cohesion, or lack of it, is framed in policy discourse in terms of happiness, where too much diversity, in conjunction with not enough mixing, is framed as bringing unhappiness to society. She argues that in more recent policy frameworks, multiculturalism has become an 'unhappy object' by being associated with segregation, while 'integration' becomes what promises happiness ('if only we mixed we would be happy') (Ahmed, 2007, p. 132). But this is a mixing where integration or assimilation is 'good' mixing. She argues that good or bad feelings are unevenly distributed in the social field, and that good and bad feeling circulates and becomes attached to certain objects, and becomes stuck to certain objects or bodies more than others.

In her example of the 'happy smiling multiculturalism' of the film *Bend it Like Beckham*, she argues that when Jess, the Indian girl, is allowed to join the football game and gets to play football with her love interest, a White boy, the two different cultural worlds 'come together' in a shared moment of enjoyment, but one in which White guilt can be displaced by good feelings. However, Jess' father represents the 'the melancholic migrant:' 'the one who is not only stubbornly attached to difference, but who insists on speaking about racism, where such speech is heard as labouring over sore points'. Here bad feeling emanates from the melancholic migrant, who becomes 'sticky, saturated with affects, a site of personal and social tension' (2007, p. 126). Ahmed argues these processes of affect circulation serve to hide the workings of White privilege

where a particular version of the ethnic 'Other' is seen to bring happiness. As others have noted, there are cosmopolitan winners and cosmopolitan losers (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004).

Some go as far as to suggest that the very concept of multiculturalism is both racialising and exclusionary (Yuval-Davis, 2005). It is worth quoting Zizek at length:

> *'Multiculturalism is a disavowed, inverted, self referential form of racism, a racism with a distance- it respects the Others' identity, conceiving the other as a self enclosed, 'authentic' community towards which he [sic] the multiculturalist maintains a distance rendered possible by his privileged universal position [...] the privileged empty point of universality from which one is to appreciate and (depreciate) properly other particular cultures- the multi cultural respect for the Other's specificity is the very form of asserting one's own superiority.' (Zizek, 1997 cited in Bev Skeggs, 2004, p. 157).*

The concept of multiculturalism then is seen to be racist, in that it assumes an essentialised other, who is granted inclusion. Various authors have highlighted the absence of class in these debates on multiculturalism and indeed, cosmopolitanism (Jon Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Haylett, 2006). For Zizek, and Skeggs, the very act of 'celebrating diversity' is conceived of from this position of both class and race privilege, where this position of privilege is assumed to be the 'norm' from which the 'Other' acts as a culture to be consumed. Within this framework, too much mixing can come to be a threat to middle class privilege, and the urban is a key site in which we see the management of this play out.

In sum, there is clearly some mileage in stressing the everyday, convivial, and fundamentally mixed nature of 'cosmopolitan' urban multi-culture, which serves to break down barriers but also to make the boundaries between cultural and ethnic categories more fuzzy and permeable. Urban schools clearly have the potential to foster convivial relations and cultural learning. However, other studies point towards newer forms of exclusion at play in the urban mixed context. I explore the potential for cosmopolitan winners and cosmopolitan losers in the game of mixing in urban schools, understanding mixing as an affective process in which 'happiness' attaches to certain bodies within these hierarchies of belonging.

1.2 Gentrification and social mixing: the urban middle classes in the city

Taking a more empirical focus on social mixing, gentrification scholars have pointed to the *inequalities* and *stratification* between the groups that mix within urban spaces, offering an alternative and critical lens that attends to the role of class and privilege in this mixing within the city. Several decades of research across sociology and geography into the gentrification of urban

areas, have charted the process of social and economic change in cities, in an undoubted trend towards urbanisation but growing inequality on a global scale (Amin & Thrift, 2002; T. Butler, 2007). For clarity, gentrification can be defined as:

> *'[...] a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital. The greater the difference in socio-economic status, the more noticeable the process, not least because the more powerful the new users are, the more marked will be the concomitant change in the built environment. It does not matter where, it does not matter when. Any process of change fitting this description is, to my understanding, gentrification' (Clark 2005,cited in Butler, 2007, p.5).*

Butler (2007) argues that gentrification is fundamentally a classed process in which middle classes move into previously working class areas. In this process, Butler argues that where you live is increasingly becoming a classed marker of identity, beyond occupational classification. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this thesis to review this literature in its entirety, of relevance here are the social relations between 'gentrifiers' and 'non-gentrifiers': those local working class (multi-ethnic) inhabitants of urban gentrifying areas and how this plays out for young people and schooling.

Much urban policy posits the benefits of gentrification in both the economic and social capital that the middle classes bring to such neighbourhoods. However, there is little evidence that this is the case. In particular, Loretta Lees in a review of gentrification and social mixing argues that 'there is poor evidence base for the widespread policy assumption that gentrification will help increase the social mix, foster social mixing and thereby increase the social capital and social cohesion of inner-city communities' (Lees, 2008, p. 2450).

Various qualitative research studies in London in particular find that middle class gentrifiers seek out this global multicultural city precisely for its mix- where their narratives are imbued with celebrations of diversity (Butler, 2003; May, 1996). However, after Benjamin (2002 [1935]), May described the Stoke Newington middle class gentrifiers in his study as the new urban 'flaneurs'- who were 'in the crowd, but not of the crowd' (May, 1996, p. 208). The suggestion being that they have some kind of superior gaze over the inhabitants of the city. Indeed both Butler and May found little evidence of these middle classes mixing. Rather these ethnic 'Others' provided a colourful backdrop (ibid, 1996). Butler's further research in Brixton, found despite the vast majority of respondents being attracted to Brixton because of its multicultural population, these communities have very little to do with each other and pass across each other with almost no contact, leading to a situation which he and Robson describe as 'socially tectonic' (Robson & Bulter, 2001). Amit and Rapport similarly framed this as lives lived in parallel in a 'mosaic of little

worlds that touch but do not interpenetrate' (Amit and Rapport, 2002 cited in Bottero, 2005, p. 8). May argues that this is a new form of 'cultural voyeursim' which only works one way: that is, it is only open to those (middle classes) who have certain control over local space (1996, p. 206). Lees (2008) concludes that there is little evidence that gentrification engenders social mixing.

Butler and Robson's studies found that middle class social networks were an important aspect of their city living experience. In their research in Telegraph Hill, South London, for example, the notion of the 'urban village' penetrated many narratives where a middle class sense of community buffered residents from the 'rougher' working class inhabitants. The middle class inhabitants all knew each other; and there were strong networks formed mainly around the primary school, which carried over into choices about secondary education and beyond (Robson & Bulter, 2001). They concluded: 'there is little evidence of numbers of cross class friendships' (Butler & Robson, 2003a, p. 127). Furthermore, their research suggested such homogeneity was consistent in children's friendships, particularly evident in the pre-school, which 'remained highly exclusionary of non-middle class children' (Lees, 2008, p. 2450). Thus, when social class is taken into account it appears that urban mixing is both constrained and partial.

Bottero's notion of 'differential association' helps us to further understand these segregationist tendencies. She argues that who mixes with whom is inevitably differentiated in line with existing social structures (2005, p. 10). Bottero shows how social relationships are embedded within relations of hierarchical differentiation. That is, our choice of friendship networks, sociability and association, and our use of culture and style to 'mark' ourselves and 'mark off' others are all affected by hierarchy. Studies of social networks (which incorporate kinships, friendships and associative ties), clearly demonstrate how such connections enable access to resources and/or knowledge which can either bring competitive advantage or can entrap or fix people in disadvantaged positions (for example some classic studies include Bott, 1971; Grannovetter, 1983; MacLeod, 1995). 'Who you know' is a vital vehicle in access to opportunities. Such 'social capital' in the Bourdieusian sense (1997[1986]), can bring access to certain (valued) resources or knowledge which can be used to an individual's advantage. Thus we do not all have equal chances of access to the same relationships, networks and associations, and thus resources. As Fortier points out: 'who mixes with whom, and under what circumstances is not left to chance' (2007, p. 109).

Attention to the role of social mobility as a process can help us better conceptualise social mixing. Lees (2008) turns to Goldthorpe's (1969) study of the affluent worker- looking at the consequence of affluence on the class structure. Goldthorpe and colleagues argued that not only would the

working class need to acquire economic status but they would also need to demonstrate middle class cultural and social behaviours to be accepted by the middle classes. They concluded that while there was evidence of economic convergence there was little evidence of social convergence- not only did the middle classes not want to accept the affluent working classes into their communities, there was little evidence that the affluent workers wanted to join them. (Lees, 2008). What this points to is the importance of class processes in mixing- even when the working classes were becoming 'more middle class', there still appeared to be fierce policing of social class boundaries, elevating an 'authentic' middle class self (Skeggs, 2004).

1.2.1 The urban middle classes and education

A key site in which we can see the contentions of social mix and mixing in the urban play out, is that of schooling. My previous research on the White middle classes and school choice, with Reay and colleagues, is a key informant of this thesis and is thus reviewed in detail in this section (Reay et al., 2007).

Authors such as Butler (2003) and Ball and colleagues (Ball et al., 1995; Ball, 2003) have pointed to the importance of understanding education as a sphere for middle class cultural reproduction. Their research has studied the ways in which middle class groups, particularly in the London context, 'skillfully, assiduously and strategically use the sphere of education to their advantage in processes of class formation and maintenance' (Butler, 2003). This activity has been heightened by 'school choice' policy, in which a quasi-market for school choice is in operation (Ball et al., 1995), part of wider global processes of 'neoliberalism'.

The education system is simultaneously a site for social class and racial reproduction. Gulson argues that neoliberal school choice policy in various global cities, can be seen to enable 'the primacy of the White middle classes as an assemblage of aspiration and idealisation, in inner city public schooling and simultaneously render[s] race invisible' (2011, p. 1). In this scene, Whiteness and middle classness is normalised – constructed as the ideal, aspirational self, against which others must be measured. As middle class social reproduction becomes more challenging in neoliberal times of increasingly scarce resources, the White middle classes can be seen to be investing greater economic, social and psychological resources in making the 'right' school choice (Reay et al., 2011). In particular, inner-city schooling infuses White middle-class parents with fear and anxiety, or at least a growing sense of unease that their children's progress may be hindered by an education of substandard variety. Fear of downward social mobility, through inadequate schooling, or as Ehrenreich refers to it: 'fear of falling' (1989), infuses middle class choices. Butler and Robson argue 'threat is perceived at every level' (Butler & Robson, 2003, p. 4). Butler's

research in the early 2000s, on middle class gentrifers, found in many gentrified areas of inner London, there were often no local state secondary schools which were regarded as 'acceptable' by middle-class parents (Butler, 2003), thus strategies involved 'going private;' travelling long distances to neighbouring boroughs; or 'playing the system' in various ways to access higher achieving state schools. At the same time, such research suggests school choice for the working classes is much more constrained. Working class parents were found to be more ambivalent about the benefits of parental school choice for them. They were more hesitant about their (and their child's) entitlements, making more 'safe' choices about what they feel 'at home' with: not necessarily the most high achieving schools (Reay & Ball, 1997).

1.2.2 Mixophobia and mixophilia

Even nearly ten years after Butler's research, when we have seen an improvement in the 'standards' in urban schools (Hutchings, 2012), the process of choosing schools generates a great deal of anxiety for middle class parents who fear that their children will not 'get on' and 'fit in' with the 'unruly mob' imagined to populate such schools (Reay, 2007; Crozier et al. 2008). Aside from attainment rates, the 'right' ethnic and social class composition of a school appears to be an important factor for middle class parents in finding a suitable school for their child (Bruegel, 2006; Butler & Robson, 2003b; Byrne, 2006a; Reay, *et al.*, 2007). Byrne's London-based research with White middle class mothers of *pre-school* age children found 'race and class lay at the heart of the way parents approached the question of which school they sent their children to' (Byrne, 2006a, p. 1004). In particular, for White middle class families making school choices in the inner city, there is a fear of being in a minority; having too much contact with working class minority ethnic children and not enough contact with middle class children (Ball, 2003). For such parents, some kind of 'critical mass' (Reay et al., 2007, p. 1048) of White middle class students- or an optimum level of minority ethnic and working class students- comprises a school that White middle class families will tolerate. This can lead to school 'colonisation' by the middle classes (Maguire, Wooldridge, & Pratt-Adams, 2006; Mansaray, 2012) as certain schools' 'reputation' makes it more popular with middle class families. This can equally lead to a middle class flight from other schools seen to be not middle class enough. These kind of tidal pushes and pulls on school compositions highlights the contingent and processual nature of social mixing, but one in which certain groups have more power in this process.

In these processes, Byrne (2006a) found discourses of a 'good mix' permeated mothers' narratives about choice of school for their child. For Byrne, this was about finding the right balance. As one mother confessed: she was interested in meeting people who are not too 'similar' but whose

differences are not 'in your face'. Difference was on the one hand desired, but it also needed to be restrained. To be 'good' the mix must be or 'enough' but not 'too much'. Furthermore, schools which didn't have 'enough' White children, were ignored, regardless of how well they were performing (ibid).

In the research with White middle class parents who sent their children to multi-ethnic, predominantly working class, urban secondary schools, we found the good or the right mix was also a key concern (Reay et al., 2007). Parents had to grapple with something that the White middle classes don't often have to contend with: being in a minority. In this research, one father confessed that a 'close' mix of predominantly Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students at his daughter's school worried him that she would have problems 'fitting in' (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010, p. 52). Another parent praised his children's school, because it was 'low on the White trash factor.' Black and minority ethnic families were seen to hold high aspirations for their children, thus a school with more Black and minority ethnic children was seen as preferable to a school with too many White working class children (Reay et al., 2007, p. 1048). Other children found themselves the only middle class child in the school. As one father articulated: 'there wasn't really anybody- certainly in his form class and maybe in the year- that was middle class and I think he found that really difficult relating to people.' (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010, p. 54).

More recent research on the Black middle classes has found strikingly similar aversions to urban state schools with the 'wrong' kind of mix of unsuitable minority ethnic and working class children. For these Black parents, whose claims to authentic 'middle classness' is constrained, strategy involved going private to maximise their child's opportunities for educational success. However this was often found to be at the expense of their child 'fitting in.' Alternatively, seeking a state school with a good ethnic mix, where their child is less likely to experience racism, was tempered by an anxiety about their children mixing with the 'wrong kind' of (often Black) working class children who don't 'aspire' (Ball, J et al., 2011).

A large part of this parental anxiety about schools is centred on the friendships and associations their children might form. Byrne argues that this anxiety comes back to social class reproduction: social mixing raises the possibility that their children 'might not acquire the right social and cultural capital and raced and classed subjectivities' (2006a, p. 1006). If these children were to go to a school with only a very small proportion of White middle class children, the concern is that their children may not learn how to be White and middle class in the in the right way.

Our research suggested that social mix did not necessarily lead to social *mixing*. Interviews with parents, and a limited number of interviews with children in the families, found that amongst these children at least, their friendships appeared to be fairly homogenous (Reay et al., 2007). Analysing the London parent interviews from that study, suggested that mixing was partial and friendships across difference outside of school were less common. These students were set apart from their multi-ethnic working class peers by their extra-curricular and cultural practices, which were a key aspect of these middle class children's lives. Lessons in dance, drama, music; trips to museums, art galleries and the theatre; cultural holidays abroad, (which the schools did not provide) were in abundance. What was clear was how 'taste' in such activities strongly correlated with social position (Bourdieu, 1986). An investment in 'high' culture could be seen to ensure their children acquired the cultural capital needed for social reproduction: as Lareau put it a 'concerted cultivation' was at play (Lareau 2003 cited in Reay et al., 2007, p. 30). These processes of distinction however tended to set them apart in the school for example with one girl being teased 'you live in a mansion' and another being teased as being the 'posh one.' (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010, p. 55).

Furthermore, high achievement and ensuing educational success prevailed for these children and young people. This was a further factor that set them apart. The vast majority of these children were in the top 'ability groups'[4] and 'Gifted and Talented'[5] cohort. All but two of the 41 young people over the age of 18 had done well academically, going on to study at selective universities. 6 young people (15%) had been admitted to Oxbridge. (Reay et al., 2007, p. 31). This academic success was largely naturalised by parents, the vast majority of whom described their child as naturally 'bright' (Reay et al., 2007, p. 29).

However this sense of natural academic superiority was clearly one that was carefully managed. In the majority of cases parents took an interventionist role checking and helping with homework; buying in extra tuition, (particularly in London); paying for out of school activities and using both formal and informal connections to call the school to account when they feel it to be necessary

[4] It is common in secondary schools (and increasingly primary schools) in England to sort students according to academic 'ability' as measured in national standardised tests. Students are then grouped in classes or lessons according to such designations.

[5] The New Labour government introduced a scheme in urban secondary schools called 'Gifted and Talented' which promoted the selection of 'gifted' students- denoted as those high achieving in academic subjects; and 'talented' students as those excelling in a 'practical' subject for extra support and activities beyond the school timetable. For a critique see Gillborn, D. (2005) "*Memorandum to the Education Select Committee: race inequality, 'gifted & talented' students and the increased use of 'setting by ability'*." from http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmeduski/633/633we09.htm accessed 28th may 2013.

(Crozier et al 2007; James and Beedell, 2007). Parents also talked about feeling safe in the knowledge that if things went wrong they could always 'pull' their child out of the school (Reay et al., 2007).

Most parents celebrated their children's experience as a kind of cultural learning experience (Anderson, 2004) where, 'mixing with other cultures', or 'engaging with difference', (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010, p. 51) could be seen to bring their children a social confidence in the multicultural global context (Reay et al., 2007). As Van Zanten argues, urban schools were constructed as 'major agents of preparation for this heterogeneous type of modernity, typical of metropolitan areas' (2003, p. 119).

For some then, the working class and minority ethnic 'mass' at their children's schools formed a 'colourful backdrop' (May, 1996) for their children, who almost floated above it. Furthermore, the ways in which parents spoke of their children evoked Skeggs' character of the middle class omnivore (Skeggs, 2004). For example one girl we named 'Sophie,' was a typical example. She was an accomplished pianist, loved classical music and the theatre but also enjoyed Black music and clubbing and had friends from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. She had also been predicted four A grades at 'A' level and intended to study English at Oxford. Sophie, like many of the other young people in the study, was described by her father as 'a real multicultural kid.' (Reay et al., 2007, p. 1047).

In support of Butler's (2001) research on White middle class gentrifiers, we found that most of the young people remain firmly anchored in White middle class social networks. Sophie clearly did this through the friends she kept at her extracurricular activities (Diane Reay et al., 2007, p. 1047). It was not uncommon for parents to acknowledge their children's privileged networks (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010, p. 57). Maintaining these middle class networks was just as important to parents as curbing other unsuitable networks. There was a careful management of mix orchestrated by parents, one of whom described spending 'masses of [her] own time and effort' (Reay et al., 2007, p. 28) ensuring the 'comprehensive experience' (Williams & Hollingworth, 2007) would work out for her child. As Byrne (2006a) found some mothers were critical of their children's taste and style, with a fear of them adopting 'tacky' (working class) cultures and styles, or as one mother in our research put it, adopting a 'chavvy lifestyle' (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010, p. 56). The majority of parents expressed an anxiety about the White and Black working classes, but constructed a 'model minority' (Leonardo, 2004) in the 'aspirational' minority ethnic working class who were seen to have similar values to themselves: representing the 'acceptable' face of working classness. (Reay et al., 2007, p. 34). Thus, certain

minority ethnic friends were valued for their children –for example 'high achieving,' 'diligent' Asian children- whereas 'others' were perceived as abject and to be avoided- for example 'rude' Black girls.

'Aspirational' or high achieving Black and minority ethnic children offered acceptable aspects of working-class culture 'that can be put to use for the enhancement of the middle class' (Reay et al., 2007, p. 1050): they were seen as having value (Skeggs, 2004). Whereas, as Haylett (2001) describes, the White working classes are marked as the abject constitutive limit by which middle-class multiculturalism is known and valorised. They embody a Whiteness that is somehow excessive and incommensurably 'other' (Haylett, 2001 p.360). But the association of excess with Blackness never entirely disappears and there is still the fear and paranoia about 'big Black boys' (Reay et al., 2007). Similarly in Wessendorf's London-based ethnography, of what she termed 'commonplace diversity,' she observed fear of the other, through the discourse of gang culture, noting that 'one fragment of this picture of good diversity does not fit in: namely Black youngsters' (2010, p. 27). Skeggs (2004) argues that embodied visibility is key to the operations of cosmopolitanism:

> *Some people have no choice about visibility. Black women and men for instance are always read through highly visible systems of colour coding. Ahmed (1998b) notes that for most Black women and men, skin is seen as a stained physical 'reality' that cannot be transformed or contained. It is the physicality. (Skeggs, 2004, p. 156)*

Thus through its very visible physicality, the Black body can be seen more tentatively, as the constitutive limit of social mixing.

Furthermore, some scholars have argued that multicultural mixing is actually a form of acquisition for the middle classes. Skeggs goes on to argue that central to these different positions is the understanding that culture is a property that can be owned in particular ways by certain groups. She argues that:

> *to turn the intellectual gaze into a form of knowledge and competence for one's own enhancement is precisely how cosmopolitanism as a disposition is generated. This must involve access to the culture of others, turning them into objects of distanced contemplation for oneself' (Skeggs, 2004, p. 158)*

Thus the cultural learning that is seen to be generated in the 'micro public' (Amin, 2002) realm is not an equal exchange, but is acquisitive. Reay and colleagues (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010; Reay et al., 2007) argue that the way in which White middle class parents talk about the multi-ethnic Other who populate their children's schools, constructs them as a resource, a form of capital, for displaying their children's 'authentic' cosmopolitanism or urban cool.

This process in which the 'multi ethnic other' becomes a source of multicultural capital, also positions these White middle class parents as a symbolic 'buffer' between the pathologised White working classes on the one side and the traditional White middleclasses (Reay et al., 2007, p. 29). Both 'White working-class trash' and 'big Black thugs' are positioned here as 'abject', the embodiment of that which is valueless (Skeggs, 2004 cited in Reay et al., 2007, p. 1049).

These important studies on gentrification and school choice- which expose the workings of social class privilege in mixed communities- have so far focused on parents' experiences and their perspectives on their children's experiences, where much less is known about young people's experiences inside the school. The education literature on young people's friendships provides a useful starting point. However before I explore this literature I want first to outline the ways in which a classic body of literature in youth studies on subculture crucially informs this study on young people's friendship affiliations, but I also explore how this project can develop this.

1.3 Youth formation and subculture

The youth studies literature on subculture, whilst not explicitly concerned with 'mixing,' provides a different lens through which we can explore young people's friendships and affiliations within the school setting. The legacy of this literature has been a focus on the social class dynamics of youth formation. Key sites of study were typically White working class (heterosexual) masculine subcultures, which has subsequently generated feminist critiques (see Griffin, 2011; McRobbie, 1991 for discussion). The 1990s however brought a shift to more complex constellations of subcultural affiliations (Griffin, 2011). Specifically the 1990s witnessed the emergence of a field known as 'post subcultural studies' in which social class was deemed no longer an appropriate lens through which to view these increasingly diverse and mixed youth cultures. More recently however we have seen calls for a return to an analysis of the social structures which shape and constrain young people's associations (Griffin, 2011; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2006) and it is this call to which this thesis responds. First I review early subcultural theory and tease out its continued relevance for understanding youth cultures, before discussing subsequent debates and developments which force us to advance the study of subculture to understand contemporary young people's lives.

1.3.1 Early studies on youth formation

Famous for bringing a sociological lens to youth cultural formations, friendship associations and practices, the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) has pioneered work on subculture, since the late 1960s. Grounded in a Gramscian tradition, such work sought to

argue that social structural inequality can be read in and through cultural processes. Using the concepts of cultural hegemony and resistance, they explored how culture is implicated in the maintenance or disruption of forms of power, viewing youth culture as counter-hegemonic 'symbolic forms of resistance' (Hall & Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 1988; Willis, 1977). Thus, they argued, subcultures were a symbolic enactment of class position. Such studies which focused on subcultures such as mods (Hebdige, 1976; McRobbie & Garber, 1997 [1977]) and punks (Hebdige, 1988) argued that the styles of such subcultures could be read as working class forms of resistance.

Working class subcultures existed to carve out space, or 'territory,' both literally and metaphorically, for youth and young people whose concerns and interests were otherwise marginalised. A key feature observed and theorised was the development of 'social rituals' which served to mark out a collective identity but also structure the group and these rituals could be observed in their specific occasions of social interaction: 'the weekend, the disco, the bank-holiday trip, the night out in the 'centre', the 'standing-about -doing-nothing' of the weekday evening, the Saturday match' (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson, & Roberts, 1981, p. 104). Such social rituals could also be observed in the adoption and adaptation of material objects (clothing, and accessories such as motorbikes or mopeds). Thus not only were they arguing that young people's subcultural friendship formations were class-based, but that these groupings have distinct styles and rituals which are expressions of their collective classed experiences. Such studies were not explicitly concerned with mixing or social cohesion. However, in their illumination of sub-cultures (cultures within and without of mainstream culture) they provide a useful lens to explore contemporary youth friendship relations. Such attention to the social implications of cultural markers of style will provide a useful starting point for this study. However subcultural studies, with a dominant focus on boys and men, and working class cultures, do little to help us understand middle class subcultures, nor the experiences of girls.

1.3.2 Feminist critiques

Feminist authors have argued that the very theory of culture which underpins youth studies was assumed universal but was in fact highly gendered (Hey, 1997; McRobbie, 1991; McRobbie & Garber, 1997 [1977]). Feminist writers on subculture have stressed how studies have tended to either highlight girls as 'moral actors', or ignore them and focus on boys. As McRobbie argued, 'women were just the people who were dancing over in the corner by the speakers' (McRobbie 1980:43 in Hey, 1997). Girls were 'empirically underestimated and theoretically eliminated' (Hey, 1997, p. 16). Such feminist writers have argued that women and girls' marginalisation in

subculture, and subcultural studies reflects women's marginal societal location, confined to the private as opposed to the public sphere (McRobbie & Garber, 1997 [1977]). McRobbie and Garber, in their study of 'Teenybopper' culture, illuminated these more private cultures of girls' friendships based around romance, fashion and the private domestic space of the girls' bedrooms, in what became known as the 'culture of the bedroom' (McRobbie, 1991). This involved experimenting with makeup, gossiping about boys, and reading magazines. Girls' subcultures were thus seen as structurally different to boys, while boys were on the streets, girls subcultures were enacted in private at home through the use of emerging media. McRobbie and Garber's analysis of girls' involvement in biker, mod and hippy cultures argued that girls' 'cultural subordination is retained and reproduced' through their participation (McRobbie & Garber, 1997 [1977], p. 108). In this thesis, gender will thus remain an analytical focus, exploring girls' experiences of friendship *vis a vis* boys, and gender (in)equality in contemporary youth cultures. Feminist education research provides a fertile groundwork for greater attention to gender and young people's relationship cultures, but before I elaborate, I want to discuss the debates about the role of social class in young people's subcultural formations.

1.3.3 More recent elaborations

Since the 1990s 'post-subcultural studies' (PSCS) have rejected a classed and gendered analysis, advocating fluidity and flexibility in contemporary youth formations. From 'subculture' to 'clubcultures' (Redhead 1998) and 'way of life' to 'lifestyle' (Chaney 2004), such theorisation prioritises the idea of 'choice biographies' where young people are supposedly free from the constraints of their class-based (gendered, racialised) structural location in terms of career and life choices (see debate between Roberts, 2010; Woodman, 2010). While class-based subcultures were 'tightly bound around a homology of style, argot, territory, music and other focal concerns' (Greener & Hollands, 2006, p. 396), contemporary youth 'cultural forms,' (Blackman, 2005) have been argued to be more life-style driven. They are seen to coalesce not around class (gender, ethnicity) but primarily around consumption, 'ambiance, state of mind, expressed through lifestyles that favour appearance and 'form' (Maffesoli, 1996 cited in Blackman, 2005, p. 12), where 'there are no rules' only "'free floating signifiers' torn away from social structures" (Muggleton, 2000 cited in Blackman, 2005, p. 10). Maffesoli- implicitly supporting a rejection of class as a useful analytical unit- argues that there is a: 'multiplicity of overlapping groups in which the roles one plays become sources of identity, which, like masks, provide temporary 'identifications'.' (2000, p.xxii). He claims social status, therefore, acquires an ambiguous edge. Such debates speak well to the cultural studies literature which stress the hybrid nature of urban

youth cultures, but the structured and structuring nature of these 'temporary identifications' is lost.

Thornton's (1995) study on dance music club cultures was a key text in Post-subcultural studies which she argued for the declining significance of social class in young people's subcultural membership. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of 'capitals' she developed an alternative concept of 'subcultural capital,' which she used to argue that contemporary subcultures were essentially 'taste' cultures, but that these tastes were free floating, and not connected to class position. She argued that such music cultures were evidence of 'the politics of the youthful will to classlessness' (1995, p. 167) essentially seeing music cultures as a way of transcending class boundaries. Griffin (2011) argues that upper middle class youth adopting working class accents was mis-conceptualised by Thornton as evidence of a blurring of class boundaries. Indeed, Skeggs (2004) would argue such identity work makes class through middle class appropriation of working class styles. I elaborate more on this in section 1.3.5.

Thornton further argued that participants' *own* denial of class as an important structuring factor was evidence of the declining significance of class. This dilemma was not lost on subcultural scholars either. McRobbie admitted of her research with young women in Birmingham in the late 1970s:

> *At the same time I did tend to pull in class wherever I could in this study [working class girls and the culture of femininity] often when it simply wasn't relevant. Perhaps I was just operating with an inadequate notion of class, but there certainly was a disparity between my 'wheedling in' class in my report and its complete absence from the girls' talk and general discourse (McRobbie 1982b cited in Hey, 1997, p.9)*

McRobbie was also clearly struggling with the absence of class as a significant factor in young women's narratives. These conundrums need to be seen in the context of a wider cultural shift in which 'classless' society narratives have begun to dominate. Social class haunts us as a 'zombie category' (Reay, 2006) –dead, but living on, through ensuing social inequality.

1.3.4 'Bringing structure back in'[6]

While post-subcultural theorists were keen to eschew the 'deadweights' (Bennett, 2005; Martin, 2009) of structural positioning on young people's subcultural affiliations, a revival-informed by connections with education research and youth transitions studies- stressed the continued significance of categories of social class, in particular, but also race and gender, in structuring young people's lives (Griffin, 2011; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2006). For researchers located in

[6] (Shildrick & MacDonald, 2006, p. 131)

education and youth transitions it was more apparent that social inequality had never gone away. Looking to this work, recent youth studies scholars point to the 'lack of attention' that post-subcultural studies pays to issues of 'racial formation, ethnic identity construction and articulation of racism in and between subcultures.' (Carrington & Wilson, 2004, p. 71) and indeed social class (Griffin, 2011; McCulloch, Stewart, & Lowegreen, 2006; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2006). McCulloch and colleagues' (2006) empirical study on Goths, Skaters and Charvs[7] is a key text here in which found subcultural groups in both Edinburgh and Newcastle were classed, both objectively (according to parental occupation, housing status and so on) *and* according to how the young people talked about them (Goths as 'posh' and Chavs from poorer areas). They concluded that 'subcultural affiliation is [still] in large part an expression of class identity' (2006, p. 540). This thesis thus aims to find a way of bringing structures of social class, race (and gender) back in, where they are neither 'deadweights', nor floating off.

1.3.5 Youth subculture and a cultural class analysis

Research in youth studies in the 2000s, including my own (Hollingworth & Williams, 2009), has used a cultural class analysis, paying attention to the implicit and euphemistic ways in which social class tacitly underpins contemporary youth subcultures (Hollingworth & Williams, 2009; Nayak, 2003, 2006; Youdell, 2006a). Several studies are informed by a body of work in cultural studies on the figure of the Chav, as a pathologisation of the working classes (Hayward & Yar, 2006; Preston, 2007; Skeggs, 2004; Tyler, 2006, 2008, 2013) – as Skeggs and Loveday argue 'the circulation of caricatures of condensed hate' (2012, p. 474). Anoop Nayak (2003, 2006) updates traditional subcultural theory on White working class masculinity in the context of declining industrial paid employment. He has written about how groups of young men from traditional skilled working-class backgrounds in the North (those viewed by others as 'Chav') are forced to reconfigure what it is to be a 'man' in these 'new times'. He discusses how they do this through their 'going out' practices- through embodied rituals of football support and drinking. While he acknowledges these practices as grounded in consumption he also ties this to class, showing how they perform a particular working class masculinity, which serves to distinguish the 'rough' from the 'respectable' working classes. Thus what Nayak does is illuminate the way class is lived through culture in young people's lives.

Representation is also key to how we can understand class in the contemporary and how this plays out in educational practices and experiences. Drawing on the work of Reay and colleagues (Reay et al., 2007) on the White working classes as the constitutive limit of class, I have written

[7] Charvs is a northern equivalent term for Chavs

about how class can be seen and felt in young people's constructions of the 'chav'. I show how the White middle classes within education construct the White working classes as not valuing education, and thus *being* of less value, where White, working-class young people's ways of being and doing in the context of schooling, stand in stark contrast to the normative middle-class subject, and become pathologised (Hollingworth & Williams, 2009). Thus these studies highlight processes of distinction-making in youth cultural associations as essentially classed processes, despite class rarely being named.

Brown and Griffin (cited in Griffin, 2011) have used Skeggs' (2004) work in an analysis of music journalism to understand the absent presence of class in the heavy metal subculture. They claim that through music journalism 'heavy metal is made to stand for a set of particularly negative characteristics that are attached to young White male working class bodies, *even if the fan base of Metal music is more diverse'* (Griffin, 2011, p. 254) and they argue that the classed and gendered work that Heavy Metal is made to do [...] is relatively autonomous from - *but not independent of* - the cultural practices and the classed and gendered positions and trajectories of heavy metal fans' (Griffin, 2011 p. 254). What is key about this work is the way in which it points towards class as a process- how, autonomous from 'objective' occupational classifications, class is read on the body, and thus how class comes to be made through these readings. As Skeggs argues: 'understanding representation is central to any analysis of class. [...] the proliferation and reproduction of classed representations over such a long period of time demonstrates the understated ubiquity of class, showing how it is continually referenced, even when not directly spoken' (2004, p. 117). Griffin (2011) highlights the ways in which youth and young people do not have equal access to cultural resources and techniques to construct themselves in 'appropriate' ways, which sees working class young people as 'lacking'. Using Skeggs' work we can also conceive of Thornton's '(sub)cultural capital' as an appropriation of 'exotic' culture, 'an aesthetic cosmopolitanism' (Nayak & Kehily, 2008, p. 134) which is a preserve of the middle classes. These studies begin to point to the way in which cultural resources circulate amongst young people's groups as classed process, and the way in which capitals have differential value. Thus a key point of interest for this study is to examine what are the cultural resources operative in the different friendship fields and can they be mapped within hierarchies of value?

Despite its focus on youth, both subcultural and postsubcultural studies have largely ignored the context of the school and the role of education in shaping or constraining youth friendship affiliations. The intersection of youth and education, I argue, is a crucial site of study to understand youth cultural formations; identities, friendships and the possibilities for mixing. Willis'

(1977) study of the 'lads,' a group of White working class school boys growing up in the West Midlands, kept a strong focus on the importance of structural location in shaping the cultures of the young. In arguing that these young working class lads were 'Learning to Labour,' he skillfully demonstrated how young people's class position gets mediated/ reconstituted through the institution of the school. Griffin's attention to girls at the point of transitions from education to the labour market revealed the gendered constraints on girls in the sexual, marriage and labour markets and how inequalities are produced through their access to different forms of education and work (Griffin, 1985). Hey's (1997) seminal ethnography of girls' friendships in an urban school deliberately consolidates this focus on the school as a key site for the mediation of young people's cultural and social identities, with a political focus on girls as an analytically neglected category. Hey thus comes to argue that 'subcultural theory is the most widely used account of the relationship between culture, power and schooling' (1997, p. 15) and as such subcultural theory implicitly underpins contemporary approaches to youth and education. Willis, Griffin, and Hey's work remind us that a study researching social mixing in schools must attend to the role of not only the school in shaping gendered, raced and classed youth cultures, but the role of *relationships to education* in shaping young people's identities and thus friendships.

Contemporary approaches to subculture call for a more intersectional approach to the study of youth subcultures which takes into account differences of gender and sexuality, and 'race', as well as class (Griffin, 2011). Various authors have called for a more nuanced account of young lives which 'steers a middle course' (Dillabough & Kennelly, 2010) or 'walks a tightrope' between structure and agency (Hey, 1997: 9). Shildrick and MacDonald suggest we look at structure (major institutions and constraints of those); cultures (traditions of each group) and biographies (careers of particular individuals): we need all three (2006). This thesis acknowledges the move away from an overly deterministic 'deadweighted' classed account of young men's youth cultures, by bringing a cultural class analysis to the study of young people's affiliations, with attention to the ways in which class (and race) is read onto certain bodies and to the circulation of cultural resources of different value. Furthermore what we can take from Willis, Griffin and Hey's work is the continued importance of the role of the school and education in these classed processes. However, what is largely missing from the subcultures literature is a sophisticated theorisation of the ways that class intersects with other markers of identity for young people such as gender and race (Griffin, 2011). Contemporary research in education provides a key starting point for this intersectional work.

1.4 Schooling and identities

The third and final body of literature upon which I draw, is the substantial body of predominantly feminist post-structuralist literature in education, which focuses on identity in education. This literature emerged with a focus on gender inequality as an analytically neglected topic in sociology, and has come a long way in its theorisation of social class, race as well as gender, in relation to young people's education and schooling. Strongly influenced by the work of Foucault, this research explores the role of schooling in the regulation of sexuality – and the (re)production of compulsory heterosexuality. However, what is also key are the ways in which these identities that are policed are linked to educational success or conversely, a rejection of schooling. Attention to the role of friendship, and young people's relationship cultures, in the production and maintenance of (hetero)normative masculinity and femininity, and of stylisations of class and race provides a useful theorisation of the possibilities for social mixing in young people's schooling. I discuss the contribution of these friendship studies before going into more detail what the study of learner identities brings to this thesis.

1.4.1 Understanding friendships sociologically

In this literature on identities in education, attention has been devoted to the role of friendships in the production and maintenance of particularly young people's gender identities but also identities of class and race (Hey, 1997). As Bunnell and colleagues argue 'friendship is not merely important in its own right but also plays a role in the broader processes of social ordering and transformation' (2012). Indeed this literature takes friendship as a serious site for examination (e.g. see Epstein, 2002; George, 2007; Hey, 1997). As highlighted earlier, such work also emerged in relation to an analytical neglect of girls' everyday lives; in relation to young men's experiences who dominated cultural studies and sociology texts. Such studies explore the intricacies of young people's 'relationship cultures' in the school context. Highlighting the important link between the 'psych' and the 'social,' Hey claims we need to study friendships because:

> *'the provocative but troubling everyday knowledges are, despite their individual mode (in the forms of feelings, subjectivities, emotions, memories), intimately related to dominant and systematic features of social life' (Hey, 1997, p. 3).*

Friendships may appear to be individualised and personal but, as Bottero (2005) also notes, they are deeply embedded in, *and* reproductive of social structures. Thus while social mixing is not the focus of such studies, their attention to the reproduction of social structures and social ordering provides us with a useful understanding about how mixing might operate at the micro-level of friendships in schools.

Rather than exploring social and ethnic mixing as static categories, such studies provide a good theorisation of how identities are *formed* through friendships and the *identity work* done through friendships. They show that friendships are a key resource for the construction of identity and thus the negotiation of difference, in education/school settings (Epstein, 2002). Key to feminist friendship studies in education is the way in which young people deploy the resources at their disposal, but also the way they negotiate difference and draw lines between themselves and others, how they distinguish between self and Other (Epstein, 2002; Hey, 1997).

Following Butler's Foucauldian theorising, which conceptualises gender as performative, such studies take an approach to identity categories of gender, social class and 'race'/ethnicity in that, rather than seeing these as fixed, static categories, they see identity as fluid, shifting and context specific, and show how identities are produced and reproduced through friendships (Epstein, 2002). This theorisation is central to this thesis and is elaborated on in chapter two.

Much of this work in its theorisation walks this tightrope well between structure and agency, arguing that young people form themselves and construct their own identities, but 'not in conditions of their own choosing' (Epstein, 2002, p. 149). As Bunnell and colleagues argue, children and young people are not only socialised by adults and institutions but also forge their own identities. They argue that as well as sites for the production of normative gender, friendships are sites for resistance and transformation:

> *Children establish complex ways of resisting or reworking the normative practices of their social expectations; through friendships, they have the confidence to develop alternative identities and the possibility of transformation (Bunnell et al., 2012)*

Thus school-based friendships can be seen as spaces to reproduce gendered hierarchies, but can also be spaces where this is undone. Thus in this study I explore the performative aspects of *friendships*, and, as Bunnell and colleagues (2012) highlight, the spaces through which they are played out. I see friendship not as fixed and binary but in terms of continuous fluidity, mobility and circulations of bodily encounters that understand relations in a context of always being and becoming (Hey, 1997).

Hey's (1997) ethnographic study of girls' friendships in a London school is a key contribution to our understanding of school-based friendships and the operations of class and gender. She illuminated the difference between middle class and working class girls' friendship groups, where working class groups of girls cultivated an identity based around sociability, and middle class groups of girls collectively focused on their studies. However she showed how both were firmly structured by heteronormativity.

1.4.2 Learner identities

This literature on friendship is intimately connected to, and grounded in, a body of literature on learner identities. An understanding of this literature is crucial to this thesis so I review it in some detail here. Attention to the relationship between masculinity and schooling has prevailed since Willis' (1977) seminal study. Australian scholar, Connell's (1995) work has been pivotal in theorising the social construction of masculinity in the school context. Connell coined the phrase 'hegemonic masculinity' to understand how certain forms of legitimated masculinity come to dominate, characterised by ambition and aggression, overt heterosexuality and male dominance over women. Such studies have proved invaluable to demonstrate the social construction of masculinity in relation to femininity and the role of the school in producing these. Ensuing research on girls and education has provided valuable counterpoint to this literature on masculinity, particularly in the face of media hype about boys' 'underachievement' in the 1990s (see for discussion Epstein, Elwood, Hey, & Maw, 1998; Francis, 2000; Martino & Meyenn, 2001). These authors have argued that the boys underachievement discourse places boys in the spot light, and fails either to deal adequately with gendered power and the inequalities still faced by girls, or to see femininity and masculinity as relational (Reay, 2001b). Thus, this body of literature seeks to complicate the 'boys' underachievement' debate by looking at the 'hidden curriculum' of schooling, specifically in terms of the socialisation of gender.

Later feminist education research has built on this work to explore performative aspects of gender in the school context, in the construction of children and young people's identities. This work emphasises how the school is a key site for the production, maintenance and contestation of norms of femininity, masculinity and compulsory heterosexuality (Ali, 2002; Bunnell et al., 2012; Dillabough & Kennelly, 2010; Epstein, 2002; Hey, 1997; Renold, 2005). That is, one of schools' central functions is 'schooling' gender and sexuality (Epstein & Johnson, 1998). Renold's research in primary schools for example found young children actually engage with a range of multiple masculinities and femininities. However, at the same time the rigid male/female dualism - masculinity deemed as rational, strong and active, and femininity as emotional, weak and passive - is produced and reproduced (Renold, 2005). Various authors find that on the whole, children in schools tend to consolidate and reinforce, rather than disrupt gender norms (Francis, Skelton, & Read, 2010; Reay, 2001b; Renold, 2005).

Feminist education research has accentuated the importance of identity more broadly in understanding children and young people's relationships to education and schooling. A number of studies have explored the labels used by young people in schools to distinguish certain subcultural

groups or cliques, but more importantly how these are intimately connected to possibilities for educational success. Much attention has been given to the classic figure of the 'hooligan' (Delamont, 2000) or the 'lad', and 'laddish' anti-school cultures -a particularly working class masculine subject position, which reproduces boys' disengagement from education. Connell's (1989) early paper on 'Cool guys, Swots and Wimps' explores how masculinity is constructed through conflict with the institutional authority of the school. More importantly school is also a site for the *differentiation* of masculinities, where different forms of masculinity are tied to educational success ('Swots'), or a rejection of schooling ('Cool guys'). Martino's (1999) later paper on 'cool boys', 'party animals,' 'squids' 'poofters' brings a Foucauldian analysis to boys' affiliations, exploring how 'certain social practices and behaviours [...] become identifiable as particularised instances of masculinity' (1999, p. 239). He explores how techniques for regulating and fashioning selves are channelled through normalising regimes of practice. That is, how boys are engaged in constructing their own identities but under constraints of expected classed masculinities, and educational identities. He explored how boys establish their masculinity in opposition to femininity, and thus how the boys who do not conform to hegemonic masculinities are denigrated for being more feminine, or homosexual, labelled 'poofters.' Various studies, including Martino's (see also Clark & Paechter, 2007; Francis et al., 2010; Renold, 1997; Swain, 2006) discuss the central role of football in generating 'cool' masculinities, but also masculinities often allied with an anti- school identity. Further, they argue that football acts as a marker to police the boundaries between girls and boys.

More recently Francis and colleagues (2010) have explored specifically the identities of high achieving students. Like Mendick (Mendick & Francis, 2012) who explores the identity of the 'geek' in relation to Mathematics, Francis and colleagues' research investigates the experiences of both high achieving students who are labelled 'Boffin' and denigrated by their peers, and the identities of high achieving students who manage to remain 'popular'. Drawing on Bahktin's linguistic concepts of monoglossia and heteroglossia, Francis and colleagues' work (2010) with secondary school age children and young people found that central to the achievement of popularity was a reinforcement of normative heterosexuality and gender. They argue that 'High Achieving Popular(HAP) pupils produced performances of gender that were relatively monological in their conformity to monoglossic, binarised societal productions of gender' (2010, p. 324) in other words conformity with the norm, or stereotype. They argue that their research found that high achieving popular girls must perform hyper-femininity and submissiveness while high achieving popular boys an assertive, assured masculinity.

Both Martino (1999) and Francis note the middle class make-up of the 'cool boys' and the high achieving popular students. For Martino, this group are violent, loud and disruptive in class, but still achieve with little apparent effort. He argues that the 'cool' boys 'act dumb' in order to establish a hegemonic form of masculinity through which they can demonstrate their opposition to the values embodied in the aims of formal education. Connell's work alludes to the differentiation of masculinities in schools as a classed process. He argues that the boys who ally themselves with a 'rational' 'responsible' masculinity, 'embrace a project of mobility' (1989, p. 291). He argues this is a form of masculinity associated with higher education, study and professional jobs.

What is less developed in much of this literature however is a class or race analysis. While most of these authors, like Connell, Martino, Francis, acknowledge the social class and ethnic backgrounds of their research participants, a sophisticated theorisation of how class and race structures young people's opportunities to perform high achieving or anti-school identities, and how class and race interact with gender to produce different types of masculinities and femininities is under-theorised. Hey's (1997) research however explicitly theorises the classed nature of discourses and friendships within her school of study. She theorised the link between popularity and power. Studying the 'All Stars'- a white middle class girls' friendship group- she explicitly acknowledged the relationship between social class and educational success. She described how the All Stars cultivated an academic identity, and this involved a denigration and Othering of working class girls who were deemed less academic. What is noted in both Reay's (2001b; Reay et al., 2007) work, and that of Power and colleagues (2003), is the implicit normalisation of White middle class masculinity, and its association with educational success. Archer (2005) and Youdell's (2006a) work goes some way to beginning to theorise this intersectionally.

Work from Archer and Youdell looks specifically at classed, gendered and raced identities and the structuring of *identities* through schools /schooling have developed sophisticated theorisation of identities which can be of great use to both theorisation of youth subcultures and thus to understanding mixing. Youdell uses a Bourdieusian informed post structuralist framework to explore how some people come to be included or excluded from/in schooling and education - placing identities at the centre of her analysis:

> *Who a student is-in terms of gender, sexuality, social class, ability, disability, race, ethnicity and religion as well as popular and subcultural belongings- is inextricably linked with the sort of student and learner that s/he gets to be, and the educational inclusions s/he enjoys and/or the exclusions s/he faces. (Youdell, 2006a, p. 2)*

Thus not only are students' identities informed by their relationships to education and to the school, these have collective ramifications. These authors emphasise the strong classed, raced and gendered construction of the 'ideal learner', or identities that are valued in the (White middle class) context of the school (and see Hey, 1997). Such research acknowledges the construction of an ideal type, premised on particular performances of White middle class identities, where certain ways of being are revered in the school context and create a conducive context for educational success, while working class and some minority ethnic identity performances are read as antithetical to educational success and bring them into conflict with the school (Archer, 2005; Leathwood, 2006).

1.4.3 Learner identities and style

Attention to youth 'style' in understanding educational identities, particularly in urban multi-ethnic contexts, has brought a more intersectional analysis of gender, social class and race, where style is seen to both produce and be produced by these identities. Style is central to the construction and policing of difference, but is also implicated in young people's opportunities to take on learner identities.

Some authors have given attention to particular Black working class youth cultures of both masculinity (Rollock, 2007a; Youdell, 2003) and femininity (Archer, Halsall, & Hollingworth, 2007a, 2007b; Mirza, 1992; Rollock, 2007b) and how certain urban Black cultural styles, such as ways of dressing, ways of talking, and ways of being, give students peer group status, but bring such students in conflict with the school. Some studies have highlighted 'old myths' about Black boys as 'hard', 'dangerous' but 'superstuds' (Hey, 1997; hooks, 1992). Sewell (2000) has argued that such traps have led Black boys to reappropriate racist and sexist perceptions of Black masculinity. Since authors such as Fuller (1984), Mirza, (1992) and Mac an Ghaill (1994) studied resistance strategies among young Black men and women, Youdell (2003), through her urban ethnography, argues that for many African-Caribbean students their identity is a 'trap' as their ways of being-loud, confrontational or defiant; ways of walking seen to denote insolence; ways of dressing seen as casual – all consolidate to be cast as inappropriate pupil behaviour (Gillborn, 1990), and thus themselves as 'undesirable'/ 'incapable' learners. Rollock writes about how certain embodied stylistic adoptions by Black boys in particular, seen to be American influenced such as wearing hats or hoods in class, are arbitrarily constructed by teachers as counter to a students' willingness to hard work and motivation (2007b). Furthermore affiliation with certain cultural styles such as hip hop music are viewed negatively, seen as having no cultural worth within the school (Rollock,

2007a). Further, Rollock argues that this intersection of Blackness with masculinity serves to invisibilise Black girls and their entitlements (2007b).

In my previous research I carried out with Archer and Halsall, we explore how multi-ethnic urban working class girls are engaged in hyper-heterosexualised femininities- overt attention to appearance (hair and make-up) and boyfriends- which brings them status amongst their friends, but conversely is antithetical to the position of the ideal learner (Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007a, and see Hey, 1997). Furthermore, in research with Reay and colleagues, I have explored how certain White working class youth style- excessive gold jewellery, trainers, baseball caps, branded clothing (e.g. Rockport, Kappa, Burberry)- comes to be labelled 'chav' by middle class families, but importantly is associated with a lack of interest in education (Hollingworth & Williams, 2009). Hey found Black girls in her study labelled by white girls as 'bad' (1997, p.57). Similarly, Alexander (2000) found Bengali youth were more likely to be marked out as a 'gang' despite engaging in practices not dissimilar to other young people. What is key to these identity positions is the way in which certain young people and their embodied styles are read by others- teachers and students- which fixes students in place and contributes to this reproduction of educational inequality.

What is important to note in this literature is, not just the ways in which youth styles are classed, raced and gendered, but also how performances of these styles (re)produce these very categories. In terms of race, Dillabough and Kennelly argue that:

> *Rather than 'becoming somebody' as a straight forward distinction between different races, youth subcultures can be seen to exploit the highly symbolic elements of racialised identities in order to specify the boundaries and putative membership of various subgroupings (2010, p. 20).*

As Perry argues, young people's 'styles, vernaculars and demeanors' 'racialised' them (2001a). In some ways the very distinction-making and 'border work' (Thorne, 1993) of young people's subcultural groups, enacted through performances of 'style,' caricature identities of race, class and gender by their focus on the symbolic. My study then, pays acute attention to the 'paraphernalia of gender' (Nayak & Kehily, 2006, p. 470), class and race, as they are operative in the different friendship fields or subcultures: with a focus on the performative staging of identities. But what this literature has highlighted is that attention needs to be paid to how gaps and cracks in performances open up discursive spaces and create possibilities for alternative gendered (Renold, 2005), raced and classed performances. As well as the reproduction of normative gender, race and class, through friendships, I explore opportunities for 'heteroglossia'- what circumstances and contexts enable fluidity, contradiction and resistance (Francis, 2010).

This education literature brings a number of key advances to an approach to young people and social mixing. Studying *friendship as the unit of analysis* can reveal important things about wider processes of social ordering and social hierarchies. Such processes can be overlooked in studies of everyday multiculture, which tend to focus on everyday interactions rather than relationships, and furthermore in studies of gentrification and school choice which tend to focus on the family unit. Attention to schooling as a key institution in shaping young people's lives and identities advances our understanding of the structuring nature of youth subcultures and how inequalities play out within them. A focus on identities of class, race and gender as fluid, processual and performative allows us to re-conceive of the way that friendship and social relations both produce and are productive of these very identities themselves. This is a useful and necessary extension to our understanding of youth culture and subculture. Research on gendered patterns of friendships reveals how these are integral to the maintenance and reproduction of both gender and heterosexuality, but also reveals ways in which these can be resisted or transformed. Attention to education research on classed, raced and gendered constructions of learner identities provides us with some key tools to bring together a study of young people's friendships, youth subcultures and the production of classed raced and gendered identities and hence social mixing in the school context. Most notably what this feminist education research brings theoretically is an understanding of how mixing or restrictions to it, are central to the policing of the borders of gender (and thus also social class and race).

Conclusion

To conclude then, my study takes a sociological approach to the study of social relations. In my attempts to move towards a sociology of social mixing, the four key bodies of literature on which this thesis draws provide fertile ground for developing this approach, which holds onto both structure and agency. The literature on the urban, multiculture and social mix brings together important analyses of the everyday conviviality of ethnic mixing in the publics of the city and a conceptualisation of urban culture *as mixed* as a consequence of this; with a counter analysis provided from the gentrification literature which points to more problematic urban relations when social class is brought to the fore. While the studies of multiculture emphasise the fluid, shifting and performative nature of racialised identities, the research on gentrification and class relations point to the stubborn solidity of social class hierarchies, revealing self segregationist tendencies among the urban middle classes, and fierce strategising to ensure social class reproduction. One key place in which this is all too apparent is the urban school. The research in this field draws attention to middle class parents' careful management of their children's

schooling experience in that they maintain middle class social networks; maintain cultural capital enabling their distinction; maintain an academic advantage and only mix with the 'right' kind of minority ethnic Other, whose culture can be plundered acquisitively. This picture presented from the existing research focuses predominantly on parents' perspectives, but lacks an analysis of young people and their everyday experiences. Thus the third and fourth bodies of literature- from youth studies and education studies- provide the conceptual and methodological focus on young people. The literature from youth studies highlights the importance of subcultural affiliations in young people's lives but presents us with a lack of clarity about how much mixing is deemed to occur between different subcultural groups, and is limited in its lack of attention to the school as a key structuring mechanism. What is clear is that the old Gramscian-inspired approach of subcultural theory which emphasises subculture and style as symbolic of class relations, needs updating to do justice to the intersections of gender and race. Emerging literature which brings a cultural class analysis to the study of what is indeed culturally constituted, is a promising direction in which we can newly conceive of young people's subcultures as both producing and produced by social class (race and gender), but also drawing attention to subculture as a system of exchange. Lastly, but by no means least, feminist education research on identity brings a useful but thus far missing part of the jigsaw to understand social mixing, in bringing together gender, social class and race. This literature is important in its examination of the school as a site of in the production and maintenance of identity, but specifically gender and sexuality. So not only do we understand (classed, raced and gendered) identity as an important aspect of becoming educationally successful, thus impacting on mixing, but that the regulation and policing of these key identity categories is fundamental to the educational project. Thus we have an understanding of the education system's necessary constraints on social mixing. Friendship studies enhance our analysis of this by giving us a lens to see the collective operations of identity work and the role of the friendship group in regulating classed, raced and gendered identities, within the constraints of the school as a regulatory institution. With this diverse literature comes a complex task in a coherent theorisation of the intersections of social class, race, gender and sexuality. Indeed we have already come across an eclectic mix of conceptual tools, from Bourdieu's tool box to approach class; Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies; and Foucauldian gender performativity theories. In chapter two I firm up the theoretical framework on which the rest of this thesis draws, and discuss my methodological approach.

Chapter 2: Theorising and researching social mixing

This chapter is divided in two sections. Section 2.1. describes and explains my theorisation of social mixing developed to underpin this thesis, and section 2.2 sets out my epistemological, methodological, and analytical framework and subsequent choice of methods.

2.1 Theorising social mixing

I build a complex theoretical model for the study of social mixing which maintains a key focus on power and inequality, and takes into account both disadvantage and privilege. The diverse perspectives adopted provide me with a model which holds in tension both structure and agency in the formations of subjectivity and identity. This thesis, with its focus on gender, class and race, is underpinned by a fusion of Butler's performativity and subjection theories with a Bourdieusian informed cultural class analysis, with implicit tools informed by Critical Race Theory. Skeggs' (2004) and Youdell's (2006a, 2006b) work have been largely central here. I aim to walk a 'tightrope' between structure and agency (Hey, 1997) recognising individual's own self-making and possibilities for mixing are structurally constrained, enabling a 'bounded agency' (Evans, 2007; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2006). Informed by the diverse bodies of literature from which I draw, the explication of my theoretical framework has four elements: performativity; cultural class analysis; affect and intersectionality. First I set out how, in the study of social mixing, I understand identities and their intimate relationship to subjectivity as a fluid, shifting and context specific process, formed through discourse. I then move on to theorise how we can understand the process of identity formation as structured by class relations, as a process of accruing value in the self. I then set out how I theorise social mixing and the making of class as an affective process. I end this section with attention to how I theorise the complex, relational, context specific intersections of social class, race and gender.

2.1.1 Gendered and racialised discursive performativity

In this thesis I conceive of identities of race, class and gender/sexuality as performative and as states of becoming that do not precede discourse (Archer, Hutchings, & Leathwood, 2001). I draw on feminist research in the field of education, largely using Butler's work (for example see David, Coffey, Connolly, Nayak, & Reay, 2006; Francis, 2010; Renold, 2005). This work sees gender as (a

series of repetitive) performance(s), as opposed to a natural given, emerging from the sexed body: the idea that gender is not something you have but something you do (Renold, 2005). I draw on Butler's (1990) notion of gender and sexuality as discursively produced: that is, they come into being through discourse. Discursive practices, which appear to describe (pre-existing) subjects, are, instead productive. It is only through discourse (and its historical consolidation) that 'man' and 'woman' or 'boy' and 'girl' become intelligible (Butler, 2004) and it is practices of 'doing girl' and 'doing boy' (Francis et al., 2010), which bring these gender identities into being. Moreover, these performances have to be continually enacted in order to maintain gender norms. Hey argues that 'performing the self entails the obligation to 'do' gender not as an act of intentionality, but as a performance already set up in a pre-scripted rehearsal' (Hey, 2006, p. 445). The framework, or the 'script', of gender thus sets the possibilities for action. There is a tension between agency (a freedom to perform) and structure (the pre-given scripts which constrain action).

A Foucauldian understanding of power underpins this perspective on performativity. According to Foucault, power does not simply operate in a top down manner but is diffuse and multi-layered and distributed through social relations. In this model of performativity, individuals become self-regulating. Feminist education researchers using this framework, argue that institutions such as schools *interpellate* young people by including them in identity categories that prescribe and enforce particular ways of thinking about themselves and of acting as subjects (Phoenix & Phoenix, 2012). Foucault refers to this as subjectification (/subjectivation) - the process of being simultaneously made a subject and subjected to (gendered, classed and racialised) relations of power (Phoenix, 2009; Youdell, 2004). However, this disciplinary power of the school constitutes and constrains but does not *determine* the subjects with whom it is concerned (Youdell, 2004, p. 412). Indeed, Braidotti argues that although cultural norms act like magnets 'drawing the self in certain directions' we do not simply internalise them in any straight forward fashion (Braidotti, 2002 cited in Blackman et al, 2008, p. 20). Following feminist education research which has explored gendered performativity in the school context, (Francis et al., 2010; Renold, 2005), in this thesis, I consider the ways in which norms of gender and sexuality shape young people's friendships and possibilities for mixing, but also the possibilities for these normative forces to be resisted or transformed.

Ali stresses the socially constructed and indeed performative aspects of *race*, aswell as gender (2003b, p. 281). Recognising race as 'a system of socially constructed and enforced categories' (Gillborn, 2008 p.3), this thesis explores processes of 'racialisation' in an urban school, as well as

the (re)production of gender. The term 'racialisation,' emphasises the historical processes by which sets of people, practices, ideas and discourses come to be associated with, and ascribed to, particular 'races' (Mac an Ghaill, 1999), with attention to the unequal power relations in this process of representation (Fanon, 1969). I explore how race is performed in the context of the urban school (Dillabough & Kennelly, 2010), but also the ways in which race attaches to different bodies with unequal effects (Skeggs, 2004).

Like Youdell I argue, however, that while race is socially constructed, we invest in it as a feature of the self that is 'actual and immutable.' (2003, p. 21). Race is an organising principle of the state, and communities 'come into being through the racial classifications, taxonomies and sorting processes of the state' (Nayak, 2012). Again, the school is a key institution of these racialising technologies (Gillborn, 2005, 2008; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). Like gender, racial categorisations can thus be highly constraining, and the school is implicated in this process. Nayak argues:

> *Individuals may feel weighed down by a 'burden of representation' (Hall, 1992a) where bodies are interpolated [sic] through fixed encodings of race and ethnicity that can appear as homogenous as they are restrictive (Nayak, 2012, p. 462)*

Phoenix has also conceptualised the school a key site for the workings of racialised interpellation, a process which she argues can be damaging for minority racial/ethnic groups (2009). This thesis then will explore the ways in which young people in schools are interpellated into racialised subject positions through school processes, and through the processes of youth subcultural formation.

Structuring race

While theorising race as socially constructed and discursively produced in and through the urban school, my work is informed by Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) which highlight the structuring effects of racialisation. CRT and CWS posit that racism is a normal, ingrained (albeit nuanced, subtle and often unintended) feature of contemporary society: a 'permanent fixture' (Ladson-Billings, 1998). 'Institutional racism'- the way in which societies' institutions are structured or operate can have racist consequences- is a key assumption of CRT and CWS, that is, essentially the 'operations of power that have the effect of disadvantaging one or more minority ethnic groups' (Gillborn, 2008, p. 27). CRT and CWS argue that we need to uncover the taken for granted privileges of Whiteness- what McIntosh metaphorically describes to as the 'invisible knapsack' (1997 [1992], p. 291)- and to critically interrogate and unmask the invisibility of racism. This is a central tenet which underpins the approach to social mixing in this thesis.

Given the work outlined in the previous chapter on the White middle classes and processes of gentrification and relationships to schooling in the London, I draw on CWS which seeks to address the invisibility of Whiteness in racial discourse (Gillborn, 2008, p. 27; Leonardo, 2004). Following CWS' call 'to move away from the quintessential focus on the 'racial other' I examine instead the 'institutionalisation of Whiteness and the systemic factors that underscore its continued dominance' (Solomon et al., 2005, p. 147). This thesis then maintains a critical focus on Whiteness in processes of social mixing, but also the naturalisation of Whiteness as the norm- into which others must mix.

So I theorise gender and race as performative and posit the integral role of discourse in bringing these identities into being, as a gendered and racialising interpellation which shapes subjectivities. However while I recognise the possibilities for resistance, I also stress the structuring structures of Whiteness and Patriarchy in which hierarchies of classification position and fix in place certain bodies. I next move on to theorise this in terms of classed process.

2.1.2 Cultural class analysis, social mixing and value

Following from gender and racial performativity, I understand social class not as fixed occupational identity categorisation but as process, one enacted through culture. This, I argue, provides us with a more 'adequate' notion of class to work with (see McRobbie, 1991) than that of traditional subcultural theory. Skeggs argues that where once labour determined the relationships of exchange, now these relationships are also premised on the use of culture from which a value can be generated (2004). The performatively constituted subject (Butler, 1990, 1993; Youdell, 2006b) underpins Skeggs' theorisation of class. She argues that 'the cultural resources for self-making and the techniques for self-production are classed processes and making the self makes class' (2004, p. 75).

Starting with Bourdieu's conceptual tools of habitus, capitals and field, enables us to begin to understand how class works through culture, but particularly how this is enacted through schooling. For Bourdieu, the middle classes maintain and advance their position not purely through the economic but through the accumulation of social and cultural assets or resources: 'capitals'. These can be economic (financial resources), but also social (networks and relationships) and cultural (knowledge and forms of representation, tastes and dispositions). All forms of capital are located within a system of competition and exchange whereby different capitals have different 'value' (Bourdieu, 1986). These arenas of competition are known as 'fields'. Habitus can be described as the unconscious framework that individuals draw on; a 'way of being', a 'habitual state'; and also tendency, inclination or propensity – expressed as 'taste' or 'lifestyle' (Holt, 2008

p. 232 citing Jenkins, 1992). Habitus is a kind of history of habit, internalised and embodied. What is key for Bourdieu is which capitals have value and when they have value is arbitrary, but is normalised and made to seem natural, and thus the classed nature of habitus is hidden. The bottom line is, we do not all have access to the same cultural resources for self-making, and the formation of this kind of habitus.

Extending our understanding of Bourdieu's 'capitals', Skeggs argues that the contemporary *middle class* life project is about the accrual of property and value in the self, and she understands culture as an exchangeable value (Skeggs, 2004). This accrual of (economic and cultural) value in the self is what (re)produces a middle class position. *Social* capital is a key concept which demands attention here, in the study of friendship and the possibilities for social mixing. Social capital, in the form of networks, social relations and friendships, provides access to cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1997(1986)). So if the middle class project is about the accrual of value in the self, we need to understand social mixing in this context: *we can conceive of social mixing as a form of social capital accumulation,* or indeed loss (for the middle classes, at least). The term social capital is key to emphasising the differing capital value of social relationships (Holt, 2008, p. 231). If we are to understand the self-segregationist tendencies of the (White) middle classes we can conceive of this as a kind of resource protection, where mixing within the middle classes provides access to various resources which can be accrued, while mixing with the (minority ethnic) working classes, who are viewed as having less resources of value, would fail to generate the right kind of valued social capital and is thus avoided.

Furthermore, cultural and social capital are not just carried around in a 'rucksack' (Erel, 2010) or indeed 'knapsack' (McIntosh, 1997 [1992]), but 'different bodies carry unequal values depending on their position in social space, on their cultural baggage-the capitals they embody' (Skeggs, 2004, p. 17). Like Skeggs, I am interested in how different bodies become inscribed, and marked with characteristics, and how certain cultural characteristics fix some groups and enable others to be mobile. I explore the idea of gendered and racialised identities as embodied resources or capitals, which have differential value in different 'fields', most explicitly in the context of the urban school. It is with this framework that I look at mixing as a form of capital accumulation or loss, where social identities are unequally distributed exchangeable *embodied* resources. Explicitly I explore the White middle class body in the educational field (the 'ideal learner'), as a body which has superior value and thus more extensive mobility, while working class and certain minority ethnic bodies have less value and are thus more static.

Not only are these resources embodied but they become etched on the psyche. Skeggs (2004) and Walkerdine and colleagues (2001) conceptualise the White middle class subject of value as the 'neoliberal subject'- a risk-taking, enterprising self, envisaged for the future of neoliberal capitalism (not a docile worker who follows orders, does his job and goes home). It is a self that works to accumulate its own value, in its own interests, via strategic decisions (akin to 'the rational actor') (Skeggs, 2004). Drawing on Foucauldian theorisation, Walkerdine and colleagues argue:

> *the two classes[sic] are not simply the bearers of differing amounts of power and cultural capital, but the regulative apparatuses of particular modes of government at different historical moments produce different kinds of subject, and power is implicated not in the possession of capital but in the actual self-formation of the subject. (Walkerdine et al., 2001, p. 142)*

Thus Skeggs goes further to argue that the self is not a subject position, but a system of exchange. Not only are capitals inscribed on the body, but the very aspects of *subjectivity* – which we see as the essence of our being- are, for Skeggs, some kind of commodities, exchangeable resources. She argues that exchange value is the defining factor in contemporary personhood: it is in exchange that value is attributed. This is crucial to my theorisation of social mixing where I understand the self, and its racialised, gendered interpellation, as exchanged through friendships.

Habitus and the production of the middle class self

Skeggs has a particular theorisation of habitus which relates to this notion of the self, and self-making. She argues that 'the habitus is the embodiment of the accumulation (or not) of value given by the volume and composition of the different forms of capital [...] displayed as dispositions [...]' (Skeggs, 2004, p. 85). The concept of habitus helps us to understand how choices and decisions are not always rational but habit, and these tendencies or 'tastes' are classed, but also raced and gendered. In particular we need to be aware of how White middle class masculine ways of being, or habitus, are more often institutionalised and thus legitimated and working class and minority ethnic, feminine habitus more often problematised. Skeggs argues that there is something sticky about the working class habitus under Bourdieu's model. For Skeggs, habitus is a very explicit model of capital accumulation which favours the middle classes:

> *It is this model of the habitus accruing value (composition and volume), in the conversion of its different forms of capital, be it consciously or unconsciously, that I argue reproduces the properties of the exchange-value self. (Skeggs, 2004, p. 86).*

The exchange value self, she argues is a particular middle class self. In contrast, however, in Bourdieu's framework the working class habitus is shaped by necessity and resignation; the

working classes are conceived of as always lack, beyond value, without value, resigned and adjusted to their conditions, unable to accrue value to themselves (Skeggs, 2004). In this thesis then, while understanding schools' role in the (re)production of the (White, masculine) middle class habitus, I want to move away from an implicit assumption of the working class habitus as lacking, to reframe habitus in terms of access to the exchange value self. This thesis then understands the working classes' and middle classes' differential positioning in relation to access to the exchange value self. I explore how social mixing is a process of self-exchange.

Skeggs thus calls for attention to be paid to the different value systems that exist outside of the dominant symbolic: for a way of thinking beyond exchange-value, instead through use-values that do not rely on a concept of the self (Skeggs, 2004). She puts this into practice in a recent article with Loveday which proposes a more expansive model of 'person value' which includes the capitals described by Bourdieu, but also thinks beyond an 'accrual-acquisition property model' to include the working classes and use value (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012). This theorisation informs the final part of my thesis which attempts to explore working class friendships outside of economies of exchange in exploring social mixing in terms of use value.

Field and spatialising social mixing

My readings also draw attention to the ways in which capital are context dependent. The value of a particular culture can only be known by the different fields in which it is realisable and can be converted (Skeggs, 2004). Spatial theory in the geography tradition brings a fresh look to understanding field in a more sophisticated way. Holt (2008) argues that Bourdieu's concept of field can come across as quite static and fixed, but we need to conceive of field as a process (Massey, 2005 [1993]). Space/field is 'constructed out of particular interactions and mutual articulations of social relations' (Massey, 2005 [1993], p. 68): space shapes social relations, and social relations shape space. Similarly Reay (2004a) argues that field and habitus are mutually constitutive: field structures the habitus, and habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world endowed with value in which it is worth investing one's energy. Thus, space and identity (Valentine, 2007), field and habitus are co-implicated. So I attend to the way that specific spaces (the school and friendship spaces) are produced and stabilised by the dominant groups who occupy them. These dominant groups thus develop hegemonic cultures through which power operates to systematically define ways of being and to mark out those who are in place, or out of place (Valentine, 2007). So we need to hold in tension the fluidity of identities *and* the fact that in particular spaces or fields there are dominant spatial orderings that produce moments of exclusion for particular social groups. Difference is both multiply constituted and locationally

contingent (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Jacobs & Fincher, 1998). Massey (2005 [1993]) coins the expression 'power geometries' to encapsulate this. The particular conditions of (capitalist) modernity that have produced 'time-space compression' (the process by which places feels closer together while time feels speeded up), have also placed people in very distinct locations regarding access to power over flows and interconnections between places (Mahler & Pessar, 2001). Massey argues that some individuals:

> *initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it...[there are] groups who are really in a sense in charge of time-space compression, who can really use it and turn it to advantage whose power and influence it very definitely increases ...but there are also groups who are also doing a lot of moving, who are not in charge of the process in the same way at all (Massey, 1994, p. 149).*

So field and the (re)production of space also needs to be conceptualised in terms of mobility. Space is produced by the bodies that inhabit it, as well as these bodies internalising and habituating the space they inhabit. Mixing is informed by the production of the spaces in which it occurs. In the context of the urban school, while working class and minority ethnic bodies can dominate spaces or fields, following Massey, I explore how capitals can flow more readily in spaces inhabited by a predomination of White middle class bodies while spaces produced by minority ethnic and working class bodies can become sticky and immobile, where capitals flow less freely.

2.1.3 The circulation of affects in the value economy

Ahmed's work conceptualises the emotional, affective dimensions of multicultural mixing also in terms of flows. As I discussed in chapter one (section 1.2), Ahmed uses affect theory to theorise community or social cohesion in terms of the circulation of good and bad feeling, and how this attaches to different bodies. She thus prompts that we ask 'who' or 'what' gets seen as converting bad feeling into good feeling and good into bad? She argues that: 'we need to attend to such points of conversion and how they involve explanations of where good and bad feelings reside' (Ahmed, 2007, p. 126). Thus in my research I explore how different kinds of mix and mixing might produce good and bad feeling and how this is structured by classed, racial and gendered hierarchies and histories. In this thesis I also want to understand mixing in terms of the circulation of affect, where the gendered, raced, classed interpellation of subjects is an affective process, and where the attribution of value- to different bodies and ultimately selves- is affectively experienced. Ahmed emphasises how 'emotions *do things*, and work to align individuals with collectives- or bodily space with social space- through the very intensity of their attachments.'

(Ahmed, 2004, p. 26). Emotions have concrete effects. Thinking about affect helps us to connect the psychic with the social, and the individual with the collective. 'Feeling good' becomes attached to other kinds of social good (Ahmed, 2007).

Fanon (1969) is known for analysing the emotional and psychic dimensions of race and ethnicity, illuminating how racialised identities are 'formed in a relational dynamic of fear, power and desire' (Reay, 2005, p. 913). More recently social class theorists have paid attention to the emotional and psychic dynamics of class. Reay coins the term the 'psychic economy of class' (2005) to conceptualise how the external structures of class are deeply internalised and felt in emotions of resentment, defensiveness, guilt and shame, as well as pride (and see Sayer, 2002, 2005a, 2005b).

Ahmed, after Butler (1993) argues that emotions can be theorised as performative: they both repeat past associations as well as generating their object (Ahmed, 2004, p. 32). Ahmed argues that our understanding of people as 'causing' an emotional response is shaped by longer histories of contact. We can understand this as a citational chain, as 'histories of association,' or 'structures of feeling' (Williams, 1977) which are classed, raced and gendered:

> *The 'moment of contact' is shaped by past histories of contact, which allows the proximity of a racial other to be perceived as threatening, at the same time as it reshapes the bodies in the contact zone of the encounter. These histories have already impressed upon the surface of the bodies at the same time as they create new impressions. (Ahmed, 2004, p. 32)*

In a process not dissimilar to the formation of habitus: the moment of contact is both reproductive and transformative. Ahmed argues then that the impressions we have of others, and the impressions left by others are shaped by histories that stick (2004, p. 32).

Moreover, bodies- as socially shaped and regulated sites of struggle (Hopkins, 2012)- need to be understood in relation to affect. Bodies are not simply the stabilising effects of the subject positions that precede them. They are not 'singular bounded, closed and fixed, but rather open to being affected and affecting others' (Blackman et al., 2008, p. 16). Bodies are also the place where social influence 'gets stuck' (Blackman et al., 2008, p. 19).

Affect thus circulates between subjects, and between bodies, resulting in an increase or decrease of their potential to act (Thrift 2003, p. 104). On friendship and affect, Bunnell and colleagues claim that:

> *[I]t is this potential to act/to not act, to do/to not do, that 'greases the wheels' of subjects' ability to solidify habitual regimes of practice that are kept in place through*

deeply routinised performances, yet that also have the potential for alteration and the reinvention of the normative associations attached to them (Bunnell et al., 2012)

Thus affect is central to the reproduction of routine, 'ritual' (Hall & Jefferson, 1976), or habitus, but is also the 'wheel grease' of resistance and the catalyst for transformation.

Fortier argues that 'community cohesion' involves governing through affect- through the manipulation of feelings about Others. Affect is differently distributed and some affects are favoured over others (Fortier, 2010, p. 23). I argue that this is fundamentally a classed process: 'Social class emerges not just as a material position but as a position in an affective hierarchy where value is assigned to particular kinds of emotional displays and bodies' (Wetherell, 2008, p. 77). Furthermore, Skeggs and Loveday argue that affect and the circulation of feelings helps us to explore use value. They demonstrate empirically how the working classes generate their 'person value' through investment and connections to others rather than investments in distinction and self. In this thesis then I pay analytical attention to the discursive circulation of affects in relation to processes of mixing. I examine affective processes of valuing and the ways in which people in schools talk about social mix and mixing generates good (and bad) feeling. Furthermore, I explore how these feelings stick to particular gendered, raced and classed bodies, and how this constrains and enables action.

2.1.4 Space-time embodied relationalities and intersectionalities

Youdell (2006a) claims that much research concerned with intersectionality does not fully interrogate the relationships between multiple identity categories. I argue that my proposed theoretical framework provides a means of interrogating these relationships. I attend to a 'contextually based, strategic, racialised, gendered concept of class' (Archer et al., 2001, p. 50) in a method that is not additive (Archer et al., 2001; Valentine, 2007), but which attends to the ways in which gender, race and class 'abrade, inflame, amplify, twist, negate, dampen and complicate each other' (Kessler and McKenna, 1978:42 in Valentine, 2007, p. 13). Moreover I attend to how this is a classed process in which certain gendered and racialised identities are valued or devalued. So this process of class-making is fluid and constantly renegotiated, so too are the intersections (Valentine, 2007). Spatialising intersectionality, Hopkins argues 'intersection is less about the alignment and crossing of [...] key social categories and more about capturing the messiness of layered subjectivities and multidimensional relations in particular localities' (Hopkins and Noble 2009 cited in Hopkins, 2012, p. 1232). Thus I aim to map out the 'space-time embodied relationalities and intersectionalities' (Hopkins, 2012, p. 1232) involved in processes of social mixing. This means understanding how young people's possibilities for mixing are dependent on a

complex configuration of timing, location and context; in relation to who else occupies or moves here and there, then; and who else the young people are in terms of their multiple identities.

The first half of this chapter has set out in detail the complex, layered theoretical framework which underpins this study. I have specified how, building on diverse bodies of literature which explore multicultural social relations and social mixing in urban mixed spaces, a progressive framework needs to encompass the fluid, processual, performative nature of identities, but also the ways in which they produce, and are produced by, the layered, multi-dimensional space-times they mix in. I argue that central to understanding the workings of social mixing- the mixing of different interpellated bodies and selves– is to understand it as an affective classed process. In the next half of the chapter I outline and discuss my approach to studying this.

2.2 Researching social mixing

In the next section of this chapter I outline my approach to researching social mixing among youth in urban schools. I begin by discussing my epistemological approach, which is informed by feminist emancipatory approaches to research and the production of knowledge. I then go on to outline in more detail the overarching qualitative methods I have chosen in order to best research subjectivity and identity, which, informed by Allen's work (2008), involves a process of first eliciting narratives and second, situating them in the wider discursive, material and spatial structures from which they emerge. In the subsequent sections I provide an outline of my research design; introduce the reader to the research sites and discuss the recruitment of my sample of participants. I then discuss in detail my approach to narratives and the methods used and how I then researched the wider context. The final sections of this chapter involve a reflection on ethics, and a discussion of my analytical tools and processes.

2.2.1 A feminist epistemology

My work is not about locating and measuring the extent and form of social mixing *per se* as a fixed 'out there' reality or truth that can be measured, but examining the ways the categories, of race, class and gender being mixed are continually in process and brought into being through discourse. In this study I explore the multiple, partial and 'situated' (Archer et al., 2001; Haraway, 1991) knowledges of the various actors. Moreover, given the emergent importance of the White middles classes in social mixing, this thesis pays attention to the institutionalisation and legitimisation of the knowledge and perspectives of these dominant groups (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2003). I attend to the ways in which the identity categories of gender, race, and class

that I am working with are *perspectives* (Skeggs, 2004) that have become institutionalised knowledge, and are positioned differently in a hierarchy of value.

Informed by feminist, cultural studies and post-colonial scholarship, my aim is for this inquiry to be an emancipatory one, which seeks to problematise and unsettle taken for granted assumptions about race, class, gender and mixing. I seek to access and elevate the knowledges of minoritised groups, but also to dismantle existing, unrecognised forms of domination and to bring attention to disciplinary and normalising 'technologies': that is, the process by which White middle class perspectives restrict and control others, and make certain ways of being seem normal (Osgood, 2011). Politically, my work is about challenging policy and dominant discourses of 'social mixing' or the 'good social mix' as defined by those privileged groups in power, by prioritising the positions and perspectives of those minoritised, and overlooked groups to get underneath these rhetorics of 'social mixing' and understand how this operates. I explore how this rhetoric is felt and experienced within the urban school, and operates within wider relations of power. In the next sections I outline the methods I used to research these processes.

2.2.2 Outline of research methods and design

Given the theoretical and epistemological position set out, this thesis aims:

1. To examine the patterns of young people's friendships in two urban schools as a lens to explore social mixing among urban young people
2. To explore the role of the school and wider institutional processes in facilitating or constraining social mixing among its students
3. To examine the discursively informed practices and processes which lead to differentiation and stratification in urban young people's friendship groupings
4. To investigate the processual nature of social mixing through attention to the socio-spatial contexts and moments in which social mix leads to social mixing

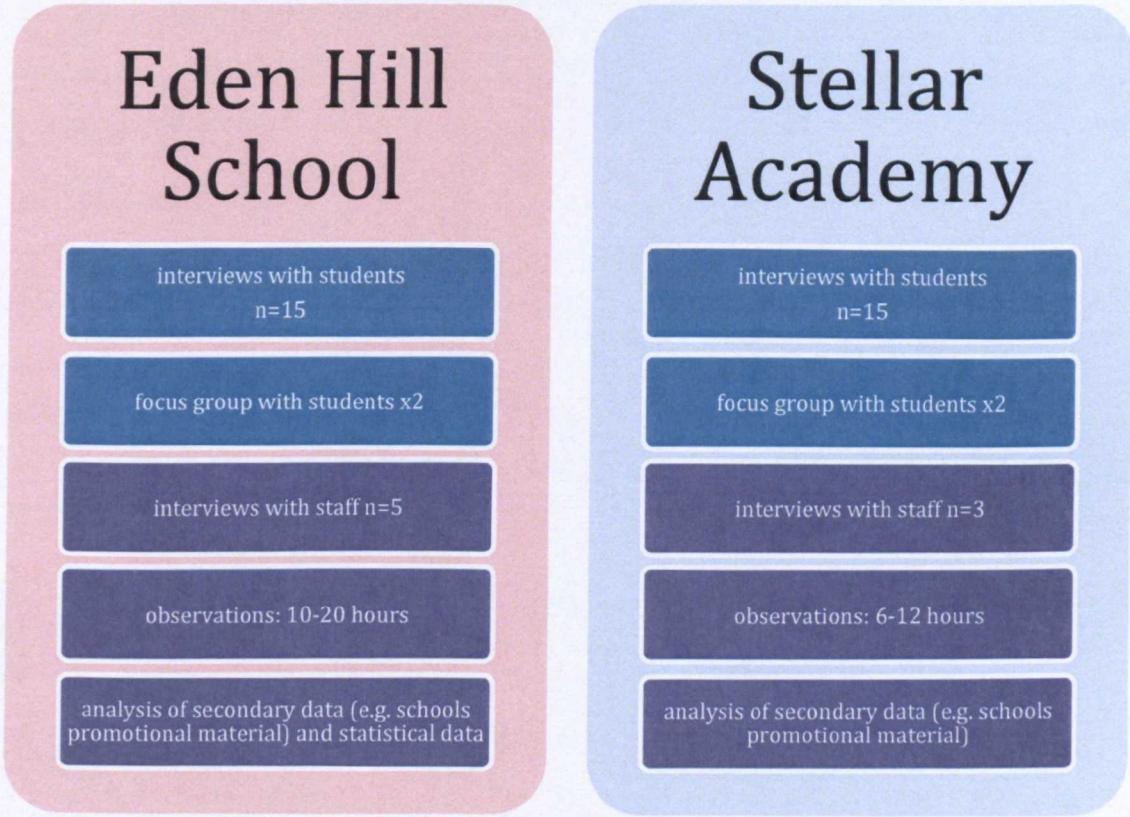
In order to address these research questions, and in order to be faithful to my epistemology outlined above, my research design can be conceptualised in two parts:

- Eliciting young people's narratives about friendship and mixing
- Locating young people's stories in wider discursive, spatial and material structures

Through qualitative narrative-informed interviews in two urban schools, I explore young people's self constructions and personal experiences of friendship and mixing; as well as generating discourses about friendship and mixing in the schools. I contextualise this data within wider

structures, through data gained through interviews with school staff; observations; analysis of textual material and statistical and demographic data pertaining to the schools and local community; and demographic data collected in relation to each of the young people. Before I go on to discuss the rationale and justification for this research design and chosen methods I outline the research sites and the recruitment and sample of my students.

Figure 1: The research design



2.2.3 The research sites: Eden Hill School and Stellar Academy

My research took place in 2010 to 2011 in two co-educational non-selective London state secondary schools. Both schools were located in areas of London that could be described as having 'gentrified' in the past twenty years, according to definitions discussed in Chapter One. Both schools had opened in the New Labour years as a result of parent campaigns. Unlike some inner London comprehensive schools, which can have ninety per cent minority ethnic children; or profess to have no middle class children at all (e.g. see Reay, *et al.*, 2007), both schools had a diverse social class and ethnic mix.

Eden Hill school was located in a relatively wealthy area, evidenced by house prices in the region of one to three million pounds to buy, and the school was, anecdotally said to have become popular with local middle class families. There were also a number of large council estates in its

catchment area, resulting in a diverse social and ethnic mix. Official school demographic statistics indicate that roughly half were White British children, a third Black African and Caribbean, the rest were a mix of other, or mixed, ethnicities. Social class mix was inevitably harder to assess. The number of children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) – as a proxy for social class - was in line with the national average (12%), but this is not always a reliable indicator of social class. In conducting the fieldwork, it became apparent there were a significant number of White middle classes, and also a number of minority ethnic middle class students in the school. The school has enjoyed a steady rise in attainment from around forty per cent of students achieving the benchmark grades in 2007 (below average), to over sixty per cent in 2010 (above average) when I undertook my research.

Stellar Academy, like Eden Hill, was located in wealthy immediate surroundings and had considerable social and ethnic diversity. The 2007 Ofsted report states that the school is 'ethnically diverse' with the largest groups also being Black Afro-Caribbean [sic] and White British. Around twenty percent of the population when the school opened spoke English as an Additional Language, with over 20 different languages spoken, and the only two Ofsted reports that mention the socio-economic make-up claimed 'far more students are entitled to free school meals (FSM) than in many other schools' and FSM is 'higher than usual'. However, the attainment profile of Stellar Academy was much lower. At the time of my fieldwork, Stellar Academy had only two years of GCSE results, and these were 35% and then 36% of children achieving 5 or more GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths[8]. This was well below the national and borough average, and below that of Eden Hill school's results at any time in its history. The school had higher than average numbers of children with Special Educational Needs (twice the national average the year it opened). This school had a more turbulent history with concerns about standards leading to the first headteacher leaving post after two years. Further discussion and analysis of this comes in chapter four.

The sixth form in both schools (ages 16-19 years old) formed the focus of my research. This was driven by a combination of practical concerns relating to regular and flexible access, and a theoretical interest in the importance of educational transitions for friendship formation. Indeed, a focus on these sixth forms enabled insightful reflection on the bifurcation of friendships following the end of compulsory schooling, particularly acute for working class students.

[8] The year I exited the field the school results had shot up to 58%, a phenomenal rise of 22%, but from analysis of Ofsted reports through the life of the school, I would ascertain that this was unlikely to be due to any substantial shifts in demographics but due to the eventual embedding of improved systems and procedures regarding tracking and monitoring of pupil progress, led by the headteacher 'Mr Navy'.

While both schools were comprehensive in their intake to the lower school, entry to the sixth form required appropriate qualifications, and was thus selective. The first school 'Eden Hill' had fairly high sixth form entry criteria, and offered only A-levels, the 'standard' academic route, and prerequisite courses for university. Around fifty percent of students left after year eleven (the last compulsory school year) and the school also accepted a significant proportion of students from other schools for A levels. I encountered the second school, 'Stellar Academy' through my research at Eden Hill. I learnt it had a more varied offer of a range of Level 2 (GCSE and equivalent) and Level 3 (A level and equivalent) courses, which offered its students a choice of 'academic' (A Level), or 'vocational' (BTEC) courses and opportunities to re-sit GCSE exams. The majority of students thus remained in the sixth form and far fewer joined from outside. This broader offer and demographics at sixth form informed my choice to include Stellar Academy as my second research site.

Undertaking research in schools is increasingly difficult. To enhance my access to schools involved playing into the very agenda around community cohesion that I critically engage with in thesis. In letters addressed to head teachers, I stressed the potential interest to Citizenship Education teachers. I contacted a handful of appropriately demographically mixed schools in London and secured the research at Eden Hill fairly swiftly. Agreement was secured with the head of Sixth form at Stellar Academy by telephone.

2.2.4 Sample recruitment

Students were recruited through a multi-pronged approach including visiting weekly tutor group classes; sixth form assembly; school council meetings; posters in the common room; approaching students in recreational periods and snowballing. A short proforma questionnaire was distributed which allowed me to collect brief demographic details and email addresses in order to contact students to arrange an interview (see appendices 1,2 and 6). Heath and colleagues claim that 'good youth research on any topic should seek to include a broad representation of both easy and hard to reach groups as an important step in seeking to normalise rather than problematise the lives of young people outside of the mainstream and to better represent the experiences of young people from a wide range of backgrounds' (2009, p. 51). Furthermore, sampling was 'theoretically' informed (Mason 1996 cited in Silverman, 2005). An empirical neglect of girls in the subcultures literature informed a balanced sample which gathered an equally mixed sample of girls and boys; and gaps in the literature pertaining to working class students' perspectives and experiences of social mixing informed significant inclusion of working class participants. The sampling process was thus purposive and iterative and the details on the questionnaire were used

to sample a diversity of students in terms of gender; self-ascribed ethnicity; an indication of Socio-Economic-Status (SES); courses, level and year group. After a filtering process, students were then contacted by email and interviews arranged at a time of their choice, in a quiet place on school premises such as the library, the common room, the staff and sixth form café, the sixth form study room or in the courtyard. The aim was to maximise variation, and I was looking for 'outlier cases' to see if emerging themes still held with students from a very different friendship group, or a very different background. Indeed, persistence to include the 'ordinary' and 'non-spectacular' students (Roberts, 2012) proved to be key to understanding social mixing, as my analysis goes on to show.

At both schools I interviewed fifteen students one to one. Also in both schools four of these students took part in the two focus groups, and a further seven students took part solely in the focus group discussions. See tables 1 and 2 for detail of the participants.

Table 1: Eden Hill School sample characteristics

	Pseudonym	Self-ascribed gender	Ascribed indicative social class	Self-ascribed ethnicity
1	Nathanial	M	working class	Black Caribbean
2	Carl	M	working class	(Black) Jamaican
3	Helen	F	working class	Chinese
4	Tanisha	F	working class	Mixed other (Black Caribbean and Indian)
5	Oliver	M	middle class	White British
6	Tristan	M	working class	White British
7	Liam	M	middle class	White British
8	Tyler	M	working class	Black English (African heritage)
9	Faith	F	middle class	(White) English
10	Gemma	F	working class	(White) British
11	Jayne	F	middle class	White British
12	Francis	F	working class	White British
13	Damian	M	working class	Black British (Caribbean heritage)
14	Ben	M	middle class	White-Asian (White British and Japanese heritage)
15	Amber	F	working class	Black Caribbean
	Focus group participants			
16	Aarti	F	middle class	British Indian
17	Amanda	F	working class	European White
18	Delores	F	middle class	(Black) Caribbean
19	Diane	F	working class	(White) English
20	Neera	F	(indeterminate)	(Black) Somalian
21	Cherry	F	working class	(South American and North African)
22	Farhan	M	(indeterminate)	British African

Table 2: Stellar Academy sample characteristics

	Pseudonym	Gender	Qualification studying for	Ascribed social class	Self ascribed ethnicity
1	Tom	M	A levels	Middle class	White British
2	Francesca	F	A levels	Middle class	White British
3	Nicole	F	Mix of A levels and BTEC L3	Working class	Black Caribbean
4	Adam	M	A levels	Middle class	White British
5	Kaden	M	BTEC Sport L2	Indeterminate	(Mixed race)
6	Karen	F	BTEC Health and Social Care L2	Working class	White British
7	Sarah	F	BTEC Health and Social Care L2	Working class	Mixed race
8	Callie	F	BTEC Health and Social Care L3	Working class	Black Caribbean
9	Lara	F	A levels	Working class	South American (Peruvian)
10	Jay	M	BTEC Sport L3	Working class	Black Caribbean
11	Freya	F	BTEC Health and Social Care L3 and GCSE retakes	Working class	Black African
12	Rachel	F	A levels	Middle class	White British
13	Robert	F	BTEC L2	Working class	White British
14	Ronelle	F	Health and Social Care	Indeterminate	Black African
15	Michael	M	A levels	Middle class	Mixed race (White British and Black Caribbean)
16	Ed	M	A levels	Working class	British Chinese
17	Dylan	M	A levels	Middle class	White British
18	Hugh	M	A levels	Middle class	White British
19	Tina	F	BTEC Business L3 and GCSE retakes	Indeterminate	Black African
20	Tyrone	M	BTEC L3 and A Level Engineering	Working class	Black
21	Data	F	BTEC Business L3	Indeterminate	Black
22	Iona	F	A levels	Middle class	Black African

An indicative social class designation is denoted here in these tables using a combination of indicators such as housing status; parental occupation and qualifications where known; indicators of income (such as eligibility for Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)) as well as self-ascription in interview discussions. Students were asked to describe their ethnicity, and these exact descriptions are reported here, while information in brackets give further information gleaned from the interview. However this is clearly only a starting point for an analysis which understands social class, gender and race as performative and produced through practices and processes (Diane Reay et al., 2007). Stellar Academy's table denotes course of study, while Eden Hill does not as all students were studying for A levels. At Eden Hill school I interviewed five members of staff, and at Stellar Academy I interviewed three (see table 3).

Table 3: Staff interviewed

	Pseudonym	School	Role	Ethnicity
1	Mr Black	Eden Hill School	Head of Sixth form	White British
2	Mr Brown	Eden Hill School	Hear of Year Twelve	White British
3	Mrs Green	Eden Hill School	Community Liaison Manager	White British
4	Mr Rosso	Eden Hill School	Head of Citizenship	White European
5	Ms Plum	Eden Hill School	Connexions Personal Advisor	White British
6	Ms Rose	Stellar Academy	Assistant Principal Post Sixteen	White British
7	Mr Dorado	Stellar Academy	Director of Learning Post Sixteen	White
8	Mr Grey	Stellar Academy	Sixth form tutor	White British

In the sections that follow I discuss the fieldwork itself. I set up the idea of narrative as a means to explore subjectivity and identity, and discuss the detail of my narrative interviews with young people about friendship and mixing. I then discuss the justification for, and the methods used, to locate these young people's stories in wider discursive, spatial and material structures.

2.2.5 Eliciting young people's narratives about friendship and mixing

As outlined in my theoretical framework, central to this research are processes of subjectification: the set of processes by which a subject or self is constituted (Wetherell, 2008, p. 75), with the self as 'the product of interiorisation of attitudes, values, expectations, memories, dispositions' (Taylor, 1989 cited in Wetherell, 2008, p. 75). Various authors have written about narrative as a way of telling the self (Byrne, 2003; Lawler, 2002; Skeggs, Thumin, & Wood, 2008)- a performance of self-making. As Byrne points out- to be asked about one's life is to some extent to be asked to give an account of one's self (2003). Butler argues that the subject must be performatively constituted in order to make sense as a subject. Thus from a Foucauldian/ Butlerian perspective, narratives are likely to offer an insight into techniques or practices of self-making: they are a 'technology of the self'. Narrative interviews then provide a technology to do this. Margie Wetherell points out:

> *Interviews can tell us crucial things about a segment of society's conversations with itself about the ways in which the world is typically legitimated, organised and justified. [...] Interviews tell us about the cultural resources people have available for telling their patch of the world [...](2003, p. 13).*

Narrative approaches enable the exploration of these processes of subjectification- the ways in which certain subject positions are discursively available for individuals to occupy (Byrne, 2003). In my research then I elicit young people's narratives: the story of them*selves*; the story of their friends and the story of their school and explore the cultural resources they have available to 'tell their patch,' how they 'string together a sense of self' (Braidotti, 2002).

Attention to discourse and the way in which subjectivity and identity are constituted through discursive processes, is also central to shaping my design. Subjectivity is the 'semiotic interaction' of 'outer world' and 'inner world' (Lauretis, 1984 cited in Hey, 1997, p. 125). Discourse is a system of representation that regulates meaning, so that certain ways of thinking speaking and behaving become natural (Best 2005:105), so uncovering the effects of power through discourse is key (Osgood 2012 p29). I attend to the ways in which subjectivities are part of a continuous, creative and dynamic process (Youdell, 2004) and are always unfinished, partial, non linear (Blackman et al., 2008, p. 16). I examine the discursive strategies and forms of capital the young people use to make sense of their subject position (Allen, 2008): What they allow to be said but also what they prevent from being said (Best, 2005).

Any account of lived lives needs to include both subjectivity and identity (Wetherell, 2008, p. 75). Identity is the external label, but subjectivity is about how this identity label is lived psychically.

The trouble with 'identity' is that it does not capture people's everyday lived experiences of those categories, in a way that subjectivity does (Wetherell, 2008, p. 75). But studying identity and subjectivity together-as intimately connected (Skeggs, 2004)- allows us to research what is made possible for subjects: 'subjectivity tells the story of how a specific self lives those available cultural slots, actively realises them, takes responsibility and owns them as an agent, turning social category memberships and social roles into ethical, emotional and narrated choices' (Wetherell, 2008, p. 75).

Furthermore, what is crucial is that not all individuals present themselves as coherent, whole subjects of a narrative (Byrne, 2003). Various authors have argued that to be known- to be intelligible- is dependent on a subject's ability to 'narrate' the self according to certain values and truths based on middle class experience (Byrne, 2003; Skeggs, 1997; Skeggs et al., 2008). Narrative inquiry is useful for illuminating which subjects can construct themselves as 'knowable' and which cannot (Allen, 2008). I ask what cultural resources do different classed, raced and gendered selves bring to the narration of social mixing and the possibilities for action, and how do the ways in which different young people narrate themselves constrain or enable mixing? Hey found in her research on friendship, the interviews were social events which provided an opportunity for the group to construct its particular version of cultural hegemony; they were a 'prime medium for elaborating and consolidating their identities' (Hey, 1997, p. 85).

My research here then entails a qualitative approach, with attention to narrative. Qualitative narrative interviewing enables us to explore people's meaning-making; it allows us to explore the stories people tell and the way that they tell them, and how this builds their identities (Wetherell, 2003) and becomes internalised as subjectivity.

2.2.6 Methods to elicit young people's narratives

The interviews

I conducted one to one, hour long interviews with fifteen students in each school. I used a loosely structured interview guide which mapped out the broad areas that I wished to cover in each interview, but allowed for participants to produce their own narrative and to interpret the questions and topics in their own way. I also conducted group interviews to explore collective narratives. I carefully framed the research as being about 'friendships' rather than social mixing directly, and I designed a topic order which leant to gradually eliciting perspectives and experiences of social class and ethnic mixing. The structure of the interview went broadly as follows:

- I began by asking students to tell me about their school;
- then to tell me about the different friendship groups and subcultural formations they saw in the school;
- then to tell me about themselves
- before moving on to ask them more explicitly about the story of their personal friendships (see appendix 3 for full schedule)

The latter part of the interview about their personal friendships involved asking students to draw a sociogram or friendship map[9]. The purpose of this exercise was to bring an element of participatory methods to the project. Asking students to draw their own sociogram enabled greater active participation in the data generation process, and served to give back some power over the interview process (Heath et al., 2009, p. 65; Hopkins, 2008b). Some participants did indeed 'take charge' at this point in the interview. Others seemed uninterested in the idea. However it was also a useful tool to facilitate students to talk about their specific friends in more concrete ways and it gave me the opportunity to digress onto other topics and return back to their personal friends featured on their 'map'.

The focus groups

In addition to individual interviews I conducted two sets of focus group discussions with different friendship groups in each school. The purpose of this aspect of the research was not just to talk about individual friends and friendships but to generate collective narratives about the friendship groupings; subcultures; allegiances and divisions in their school. In the first half of the interview I asked three short prompt questions:

1.Tell me about what influences friendship groups in the school?

2. What do you think of when I say 'community cohesion'?

3. Do you see your school community as cohesive?

The group discussions were again participatory in nature in that they were organised around task-centred activities, which help to de-centre a group interview situation and take the focus of the interview away from me as researcher (Heath et al., 2009, p. 65). The first question, for example was accompanied by a series of printed statements to act as prompts, which I laid out on the table for students to select as they wished and to bring to discussion. Some examples were: 'Black

[9] Sociograms are not included in the appendix as anonymity was guaranteed, but some young people's sociograms are reproduced in Chapters 7 and 8 for illustration.

and White pupils are quite divided in this school' and 'Friendship groups are all about style and music tastes'. These were all themes directly arising from the individual interviews but not personally attributed. The second half of the interview revolved around the questions:

4.What types of people do well in life?

5.Why do some people do better at school than others? (see appendix 4 for full schedule)

Responses to the last question were prompted by a series of statements, drawing on popular discourses of achievement (such as 'If you are from a middle class background you are more likely to achieve better grades at school and college' and 'When students get put in ability groups or 'sets' those in top sets do well while those in the bottom sets give up'). This generated data about social relations between groups in school; issues of injustice immediately resonating with them; as well as personal views and theories about inequality. My previous research (Hollingworth, Williams, Jamieson, & Beedell, 2010) had found meritocratic and individualising discourses circulating amongst White middle class children attending urban comprehensive schools. I was interested here in whether minority ethnic and working class students in such socially mixed schools shared the same views, and whether having mixed friends might impact on these views.

2.2.7 Locating young people's stories in wider discursive, spatial and material structures

Studying social mixing by analysing the ways in which people narrate it– attending to the discursive repertories and technologies through which social mixing, the urban school, class, gender and race get produced - tells us important things about how people construct the world and the self within it. However, as Wetherell argues:

> *The interview is a highly specific social production, but it also draws on routine and highly consensual (cultural/normative) resources that carry beyond the immediate local context connecting local talk with discursive history' (2003, p. 13).*

Thus interviews tell us not only about the individual but the collective, and how they are embedded in wider practices of meaning-making. Wetherell argues that we can study 'small discourses' in order to make conclusions about 'big discourses' (Wetherell, 2003, p. 12). So I connect these narratives to the wider discursive landscape. Methods of narrative enquiry can be used to examine how subjects make sense of the world and their position in it but also how these processes are informed by location in material circumstances. I explore the ways the social (the collective voices of culture) permeate the individual voices of the interview.

Individuals are active agents in the construction of their own subjectivity, but this is bounded by constraints of social structural dynamics of these categories. Concerned with the partial and subjective nature of experience, but also the way in which socioeconomic structures exert forces on this, I pay attention to the way that personal biographies both produce and are produced by structural relations (Skeggs, 1997). Wetherell highlights that 'inequality is not first a fact of nature and then a topic of talk. Discourse is intimately involved in the construction and maintenance of inequality' (Wetherell, 2003, p. 13). I thus pay attention to the ways in which schools- and the subjects within them- talk about themselves, reflecting and producing inequalities. I explore how these discourses function to protect certain interests and maintain particular power relations (Wetherell, 2003).

As a sociologist, this involves looking deeper beyond individual narratives, beyond the immediate data, to explore how these narratives map onto the wider discursive and material landscape of community cohesion, multiculturalism and social mixing. I attend to both self narratives and the wider discursive, material and spatial structures from which they emerge. Skeggs' (1997; 2004) analysis outlined above points us to the necessity to map subjective experience onto a wider context of historical and classificatory schemes and material structures (Allen, 2008, p. 50). So here I am not only attending to discourse, but the connections to the material and structural in terms of how classed selves are made through discourses and processes of inscription. So I am looking for the ways in which the school as an institution structures discourses and subjectivity, but also how this is intimately connected to classed processes.

2.2.8 Methods to locate young people's stories

Locating these narratives involved an eclectic and iterative approach to further data gathering. This involved 'loose ethnographic' (Golbart and Hussler, 2005, p. 16 cited in Allen, 2008, p. 63) research in both schools, involving informal participant observations in and around the school including:

- informal discussions with staff;
- observing the social spaces of the school at key recreational times- the café, the canteen; spaces for sixth form including the common room; study areas; smoking area;
- observing the journey to and from school;
- observing student and staff interactions;
- observing some lessons and a number of school council meetings.

This ethnographic work took place around my interview appointments, and was recorded with extensive field notes recording observations; informal conversations with staff and students and diagrammatic mapping of the school spaces.

The purpose of this lose ethnography was three fold: to become a familiar face and build rapport with staff and students in the school; to gain a general sense of the culture and ethos of the school; and to study the socio-spatial practices of social mixing taking place. The longer I spent in the field; met students and gathered interview data the more insight I was able to glean into 'who was who'; the group formations and how they took up different spaces and interacted with each other in the school.

In addition to interviewing young people, I interviewed a number of staff in each school primarily to elicit wider, school level, discursive constructions of the school and also wider discourses about social mixing and multiculturalism circulating amongst the school authorities (see appendix 5 for schedules).

I also undertook extensive desk research to explore the background of the two schools including collection and analysis of the schools' promotional and marketing material including brochures; websites; online press coverage and available public information about staff I interviewed, and school governance. The purpose of this was to get a sense of the 'official' narrative' and discourses of social mixing mobilised by the school as part of their performance of social mixing.

To complement my qualitative depth interviews and to help to locate all participants in wider social and educational structures, I collected limited basic demographic data from each participant, via short proforma, requesting information on courses /levels studying; subjects studying; aspirations for post-sixth form destinations; self-ascribed ethnicity; housing status; Free School Meal (FSM) status; Education Maintenance Allowance(EMA) status (see appendix 6 for proforma template). I was also able to acquire and analyse the schools' raw demographic database from Eden Hill School. This included the dataset for the whole school for the year of research (2009-10), and a comparison year two years prior, which enabled me to study changing demographics after post sixteen transitions. Data included ethnicity, gender and Free School Meal status. This allowed me to compare both the demographics of the school and the sixth form, and over time. This acted as a useful triangulation with perceived accounts by students and staff about the (changing) demographics of the school. This data was analysed, producing basic descriptive statistics and is drawn on in Chapter Five. The sections that follow include a discussion on reflexivity and ethics in the research process, and a discussion of the analysis of my data.

2.2.9 Reflexivity and ethics

Ethical guidelines from key research bodies such as the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) the British Sociological Association (BSA, 2002) and London Metropolitan University's own guidelines (LMU, no date) were only a starting point for what has been a thorough and deep reflection and action-taking process in terms of ethical issues arising during and beyond this research. Being reflexive about the myriad aspects of the research encounter is crucial to situating and analysing the status of the knowledge produced through this study. As Mason highlights, reflexivity means: 'Thinking critically about what you are doing and why, confronting and often challenging your own assumptions, and recognising the extent to which your thoughts, actions and decisions shape how you research what you see' (2002, p. 5).

As well as more standard ethical procedures regarding confidentiality and anonymity, the research involved ongoing negotiation and reflection on more knotty ethical issues around power and positioning, and researcher reflexivity, which are often elided by ethical guidelines and statements or checklists. In this section I reflect on three key issues which became salient in the research process and to which reflecting on their ethical implications and their impact on the status of the knowledge generated has been an important informant of my analysis. I discuss, in turn, some *reflections on access* to my two school sites; *voluntary participation* and *researching across difference*.

Access as data

George (2007) and Delamont (1992) both highlight that negotiating access is a continual process, 'not a simple decision' (Delamont 1992 p8). Indeed while access was granted to both schools in this research, the extent of this access was significantly different. Ongoing access to Stellar Academy always felt much more partial and constrained than access to Eden Hill. Time in the field at Eden Hill School dated from 9th February 2010 until 7th July 2010 involving around fifteen to twenty visits in total; while at Stellar Academy time in the field dated from 1st November 2010 until the end of term in mid December 2010, completing all the interviews in ten visits, returning in mid February 2011 to complete the focus group discussions.

My summer fieldwork experience at Eden Hill school felt very positive, welcoming, informal and hence my 'access' felt extensive, 'thick', deep and well-rounded. I was given an open ended visitor's pass, quickly befriended the reception staff, and felt at home sitting people watching and note taking in the staff and sixth form canteen. Staff chatted to me regularly and I am still in touch with the sociology teacher who was my initial point of contact. This enabled me access to 'thick

description'(Geertz, 1973), via a deep understanding of the research setting that is enabled via open and extensive access.

In contrast, my fieldwork period at Stellar Academy was more formal. It was shorter, with fewer and shorter visits, and my 'access' thus felt 'thinner' and less substantial. When I reflect back on the fieldwork experience, I was aware at the time that my image of Stellar Academy felt very two dimensional: flat, substantively and emotionally, but this sense was also mirrored in my physical experience of the school. My roam of the school felt restricted and confined- locked doors (even the toilets); a lack of social spaces and restricted movement throughout the school, felt controlling and disciplining. My communications with staff were more formal; my visitors pass had to be renegotiated each visit; few staff frequented the uninspiring student and staff common room and thus my interviews with staff were limited and more formal. There was a certain level of discomfort in my presence there, and this was reflected in staff discourse that came across as somewhat hollow, two dimensional or flat. Compared to Eden Hill school, I never felt as if I got the same depth of experience of the school. My engagement always felt quite superficial and surface level. I could feel the surface of the cardboard cut-out, but as I go on to analyse in chapter four, this was something of a façade. Hey (1997) in her research in schools on girls' friendships found her research was treated as simultaneously non-serious but also a threat. This is how I felt positioned by Stellar Academy. The research process was driven by attempts to offer me a certain image – an image of community cohesion, the 'good social mix.' But as I argue in chapter four, the turbulent history of this school, and, related to this, the ethnic and social composition, meant possibilities to uphold this image were fragile. The restricted nature of my experience of Stellar Academy reflected the school's attempts to manage what was a difficult mix, and my presence in the school as researcher threatened to disrupt this.

Reay and Crozier (2007) highlight that the process of negotiating access to research sites can be considered data in and of itself. They discuss how difficulties accessing working class students in an elite university was useful data in itself which spoke volumes about the nature of the intake at the elite university in their research. Similarly, this differential access to my two schools was indicative of their (self)location and image in the community, and cohesion and social mix agendas/ discourses. This becomes apparent in Part Two.

Voluntary participation with children and young people

Voluntary participation is particularly important in research with children and young people (Hopkins & Bell, 2008), who are not typically in a position of independent decision making. Having

extensive experience of qualitative research with young people in schools, I am aware of how young people are often coerced into research through the virtues of efficiency, backed by teachers' authority. Given the more relaxed time constraints on my own doctoral research, and the location of the schools, meaning I could easily return regularly, I was keen to avoid this coercion to participate as much as possible. I emphasised participation in the research as voluntary; advertised for students to approach me and sign up, rather than cornering them, and wherever possible I addressed students directly, avoiding accessing students through staff.

This of course generated some great interviews with students who genuinely wanted to talk about their experiences, and appreciated having their views and perspectives listened to and valued. I was careful to balance the 'keen volunteers' by gently pursuing others less likely to volunteer, but still making sure not to pressurise any one – giving students lots of different opportunities to drop out along the way. As a sociologist I saw it as my responsibility to 'listen to complex experiences with humility and ethical care' (Back, 2007). Many young people may appreciate the chance to talk to a genuinely interested adult in a non-judgmental and confidential setting(Heath et al., 2009), and this did appear to be the case with many of my respondents.

Researching across difference

Reflections on my positionality were a central iterative process in the conduct of my fieldwork, on which I reflected on the ways in which I was researching across sameness or difference. Through these reflections, I reject the idea of an 'insiderness' based on some kind of 'unitary' 'sameness' (Hollands, 2003). I argue that claims to insiderness are based on a simplistic and essentialising notion of a shared identity. Hey in her ethnography of girls' friendships argues that the idea that our feminism secures us the privilege of 'becoming one of the girls' is but a 'cosy fantasy' (1997, p. 49). Indeed, as a White middle class, young(-ish) woman, born in the height of Thatcher's Britain, schooled in private and grammar schools in a rural part of Kent, I made no attempts to claim insider-status in the lives of young multi-ethnic Londoners born in the early 1990s. Hey argues that what is required is more reflexivity, about who 'we' are but also a more 'finessed sense of the power relations' (1997, p. 49). Thus I argue that it is the quality of the encounter that matters- a fostering of collaborative, non-hierarchical and non-exploitative relationship with respondents (McDowell, 1992). Moreover, I argue that the commitment to social justice which is brought to the research through analysis, is more important than the researcher's position.' (Skeggs interviewed in Chameleon, 2006). Furthermore it is impossible to ignore the power relations in the research encounter with young people. It is somewhat patronising to claim insider status; I ultimately have more power as it is me who is telling their stories. I am not 'giving voice' to

marginalised youth- it is a story that I am telling about these young people (Hey, 1997) and I have analytical and editorial control.

The points where I acted as an 'outsider' to youth experience (Taft, 2007 p.207 in Heath et al., 2009) were perhaps the most fruitful. I feel I was similar (young) enough to be non-threatening (contrary to a teacher) but different enough to generate interesting stories that would have been taken for granted, had complete commonality been assumed. Like Hey I found myself located somewhere between childhood and adulthood. And like Pascoe (2007 p.233 in Heath et al., 2009), I deliberately attempted to position myself in this space, as mediator between the adult work and the world of the young people I was researching. Indeed, I feel I occupied a kind of 'inbetween' position in the encounter. I was rarely read as a teacher, by the students, but I was never read as 'one of them' either.

Indeed, the deliberate mismatching of researcher and researched identities can actually produce really fruitful data, *across* difference. Carter argues 'it is the gap in experience between interviewer and interviewee that creates a space for respondents to describe and tease out meanings and assumptions that may otherwise remain unspoken' (Carter, 2004). A good example of this is my interview with a Black working class boy Tyler in which he told me that a 'good' friend is someone who is prepared to 'back you'. Clearly highlighting his view of me as an 'outsider' (to urban Black youth slang) he asked me 'do you know what 'back' means?' I feigned ignorance to allow Tyler to elaborate on what his view of 'backing someone' means, which produced really valuable data. Indeed, in being carefully reflexive about the productions and performances of classed, raced and gendered identities within the interview encounter itself, I realised that with Black working class boys in particular, it was precisely my difference which opened up a space in which they could tell their stories and narrate their version of events with elaboration. Several of the Black working class boys had very sophisticated and insightful perspectives on social mixing and indeed race and class injustice, and it was precisely my 'outsider' status that generated these performances. In her research, Malyutina (forthcoming) found her interviews with men respondents often yielded much longer, rich, elaborate depth interviews than those with the women with whom she assumed more of a commonality. My research experience concurred.

My heightened emphasis on voluntary participation revealed interesting patterns in the demographics of who were willing, and who were more reluctant volunteers. Shared understandings did not necessarily develop from shared gender (Malyutina, forthcoming; McDowell, 1992; Riessman, 1987). At Eden Hill School girls were less likely to volunteer and particularly middle class girls. Refuting claims about shared identity characteristics, Malyutina

argues 'gender is problematised and further differentiated by class, cultural, generational and other factors'. (Malyutina, forthcoming, p. 14). I clearly could not assume commonality with these younger middle class girls.

It was evident that the boys were curious about me, but the girls suspicious. Like Hey (1997) I found acute difficulty gaining access to girls' friendship groups. She explained how she learnt a lot about 'how girls exercise power through the veto of exclusion' (Hey, 1997, p. 46). Indeed my attempts to engage middle class girls in my research was mostly met with disinterest or mild hostility. Furthermore, when I did eventually interview some White middle class girls, the power balance was decidedly different. Earlier feminist literature reminds us of the propensity of women to ask questions back, and encourages the researcher's responses (Oakley 1981). Indeed my interview with Faith, a White middle class girl was met with her asking questions back. After the interview I asked (as I did with all respondents) if she had any questions, and she replied, smiling in a friendly manner 'do I get to interview you now?' I agreed, and she went on to ask me about my life and my friends. This was a fascinating experience which enabled me to reflect on the complexities of the interview encounter and the way in which it entails context specific performances of self.

At Eden Hill school, I found one particular middle class friendship group, 'the Smokers,' impenetrable. In my observations of these students- hanging around smoking outside the school gates- I noted how 'I had been aware that there were not really the kinds of kids who were lining up for my research' (Fieldnotes 24th March 2010). Their projected insouciance filled me with a cringing paralysis that blocked me from approaching them directly. Even attempts to access the group through snowballing failed. This speaks volumes about the power-and the closure- of this group in the school, and throws up questions about how other students in the school must have felt around them (indeed as Tyler said 'some people don't have the ability to go outside [to the smoking area]'). Like Malyutina found in her research on sociality, reflecting upon the relationships with the respondents interviewed, or indeed not interviewed, is a way of understanding these students' concepts of friendship and mixing (Malyutina, forthcoming). This group feature at the heart of my analysis in chapter six.

In the final section of this chapter I outline my eclectic approach to the analysis of the data, providing a key spotlight on the ways in which I approached the analysis of data generated about social class and race, and gender, clearly central to researching social mixing.

2.2.10 Analysis

In terms of the process of analysis, I began with being 'data driven' (Holliday, 2002), that is by immersing myself in the data as it was being generated. But at the same time this process is always iterative and my analysis and 'data reduction' (Miles and Huberman 1994) was informed by my knowledge of the literature, theory I am immersed in as an education researcher, and suggestions from my supervisors. My initial analysis began by reading and re-reading printed transcripts; and re-listening to audio recordings of interviews, scribbling in margins and jotting down initial thoughts. Immediately I was looking for themes or patterns in the data. All transcripts, sociograms and fieldnotes were also uploaded into the NVivo software package which enabled me to then setup an initial coding frame which expanded and adapted as my analysis continued. My 'data display' (Miles and Huberman 1994) involved using a combination of NVivo tools; tables and databases using Excel; separate word documents and printed documents. I tended to use NVivo to store and organise all my data and to pull out thematic nodes, but still return to original printed transcripts and audio-recordings to get a sense of the whole of the interview and personal biographies.

My analysis consisted of an eclectic but judicious layering of thematic analysis; narrative and discourse analytical approaches; with elements of psychosocial analysis. I summarise my specific use of these approaches in brief here. Beginning with a constant comparison thematic analysis, a list of themes were generated and coded, informed by the interview topic guide, but also inductively, emerging from the data (Miles and Huberman 1994). I looked for how respondents drew on wider societal discourses. Informed by the literature, I was immediately attuned to 'big' discourses (Wetherell, 2003) of the 'good mix' (Byrne, 2006a); celebrations of diversity (Ahmed, 2006a; Butler, 2003; May, 1996; Reay et al., 2008); Othering and pathologising discourses about urban schools (Archer, Hollingworth, & Mendick, 2010; Hollingworth & Archer, 2010; Lucey & Reay, 2002; Reay & Lucey, 2000). In addition I looked out for new and emergent discourses. Such analytical techniques were key informants of Part Two of this thesis. My later analysis paid more attention to gender, to explore friendships, subcultures and mixing as gendered and gendering processes. On the topic of social mixing, race and class are explicitly problematised, but mix in relation to gender is naturalised. By bringing an analytical focus on gender my analysis was strengthed. Discursive performances of 'girling' and 'boying' (Hey, 1997; Renold, 2005), racialising talk (Van den Berg, Wetherell, & Houtkoop-Steenstra, 2003), and the classed nature of these, were key to analysis of the data in Part Three, and to understand the construction of identities and the (im)possibilities for mixing.

To complement an analysis which had thus far 'spliced and compartmentalised' bits of talk, I adopted elements from psychosocial analysis, largely influenced by Holloway and Jefferson's work (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). I gave analytical attention to 'the importance of the whole in understanding a part' (ibid, 2000, p. 151). This more biographical approach informed my analysis for Part Four in particular, where I look in-depth at the biographies of key young people and their experiences of mixing. A key aspect of a psychosocial approach foregrounds the importance of the unconscious in people's narrative accounts (Frosh, 1999; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Lucey & Reay, 2002). In particular, this analysis was informed by attention to strong defenses against anxiety for the urban White middle classes in their relationship to their class and ethnic 'Other' (Reay, 2008). I pay attention to the affective dimensions of subjectification: how the 'psychic economy of class' (Reay, 2005), and racialising processes generate, and are generated by, affective responses.

Informed by a psychosocial approach I was also looking for the silences, particularly when race, class or gender was silenced, hidden or implicit but also *who* or which groups of students were silent in student's accounts. Roberts' focus on the 'non spectacular,' (2012) in terms of researching young people was influential to my analysis. He argued that in youth studies, the 'ordinary' are often 'overlooked' and in education studies dichotomies abound: typically boys are positioned against girls; achievers against underachievers; working class against middle class. Thus a focus on the overlooked students- outside of subculture- was a key analytical technique which informed my analysis in chapter eight.

A further psychosocial analytic technique which proved fruitful was 'free association' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Looking at how respondents 'free-associated' from one topic to another uncovered implicit assumptions about social class, race and educational success.

Researching class, race and gender in young people's lives

Indeed, a key aspect of the analysis for this research involved grappling with the explicit and implicit ways in which people talk about social class and racial difference, and later on in my analysis, the naturalisation of gendered difference. In a seminal paper Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2001) wrote about a certain 'ambivalence' or 'defensiveness' among their research participants when talking about social class. Essentially they found reluctance among participants to talk about themselves in class terms. There have been critiques of the interpretation of this research (Payne & Grew, 2005), but nevertheless attention to how classed discourses were taken up or avoided, was central to my inquiry. Sayer (2002) – responding to this work- offers an analysis of 'why class is an embarrassing subject'. He argues that class is 'not just 'an innocent

descriptive' but a loaded moral signifier' (2002 sec.1.4). He thus noted unease, ambivalence and defensiveness as common reactions to this moral evaluation.

Indeed, what I found in my research in socially mixed urban schools was more of a reluctance, hesitance or avoidance of talking about class, and race among the *White middle classes*. White middle class boys in particular were most likely to evade this topic, or deny its significance. This is unsurprising in the light of Reay's research with the socially committed White middle classes who send their children to comprehensive schools, which highlights underlying emotions of guilt and defensiveness (2005, 2008). I theorise that a classed, raced and gendered privilege underpins this avoidance.

Savage and colleagues' (2001) closed survey responses can be productively complicated by more qualitative work. Drawing closely on the empirical work of Reay (1998) and Skeggs (1997), Sayer (2002) noted a number of positions that can be taken in relation to class. He notes, from this work, a tendency for working class women to be in denial about their class position– on the one hand reluctant to acknowledge it, and on the other acutely aware of its effects (2002 sec.1.3). This was also noted by McRobbie (1991) with her working class young women. Indeed in previous research, I found urban working class young people keen to profess to be 'just ordinary' (Archer et al., 2010). While this sentiment was present among some young people I interviewed for this thesis, I also encountered a variety of other responses. Like Sayer, I identified 'heroic narratives' amongst the aspirational working class, in interviews with Black working class girls, which I discuss in chapter five.

Also identified by Sayer, I found a class consciousness and pride in being working class. I found this in one White girl-Gemma whose father was a Labour councillor. As Sayer argues, this was a certain pride in lacking the pretensions and affectations associated with middle classness. This is particularly interesting in the case of Gemma, given what Skeggs' highlights about young working class women and their struggle for respectability (Skeggs, 1997). Gemma's negotiation of this difficult position is something I analyse in detail in chapter eight. However what I also found was a class pride amongst the Black working class young men – this was a particular racialised class position which distinguished them from the middle classes who were predominantly White. With no large visible White working class in either school, middle classness became conflated with Whiteness; and hence Blackness with working classness. Perry (2001b) who studied a predominantly White high school and a more multi-racial high school found White students in the more mixed school more aware of their Whiteness. But I suggest that what was happening in Eden Hill school was (predominantly minority ethnic) working class young people, faced with the

presence of White privilege, much more aware of their working classness, and lack of privilege in comparison, and unable to claim an 'ordinariness' in this presence.

The emotional and affective responses to class -and furthermore, racial injustice -were most clearly visible and volatile in the focus group discussions. At Eden Hill School in one mixed class and ethnicity focus group an acute discomfort was generated for the one White girl –Chloe- amongst vocal Black working class boys, who were keen to highlight White middle class privilege in the school. My fieldnotes recorded:

> *As Damian and Nathanial dominated the conversation they talked a lot about racism, and White middle class privilege (in essence) and I worried that she [Chloe] then felt she could not say what she thought. I wondered if she was middle class or not, but I couldn't get a sense at all because she said so little. Sometimes she smiled and laughed and did engage with the group, but when I directed questions at her, she just said 'same as what he said', or monosyllabic answers. (Fieldnotes 7th July 2010)*

While not explicit defensiveness, this incident clearly provoked a discomfort in the group generated by Chloe's Whiteness, regardless of her class background. This attests to the unease around class and racial identity and privilege which come into conflict and struggle when you are in a research situation which asks people to position themselves and discuss these. Indeed such discussion breaks the image of the 'happy, multicultural' (Ahmed, 2007) school in these very performative instances of the focus group which carries risk, threat and anxiety because it is, in its nature, disruptive. Damian and Nathaniel are speaking the unspeakable. As Sayer points out 'unease –rather than matter of factness- about class is perfectly reasonable. It is not surprising that people find class embarrassing, for embarrassment, and indeed shame, are appropriate responses to the immorality of class' (Sayer, 2002, sec.9.5). Furthermore, we cannot ignore the fact that conversations about White privilege do make White people feel uncomfortable, and this is in some ways an important part of the process of unmasking it (Gillborn, 2008).

My analysis however was not solely concerned with objective discussions and distinctions about class and race, but the operations of wider classed, racialising and gendering processes. Indeed in my analysis I attend to the 'psychic landscape of class, one that joins socioeconomic categorisation, the static, safe characteristics of social class, with far more dangerous, mobile, affective ones' (Reay, 2005, p. 913). Following Skeggs, (2004) how the young people talked about class and/or how their discourses were classed, both explicitly and implicitly, was a key interest of mine. Euphemisms for class were rife (for example the 'booksmart' versus the 'street smart' students, as Carl described them; children from 'estates' as teachers often used for working class children; the 4x4 driving parents, as one boy referred to middle class families). Further I was

interested in the different groups or subcultures they identified in the school, but more explicitly how these groups were constituted by the way the young people talked about them. For Perry (2001a, 2001b), in her research with urban youth, 'the discourse of taste' (Dolby 2000) was the language of choice among all groups of students for articulating racial/ ethnic differences. So like Perry, I looked for distinctions in terms of music, hobbies, interests, dress; but also aesthetic sensibilities (Bourdieu, 1984; Hollingworth & Williams, 2010; Skeggs, 2004). I looked for the ways in which gender difference, and racialised difference was constructed as just 'natural' or 'just culture'.

Writing as analysis

I see writing as analysis, and began writing very early on in the analytical process. Building on analytical memos annotating the data, and driven by emerging themes, I shared the analytical process with my supervisors by writing analytical working papers, often presenting this via powerpoint presentation, sharing key quotes, emerging patterns and 'puzzlements' (Holliday, 2002). I presented preliminary overviews of each school, and emerging themes, whilst also writing working papers on specific key themes (such as 'middle class networks'; the 'good mix'); paying particular attention to the key subcultural groups (such as the 'Smokers' and 'the Football Crowd'); and pertinent biographies (such as Lara and Damian). I also wrote theoretical working papers (such as 'working with intersectionality' and 'beyond post-subcultural theory'), which then enabled me to bring thematic analysis and theory together. Following Holliday (2002), I see myself as the 'the architect of meaning', and this is how I frame the writing process. However, Smart (2010) argues that '[t]he sociologist is not free to take their interviews or their observations and "run away" with them' and generate a complete fiction. Our work is anchored much more in ongoing lives to which we are accountable in a variety of ways. She nicely describes working with data as a like a mound of wet clay which defies you to shape it into something recognisable. My sociology here is like story telling. However, it is a kind of bounded story telling- constrained by my accountability to my research participants' stories.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to detail my theoretical framework and chosen methodology. My theoretical framework brings together performativity and subjection theories with a cultural class analysis with attention to intersectionality and the importance of the affective. I have outlined a feminist epistemology which underpins my research, and informs the methodological approach that attends to both structure and agency in eliciting young people's narratives,

highlighting the importance though of situating individual narratives in wider discourses and social structures. I have provided a detailed account of the research design and chosen methods, while reflecting on ethical concerns that have arisen in the research. The final section of the chapter has provided a detailed account of both the analytical tools and the analytical process with a particular spotlight on how social class and race and gender explicitly and implicitly feature in the data generated in this thesis. The following Parts Two, Three and Four discuss my findings.

Part 2: Discourses of social mixing

Chapter 3: Eden Hill School and the 'good mix'

Ahmed (2007) discusses how diversity- or the right kind of diversity – is seen to bring happiness in contemporary 'Western' society, in the way that feeling good becomes attached to other kinds of social good. In this thesis, and specifically in the next two chapters, I argue that discourses of social and ethnic mix within schools can attempt to bring about this good feeling. Various scholars have identified the circulation of celebratory discourses of the 'good mix' amongst the urban middle classes (Ball, et al., 2011; Byrne, 2006a; Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012; May, 1996; Reay et al., 2007)[10] and urban schooling is a key site which provokes these discourses, where middle class parents seek a school with the right social and ethnic balance. In these two forthcoming chapters, through my two school sites, I explore urban schools' opportunities to engender the good mix, and how this is connected to the circulation of good and bad feeling. In this chapter, I show how Eden Hill school came to embody this 'right' or 'good' mix, while in chapter four I illuminate how Stellar Academy came to embody the wrong mix and became sticky with bad feeling.

In this chapter I explore Eden Hill school in detail and I show that while this discourse of the good mix allowed good feeling to circulate, it problematically concealed inequalities and privilege within the school as the circulation of 'good feeling' was dependent on the growing presence of White middle classes in the school. Illuminating how the sixth form at Eden Hill, was characterised by a discourse of 'everybody gets on' and claims to the sixth form as 'one big happy family', I argue that Eden Hill sixth form is emblematic of the 'happy smiling multiculturalism' which Ahmed identifies as circulating good feeling (Ahmed, 2007; see also Kulz, 2011). I use Anderson's notion of the 'cosmopolitan canopy' (Anderson, 2004) to critically unpick how this 'conviviality' (Gilroy, 2004) and 'good feeling' is structured by divisions. In doing so, I reveal the presence and consequences of social and ethnic divisions lower down in the school, tracing the processes of differential association (Bottero, 2005) which give rise to this good feeling. I identify institutional and academic processes within the sixth form which see the lives of Black and White students, and students from different class backgrounds gradually bifurcating as they continue their

[10] A research paper drawing on data from Eden Hill school, theorising and deconstructing celebratory discourses of the 'good mix,' is published with Ayo Mansaray in Sociological Research Online (2012). I am extremely grateful to Ayo for this collaborative theoretical work upon which this chapter now builds.

educational trajectory. I begin this chapter by briefly outlining the discourses of the good mix circulating in the school; I then go on to discuss the sixth form in particular and how it was constructed as epitomising this good mix. I then spend the main focus of this chapter exploring beneath the surface of these discourses and reveal the ways in which these discourses hide subtle divisions within the school by race and social class.

3.1 Celebrating the 'good mix'

The social mix of Eden Hill school framed official discourses espoused by the school's promotional materials, and permeated both staff and students' narratives. This discourse was very much a celebratory one, in which the mix was constructed as positive and 'good' and moreover, as evidence of 'community cohesion'. As I have detailed in the methodology, Eden Hill School was a non-selective, co-educational comprehensive school, opened as a result of parent campaigns for a new school. Now oversubscribed, it had become popular with local middle classes, but nevertheless also had significant numbers of multi-ethnic working class children.

'Social mix' was said to have underpinned the school's mission from its conception, as the school's public website claimed:

> *The main aim of the school was to provide a school for all the community – that includes students from some of the leafiest parts of London, as well as some of the most deprived in Europe.*[11]

This is a public statement of a particular 'social mix' ideology: a commitment to being a mixed school for 'all the community,' rich and poor. There is a hint of pride present in this statement, in connoting the school's perception of its role in 'bridging' worlds. This, I argue, is part of the school's self-image and underlying it is an assertion that its mission therefore is morally good and valuable, thus circulating good feeling. Indeed, the school website proclaimed the school to be an 'integrating force' and a 'force for community cohesion.' It appeared to promote this notion successfully, as a recent Ofsted school inspection report indicated:

> *The inclusive culture and ethos of the school extend beyond its gates and result in outstanding promotion of community cohesion; in many ways the school is at the heart of the local community (Ofsted, 2009).*

This marketing of the school as embodying social mix and community cohesion can and must be read more critically. Ahmed (2006a) writes about the 'turn to diversity' in Higher Education in

[11] This quotation has been altered very slightly to protect the identity of the school.

which certain ethnically and socially diverse universities are able to market themselves as 'doing diversity' purely by virtue of having a diverse student body (see also Allen, Quinn, Hollingworth, & Rose, 2012; Archer, 2007). She also writes about how such diversity work involves working with, as well as through, emotions, where 'pride' is mobilised through this diversity talk and doing diversity is constructed as 'doing good' (2006, p. 754). Such 'diversity' talk produces 'good feelings' but also that this 'good feeling' can mask inequalities and lack of diversity.

The (White middle class) Community Liaison Manager, Mrs Green – also a parent of a child at the school – explained that before the school opened, children from the local primary schools were dispersed to some forty-seven different secondary schools, which she argued was very divisive for the community. She claimed that the opening of the school 'potentially had a huge impact on the cohesion of the local community really', and 'that has been proven, you know, ten years down the line.' For her, attaining a social mix- schooling students from different social, cultural, ethnic backgrounds within the community – was an end in itself (see Ahmed, 2006a; Allen et al., 2012). Achieving this was equated with the aims of a wider community cohesion agenda- it was a demonstration of cohesion.

This discourse of the 'good' mix was espoused by most staff interviewed (four out of five) and was a core part of their narrative of the school. When asked how he would describe the school to an outsider, the Head of year 12, Mr Brown (White British middle class) replied:

> *It's very mixed. It's genuinely mixed. I think that's what I like about it. It's got kids from a wide range of social backgrounds, outlooks, values, religious beliefs ... cultural backgrounds and so on. So it's genuinely a very mixed school.*

Mr Brown is talking about more than just a socio-economic mix, but cultural, religious, and a mix of outlooks and values. Here again we have a 'self-congratulatory' discourse, a claim to being 'genuinely' mixed as opposed to schools where the mix is somehow contrived. There is thus an implicit claim to a certain kind of authenticity. In other words: we have 'real' mix here.

In some cases, staff accounts echoed closely the school's promotional material. For example Mrs Green talked of the mix of 'gentrifiers' and those living in social housing: 'some of the most deprived in Europe.' Others offered their own interpretation of what the 'mix' was and what it meant. The head of Citizenship education, Mr Rosso (White European middle class), who also taught Sociology, elaborated in more detail, explicitly using social class terminology:

> *Officially it's a mixed abilities school with um, you know, very mixed backgrounds. Having said this, having seen other schools in London that classify themselves in the same way as mixed -they're not as mixed as Eden Hill School, because I would say*

> *there is also something like forty per cent or fifty per cent of White middle class, there is also a huge Afro-Caribbean middle class as much as White middle class. You also have the White working class. [...] because of the positioning of the school [...] in Eden, it's inevitably [...] meant to be an opportunity to this kind of integration between various groups who come from different classes.*

Again, claims to a more authentic mix at Eden Hill, as opposed to other London schools, suffuses this teacher's account. While analysis of the school data suggests Mr Rosso overestimates the size of the minority ethnic *middle class*, it is important to note his emphasis that the mix is an intra-class one, White *and* Black middle class as well as minority ethnic working class and White working class. However, I argue that essentially what is implicit here, and central to claims to a 'real mix' is the presence of the middle classes.

This official discourse of 'mix' at Eden Hill also permeated young people's talk. For example Jayne, White British girl from a professional middle class background, made reference to the ethnic mix of the school, at the outset of her interview:

> *I really like it. I've always just loved it. [...] [In] this school, race is just really mixed [...] Since year 7, like, I used to have so many friends of different races to me, and we all kind of had a group together. It was really- that's why I like this school so much, because it is not so segregated*

Indeed, Jayne went on to say that, rejecting private education, the 'mix' had been one of the reasons her parents had chosen the school. Amber, a Black Caribbean girl who lived in council housing with her single mother, also inferred this notion of authentic social mix in her account:

> *It's very mixed [...] Loads of people from loads of different cultural backgrounds. Where some schools say they're diverse, I think this is a good example of it, like ... in terms of like income and stuff as well, because we get like ... I mean Eden Village is just up the road and you get some really well off people coming to this school. But then you get others who are like not so well off. But everyone just kind of knows each other and just mingles. That doesn't ever seem to be an issue anyway, so I think it is diverse in terms of culture and just in terms of general background as well.*

In both girls' statements there is a sense that this mix of 'races', cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds is a 'happy' and harmonious one: 'I love it', 'every one mingles' and 'it is not an issue'. This is happy, smiling multiculturalism (Ahmed, 2007).

Amber is talking though, not just about the mix of 'cultures' but different 'income' backgrounds as well. As a working class young Black woman, she is acutely aware of the presence of 'really well off people' from Eden Village a wealthier and Whiter area of the schools' catchment. In the opening paragraph to this thesis I presented a quotation from Jemma, a White middle class young

woman interviewed in previous research I was involved in (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010). Jemma mused that the presence of students from 'more privileged backgrounds' in urban working class schools, far from bringing 'good feeling,' might 'intensify' feelings of animosity. In contrast, the dominant narrative of Eden Hill school presents a celebratory, good feeling story of mix.

While previous research suggests that the narrative of a 'good mix' is a White middle class one, rooted in middle class gentrifiers' omnivorous desire for mix (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Butler & Lees, 2006; Butler & Robson, 2003a; Byrne, 2006b; Reay et al., 2008), my analysis complicates this picture. Celebratory accounts of the good – and pleasurable - social mix were espoused not just by White middle class students but also Black and working class students. Using Ahmed's work, I argue that this discourse of the good mix travels. As happiness involves the sociality of passing things around (Ahmed, 2007) -the 'transmission of affect' (Brennan, 2004)- in the right conditions, the 'good mix' can be appreciated and celebrated by all. However, later, exploring of the politics of 'attribution and conversion' (Ahmed, 2007), I look at which objects bring this happiness: 'who' or 'what' converts bad feeling into good feeling and good into bad.

Such sentiments of the good social mix, like that of multiculturalism, must be interpreted with caution. In the context of schools or gentrified urban locales, a 'good mix' can mean enough people 'like me,' or 'like my child' (Ball, 2003; 2007), or a mix can be nothing more than a colourful backdrop of minority ethnic 'Others' (Butler & Robson, 2003a; May, 1996). As Archer states in relation to diversity talk in Higher Education, 'the achievement of a more diverse population of students [...] does not straightforwardly equate with the achievement of equitable forms of participation'(Archer, 2007, p. 647). Indeed, what is central in this research is how this celebration of the good mix at Eden Hill school works to mask a particular composition within the school intake. The school had always been oversubscribed; the school featured a significant number of students of 'higher ability;'[12] and as my analysis shows, a substantial number of White middle class students. As the school rose in popularity, staff confessed, these numbers of middle class students appeared to be growing. Furthermore, the school's location and 'catchment' area, facilitated this growth of the middle classes as described in my fieldnotes:

> *While the intake does draw students from several council estates, in fact the word 'catchment' is technically incorrect, as the school website professes that it does not have a 'catchment'. It claims, 'We take children who live nearest to the school'. The furthest they have stretched is 2000m. The school is located right in the middle of a residential area of detached and semi*

[12] Department for Education (DfE) data shows forty percent of the school's intake is from the highest 'ability' band

detached houses. Fieldnotes (30th June 2010) recorded the house prices in the local Estate Agent window. The cheapest was a 1 bed flat for £260,000. And predominating in the window were detached houses from £750,000 to £2,600,000. Some participants, including staff, told me the school demographic is becoming wealthier, as the school is becoming more and more popular with the local middle classes. As the school does not have a 'catchment', this will mean those who live closest -in these kinds of houses- could gradually replace those who live in the council estates a bit further away. (2nd May 2011)

Indeed a national newspaper article in 2011 about the school suggested that this prediction -of a process of exclusion of local working class children and colonisation by the middle classes- was becoming a reality. Reports reveal that the school was investigated by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA)[13], following official complaints from parents that their admissions practice excluded two areas of social housing from its calculation of the shortest 'safe' walking distance, as their admissions practice excluded a pedestrianised path leading to these estates. The judgment of the OSA concluded that there is potential 'that the disputed practice will have the risk of skewing its intake against some economically and socially disadvantaged pupils.'[14] Further analysis revealed that the selective sixth form of the school was also becoming a Whiter and more middle class space. The sixth form, at the time of the fieldwork, admitted around twenty percent new students, and as I elaborate further in Part Three (chapters five and six), many of these new entrants came from higher status and higher performing state schools and fee-paying schools with a large proportion of middle class students.

Thus, underneath the rhetoric of the 'good' mix which circulated across the school, staff and students' accounts we find the presence of a critical mass (Reay et al., 2007) of (White) middle class students. Implicit is that it is the presence of the middle classes which brings the real mix. This echoes policy discourses of neighbourhood mix whereby, in encouraging middle class settlement in working class neighbourhoods, the 'professional expertise of the articulate few' is expected to 'trickle down' to benefit the 'underprivileged' (Lees, 2008, pp. 2449-2453). This 'charitable' activity can be seen to generate good feeling, however the extent to which this privilege 'rubs off' on the working classes, or is 'rubbed in their faces,' remains to be discussed in the rest of this, and the following, chapter.

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[13] The Office of the Schools Adjudicator work independently from the government Department for Education (DfE) but are appointed by the Secretary of State for Education. Reviewing the evidence from relevant parties that have responsibility for ruling on objections to schools' or local authorities' admission arrangements; ruling on appeals; resolving local disputes regarding statutory proposals for school reorganisation, and making the final decision on building new schools. See http://www.education.gov.uk/schoolsadjudicator. Accessed 1st March 2013.

[14] http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/feb/01/anon Accessed 28th August 2013

In Chapter Four, at Stellar Academy we can see how a different composition in terms of academic 'ability' (which is implicitly racialised and classed) can have a profound effect on how the social mix of the school is framed. I argue that ethnically mixed *working class* urban schools are constructed as 'not mixed enough'. Saturated with metaphors of waste and dirt, such schools are constructed as too 'rough' and 'unruly' (Hollingworth & Archer, 2010; Lucey & Reay, 2002; Reay, 2004b, 2007) - they are sticky with bad feeling. I go on to argue that this is about academic achievement: the school is a problematic mix if it doesn't have enough high attainers. Furthermore, these bad feelings become attached to particular minority ethnic and working class bodies. Before I discuss Stellar Academy however, I want to dig further underneath this discourse of the 'good mix' at Eden Hill school, revealing how it was structured and managed by processes of exclusion operating within the school.

3.2 The sixth form and happy smiling multiculturalism

The sixth form in particular was characterised by what sociologist Back has coined as 'harmony discourse' (1990 in Hewitt, 2003 [1992]). The sixth form was constructed as a specific, unique space, where 'everybody gets on' and in which social mixing can, and apparently does, occur. The sixth form in this sense, was an enactment of everyday, unpanicked multiculture (Kesten et al., 2011; Noble, 2009), where diversity is 'commonplace' (Wessendorf, 2010). A 'contact zone' where people from different cultures can come together and mingle (Wessendorf, 2010, p. 21). I explore the sixth form as an example of the 'cosmopolitan canopy' (Anderson, 2004) – a 'convivial' space where students can learn to appreciate each others' differences. Most importantly this is one that brings good feeling (Ahmed, 2007), tapping into the 'feel-good politics' of cohesion (Fortier, 2010).

The sentiment that 'everybody gets on' at Eden Hill school was expressed by more than two thirds of students at Eden Hill School. Carl (Black Jamaican working class), describing the school as a 'hub,' explained 'It is just a place where generally everybody gets along. It is a nice place full of friends.' Jayne (White British middle class) agreed that 'everyone is really friendly'; and Amber (Black Caribbean working class) claimed 'everyone mingles,' difference is 'not an issue.' This discourse also featured in the school's Ofsted report (2009), with school inspectors remarking that 'We were particularly impressed by how well you all get on together in the school.' Relations were characterised by a seemingly genuine cosmopolitan outlook, in the sense of an openness and a willingness to engage with the Other (Hannerz 1992 in Wessendorf, 2010, p. 18).

At least one third of students stressed the sixth form as a *particularly* 'convivial', 'harmonious' space: as one big happy family. As Liam (White British middle class) claimed 'I think everyone gets on pretty well, especially in the sixth form. Everyone's quite close, and everyone sort of knows everyone else, which is good. ' Ben (mixed race, middle class) who joined the school for the sixth form from a boys' state secondary school, also described it as a welcoming place:

> *When I first came here [...], it was really hard to tell, you know, who was mixed with who, because everybody appeared very open and friendly with each other. It is really hard to sort of categorise you know.*

Comparing it to his previous school, where friendship groups were more rigidly segregated, Ben suggested it was hard to identify immediately discrete groups or cliques within the 'friendly' space of the Eden Hill sixth form: ' I mean there are people who I don't talk to as frequently, but if I do, it's on good terms. It wouldn't be like as if I'm talking to a stranger or anything. It would be sort of friendly terms or gossip, I don't know. You know, it would be very friendly'. Tanisha (mixed race, working class) elaborated on this theme:

> *It's pretty cool because it's just really chilled, like. [...] now in the sixth form its weird because it's, like, everyone literally just chills with everyone. Like obviously we still have little groups that you just tend to go to, but we're all friendly sort of thing. It's more welcoming I guess.*

The sixth form is hence constructed as 'nice,' 'friendly' and 'welcoming'. A place where 'everyone knows each other'; everyone is 'close' and 'gets on'; everyone 'mingles'; is on good terms and everyone 'chills' with everyone else. The school could be seen to epitomise 'everyday,' 'convivial' multiculture (Gilroy, 2004; Kesten et al., 2011). The simple fact of togetherness can bring good feeling (Wise, 2007). However, in the next substantive section I explore the extent to which the celebrated social mix of Eden Hill school did or did not lead to *mixing*, specifically the institutional processes which led to this.

3.3 Beneath the surface: the structuring of good feeling

The head of Citizenship claimed the *raison d'être* of the school was to provide an 'opportunity' for 'integration' or social mixing. However, to what extent these 'opportunities' for 'integration' were enacted remains open to interrogation. This forms the focus of this next section. I go on to illustrate how, beneath the surface of these discourses of happy smiling multiculturalism, friendships and associations at Eden Hill school were tightly structured along social class and ethnic lines, mediated by institutional processes and external social networks.

As other authors note, a mix is no guarantor of mixing and meaningful exchange (Amin, 2002 ; Noble, 2009; Vertovec, 2006; Wessendorf, 2010) and mixing can indeed be superficial. Keane's research in Higher Education found contact between working class ('non-traditional' / 'access') students and middle class/ traditional students tended to be superficial, mostly limited to a 'hi or a smile in passing' (Keane, 2011, p. 450). Similarly, Kesten and colleagues' (2011) research on 'everyday multiculture' in an urban location, found a conviviality through *superficial* mixing, which stopped short of friendships across difference. Such findings of a superficial or partial mix were evident in this research. At Eden Hill school, when asked if people mixed *outside* of school, what Tyler (Black African working class) said is telling:

> *I don't think so. No. It's so hard ... it's much harder, because outside school is much different from inside school. Inside school, it's not like an obligation, but it's like keeping up appearances in a sense. You have to say hello, hi to someone and hang out with the person, but outside school you have no obligation.*

Mixing had a superficiality- limited to a 'hi' in passing- a kind of performance of duty. Furthermore, while the official discourse was of a celebratory one of a 'good' mix and 'everybody gets on', at least half of students, and staff interviewed claimed that in the lower school years (age 11-16) students tended to mix less across social and/or ethnic difference. As Tanisha (mixed race working class) argued 'when we were, like, from year 7 to year 11 there was different cliques and stuff, like, everyone had their own little group.' The sixth form was constructed as 'different now' to the lower school years where clearer divisions were, and are seen:

> *It is evident from like year seven and that, you know, there is a kind of split from the, you know, richer students [...] Back in the day it was like working class and middle class people wouldn't talk, and now everyone is cool (Nathanial, Black Caribbean working class)*

Aside from Nathanial's emphasis on social class differences, it was more common to assert racial divisions in the lower school, constructed in terms of 'Black' and 'White', as exemplified in Tanisha's description:

> *What we noticed during[the lower school], it's funny because there would be a group of like Black girls all together and like one White girl and then there'd be like a group of White girls together and like one Black girl and a couple of mixed race girls. And it was funny because we used to make fun of like mixed race people and say, it's funny because they're confused because they don't know which one to go to.*

Tanisha and Nathanial's observations suggest that 'everybody gets on' means not a capacity for mixing across groups but rather that students can find other people 'like them' in terms of social class/ wealth, and/or ethnicity. Such seeking out of similarity reproduces rather than breaks down

lines of difference. Furthermore this structuring determines how students of different ethnicities come to know their 'place', or come to learn they have no place within the school– which I will come to shortly.

In Perry's (2001a) research in a US high school, she observed how students from different racial backgrounds would occupy different spaces of the school in recreational times. In my research I also found student focus groups engendered discussions of how the spaces of the school were segregated by 'race'. In this sense, everybody can be seen to 'get on' because they don't mix too much. Damian reflected that in the lower school, if there was no seating plan in class, all the White students would sit at the front and all the Black students at the back. Faith (White English middle class), in her interview, sought to strengthen her claim that in the lower school years students mix less than in the sixth form, by pointing out: 'If you just look outside [gestures to the playground], everyone is kind of divided in ethnicity... slightly anyway.' We can see both Tanisha and Faith are keen to stress that these groups were not entirely homogenous in terms of race but that this general trend prevailed. Similarly Tyler concurred: 'there was only a few White kids who hung around with both [Black and White]' and vice versa. Tanisha described in more detail the racialised use of open school spaces during break and lunch time. She recalled in the focus group discussion, gesturing to different spaces of the school:

> *Remember the cafeteria was all Black people and then outside all the White people would be on the veranda trying to sunbathe and stuff. [...] Inside the lunch hall there's generally the majority White people like having packed lunches or whatever. [...] I'm not saying like it's [right or] whatever but I'm just saying how it is. Outside there- you know when you're walking from the atrium - you just see loads of White boys hanging around. Just there outside the assembly hall you see like all Tracy and that, like Black people.*

Indeed, a White middle class teacher described a very similar scenario to Tanisha. Taking me on a lunchtime tour, he revealed how he was *'fascinated by the different groups of kids and their "territory" around school',* and went on to give his perspective on the way spaces were used by different ethnic groups in the school. He noted that the *'school hall is mainly younger White middle class girls eating packed lunch'* (fieldnotes 31/03/2010). Thus social and racial segregation mirrored a spatial segregation in which students from different backgrounds occupied different 'territory'.

Bottero's (2005) concept of 'differential association' is useful here. As I discussed in Chapter One (section 2.1), she argues that people with different social resources tend to move in different circles, so are less likely to come across others different to them, and when they do, they have

less in common. At Eden Hill, while students from different social and ethnic backgrounds *are* encountering each other in school, arbitrary practices such as sunbathing or eating packed lunches operate as forms of distinction and thereby foreclose opportunities for interaction with others that are different (Bottero, 2005). Thus seemingly neutral 'preferences' for packed lunch as a White middle class preference (or school dinners, a Black student preference), further reproduce divisions in the school, marking out territories where some students 'fit' (because that's what students 'like them' do) and marking others as no-go areas (Puwar, 2004). The lunch 'preference,' individualised as a lifestyle choice, is influenced by position in the social hierarchy: for example more Black and minority ethnic students in the school are eligible for Free School Meals, so inevitably take this up. However, this lifestyle choice at the same time thus produces stratification. For White middle class students, school dinners may appear to be a stigmatised choice associated with poverty and those who claim it – Black and minority ethnic students – and hence avoided. The consequences are that Black and White students do not eat or spend their main recreational time in the school day together.

However, these divisions did not appear to undermine the notion that everybody got on, most (though not all) were keen to assert that there was little animosity. Overall, students did not tend to question why these interests coalesced around 'race' (and class) so neatly and suggested that such divisions were just a 'normal' and 'natural' consequence of different 'interests.' Likewise, the head of sixth form commented: 'It's natural human behaviour really to kind of go with people that you feel comfortable with.' Such a sentiment was echoed by the students also, as I discuss more in Part Three (chapters five and six). However, this serves to neutralise and mask the role of class or race inequalities as structuring these differences or cliques and hence possibilities for 'mixing'.

To some extent then, it would appear that within the lower school, the discourse of 'everyone gets on' was consistent with a certain managed social distance (Reay, *et al.*, 2007). Difference can be tolerated from afar, and to some extent, as long as social hierarchies are not interfered with/ remain intact (Back et al., 2012).

As indicated, the 'conviviality' of the sixth form at Eden Hill was seen as pronounced because of its contrast to the divided nature of friendships within the lower school years. I now turn to the factors which go into producing this social experience. As Keane (2011) found in her research, a common explanation given by students was that they were now more 'socially mature', and this enabled them to appreciate each other's differences. The following quotations are illustrative:

It is just really at sixth form everything changes. You just feel that little things don't matter anymore. [...] you see a bigger picture [...] you have to be mature enough. (Faith, White English, middle class)

Everyone's got past what you look like. (Aarti, British Indian, middle class)

Maybe you set differences aside or you are not as narrow minded about different people's interests and stuff. (Tanisha, Mixed Other, working class)

Anderson observes that under the 'cosmopolitan canopy' people 'may see profoundly what they have in common with other human beings, regardless of their particularity' (2004, p. 29). The students stress that this occurs through maturity, but there is also a sense that familiarity over time breeds this desire to put 'differences aside'. In taking up these positions, students are learning to become the 'good' student and 'good citizen' of multicultural society (Kulz, 2011). There was also a sense of curiosity about others, which itself reflected the extent to which students' were becoming aware of wider social differences, the distance/nearness of others in the emergent adult world into which they were being socialised. Nathanial explained that as they have matured they have become more interested in other people's lives:

It is just like you are more interested in the other side. You want to see [...] how they live, [...] like all the richer ones seem to go to like, I don't know, wild parties and stuff that you imagine stuff that you wouldn't necessarily get to go to. So you just want to go in and experience it. And at the same time they want to come and like just sit around on the block with you and just like have fun, having jokes with us [...] Maybe it is just intrigue really- intrigued with how other people live.

One can see Nathanial's comments are emblematic of Anderson's 'cosmopolitan canopy' as a space where exposure to others' difference invites intrigue and interest. Anderson argues that:

'The existence of the canopy allows [...] people, whose reference point often remains their own social class or ethnic group, a chance to encounter others and so work toward a more cosmopolitan appreciation of difference.' (2004, p. 28).

I argue that in students' understandings, many see the sixth form as a 'cosmopolitan canopy', which enables them to 'indulge themselves, observing, pondering, and in effect, doing their own folk ethnography [...] testing or substantiating stereotypes and prejudices' (2004, p. 25). Yet, we can read Nathanial's account in a more critical way, pointing to the clear sense of distance implied in his language. He describes the 'other' young people as 'the richer ones': the image of the social world he evokes is one of 'us' and 'them'. Whilst providing opportunities for mixing, what is equally important about the canopy are the opportunities for interpretative work, or the development of 'folk' taxonomies about what others are like, which can both *reinforce* as well as challenge our understanding of social distance and sense of place. Hence, the cosmopolitan

canopy may also provide opportunities for the 'substantiating (of) stereotypes and prejudices' (Anderson, 2004, p. 25). Rather than taking this conviviality as a successful resolution, or rather abatement, of processes of class and social reproduction, I point to the wider social relations which inform student's friendships. In addition, I argue that the sense of the conviviality of social experience, and the structures of feeling (Raymond Williams, 1977) which underlie it, contribute to the social reproduction of difference rather than its dismantling.

Furthermore, as I pointed out earlier, the composition of the sixth form was different to the lower school. Some fifty percent of students had left, and around twenty percent of the sixth form cohort had come from other schools. A number of the students interviewed were acutely aware that the composition of the sixth form was different to the lower school and therefore the 'mix' was no longer the 'same'. I argue that one of the key factors shaping opportunities for friendships within the sixth form is its educationally selective function. Eden Hill sixth form remained the domain for those embarking on a more academic post-compulsory trajectory, where only A-levels, the traditional route into university, were offered[15]. Consequently, at Eden Hill a significant proportion of students would leave at the end of compulsory schooling. This had a homogenising effect in terms of the dispositions and orientations of the remaining student cohort. Faith (White British middle class) elaborated: 'You are not here because someone is telling you to go to school because you have to. You are here because you want to learn and because you want to get A-levels.' This desire to study further is framed as personal choice, and capacity to study, but the trajectories of those who leave and those who stay-on in education is classed and racialised. Nationally, students from working class and particularly Black minority ethnic groups achieve less well at GCSE, the compulsory examinations at age sixteen, and are thus less likely to be eligible for A level study.

The sixth form was thus a Whiter more middle class space. Analysis of the school demographic data revealed that the composition of the sixth form was indeed different to the lower school. In both sixth form year groups (year 12 and 13) at the time of my fieldwork, the percentage of White British students was at least ten per cent higher than their cohort when they were in the lower school. This meant that within the sixth form White British students were the single largest ethnic group. Correspondingly, the percentage of Black (including mixed Black) students had fallen for both year groups of the sixth form also (from around 35 per cent to around 20 per cent). While

[15] In fact, the sixth form had just begun to introduce more vocationally oriented BTEC Business Studies and BTEC Sport (but still only A level equivalent and very few students at this time were taking these courses). The school had plans to offer more BTEC in future, in order to widen their offer. This will no doubt have an impact on the future composition of the sixth form; and consequences for friendships and associations.

social class composition is harder to ascertain from the data available, of these cohorts, students who progressed into the sixth form were less likely to receive Free School Meals.

Some students were aware of the skewed composition of who had left and who had stayed. Damian in a focus group discussion claimed that all the 'popular people have left'. When asked what he meant by 'the popular people', he replied 'the Blacks', and the group laughed. Interviews with staff at the school indicated that practices of ability grouping were acting as an even earlier filtering process for those who did not wish to stay on and study A-levels (or who did not get the grades). In line with other research (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Youdell, 2004), the lower ability groups were reported to contain more Black students. Jayne, (a White British middle class girl) explained, slightly uncomfortably, that she was the least academic out of all her friendship group and was in the lower ability group for maths and science. She went on to say:

> *I hate saying this, but this is quite common... I was the only one- me and about three others –were like the only White people in my [ability group]. And then in the top class, it was very- mostly White [...] It was weird, thinking back. [...] a lot of the people in my [ability group] went [on] to either Stellar Academy or Queens Academy, or like, they just went straight to work.*

In this sense, the narrative of the 'good mix' jars– Jayne is uncomfortable that the 'good mix' does not result in equal academic experiences. She goes on to say that the sixth form was more mixed because they were now taking different subjects and they are not in ability groups anymore. We can see from Jayne's account that many of these Black students who were in the lower ability groups left school at the end of compulsory schooling. Damian (Black British working class) also spoke a lot about this in his interview. He claimed that many Black students left not only because they did not meet the grades, but even those who did meet the grades chose to leave because they did not like the school as they felt it did not 'respect' them. Youdell suggests that: 'In a racialised school context, students know, at least tacitly, that their Blackness renders them undesirable learners' (2003, p. 17). She, and others argue that this makes it difficult for them to maintain high status subcultural affiliations *and* successful learner identities (Archer et al., 2010; Gillborn, 2008; Rollock, 2007a, 2007b; Youdell, 2003, 2004, 2006a). Damian was intuitively aware of the way in which ability grouping was a mutually reinforcing process, as the lower ability groups became spaces for Black 'undesirable learners', they became desirable Black *social* spaces: 'more of the people wanted to be in that set because of the social implications, kind of thing. Like all friends of friends really and that's it'.

Jayne's discomfort suggestive in: 'I hate saying this;' 'it was weird,' is indicative of the bad feeling that attached to this segregation. Furthermore, Damian's suggestion that such students'

relationship with the school were marred by a lack of 'respect' points towards less than positive relations. I argue that these lower ability group (Black) students can be conceived of as the unhappy objects of the socially mixed urban school, the 'killjoys' (Ahmed, 2007) who do not want to learn, and do not aspire (Hollingworth & Williams, 2009; Hollingworth et al., 2010). Thus, paradoxically, there appeared to be more 'social mixing' in the sixth form, because the students to some extent were becoming more similar in terms of their likely social trajectories, and 'similarity breeds connection' (McPherson, 2001 p.415 cited in Bottero, 2005). In this sense the sixth form is a 'happy' space, as the 'unhappy objects' which threaten convivial relations have been cast out (Ahmed, 2007). The 'good mix' comes into its element, as it is now actually a more *exclusive* mix which adheres to the values of the school regarding academic achievement.

While ability grouping can be seen to play a structuring role in young people's friendships, this is not as it seems. As we saw, Jayne, a White British middle class girl, finding herself 'on her own' in the lower ability groups, did not make friends within these lessons. Although Jayne proclaimed that she had 'so many friends of different races', her discussions inspired by her sociogram revealed that in the sixth form her close friends were (White and minority ethnic) *middle class*. Furthermore, she did not leave school like many of the other (Black) lower ability group students. She stayed on in the sixth form to study arts subjects. This suggests class and race are equally powerful forces in structuring students' friendships as ability grouping. Moving into sixth form 'reunited' Jayne with her middle class friends.

For other students, such as Damian (Black British working class), Amber (Black Caribbean working class) and Tanisha (mixed race working class), the transition from compulsory schooling (year 11) to sixth form was a less comfortable one. Damian and Amber individually talked about how all of their close friends were less 'academic', or did not like the school and so had left after year 11. Amber's sociogram revealed that all of her close friends were now at college elsewhere, while Damian had made some new friends in the sixth form. Indeed Keane (2011) who studied friendships at Higher Education(HE) found that working class /non-traditional students experienced a bifurcation between HE and their external lives in a way that middle class students did not. Thus, as with Keane's research it would appear for these Black (working class) students, the sixth form represented a disruption to their pre-existing friendship formations. Damian claimed that the sixth form 'forced' new friendships because of the restricted range of others available; there was little choice in the matter: 'You're forced to make new friends basically [...] you have to put it down in your priorities because there is no one else to – everyone's gone – it took away all your options.' Both Amber and Damian, who claimed all their friends had left,

admitted that all of their close friends were Black, and mainly Black Caribbean. Though Damian had made friends with new people in the sixth form he admitted his close circle was still predominantly Black. Tanisha who had also lost several friends to other schools and colleges, made similar remarks, using humour, to articulate this sentiment:

> *Maybe [there were divisions] because we'd made friends and we stuck with them and because everyone's [now] gone to different colleges and everything it's like we're mixing up again even though we're with some of the same people, friendship groups have broken up. Because we used to be in a friendship group of five of us and three left and now I talk to this White girl [pointing at Amanda] [everyone laughs].*

Like Damian, Tanisha's explanation also suggests that this exodus of Black students from the school to some extent forced new, inter-ethnic friendships. Humour is used here- and with Damian's earlier laughter-inducing comment that all the 'Blacks' had left- to mask uncomfortable feelings generated from this segregation and inequality. Whilst the move to sixth form could be viewed as an opportunity to make new friends across difference, for many of the Black and working class students, this was experienced as a constricted field. Their 'choices' were fewer, in contrast to the White (middle class) students whose friendship groups move with them into the sixth form. Their mobility in social space is restricted.

For these Black students at Eden Hill school, becoming 'desirable' learners in the sixth form involved more sacrifice- not only in terms of identity shift, but in the loosening of ties with other Black students. Indeed, for students like Damian and Amber this choice to stay on in the sixth form was a less comfortable one, and was against the grain. For example Amber (Black Caribbean working class) lamented, of her friends, that 'they all just went and left me.' For Damian, while he admitted he was becoming more studious now, this was not expressed as an entirely comfortable identity shift:

> *My friendship group who I used to hang around with have gone, which I think is affecting me somehow- like I think is affecting me because I was more of a student where I would slack off and not do any work because my peers and friends were.*

Damian is aware of the affect circulating and attaching to him in this new space of the academic sixth form, rubbing off on him to become the 'good learner' and the 'good citizen': more readily read as middle class ways of being (Youdell, 2006). He is learning how to have the right middle class affective disposition (Kulz, 2011). Thus not only was the sixth form populated with more similar people in terms of background, the sixth form exerted a conservative force on students' identities. Like Jess in the film *Bend it Like Beckham*, the Black minority ethnic and working class students have to undergo transformation and work on themselves to become the good objects of

multicultural mixing (Ahmed, 2007). Good feeling comes from proximity to Whiteness, and as I go on to discuss in later chapters, students like Damian become the 'good mixers' through their proximity to Whiteness and educational success.

At the same time as many of the Black working class students' friendships in school were disrupted, through transition to sixth form, middle class patterns of association outside of school were sharpening. Participants' sociograms and accompanying discussion, revealed that for the working class and minority ethnic students in the sixth form, ties tended to revolve around their locale and existing forms of 'community' (extended family and 'people on my estate' for example) and friends outside school tended to be in lower status educational institutions and on vocationally orientated courses. However, what was striking was how the middle class students' patterning of *external* associations and friendships tended to involve 'weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973) with individuals across the elite field of private and prestigious state schools across London. Oliver, Liam and Jayne, three 'solidly' middle class[16] White students at Eden Hill school all talked about associating with students from the neighbouring private schools. These were very much casualised 'friends of friends' networks formed through 'parties'; through siblings attending higher status schools; old primary school friends and friends of the family. Alongside this, Oliver and Jayne each had a substantial group of friends who attended other 'higher' status schools in the area. So, while the Black and working class students had 'opportunities' to form friendships and associations across social class and ethnicity *within* the sixth form, these were less comfortable choices (and not always seen as a positive social benefit). Moreover, such opportunities to access more privileged social networks and White middle class friends outside of school were not available to the Black/ working class students in the same way.

Conclusion

This chapter has given the reader a contextualisation of the dominant discourses and structures of feeling circulating at Eden Hill school. I have used Ahmed's work to illuminate the affective dimensions of discourses of the 'good mix' operating at Eden Hill School. At Eden Hill we can see how diversity, celebrated as doing good, produces good feelings. However I argue here that this good feeling is enabled by a critical mass of middle classes in the school, and an element of structured and managed distance and division in the school. Exploring Gilroy's (2004) notion of conviviality and Anderson's (2004) notion of the cosmopolitan canopy of socially mixed urban

[16] Oliver, Liam and Jayne's parents all have professional jobs, are home owners and live in the gentrified part of the locale.

spaces, I have explored the opportunities urban schooling provides for socially mixed friendships and a degree of 'cultural learning'. However I have begun to illustrate how the institutional processes of schooling contribute to reinforcing rather than dismantling social hierarchies. What I have suggested is that actually, *differential association* 'acts as a conservative force on the distribution of opportunities and resources' (Bottero, 2005, p. 4), but perhaps most importantly, consolidates White middle class advantage. I have explored how the sixth form is characterised by happy smiling multiculturalism where 'everybody gets on' but we learn that a large proportion of Black working class students had left- the sixth form was essentially a Whiter, more middle class space. I show how this impacted specifically on Black and working class students as it meant a disruption of pre-existing friendships and pressure to adopt a more middle class affective disposition, which as I go on to discuss in subsequent chapters was never entirely possible.

In chapter four, I turn to Stellar Academy and explore how the different composition of the school saw it constructed as having the 'wrong'/ a problematic mix, which not only led to the circulation of negative affects but also led to a careful management of the mix, and hence mixing.

Chapter 4: Stellar Academy and the management of unease

> *[S]ome bodies are presumed to be the origin of bad feeling in so far as they disturb the promise of happiness, which we can re-describe as the pressure to maintain the signs of 'getting along'. [...] Feelings can get stuck to certain bodies in the very way we describe spaces, situations, dramas. And bodies can get stuck depending on what feelings they get associated with (Ahmed, 2007, p. 127)*

In this chapter I argue that the different social and ethnic composition, and trajectory of educational success, of Stellar Academy blocked celebratory discourses of the 'good mix' and 'happy smiling multiculturalism' and led to the school being conceptualised as problematic, as 'not quite the right mix'. I trace how this led to the circulation of negative affects, where the school- and the bodies in it- thus becomes 'sticky' with bad feeling. I go on to trace how this led to a careful management of the mix, and hence mixing.

Stellar Academy was a non-selective school, but was a more academically 'inclusive' one than Eden Hill. In terms of its intake, Stellar took higher numbers of students in 'lower ability' bands, and had a more diverse and inclusive course offer at sixth form. This resulted in a more diverse student body in terms of social class and ethnicity. I argue that at Stellar Academy 'not quite the right mix' referred to 'too many' lower band pupils. This had racialised and classed implications, as minority ethnic and working class students tend to be disproportionately located in lower 'bands' and lower 'ability groups' (Gillborn, 1990, 2005; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). I argue that the presence of 'too many' lower band minority ethnic and working class students in the school, and in the sixth form, positioned them as 'unhappy objects' of academic 'failure', and converted good feeling into bad feeling. I elaborate how this 'not quite right' mix, led to a naturalisation of practices of segregation, and a careful 'management of (middle class) unease' (Bigo, 2002 cited in Fortier, 2010, p. 23) in the sixth form through 'streaming.' Specifically I show how streaming was introduced by the school to alleviate middle-class anxiety brought about through proximity to the 'unhappy objects' of working class and Black urban youth. This, I go on to argue, contributed to a 'specialling' of the 'top' tier academic group, populated by the few White middle classes in the school, which created a rift between them and other students and hence impacting on mixing.

4.1 The unhappy objects of inclusive success

Similar to Eden Hill school, Stellar Academy was deemed by Ofsted, at the time of the fieldwork, to be 'culturally harmonious', making an 'outstanding contribution to the promotion of community cohesion' as 'students come from a wide range of ethnic and social backgrounds'. Like with Eden Hill school we see how being diverse is claimed as evidence of 'doing' diversity (Ahmed, 2006a). Reciting the comprehensive ideal, Mr Grey, one of the (White British middle class) sixth form tutors espoused that, ideally, schools 'should reflect society', that 'there are people from all races, religions, languages or academic abilities all within a school'. However, he went on to say 'this is the idea that we try to have in the Academy'. As Mr Grey's tentative wording suggests -'*try* to have'- there was quite a different back story to Stellar Academy which undermined celebratory narratives or claims to social mix, which shall unfold as this Chapter progresses.

Stellar Academy was premised on inclusion: while both Eden Hill and Stellar were set up as a result of parent campaigns, and were located in gentrified immediate surroundings, Stellar Academy's position in the school 'marketplace' differed notably to Eden Hill. Fewer local middle class parents sent their children to Stellar than Eden Hill. Further, while both schools were 'non-selective' and 'comprehensive' in their intake, Stellar Academy always had higher proportions of lower 'ability' band pupils; results were well below the national and borough average, and below that of Eden Hill schools' results at any time in its history. The school had higher than average numbers of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and high proportions of students from minority ethnic and socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Stellar Academy's short history was also marred by the 'radical' vision for 'inclusive' education of the former headteacher, Ms Scarlet, which deviated from the national curriculum. As I go on to discuss, this approach appeared to have failed in the climate of the standards agenda, as initial SATs[17] results were poor. Her legacy was thus constructed as a 'mistake' that coloured the schools' reputation and perception of itself, but moreover, contributed to how the mix in the school came to be perceived.

The importance of community and specifically the 'local' was central to Stellar Academy's ethos. The school's promotional material referred to it as 'a neighbourhood school,' 'in the heart of the community,' that 'students can walk to', and proximity to the school has always been prioritised in admissions. An Ofsted report inscribed the sentiment: 'Stellar Academy is a local school for local children'. The commitment to 'non-selective' admissions came to characterise the ethos of

[17] SATs are national standardised tests in England taken at various ages including in year 9 (age 13-14 years old)

the school. In the school's admissions statement, Stellar is presented as an 'inclusive school' committed to ensuring it 'reflects the full range of ability'. As one teacher, Mr Grey, explained: 'we take the most local students regardless of ability'. The school had hopes to provide an 'authentic' comprehensive school experience in spite of their Academy status. An early newspaper article in the *Times Education Supplement* quoted Ms Scarlet as saying 'We are a proper community comprehensive' (Anon, 2004).

Indeed, underpinning the school's ethos and vision of itself as 'real' comprehensive, local and non-selective, was a claim to authentic working classness, but as I go on to elaborate later in this section, this was not without ambivalence. Mr Black discussed the school as having children from 'working class backgrounds,' and this investment in the school's working classness was evident elsewhere. For example, Mr Dorado, the Assistant Principal (with responsibility for Post Sixteen Education) (White British) chose to reveal that growing up as a working class Londoner, he had attended Stellar Academy in its previous incarnation as a Boys' school[18], and these fond memories had, in part, informed his decision to return to teach there. In addition, the first headteacher, Ms. Scarlet presented herself in early news reports as a 'classic working-class girl'. The 'daughter of a pastry cook and a builder', she grew up, and was schooled in a North London borough, and became a teacher to improve educational experiences for other working class children (Anon, 2004). Ms Scarlet's narrative of her 'authentic' working class identity was reproduced by other staff in the school. The Chair of Governors, Mr Olive[19] (White British, middle class) praised her as 'totally honest'[20] claiming that there was 'nothing phoney' about her (Anon, 2004).

While authenticity gets ascribed to the working classes, this is double-edged, as they can be seen as too authentic (Lawler, 2005; Skeggs, 1997; Tyler, 2006). Ms Scarlet was committed to a fairly 'radical' approach, which 'aim[ed] to do things very differently for children of all classes and abilities' (Anon, 2004), which at the time was praised, but subsequently vilified. In his online blog, Mr Olive, a leftwing journalist, praised her 'commitment to the comprehensive ideal', describing it as 'a brave thing to say these days' (Anon, 2004). Ms Scarlet's approach involved a rejection of the national curriculum, for a more 'alternative' curriculum involving more cross-curricular links; applied learning, and a commitment to community languages. In a move which framed this approach as 'inclusive', an early Ofsted monitoring report recognised: 'the principal has set out an inclusive vision that is based on providing a wide range of opportunities for the pupils.' However,

[18] Academy schools were first introduced in the 1990s to replace 'underperforming' urban schools.
[19] Whilst not directly interviewed in this research, the name of the chair of governors has also been changed to protect the identity of the school.
[20] http://www.anonbooks.co.uk/mrolive/article.htm accessed 28th August 2013

as I go on to show, in the wider climate of Standards policed by league tables (see Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Hutchings, 2012; Youdell, 2004), and associated middle class anxiety in the school market place (Ball, 2003; Butler & Robson, 2003b), this 'braveness' and radicalness to be 'inclusive' but also to 'do things differently' had damaging consequences, which then mitigated against mixing. Ms Scarlet resigned after only two years and was replaced.

Not only was the lower school premised on inclusion, so too was the sixth form. The provision was explicitly designed to be inclusive, offering traditional academic A levels; as well as more vocationally oriented BTEC qualifications (at two different levels), and offering resits in the compulsory GCSE examinations. This meant that even those who had not made the entry requirements to study for A levels were offered a place to stay on in the sixth form- there was 'something for everyone'. The Director of Learning Post sixteen, Ms. Rose (White British), explained that this gave an opportunity to those who wouldn't normally be accepted to an academic sixth form:

> *if you have just missed out and got your Ds rather than Cs we will allow them here, because we can, because we want them to stay, and we allow them to do the BTEC programme at Level 3, and they do[GCSE] retakes.*

It also transpired that Stellar Academy had a very flexible approach to students' studies- particularly at sixth form, allowing students resit years, re-admitting numerous students who had left at 16 for a 'second chance'. Approximately seventy percent of students stayed on, and only a handful of new incomers joined from other schools each year. In this sense the sixth form at Stellar Academy could easily be constructed as a 'truly' mixed community of learners.

However, the issue of academic 'ability' appeared to be a sticking point. Rollock's (2007a) conceptualisation of 'exclusive' and 'inclusive' success, or indeed Archer's notion of 'good enough success' (2005) is useful to illuminate how Stellar Academy came to be constructed as 'not quite the right mix'. Rollock (2007a) argues that English schools are characterised by an academic hierarchy- what Gillborn and Youdell refer to as 'the A-C economy' (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000), where A*-C grade successes are deemed achievable for certain pupils, and D-G grades operate as a kind of consolation prize for others. We can see economy in operation in Ms Rose's statement above where these grade successes are differently valued. A-C grade students, eligible for A level study, are valuable members of the sixth form, while D-G grade students are more reluctantly included ('we will allow them here'). Failure to achieve the grades to progress to A level, becomes recast as 'inclusive' success. Most importantly Rollock argues that this success hierarchy is socially and racially structured where minority ethnic, working class students (and students with Special

Educational Needs, who are disproportionately minority ethnic and working class) are afforded 'inclusive' success through A-G grades (and vocational study) while A-C grades (and A level study) are almost exclusively reserved for the middle classes. In this economy 'academic success becomes reconstructed and formalised directly in relation to [the] demographic' of the school, and for minority ethnic and working class students 'exclusive success remains out of their reach because of who they are' (Rollock, 2007a, p. 281).

Thus the mix of the school determines school discourses about 'exclusive' and 'inclusive' success. Schools become saturated with discourses of the 'type of pupils' able to achieve, either in inclusive or exclusive terms (Comber, 1998; Rollock, 2007a), and, I argue this comes to structure the circulation of good and bad feelings as the presence of too many pupils bound for 'inclusive success' become unhappy objects threatening the 'right' mix of the school. Black and minority ethnic and working class students carry a sense of deficit read onto the school and student body.

As with Rollock and Youdell's research, Stellar Academy participants' accounts pivoted around 'deeply entangled concerns with the nature of the school, the local community, and the student body' (Youdell, 2004, p. 416). Staff and students' narratives were pervaded by discourses of 'ability'; student and community deficit and school improvement. Most importantly, however, I argue these discourses attach to certain bodies. Both Youdell (2004) and Rollock (2007a) encountered schools whose 'market' position, and corresponding student 'body', constituted them as problematic. Indeed, staff narratives at Stellar Academy were dominated by comparison to other schools whose market behaviour impacted on Stellar's composition. While hailed to be the *only* non-selective school in the borough, in actuality, Stellar Academy was not very mixed in terms of 'ability'. Many other schools in the borough admitted students regardless of distance, which in effect allowed them to 'cream' top 'band' students who lived in the locality of Stellar Academy. Thus Stellar's policy to be a 'local' school, and non-selective, disadvantaged the school in regard to its position in the school market place. Narratives were remarkably similar to those in Rollock's research, where staff complained 'a lot of children in the area are creamed by other schools' (2007a, p. 280). Mr Grey, a tutor, explained, 'there are other schools around us that are academically better as they have more bright students'. This cohort of 'missing' ('bright') students thus came to characterise the school's identity. As a consequence, the school was clouded by a 'hard done by' narrative, of struggling against the odds in a context of high stakes accountability and competition in the state sector (Whitty, 2002). As Youdell argued: 'as the school comes to constitute the students and community in terms of irredeemable deficit, so it constitutes itself as without hope in a local market, albeit through no fault of its own' (Youdell, 2004, p. 418). The

affective construction of Stellar Academy was thus one that was without hope, hope-less, 'residualised' (Youdell, 2004) which undermined any celebratory image of social mixing.

In this process there was a clear othering of schools whose practices were less inclusive and attracted 'high ability' students. Ms Rose, for example spoke disparagingly of other more 'elite sixth forms' in the area. Resembling a kind of martyrdom, this narrative attempted to shelter the school from deficit and hopeless discourses. A way of responding to their deficit position is to try and generate value by dismissing other schools as lacking diversity and of playing into the market by being covertly selective.

Nevertheless, as with Rollock's (2007a) research, a consequence of this 'diverse' intake led to discussions about the school's 'mix' which were marred by pathologising discourses about the 'kinds of students we get'. Read collectively, these discourses subtly fixed the academic vocational divide in place, but also conflated academic ability with social class, positioning working class, 'vocationally oriented', students as lacking (Archer et al., 2010; Youdell, 2004). Mr Grey, the tutor, said 'a lot of the students coming in [...] are academically quite weak' and the Assistant Principal, Mr Dorado, explained 'a lot of our students prefer vocational'. Education research provides a body of literature which shows how working class students are interpellated by deficit discourses about lack of 'ability' (Archer et al., 2010; Burke, 2006; Reay, 2004b). Leathwood's (2006; 2003) work in the HE context has revealed discourses of the ideal rational 'autonomous' learner who is independent, and how working class / 'non-traditional' students get positioned as 'needy', incapable of independent/autonomous learning. Such discourse saturated accounts at Stellar Academy. Mr Grey espoused: 'one of the sorts of issues for our students is that they are quite needy. They are not the best at learning independently and learning on their own'. Not only were 'our students,' seen as academically weak, but needy and dependent, but also this was constructed as an 'issue'. These students embodying the unacceptable learner were of less value and a potential drain and threat to the school's success.

Furthermore, academic weakness and (over)dependency was conflated with behaviour problems. Discourses of 'ability' and 'conduct' are then deployed in assessing and constituting ideal acceptable and unacceptable learner identities (Youdell, 2004). In Kulz's (2011) analysis of a London Academy school, she found the working class student body of the school were constructed as 'unruly' and in need of routine and structure, with school policy geared around methods of 'fixing' such problematic students (see also Youdell, 2004). Leathwood's work in the HE context found the increasing presence of working class 'non-traditional' students brings

discursive constructions of 'chaos' (Leathwood & O'Connell, 2003)'. Similar narratives were found at Stellar Academy. The Director of post 16 Learning, Ms Rose explained:

> *You can see it's quite chaotic at times because of our cohort. It is the nature of our cohort. We have got a lot of angry students; we have got a lot of students who don't understand boundaries.*

Here, parts of the 'inclusive' student body are constructed as unhappy objects whose anger and lack of boundaries causes the circulation of chaos. This idea was also internalised by some of the students. For example Callie, a Black working class girl reflected: 'I think [initially] the teaching wasn't that good. [But] I don't blame teaching alone. I blame my behaviour because I wasn't a very good student'. Whilst not making judgments about the quality of teaching, versus students' behaviour, what I want to point out is that these individualising and pathologising constructions of 'weak' or 'problem' students were central to the construction of working class students in the school, and located failure in the pupils (as part of their innate 'nature') rather than as a consequence of systemic inequalities brought about through market forces. As students of less value, problems and failure attach to them, which further reinforces their lack of value.

In this scenario bad feeling attached to such students. Furthermore, they are blamed for the lack of mixing. Ms Rose's story is revealing in this respect:

> *But they have grown- the friendship groups- as they have branched out a bit and overlapped, allowed others in or they, you know- they're spreading their wings or venturing out to other cliques or groups. But they- you know, they will still be within the same [group] because that's safe and they know those people won't hurt them and it is safe. It is very much about safety in this school, because of the culture they are coming out of and the context that they are living in- a lot of them coming from- you know, there's a lot of trouble on the estates that a lot of our kids live in and that's regular. They see it as regular or normal. Not that they bring it in here, because they don't. We are not part of it and wouldn't tolerate that. But, you know, these kids have hard lives. These kids are not ... I mean there is a proportion who obviously come from very affluent, sort of very educated families, but the majority of our intake here doesn't.*

This narrative reinforces the lacks of the 'kinds of students we get', and reproduces this idea of working class (and minority ethnic) families having chaotic, 'deeply troubled' lives (Youdell, 2004). In research I have conducted with Archer and Mendick (2010) we found urban teachers commonly constructed a binary between school and 'home' (and 'the street') where learning and discipline are seen to take place exclusively 'in here,' while 'out there' is chaos, where no discipline or learning occurs. Indeed, here, trouble and chaos 'out there' is constructed as 'irregular', 'abnormal', which normalises middle classness, and justifies attempts to 'civilise' this

perspective out of students through disciplined schooling (Kulz, 2011). Ms Rose's narrative also speaks to how the urban- as well as being a concrete material place- exists in the public imaginary (Hollingworth & Archer, 2010; Leonardo & Hunter, 2007). The urban is also an implicitly racialised space where the spectre of 'trouble' on the 'estates' cites gang and gun crime, which implicitly attaches to Black bodies (Alexander, 1992, 2000; Archer, 2003). Whiteness and middle classness becomes the social norm through which Others are judged. In other work I have argued that the working classes are constructed as problematically immobile, as fixed in place (Allen & Hollingworth, 2013). In this scenario, the responsibility for mixing lies with these young people from the estates, who- constructed as immobile, as stuck with same people- don't feel 'safe' enough and need to be nurtured to mix. Structures of Whiteness and middle classness regulate their being – as they are 'simultaneously constructed as the 'problem' and paradoxically the potential 'solution' to a cohesive society' (Nayak, 2012, p. 462). The implication is that working class and minority ethnic groups are lacking when it comes to commitment to cohesion.

As well as attaching to the student body these 'problems' of attainment and student behaviour, were also at times attributed to Ms Scarlet's 'alternative' regime. Mr Olive, the Chair of Governors claimed 'the school opened with problems and things that were wrong in the first couple of years'.[21] Other teachers concurred that the early regime of the school was problematic: 'a lot of the issues stem from then' (Mr Grey). The memory of Ms Scarlet's leadership conjures up bad feelings which stick- 'problems', 'issues', 'things' that were 'wrong'. The past is an unhappy object, which needs to be cast out, forgotten. These 'problems' were blamed on 'the *very sort of* alternative curriculum' but also the 'relaxed atmosphere,' where 'rules' and discipline were seen to be 'slack' (Mr Grey), also confirmed by Ofsted judgments. These identified issues reinforced the student body as 'chaotic' 'rogues' (Mr Grey). This difficult past sticks to, and is carried within/on the bodies of the minority ethnic and working class students inscribed as academic 'failures'.

Discourses about leadership competence- which positioned Ms Scarlet's management as lacking, and the school in need of 'rescuing' - were highly gendered and classed. Indeed Mr Navy, a White middle class, middle aged, Oxbridge-educated, ICT teacher was subsequently employed as Principal- instating a Senior Leadership team of other White middle class, middle aged Oxbridge-educated men. Mr Navy's leadership was seen to have 'turned around' the school[22]. As in Kulz's

[21] Tuesday, 29 November 2011 http://www.localnewspaper.co.uk/news.cfm?id=44325 accessed 28th May 2012

[22] Tuesday, 29 November 2011 http://www.localnewspaper.co.uk/news.cfm?id=44325 accessed 28th May 2012

(2011) research, Mr Navy's success was attributed to having a 'proper' curriculum, and strict discipline (according to Mr Grey), increasingly valorised by the current coalition government, post riots in 2011 (BBC News, 2011). As we have seen, Ms Scarlet's 'relaxed' pastoral approach was positioned as weak; 'slack'; too soft; feminine and 'chaotic' – lacking rationality, and her 'sort of' curriculum as pseudo, as substandard. The ways in which her 'radical' curriculum were discussed conjured historically embedded- and newly resurfacing- discourses of the 'loony left' and the failure of progressive urban education[23]. This narrative at once positions Ms Scarlet as Leftwing whist simultaneously discrediting her. Through this form of symbolic violence, Ms Scarlet's working class 'feminine' leadership is vilified. This discourse of salvation was taken up by the subsequent authorities of the school, parents and students. For example, Callie, a student, informed me: 'the rule enforcement here, they were not that good but since Mr Navy has moved into the building it has been embraced fully.' Ofsted reported parents as having praised the new headteacher's work. Hailing medieval discourses of chivalry, Mr Navy was literally described as a 'Knight in shining armour', who swept into the building, 'transformed' a 'failing' Academy[24], having to 'reign in' Ms Scarlett's (feminine working class) 'legacy'[25]. This history came to position the school itself as the hard-done-by, melancholic native (/woman) saved and civilized by the White man. This narrative erases the system of Whiteness, class and gender privilege which created their subordination in the first place (Ahmed, 2004). Echoing neighborhood mix discourses which hail the benefits the middle classes bring to deprived communities (Lees, 2008), this story allows the White middle classes (of value) to generate good feeling for rescuing the poor school, for which the urban working classes (of less value) should feel grateful.

I argue that this narrative of the school's salvation functions to attempt to alleviate and shake off some of this bad feeling generated through proximity to the unhappy, value-less objects of academic 'failure'. Further attempts to mitigate this bad feeling could be seen in behaviour of the White middle class contingent of the school, in their identity work to distinguish themselves from the 'Other' local middle classes who rejected such as school as theirs. Stellar Academy had a contentious relationship with the local upper middle classes who lived on the 'surprisingly posh road' of 'million pound' houses (Anon, 2004) on which the school was built, but who didn't send

[23] Evident in a recent Daily Mail article written by Education Secretary Michael Gove (2013) 'I refuse to surrender to the Marxist teachers hell-bent on destroying our schools: Education Secretary berates 'the new enemies of promise' for opposing his plans' *Daily Mail Online,* 23rd March. Accessed 29th May 2013

[24] Tuesday, 29 November 2011 http://www.localnewspaper.co.uk/news.cfm?id=44325 accessed 28th May 2012

[25] Tuesday, 29 November 2011 http://www.localnewspaper.co.uk/news.cfm?id=44325 accessed 28th May 2012

their children to this school. Staff and the middle class families were acutely aware that other middle class families- the '4x4 driving' middle classes- who send their children to 'private school'- rejected such a school as theirs. These middle class parents were mocked by Mr Olive for their 'neurotic' fear of being 'mugged' by the urban working classes that attend the school (Anon, 2001). The absence of these (beneficial) middle class students, supported concerns of Stellar Academy as 'not quite the right mix'. At the same time, forms of distinction were operating. The White middle classes of Stellar Academy sought to distinguish themselves from the 'posh' and exclusionary middle classes, as the good, ethical self through their commitment to comprehensive schooling (Reay et al., 2011). However, as I go on to show, this 'ethical self' is not without anxiety, as they are still complicit in reproducing middle class privilege within the school.

As I have attempted to show in this section, the 'right mix' is underpinned by an economy of value, which is intimately attached to educational success. The (Black) minority ethnic working classes are seen as value-less and the middle classes as having value: and thus their presence worth more. Fortier argues 'values and morals rather than 'cultural practices' such as customs and traditions are the primary site for the marking of absolute difference' (Fortier, 2007, p. 109) Indeed, this is where class enters centre stage – where we see the moral significance of class- as the valuing of others is a classed process.

4.2 Middle class anxiety and the tussle of good and bad feelings

I do not wish to reproduce processes of demonisation of schools, nor teachers in them, rather I want to draw attention to the raced, classed and gendered nature of the circulation of good and bad feeling, and the valuing of different bodies in this process. In this section, I stress the tussle – the push and pull- of good and bad feeling at Stellar Academy, and the classed ambivalence inherent within the school's identity. While minority ethnic and working class students constructed Stellar Academy as a 'good school' where they felt well supported, White middle class students' narratives were characterised by anxiety. While discourses of Stellar Academy as a 'good,' new school drew in the minority ethnic and working classes, anxiety about Standards and (lonely) proximity to too many unhappy objects of academic 'failure', repelled, repulsed and expelled many White middle class students from the school and had to be carefully managed.

The working class and minority ethnic students I interviewed viewed the school as a 'good' school, with supportive teachers. For example, Ronelle (Black African working class) described the school as a 'really good school', which she actively promoted to others: 'I tell people: bring your kids to Stellar Academy'. For many of these students, it was the responsive and supportive nature of the

school and its staff that was particularly valued, and pastoral management was something consistently praised by Ofsted. Typical comments from minority ethnic and working class students described the support and help they received academically and socially:

> *They are very supportive on all levels (Callie, Black British working class)*
>
> *You get more help from teachers especially at sixth form (Ronelle, Black African working class)*
>
> *I had a lot of support to help me get the results I needed (Nicole Black Caribbean working class)*
>
> *I was going through an emotional stage but they helped me a lot (Callie, Black British working class)*

We can see from these quotes that the kind of pastoral, supportive relationships of reciprocity that are so valued among urban working class students (Archer et al., 2010) were strongly in play here. Yet these are the students who are saturated with negative affects- constructed as 'needy' 'chaotic', academically 'weak', constructed as dragging the school down- a drain on the schools A-C successes. These students are the unhappy objects of academic 'failure' /of 'inclusive' success. Thus we can see 'inclusive success' taking the form of a charitable act which positions these students as needy, and in need of help.

The middle class students in my sample also had positive things to say about relationships with staff, (as Tom said 'I stayed because of the teachers'). However, narratives of good teacher-student relationships circulating in the school constructed working- and middle- class students unequally within this relationship. While working class students' are constructed by others- and themselves- as dependent and needy (Leathwood, 2006; Leathwood & O'Connell, 2003), the middle class students are positioned as naturally 'bright', independent, autonomous and always already supported at home (Johnson, Lee, & Green, 2000; Reay et al., 2011).

Despite this always-already-'brightness' inscribed upon the middle class student, the proximity to the unhappy objects of academic 'failure', and the close memory of Ms Scarlet's 'failed' regime, contributed to the circulation of anxiety about academic success among the middle classes in the school. This was evidenced in the middle classes' concerns about the 'substandard' education they had experienced under Ms Scarlet; concerns of being a minority in their school; and fear that there were not enough resources devoted to them. Leathwood's research in Higher Education found very similar processes, in which 'non traditional' students- even when presented within a discourse of social justice -can become part of the discourse of derision – when they are deemed to place excessive demands on institutional resources. (Leathwood & O'Connell, 2003, p. 599).

Several of the middle class students I interviewed adopted teachers' and their middle class parents' narratives of the problematic (substandard) education they had received in the early years of the school. Indeed, discussing how in years 7-9 they felt their education was not 'up to standard', Rachel (White middle class) described the experience with acute anxiety:

> *It was just so frustrating ... I remember coming home and being so frustrated, because I had begun to realise what we were missing out on ... slowly like ... I don't know how it happened. But I began to realise that we were missing out on knowing and learning and it freaked me out ... like it completely freaked me out that we had ... I mean we had things like SATS and we didn't know anything for our SATS, like nothing at all. It was a miracle that we got like above what we got in year 6. I began to be conscious, I think partly through my Mum, that we had missed out on a lot of learning and it really, like, spooked me.*

When it came to the external assessment, judgment and validation of their ability (through the national SATs examinations) Ms Scarlet's radical attempt to 'do things differently' came up against normative judgments of academic success and measurement. Against this national measure, they were constructed as having learnt 'nothing at all' and as having 'missed out' on learning, where 'different' becomes constructed as 'nothing', as absence, as without value. This radically alternative education was experienced as loss -deeply psychically felt by Rachel (Reay, 2005)- and brought 'ugly feelings' (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012). Rachel was 'freaked out' and 'spooked'- panicked, and haunted by the possibility that this 'mistake' would be irredeemable. Rachel's narrative is imbued with a 'fear of falling' (Ehrenreich, 1989), socially. When the realisation hit- that she might not do as well in her formally assessed education (as is expected of the middle classes)- this all-consuming fear of academic failure generated a clambering/trampling mentality- to get out, to get away, to get above Others.

The origin of the discomfort is seen to emanate from the classed and racialised other who is seen as causing the 'upsetting' (Fortier, 2010, p. 23). Indeed the origin of this bad feeling resided partly in the presence of too many 'lower band' students in the school which hindered middle class students' learning experience. Echoing discourses of 'too many migrants' (Back et al., 2012) middle class students' narratives were imbued with a fear that such students- growing in numbers- were implicitly taking over. Adam explained:

> *My year's intake was a very mixed ability intake. There were lots of high achievers and some low achievers and a lot of people in the middle. But as the reputation of the school went down ... it declined a lot ...*

Achievement is implicitly conflated with social class in Adam's narrative (Youdell, 2004), as the schools' reputation went 'down' the numbers of middle classes declined. This situation of 'too

many' lower band students, led to claims of a lack of attention for the middle classes. Adam's thirteen year old brother who was 'exceptionally smart' was not being 'challenged enough' in his classes where there were too many 'lower ability' students. Indeed Mr Grey, a sixth form tutor, corroborated this, claiming that lower down the school 'I think we have less of the brighter students and more sort of middle to bottom really.' The school was thus not quite the right mix (Byrne, 2006a; Hollingworth & Mansaray, 2012; Reay et al., 2007): it was 'too inclusive' of the wrong kinds of students and not enough of the 'right' kind of high achieving middle class students. This was stated explicitly by Adam who claimed, of his brother: 'he doesn't like the composition of the people in the school.'

Fears about 'too many' minority ethnic and working class pupils was simultaneously joined by fears that there wasn't quite enough of a 'critical mass' of White middle classes (Reay et al., 2007) which compounded by their sense of social isolation and fear of being in a minority (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010). This anxiety felt by the middle classes is a 'shared, communal, visceral response' to the Other, and this shared feeling brings a togetherness (Ahmed, 2004, p. 26) against those 'who don't notice' or 'don't care' that they are 'missing out' on their education, as Rachel's story suggested. This also positions the White middle classes who want to achieve well as victims and the working class minority ethnic other as threat to this:

> *the collective takes shape through the impressions made by bodily others [....] how we feel about others is what aligns us with a collective, which paradoxically 'takes shape' only as an effect of such alignments. It is through an analysis of the impressions left by bodily others that we can track the emergence of 'feelings-in-common' (Ahmed, 2004, p. 27)*

Indeed, Francesca (White middle class) lamented: 'there's only about 20 middle class people in this school'. As I discuss further in chapter six, according to Tom, Francesca and Rachel, a White middle class friendship group in my study, their early social experience of the school was negative. Belinda had been 'badly bullied' and her parents eventually removed her from the school mid-year in year 9, and Francesca talked about not making friends very easily to start with and being called 'posh'. The group were labelled by others in the school as 'the Neeks'. Panic comes when one feels alone in this threat of social 'falling', like Rachel or Belinda. However, as I elaborate in chapter six, the collective experience of these emotions provided a source of mutual support, or social capital for this group.

As I have begun to suggest, too many of 'them' and not enough of 'us' led to competition over resources. The seemingly genuine attempt to encourage social mixing in the sixth form, and to reduce the divisions of the academic/ vocational divide (through mixed tutor groups), was

undermined by concerns that the 'more academic' students would not get enough attention/ resources. Ms Rose explained:

> *What we found was the more academic who were applying for Russell Group, Oxbridge, you know, they weren't getting the tutor's time, because the tutor was having to cope with managing the BTEC students' workload and getting their homework in or - you know... So what we did was, we created three groups*

Within this, the 'unruly mass' (Reay, 2007) of BTEC students are seen to demand *too much* of the school's resources thus threatening the success (/domination) of the middle classes. This echoes Spender's (1982) research, where boys in class objected as soon as girls received attention that was only commensurate with that received by the boys. The anxiety among middle class pupils around 'losing out' because of the schools' focus on 'disadvantaged' learners was echoed in official reports. For example, previous Ofsted reports praised the school's strategic focus on improving 'Black or Black British' students' attainment to be 'inline' with the whole year group. Yet this was also seen to be at the *expense* of ensuring 'higher attaining students are reaching their full potential' and to the expense of adequate provision for 'Gifted and talented' pupils. Reay and colleagues' (2011) research signals the power of the middle classes as valuable and valued clientele of urban schools, who mobilise entitled claims to resources. Here we can see how some 'bad feelings' (of unfairness) are recognised and given political value (Ahmed, 2004, p. 27) by official institutions, while as I demonstrate in the next section, minority ethnic and working class claims to unfairness are constructed as merely envy.

One criticism of Ms Scarlet was that she did not cater enough to the needs of the middle classes. Reports from students at her previous school, featuring on the website *Ratemyteacher.com,* were insightful but damning: 'she rewarded the ones who did not care'; 'concentrated on the kids who didn't want to learn'; and 'the pupils who worked hard from the beginning and acted respectfully were punished, the 'naughty' ones always seemed to be the ones who were rewarded'. What is implicit here is that the 'good', 'high achieving' students who 'care' and who 'want to learn' did not receive enough of her attention. As I have argued elsewhere this is a particular discourse which positions middle class students as deserving and working class students as undeserving (Hollingworth et al., 2010). This discourse positions Ms Scarlet as the 'killjoy'. Her attention devoted to the 'naughty' working class students who were not achieving -as a political act to address educational inequalities and injustice- is seen as misguided. These intentions are constructed as ' bitter, angry, or dangerous,' and the act conceived of as 'bringing others down,' killing the joy of the middle classes who are well behaved and hard working (Ahmed, 2007, p. 127).

The tussle of good and bad feeling –pushing and pulling in different directions- was made material in students' 'vote with their feet.' In contrast to Eden Hill school, which was able to maintain the 'happy', mix through the removal of the unhappy objects of lower band Black and working class students, Stellar Academy witnessed an exodus of middle class students, anxious about standards. Thus, while Eden Hill school enjoyed a steady rise in popularity among the middle classes both in the lower school and at sixth form, Stellar Academy on the other hand was experiencing the opposite. As Ahmed argues, affects are contagious. Anxiety, she argues is 'sticky- rather like velcro, it tends to pick up whatever comes near' (Ahmed, 2007, p. 125). The anxiety felt by the middle class at Stellar Academy was 'contagious' as the middle classes I interviewed all talked about friends or siblings, who had left. Of the White middle class students' friendship group I encountered at Stellar Academy, four had left in year 9 to higher attaining schools. Another two left at sixth form, joining several of the others at more popular middle class sixth forms.

This exodus sat in direct contrast to minority ethnic and working class students' experiences, for whom the school remained a popular first choice. Three of the students I interviewed, Ronelle (Black working class), Jay (Black working class) Lara (South American working class) had all joined the school in year nine from other state comprehensives across London. For Lara 'it was a new school so it would be a lot better'. Ronelle moved because she thought she'd get 'a better education' than her previous school she perceived to be 'really laid back' where she 'didn't really concentrate'. Thus, Stellar Academy became marked as a desirable or undesirable space for certain groups informed by their class and race backgrounds. This analysis reveals how school choice is a process complicated and saturated by class and racial hierarchies.

So, the minority ethnic and working classes were positive about Stellar Academy, and viewed it as a positive choice, but these affects- these good feelings- were overshadowed by middle class anxiety about their potential for success in the school. In the next substantive section, I go on to show how these ugly feelings were legitimated by the school through institutionalised practices of amelioration.

4.3 Tolerated segregation and the 'specialling' of middle class students

At Stellar Academy, it became clear that social mixing was much more institutionally constrained than at Eden Hill School. Segregation was naturalised, difference 'tolerated', and thus mixing seen as something that had to be managed. Like many comprehensive schools, hailed by the disciplining technologies of the standards agenda, measured by league tables (see Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Hutchings, 2012; Youdell, 2004), both Stellar Academy and Eden Hill school

practiced ability grouping. However, at Stellar Academy, a new 'streaming' of students had been instated in the sixth form, according to post-16 course and level of study. As with Eden Hill school this streaming inevitably structured mixing, but not in a straightforward way. What it did was contribute to the reification of an academic hierarchy, which was classed, raced and gendered, elevating the 'high achieving' White middle class students and reinforcing their friendship group as a separate and 'special' one. This streaming made a substantial contribution to the school's management of (White middle class) 'unease' (Bigo, 2002 cited in Fortier, 2010, p. 23). However this was not without an element of animosity and 'bad feeling' on the part of (minority ethnic and working class) students who were excluded from this.

Speaking of community cohesion discourses in policy, Fortier posits that disadvantage and inequality are hidden behind a rather 'cozy spin on good neighbourliness' (2010, p. 19). Similar 'spin' was at work at Stellar Academy. When asked explicitly about the extent of mixing, Mr Dorado, the assistant head, reassured me: 'our students are very friendly and welcoming' and the sixth form in particular was noted for its 'community spirit' (Ms Rose). The problems of inequality were thus hidden behind a well-meaningness. As Ahmed (2006a) found in her research on the work of 'diversity' officers in Universities, the recasting of 'equality' work under the term 'diversity' created a rather empty and nebulous concept which could be taken to mean almost anything (Archer, 2007; Taylor, 2012). Indeed, in some instances the term broadened to refer to diversity of courses on offer, which of course gives most universities a claim to 'diversity'. Similar (re-)interpretation was at play at Stellar Academy, whereby definitions of 'social mixing' stretched to the school's mixed-aged tutor groups.

Furthermore, given the construction of a problematic community of urban working class underachieving students, attention to mixing was undermined by attention to equal opportunities for achievement. The school's very mission of providing opportunities for 'socially deprived' children, implicitly elided the necessity for mixing, where the school claimed to 'try and see the best in every individual rather than have higher expectations for some social groups and lower expectations of others'. Providing equal opportunity was thus deemed good enough (Archer, 2005). Evoking discourses of charity, which subtly place the middle classes in the position of saviours, like Eden Hill, the presence of middle classes in the school was given as *evidence* of mixing: 'they mix here,' 'they come together here' (Mr Dorado). Furthermore, Mr Dorado rejected accusations of social class segregation in the school ('I personally don't see it myself') and misrecognised working class students' sense of injustice as envy or jealousy, arguing 'even though

their perceptions may be someone [richer] has got an amazing life, it may not necessarily be the case'. This, I argue, is indicative of a subtle denial of White middle class privilege (Gaine, 2005).

Similar to Eden Hill school, the segregation of friendship groups at Stellar Academy was constructed as 'just natural' and inevitable. Mr Dorado informed me: 'students who have something in common stick together' and tutor, Mr Grey reinforced this: 'students who have a similar life and similar ability are going to get on well together.' Friendships were described as 'naturally forming' around 'personality traits', and interests: 'around music, sport what teenagers have in common' (Mr Dorado). Furthermore the fact that segregation exists in society anyway was implicitly provided as justification that this might inevitably occur in school: 'you get [cliques] naturally anyway.' (Mr Dorado).

Ms Rose, however, admitted that mixing in school was limited (but nevertheless as something she actively encouraged). She told me at length about her A level English class:

> *They are very giving, and that's what helps them to start forging other relationships than learning relationships, if you like, but maybe not friendships. [...] My English group is very mixed ... very mixed ... external students, internal students, loud, quiet, different social classes ... but they will mix in English because I force them to mix, and I foster this sort of culture of sharing, trust, you know. [...] But I do find that these conversations tend to be ... not contrived, but you'll find that they are not friendships ... they are more learning partnerships or acquaintances. [...] So they are very professional in their manner with others, even if they don't like them, and some of them they do like, and then that may develop into a friendship. You don't see it very often. You don't see it very often.*

Ms Rose encouraged mixing in her class. But while this was all very convivial- 'giving,' 'sharing' and 'trusting'- she admited that it was always partial. She saw that her efforts to mix led to students talking to others from different backgrounds, but she describes these interactions as 'professional' in manner, as 'learning partnerships', 'acquaintances' and 'not quite' friendships (you don't see that 'very often'). She went on to argue:

> *There's inter-mixing sometimes, you know, cross fertilisation. But [...] it is very fleeting. So you know, you will always have your cliques, you will always have your groups and it's for very different reasons.*

Ms Rose naturalised segregation, and asserted that when there was mixing, it was often shortlived. Ms Rose thus came to conceptualise the school as a 'family [but] with different pockets'.

While the good (exclusive) mix at Eden Hill school attracted a harmony discourse (Back 1990 in Hewitt, 2003 [1992]), the inclusive mix at Stellar Academy attracted a tolerance discourse. For example Ms Rose pondered:

> *I think you try and encourage [social mixing] as much as you can, don't you, as teachers, because you train them to be good citizens in the outside world? I think, to be honest, [...] you get groups in society. That is what society does, but it doesn't mean you can't interact with those groups. It doesn't mean you can't tolerate or respect those groups if you don't believe in what those groups believe.*

The 'good citizen' is the cosmopolitan one, one that is open and willing to 'interact' with others who are different (Hannerz 1992 in Wessendorf, 2010, p. 18). However in Ms Rose's narrative this does not lead to convergence or intimacy but a distancing 'respect' for Otherness. Ms Rose's narrative sets up a 'separate but equal' discourse, a 'live and let live'. As Furedi argues, tolerance has come to stand for a sort of non-judgmental indifference (see Bunting, 2011). However, this tolerance discourse also functions as a form of patronising 'cultural domination' (see Bunting, 2011), where minority groups are reified as different but 'tolerated' and are expected to be 'tolerating', thus reinforcing the (implicitly White) 'multiculturalist's' superiority (Zizek, 1997). The minority ethnic Other is tolerated as long as long as they do not challenge the terms of the hierarchy itself (Back et al., 2012). As Ahmed argues, new discourses of diversity become detached from concerns about equity and equality (Ahmed, 2006a). Similarly, this discourse of tolerance is a depoliticised one (see Bunting, 2011; Fortier, 2010). Fortier argues:

> *The request for tolerance with intimacy is impossible because it sets up injunctions of love and understanding that neglect the relations of distance, power and conflict that living with difference is embedded in. The illusion of tolerance with multicultural intimacy is that power relations and conflicts will somehow be suspended through dialogue and intimacy, and the distance hierarchy between those who tolerate and those who are tolerated will dissolve (2007, p. 111)*

In the context of Stellar Academy, where there is a resignation that segregation is inevitable, we are left to hope for little more than tolerance. Echoing post 9/11 community cohesion policy rhetoric, Mr Dorado framed the benefits of social mixing as a kind of conflict abatement: 'it is the most important thing' because if we 'improve communication with each other and understanding of each other, we will have fewer problems when they get older'. Difference is constructed as a problem that needs to be managed with tolerance. This tolerated segregation, in part, justified the institutional structuring of the school. Miss Scarlett's previous vision of mixed ability teaching was shortlived, and Mr Navy's new regime introduced ability grouping with immediate effect from

year 9 (aged 13) for core subjects. Furthermore, and most importantly, the sixth form at Stellar Academy was also organised by 'ability'. It comprised four tiers:

- Tier 1: Those taking A levels only (Level 3)
- Tier 2: Those taking a mixture of BTEC and Alevels (Level 3)
- Tier 3: Those taking BTEC only, Level 3
- Tier 4: Those taking BTEC Level 2 (GCSE equivalent)

Students were organised according to these different tiers, taking subject classes but also tutor time within their tier. There was also a further subdivision *within* these tiers by other organising criteria such as subject discipline, or assumed career trajectory. Most significantly, those students who were predicted A grades at A level and were deemed 'Oxbridge material' were grouped together and led by a teacher who had himself studied at Oxford. The rationale behind this structuring was to use tutor group time in a way 'focused' to the learning needs or trajectories of the specific group. Tutor groups met for an hour every morning for group activities (for example for UCAS[26] applications); structured study time, or, as much of my observation time in the school revealed, to sit around and chat. This differentiated system was, unsurprisingly, implicitly hierarchical. Ms Rose explained:

> *You've got at the top end those who just purely would never even consider the BTEC, because they are very academic and [...] they want to excel and they want to get the As. They see the value ... they see an A level as more valuable to them because that is where they come from and that's their parents telling them that and that's our society, to be honest, telling them that. It is a big battle on open evenings and things like that to promote the BTEC to parents as our culture in the UK still kind of shrugs its shoulders a bit, and so do a lot of universities, as you know, at the BTEC ... that it's not an acceptable currency for their universities. But the majority of universities that our students do go to ... the majority of our students will go to ... the BTEC is absolutely fine as exactly an A level equivalent*

Ms Rose's narrative disclosed the A level-only group as the 'top', which implicitly constructs BTEC as a 'lesser' qualification and one of less 'value'. Indeed, as she suggests, it is not 'exactly equivalent'. While the academic hierarchy is clearly something that exists beyond Ms Rose's control, she went on to reproduce this hierarchy by resignation to the fact that BTECs are perfectly adequate for 'the kinds of students' who populate Stellar Academy. Thus, this differentiation further contributed to the implicit division between 'exclusive' and 'inclusive' success (Rollock, 2007a), at Stellar Academy where A levels were elevated as the 'academic' (middle class) route to success, and BTEC 'good enough' for the rest (Archer, 2005).

[26] Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

Indeed, as other research suggests, these disciplines and trajectories are classed and racialised with middle class students more likely to be found taking A levels (Power, 2000; Power, et al. 2003; Tomlinson, 2000) and conversely more working class and Black students on 'vocational' courses which are also gendered. We can see the way that the school organises around subject disciplines and qualifications has a socially segregating effect, as who takes these subjects and qualifications is differentiated in line with social structures.

Students were aware of the effect this had on friendships. Michael (Mixed race, middle class, tier 1) claimed that from early on in the school's history:

> *The more intelligent people stayed in one group, and then people from different backgrounds stayed with people similar to them [...] It was kind of segregated but everyone got along. Like different races stayed together, but there were mixed people obviously. Everyone sort of got along.*

Here, there is a conflation of intelligence with similar class background, and then with 'race'. While, Michael stresses this familiar story of 'everyone one gets along', and the acceptance of that rule, it is evident that academic ability quite quickly became conflated with Whiteness and middle classness, and became a structuring principle of friendships.

Discussions with students and staff about the academic organisation of the sixth form revealed it did have a structuring effect on mixing, and friendships, to some extent. Friendship segregation was not as straight forward as Black/White; working class/middle class; A level/BTEC. The way in which the academic/ vocational divide subsequently shaped the possibilities for friendships was not straightforward either. What emerged is that 'streaming' itself did not create class and racially segregated friendships through the physical segregation of students in different classes. Rather, streaming reinforced broader social hierarchies which shaped students' sense of belonging, and hence friendships. It is streaming which *produces* class: it is a classed process. The academic vocational divide is a consequence of social stratification, but also helps to reinforce it (Bottero, 2005). The White middle class A level students claimed that even if they did mix with students studying for BTECs (which they said they did not), they would be unlikely to *make friends* as they would have little in common. Hugh for example said:

> *It is difficult to be friends when you're- I don't mean not as clever, but if you're not studying at the same level [...] because what would I have to talk to them about? [...] And it's because: in a school- what is your purpose to be in school? To learn. And if you're not learning the same thing you're not going to interact.*

We can see Hugh places primacy on his studies, as a defining part of his identity, and argues that if others are not studying at the same level, or studying the same things then he is not going to have

anything in common with them. Who performs ideal success and follows the academic route is already classed, but then these academic/vocational divisions also further reinforce social stratification producing a classed and raced sense of belonging and identity *vis a vis* academic successes.

Furthermore, these White middle class A level students admitted that while they do not mix across the A level/ BTEC divide, *others do*:

> *'some of the other people here who do take A levels do talk to them because they share other interests [...] so if they're all into Bashment [a music genre] and some people are doing A levels and some people are doing BTECs, then they'll still be friends'*

The suggestion is that, for those for whom academic study is *not* the defining feature of their identity, other interests (such as popular culture) may take primacy and thus produce friendships across this divide. But this also contributes to the 'specialling' of the White middle classes who are by implication 'too important to mix'. My analysis suggests the more important the academic hierarchy, the less likely students will be to act across it. Indeed, students who are experiencing a reinforcement of their classed, raced position through this segregation (such as the White middle classes in the 'top' tier and the Black working classes in the 'bottom' tier), are more likely to see the division as a meaningful one, as it confirms their 'place'. Others, for whom their position in the hierarchy jars, will be more likely to act across it. As Adam (White British middle class) argued: 'I don't think it matters because I think if you're good enough friends with someone you're going to stay friends with them across that divide because it's only a divide'.

This implicit academic hierarchy of value set the context for a 'specialling' of the White middle classes at Stellar Academy. This ability grouping however had a positive impact on the White middle classes whose school experience prior to this had been imbued with unease. Tom (White British middle class) revealed how ability grouping enabled him to find his social place through bringing him together with 'people like me'. He said before the introduction of ability grouping he was unaware of other middle classes in the school:

> *I didn't know there were people like me who existed so much in the school [...] suddenly I had this big choice of people to talk to, who I had never really talked to before.*

The 'top set' became a place for the middle classes to encounter people they had something in common with, people they could talk to. Indeed, the 'top set' came to be the site for the creation and nurturing of Tom's tight-knit, White middle class friendship group. Tom revealed that (apart from Mark) everyone of his close friends had been in that 'top set'.

The specialling of this group was reinforced by a school trip in which several of these students were 'selected' to go to Russia. All three of the White middle class students in my sample spoke highly of the ('amazing') trip in their interview. Rachel said:

> *[It was] the best trip I've ever been on (family holidays included) [...] it was just so odd and such a nice group of us [...] a really tight group [and the staff were] really nice and relaxed.*

The rarified trip, not only made them feel special and valued, it provided these students with the undivided attention of school staff and a kind of social capital gained through this informal time spent with staff. Brooks and Waters (2010) who researched (middle class) British students who go abroad to study, identified the cultural capital that such students were generating through this experience (what they coin 'mobility capital'). Whilst creating a sense of community for the middle classes (in cahoots with the staff), this 'mobility capital' became a way for the middle classes to distinguish themselves from the fixed, homogenised Other. Furthermore, like at Eden Hill school, at Stellar Academy middle class networks outside of school were solidifying. Despite many of White middle classes leaving, friendship groups were not interrupted. Belinda remained friends, and a number of the group joined each other at high performing Heathcliffe school sixth form.

This academic hierarchy in the sixth form did not go unnoticed by working class and Black and minority ethnic others and contributed to the circulation of bad feeling, where the White middle classes were viewed as self segregating and in some cases elitist. Students in the Oxbridge-bound group were more likely to justify the academic structuring, albeit recognising that it may create 'prejudice'. However, interviews with other students outside of this elite 'Oxbridge' group revealed an awareness of the self-segregationist tendencies of this group. Students and staff variously suggested that the 'people doing A levels'; 'the more privileged and able'; the 'higher achieving'; the 'middle class group'; those with 'parents with high paid jobs' tended to stick together. The 'more able' and the 'higher ability' clearly became conflated with 'the more privileged' and 'middle class'. Ms Rose however, stressed, despite this self segregation, *'they still branch out and help others'.* The academic hierarchy is implicit again in Ms Rose's talk where 'high achieving' and 'special' middle classes need to support the lower achieving masses.

This assumption arguably contributed to other students' distain of this group. Freya (Black African working class) saw these 'A*' students as 'a bit up themselves' and similarly Callie (Black Caribbean working class) hinted that while she used to be friends with everyone, 'sixth form is

kind of stuck up really'. Nicole (Black Caribbean, working class) who saw the sixth form as 'very divided' elaborated:

> *I think some people think the Black people might think if they talk to the middle class White people they're going to look down on us or whatever, so they don't really... that's why we don't have a friendship. I don't know what the White people think, but that's what the Black people think. That's why I think there is a division.*

Explicit in Nicole's narrative is a raced, classed hierarchy, where Black (implicitly working class) students feel that White middle class students will 'look down on them,' as lower in the academic hierarchy. We can see clearly here how the implicit academic hierarchy can inform social divisions in the school and how this can impact on social mixing.

Conclusion

In this Chapter I have presented an analysis of Stellar Academy in comparison to Eden Hill School, revealing how Stellar Academy was tightly constrained by the social, demographic and systemic forces acting upon them. It appeared that attempts to institute a genuinely inclusive and democratic schooling for those 'of all abilities' were thwarted by events out of their control, marred by phantasmic histories of the failures of progressive (working class/Left) education. Ms Rose revealed that she had originally organised the sixth form tutor groups as 'mixed ability' and she asserted: 'I deliberately did it because I thought it was good for them'. However in this Chapter I have shown how bad feeling sticks to the bodies of minority ethnic and working class young people whose proximity threatens the success of White middle class students. The constitution of working class and minority ethnic students as 'chaotic', 'needy', 'less able' justified practices of ability grouping and 'streaming' but which then acted to further constitute them in these terms (Youdell, 2004).

What I have demonstrated in these two chapters is that discourses of mix and mixing, are intricately tied to the academic hierarchy, where processes of *selection* at sixteen- an element of exclusivity and the expulsion of the unhappy objects of academic failure- means 'everybody gets on'; while processes of *inclusion* at sixteen, and the inclusion of the unhappy objects, produce the sentiment that a degree of structured segregation is necessary, and mixing is inevitably partial. I have begun to set up the relationship between school structures and practices and students' biographical identities (Youdell, 2004). In Part Three (chapters five and six) I continue to explore economies of value, through examining more closely the different (sub)cultural friendship groups that characterised the sixth form in these two urban comprehensives.

Part 3: School-based subcultures and the (im)possibilities of social mixing

Chapter 5: the Football crowd and the Performing Arts girls: Black working class subcultures

The next two chapters move from institutional practices which structure social mixing to the structuring of youth formations within these urban schools. Using friendship as a lens to explore social mixing, I examine the different cultural formations of friendship groupings in the sixth forms at Eden Hill and Stellar Academy. While arguing that schools are significant sites in the formation of youth cultures, I argue that social class, race and gender still strongly structure youth cultural forms. Contributing to youth studies debates in subcultural and post-cultural studies (Blackman, 2005; Griffin, 2011; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2006), and drawing on feminist education research literature on friendships and learner identities (Epstein, 2002; Francis, 2009; Francis et al., 2010; Hey, 1997; Mendick & Francis, 2012; Nayak & Kehily, 2008; Renold, 2005; Youdell, 2006a), I argue that school-based subcultures are key sites for the normative production of classed, raced and gendered identities. Furthermore, through analysis of working class and middle class friendship groups, I argue that moving beyond (solely) the study of (marginalised) working class youth cultural forms (Delamont, 2000), enables us to explore how privilege and hegemony are maintained and reproduced through youth subculture. This also enables us to examine how education, as a powerful institution, informs these processes. I explore how the resources, or capitals, of the different subcultural groups get attributed with value (or not), become institutionalised and consolidate power and advantage in the urban school context. I also explore identities of class, race and gender as embodied resources which accrue value (Bev Skeggs, 2004) and argue that these processes of valuing constrain opportunities for mixing.

This chapter explores Black working class subcultures at Eden Hill and Stellar Academy sixth forms: the Football crowd and the Performing Arts girls and chapter six explores the White middle class friendship groups: the Neeks and the Smokers (see Appendix 7 for a diagrammatic representation of the friendship groups in the two schools). These four groups emerged from the interview data as key sites for interrogation. At both schools the two main ethnic groups were Black (Caribbean and African) and White British. At Eden Hill school the Football crowd – a group of predominantly Black and minority ethnic working class sixth form boys, were referred to in at least half of the interviews with young people. At Stellar Academy no corresponding group emerged in interview

discussions beyond a recognition of Black students hanging out together. I focus my analysis here then on a small group of girls within the Black student friendship group, who I have termed the Performing Arts girls.

However, before I move into discussion of the classed, raced and gendered structuring of the Football crowd and the Performing Arts girls in this chapter, I want to begin by setting up the debates about the free floating or structured nature of youth subcultures, through discussion of student's perceptions of subcultural differences in the schools.

5.1 The naturalisation of youth subcultural differences

In her ethnographic work on school identities, Youdell (2006a) asserts that school-based cultural forms are often constituted as nothing more than neutral youthful 'tastes': individualised as different but equal. Indeed, post-subcultural scholars have advocated a conceptualisation of contemporary youth cultures as 'neo tribes' characterised by fluidity and flexibility. Furthermore, these flexible 'choice biographies' are deemed to have replaced relatively static class-based subcultural groups with clearly demarcated boundaries (Maffesoli, 2000; Thornton, 1995; Woodman, 2010). The downplaying of class and race in structuring contemporary youth (sub)cultural formations has a purchase on public discourses about youth and indeed young people's (self)understandings. Indeed, this discourse of free-floating affiliations appeared in the accounts of many of the young people in this study. However, as I will show, these individualised narratives hide the presence of classed, raced and gendered practices which contribute to these formations.

In Part Two (chapters three and four), I discussed how social class or racial divisions in friendship were normalised and naturalised. Happy smiling multiculturalism was simultaneously structured by a recognition of different lifestyles which would naturally confer divisions. Similar to the discourses found in Hey's (1997) research, subcultural differences were narrated as personal choice. Common statements were:

> *It's more about appreciating someone's personality (Rachel, White British, middle class, Stellar Academy)*
>
> *It's more about your interests (Hugh, White British middle class, Stellar Academy)*
>
> *People just make friends because of their personality. Just their personality would just do it. That's how I would get matched up. That's how I would just look at someone, and if they're funny then I'm like, yeah, he could be a friend. (Robert, White British working class, Stellar Academy)*

So, 'personality' and interests were often constructed as the driving force behind friendships –as free floating lifestyle choices-influenced by access to an array of popular culture.

In a socially and ethnically mixed London school we might expect indeed to find a real melting pot of hybrid (Bhabha, 1994) or intermezzo (Back, 2003 [1995]) forms of polyculture (Hewitt, 2003 [1992]). After all, this hybridity is everywhere in popular urban youth culture in music, dress, film, which draw on a particular notion of the urban *as mixed* (Rampton & Harris, 2003). If we looked at available urban youth subcultural styles in popular culture, we might assume that ethnicity ceases to be an important variable (Back, 1996). Faith, a White middle class girl at Eden Hill school espoused a common sentiment that contemporary youth subcultural groups are beyond categorisation:

> *Everyone wants to be themselves. [...]You can't really categorise everyone anymore. No-one wants to be categorised. So everyone sort of dispersed and tried to become something different [...] One sort of matures a bit and everyone goes: 'I'm not in a category. You can't categorise me'. No-one wants to be categorised.*

Indeed it was common for students to assert, much like those in Thornton (1995) or Pilkington and colleagues' (2002) research, an individualised identity ('I'm just me'/ 'I just like things that are style') and to reject any belonging to a specific subculture: to eschew categorisation. As we saw in Chapter Three, for Faith, maturity is seen to bring with it an erosion of classed and racialised segregation, as everyone 'gets over it,' and no longer wants to be categorised. I argue that what this really shows though is a further investment in the fantasy of the mixed, convivial space within youth and the wider public imagination. While this discourse attests to an investment in the authentic self – and respect for this authenticity, the act of the young people drawing on this discourse is bound up with an attempt to show themselves as the happy smiling multiculturalist, the 'good, ethical self' of neoliberalism, as one who is not categorised, and does not categorise (Zizek, 1997 cited in Ahmed, 2007).

Faith asserted that the hybrid music styles enjoyed by youth today, such as that of the band MGMTs, is testimony to the lack of relevance of the 'deadweights' (Bennett, 2005; Martin, 2009) of categorisations of race and class in contemporary youth cultural forms. Indeed the music style of this band is a rhizomatic fusion (Back, 2003 [1995]) of rock, with psychedelic influence, and more contemporary electronica. However, while the music is indeed a fusion of genres, closer inspection reveals the US -based band to be a White middle class duo formed when the two met during their freshman year at Wesleyan University, a private liberal arts college in Connecticut. The band has universal appeal but has a strong indie rock following–evidenced by their support on tour of bands like Radiohead. A White and middle class following of the band is predominant.

Indeed it was most common for the White middle class boys in my research to proclaim free floating influences and deny categorisation (or indeed an avoidance of discussing class and race altogether). This points towards not only the normalisation of Whiteness and middle classness, but evidence of the footloose, mobility of the acquisitive White middle class (masculine) self (Skeggs, 2004). This forms a key site of discussion in chapter six.

An equal number of students however were acutely aware of how social class and race, in particular, structured the subcultural forms in their school. As I showed in Part Two (chapters three and four), the class and race divisions were explicitly discussed by some, and by others references were euphemistic (Skeggs, 2004). Carl, a Black Caribbean working class young man at Eden Hill school, had fascinating insight into what he called the different 'batches'. Though it was unlikely that Carl had read the work of Pierre Bourdieu, he cogently claimed that there was a certain 'form of logic' which bound the different subcultural groups (Bourdieu, 1990). He distinguished the main differences as being that one group were more 'intellectual' which he called 'booksmart,' and the other group more 'streetsmart' as they spent more time 'outside' than with their 'books'. While Carl does not go into detail about who is more book smart and who is more street smart, these terms are implicitly racialised and classed, where the 'street,' and a certain 'streetwise-ness' has long been associated with the working classes (Hey, 1997) and the indeed urban Black young men in particular (Archer et al., 2010). 'Intelligence' and 'books' connotes middle class ways of being and knowing (Williams, 1977). Furthermore, Carl's use of the term 'forms of logic,' which he argues are learnt, speaks to a kind of habitus – an embodied 'structure of feeling' (Williams, 1977) governing the different groups.

Youdell, in her identification of distinct classed and raced school-based subcultures posits:

> *On the surface, these names might appear to reference nothing more than a nebulous array of 'teenage' 'choices' concerning clothing, hairstyles, music genres, effort in school work, but Bourdieu's (1987) analysis of distinction presses: these apparent tastes have differential values in differentiated markets and it is the relative values of the wearer/user/listener's capitals in varying markets that is at stake (Youdell, 2006a, p. 139).*

Indeed, it is this distinction-making and processes of valuing (Skeggs, 2004), and the hidden 'border work' (Thorne, 1993) which excludes and includes young people in and outside of friendship formations. What I argue in the following two chapters is that these subcultural groups are performative, and hence contribute to (re)producing social class, race and gender. What is clear is that a huge amount of identity work goes into producing these subcultural groups. I go on to show how such subcultural groupings 'participate in a citational chain of classed and raced [and

gendered] practices that constitute these' (Youdell, 2006a, p. 142). I demonstrate here how school-based subcultural performances are implicated in the normative production of social class, race and gender which, not only contributes to making these identities 'intelligible,' but also has strong implications for the possibilities for social mixing.

I now go on to explore two predominantly Black working class subcultures, the Football crowd at Eden Hill school, and a small clique of girls at Stellar Academy, the Performing arts girls. I first introduce you to the Football crowd at Eden Hill School. This group- while still studying for A levels- performed an identity which placed emphasis on their sporting capabilities, and elevated a sociability and lightheartedness, above the seriousness of their studies. I argue that while characterised by a discourse of 'football unites', there were a number of ways in which the football subculture was productive of a certain Black working class masculinity, which thus necessarily excluded other from it. I then go on to discuss the operations of Black working class femininity at Stellar Academy through a case study of Black working class girls at Stellar Academy. I locate similar performances of Black working classness here, to that seen in the Football crowd but this was coupled with certain performances of heteronormative femininity which separated their subculture from that of the boys.

5.2 The Football crowd: performances of Black working class 'laddish' masculinity

The Football crowd at Eden Hill School was interestingly constructed as the most 'open' and 'mixed' group of all the (sub)cultural formations I encountered in this research. They are clearly not 'sharply demarcated' (Clarke et al., 1981) like the subcultures of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Through my research it became apparent that the Football crowd was a much larger, more fluid group than the Smokers and the Neeks whom I explore in chapter six. The Football crowd was a larger umbrella group, formed of smaller 'cliques', but nevertheless coalesced around a dedication to football. However, as I show, this group was far from inclusive: this group was predominated by more working class and more Black students, and most importantly, the group was entirely made up of boys (See Appendix 7 for diagram). Girls associated with the group but were not constitutive of it.

Playing an important role in bolstering particular constructions of masculinity in the school, this had effects on who could participate and the gendered patterns of ex/inclusion. Indeed as Francis (2010) and others have shown (see e.g. Connolly 1998; Jackson 2006; Martino 1999; Skelton 2001; Swain 2002), sporting ability is of central importance in the construction of masculinity in

educational settings. In many ways this group most resembled the 'laddish' counter school culture, embodied in the figure of the hooligan. The 'lad' implies a particularly working class masculine position (Willis, 1977). Delamont (2000) analyses constructions of the 'lad' and the 'hooligan'. She summarises that he is a working class boy who hates school and school work and who rejects the opportunity for credentials. Instead he values fighting and toughness and denigrates boys who invest in study as effeminate and weak. The 'lad' gains peer status from boasting about sexual conquests and delinquent and criminal activity, tries to impose his version of masculinity on other boys in the school, and is a hero in the peer group for doing so. As I show here in my work, 'laddish' resistance takes on a new dynamic in a selective sixth form context. In my study, every student is studying for A levels and has an element of academic focus thereby mitigating against an explicit counter school identity. However, while an explicit counter school culture was not present, elements of laddish behaviour *were* present in the Football crowd, in a particular valorising of the physical body over the mind/ academic pursuits through almost obsessional interest in sport. In addition, an elevation of sociability was present, which involved a particular commitment to 'loudness' and 'jokes'. Through these elements, the Football crowd was constitutive of a particular heterosexual Black, working class, masculinity, which constrained who was able to mix. In the sections that follow, I begin by deconstructing the popular discourse that football unites young people from different backgrounds; I go on to explore this dedication to sport as a '(sub)cultural capital'[27]; followed by a similar discussion of sociability. I end discussion of the boys by turning to look at exclusions from the Football crowd, with the case study of Amber.

5.2.1 Football unites?

The Football crowd was predominantly working class and more likely to be Black and inclusive of other minority and mixed ethnicities than the Smokers or the Neeks, but there was some fluidity and this was a space where boys, specifically, had the opportunity to cross social class and ethnic boundaries. However this transgression was dependent on having the knowledge about and/ or skill at football. Football was thus located by some as a congenial space for social mixing. As Ahmed points out, in popular discourse, football is proximate to the ego ideal of the nation, as being a level playing field, providing the basis for a common ground (Ahmed, 2007; and see Back, Crabbe, & Solomos, 2001). Here we see Damian (Black working class) construct this crowd as a 'mixed up space' echoing Anderson's notion of the cosmopolitan canopy (Anderson, 2004):

[27] I do not theorise (sub)cultural capital in the same way as Thornton's (1995) study. I develop a concept of (sub)cultural capital building on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital: a cultural resource which has value in particular subcultural and youth culture contexts, as opposed to cultural capital which has more currency in mainstream social contexts.

> *[The school] was racially divided most of the time. But only ... things that put everyone together was stuff like sport ...like football. Everyone would be on to play football no matter what ... who anyone was. And that was very good, because we used to play football a lot, and that's how I ... everyone was mixed up really.*

Thus we can see from Damian's narrative that football provided an opportunity in the school timetable which allowed people access to others they might otherwise not encounter. Thus, Bottero's (2005) 'heterophily', or social mixing can supposedly occur. However, as she points out, people from similar social backgrounds tend to have similar interests, and thus the likelihood of being interested in football and having the opportunity and inclination to develop skill at it, are socially differentiated, particularly in terms of gender. Further, for such genuine heterophily to occur in the first place depends on the frequency and depth of such interactions. Indeed it is debatable how deep such interactions are as to generate meaningful, lasting relations, as Damian's account indicates:

> *Football is a thing where anyone from any labelled group can be involved. Like imagine there was a smoker and a Black boy who doesn't smoke, and is like a cool gangster kind of person, the rude one, yeah and then they wouldn't mind playing with them, even if they are from two different groups, because of football, because they will just be in the same team or on opposite teams, and they are trying to get the ball straight in the net. So they have their own common goal and their own common like similarities really. And that's what sport brings.*

Here we can see both the superficiality, and the temporal limits to the interaction Damian is describing. He conjures up a scenario in which two boys from different subcultural groups mix with each other as they come together over a common aim, but there is no indication of how this generates lasting relations. Indeed, the very description of the two boys reproduces class, race, and gendered subcultural groupings – the 'rude', Black, 'gangster' vs. the (White middle class) 'smoker'. As I have discussed in Part Two (chapters three and four), this may simply serve to reinforce understandings of social distance and sense of place and may also provide opportunities for the 'substantiating (of) stereotypes and prejudices' (Anderson, 2004, p. 25).

Indeed, in the majority of conversations with students, football was constructed as something that divides rather than unites. Tanisha (mixed ethnicity working class) said 'all the sporty guys stick together'. Oliver (White middle class) said, talking about the lower school: 'Basically it is separated into people who go and play football and people who don't.' He went on:

> *That's how you get your friends like if you go on the ball court, all your friends will be from people who like football and stuff. Then if you don't, you've got a completely different group of friends. They just don't mix.*

Both Oliver and Tanisha painted a picture of quite separate friendship groups formed around this passion for football (or not) where, if you are in one group, you will not be in the other. Oliver stated: 'you wouldn't think football would be such a big separation of people, but it does create a big divide.'

As I go on to show, opportunity to form friendships within the Football crowd was dependent on one's particular embodied (raced, classed and gendered) identity, itself a form of capital that could contribute to this access. Indeed one of the most stark ways in which football divided was in terms of gender (Tanisha-'all the guys play footy'), which I later go on to discuss. Like in Clark and Paechter's research, boys had to some extent, 'automatic rights' to football, and girls only 'marginal tenacity' (2007, p. 261).

5.2.2 Dedication to sport

Sporting ability was a major (sub)cultural capital amongst the boys in both schools, particularly evident at Eden Hill School, but as research suggests, a common feature of many secondary schools (Francis et al., 2010; Martino, 1999; Youdell, 2006a). As Youdell argues, 'football remains the domain of men, a constitution that cites and inscribes discourses of physical strength and mastery and is, in turn, constitutive of masculinity' (2006a, p. 158) Football was not just a hobby. For many of these young men it also formed part of their imagined futures, figuring as a future career aspiration. For example, Damian (Black working class) and Tristan (White working class) both had an ambition to play professional football and were making the right moves to do so, and others in the group had friends who had left school already to pursue professional paths. Those boys within school tended to be studying A level PE. A number of these boys went to a neighbouring school every Friday to play football under the floodlights. While football was the main sport, knowledge of and/or skill in other sports such as Basketball were also valuable currency. These boys were described by Jayne (White middle class girl) as almost 'obsessed', defined by an all-consuming passion for football:

> *They are really madly [into football] they are really, like, boy boys. They go to [neighbouring school] just a field on their own and play football. They all live very local. They love the game. It is just so much like a boys' paradise.*

It is not enough to simply like football. Rather, to be part of this crowd, one must, live and breathe it: they are 'mad' for it, they 'love it' they even play on their own, without an audience. This dedication was, I argue, a form of (sub)cultural capital which enabled entry to the group. We see here how this passion for football also becomes a marker of heterosexual masculinity- you are a 'boy boy' if you do it- it is a boy's paradise (Clark & Paechter, 2007). As I go on to show with the

case of Amber, this construction of football as a 'boys' game acted as an exclusionary force not only on girls participation in playing, but also on their ability to make friends across this divide.

The co-presence of the Smokers –deemed the 'high flying, high achievers'- necessarily renders the Football crowd as lower achieving in the academic hierarchy (Bradford & Hey, 2007; Youdell, 2006a). Members of the football group tended to take 'lower status' A level subjects such as PE and Business studies. This hierarchy was further reinforced by their own (bounded) choices. Their valorisation of sport and preference for this over academic work involved drawing on, and reproducing, a dichotomy between physical sporting prowess and academic and mental faculties. As Tristan said 'I like this school [...] but I like football more.' Further, the academic route of university was seen by several as a last resort, as something to fall back on if they do not succeed at professional football. Tristan explained: 'I said to my head of year, I don't really want to go to uni, like, it's not going to be for me. I didn't really want to apply until I had tried everything possible to do other stuff'.

In students' accounts it emerged that an interest and ability in football was a fairly valuable 'ticket' to being accepted in the hegemonic masculine subcultures of different urban comprehensives. As Tristan revealed:

> *I only fitted in at Endbridge [his previous school] really well because I could play football. I found it easier to make friends here [Eden Hill] even when they realised I could play football. I think that's like a big part of sort of who I am and how I make friends anyway.*

Tom, one of the Neeks at Stellar Academy, also used his football (sub)cultural capital in order to make friends and 'get on', as one of the only White middle class children in the early years of secondary school:

> *My friends have changed sort of ... At the time I spent most of years 7, 8 and 9 at break times just playing football. [...] what happens when you play sport as a sort of social thing, quite often you end up with people you don't really like at all, but you sort of hang out with them anyway.[...] Then I started to hang out with the girls, and then they became my friends.*

Ability to play football enabled Tom to get by in the urban comprehensive, but allied him with people he 'didn't really like at all'. Over time he became friends with more of the White middle class girls and boys with whom he felt he has more in common. We can view this as a move away from a multiethnic working class masculinity to a more feminised but hegemonic White middle class masculinity which I discuss in more detail in Chapter Six.

5.2.3 Sociability, loudness and 'jokes'

Not only was access to the Football crowd dependent on skill and knowledge in football, it also centred around a certain way of being and set of practices of sociability which were gendered, racialised and classed. Concurrent with much of the literature on working class 'lads', central to the identity and identifications of the Football crowd was an elevation of sociability, and, most importantly a sense of humour: as Willis coined: 'having a laff' (1977). As others have argued, humour plays a significant part in consolidating masculine peer group cultures in secondary schools: 'humour is less an outcome of working class masculinity, but rather, is constitutive of these very identities' (Kehily & Nayak, 1997, p. 71).

Tyler (Black African working class), joined the school from the US having not played English football. His account reveals the amount of identity work he had to undergo in order to get into the Football crowd. He told me 'I couldn't just jump into the Football crowd'. However this did not so much involve demonstrating footballing ability, but his ability to participate in the humour rituals and camaraderie of the group- his ability to 'entertain':

> *It was demanded that the more appealing you are – the more you can make people feel good or make people laugh and that stuff. That's what brought people in. That's a major requirement. While the more [...] grouchy or... more down [you are] the lower you are in the group. That's what it's like. Luckily, because I'm a kind of party lightener... [I] lighten the mood... I was eager to get inside, and they were saying: 'Yeah! Yeah! Let this guy in!'*

As Kehily and Nayak argue 'it is through these displays of verbal and physical performance that young men are able to exhibit their heterosexual masculinities' (Kehily & Nayak, 1997, p. 72). Tyler saw his ability to get into the Football crowd as owing to his personality. However, I argue, embedded in these 'personal qualities' is the ability to perform the desired identity: the skill at doing the 'right' identity work. You have to make yourself 'appealing,' you have to sell yourself to the group; and to do that you need to know what they will 'buy', you need to know what appeals to them. Again, with beautiful allegory, making people laugh, making people feel good, and lightening the mood, is part of the central work that needs to be done to get into the sports crowd. Being too 'grouchy' or 'down' will only work to relegate you to a lower division. Implicit in Tyler's description is a subtle acknowledgment that, like football, this is a game that has rules: there are 'requirements', there are 'demands', and the extent to which these are met will be rewarded differently. This being 'laid back' as Tristan coined it, can be seen as a (sub)cultural capital. Furthermore, it is always already classed, raced and gendered.

This particular incarnation of sociability centred on 'loudness', which as I shall discuss later, stood in sharp contrast to the White middle class subcultures. This discourse of loudness was drawn upon in both schools particularly used in relation to Black African Caribbean students, who owned the discourse as well as being labelled through it. Nathanial (Black working class), explained how he became friends with Damian (Black working class):

> *The old ball court used to be down there and, yeah, he was always so loud that it was kind of hard to miss him. So we just became friends from then. I don't really know why, but he is really loud. He's just a funny guy, I guess.*

As we learn more in Chapter Seven Damian was a 'larger than life' character who embodied the 'leader' role in the school. As Nathanial says it was 'hard to miss him'. More importantly though, or perhaps more central to this particular was of doing Blackness, was being 'loud' but also, as Tyler's narrative shows, being 'a funny guy'. Damian, and Tyler, can be seen to be performing the figure of the 'clown' or 'entertainer' illuminated in Stuart Hall's (1992b) analysis of the 'grammar of [Black] race' in popular culture and mediated texts. The Black man is seen to embody an innate humour: a natural entertainer who must perform for others.

Walker and Goodson (1977) identify a relationship between humour and power: it is usually those with most power in the situation who tell the most jokes. However, as with the clown and the joker, the question is whether we are laughing at, or with them. As others have noted: 'The nature of humour is complex because it resides not only in the logic and content of what is said, but in the performance of the teller, in the relationship between the teller and the audience' (Walker and Goodson, 1977 cited in Kehily & Nayak, 1997, p. 75). In this context, such humour and jokes were a shared source of 'private'/ 'in-house' humour amongst Black students (both African and Caribbean). Nathanial said:

> *Cultural stuff does make a difference, I think. Because it tends to be like ... the humour is the same and the way you interact is the same. [...] You know if Damian makes a certain joke that, you know, someone from a different background wouldn't understand, then he could talk like that with me.*

Damian further reinforced this:

> *If your background is like working class and you're like ... you're Black, you have more understanding of another person's life and like how they grew up, yeah, and you'll make jokes and references about it, and all of that, and that will make you more ... that's why the social group kind of begins*

The 'shared telling and remembrance affirmed links between the present and past' (Kehily and Nayak, p.78) which served to consolidate their friendship groups but also set them apart from

others of different ethnicity. Like in Kulz (2011) research, getting 'beats' (a child being physically punished by a parental or authority figure) was highlighted as a key shared 'joke' by Damian and Nathanial. Such shared, personal, emotional understanding sets up a scene of 'comfortability' (in Tyler's words) if you are in the know, or a discomfort, or sticky relations if you are not (Kulz, 2011).

While this position can be seen as potentially liberating, and can be interpreted as a ritual of resistance (Hall, 1992b)- a response to being a minoritised group in an oppressive context (Kehily & Nayak, 1997)- this loudness and performance as 'the clown' is problematic. Not only does it come to reinforce negative stereotypes, it comes in conflict with the middle class habitus of the school and serves to distance them from legitimated cultural capital. As Kehily and Nayak (1997, p. 71) argue 'although pupil humour contains moments of subversion [...], it is also a compelling mode for sex/gender conformity'. I argue likewise for a shoring up of racial essentialising through subcultural practices. This humour and loudness functions within the peer group to provide a colourful backdrop for others to watch on and celebrate 'happy smiling multiculturalism' (Ahmed, 2007). As I go on to argue in chapter seven, Damian's raced, classed and gendered performance only goes so far to accrue him (sub)cultural capital among the White middle classes in the school and superficial access to the 'Smokers' crowd. Yet this is necessarily partial and is implicated in an unequal extraction and consumption of cultural difference by the White middle classes, which fixes Damian in place.

Passion for football and performances of 'loud' sociability, are not always enough- in and of themselves- to gain access to the Football crowd. The embodiment of a particular raced, classed and gendered identity is also important. Indeed I argue that this (sub)cultural capital was not equally available to all. As other have argued, Black masculinity has long been associated with the physicality of the body and indeed with sporting prowess (Gilroy, 1991; Hall, 1992b; Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent, & Ball, 2011; Youdell, 2003), and the ability to perform Black working class masculinity was pivotal in providing access to (and authenticity within) the Football crowd. However, what I want to discuss here is how the Football crowd can come to represent a certain Black working class masculinity, relatively autonomously from the 'objective' classifications and identity positions of its members (Griffin, 2011). That is, how the Football crowd as a collective, can be symbolic of a Black working class masculinity even if its members might come from more diverse backgrounds.

I focus my analysis here on Tristan as an example. Tristan was a White boy who joined Eden Hill school from another lower performing London state school. We learn that Tristan had access to

the Football crowd when he joined the school, when they discovered he could play well. Tristan now played for a local reserves team and hoped to get into the first team by next year, and play professional football. Faith revealed that his commitment and his ability had bought Tristan high status among the peer group when he became symbolic leader of his clique, subsequently known as 'Tristan's lot'. Tristan's capacity to fit into the Football crowd was not simply due to his footballing ability, but his capacity to perform and embody a working class minority ethnic (/non-White middle class) identity. Tristan was hard to place objectively in terms of class background: he lived in council housing but he was not in receipt of EMA[28] so his family income was above thirty thousand pounds a year. His parents both worked in the NHS (one of them being a dental nurse) but neither of them had been to university, nor had Tristan's older brother who now played professional football. Tristan was not keen on going to university himself either. His parents decision to move him from Endbridge school- in a 'rougher' area where he had got in some low key trouble- to Eden Hill school (a higher performing state school) could perhaps position them as aspirational working class. Furthermore, Tristan defined his ethnicity as White British, but this was very much positioned within a friendship group of minority ethnic working class young people. Further, Tristan had shoulder length dark hair, dark brown eyes, and an olive skin complexion, and he confessed that he often got mistaken for being European or South American heritage:

> *People always used to think that I was like half Spanish or half like Italian [...] When I told people I was White, they wouldn't believe me. [...] All my friends ... like nearly all of them have been Black*

In the context of the superdiverse (Vertovec, 2006) London comprehensive school, we can see how Spanish or Italian identities are minoritised by Tristan, positioned as non-White. Not only is Tristan's assumed (minority) ethnic identity validated by his embodied appearance, but his association with only Black and minority ethnic students is read as further evidence of his minority ethnic status. Thus, my argument is that, complementary to Tristan's actual sporting ability and interest and his performances of 'laid back' sociability, Tristan could perform the right identity to access this subculture: he could perform minority ethnic working classness. He is a darker shade of pale (Reay et al., 2007): constructed as 'less White' than the White middle class kids but also less White than the White working class 'chavs'. Race and class are read on the body, and thus class comes to be made through these readings (Skeggs, 2004).

[28] Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was a means-tested grant in operation at the time of the fieldwork, to support students to stay in education past the age of 16. Students whose annual parental income was less than £30,000 per year were eligible for up to £30 a week.

While some identity constellations (Youdell, 2006) enable access to the Football crowd I go on to show how for girls, this was almost an impossible identity position. In a move that shored up hetero-normative masculinity and femininity, the subcultural constitution of the Football crowd constrained opportunities for mixing.

5.2.4 Embodied femininity and exclusion

As Reay (2001b) argues in the context of the primary school, despite being differentiated, gendered practices within the school tend to bolster boys' power at the expense of girls. Indeed what I now illustrate is how what it means to be a girl and a boy impacts on involvement in sport and football in particular (Clark & Paechter, 2007) reinforcing hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995), and placing restrictions on friendship formation. I use the example of Amber's story to illustrate this.

Amber was of Black Caribbean heritage, and from a working class background. She lived locally in council housing with her mum who worked in Marks and Spencer. As we learnt in chapter three, all of Amber's friends had left the school in year 11. Amber however was committed to her studies and was determined to go to university. She planned to study business at Brunel University which she had visited on an Aim Higher programme. Amber told me how she used to love football and described her previous identity in school as a 'tomboy'. The conversation went as follows:

> *Amber [...] because before I was such a tomboy ...as well as hanging around with those two sets [of girls] I was also on the football pitch with the boys. But yeah ...*
>
> *Sumi Doing what with the boys?*
>
> *Amber On the football pitch. So I was a footballer up to year 11 [age 16]. Then I stopped.*
>
> *Sumi Oh, that's quite interesting, because I've come across ... a lot of the guys I've talked to were in the Football crowd. But I've not come across any girls. They were all like, 'No, girls don't do it'.*
>
> *Amber No, it was mostly in primary school.*
>
> *Sumi Were there any other girls involved?*
>
> *Amber Never. Not on the pitch ... in PE yeah, but not on the pitch. I was always on the pitch.*
>
> *Sumi That's interesting.*
>
> *Amber I was such a boy.*

We can see here how football is implicitly and explicitly inscribed as masculine. While the fact that the sixth formers no longer played football in school anymore will have contributed to Amber's cessation, we simultaneously read this as Amber maturing and learning her gendered place. Like in others' work (Clark & Paechter, 2007; Francis, 2010; Renold, 2005), in the quote above we see Amber reproduce this idea that playing football was doing 'boy'. Indeed, the figure of the 'tomboy' reinforces the dualistic framework of gender (Paechter, 2010; Diane Reay, 2001b; Renold, 2008), where 'tomboy' is constructed as mimetic of hegemonic masculinity (Renold, 2008), as unable to authentically be it .

The oppositional construction of these identities makes it harder for girls to take up more flexible femininities (Paechter, 2010). We see therefore how Amber was forced to 'choose'. Amber told me how she had previously embodied a 'typical tomboy' in her interest in traditionally masculine pursuits, and her lack of feminine aesthetic embellishment. She told me how she always used to dress like a 'boy' but now she wears short skirts, dresses and makeup. As Bourdieu (2001) argues: 'femininity is imposed for the most part through an unremitting discipline that concerns every part of the body and is continuously recalled through the constraints of clothing or hairstyle' (cited in Clark & Paechter, 2007, p. 267). Drawing on Francis (2010) work we can suggest that there are not many aspects of Amber's production that can easily be categorised as feminine, thus any reading of her performance as feminine draws on the (essential, sexed) body, and her adornment of it.

Amber said she gradually stopped being a tomboy around year 8, aged thirteen, revealing a pressure to conform to gender norms, strongly driven by friendships. She told me about her friend Carmel who used to do her hair and make-up: 'she always wanted to do my makeup and always wanted to just dress me up, because before I was such a tomboy'. She also talked about how she had a romantic boyfriend in year 8, but that it was all Carmel's 'doing': 'She always used to push me to do things.' As Hey and others have noted, gender expectations are highly monitored and regulated by peers at this age in particular (Clark & Paechter, 2007; George, 2007; Hey, 1997). Personally invested in non-normative gender performances, in primary school Amber had made friends with a boy, Daniel (a Black Caribbean boy), who wanted to be a hairdresser – a profession often labelled by boys in schools as 'gay' (Martino, 1999). Interestingly though, these seeming transgressive gender investments ultimately resulted in Daniel's complicity in the transformation of Amber into a 'proper' 'girl':

> *He was busy with my hair. He made me look like a girl. Then after a while I got used to it and I started doing my own hair, and made myself even more girly ... more and*

more girly every day. Then here I am now. I don't look like it today, but I love make up. It is weird to see the transformation. My Mum said to me the other day, 'What are you doing?' You were never like this when you were younger. I hated make up. I hated everything girly. I didn't like little skirts, but now, the shorter they get, the better.

Here we can see Amber's 'transformation' to girl is evident here (S. Clark & Paechter, 2007). She 'loves make up', and 'the shorter the skirt the better' now. Previous research I have been involved in (Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007a) has shown how urban working class young women were substantially invested in producing heterosexual, 'desirable' and 'glamorous' (Skeggs, 1997) femininities through manipulation of their bodies and this pressure was clearly felt by Amber.

However, the way Amber talked about doing 'girl' was almost as if she felt like an imposter in this role, revealing the instability of gender performances (Butler, 1990):

I came to school with my hair up in braids one day and it was unbelievable. Everyone was like, 'Oh she's pretty' ... and I wore a skirt. And I was so scared of what people would think. I was so scared. I was like, what if the boys all say: ' What are you doing?' I got so scared.

Further, my field notes hint at a sense of inauthenticity read by me in Amber's performance of 'girl':

Today she was wearing jeans and trainers and a vest top and summer jacket. She has long dreadlocked hair which she was wearing lose. I remember thinking that she did not come across as 'girly' as some of the other girls around in sixth form - there was something about the way she dressed that was not geeky but not fashionable either, just uncomplicated. She did not appear to be wearing make-up and she had very minimal jewellery on. There is something slightly contrived about Amber's comments- accentuating the fact that she loves makeup (though she's not wearing any) and the shorter the skirt the better (though she is wearing straight leg jeans). None of the other girls (despite some of them wearing short skirts, and lots of makeup) talked about it. There was something about Amber's comments that drew to my attention that this was a performance. Not quite comfortable with the gendered expectations bestowed upon her, Amber had learnt to be and 'love' being a girl, and leave her tomboy behind her, although it didn't come 'naturally'. (30/06/2010)

Other authors have noted that working class women's investment in their (heterosexual) appearance constitutes one of the few available sites for the generation of symbolic capital (Skeggs, 1997), where young women can achieve a sense of power and agency from their performances of hyper-heterosexual femininities (Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007a; Hey, 1997) that are imbued with 'status and desirability' (Renold, 2005, p. 40). Like Carol the working class girl in Hey's ethnography, Amber could be seen constantly drawing attention to her body- to accentuate

her femininity in order to become respectable (1997, p.91). 'Hyper aware' (Clark & Paechter, 2007) of her body in these gendered performances, and unable to accrue value through the football identity, we see Amber displaying overt performances of gender-normativity, in order to successfully maintain her educational identity, and find her place in the subcultures of the school. She has now become one of the girls who sits on the side of the pitch looking pretty (S. Clark & Paechter, 2007). As I go on to discuss in relation to the Performing Arts girls, this investment in femininity is likely to be a balancing act for Amber where a hyper-feminine Black identity can also be read as antithetical to education.

What I want to emphasise is that this is both a push and pull for Amber. The push of being excluded from football and the masculinities inscribed onto it (and we can speculate, the repulsion of the 'spectre of lesbianism' (Griffin, 2005) if she does not 'grow out' of this tomboy phase (Renold, 2008)), but also a pull towards a normative heterosexual femininity. However, this is not an easy position for Amber. However, as I go on to argue in Chapter Eight in relation to other students, this gender transgression has interesting implications for mixing.

5.3 The Performing Arts girls: loudness and Black working class femininity

In the sixth form at Stellar Academy, by contrast, there was an absence of a discernible masculine Football subculture. This brought the Black working class girls into allegiance with the boys in a way that was not possible at Eden Hill school. At Stellar Academy sixth form, loudness and jokes were part of a particular performance of Black working class masculinity and femininity, which consolidated both girls' and boys' membership of a 'loud' Black subculture, but also contributed to their exclusion from other White friendship groups. This, however, did not happen in a way that fully disrupted gender binaries, as particular raced and classed performances of 'doing girl' were also rigidly adhered to.

5.3.1 Black girls' performances of loudness

Several students (Robert: White working class, and Nicole, Ronelle and Freya: Black working class) conceptually divided the sixth form at Stellar Academy into 'loud' students, and more 'quiet' students. 'Loud' students were described by some as the 'cooler' students, but also by others outside the group as 'a bit gangster'. 'Gangster' is an implicitly racialised term, but also this loud identity was explicitly racialised. Nicole admitted: 'the loud group I would say is Black' and Freya elaborated:

> *Black people tend to be more out there and more loud for some reason. [...] All my Caribbean and African friends are just very loud. [...] my White friends are...they are still loud but not as loud. [...] so it's a bit different when I go to them.*

This way of being, which could be defined as constituting working class laddish performances of masculinity, was not confined to boys. While such an identity is usually constitutive of masculinity, other studies have observed Black girls as being read /inscribed as loud and boisterous (Ali, 2003b; Archer, 2005; Francis, 2010; Mirza, 1992) in a way that is constructed as problematic. In Hey's (1997) ethnography, the Black friendship group of girls were known as the 'bad lot'. Other research also suggests though a simultaneous claiming of this loud identity, where 'speaking my mind' is constructed as a positive act, but recognised as getting them into trouble in school (Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007b). Freya, a Black African working class girl at Stellar Academy elaborated that this loudness and assertiveness was a particular cultural marker: 'I'm African, like: you can be on the phone but you have to make sure everyone hears your conversation.' Ronelle, a Black African working class girl at Stellar Academy went on to reveal:

> *Everyone in our group- we've got these bubbly laughing personalities. We just laugh at anything, and we are always telling jokes.*

Very similar to the Black boys at Eden Hill school, social relations in this friendship group revolved around, not only a loudness, but a light heartedness: telling jokes and making each other laugh. Freya's narrative went on to show how these performances of loudness and 'jokes' became a particular way to recognise whether someone would be a suitable friend or not. Freya explained how her group got to know two Black boys in the common room, who were new to the sixth form that year. She explained:

> *My friendship group is quite loud and everyone can hear our conversations and we might get a snigger or a laugh or something like that and from there on you'd just be like 'What are you laughing at?' and they'll be like 'nuffing'. And from there on you'll just be like 'OK this person's alright to talk to'.*

Freya's narrative suggests that the 'loudness' and conversations that 'everyone can hear' serves to generate conversation in an inclusive manner in the common room– as others in the room are allowed access to the conversation and may join in. This could be viewed as an empowering practice which is about claiming space in a context of marginalisation – speaking back and claiming value (Phoenix, 2009). However, we can see here how these friendships and identity performances map on to the institutional practices outlined in Part Two (chapters three and four), whereby Black working class students in this school form a mass of unruly, problematic learners, and their loudness can reinforce this chaotic reading, positioning them as Other and as antithetical to educational 'success.'

However, this does not necessarily act as an inclusive practice, but an exclusionary one. We can also see how these ways of being, are read differently on different bodies. A 'snigger' or 'laugh' across the common room from a Black boy is read as hetero-sexualised masculine engagement in the form of banter –and is granted with inclusion to the group. In contrast, this behaviour from a White middle class girl might be read as snobbery or disdain. Indeed Freya went on to say that there are some 'girl groups' who are not her 'scene' in the sixth form that she would steer clear of, because sometimes you walk in the room and they give this 'look' and you 'just know' you are not welcome. When I asked 'can you give me an example of what somebody does that you feel is not approachable?' She replied:

> *The looks that they give you ... like you couldn't enter a room ... and the look that they will instantly give you will just tell you that they want to say something about you, or they will go off and whisper something into someone else's ear. It is quite tedious because we are kind of young adults now and there shouldn't have to be people who are still like that.*

It became evident as Freya's interview progressed that she was referring to the girls in the 'higher achieving' Oxbridge group. Thus we can see how these particular performances – of loudness and 'sniggering' (as opposed to 'looks' and whispering) are both raced, classed and gendered ways of being which differently operate to signal inclusion or exclusion from the group.

Various authors maintain that Black girls are frequently constructed by (White) teachers as insufficiently feminine due to their 'loud' and assertive behaviours (in Francis, 2010), which enforces a particular racialised femininity (Archer, 2005). Francis' (2010) work might suggest these girls are performing a more 'female masculinity' (Halberstam, 1998), or a heteroglossic (after Bakhtin, 1981) gender performance. However, as I now show, this loudness and assertiveness, coupled with particular (raced and classed) performances of hetero-femininities positions them as different to the boys in the group.

5.3.2 Shopping and performing

In contrast to the boys in the Football crowd, these girls' interests revolved around hetero-normative gendered performances of 'girling,' not dissimilar to the performances of desirable, glamorous, hyper-heterosexualised femininities discussed in my previous research (Archer, 2005; Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007a; and see Hey, 1997). For these Black girls this revolved around shopping; Performing Arts and gossip. As Ronelle said 'we love shopping- official shopaholics'. Their recreational time was often spent clothes shopping, and shopping was a particular way in which they performed their collective identity as a friendship group through collective affirmation of things they have in common: they claimed 'we have similar personalities: like taste in clothes.'

Shopping demonstrated knowledge of each other-knowing what each other likes: 'we've got the same tastes- like I would pick up a dress and they would be like 'I was just looking at that'. Shopping was thus also a performance of doing things for each other, to reinforce this notion of similarity: 'I will buy something for my sister [...] cos we've got the same tastes'. Group membership was consolidated through gossip in school: after they had been to different lessons they told me how they would come together in the common room and tell stories of their experiences that day: 'guess what happened?!' Freya summarised:

> *We've done a lot of things together that strengthens our relationship as friends and we've got to talking, and then from talking it's come to my house and just hanging out and watching movies and then going out shopping and doing girlie stuff really.*

Their relationship has progressed from talking in school; to spending time together in private in their homes, to going out publicly with each other.

Their loudness, overt sociability and assertiveness were unsurprisingly put to use in their love of Performing Arts: 'We all liked singing and music and anything to do with showing off the talent and all that'. However, as I show, unlike the Football boys, their raced, classed performances were not positioned as counter school. Like the Black girls in Mirza's (1992) research, these girls' loudness was coupled with a driven commitment to their education. Their love of 'showing off' was able to be put to use to generate some legitimated capital in the school by involvement in charity fundraising events, and educational campaigns such anti-bullying.

5.3.3 Embodying a pro-education identity

Unlike the girls in Willis' study where investments in heterosexuality was coupled with disinvestments in schooling (cited in Hey, 1997) the Performing Arts girls, more like the Black girls in Mirza's research (1992), were very self-assured and claimed a position of agency in relation to their own educational trajectories. Ronelle joined the school in year 9 (age 13), moving from a school, in her view with a lesser reputation. She said, self-assuredly 'it was my idea because I'd rather get a good education [...] I really wanted to move. It was like a big thing for me.' Freya also actively chose the school in year 7 (her mum wanted her to go to girls only school): 'I just told her [mum] this would be the best option for me.'

However, like the minority ethnic girls in Bradford and Hey's (2007) research and the Black girls in Mirza's (1992) research, their interviews were peppered with narratives of struggle and redemption. Freya told me:

I've been 'brought up to be successful [...] my aim is to be successful because my mum's been through a lot for me and my siblings so I feel that I need to become something successful to be able to give back to my mum. That is how I've already placed it in my head

What was interesting was how this commitment to 'successfication' (Bradford & Hey, 2007) impacted on who Freya allowed herself to be friends with: 'all my friends they have to want to be something,' 'everyone I talk to has to have ambition'. Thus a further factor that consolidated these Black working class girls as a friendship group was a shared sense of struggle and determination to succeed educationally. Freya said:

My group of friends are all ... well not in the same struggle, but we are all more or less in the same boat. With all of my friends, they either live with their Mum or they live with their Dad. They never live with both, kind of thing. I think that's why we relate even more, because it was like, 'Oh, I thought I was the only one', kind of thing. Then you find out there's other people that go through the same things as you, and we're obviously like not the richest people in the world, but we get by. So that kind of helps us when we are around people who are ... like Lysander and Ollie as well, because I have a few wealthy friends, like really wealthy friends...

This narrative was also espoused by Nicole another Black working class girl from a different friendship group:

Natalia's mixed race but she doesn't know her Dad's side, which is White. She only knows her Mum's side which is Black. Her Mum's like my Mum and I like my Mum so ... and Natalia's basically grown up as Black. She's mixed race but she has grown up with Black people so we have a lot of things in common, because she doesn't know her White side.

Here, single parenthood is seen as a collective, shared cultural experience, as is a financially constrained upbringing: 'I can relate to them', 'we have a lot of things in common.' But these experiences are raced and classed. This is very similar to how Damian and Nathaniel at Eden Hill school talked of having the same culture as a shared source of friendship. As we saw with Nathaniel's comment in Chapter Three section 3.3, while not negating cross-class friendships, this sense of 'seeing how the other half live', also created an element of separation from other more wealthy friends like Lysander and Ollie.

However, what I want to emphasise, is that despite this self-assured, active engagement in both the curricular and the extra-curricular, like the girls in Mirza's (1992) study, these girls were on 'lower status' and gender stereotypical BTEC courses of Health and Social Care. We can see Rollock's (2007a) 'inclusive' success in operation here. Their cultural capital buys them access to lower status activity and courses, which we will see later sits in contrast to those of the Neek

group: local charity events, not exclusive trips abroad; BTEC not A level; Performing Arts not Theatre Studies; and Health and Social Care not Science or Medicine. Indeed as I have argued in previous work, these 'glamorous' identities occupy a paradoxical space filled with tensions in relation to education success- teachers perceive this attention to appearance and bodily performances as preoccupied with 'looking the part' and a distraction from their studies (Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007a; Archer, Hollingworth, et al., 2007). These ways of being thus can accrue (sub)cultural capital but not legitimated capital within the school as they are fixed in lower status trajectories.

So what we can see is the ongoing identity work undertaken by these girls to hold together Black subcultural friendships and practices in the face of marginalisation by White middle class others and as a site of talking back and claiming space. This operates alongside an investment in education and a determination to succeed, but their embodiment of the ideal learner is denied in the presence of White middle class others, where their participation in lower status courses and activities and readings of their Black femininity as problematic, positions them in spaces of less value.

Conclusion

In this chapter, by bringing together a discussion of the operation of Black working class femininities at Stellar Academy with Black working class masculinities at Eden Hill, I have attempted to shed light on shared characteristics of Black working classness, which cut across the two boy and girl groups, but also elucidate the gender-specific performances which not only separate the girls from the boys, but act as forms of classed and raced distinction. At Stellar Academy sixth form, loudness and jokes was a particular performance of Black working class masculinity *and* femininity, which consolidated both girls and boys' membership of a 'loud' Black subculture, but also contributed to their exclusion from other White friendship groups. This did not however happen in a way that fully disrupted gender binaries, as particular raced and classed performances of 'doing girl' were also rigidly adhered to. These girls' identities, in contrast to the boys, revolved around particular heteronormative (loud) feminine performances of 'singing' and talent shows and the typical feminine bodily adornment activity of clothes shopping. While these performances of both groups generated (sub)cultural capital which bolstered group membership the exchange value of this capital into legitimated capital was constrained. Implicitly I argue that for the Football crowd, a particular elevation of football above academic studies, coupled with loud laddish behaviour, constrained their opportunities to be positioned as the ideal learner and the ideal subject of value in an academic sixth form. Further, for the Performing Arts girls, a pro-

education identity –via their particular Black working class feminine performances of 'successification' (Bradford & Hey, 2007)- did not necessarily translate into legitimated capital either, rendering them destined for 'good enough' success (Archer, 2005). In chapter six I go to show how White middle class identities became differently produced in the context of the two schools, but nevertheless inhabit and produce subcultures of hegemonic value.

Chapter 6: The Neeks and the Smokers: White middle class abject or privileged subcultures?

In this chapter I explore the two White middle class subcultural groups at Eden Hill and Stellar Academy, providing an illuminating comparison to the Black working class friendship groups in chapter five. What was more apparent from the White middle class subcultures in these two schools was how they were governed or structured by both a local or 'institutional logic', as well as a wider 'class logic' (Willis, 1997 [1977], p. 122), where the different institutional circumstances, market forces and processes of gentrification produced different kinds of middle class selves and middle class collectives. In presenting a comparison of the 'Neeks' and the 'Smokers,' I move through theories of abjection to use theories of class privilege and Whiteness, to trace the accrual of symbolic value for these groups through embodied, legitimated social and cultural capital accumulation, as a means of illustrating the classed, raced and gendered (re)production of youth subculture.

At Stellar Academy, the tight-knit White middle class group identified in chapter four, section 4.3, as occupying the 'Oxbridge' tutor group, were labelled the 'Neeks'. The Neeks were conscious of their label given to them by others in the school- a conflation of Nerd and Geek- so called because they were high academic 'ability', and placed importance on school work. They were sometimes referred to as the 'posh group,' or the 'goody- goodies.' This group of six to ten mixed gender students were all White British and ostensibly self-ascribing middle class, except Ed and Leila who was second generation Chinese and from working class backgrounds. Ed and Leila were notably more peripheral to the group (see Appendix 7 for a diagram of the subcultures in the two schools, and students' memberships of these). The Neeks were less style conscious/ 'stylish' than the Smokers at Eden Hill school, who I introduce next, but nevertheless had clear lifestyle interests, which bound them as a group. At Stellar Academy the Neeks sat in contrast to a more rebellious (also predominantly White middle class) group sometimes referred to as the 'bad posh group'. However as I discussed in Chapter Four, the 'bad posh group' had disbanded somewhat at sixth form as many had left for other schools. Thus the Neeks were the key middle class group at sixth form, and provide a key site of analysis in this chapter.

Eden Hill sixth form also featured a tight-knit contingent of White middle class – deemed to be high achieving- students who associated with each other. By contrast, this was a fairly large group

dominated by boys, a core group of these having joined the school in the sixth form from other higher status schools in the area (including fee-paying schools). Whilst no-one who was directly in this group appeared in my sample (see chapter 2 section 2.8 for discussion of this), they loomed large in other student's narratives. This group were variously referred to by others in the school as the 'Smokers'; the 'ravers'; the 'grungers;' the 'skaters' or the 'druggies'. Unsurprisingly, the label for this group was derived from their participation in particular alternative and somewhat 'rebellious' lifestyle choices (independent music, raves or parties, skateboarding, recreational drug-taking), and were referred to as the 'Smokers' because of their obvious activity of smoking, as a group, outside the school gates.

In what follows, I argue that the Neeks and the Smokers are productive of particular White middle class feminised and masculinised identities, which accrued legitimated capital in the context of the urban school. Francis and colleagues' work on the Boffin (2009; 2012) and on high achieving popular students (2010), is helpful in understanding both the position of the Neeks at Stellar Academy, and the Smokers crowd at Eden Hill school, respectively. However, my analysis develops this theorisation of learner identities by bringing social class and race to the fore. I argue that while the Neeks, like the Boffin, were in some ways pathologised and abjected in the urban school, they are able to accrue legitimated social and cultural capital. However, the particular circumstances at Eden Hill school enabled the Smokers (high achieving popular students) to accrue both a (sub)cultural capital amongst their peers, and at the same time a legitimated cultural capital in amongst staff in the school. Through my analysis I go on to show how the particular institutional circumstances of White middle class hegemony produce these differences. I argue that the Smokers occupy Archer's conceptual position of the ideal (masculine) student (Archer, 2005), which I argue is aligned with the neo-liberal cosmopolitan subject. By contrast, the Neeks- occupying a more feminine subject positions due to their fragile position in the school- come to occupy the position of the 'high achieving Other' (Archer, 2005).

6.1 The Neeks: performances of a feminised White middle class subculture

I draw on work on the concept of the Boffin and Geek in education (Francis, 2009; Francis & Archer, forthcoming; Mendick & Francis, 2012) to theorise the Neeks as a school-based subcultural group. This identity has taken many names over the years for example Swot, Boffin, Keeno, Geek or Nerd, but generally denotes high achieving or hardworking identities in school, but in a pathologising way. The Neek, as used to describe students in this research, has particular urban connotations, and implies lack- in that the Neek is someone who is not 'streetwise' and

who cannot handle themselves in situations such as being threatened or being 'mugged'[29]. This arguably infers a classed, and raced position. In this section I explore Francis' (2009) claim of the Neek as 'pariah'- as a vilified outsider- but go on to show that, while the Neek could be read as an unintelligible subject, my data reveals a raced, social class privilege which not only sets them apart from students in the rest of the school but accrues them social and cultural capital, as a collective, privileged identity. I first explore the claims to the Neek as abject other, before moving on to discount this theory through firstly exploration of the Neeks' social capital accrued through their collective identity; and secondly through their cultural capital acquired through middle class practices of distinction. I show that while the Neeks accrued little peer status within the sixth form, their capital legitimated through the formal channels of the school still afforded them access to more valued identities of educational success.

6.1.1 The Neeks as Abject?

Francis (2009) uses Butler's work on gender and intelligibility, and Ahrent's notion of the 'pariah' in order to understand the Boffin in contemporary schooling. In her research she found that Boffins tended to lack friends all together, and argued the Boffin was thus a 'social pariah signifying isolation and social rejection' (Francis, 2009, p. 655). This, she argued is gendered, as there is, in the institutional context of the school, a conflation of academic achievement and queer sexuality, which for boys, is read as homosexual or 'gay' (see also Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino, 1999), and for girls is read as a-sexuality (see also Epstein & Johnson, 1998; Walkerdine, 1990). For Francis (2009), the Boffin is an unintelligible subject and thus rendered abject Other. My data confirms but also complicates this reading.

Narratives of the Neeks' early experiences of Stellar Academy do elucidate the 'grim experiences of some boffin children' (Mendick & Francis, 2012). As I outlined in Chapter Four, the Neeks early experience of Stellar Academy was not wholly positive. A sense of social isolation experienced by these students did lead to a partial form of abjection and outcasting. The school operated mixed ability teaching until year 9 and the Neeks talked about how they did not encounter many other high achieving students until this point. Like several of the White middle class young people in my previous research (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010; Reay et al., 2007), these young people experienced a sense of isolation in a low performing, predominantly minority ethnic working class school. This had disastrous consequences for one girl, Belinda whose story speaks of these processes of othering and abjection. Tom, Francesa and Rachel all talked about a significant event in the story of their groups' friendship: that of Belinda's painful rejection from peer groups in the

[29] http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=neek accessed 19th September 2012.

school, which manifested in her school refusal; a rumoured eating disorder; and eventual removal from school by her parents and reinstatement in a girls' private school. As discussed in Chapter Four, the mixed ability teaching in the school meant the White middle class students, who were in a minority, did not necessarily encounter each other as they later did when they found themselves together in the top ability group. Belinda's friends I interviewed all talked about how-isolated from the other White middle class students- she did not make friends in her class, and there were insinuations of bullying. Rachel said Belinda 'kind of' had a 'break down' and 'looking back' she was 'probably depressed'. Following on from her story about her own negative social experiences Rachel went on to say:

> *Then Belinda...I think she was quite badly bullied. We didn't really know what happened, as we didn't really see her that much, apart from lunch and break time. But I remember like she would refuse to go to school, like point blank refuse, and I remember she used to be sick after every meal. It wasn't that ... she didn't have bulimia or whatever, she was just like she couldn't eat. She got really, really stressed and her parents moved her.*

Belinda's ostracism was so acute it had physical repercussions on her health, which had gendered manifestations. The Neek can be viewed as a feminised position: someone who cannot protect themselves against a physical threat. This construction of Neek, can also be read as a middle class position in its alignment with educational success- someone who is 'book smart' rather than 'street smart', as Carl put it. Moreover, the Neek- who is not streetwise- is an implicitly White subject who fears the (Black) 'mugger'. Belinda embodied this weak, White middle class feminised subject. As Mendick argues 'there are discourses that render these [white middle class] bodies legitimate and legible' (2012).

As I discussed in chapter five (5.1.2), Tom was able to 'survive' amongst the mass of working class boys at Stellar Academy through performances of (working class) masculinity through sport. Thus, the Neek boys were able to avoid some of the injuries of the label and accrue some (sub)cultural capital through sport affiliations. Further, I argue, the boys in some ways, were more able to perform the effortless (/hidden) academic achievement, more readily tolerated in the masculine (Bradford & Hey, 2007), and which confers some subcultural status. However, the girls, like Belinda (more readily citing discourses of application and effort (Bradford & Hey, 2007), could not call upon these subcultural resources in the same way and suffered from being 'Othered'.

Francesca also talked about not making friends very easily to start with and being called 'posh'. She confessed: 'I was quite uptight'. Clearly Francesca's labelling as 'posh' denotes a conflation of social class with academic ability, but also the notion of uptight is bound up with the Swot/ Keeno

identity, of trying too hard. I also argue this -denoting over-cautiousness, anxiety and an overt self-control- is a strongly gendered, classed and raced discourse. This identity sits in opposition to the 'laid back' masculinity of the football-playing working class students at Eden Hill, and is also in stark contrast to Skeggs (2004) working class women constructed as excessive, hedonistic and out of control. 'Uptight' instead evokes the 'hysterical' middle class woman of the Victorian era panicked about losing control. Indeed, 'uptight' can also be read as a racialised position, where, as I discussed earlier, Black students are constructed as 'light hearted,' 'party lightner' and 'not too serious'. So in one small discursive move, Francesca takes on her abject label, but at the same time affirming her White middle class femininity. However, as I go on to argue, the classed and raced dynamics mean this can only be experienced as temporary abjection, as ultimately their status of privilege is not destabilised (Mendick & Francis, 2012)

6.1.2 A collective identity: status and superiority

While we find occasions of abjection, I want to complicate Francis' claim of the Neek/Boffin as pariah. I argue that strength in numbers – and practices of affirmation and protection by the school - enabled the Neeks to claim the label as a collective identity and thus take some power back. As I outlined in Chapter Four, the Neeks were part of a collective which was institutionally legitimated in the school. Further, I show how parental strategising further enabled the generation of social capital for this group. This collective, superior identity was bolstered by an Othering of lower achieving students.

Thus concurring with Mendick (2012) I argue that in this instance, pariah is not the most useful way to understand these identities. The Neeks, as White middle class subjects do have some power in their positioning, so are not straightforwardly 'abject'. At Stellar Academy, Neek is a particular classed, raced position and it accrues different value, despite the negative connotations and ensuing peer rejection in schools, it is ultimately a privileged one. Mendick (2012) in her research on Geek identities in relation to representations of mathematics geeks in the media, found overwhelming the Whiteness, middle classness and maleness of the geek positions in pop culture. In line with Mendick, I argue that we cannot ignore the cultural capital and hence advantage this provides. Indeed, as I showed in Chapter Four, the Neeks are able to accrue some institutionalised cultural capital as a 'special' group of high achieving students bound for Oxbridge. In this context, their Whiteness and middle classness renders them intelligible subjects for grooming for elite universities.

The Neeks at Stellar Academy accrued social capital, in the form of a peer group of like minded, hardworking high achievers (at least from year 9 when they became friends), which protected

them from the abjection of the label 'Neek', and Belinda's experiences. Furthermore, as I showed in Chapter Four, this social capital was institutionalised in the academic streaming in the sixth form and further institutionally legitimated in staff's narratives. Tom at Stellar Academy protested, 'I don't want to appear exclusive or anything' but admitted his group did tend to consist of the White middle class high achieving students in the sixth form. As we learnt in Part Two (chapters three and four), despite a number of the group leaving the school throughout the years, they had maintained a close friendship network across different schools. This enhanced their social capital as it gave them access to networks in higher attaining state and private schools.

As well as being institutionally legitimated, this social capital was something that was carefully orchestrated by their parents. The careful management of their children's friendships (and hence social capital), that Reay and colleagues (2011) identify in our research on the middle classes, was occurring even before the 'Neeks' began their schooling at Stellar Academy. Rachel told me how they all knew each other 'vaguely' before joining the school. Indeed, their parents 'socialised together', having met at a local baby group and been involved in the campaigns for the school. Several of the Neeks went to the same primary school; several were childhood neighbours, and two of the girls now work together in the same Delicatessen. Interviews with students from this group revealed that their parents have similar left-leaning professional lifestyles- Tom's dad (Chair of Governors) is a novelist and a 'big Labour guy'; Dylan's dad is a councillor (and both knew each other through the Labour party); and Belinda's dad is a public sector director. In an open display of the social capital operative in the school an early newspaper report about the school chose to celebrate that 'parents include an award-winning film producer, architects, journalists and a best-selling novelist' (Anon 2004).

A specific event- the 'rounders match'- signalled the initiation of this social capital formation. Rachel revealed that in the summer before they started secondary school, Tom's dad organised a rounders match for this network of children in the local park. They were all 'interconnected' prior to this, as Rachel put it, but this rounders match, we could read, introduced the complete network to each other, solidifying their connections. Given the anxiety detailed in chapter four (section 2) about 'too many' lower ability minority ethnic and working class children at Stellar Academy, this act of organising a rounders match can be seen to be a move which resources these children-enabling them to meet each other, so when they start school they can recognise each other- others like them (Ball, 2003; Byrne, 2006a). These social networks are a resource which is convertible into symbolic capital because of the access to professional and lifestyle resources within these families.

The Neeks were further able to accrue status through a subtle collective process of othering lower achieving students. In Hey's (1997) ethnography, middle class girls patterned themselves according to differences of 'ability' and 'cleverness', which distinguished them from other lower achieving working class students in the urban school. Such othering process has been identified in others research in socially mixed schools (Francis, 2009; Youdell, 2006a). Very similar to the White middle class 'All Star' girls in Hey's (1997: 106) research, who located themselves through processes of judging others, Francis (2009) found 'Boffins' constructed a clear binary of 'us' and 'them' between those in the top and lower ability groups. Boffins rejected their label given to them, constructing the other students as 'just jealous'. Francis' Boffins delighted in the retribution that such students would not find the same success as them. Francis claimed:

> *[Boffin's] conformity to the institution and academic achievement facilitate[d] the mobilisation of particular socially classed moral discourses around the work ethic and deferred pleasure that may confer a sense of superiority (2009, p. 665).*

Similarly in Hey's research she identified how White middle class girls positioned White working class girls as 'immature for focusing on their friendships, and themselves as sensible for focusing on their studies (1997, p. 79). In my research Rachel's narrative involved a similar othering, which positioned the Neeks as superior and likely to confer greater educational success. She claimed: '*we* [the Neeks] understood that school was there to learn and the others just didn't.'

Due to the concentration of working class and minority ethnic students in the lower streams, this othering has classed and racialised implications. Indeed, experiences at Stellar Academy were remarkably similar to the multi-ethnic urban school in Francis and colleagues' research, in which, Black and minority ethnic students who engaged in the 'gangster' aesthetic and resistant behaviour, were referred to as 'bad breeds' (Francis, 2009, p. 661) and were smugly written off by the Boffins as unlikely to succeed in life. Indeed, implicit in Rachel's free association (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000) was that the 'we' referred to her group of White middle class students, which othered the Black and working class students.

Rachel sets up the Neeks as a victimised, isolated group- who became 'frustrated' when they realised that they were 'missing out' on learning. This puts them in opposition to (but more importantly superior to) the 'unruly mass' (Reay, 2007) of Black working class students, who at best did not realise they were missing out on learning, or at worst did not care (see Hollingworth et al., 2010). Similarly, in Youdell's (2006a) work, the (White middle class) 'dirty hippies' constituted their selves as marginal Other but she argues, by defining what they are not, inadvertently exposes institutional and social privilege- a privilege that rests upon Whiteness and

middle classness. Thus, the Neeks alignment with middle class discourses of educational success accrues value in the institutional context of the school.

6.1.3 The accrual of symbolic value through cultural practices of middle class taste

This consolidation of social capital (strength in numbers) enabled the Neeks to form a protected subculture, in which they were able to develop symbolic capital specific to the group. While this was a kind of 'geek' capital, this was a particular *legitimated* (White) middle class capital in the symbolic economy. Sayer (2005b) argues that the fragile middle classes- no longer protected by economic capital- are driven to undertake heightened boundary work through culture and taste. A growing body of research reveals how processes of middle class distinction-making are operating in diverse fields. In Hey's research in an urban school in the 1990s, the group of White middle class girls' (the Allstars) poise was predicated on affluence and classed patterns of leisure, aspiration and inconspicuous consumption. She noted that all the girls had substantial clothes allowances, were good skiers, were fluent in another language (1997, p. 105), all of which operated as markers of distinction. Keane's (2011) research on friendships at University, for example, reveals that in the more mixed Widening Participation context, the need for middle class students to defend their status is heightened, achieved through various socio-cultural practices of distinction in friendship groups. Research on the middle classes and gentrification theorises a specific 'metropolitan habitus' of the urban middle classes which reinforces lifestyle boundaries between us and them in the urban context (Butler, 2007; Webber, 2007), and author such as Allen and Mendick (2012, 2013) and Friedman (2011) show how new distinction practices are operating in young people's consumption of popular culture such as comedy and celebrity. The Neeks practices provide a good example of this classed boundary work, located in their tenuous position in the urban school. I go on to argue that the mixing that occurs through distinction-making is superficial and is one which merely reinforces separation, but nevertheless still leads to cultural capital accumulation on the part of the Neeks.

A 'shared articulation' of Neek (Mendick & Francis, 2012) was evident in my data which was in part done through expression of similar interests and hobbies, but also academic school subjects. They spent time in school together -all being in the same tutor class and sharing History lessons together- and they also spent time together outside of school at the pub; at 'gigs'; or at Tom's house (his house, in the gentrified part of the area, was 'pretty big' and his parents were often out). Discussions centred around the group having 'a lot in common', 'culturally' and in terms of 'tastes'. As well as highlighting shared views and beliefs-left wing politics and atheism, they

elaborated shared interests in books, and TV shows like *the Wire* and *Curb your enthusiasm* (the latter of which also exemplified their shared sense of humour). Tom revealed that this 'bookishness' had them known collectively as the 'group who talk about books and things'.

Like Geeks in Mendick's analysis, the Neeks displayed some fixation with particular 'square' hobbies such as reading and books; a shared interest in history and Party politics and a politicised position on organised religion. This was a 'shared articulation' ('we have a lot in common') which buffered them from the 'parvenu' (Francis, 2009) of the rest of the school, but also enabled a form of distinction, in Bourdieusian terms (1984). Indeed, while this conferred them symbolic or (sub)cultural capital within the group through a shared articulation of taste, these particular manifestations of their 'Neek' identity, are classed performances, accruing them some cultural capital within the institutional educational context and the wider classed field. A liking for reading and books and a critique of organised religion are a middle class enculturation not available to all. Furthermore, it is precisely these capitals that will have value, and can be exchanged, in University applications and interviews (see Burke & McManus, 2009 for a discussion of this) as students that know how to 'tell themselves' in the right way (Skeggs, 2004). Youdell argues in relation to the middle class subcultural group in her research, the 'dirty hippies':

> *This turn to subculture cannot overwrite the respective privilege and disadvantage embedded in them: in the classroom, the GCSE examination, the further and higher education market places, and ultimately, in the employment market, it is the dirty hippies- the White middle class high attaining and positively educationally orientated pupils -who score highly for Bourdieu's social, cultural, symbolic and linguistic capital (Youdell, 2006a, pp. 141-142)*

In taste for 'cult' (but 'cultured') esoteric TV programmes such as US drama series, *the Wire*, a show about the US drug trade, and US comedy show, *Curb your Enthusiasm,* we can see how this cultural capital was not only limited to traditional, institutionalised forms of cultural capital but through new practices of popular cultural distinction (Allen & Mendick, 2012, 2013). Friedman's (2011) research draws attention to how British comedy is now being mobilised by the culturally privileged as an instrument of distinction. Comedy, he demonstrates, now represents an emerging field for the culturally privileged to activate their cultural capital:

> *Those who have assembled high cultural capital resources via socialisation, education and occupation are activating these reserves through distinct modes of comic consumption (ibid p367)*

Following Friedman's work, the Neeks resemble an 'interpretative community' which share a common aesthetic style in their reading of comedy (2011, p. 359): an 'in-crowd of comedy nerds'

(ibid). Friedman found those displaying high cultural capital tended to rate comedy beyond simply laughter: 'clever' comedy which displayed socio-cultural critiques, often bound up with a distinctly liberal and secular world view (ibid). Thus, in this framework, unlike the everyday, light-hearted, 'feel good' humour of the Football crowd, taste for *Curb Your Enthusiasm* can be construed as a 'higher, purer, more disinterested plain of aesthetic perception' (ibid p360), thus constructed as fundamentally more 'high brow'; moreover, a taste legitimated by the wider middle class community.

Furthermore, another capital that may increasingly stand them in good stead in University applications is a certain 'multicultural capital' (Reay et al., 2011). This group of students very much embodied the metropolitan habitus (Butler, 2007; Webber, 2007) of the urban White middle class families in Reay and colleagues (2011) work, who, choosing 'against the grain' and made 'counter-intuitive' school choices by sending their child to the local comprehensive. Reay and colleagues argue that such White middle class young people, in their experience of the multi-ethnic, socially mixed comprehensive, are able to accrue a 'multicultural' capital through their access to the multi-ethnic Other (Reay et al., 2011; Reay et al., 2007). Indeed, in my research, Tom's father's narrative closely echoes these parents. In an online blog, Tom's father claimed:

> *'My kids rubbed along with classmates of all races and classes. They know the other people in their community, they are not frightened when they walk down the high street after dark, they have gained an understanding of how society works.'*[30]

Mocking other parents who send their children to private school, who are 'frightened of hoodies'[31] he argued 'they will be liberated from that crippling fear of people who aren't like them.'[32] Evident in these statements is precisely the sentiment found amongst parents in Reay and colleagues work that urban comprehensive education is a more authentic experience of inner-city life 'keeping my kids real' (2007). However, we can also see that this is a distancing one, which also includes processes of othering. 'Other people' in the community, 'people who aren't like them' are by default something to fear (but nevertheless a fear that these young people have been able to overcome). Ironically, their labeling as Neek by their urban school peers, subtly re-incites their failure to embody and perform 'streetwise'.

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[30] http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012//anon , accessed 19th September 2012

[31] ibid

[32] http://www.booksanon.co.uk/anon accessed 19th Sept 2012

Reay and colleagues further argue that such White middle class students display a 'cultural omnivorousness' (Reay et al., 2011, p. 88): an eclectic mix of multi-cultural and socially diverse tastes. This omnivorousness however is part of a middle class colonisation and accrual which further embeds middle class privilege. Indeed, in addition to his academic success, Tom's father takes pride in his son's 'fluency in African Caribbean swear words'[33]. However, as the term omnivorousness implies, this is something that is consumed and used up in the process. The Neeks' socially and ethnically homogenous friendship group failed to give them meaningful engagement with their classed and ethnic other. Instead we see a cultural appropriation, where knowledge of African Caribbean slang is a capital accrued from proximity to the Black other, without any need for genuine friendship. This is Skeggs' (2004) middle class 'appropriation of urban Black cool' in operation. Indeed, the Neeks' investment in the US urban crime drama *The Wire*, based on the inner workings of the illegal drugs trade in Baltimore, can similarly be viewed as an appropriation of 'Black cool', but from a distance via popular cultural consumption. In Youdell's research she argued that the White middle class 'dirty hippies' display cultural eclecticism which on the surface is racially inclusive 'yet it appears the sort of expropriation of minority ethnic cultural forms that has been, and remains, constitutive and indicative of the operations of Whiteness' (Youdell, 2006a, p. 140). Thus the Neeks knowledge of African Caribbean swear words and the illegal drugs trade in Baltimore comes to be a way in which they know 'the Other' and position them as abject, while at the same time be able to distance themselves as superior. Consumption of Blackness via the Wire does not mean they mix with Black students.

Furthermore this consumption or expropriation of minority ethnic culture 'from a distance' can be seen to essentialise the racial and cultural other. In Youdell's (2006a) work, she found the 'dirty hippies' ascribed to the 'Shazas and Bazas' a particular narrow set of 'mainstreamed', 'Black' fashion and music styles, which did not do justice to the diversity of cultural tastes within that subculture. In the same way, at both Stellar Academy and Eden Hill school, a certain White middle class imposition of, and simultaneous disidentification with, rap music came to epitomise the 'constitutive limit' (2004) and fix the minority ethnic other in place, and outside their friendship group. Tom's explanation as to why he didn't have any Black friends revealed precisely the workings of White middle class distinction: that he wanted to be friends with someone 'who wants to talk about what I want to talk about and not talk about something like rap music'. Thus, omnivorousness had its limit as distinctions drew a line between certain acceptable popular cultural forms (Friedman, 2011). Following Foucault, Skeggs argues:

[33] http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/anon , accessed 19th September 2012

> *Particular discourses and technologies make classed selves, not just through productive constitution [...], but also through process of exclusion. By establishing constitutive limits, and by fixing attributes to particular bodies (Skeggs, 2004, p. 6)*

This identification of 'rap' music, is thus fixed to Black and minority ethnic bodies, and comes to be a yard stick against which culture is held and the White middle classes come to know their refined tastes, but more importantly claim their place. The Neeks are 'enlightened eclectics' (Friedman, 2011, p. 351) employing a distinctly enlightened aesthetic lens to all cultural consumption- as their taste for 'low cultural forms' such as African Caribbean swear words are worn differently- prosthetically (Skeggs, 2004) on White middle class bodies.

The Geek/Boffin identity also confers racist stereotypes in its exclusion. As I discuss in more detail in Chapter Seven, the Neek identity makes intelligible some East Asian/ Chinese identities, but as Mendick (2012) points out 'the tendency to exclude Black- especially African Caribbeans and African Americans- from the Boffin subject position operates a conversely racist positioning via which Black bodies are constructed as too 'cool' and/or too resistant and/or insufficiently intelligent to fit the label'.

What I have argued in this section then is that the Neeks- despite experiencing some initial social isolation- are by the sixth form, not abject, but engaged in performances of Whiteness and middle class distinction which accrue them legitimated social and cultural capital in Stellar Academy and arguably beyond. While the Neek constitutes a feminised subject position, the Smokers' performances at Eden Hill School enable some claims to a hegemonic masculinity which enabled them to accrue a (sub)cultural capital within a multi-ethnic working class peer group, but also revealed more subtle processes of validation of legitimated cultural capital. It is to the Smokers that I now turn.

6.2 The Smokers: the ideal cosmopolitan neoliberal subcultural identity

Eden Hill school featured a fairly large group of predominantly White middle class, mainly boys, who could be seen in a large group smoking outside the school gates. These students were deemed high achieving. However, in contrast to the Neeks at Stellar Academy, the Smokers at Eden Hill School conferred rather more status amongst their multi-ethnic working class peers. As Damian, a Black working class young man said –'I call them the cool group'. Using Youdell's work, I show how the Smokers constitute class and racial privilege:

> *Discourses of sub-cultural difference is deployed [...] in a way that deflects pro-school, White middle class identifications and constitutes subcultural cool at the same time as it masks and constitutes class, race and learner privilege (Youdell, 2006a, p. 137).*

At the same time this subcultural cool masks gendered hierarchies. As I have shown with the Football crowd, gender was an implicit principle of group formation. Girls could belong to this group but it is the presence and practices of boys which legitimised what the stakes (forms of capital) were. In the thirty to forty years since the Birmingham school's attention to gender and subculture (McRobbie, 1991), and while social class theorisation is in desperate need of updating, the gender dynamics of subculture do not appear to have shifted greatly. Girls here still appeared to be marginal and thus with less power.

I argue that key to understanding the hegemony of this White middle class group of boys are cultural practices, but specifically about performing the right kind of balancing act. Using Francis and colleagues' (2010) research on high achieving but popular students, I stress the importance of 'balance' in order to accomplish both high achievement and popularity: balancing academic hard work and an outward display of sociability. Indeed, there were three key elements to the Smokers' groups' success/ status which enabled them to perform this 'balancing act': overt performances of rebelliousness; a projection of academic achievement as effortless; and a particular attention to an embodied aesthetics, which conferred them subcultural status. I argue that like the high achieving popular students, integral to this was the performance of normative gendered, but also raced and classed identities. The Smokers' classed and raced performances and positionality conferred them a balance between high achievement and popularity but also conferred a balance between subcultual capital and legitimated cultural capital from the school, which were mutually reinforcing. I further argue that this subject position is allied to a new cosmopolitan neoliberal subject, one who accrues significant value in the cultural and knowledge economy.

6.2.1 Overt performances of rebelliousness

Among the Smokers, was visible an element of the 'laddish,' anti- school, rebellious identity, based on 'performances of rebellion, irresponsibility and hedonism' (Francis, 2009, p. 646). However this did not bring them in conflict with school, and did not threaten their academic success. I argue that the way in which the Smokers performed rebelliousness was a particular White, middle class masculinity, that in fact, not only underpins the ideal student/learner (Youdell, 2006; Gillborn, 1990), but also the ideal neoliberal subject.

Francis and colleagues' research found high achieving popular students displayed 'rebellious confidence and low level resistance' in the context of classroom interactions (2010). However, for

the Smokers, rebelliousness manifested in extra-curricular behaviour, which might be considered a 'distraction' for them to 'focus' on their school work (Bradford & Hey, 2007). The central activity, which defined the group: smoking outside the school gates, epitomised their rebellious behaviour. As Nathaniel alluded: 'you never see them in school -they come for the lessons then they go out and smoke'. Cullen's (2010) research draws attention to the classed, raced and gendered nature of smoking in school and how it is associated with particular youth subcultures. Smoking in this context, she argues, is simultaneously about reciprocal webs of exchange amongst friends, and the about style, pleasure and popularity. She highlights how the very act of smoking is short hand for rebellious youth, and I would argue, an overt performance of rebelliousness that the Black students- always already read as rebellious/deviant- do not need to perform. Smoking, in its multi-faceted symbolism of trampy or sophisticated, pleasurable but unhealthy (Cullen, 2010), are ways of these students performing this balance between cool/rebellious and studious/good student.

As an extension of this rebelliousness in school, the Smokers were said to go to late night parties, 'raves', listen to Drum and Bass and Grime music, and take recreational drugs. Cherry (mixed race middle class) even referred to them as 'the druggies'. These activities (drinking, smoking and taking drugs) were a key 'focal concern' of the group and played out at an 'occasion of social interaction' (Clarke et al., 1981): 'the party'.

This rebellious identity was both performative, and at the same time exclusive, as key to the production and maintenance of the rebellious identity was the performance of these occasions of rebellion in school. Their extra-curricular rebellious 'focal concerns' became a key source of conversation in school, which served to signal exclusion or inclusion from the group. As Damian revealed:

> *They are known to party hard and like do drugs and they'll talk about it the next day and make everyone notice all about it. But [...] they always keep into their group, if you know what I mean. They won't share it with people outside the group. Their friendship circle is very tight, and they'll only bring people in who they like ... like who they find is okay, kind of thing.*

The 'talking about it the next day and making everyone notice' is a classic example of how the classed, raced and gendered identities of the Smokers are performed in the arena of the school, and thus how they are brought into being through this performance- how they become intelligible. However, as we can see from Damian, these conversations were also boundary-making practices which shored up who was in, and who was outside of, the group.

Space is implicated in the exclusiveness of the group. Tyler talks about how the majority of people who occupy the common room would be excluded from hanging out with the Smokers outside:

> *Sometimes I hang upstairs [in the common room], but I could go outside. The majority of people who are upstairs, they don't have the selection...they don't have the ability to go outside.*

So, the Smokers' status was about control of information within the group, and membership of the group- which adds to the mystique- coupled with the rebellious/ transgressive activities.

Whilst in the figure of the 'lad' we can conceptualise this rebelliousness as gendered performance, as I suggested, the particular nature of the activities that the Smokers were involved in, I argue, are classed and raced too. Smoking, drinking, drug-taking and partying was something that the Black and minority ethnic working class students I encountered did not partake in. As Damian said- he can talk to them in school, but they have 'different interests when it comes to outside school- like partying and stuff'. Also, Tyler, who was Muslim did not drink, or 'see the attraction' of smoking. Damian and Nathanial, of Caribbean heritage positioned themselves as different to the Smokers, admitting they did not like to drink. Thus this particular rebelliousness was exclusive and not available to these students.

Nayak (2003, 2006), through his research with working class young men, charts how 'going out' practices can be read as particular classed negotiations of masculinity in the contemporary. With the Smokers we can see how social class structures such cultural practices outside school through access to the requisite material and social resources. Holding a house party requires a house, something much more common amongst the middle class students (most of the minority ethnic and working class students lived in council flats); it further requires parents who go away with some frequency (for example on holiday or for business) again something discussed by the middle class students. Further such partying requires a degree of economic resources (in the form of money for recreational drug use, smoking, and indeed in some instances discussed, hiring venues for parties). The classed and raced nature of these seemingly neutral leisure activities thus served to reinforce boundaries of the subcultural group which not only elevated their status (as 'untouchable') but reduced the opportunities for mixing.

6.2.2 Performances of effortless achievement

These overt performances of rebelliousness were coupled with a down-playing of academic studiousness, despite their high 'ability'. A key characteristic, assigned to the Smokers group, like Francis and colleagues' high achieving popular students, was that while maintaining a rebellious character, they projected a 'confident even arrogant [...] intellect' (Francis et al., 2010, p. 238).

Indeed, various research has found that this 'effortless achievement' has profoundly masculine associations (Bradford & Hey, 2007; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Mendick, 2006). Other authors have argued that this is particular *middle class* performance of masculinity, in the context of the school setting (Martino, 1999; Power et al., 2003). Described by Tyler as 'very smart', the Smokers were able to combine effortless educational success with a cool sociability and rebelliousness. Damian illustrated:

> *They are going out and partying and stuff, yeah, but they work hard and they play hard, if you know what I mean. So they will work hard in school, kind of thing, and in class, but they'll still do the kind of social ... but the majority of them will come out with good grades and stuff, but they are known to party hard.*

Central to Damian's comments is this idea of 'balance' encapsulated in the expression 'work hard and play hard': they'll work hard in school but 'still do the social'. Like Francis and colleagues' high achieving popular students, and other research findings on middle class boys' achievement, the Smokers appeared to have an insouciance and come across as blasé about their studies. As such, their academicness comes across as a natural, rather than achieved through hard work (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). Damian describes them as 'confident' and Tyler claimed:

> *They pretty much don't let the trouble of school affect them too much. They are the ones of those kids who like it doesn't make a difference. They are smart. Like the majority of those are super smart, but it's like they can't be bothered. But if they wanted to [...] if it came to the point where they have to do it, they become so diligent. They become so super smart [...] You could hang out with the person for like a day and they could be smoking and jamming, doing nothing, but when they go to school they have like fifteen answers in front of you.*

As Tyler proclaims the Smokers appear 'untroubled' and not 'bothered' – not trying too hard with their schoolwork. Being too overtly hard working risks construction as a Boffin (Francis et al., 2010), thus, as we can see in Tyler's comment, their 'effort' is covert or private. They appear to be socialising- hanging out and 'jamming'- but when they return to school they have completed their homework. While the 'lad' identity invokes 'semi-biologistic and behaviourist notions about the historic male propensity for distraction', central to the lad identity is a failure to be 'focused' (Bradford & Hey, 2007, p. 602). However, the Smokers are able to maintain the right balance and remain focused– not too distracted by their social life.

We can see from Damian and Tyler's comments the Smokers convey a sense of an effortless academic 'ability' that doesn't get in the way of their ability to socialise and 'party.' Effort is not required to do well at school, it appears to come 'naturally'. We see an outward detachment to the symbolic/cultural order of the school system, but inner motivation and drive towards

academic goals: an embodied habitus which can be activated when required, when it is necessary to perform. They are not slackers, they know intimately how to play the academic game, appear to consider themselves superior (Mac an Ghaill, 1994) and self-consciously know how to play that game. As Francis and colleagues (2010) suggests: they are highly aware of their high achievement- but maintain a balance with their social lives, in order to maintain some social status in the school.

Various authors have shown how it is precisely this constellation of characteristics, and performances of masculinity in particular, that make up the 'good student' or the 'ideal learner' (Francis et al., 2010, p. 335; Youdell, 2006a, p. 27). Various authors have written about the embodiment of the 'ideal learner,' as a particularly White middle class, able-bodied subject (Ruddick 1996; Leathwood, 2006; Youell, 2006; Archer, 2005). The ideal learner is characterised by independence, autonomy, freedom and seen to be questioning, active, mature, responsible, assertive, taking initiative (Archer, 2005; Leathwood, 2006). Leathwood (2006) has traced how independence and autonomy are important –but socially constructed- concepts which historically in western philosophical traditions, are the preserve of white middle class men, and have come to define the archetypal economic man. I would like to update this conceptualisation to argue that the balancing act of the independent, autonomous, responsible- yet assertive, rebellious and risk-taking subject, is the ideal neoliberal subject desired for work in 'new times' (McDowell, 2012) and in the cultural and knowledge economy (Allen, 2008; Allen and Hollingworth, 2013). However, we know these ways of being work for those always-already shaped by these forms of personhood that these practices seek to produce (i.e. White middle class men) (Leathwood, 2006).

6.2.3 An embodied aesthetics: the preppy hipster

The performance of the ideal neo-liberal learner was reinforced by a particular aesthetic, which cited a distinct Whiteness and middle class masculinity, but also a cosmopolitan one. Unlike the Neeks whose style was plain and indiscernible, the Smokers group at Eden Hill school were perhaps the group whose style most clearly set them apart as a clearly distinguishable subculture. My early field notes are revealing about the significant presence of this group:

> *I had [...] noticed the groups of sixth formers smoking out the front whenever I arrived. I remember thinking there are a lot of seemingly White middle classes at the school (more than I expected). You might guess they made up a large percentage from standing at the school gate (mainly boys actually). I am guessing class from how they look, but somehow I feel you can tell. They tended to dress quite what we would call in my day, indie/ alternative. However, in my school, they [the alternative /indie types]*

were less of a majority. But there was something about haircuts and even facially, they looked like 'posh' kids. Can't pin point it really. (15/3/2010)

The Smokers subculture maintained a particular 'alternative' fashion style, which was notable to other students, and indeed notable to me as a researcher, as my fieldnotes show. Like Francis and colleagues found, 'embodied aesthetic aspects such as 'good looks' and fashionability appeared important elements' (Francis et al., 2010, p. 324) in status accrual. Like the middle class students in Keane's (2011) research these students stood out through their highly groomed appearance, and like the middle class 'Allstars' in Hey's (1997) ethnography, their style conferred a conspicuous consumption. In my field notes I recorded their style as 'indie/alternative,' but one that was fairly subtle. Boys tended to wear skinny or straight cut jeans; branded trainers (Converse canvas boots and skateboard trainers such as Etnies or Duffs); t-shirts and Oxford or checked shirts; or a t-shirt and cardigan; hair was worn longer than the collar; floppy and often cut asymmetrically. The cardigans; tight as opposed to baggy jeans; and the haircuts brought a more 'preppy' look to the grunge or skateboard styles of the 1990s, a look that confers the 'hipster'. Girls associated with the group often wore short skirts; tights; Doctor Marten or Converse boots or ballet flats; tops or vests revealing shoulders and bra straps; dark eye makeup; obvious jewellery, but the popularity of floral prints again brought a slightly 'preppy' feel to them.

In line with the Birmingham school, I would argue this style is not accidental. As Clarke et al (1981) assert, commodities are 'cultural signs' with meanings, associations and social connotations. These students echo elements of both the hipster and the preppy look, which are both White middle class subcultural styles. The hipster has its roots in 1950s/1960s bohemian, alternative middle class subculture, while the preppy look derives from upper middle class US preparatory (private) school teenagers, and is associated with the elite Ivy League universities. Thus, I argue, these are specific manifestations of a middle class habitus. Unlike my research on working class articulations of style in an urban school, where minority ethnic working class students' style comes into conflict with school (Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007a; Archer, Hollingworth, et al., 2007), the preppy, hipster look is permissible as it does not suggest opposition to school and middle class values. It is far from the 'gangster' style read onto Black working class youth, epitomised in the 'hoody' (Archer et al, 2010). It is not overtly hypersexualised, or 'crass' like the minority ethnic working class 'Kazzies' in Nilan's (1992) research but subtle. The preppy look, combined with the grungy skater 'rougher' look, again maintains a balance- it is not too preppy to be too 'posh' or 'square' but not too 'grungy' to be untidy and ruin the schools reputation. Furthermore, the preppy look combined with elements of grunge and hipster is carried off as ironic parody (Hebdige, 1988) in the context of the working class multi-ethnic urban school, in a way that 'pure'

preppyness might be mocked as Neek. This cosmopolitan amalgam of international 'gritty' urban and middle class styles confers a certain cool.

While members of the Smokers group may be objectively middle class, I argue, the adoption and performance of these particular styles is a classed and raced process. By incorporating the hipster and the preppy look, these styles adopted by the Smokers are 'simultaneously drawing upon and reproducing a historical consolidation of previous acts' (Holt, 2008, p. 237). Indeed as Skeggs argues 'only already visually evaluated body parts, practices or culture can be used as a resource in the process of self making.' (Skeggs, 2004, p. 157). Youdell cogently observes, when writing about White middle class 'dirty hippies' of her study:

> *Students are citing names that circulate in discourses reaching far beyond the specific context of the school, and whose historicity, lends them their performative force. The names at stake here have the potential to constitute the student population in very particular ways (Youdell, 2006a, p. 138).*

These discourses have currency beyond the context of the school and carry with them different classed, raced and gendered connotations. Variants of this style have been cited in research across Western capitalist countries. Perry's (2001a) research in US high schools cites how the 'alternatives', 'hippies' and 'punks' were White groups; Greif and colleagues (2010) research on the New York hipster positions this as a particular middle class style. Youdell's (2006) research in London reveals the 'hippies' to be the White middle class subculture, and Nilan's (1992) research in Australia found a group of wealthy girls from a bohemian part of town (referred to as the Double Bay Trendies) adopting a 'preppy' /'Sloane Ranger' style which she argued echoed the style of American college girls or London 'yuppies': the upper middle classes. The Smokers followed particular alternative/ indie music interests, which are associated with the history of these styles, but also a more contemporary cosmopolitan urban-inflected hipster middle class interest in drum and bass and grime music. Thus the subcultural style of the Smokers is read and tacitly understood by others as a classed style, associated with elite and privileged cultural practices and tastes, but with an urban inflection that has currency in the field. For example, Tristan (from the Football crowd) immediately identifies this group through their dress – he recognises that their economic capital cannot be easily read off their visual style- as referencing the hipster, and the bohemian- they dress 'like tramps' despite having more money than most people in the Football crowd. There is something here about the effortlessness in appearance, the performances of not trying too hard. The middle classes do not have to worry about looking too scruffy, as they have other forms of cultural capital. In contrast the working classes are much more invested in performances respectability (Martin, 2009; Skeggs, 1997). And it is outwardly

displaying this investment that gets read by the middle class as crass and tasteless (Kim Allen & Mendick, 2012; Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007b; Hollingworth et al., 2008).

What is key is the 'centrality of the body in productions of gendered [classed and raced] subjectivity, and in facilitating balance between popularity and academic achievement' (Francis et al., 2010, p. 335). Further, I argue, because of this historical signification, some styles can be carried off by some bodies more than others. The adoption of the preppy or hipster look can better be carried off on White bodies. As my field notes included earlier suggest, class can be read on the body in a way that is tacit and obscured ('I am guessing,' 'I can't pin point'). This hipster/ preppy style relies on a particular aetheticisation of the body. As Skeggs argues: 'some people have no choice about visibility. Black women and men for instance are always read through highly visible systems of colour coding.' Ahmed (1998b) notes that for most Black women and men, skin is seen as 'a stained physical 'reality' that cannot be transformed or contained. Visibility is produced through a process of materialisation that constitutes the 'matter' of bodies.' (cited in Skeggs, 2004, p. 156). I argue that this look is a White middle class look that cannot so easily be carried off- or is read very differently- on Black bodies (Puwar, 2004).

6.2.4 Legitimated, embodied cultural capital

So far I have shown how integral to the Smokers subculture is a certain rebelliousness but this is stabilised by an effortless academic achievement and a middle class aesthetic which confers them the easy readability of White, middle class masculinity. I argue that, for the Smokers, it is not only that they choose to dress in this way; to smoke; to party (and to be effortlessly high achieving) but it is these acts which make them intelligible as White middle class boys. Whiteness and middle classness (and the way in which their practices cite this) and thus the capitals this accrues, are central to the success of the Smokers crowd in the school. Francis and colleagues argue that 'pupils overall construction, achieving 'balance' between resistance to schooling and engagement of the teacher, is crucial, both in the production of behaviour, but also in how the behaviour is *read* by teachers and peers' (Francis et al., 2010, p. 333 my emphasis). Thus the Smokers' balance between rebelliousness and effortless achievement as performance of White middle class masculinity confers them a cultural capital in the way it is *read* differently by staff to that of the Black working class Football crowd, for example. Furthermore, this was a much more subtle accrual and legitimation of cultural capital than the overt 'specialling' of the Neeks. I demonstrate this process of inscription and legitimation with a specific example by which their embodied aesthetics, read as middle class, enabled their rebellious (even 'illegal') behaviour to be overlooked in the institutional context of the school.

The bus stop incident: setting the scene

The Smokers were marginal-spending time on the peripheries of the school- but at the same time were highly visible, as they congregated on the driveway leading up to the school gates, in full view of the public. They were not 'round the back of bike sheds', but at the front entrance- highly visible to passersby and the first thing that visitors were met with. Their presence here, 'illegally' smoking, appeared to have been turned a blind eye to by the school authorities. However, simultaneously, predominantly young Black boys congregating at the bus stop a few hundred yards down the road had become the focus of the school authorities' concern. My attendance at a school council meeting recorded: *Item 5: Mugging and fighting outside school,* in which school council reps voiced concern about potential complaints from local residents about the behaviour of younger students at the bus the stop. While this was, as yet, an imagined threat, the decision was taken to police these students' behaviour outside the school gates by way of uniformed behaviour officers.

The differential legitimation of rebellious behaviour

We can begin to see here a picture of how certain groups are legitimated and certain groups are 'policed.' This raises questions of which bodies can belong where in rebelliousness (Cullen, 2010)– where the White middle classes are essentially allowed to rebel in this space while others are not tolerated. Skeggs argues that we need to ask what systems of exchange lead to some characteristics being read as good, bad, worthy or unworthy? Thus, how is value attributed, accrued, institutionalised and lost in the exchange? And how is this value both moral and economic? (Skeggs, 2004, p. 2). Using Skeggs' work, I argue that the predominantly White middle class students who dominate the driveway at the front of the school were tolerated because indeed they were not a 'threat' to the local community- mugging people and fighting (a space occupied in the public imagination by Black urban males). Instead, they were an asset to the school: an advert to the local (middle class) community that 'we have lots of White middle class kids in our school: it is safe to send your children here'. This unconscious, unspoken fact is tacitly absorbed by these students. The Smokers' occupation of this space gives them power, and their presence there is defiant, even arrogant. Not only are they smoking on school premises, but they are under the legal smoking age of 18. Further, not only in full view of staff, they are also in full view of the general public. I argue, however, that implicitly there is some acknowledgment that the school 'needs' them. They are unconsciously aware that they, with their Whiteness and their good grades, and their public school upbringings, are an asset to the school. We can see this level of arrogance reflected in their behaviour, read as effortlessly 'smart', cool, 'confident'. So, this is

an aspect of their symbolic power, to have their presence and experiences of doing things legitimated. Thus, this White middle class subcultural identity is attributed with value that is both moral and economic.

But what is also interesting was the level of 'self policing' going on. The mugging was an imagined threat. There had not been complaints from residents (yet). Staff were not instigating this policing either, but students themselves via the school council. This says particularly interesting things about the power dynamics in the school: which groupings were tolerated and which were not. Again, as Skeggs stresses, we need to know how these systems of inscription, exchange, valuing, institutionalisation and perspective provide the conditions of possibility for being read by others in the relationships that are formed between groups; [and] what are the effects? (Skeggs, 2004, p. 2). Introducing a school council with student representatives, gives students power to say which 'groups' are legitimate and which are not (Puwar, 2004).

6.3 Middle class rebelliousness as prosthesis

Before I conclude chapter six I want to provide a more direct comparison of the Neeks and the Smokers. Francis argues: 'the construction of the Boffin is a relational one with boundaries of acceptable behaviour in relation to academic application being drawn differently at different schools' (Francis, 2009, p. 665). In this vein, I would like to argue that the particular institutional and discursive contexts –or 'logics' (Bradford & Hey, 2007; Willis, 1997 [1977])- which produce the two different schools in my study, produce varying possibilities for different (classed, raced and gendered) subcultures to emerge. The Neeks are produced out of a particular set of circumstances. As I discussed in chapter four, the middle classes' position was highly tenuous at Stellar Academy, and this particular group of middle classes had been 'guinea pigs' for subsequent middle class school choice. The group had experienced fairly extreme anxiety about the potential for the school to deliver them a 'good' education and thus, I argue, any kind of distraction from a studious, hard working and diligent identity, and any investment in more resistant or rebellious behaviour like the Smokers, was risky. The possibilities of being educationally successful were fragile, tenuous and under threat and the 'fear of falling' (Ehrenreich, 1989) too great a possibility.

Indeed, we can extend our understanding by looking at the situation of the 'bad posh group', at Stellar Academy, many of whom had now left for higher status sixth forms. In many ways this group could be seen to be a parallel group to the Smokers. We can see the rebellious group of Smokers at Eden Hill School with their insouciance, are able to experiment to 'try on' this

rebelliousness - what Skeggs refers to as prosthesis (Skeggs, 2004, p. 139) in a context of 'well afforded liberalism,' as their position in the school was stable.

Skeggs (2004) argues that the prosthetic self is based on experimentation, and that the opportunity for 'self extension' comes from choosing and putting on parts (prosthesis), which is, in many ways, dramatic: an act. But who can extend, and how far, becomes a central issue, and this becomes a balancing act:

> *The prosthetic self must know which practices, knowledge and objects to strategise about and play with. As a model it is reliant on exchange-value but is less corporeal and accumulative as the body attaches and detaches its prosthesis rather than storing it in or on the body as self-value (Skeggs, 2004, p.139).*

Thus the rebellious behaviour (drugs, drinking, parties) enacted by the Smokers and the 'bad posh group' is a temporary practice that they are able to play with. This practice is a form of (sub)cultural capital which has exchange value in the context of the working class urban school, but is necessarily prosthetic rather than inscribed on the body, as circumstances dictate when it must be abandoned. Concerned with the instability of their class position- brought about by being in an urban state school experiencing poor standards- for the Neeks the possibilities for experimenting with rebelliousness was much more of a risk and therefore not a strategy they played with. Their appropriation of subcultural cool is thus restricted to their consumption of urban cool, from a distance, via popular culture. Those rebellious middle class students at Stellar Academy (the 'bad posh group') are able to continue with their risk taking experimental prosthesis only by leaving the 'sink' school and positioning themselves in more stable middle class environments (akin to the Smokers).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the different White middle class subcultures of Eden Hill school and Stellar Academy. I have illustrated how the Neeks' social capital, and consolidation of shared cultural tastes, protects them from an abject positioning and accrues them legitimated cultural capital in the context of Stellar Academy and the wider middle class world beyond, but is ultimately a feminised position which hampers their subcultural 'cool'. Conversely, the Smokers performances of White middle class masculinity – of rebellious aesthetics, stabilised by effortless achievement - makes them a particular subculture of hegemonic value, one which epitomises the ideal cosmopolitan neoliberal subject.

In chapters five and six, through analysis of two Black working class subcultures and two White middle class subcultures, I have illuminated the conservative forces- to classed, raced and gender normativity acting on the subcultural groups. Furthermore, I have illuminated how these different subcultural groups accrue different capitals, which are more or less validated in the context of the urban school, but moreover I have begun to demonstrate how these different embodied identities accrue more or less value, which I argue necessarily shore up boundaries of the groups and constrain opportunities for mixing. In part four (chapters seven and eight) I go on to explore the possibilities for mixing, by exploring in more detail the differing capital value embodied in these raced, classed and gendered identity positions, applying concepts of use value and exchange value.

Part 4: The located micro-politics of social mixing

Chapter 7: The exchange value self and the (im)possibilities of social mixing

Skeggs (2004) argues that the working classes begin from a different starting point where their culture is not valued, thereby limiting their culture's potential for use in the development of the subject of value who can enterprise themselves legitimately. The working classes by contrast to the middle classes, she argues, do not have the same 'approach to accrual, access to the knowledge of how to accrue effectively and access to the sites for optimising the cultural capital that they may have acquired' (Skeggs, 2004, p. 75). Indeed in the previous two chapters we have seen the potential for differently raced, classed and gendered subcultural groups to optimise their cultural capital.

The last two substantive chapters of my thesis explore the possibilities for the working classes to accrue value through mixed friendships. Drawing on the literature which explores the borders and boundaries of identity categories (Bunnell et al., 2012; Hey, 1997; Thorne, 1993; Walkerdine et al., 2001) in this chapter, I explore those who attempt to 'cross borders' into White middle class subcultures. In previous work I have explored the concept of the acceptable minority ethnic other, who is more able to accrue value in young people's friendships (Reay et al., 2007) and this chapter builds on and extends this analysis by exploring the possibilities for *who* can perform the acceptable minority ethnic other in more detail.

I use, as exemplars, three participants: Damian and Tyler (at Eden Hill school) and Lara (at Stellar Academy), to explore the 'located micro political' (Jacobs & Fincher, 1998) classed, raced and gendered practices at play in border crossing (see Appendix 7 for the friendship diagram). I show how ability to access these White middle class groups - to mix into them - relies on a complex configuration of space-time embodied relationalities and intersectionalities (Hopkins, 2012). Emphasising the fluid and processual nature of social mixing, these students' ability to mix into these groups was more or less successful, varying across different times in their school life; different spaces or 'fields' (e.g. in school or out of school); *who else* was occupying or moving into these groups and who else the young people were in terms of their multiple identities and the value of these. We can understand the workings of intersectionality in terms of exchange value within these processes: exploring the specific configurations of space-time embodied relationalities and intersectionalities that are conducive to exchange. I explore the circulation or fixedness of bodies (Kulz, 2011) in this process. What I show is that friendships across this border are characterised by 'semi-investments' on both sides, and promise only partial possibilities for

social mobility via social mixing, though limited access to academic capital and embodied Whiteness. Before I move on to discuss these three participants in detail, I want to illuminate the nature and extent of cross-border work more generally in the schools and how it is conceptualised in the young people's narratives in this study.

7.1 Boundary crossing, border work

Several students, particularly at Eden Hill school talked about the possibilities of movement between different subcultural groups. Carl, for example who distinguished the 'booksmarts' and the 'streetsmarts', recognised the fluidity of these categories and talked about how some people can be both 'book smart' and 'street smart', straddling both social and friendship groups. Tyler, a Black African working class boy at Eden Hill School, also preferred to emphasise the possibilities for border crossing, and he did this through emphasising the performative nature of these different identity-based groupings. As I touched on in chapter three (section 3.3), Tyler and other students noted the crude Black/White division in the school, but emphasised that groups were not entirely homogenous in terms of race. Tyler, talking about border-crossing students interestingly claimed: 'If you hung around with the White kids, you were a White guy. If you hung around with Black kids you were a Black guy.' Tyler's analysis implies Black and White as somewhat mobile shifting cultural signifiers that attach to different bodies (Skeggs, 2004), autonomous from (but not independent of) students 'objective' racial positionings (Griffin, 2011). As I discussed in part three (chapters five and six), and go on to elaborate in more detail in this chapter, the ability to perform classed, raced and gendered identities was to some extent agentic, but this was a severely bounded agency.

For example, Tristan (introduced in chapter five section 2.3) was a White boy of ostensibly working class positioning, but at the centre of the Black working class Football crowd. He explained how he had aligned himself with this more Black and minority ethnic crowd because in his previous school - Endbridge - he dissociated from the White working classes:

> *All my friends ... like nearly all of them have been Black [...] In Endbridge school [his previous school] there weren't a lot of White boys. There were a couple but they were all, like, chavvy from Bermondsey and they weren't like my sort of people, so I hung around with a lot of Black boys*

Although Tristan was White like these 'Bermondsey'[34] boys, they were not his 'sort of people'. Reay and colleagues have written about the White working classes as the constitutive limit of middle class friendships, where the minority ethnic Other acts as a buffer between the middle classes and the White working class who are considered beyond value (Reay et al., 2007). As I have argued, through this dissociation from the White boys, Tristan becomes a 'darker shade of pale' (Reay et al., 2007) - his choice to associate with the Black Football crowd means he is read as of minority ethnicity. Tristan goes on to argue:

> *These chavvy boys from sort of Bermondsey area that ... they um don't care about school, they like sort of wear Reebok classic, they've got like their track suit bottoms high tops ... that's not my sort of people.'*

Tristan typically distinguishes 'chavs' by their choice of clothes and trainers, illuminating how class is embodied, and how 'the chav' has come to be defined by and through their clothing and style (Hayward & Yar, 2006; Hollingworth & Williams, 2009; Raisborough & Adams, 2008). Moreover, as I have found in other research, a defining characteristic of 'the chav' is that they are seen as not caring about education (Archer, 2005; S Hollingworth & Williams, 2009). While Tristan says he prefers football to school; he still chooses to distinguish himself from this White working class group who are fixed in place-defined by their local area of Bermondsey. I argue that Tristan's distancing from the Bermondsey boys is a racialised and gendered, classed process, where his movement to a new school affords him a more desirable (European/ South American) minority ethnic working class identity (which can be high achieving and hard working), while choosing an identity actually much more aligned with his ostensible (White) race and (working)class background would not have given him the same access to this educational capital.

Indeed, in parallel with Tristan's experience, Faith (White middle class) talks about her friend, Jen, who crossed over the border into this 'chav' White working class subculture, from a more middle class subculture. My analysis here attests to the importance of a gendered intersectional theorisation in making sense of this move. Faith associated with the Smokers White middle class crowd at Eden Hill School, who she described as having a 'grungy,' 'skatery' style. She lamented that one of her best friends, Jen, had turned from the grungy style into what Faith referred to as 'chavvy':

[34] Bermondsey is an area of inner London with a long term settled White working class population, historically connected to employment in the docks, but now associated in the local public imagination with long term unemployment and the social 'problems' associated with it. See Evans, G. (2006). *Educational Failure and working class White children in Britain* Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, for an ethnographic account of youth in Bermondsey.

One of my best friends was like a complete grunger, like she wore these huge trousers... and so it sort of changed a bit [...] She used to wear like huge trousers which were like [gestures wide leg] and huge baggy T-shirts and kind of really grungy type clothes. But now she wears like tight jeggins and loads and loads of make-up and slicked back hair and is sort of completely different. [...] She used to listen to Red Hot Chilli Peppers and Snow Patrol and silly little Indie bands, but now she sort of listens to like Meo and sort of like Chris Brown and people like that.

As with Tristan, here we see 'chavs' distinguished by their 'excessive' dress sense. Francis (2009) in her research provided an example of a middle class Boffin student who denigrated her (once) Boffin friend for turning 'chav'. Francis describes this as a gendering process, in a move to construct an aesthetic feminine (hetero)sexuality in order to be accepted in the more popular group. In support for Francis' argument, we can see a 'girling' operating in Jen's narrative: she moves from a more masculine subcultural form of dress (baggy trousers and tops) to a more feminine adornment: hyper-tight trousers, 'loads of make-up' and attention to her hair. This was accompanied by a move to listening to RnB music which invested in and produced more hyper-(hetero)sexualised femininity (Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007a). Thus, in order to be accepted into the 'townie' or 'chav' subculture, an identity associated with resistance and counter-school cultures, we see the need to perform a more normative gender identity. Faith tacitly understood this: 'She got more attention when she did it the other way. [..] Attention from boys mainly. She was a bit chubby as well.' Like Amber (discussed in Part Three, 5.2.4) who rejected her tomboy identity to become more feminine and simultaneously more desirable to boys, as she got older, Jen too found her more masculine embodiment - her more chubby body shape and her baggy trousers– disrupted her sexual attractiveness to/ popularity with boys.

However, Skeggs argues that what is often missed in feminist queer critiques is that the exchange mechanism upon which femininity is valued and performed is firmly anchored in class (2004). Women who appear hyper-feminine are assumed to be heterosexual, but they are also read through devalued class signifiers of excess (big hair, short skirts, lots of makeup) (2004, p. 170). Indeed, this classed process is tied to educational success. Archer's research on girls and achievement proposes that the overly sexual is positioned as antithetical to educational success (Archer, 2005; Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007a) and White working class families were positioned as the 'repository of social and educational problems and failure' (Skeggs, 2004; Reay and Lucey 2000 Archer 2005). Faith recounted that when Jen took this 'chavvy' identity position she grew apart from Faith, who remained in the middle class subcultural group. Indeed, I learnt that Jen had left school and did not continue into sixth form. Jen's 'chubbiness' and Amber's tomboyness, which constrained their ability to perform and be read as feminine, led to an adoption of a more

hyper-heterosexualised femininity. However this fixed Jen in a White working class value-less identity, constrained her access to social capital (having less exchange value in the White middle class subculture) and potentially her social mobility.

Tristan and Jen's experiences suggest some fluidity in terms of available identity positions which can be taken up, despite the perhaps unintended consequences of this. However, students suggested that opportunities were not entirely fluid, but groups cement in their time at the school and identities become sticky (Allen & Hollingworth, 2013). Tyler explained:

> *Here it is like, you are in a group, but you can quickly jump to another one. But after you get to a certain age and you can't do that anymore. [...] If you are known for reflecting something, in this school, if you are known for a long period of time, you won't be able to make a change. It would take you a long, long time to like, be accepted there first, and then... and then...-until that becomes a part of you as well.*

Tyler is talking about the formation and solidification of identities through subcultural groupings. He points out how certain people 'reflect' different identities in the school, and these become embedded, cemented over time. In my previous work, I have discussed how learner identities can 'stick', where students lament that they cannot shake off their negative learner identity that teachers read onto them (Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007b). Very similarly, Tyler signals to the time it takes to 'build up' a certain identity - to do the necessary identity work be accepted into a group - and that through this process this identity becomes written on the self: it becomes a part of you that you cannot cast off or change. But these are identities that are collectively experienced through the group. Thus the possibilities to border-cross become more and more constrained over time as identities, of individuals *and* the collective become etched. Indeed, Jen's opportunities for fluidity, as a girl, feel more constrained and policed than Tristan's. And in fact Tristan's is a mobility that is bound up with class exclusion and symbolic violence that gets done to working class young people. 'Fluidity' appears as a positive, liberating movement, but these movements are not about choice.

Indeed, as I go on to show, the possibilities for mixing are unequally experienced by different bodies, as certain bodies are more sticky, and for some, this border crossing remained a permanently liminal state (Back, 2003 [1995]). Echoing the theorisation of Hall and Bhabha, Carl referred to young people who crossed these social borders as 'hybrids'. But both Tyler and Carl discussed how this 'hybrid' position is not without its difficulties. Tyler claimed: 'to be in the middle it's like the weirdest feeling, because it's like no side could touch you ... no side could like harm you by getting angry.' Tyler is insinuating that there is a element of status (exchange value) attached to these people who can successfully cross borders in this way. These young people

occupy a 'thirdspace' of 'inbetweenness' (Bhabha, 1994) where 'no side could touch you.' Back's (Back, 2003 [1995]) use of 'intermezzo'- a connecting link between two cultures- can be seen in Carl's suggestion that the 'people who are the hybrids' 'make the batches stick together': they are a connecting link. However this position is also psychically difficult to occupy. Observing other students in the sixth form Carl narrated:

> *There is one particular guy [Jay] who doesn't actually fit into any group but because he's never been around a particular group for too long, he's kind of like confused.*

This 'third space' is a troubling space-time to occupy. Indeed, as I mentioned in Part Two (chapter 3.2), Tanisha, talked about the Black/White friendship divide in the school. Herself mixed race, Tanisha claimed 'we used to make fun of mixed race people,' because they're 'confused' because they don't know which friendship group to go to. These subcultural groups are where students come to learn their raced, classed, gendered identity, and if their identities are 'hybrid' in these contexts, this can be a troubling experience. Carl's narrative suggests that Jay experiences what Renold (after Deleuze and Guattari) refers to as the 'schizoid double pull,' where choice operates within a modality of constraint, and diversity operates within a modality of sameness (2008):

> *So he doesn't know who to be, the way to talk whatever, so he more or less can't really mix with any other batch because when he's in one batch he tends to lean towards the way they act but if you're in one batch and then you're acting the way another batch would, then it just doesn't work well. You know what I'm saying? It's like the piece of a puzzle and he doesn't fit within the puzzle...*

Positioned in no time-place in particular, Jay's performances oscillate unsuccessfully between the 'batches'- where both diversity and sameness push and pull- and he remains a piece of the puzzle that 'doesn't fit'. As Renold (2008) suggests, such schizoid, rhizomatic positions can entrench normative categorisations of gender, and I suggest, race and class. Jay, as a lone body out of place troubles the coherence of these subcultures, but cannot shatter them, merely reinforcing who they are in relation to each other (Puwar, 2004).

Indeed too much mixing can be really troublesome. Not knowing one's place and moving back and forth between different subcultural groups- or 'chopping and changing around' - can cause conflict. This can be seen in Damian's account of Joe, who moved between the quiet group in the common room and the Smokers group:

> *Joe would go in to extreme groups where he would know a lot of stuff about every group and then use that as conflict, because he would know something and he would say it to someone else, and that will create conflict. So imagine Mark hanging out with the Smokers for like a whole month or like two months, and then he goes from*

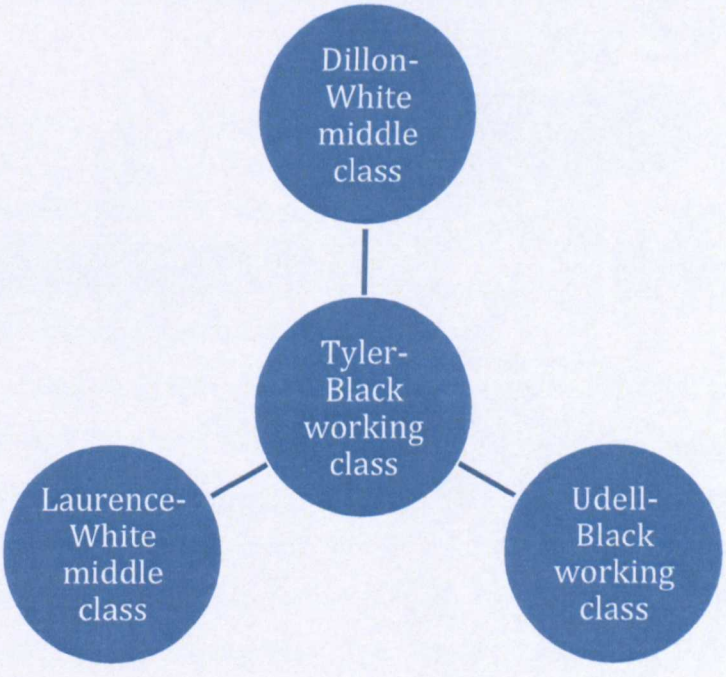
the Smokers to the sixth form room and he says everything that he's known and what he's done, to the sixth form people. That creates conflict because they entrusted him with that kind of information, and then he betrays their trust and goes and says it to someone else [...] The people who smoke outside have been angry at him and saying, why are you doing this? Why are you doing that? And it creates arguments and stuff. So a person who goes from group to group causes conflict if they like tout information what they shouldn't really say. That's what I think creates conflict between groups.

Here we see an unsuccessful attempt at being 'the good mixer.' Mixing is not necessarily conceived of as good if done in the wrong way. Joe is deemed the bad mixer because he threatens the integrity of the group. As we saw in chapter six, the Smokers were a tight knit group and secrecy of their rebellious extracurricular behaviour functioned to shore up the boundaries of this group, making them exclusive. Joe's movement between the groups disrupts these boundaries and threatens their intelligibility. This is not merely the movement of Joe as a body, but the movement of internally verified exclusive practices (i.e. mixing that is too deep and personal). As I discussed in chapter two, if it is *too* deep, mixing disrupts the hierarchy itself (Back et al., 2012) and can serve to intensify conflict (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010). Indeed, movement into White middle class friendship groups appeared to be the most contentious. I now go on to discuss these kinds of processes in more detail by turning to the friendship biographies of three students who represents the possibilities, constraints, affordances and costs of border crossing, which must remain superficial and not disrupt the hierarchies.

7.2 Tyler: the impossible nerd?

Tyler was a handsome, perceptive, Muslim boy of Black African Nigerian heritage, born in the UK but having grown up in Florida. He had an iconic American name, which I have tried to emulate here. When Tyler arrived at Eden Hill school aged 13 he was 'large' -what the English refer to as 'obese,' he elaborated. However, when I met him he had lost considerable weight and was athletic in body type. Tyler professed to be a member of the Football crowd. He dressed both smart -in a shirt and jeans and bespectacled- other times in a sporty tracksuit. On his sociogram (which Tyler drew as a tree with himself the trunk), Tyler named three close friends, who he described as having 'formed him' into the person he is now.

Figure 4: Tyler's Sociogram



Two of these three were middle class White boys, Laurence and Dillon, who he emphasised were friends 'at school' (as opposed to outside of school), and were part of this Smokers group. He differentiated these friends as 'higher class' with 'cash to splash'. In chapter six we learnt how this group commanded significant power in the school and that Whiteness plays a part in this. I also argued that the way in which this group segregated themselves off in a clique reinforced by their social and academic practices that they share in common, is a way of 'doing class', and doing advantage. Tyler was also however part of the Football crowd, which we learnt in chapter five, was produced by various practices of Black working class masculinity. Tyler prided himself on how he straddled the two groups. He had more Black working class friends who had left school – one in particular who featured on his friendship map, Udell. Udell had left school at age sixteen because he felt that school was 'not for him'. In an all too familiar narrative of contemporary working class masculinity (McDowell, 2003; McDowell, 2012), Tyler told me that Udell is good at 'working with his hands', and 'wants to be a carpenter', but, a year after leaving school, was unable to find employment.

Tyler joined the school two years in, aged thirteen. His family had been living for the most part of his life in Florida in the USA, but had decided to move back to the UK. In an apparently 'aspirational' strategic move, Tyler parents had decided to move back as they felt that- with a 'British qualification'- Tyler could go anywhere and 'get a job'. Tyler explained that when he had joined the school, aged 13, as a overweight, bespectacled Black Floridian kid, two middle class

White boys (Laurence and Dillon) took him 'under their wing', and he has remained friends with them ever since. However, this somewhat jarring experience was not without some resistance from Tyler:

> *The first day I came to school, Laurence was my friend and he was like the one who set me up in the crowd. He made me know who the crowds were. I got like a good analysis of the crowd. Dillon helped me get into the crowd. I don't want to separate the crowds as White or Black, but he helped me to get into the White crowd, which I kind of resented at first, because I'm a Black guy, and it was like, 'What are you doing guy? What are you doing?'*

Despite Tyler's reluctance to racialise the subcultures of the school, his extraordinary experience of being 'adopted' and 'shown the ropes' in an urban comprehensive by the White middle classes could not fail to make an impression on him. Nevertheless, not negating his gratitude, Tyler made a slow exit from this arrangement. He described Laurence and Dillon as 'stepping stones' to the construction of his own identity: to the 'person everybody knows' Tyler to now be. Implicitly and intuitively aware of exchange value, Tyler also felt uncomfortable describing his friends as 'stepping stones'. As I touched on in chapter five, Tyler told me a long story about how he subsequently, persistently and meticulously worked to get into the Football crowd. This desire was historically grounded in a racialised and classed 'cool' instilled in the USA, but was also about learning his racialised, classed and gendered place in the UK:

> *In America, the sports crowd were like the big crowd ... like in America, if you're a sport guy, you know everybody, like you're part of everything. That's actually true here as well. It's more like the sports crowd was like linked everywhere.*

Tyler's ultimate desire was to 'know everybody' and be 'linked everywhere': to be the ultimate mixer. Through Udell specifically, Tyler eventually succeeded in making it into the Football crowd which more importantly, in Tyler's circumstances, gave him access to the Black networks in the school:

> *After a year I met Udell, he made me jam ... like he made me relax. Not like relax, but he made me like realise that it's not hard ... it's not hard to meet people ... it's not hard to like pop with them and stuff. So it was like, in under like a month ... like I say there's a huge branch of the tree that opened to me... like with new guys I became cool, because like, all of sudden I was like wow! Then like the Black side of the school opened to me, and I was like wow! People started knowing me and I started like going places, and It was like wow!*

Tyler's narrative is replete with the familiar tropes of Black working class masculinity that I have elaborated in chapter five - of 'cool'; 'relaxed'; 'jamming' and 'popping' sociability.

I want to analyse Tyler's experience in terms of spatially and temporally specific (relationally and intersectionally contingent) inclusion and exclusion: a (rare, exceptional) inclusion to a White middle class friendship group, and initial exclusion from, and uneasy access to, a predominantly Black working class friendships group. When joining the school from the US, Tyler's 'rucksack' (Erel, 2010) of cultural capital etched on his body – of cosmopolitan transnational travel; an exotic but familiar American lifestyle only dreamt of by White British boys through proximity to movies; embodied in his American accent and his 'party lighter' 'cool guy' performances – made him prime consumption for these awkward, uncool White middle class thirteen year old boys in the terrifying space-time that is the year nine urban school. Tyler explained:

> *When I got here, I was kind of a freshy ... like that's what they call it, a freshy. Like I was speaking my own American slang.*

A 'freshy' is urban slang for someone who is 'fresh off the boat' and still wearing his clothes from his old country. Tyler went on to elaborate that Laurence and Dillon immediately warmed to his 'freshy' ways: 'they thought it was funny. It was like a novelty'. Tyler embodied the US comedy Black cool of TV and movie fame: the Joker or the Clown that Stuart Hall (1992b) writes about. This Black cool could be consumed/appropriated/prosthetised by these White middle class boys. However, this was experienced simultaneously as exclusion from the Black group who were the largest and most dominant group in the school at the time. Freshy - being mainly used in the UK context to refer derogatorily to people of African descent, often embellished by 'his spear and all'[35] - is also a 'cuss' which serves as a marker of distinction *between* Black youth keen to assert their authentic London-specific Britishness as superior to a 'primitive' non-British Blackness. Tyler's not-quite-African, not-quite-African-American, certainly-not-Black-British embodiment, always already fixed and marked in American caricature, unsurprisingly set him apart. As if that was not enough, Tyler's body size (as overweight and thus deemed 'unsporty') would be enough to exclude him from the sporty crowd. Thus, Tyler's 'freshy-ness' was an embodied 'capital' – a resource - but one that has different currency in different 'fields,' among different peers, thus shaping the forms of mixing and mobility available to him in social space.

Tyler, not wanting to be beaten, performed a huge amount of identity (and body) work to get into the Football crowd. In a narrative performance that resembled a scene from the iconic US drug crime drama series, the Wire[36], Tyler described this journey into the Football crowd. This famous scene in the programme involves a young drug dealer teaching the younger boys how to play

[35] Definition of 'freshy', according to the Urban Dictionary http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=freshy accessed 17th April 2013

[36] The Chess Scene from the Wire can be found here http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0mxz2-AQ64 accessed 9th July 2013.

chess. The scene is a clever double metaphor, where the familiar world of the drug hierarchy is used to explain the game of chess to the younger boys, but then the audience, assumed to be familiar with the rules of chess, simultaneously become familiar with the drug hierarchy in the drama. Tyler, explaining the rules of the game to an unfamiliar researcher, used metaphor, describing his entry into the Football crowd as 'a small long thing,' 'like a chain'. He described how he had to gradually socialise with them – starting with those on the peripheries – the 'small workers' and working his way up to the 'head people'.

However, he also explained how, fundamental to this success, was to change himself, namely tackling his obesity and the deadweight this cumbersome 'identity-trap' carried (Youdell, 2003). Tyler reflected that had he stayed in the US, he would have remained an overweight 'nerd', and would never have made it into the sports crowd:

> *I would have been huge and I would have been one of the book nerds. I would have been a nerd like. Yeah, I would have been a nerd. I was really a nerd there [in the US], but I would have been more of a nerd like, because like those things you see on ... like a stereotypical American lazy guy sitting with his Mom when he's like thirty years old. I would have been one of those guys. I would have gone like that. But like when I came to England, that's when I had to put my own individualism as well as my like book down: come on control yourself.*

Bev Skeggs emphasises how categorisations of race and class are not just classifications or social positions but an 'amalgam of features of a culture that are read onto bodies as personal dispositions' (Bev Skeggs, 2004, p.1). Tyler's exposition of the amalgam of the 'obese' raced, classed and gendered body is a powerful illustration of this. Skeggs claims it is this history of inscription that produces the conditions for marking, and certain readings are underpinned by certain perspectives. We can see Tyler's narrative evokes a historically grounded, commonly shared, perspective of the overweight American man, but importantly, one that sticks to an amalgam of other 'negative' features, such as laziness, bookishness, and nerdiness. Indeed in order to move into the Black sporty crowd, Tyler recognises this himself: that his behaviour, attitudes, lifestyle - his dispositions - had to change. If he had remained overweight he saw a certain inevitability that he would become more academic and studious, and that in a London comprehensive, in order to get into the popular Black Football crowd this identity must be shed and replaced for a more sporty and less bookish one.

Tyler recognised that this obese Nerd identity did not have value to the sporty Black guys of the Football crowd. Exemplary in Tyler's narrative, the obese body is inscribed and loaded with a range of negative associations and affects: it is read simultaneously as geek /as American/ as lazy/

as childlike/ unmasculine/ emasculated/ uncontrolled/ unregulated. Tyler imagines himself in this body as lazy, as passive, sitting at home. As Hopkins highlights, such stereotypes of the obese body are rife (2008a, 2012) and carry negative associations of undesirability. In Tyler's narrative, the obese body, 'trapped' in the home is imbued with pity but also a disdain, as a self-inflicted lack of regulation and lack of self-control. But this is coupled with a sense of emasculation. We see him imagined *sitting* in the *home* with his *books*, with his *mother* (a passive, feminine activity in a feminine space-time with a feminine role model). The image of the thirty year old man who still lives with his mother is a childlike, emasculated, feminised one. This amalgam of features are incompatible with the sporty body as a master of control, the product of, self-management, energy and self-investment: the good body. Further, the sporty body privileges the body over the mind and thus the studious geek is incompatible. In particular, the obese body is an unwelcome vessel for a Black masculine subjectivity which, particularly in the institution of the school, presumes a 'talent' for sporting endeavors (Rollock, 2007a) but also demands a hyper-heterosexualised masculinity (Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007a; Youdell, 2003). In chapter five, I showed how the Black body is continually fixed in racialised regimes which associates the Black subject with physicality and this constrains how these bodies can be read as intelligent. Tyler's story shows how difficult this is to break out of.

Tyler's experience is governed by a 'complex configuration of space-time embodied relationalities and intersectionalities' (Hopkins, 2012, p. 1238). That is, Tyler's experience is multiply about Blackness, working classness, masculinity, Americanness and obesity, and is differently experienced in different periods of his life and different contexts. This is a key example of the workings of 'hidden acts of multiple discrimination' (Fernandes, 2003 cited in Yuval-Davis, 2011 emphasis my own), where we see 'the experience of race *alters* the meaning of gender' (Valentine, 2007, p. 13, my emphasis), for example. The categories 'abrade, inflame, amplify, twist, negate, dampen and complicate each other' (Kessler and McKenna, 1978, cited in Valentine, 2007, p. 13). The Black obese masculine body does not carry the same signifiers as the White obese feminine body, in which the geek identity can sit more comfortably (though that is not to deny the internalised pain of this ascription)(Mendick & Francis, 2012). Furthermore, the different spatial circumstances – the US and the UK urban schools – and spaces of educational success versus the spaces of physical sporting prowess, alter Tyler's experience and the possibilities for him to become intelligible.

It is also important to note which embodied intersectionalities are institutionalised and legitimated and the implications of this. In moving away from the bookish geeky identity Tyler

embodied when he was obese and towards the sporty, ungeeky guy who has 'put his books down', Tyler was moving away from the 'ideal learner' identity (Youdell, 2003, 2006a) which has exchange value in the institutional context of the school.

Indeed, these identity shifts and realignments are inextricably linked to the kinds of networks one has access to. As identities shift, new networks open, and others close down or constrict. This moving away from the 'bookish' 'nerdy' identity saw Tyler simultaneously moving away from Dillon and Laurence - his White middle class friends. While he claimed they were still friends 'in school', this friendship had become partial and limited. Tyler explained that, if he had to choose now, he would choose Udell and his Black working class friends, over Laurence and Dillon. It is telling in the first instance that Tyler conceives of the idea that he *might* have to choose, but what is more illuminating is the nature of the friendship that he conceives on both sides. Tyler explained that a friend is someone who would 'back you' - someone who would come to your aid when you're in trouble, someone who would 'risk for you'. Tyler went on to reveal that he knew Laurence and Dillon would come to his aid as friends, but felt that the strength of Udell's commitment was greater. He characterised his friendship with Laurence and Dillon as a semi-investment. He went on to elaborate with a metaphor, typical of Tyler's interview performance:

> *Like say ... would they go in a burning fire for you? Would your best friends go in a burning fire for you? Or would they call 911 and say there is a burning fire? That kind of thing. They would help you but they would be more hesitant to help. That's the thing ... the difference.*

Thus, while Tyler felt Laurence and Dillon would come to his aid, he stated vehemently that Udell would risk life and limb for him. As Holt (2008) argues, investments in social capital do not guarantee a particular return. We can see from his White middle class friends, Tyler is aware of the limitations of returns from this particular cross-racial and cross-class investment, and thus Tyler reveals the complex constraints, risks and hesitancies bound up with 'social mixing' even among those youth who do 'cross borders'.

Tyler rationalised that Laurence and Dillon have grown up in a 'hugely different social world' ('higher class' 'with cash to splash'), unlike his social world, which is 'difficult' because you have to 'learn' and you learn 'quickly'. Tyler constructed Laurence and Dillon's social world as somewhat protected, and cocooned, whereas he admitted that while the Black working class world of Udell is 'difficult' and more challenging, he felt here is where you learn more about life. Tyler's relationship with Laurence and Dillon had become characterised by a semi-investment on both sides, brought about through their different social positionings.

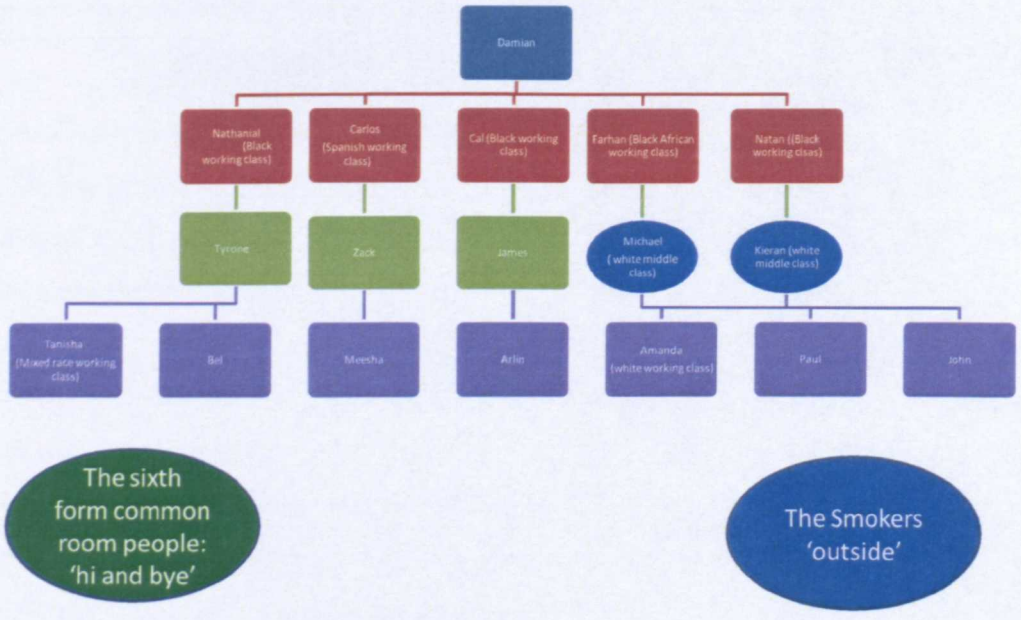
Tyler's success at making it into the Football crowd was borne out of his embodied raced, classed, gendered identity, one that was dependent on his success at shedding his obese, nerd identity driven by a raced, classed habitus that let him know his sense of place in a particular field which valorises the body. However, this very process, simultaneously constrained his ability to participate in the 'ideal learner' identity within the middle class school, which valorises 'books' and the mind. Keane argues that working class students going to university misrecognise the socio-relational advantages from making friends with the middle class students. She describes this as 'self-limiting' or 'self sabotage,' (Keane, 2011, p. 460) as they do not recognise the upward social mobility that such mixing is supposed to bring. However, such an analysis neglects the power relations, processes of exclusion and risks that govern and shape the possibilities for cross-class and cross-racial relationships. Tyler's movement away from his White middle class friends is not self-sabotage but a realisation of his diminished exchange value in the White middle class field of education, schooling and the professional world beyond.

7.3 Damian: becoming user friendly?

Damian was a gregarious Black British working class young man of Caribbean heritage at Eden Hill School. Through his narrative, it appeared he was able to cross the border, to some extent, from the Black working class Football crowd into the White middle class Smokers crowd since entering the sixth form. Damian's story appears at first sight to be the opposite of Tyler's, but ultimately it is carries similar consequences, demonstrating the partial and limited nature of social mixing, as well as the space-time embodied relationalities and intersectionalities involved in this process (Hopkins, 2012). Again, *who* can mix, and the exchange value they embody in this process is crucial here.

Damian was well-known and liked. He was central to the Football crowd when they were a larger and dominant group in the school, and while this group had dispersed somewhat since year 11, he embodied this history of being 'a leader'. As I discussed in chapter three (section 3.3), since many of the 'loud' Black students had left (a group with whom Damian associated) the balance had shifted to more White students in the sixth form, and Damian's status had to be renegotiated. Since the move to sixth form, Damian explained, two White middle class boys featured on his friendship map: Kieran and Michael who ' were associated with' the Smokers group.

Figure 5: Damian's Sociogram



As with Tyler, immediately we see hints of semi-investment in these friendships- Damian referred to these boys as 'outliers' on his sociogram, as they are not the same as his typical friends, and he consciously placed them in the second tier of his sociogram. There was an element of distancing: Damian said 'I get on with them' but 'they don't hang around with me' outside of school, whereas he describes the first tier of Black friends on his map as 'tight knit', who he walked home with everyday. Kieran was new to the sixth form, having joined from a fee-paying school and, as Damian elaborated, 'hasn't had the same growing up as we've had'. Despite being part of this White middle class crowd, and not having the *same growing up* [sic] as him, Damian said Kieran is currently 'one of the people who I proper know and have confidence in'. Michael had attended Eden Hill throughout the lower school, but had only become friends with Damian recently through Kieran. In this section I examine in detail the located micro politics (Jacobs & Fincher, 1998) of Damian's mixing with Michael, Kieran and the Smoker's group.

Damian could be seen to embody the authentic London-specific 'urban youth' Britishness that Tyler at first could not. This conferred Damian with a certain degree of power and status which it was expedient for the emergent popular White middle class boys to respect in the sixth form.

Damian's narrative is also one of inclusion and exclusion. However, in contrast to Tyler's story, as an established, respected pillar of the school community, Damian's narrative is one of how two White middle class boys were able to become friends with someone like him. Damian explained:

> *[The schools Michael went to were] both working class schools, and predominantly Black as well and more working class. So he understood how to act and how to like understand them really. That's why I think I took [to him]... he used to ... he would mostly jam with the Smokers outside because they have different interests when it comes to outside school, like partying and stuff. But I still like them.*

Implicitly Damian is claiming control of these friendships and of their borders ('I took to him'). Michael is constructed as having to mix with him. Michael had spent his life in predominantly Black and working class schools, so Damian reasoned that he understood how to act and how to understand them: to understand the Other. Similarly, of Kieran, Damian explained: 'even though Kieran went to a middle class [fee-paying] school, he hanged around more with working class people'. Damian's White middle class friends are constructed as being able to 'bridge' this social class divide because they have some kind of genuine experience of authentic working class life. Through their lived experience of the urban comprehensive, they are able to claim some authentic closeness to the working class (minority ethnic) Other (Hollingworth & Williams, 2010; Reay et al., 2007). We can understand this as a kind of urban (sub) cultural capital (either attending a working class school or having working class friends) which is able to be converted into social capital (i.e. friendship).

Kieran must have done some hard and fast identity work, as a private school boy joining an 'urban comp', to perform an identity which communicated: *I have working class friends, and I know working class people.* It transpired that Damian had come to know Kieran (and then Michael) because they are in the same A-level History class, had got talking and realised they had some things in common. In many ways, this scenario embodies the vision of the comprehensive ideal: a bringing together of students from different backgrounds, where studying and learning together can break down barriers of perceived difference (Anderson, 2004; Ford, 1969; Pring & Walford, 1997). Despite Kieran and Damian coming from different social and cultural backgrounds, they 'get on' because 'he has the same interests': 'he likes basketball', and 'he likes the same jokes as me- we find each other funny.' As illuminated in chapter five, Damian accentuated the cultural and social class basis of humour and jokes, but here he asserts that it is possible for someone from a different social and cultural background to develop the same humour through association. This is a learned performance. Further, Damian said Kieran is 'very loud and very social' and has 'made a big impression since he arrived in the school'. Again, these performances of loudness and

sociability, were central to the (re)production of Black working class masculinity and the Football crowd. Kieran, through his experience of 'authentic' working class life, is to some extent, able to align himself with, or perhaps even reflect back, performances of a Black urban working class masculine identity.

However this mixing does not travel in both directions equally. As I noted earlier, Skeggs argues that Black working class masculinity operates in popular culture as an available, mobile cultural style, be the person wearing it Black or White. Yet, she argues, 'the mobility of this attachment and the inscription of cool are not resources that are equally available to all' (2004, p. 2). With Black cool, 'a particular version of inscription becomes a mobile resource for some, whilst being fixed and read onto some bodies as a limitation' (2004, p. 2). Hence she explores how:

> *Some forms of culture are condensed and inscribed onto social groups and bodies that then mark and restrict their movement in social space, whilst others are not but are able to become mobile and flexible' (2004, p. 2).*

In relation to my research, while these White middle class boys are able to do Black cool- through sporting knowledge, loudness and knowing the right kind of jokes- Damian is Black cool. But he is also fixed in his embodiment of it.

Despite Damian's framing of Kieran and Michael 'fitting in' with him, Damian illuminates how it is he who embodies the 'good mixer':

> *I don't put myself into one group kind of thing. I make myself know everyone first, and then I have like one or two people what I'm close to. [...]I'm friends with practically everyone in my college really, because I don't put myself in one group.*

Damian embodied the football identity: he was named after a famous footballer; wore trademark short dreadlocks and his team football shirt consistently. Damian was very much a 'cool guy'. He was a big character, popular in the school, and, in many ways embodied the 'everyday' (Noble, 2009) 'conviviality' (Gilroy, 2004) of the multicultural sixth form discussed in chapter three. As he moved through the spaces of the school, he could be seen saying 'hi' to practically everyone, teachers and students alike. I observed in field notes that when he walked into the common room, his presence was known.

Damian's successful engagement with the Smokers group was through these performances of Black working classness. However, such performance – while granting 'access' or rather enabling border crossing - also acts as a fixing mechanism for Damian which renders mixing superficial or at least problematic. As I have argued in relation to the Football crowd, these performances can shore up racial essentialising while at the same time providing a 'colourful backdrop' (May, 1996)

of happy smiling multiculturalism (Ahmed, 2007). When I asked Damian if he could pin point what it is about people who can mix in different groups he replied:

> *I think it depends on their likeability and their social behaviour really. If they have a thing interesting to someone else, and are very enthusiastic into what people are doing and what people's interests are, then they will be accepted anywhere. So with me, I'm like always up for doing stuff. Like I'm always up for having a laugh. I think people who make jokes are easily put into groups and easily liked and accepted because they create happiness and stuff. And I think I am one of them where people find me funny and easy to talk to, and I'm not shy when it comes to meeting new people, so I make them feel comfortable easily. So they will accept ... I'll be accepted in any group.*

As I discussed in Part Two using Ahmed's work, some bodies are presumed to be the origin of bad feeling and others good feeling (Ahmed, 2007). The ethnic minority other (/the 'migrant') who resists 'integration' or 'mixing' is seen as the origin of bad feeling. Kulz in her research in a London school, analyses how Black young men in particular embody the good mixers (Kulz, 2011), acting as 'conversion points,' turning bad feeling into good (Kulz, 2011 after Ahmed, 2004). Here, we can see how Damian is the happy smiling social mixer who 'creates happiness' and good feeling everywhere he goes. Indeed, as he said he has a 'thing that is interesting to someone else': he – in embodying a particular form of urban-inflected 'diversity' - is becoming 'user friendly,' in Skeggs' terms (2004, p. 157). However, at the same time, I want to argue that these performances are a re-enactment of performances of Black working class masculinity which fix him in place as the 'joker' or the 'clown' (Hall, 1992b). This is a form of contemporary exploitation, according to Skeggs, when a person forced to use the cultural attributes by which they are positioned (forced to display the skills they already have), for the benefit of others. This is a kind of forced performativity, where performativity becomes culturally essentialising. Damian does not optimise, he is optimised by others (Skeggs, 2004, p. 474). What is not visible here is the potential extraction – the consumption of Damian's 'happiness' that he emanates and where it goes. Damian is giving/sharing/ making happy. This is not an exchange. It is one way. As I argued in relation to the rebellious posh group at Stellar Academy who could perform rebelliousness as a prosthetic/ appended identity, Kieran can perform Black working classness, but ultimately he is not fixed by it- it is mobile cultural style – a prosthesis which he can append and remove when necessary. In contrast, Damian is fixed in this position.

Furthermore, the imperative circulating in discourses of cohesion and social mixing is that the White middle classes are implicitly the norm and do not have to mix (Back et al., 2012; Fortier, 2010; Moore, 2012). Whereas, minority ethnic students 'need to circulate and accrue value, or

risk becoming pathologised and immobile' (Kulz, 2011, p. 14). So here, the Smokers are not the ones who need to mix in order to 'move up' or to 'change up' as the Black working class young women in my previous research put it (Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007b). The Smokers have 'already arrived' (Kulz, 2011, p. 11). So while Damian suggests it is Kieran and Michael who have to mix with him, this is misrecognised. Damian is acutely aware of how the pressure is on him to 'change' in order to be socially mobile (Archer, 2005). As we saw in chapter three, Damian finding himself in this new White middle class space-time, he is 'a fish out of water': he has to adapt to this new environment which is always uncomfortable. Damian admitted that access to this different friendship group 'is starting to affect me'. Thus it is Damian who is affected in this new space-time. Kulz theorised urban working class students 'accessing mobility by reforming their personal affects', by 'learning to have the right affective disposition' (Kulz, 2011, p. 14). Damian revealed that he used to be someone who would 'slack off' and was influenced by his (Black working class) friends who did not take school work seriously, whereas now he is beginning to become the 'aspirational subject' (Kulz, 2011). He resigned: 'you are forced to make new friends', in order to get on, and up.

Simultaneously, Damian provides the White middle classes, with some urban subcultural and social capital. In Damian's attempts to mix, he is himself a resource for others. We can analyse Damian's position in terms of Francis and colleagues 'fall guy' phenomenon. In their research on high achieving and popular students she found 'an intriguing tendency for 'alpha' high achieving popular pupils to have a more disruptive, less high achieving close friend' (Francis et al., 2010, p. 333): the 'fall guy'. They argue that high achieving popular students' alignment with rebellious pupils helps them sustain the balance of intelligible (gender) subjectivities and academic attainment: 'some children must be marked out as failures in order that others can be identified as successes' (Francis et al., 2010, p. 334). Thus, I argue that the 'fall guy' - embodied in Damian - is a resource for the White middle classes that can be drawn upon by the higher achieving students (the Smokers) to maintain their popularity. In other words, Damian is Kieran's fall guy. Always having been located in the lower and middle sets or ability groups, Damian explained how most working class students in their sixth form, including himself, received C and D grades, while Kieran achieved As (although he never boasts about it). Thus, while Damian's classed, raced and gendered identity positions him as the less than desirable student (Rollock, 2007a; Youdell, 2003), Kieran is able to extract subcultural cool from the relationship with Damian. This is not a conscious extraction, but an inevitable classed and radicalised process embedded within the urban school.

Francis argues that 'in such couplings capital does not flow in an exclusive direction, as the fall guy pupil may gain various capital, and possibly avoid further stigmatisation, via their relationship with the [high achieving popular] pupil' (2010, p. 334). Indeed, if we understand social mixing as a system of exchange, capital flowing in one direction is unlikely (that is theft). This relationship with Kieran and Michael could be seen to confer Damian some cultural capital in that his friendship with them continues his participation in the sixth form. Indeed, his connection with Kieran and Michael through A level History classes may bring him access to cultural capital in a legitimated form. Certainly Damian's proximity to these White middle class boys in school may be read positively by school staff –as an aspirational subject -and translate into legitimated cultural capital in the context of the school. Furthermore, perhaps fundamentally, Damian's friendship with Kieran and Michael *should* give him access to social capital in terms of access to White middle class networks, or 'weak ties' (Grannovetter, 1983).

However, there are unequal amounts, and unequal flows of capital. It is vital to acknowledge that the value of capitals lies in their exchange and conversion into economic capital, which on examination looks constrained for Damian and thus unequal. Even if Damian remained in the sixth form in part as a result of these ties, and manages to obtain the institutionalised cultural capital in the form of A level grades 'good enough' to exchange for a university place, contemporary research in the UK shows that Black and minority ethnic, and working class students, and students from state schools are less likely to gain a place at the more prestigious universities than their White, middle class and private school educated counterparts (Boliver, 2013). So for Damian this exchange is not entirely a good or equal deal - the exchange is rigged.

Furthermore, Damian's access to White middle class networks beyond school was limited. Connected to Damian's inability to perform White middle classness, this inscription is less mobile. Field is important here. With Damian we can see he shares some similar interests (sport and jokes) and so 'jams' with some of the Smokers group during school time. Yet, this is partial and does not extend beyond school. He says they have 'different interests when it comes to outside school- like partying and stuff'. Damian and his friends by contrast, 'go to eat, just sit outside and chat and stuff like that. It's more of a casual thing really.' Or as Nathanial put it: 'sit around on the block'. The late night parties, raves and recreational drug taking that we learnt in chapter six constituted the Smokers group, do not represent an interest that Damian shares, but are also interests that he is excluded from. Indeed Tyler, despite his association with some of these boys, also stressed that he didn't drink or smoke, and said 'I just don't see the attractiveness of smoking.' Damian revealed how these groups were very cliquey about who was included in such conversations and

performances of these events. As we learnt in chapter six, the Smokers will 'talk about it the next day and make everyone notice' but they won't share it with people.

Not only are Damian's (and Tyler and Nathanial's) habituated raced, classed interests divergent from those of the White middle class Smokers group, Damian cannot perform the effortless (but legitimated) rebelliousness of the Smokers because of his Blackness. As I argued through the bus stop incident in chapter six, rebellious /deviant behaviour is read differently and more harshly on Black bodies. Ahmed notes that for most Black women and men, skin is seen as a stained physical 'reality' that cannot be transformed or contained (Ahmed 1998b cited in Skeggs, 2004, p. 156). Damian is forced to assert that 'lifestyle incompatibilities' (Gunew 2000 cited in Skeggs, 2004, p. 156) – not enjoying drinking and smoking – constrain his ability to mix, as opposed to an embodied Blackness, racism and processes of racial exclusion.

Unlike Kieran, or indeed Tristan, who I discussed earlier, who are able to take-up Black cool – to perform a minority ethnic working class identity despite being White – Damian is unable to perform White middle classness. The context of the 'Party' is important here. As discussed in chapter six, the 'party' and 'partying' was a particular White middle class phenomenon that the Black (/working class) students did not/could not fully engage with. Holt claims Bourdieu's work tends to present field as static, isotropic surfaces, while she argues that we should see field as a process/ as becoming, as produced in the encounter also. We should not think of places as static spaces, filled by bodies occupying them, but as Puwar argues, 'bodies do not simply move through spaces, but constitute and are constituted by them' (Puwar, 2004, p. 32). Further, 'power geometries' are central (Massey, 2005 [1993]). Gender, class and race operate simultaneously on multiple social and spatial scales (Mahler & Pessar, 2001), and specific spaces are produced and stabilised by the dominant groups who occupy them (Valentine, 2007). Thus I want to look at the context of the 'Party' as a space in which Damian (Nathaniel and Tyler) are 'space invaders' (Puwar, 2004): where they are (in their potential) Black bodies out of place in a White middle class space.

The 'party' is a White middle class space that is constituted by White bodies consuming: alcohol, cigarettes, recreational drugs, and drum and bass and grime music. Black cool is a product to be consumed here but Black bodies are not at home. I am talking about Skeggs' aesthetic, prosthetic or omnivorous middle class self (2004), where certain attributes, features or acts are read by privileged groups as desirable, are appropriated and appended, fashioned, worn, 'tried on', consumed, worn out and the remnants discarded. As I showed with the Neeks, in the context of the significant Black majority urban school, Black cool is worn/ played with by these White middle

classes and used as capital to 'get on' and enable friendship in the urban school in a way that is inclusive (but also fixed on Black bodies). Yet outside of school, in dominant White hegemonic spaces of privileged leisure, Black cool is appropriated in a way that is made exclusive. Indeed as Nathanial, Damian's best friend elucidated the 'party' is a space, where you can only 'imagine' how the 'other side,' the 'richer ones,' live. He dreams of 'going in and experiencing it' but rarely does.

So in Damian's comfortable habitus located in a predominantly Black student body, and one with subcultural privilege, he found himself now bordering a more uncomfortable space-time where he could only partially belong. While on the surface it appeared that the White middle class boys needed to 'fit in' with, to mix with him, in this Whiter, more middle class sixth form, Damian finds himself performing the 'good mixer'. Furthermore, in these performances of Black cool which are appropriated and appended, Damian remains exploited, fixed by it, and less likely to accrue the requisite legitimated capital in return. Because he cannot embody Whiteness and middle classness, because he is in the wrong Black body, Damian's access to upward social mobility is constrained.

7.4 Lara: the embodied, acceptable minority ethnic Other?

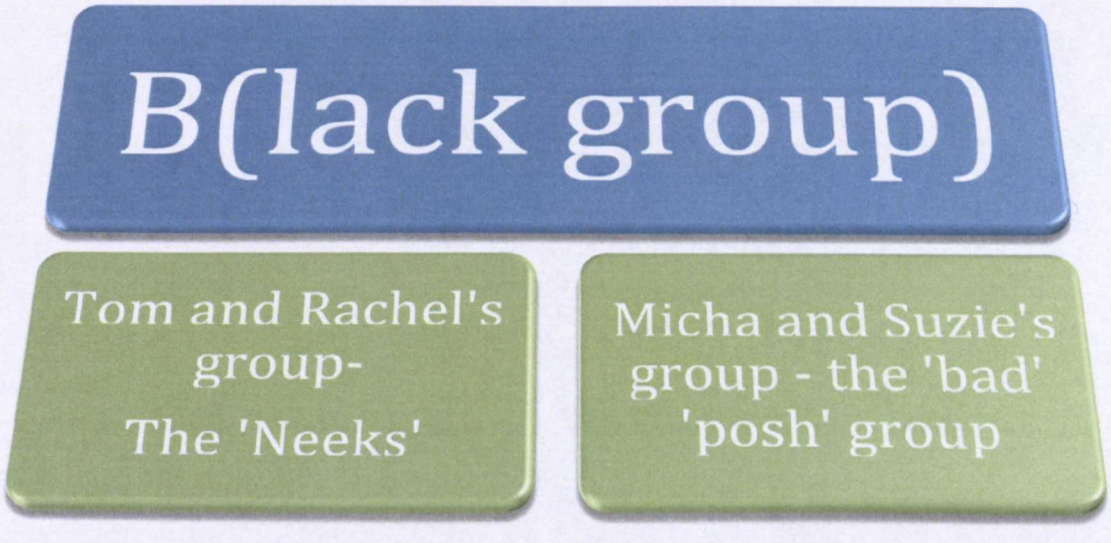
I now turn to discuss Lara at Stellar Academy, whose story of 'mixing' is, on the surface at least, a more successful one, but again, not without limitations. Lara was a petite, attractive South American girl of Peruvian heritage, with olive skin, long dark hair and dark eyes. She was in her final year of sixth form at Stellar Academy. She was born in Peru but had grown up in London since she was two years old. She lived in council rented accommodation in an area near the school, her family income was low and neither of her parents had gone to University. She was in the 'top tier' academic group; was taking three A levels and planned to go to university herself. She began secondary education at a different school, as she did not live close enough to get into Stellar Academy on first application, but it appears her parents persisted with her application as they felt it was a 'better' school and she was accepted in Year 9 at age 13. Lara described herself as shy and quiet.

Lara's story is one characterised by a move from a Black working class friendship group into a more White and middle class one. By the time she had reached year eleven, aged sixteen, Lara told me she associated more with middle class White students. These were not the 'Neeks' but rather the rebellious 'posh' group that I introduced in Part Three. In this section I show how Lara embodied the 'acceptable minority ethnic other' (Reay et al. 2007) which enabled her better

access to this White middle class friendship group. Yet I also show how this was ultimately characterised by semi-investments.

Lara conceptualised Stellar Academy, and the sixth form in particular, as divided into three main groups: Black students, and two White middle class student groups, who she further subdivided into a high achieving versus a rebellious White middle class group. Lara showed some discomfort in categorising students in racial terms: 'most people here are like... how can I put it... gangster. Most people are... Black', she whispered. She proceeded to draw a large 'B' for 'Black' on her friendship map and scored a solid line at right angles on the page locating and separating them in a large corner on the paper. She then claimed the 'other' group in the sixth form, where she located herself: 'we were known as 'the posh ones', and were generally high achieving ('top grade'), and she drew this group outside of the solid scored line and drew a circle around them.

Figure 6: Lara's Sociogram



Lara explained the process of movement into this friendship group, which in some ways was opposite to Tyler's experience. When she arrived at the school in year nine as a new girl of minority ethnic heritage, from a social housing estate, she was 'buddied up' with a Black girl Joleen, who looked after her and helped show her around and settle in. Lara recalled that she initially hung out with Joleen's group of friends, but had found this a jarring experience:

> *The first girl that took me around, [Joleen] she was basically part of this [Black] group. And then I was with them for a while, and then, I don't know, they were just a bit too much for me. They were really confident and really like, 'Oh my God, yeah, yeah,*

yeah!' and I was just like ... I was really shy and really quiet. I mean I know they were nice to me. It's not like they bullied me or anything. It's like they were just like ... they liked to take the piss a lot and I didn't know how to react to that. I was just like oh ... and they were like, 'we're only joking', and I was like 'okay'.

As I identified in parts two and three, Black students are often constructed as loud and boisterous (Ali, 2003a; Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007a, 2007b; Mirza, 1992). As I also outlined in chapter five, in relation to the Performing Arts girls in particular, who were part of this 'Black group' at Stellar Academy, 'loudness' and 'jokes' was constructed as a cultural marker, and came to characterise performances of Black working classness. However I also showed how these overt performances came to produce a way of being included or excluded from this group, creating subtle (albeit perhaps misrecognised) antagonism between them and other White middle class girls. Indeed while Lara recognised she was not being bullied, she found this loud, confident, boisterous and antagonistic approach to 'joking,' 'a bit too much'. In direct opposition, Lara described herself as 'shy' and 'quiet', which led her to her bond with a White middle class girl Ivy: 'Ivy who was like ... she is not at all like that ... she was really timid, and we just went off together.' We can see from this narrative how Lara did not feel 'at home' (Bottero, 2005; Johnson & Lawler, 2005) with the Black students way of being/ performance of being really confident, jokey and 'taking the piss a lot', but felt more at home in a White middle class feminine habitus.

However this location was not solidly inhabited. Lara went on to explain that she sometimes saw Joleen outside of school, but separately to her new friendship with Ivy and the White middle class group. As Lara reflected:

I still get on with them because, I mean, I live, like, around people like that. It was just, I don't know [...] I would have rather, like, preferred to be around people that, I don't know, understood me a bit more.

At the same time as she 'gets on' with the Black students as she 'lives around' 'people like that', Lara felt misunderstood in this subculture, but this wasn't a complete rejection of the Black students, on Lara's part, but more of a gradual realisation of where she fits (of 'comfortability' as Tyler calls it). As Lara says, she would just rather be around people who 'understood her more'.

What is also interesting in Lara's account – and which helps elucidate her position as a border crosser - are her claims to know the Other. She used to be in the Black working class friendship group; and on her council estate she 'lives around people like that' but she also feels it is not her place. So Lara has some (urban sub)cultural capital which enables her to fit with the Black group. She was able to claim a knowing – knowing authentic Black domestic experience, because she *lives around people like that*- and she is able to bring this capital into the urban school. But in

terms of habitus, she cannot move like a fish in water (Bourdieu and Waquant, 1992, p. 127) in this group - it doesn't come naturally, and they don't fully 'understand each other'. But also, we can understand this as a conscious positioning in terms of an affective distancing from the unhappy objects of academic failure, as I go on to discuss later. As I outlined in chapter four, the spectre of 'trouble' on the estates attaches to these Black bodies (Alexander, 1992, 2000; Archer, 2003) and Lara needed to take care to avoid contamination.

I argue this is part of a process of Lara becoming 'respectable' (Skeggs, 1997); dissociating herself from the impossible subjects of educational success; and seeking out a more respectable position. However Lara's story is perhaps one of the 'good' – or desiring - upwardly mobile social mixer: the aspirational subject (Kulz, 2011). As Kulz argues minority ethnic students 'need to circulate and accrue value, or risk becoming pathologised and immobile' (Kulz, 2011, p. 14). Indeed, Lara's association with these Black girls risks her too becoming pathologised, read as the 'wrong sort of pupil' (Archer, 2005, p. 3); or the 'impossible learner' (Youdell, 2006a) and read as not valuing education. Lara can be seen as having an aspirational habitus (Baker, 2005) which, despite her difference, makes them not too different, unlike the White and Black working classes who are the constitutive limit of White middle class friendship (Skeggs, 2004). This is of course reinforced by the cultural capital she has of being enrolled in the 'top' tier group in the sixth form. The promise of happiness and success resides in Lara's proximity to Whiteness, and distancing from Blackness (Ahmed, 2007). Lara's potential embodiment of the impossible learner brings the threat of her being read as of less value and thus must be constantly defended against, and worked upon.

Indeed, Lara positioned herself very much in opposition to the Black students in the school. Lara's story has echoes of Hey's findings in her ethnography of girls' friendships, where a lower middle class girl was warned off the Black girls, referred to as the 'bad lot' (1997, p.57). Labelling the Black students as 'gangster,' Lara's talk simultaneously homogenises 'Black' students; but also operates as a racialising mechanism through which she disidentifies herself from them. Perry, in her research in a US high school, argued:

> *Styles, vernaculars and demeanors that marked identification with a certain clique or subculture simultaneously inferred racial identification. In a word, peer group activities racialised youth (Perry, 2001b, p. 75).*

In Perry's research, as with my study, Black student groups were often referred to as 'rappers' or 'gangsters'. Thus not only do peer group *activities* racialise youth, but peer group *discourses* serve to racialise. As I go on to argue, this racialisation informed Lara's sense of belonging in the school, as a minority ethnicity working class student but not of Black heritage, whereby Lara

resisted racialising practices within the school which sought to locate her as belonging with these Black students.

In Archer's research with the multi-ethnic working classes, she identifies a sentiment that 'in order to have a chance of inhabiting 'success' they would have to change themselves' (Archer, 2005, p. 16). Like Damian, Lara was driven by the need to 'change up' (Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007b). Lara's identity work and refusal of being associated with the Black girls needs to be understood in a context of a realisation of the risks inherent in positioning herself in Black group: the risks of contamination through proximity to the 'mass' of unhappy objects of educational failure. Not only do they emanate bad feeling, nothing good can come of it. As I have explained throughout this thesis, these subjects appear as lack, deficit, and void of value (Boyne, 2002 cited in Skeggs & Loveday, 2012): they produce ugly feelings and thus must be avoided.

In one reading, Lara is a shining example of true comprehensive education: that a genuine mix of social class and ethnic backgrounds in a school can facilitate working class student's access to social capital (in the form of access to the middle classes). However, Griffin (2011) highlights the ways in which youth and young people do not have equal access to cultural resources and techniques to construct themselves in 'appropriate' ways. Not all young people have access to cultural resources to produce themselves as a subject of value, and thus with exchange value in the context of upwardly mobile friendship moves. Furthermore, as I have shown through the analysis of Tyler and Damian, not all bodies have the same possibilities for this (Skeggs, 2004). My field notes state: *Lara could pass for a White girl- she had fairly pale skin- could pass as a tan and long dark brown hair and dark eyes. She was small and slim and pretty.* Perry (2001b) in her research on White students found a student who was 'half Chinese' heritage who looked White and hung out with an all White group in school. Indeed, Archer and Francis' research clearly reveals the construction of Chinese identities as closely aligned with the 'ideal learner' (Archer, 2005; Archer & Francis, 2005; Francis & Archer, 2005).

I argue that Lara's particular 'constellation' of identities characterised by a 'passing' Whiteness and her 'passive', 'shy', 'timid' femininity - like the Chinese students in Archer and Francis's work - enabled Lara to be read as the ideal student / the good learner (Youdell, 2006a), in a way that Tyler and Damian cannot. As authors such as Walkerdine have argued, middle class femininity is coded as sexually restrained, demure, and passive- congruent with the idea of the innocent school girl (Archer, 2005; Walkerdine, 1996), and Lara can embody this successfully – at least in part. In research with Reay, we have argued:

> *A segment of ethnic minority children are separated out from the excess of Blackness and come to represent the acceptable face of working classness, and of ethnic/'racial' difference, they are the children who are 'exceptionally bright and very nice', 'are doing the best', those who are a paler shade of dark, and come from families 'where the parents really care about education', 'have high aspirations' and 'are really ambitious for their children' – the 'model minority'. (Reay et al., 2007, p. 1048 citing Leonardo, 2004: 129)*

As Reay and colleagues acknowledge though, this status is not attributed to all minority ethnic groups. The 'aspirational', acceptable minority ethnic other is most commonly and stereotypically attributed to Chinese and Asian (subcontinent) girls, who, research suggests, fairly consistently ascribe to middle-class values towards education, regardless of class position (Archer & Francis, 2006). Indeed, like Leila and Ed, two Chinese students who (partially) cross the border into the White middle class Neeks group, Lara's characteristics have exchange value. Lara represents the acceptable or manageable minority ethnic other (Reay et al., 2007). In my research with Reay and colleagues the 'aspirational' ethnic minorities come to be defined as good and having worth in a middle-class process of drawing boundaries and attributing value. Most importantly this value is read onto certain bodies. Lara's embodied intersectional identity in this context can pass as slightly exotic: as foreign; (higher status) modern-foreign-language-speaking; Spanish girl.

Indeed, as we saw in chapter five, the Black students who were equally 'aspirational:' the Performing Arts girls who claim to have 'been brought up to be successful'- and Ronelle and Jay who also chose to move to the school in year nine because they saw it as 'a good school' – did not see the same social capital available for accrual through proximity to Whiteness. They remained in almost exclusively Black friendships. Furthermore this proximity to Whiteness altered Lara's perception of the school. As I discussed in chapter four the Black working class students constructed the school as a good school but the White middle classes were repelled and felt let down, haunted by the spectre of failure attached to a 'bad' school. Likewise, Lara concurred: 'Mum thought it would be closer and it was a new school so it would be a lot better. But it wasn't.'

This lengthy quote from Ahmed beautifully shows how Lara's embodied difference but sameness, not only enabled her position in the friendship groups, but also, her position of possibility is also enabled through composition of the rest of the school:

> *When we face others we seek to recognise who they are by reading the signs on their body, or by reading their body as a sign. [...] such acts of reading constitute the subject in relation to 'the stranger' who is recognised as out of place in a given place. The surprising nature of encounters can be understood in relation to the structural*

> *possibility that we may not be able to read the bodies of others. However, each time we are faced by an other whom we cannot recognise, we seek to find other ways of recognition, not only by re-reading the body of this other who is faced, but by telling the difference between* ***this*** *other and* ***other*** *others. The encounters we might yet have with other others hence surprise the subject, but they also reopen the prior histories of encounter that violate and fix others in regimes of difference (Ahmed 2000 cited in Skeggs, 2004, p.166 my emphasis)*

Lara, is clearly 'other'- she is foreign, but she is not the Black Other. Her embodied minority ethnicity is relational. This process of recognising Lara – as a paler shade of dark (Reay et al., 2007)- further fixes the Black 'gangster' group in place. There is less potential for transformation, or for boundary crossing relationships for this Black group, as the model of the gangster is fixed and reproduced through Lara's acceptance and movement into the White middle class group.

So indeed Lara is same but different. Within her more rebellious 'posh' White middle class group, Lara explained there was a more rarefied 'Neek' group, who she also distanced herself from. She explained:

> *So like basically there was Rachel and Tom's group [the Neeks], and then there was Micha and Suzie's group. [...] And Suzie, like, influenced all of them. I mean, I didn't smoke. I drank a bit but I didn't smoke and we were just so...we were known as like the bad, posh people. We're not posh at all, but um...and these [Rachel and Tom's group] were like the goody-goodies...like they were like the other White...like the minority basically of the people like top grade students. They were like...we still like, when we had parties, we still invited each other...we still did talk because Adam was part of that group, but we didn't share the same...we were a bit wild and they were just really hard working.*

What is interesting is how Lara simultaneously shows how she was *in* this group, but not quite *of* it: 'we are not all posh' – meaning 'I'm not posh', and 'I didn't smoke'. Here we can see the 'bad posh' ones are constructed as not as posh, through a process of disidentifying from the Neeks. Indeed, Lara's 'integration' was still partial. Describing herself as the 'foreign one' in the group and the 'new girl,' positioned as exotic for speaking Spanish on the phone to her parents, yet despite having attended the school for five years, she remained something of an anomaly in this White middle class group.

Furthermore, Lara's White middle class friends embodied a 'mobility capital' (Brooks & Waters, 2010) which enabled them to move on and up by physically moving schools. This mobility capital was in some ways available to Lara as evidenced in her 'aspirational' move to Stellar Academy in the first place, however Lara's less endowed cultural capital saw her moving in the 'wrong' direction in terms of upward social mobility: joining the school when many of the White middle

classes were leaving. Lara had lost several friends fairly quickly in year nine, in the White middle class flight that I outlined in chapter four, including a 'half English half French' girl, Beatrice, who had apparently moved to a boarding school in Bosnia. Many more of her friends moved to undertake A levels in other more prestigious schools.

Furthermore, Lara with less endowed cultural capital, could not fully understand these 'crazy' moves. She didn't really know why. Lara found herself precarious- left behind, in this tenuously already marked space-time of 'not quite the right mix', the pathologised, agonised space of less value. Indeed, now many friends had left, Lara revealed how her friendship bond with this rebellious posh group had weakened. Indeed her two best friends Polly and Bella had both moved to higher performing sixth forms outside of the borough, and when they moved made lots of new friends. Lara said they sometimes meet for a drink and catch up but are not close anymore. Lara rationalised that it was 'a good thing, in a way' that they left because of 'distractions' and if they were still here, she said she rationalised that she 'probably wouldn't focus much' on her studies. She gave an impression that they had grown apart ('we just got bored of ourselves') however this naturalised explanation masks a classed process. As I argued in chapter six (section 4), this White middle class rebellious posh group were able to append/prosthetise a rebellious, counter-school cultural identity, and when it became too much of a threat, they were able to take it off, or put it down. This prosthetisation is evident here in the 'bad posh group' moving on, and up, to a new more middle class environment. Here they could accrue cultural capital in the form of 'better' qualifications, but also social capital through proximity to other White middle classes. Lara, as a minority ethnic working class girl, has a less tenable position however, where risking 'distraction' or losing her focus, is a more tangible probability. Lara has less distance to fall, but it is more likely to happen.

Despite attempts to accrue value in the self, through an 'aspirational' move to the 'better' Stellar Academy; the acquisition of cultural capital through hard work to access the A level tier; and attempts at the acquisition of social capital through aligning herself with a middle class crowd, this is thwarted as Lara ultimately finds herself excluded from the White middle class Neek group, and left behind, fixed in place in the school with students of lesser value.

Conclusion

In this chapter, through close analysis of three student's friendships, I have demonstrated how social mixing is a fluid, shifting, context specific and performative experience, but also one heavily imbued with relations of power. Indeed I have also shown how different space-time relationalities

and intersectionalities, which are written on bodies, produce different possibilities for friendships. In the field of the Black-majority urban school: Stellar Academy, Lara, the shy, timid, high achieving, petite, pale-skinned South American girl, is the acceptable minority ethnic other for the privileged White middle class, which fixes the 'mass' of Black students in place. However, the upwardly mobile White middle classes ultimately leave her behind. I have shown how Tyler as a young, over-weight Black (American) boy began his school career as an acceptable friend for the 'nerd' White boys who took him under their wing, but consciously worked his way into the Black sporty crowd, through changing his bodily appearance, and hence the amalgam of features read onto it. I have further explored how the White middle classes in an elite minority at Eden Hill school, are able to prosthetise Black cool and use it as cultural capital in the context of the urban school, but how this appropriation is not two way and fixes Black boys such as Damian and Tyler, and excludes them from other more privileged spaces of difference. In the chapter eight I go on to explore students who are entirely outside of these hegemonic, normative, classed, raced and gendered subcultural groups, and outside of this dominant system of exchange.

Chapter 8: The misfits, social mixing and use value

As my analysis in chapter seven has demonstrated, attempts to mix into the middle class subcultures are highly constrained and dependent on space-time embodied relational and intersectional identities. These identities are also located within hierarchies of value, where certain space-time embodiments have more value than others. The successes (or failures) of mixing into these groups are about the (de/)valuing of embodied resources by these subcultures. The final chapter of this thesis looks to students outside of these subcultural groups entirely. What I found here were predominantly working class students of varying ethnicities, and while tentative, and far from conclusive evidence, I found what might be considered more genuine mixing here, with close friendships across gender and ethnic difference and in some instances across social class. Through analysis of these students, I have termed the 'misfits', this last chapter then explores if the possibilities for genuine mixing lie outside of these hegemonic subcultures and systems of exchange: within those excluded from these dominant systems of exchange. In this chapter I argue that, with respect to social mixing, these overlooked students -both overlooked in the school, as well as within scholarship on learner identities and youth subcultures- are the missing piece of the puzzle. I propose that they are central to the theorisation of social mixing.

In Part Three I have argued that the White middle class subcultural groups, the Neeks and the Smokers, protect and reproduce their privilege through the repetition of legitimated cultural performances. Conversely, I show how the Black working class groups, the Football crowd; the Performing Arts girls, reproduce their disadvantaged position through (the repetition of) hyper-heteronormative gendered, classed and raced performances which, while accruing some *(sub)cultural* capital, are devalued in the educational setting. In Roberts' (2011, 2012) research on youth education transitions, he focuses on the 'ordinary,' 'non-spectacular' and overlooked students, arguing that transition studies tend to dichotomise youth experience by focusing either on the linear pathways of middle class students through post-compulsory education on the one hand, or the pathways of those not in education, employment or training on the other; and not on ordinary students who fall neatly into neither of these polarised positions. He conceptualises these 'ordinary' students are the 'missing middle' (Roberts, 2011, 2012): representing a hole in our understanding. This analytical observation prompted my focus outside of the subcultural groups, where I found the 'misfits'. In the space-time context of the urban sixth form, the misfits

neither have access to spectacular cultural capital of White middle class high achievement (of embodying the right kind of enterprising, neoliberal, cosmopolitan subject) nor the spectacular (yet devalued) (sub)cultural capital of Black working class boys. Yet, unlike Tyler, Damian and Lara, the misfits do not attempt to mix into these hegemonic subcultural groups either. They appear as Bourdieu's excluded, who exclude themselves from that from which they have already been excluded (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 471).

Here I conceptualise these young people's (self-)exclusion as a failure (/refusal) to embody and perform the enterprising subject, which is the ultimate subject of value. There are three key ways in which I conceptualise this: through embodied identities which have no exchange value in this field; through having and being 'problems,' which are sticky and contaminating and have *negative* exchange value; and through inhabiting a 'quiet' identity as an avoidance of risk, in a culture where risk-taking is fundamental to producing the enterprising subject.

However, following Skeggs and Loveday, I ask how we understand personhood outside of this future-oriented, accruing subject: those who are purposefully excluded from and cannot access the right resources, convert, exchange or accrue value for themselves. For Bourdieu, these subjects appear as lack, deficit, and void of value (Boyne 2002 cited in Skeggs & Loveday, 2012). But Skeggs and Loveday suggest that we shift our perspective from exchange value to use value. (Skeggs, 2005). The misfits' failure (/refusal) to perform the enterprising subject renders their selves as without exchange value, but their relations become more about use value, by default. As their friendships then are about use value and not exchange value, they *have the potential to* be more mixed. The misfits' friendships are with others who do not 'fit'. In this chapter I tentatively explore how this conceptualisation of social mixing might lead us to an alternative value system premised on use value.

8.1 Introducing the 'misfits'

None of the friendship groups across the study were entirely homogenous in terms of gender, class or race. Unsurprising in these urban mixed schools, most students in my study had some relationship with someone who was at least a different race/ethnicity or gender, but such friendships tended to be superficial and not deep. The tendency was for close friendships to be fairly homogenous. What was different about the 'misfits' is that they tended to have a *close* friend/s of a different gender, or race or social class background to themselves. This did not tend to be a group of friends however, as we saw with the subcultures, but friends kept separately and independently, often outside of school. This chapter draws on the experiences of six of the

students to explore these alternative identities and relationships. At Eden Hill school, I focus on Carl a Black working class boy; Gemma and Francis two White working class girls and Helen, a Chinese working class girl (all located in the 'quiet group' studying for A levels) and at Stellar Academy: Kaden, a mixed race working class boy; and Robert, a White working class boy (both located in the 'lower' tier BTEC groups). See Appendix 7 for the diagram of where these students featured in relation to the other groups in the schools.

In the first section, with the examples of Carl, Gemma, Kaden and Robert, I discuss the ways in which the 'misfits'' failure to embody the enterprising subject of value, for some, emerged from embodying devalued White working class identities and for others an embodied 'oddness' or unconventionality in terms of their interests and 'personality'. This, I argue arose, in part, from non-normative classed, raced and gendered identities, or 'heteroglossic' (Francis, 2010) and 'unpredictable' (Wessendorf, 2010) performances. In the second section, drawing on Gemma, Carl and Robert, I discuss how (not unrelated to these non-normative identities) these students came to be constructed as having 'problems' and being 'problems' which attributed them a *negative* exchange value. In the third section I discuss the 'misfits' avoidance of risk, which both produces, and is produced by, their position of mis-fit, but is ultimately antithetical to their recognition as the valued enterprising subject. In the final section I tentatively and provisionally argue, with some illustrations, that these non-normative embodiments; 'problems' and subsequent avoidance of risk have the potential to give rise to more mixed friendships as these friendships are premised on use value not exchange value.

8.2 Embodied oddness and unconventional ways of being

> *Becoming the subject of value depends on turning one's self into a marketable product, into a commodity, and ultimately becoming more easily controlled through ethical self governance (Skeggs, 2004, p. 73).*

In this section I argue that one of the key ways that the misfits failed to perform the enterprising subject of neoliberalism, was through their embodiment of identities that had little or no exchange value in the urban school. In my research, and in line with contemporary theorisation (Reay et al., 2007; Skeggs, 2004; Skeggs, 2005), White working class students were most likely to be found outside of the dominant symbolic economy of value, with little or no exchange value, but so too were some minority ethnic or mixed race working class young people. I argue that having exchange value is premised on readability, and while the school-based subcultural groups practiced normative class race and gender identities, the misfits tended to embody non-normative identities which were either difficult to read, or read as having little or no value. I argue

here that the symbolic economy of exchange encourages gender, race and class normativity, as this is about identities being evaluated in the symbolic economy (McDowell, 2012) and easy readability makes evaluation possible. Being read as working class has less value, so too does *not being able to be read* as *(White) middle class*. Skeggs argues that what is important in the neoliberal economy of value is how to display one's subjectivity 'properly' (Skeggs, 2005, p. 974). The misfits do not know how to tell or display themselves properly – or cannot- because of their devalued, or non-normative identities. They cannot accrue value to themselves because their displays devalue (Skeggs, 2005, p. 974). I argue here that the regulation of gender/sexuality, race and class is part of this governance, where 'proper' displays involve normative identity performances.

Furthermore, this enterprising self is an aestheticised self. Savage and colleagues (1992) argue that performing the self- especially in relation to the stylisation of the body, including an emphasis on appearance, display and the management of impression- is key for membership and constitution of the new (neoliberal cosmopolitan) middle classes (and see Skeggs, 2005). This aestheticisation is central to my argument in Chapter Six about the Smokers and how their aestheticised embodiment brought them legitimated capital in the school. Here I go on to show that the misfits embodied the 'wrong' aesthetic, which produced them as subjects without value.

Several of the 'misfits' tended to engage in cultural practices which could be conceived of as 'geeky,' which were bound up with identities that could be described as unconventional, or unpredictable in terms of their expected class, race and gender. They tended to be the kids who were a bit 'weird'. Unlike the Neeks who we saw in Chapter Six- pathologised but still empowered through their embodied Whiteness and middle classness and the social and cultural capital this accrued- the misfits were perhaps the 'real' geeks, or the 'pariah' Boffins of Francis' (2009) work, where their weirdness did not have any currency. A number of students performed these heteroglossic or non-normative identities, but I focus on four here in my substantive analysis, Carl, Gemma, Robert and Kaden.

8.2.1 Carl and 'weird', 'booksmart' working class Black masculinity

Carl was a very overweight working class Black Caribbean boy who enjoyed computer games and history lessons and loved the comfort of his own company. In many ways Carl was the 'nerd' that Tyler refused to become. While Tyler went to a great deal of effort to produce himself as the Black working class subject of subcultural value in the urban school, Carl's story is one of exclusion from that from which he has already been excluded (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 471)- of inevitable exclusion from White middle class hegemonic cultures of value, but also of knowing his place

outside of this subculturally valued Black working class masculinity. I analyse here the ways in which Carl was unable to perform a normative Black working class masculinity but also unable to be read as the enterprising subject of value.

As we learnt in Chapter seven Carl categorised people as 'booksmart' or 'streetsmart', and I discussed how streetsmart mapped onto a particular urban Black working class masculinity. However despite his embodied Black working classness, Carl proclaimed that he was actually the most booksmart of all the people he knew on his social housing estate. Carl was not interested in football like his Black working class peers in school, nor cars and mopeds like the other boys on his housing estate. In opposition to this hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995), he had a private passion for history which he discovered through strategy based computer games, such as Age of Empires, where he learnt about historical figures Joan of Arc and Genghis Khan, and Command and Conquer: a science fiction game set in a dystopian future earth at war. Carl was able to relate this knowledge and passion to his History studies at school. He claimed 'I just fell in love with it':

> *I was so into games it got me really interested in History. Then what pushed it over the edge was during the year two when you learn about World War II and you learn about the gas masks and the Blitz and stuff like that and it got me really interested, and that ... over time I developed a weird fascination with Russia.*

Carl was now taking A level History, English and ICT. He also spent time with his dad building computers out of hybrid components, and saw a liveable future for himself studying electronic engineering at University and working in computer development, despite being the first in his family to aim for Higher Education.

In direct opposition to the loud sociability of the Football crowd, Carl was quiet and enjoyed his own company. He explained: 'I've spent like a lot of time playing computer games and by myself so I've had like a really different childhood, because most of my time was actually spent by myself.' He explained that other students often read him as 'reclusive' but he refuted: 'It's not that I didn't make friends, but I actually liked to be in by myself.' Through this experience of isolation Carl came to conceptualise himself as having a 'weird' way of being that no one else quite understood:

> *I'm actually like the weirdest one out of any group. I have my own weird form of logic the way I think and act and how I justify my actions and no one ever understands it to be honest. Actually no one ever understands it but that's what makes me me.*

In many ways, in key alignment with the figure of the Rational Scientific Man – a particular White Western masculinity (Leathwood, 2006) -Carl went on to describe his way of being as 'sort of robotic:' having a rational mind, not driven by emotions.

In fact much of Carl's cultural practices and ways of being fit with a particular White middle classness: an interest in intellectual pursuits; a rational mind; a commitment to his academic studies; private intellectually challenging hobbies and a future-oriented goal of Higher Education study and professional work. In fact, his cultural practices very much echo the White middle class masculine geek of Mendick's (Moreau, Mendick, & Epstein, forthcoming) analysis. However I argue that Carl's embodied Blackness and working classness meant he was unable to accrue the capital of the privileged geek, and was unable to be read as the enterprising subject of value. Despite being one of the most engaging, perceptive and interesting willing volunteers in my study on friendship, Carl had not been read by others in this way. Instead, Carl explained that his way of being was problematised and, as a child, he was labelled as 'lacking social skills' and was subject to intervention by social workers. Walkerdine and colleagues (2001, p. 121) in *Growing Up Girl* show that such regulatory judgments are socially differentiated, where working class young people who have problems at school are more likely to have their behaviour read as pathological. As a working class Black boy, Carl found himself subject to the regulatory gaze of the institutions of the state, with powerful claims to know what is 'normal'. I argue that what is crucial here is that Carl's way of being was unconventional in terms of performances of Black working class masculinity, thus constructed by the authorities as problematic, deviant and as 'lack'. I argue that this is a particular classed, raced and gendered symbolic violence, in that had Carl been a White middle class boy, his way of being would be unlikely to generate such scrutiny and pathologisation. Carl is hence an unintelligible, impossible subject (Youdell, 2006a). Unable to be read as 'proper' (Skeggs, 2004, p.974) Carl's subjectivity is misrecognised as pathological and medicalised by social services.

8.2.2 Gemma and odd White working class femininity

Gemma was a White working class girl who lived with her elderly parents in council housing locally. Her father had, at one point, been a Labour councillor but had not worked for many years due to illness, and her mother had never worked. As an urban White working class girl from a workless household Gemma immediately embodied the constitutive limit of value (Skeggs, 2004). In the absence of a discernible White working class subculture which can generate some internal value in peer groups in the school (such as the Lads in Willis' (1977) study), Gemma was also unable to accrue subcultural value. However, Gemma's embodied performances of White working class femininity were not normative either and were read as 'odd'. As I go on to explain, while Gemma's aesthetic had an element of working class 'chavvy' or 'townie'[37] femininity, she also

[37] Both 'chav' and 'townie' were used by students to describe White working class students and associated styles of dress and fashion.

embodied elements of a geek aesthetic. Furthermore, in opposition to the figure of 'the chav', Gemma was highly committed to her studies and planned to go to university (Hollingworth & Williams, 2009 for a discussion of 'chav' idenitities in education).

There were a number of ways in which Gemma's identity performance was somewhat unintelligible (Youdell, 2006a) and this related to a 'heteroglossic' (Francis, 2010) and 'unpredictable' (Wessendorf, 2010) raced, gendered, classed performance. Faith (a White middle class girl) first suggested that I approach Gemma to interview because she saw her as an interesting and unique character. Francis (citing Kessler and McKenna, 1978) points out that the 'reader' is central to gender construction, but also that these readings are produced from tacit shared understandings of normativity. Indeed I confirm here that Faith's readings of Gemma's unconventionality were indeed shared by myself as researcher. In my initial field notes I observed:

> *Gemma did come across as an odd girl. Perhaps a stereotypical 'geek'. I warmed to her quickly as she was friendly and quite amusing. Quite matter of fact. She was quite well spoken but had something about her that made her come across as old before her time. Like kids who have elderly parents, and lo and behold it turned out her parents are quite old. She had a brother who is 20 years older.*

We can see from my notes that Gemma's performances of age and social class were incongruous with her more 'objective' classification as a seventeen year old working class girl. In terms of her appearance, my field notes read Gemma as more of a 'townie' in appearance: *She was wearing a pink top, jeans and a brown leather jacket with fur collar. She had small gold earrings on. I would have guessed she was more 'Townie'. She had quite thick glasses on.* However this 'townie' or 'chavvy' look was toned down, and was also made 'geeky' with the addition of quite thick spectacles. Her well-spoken elocution belied her working class background; her astuteness and matter of factness was read as 'old before her time'; her pink top, gold earrings and fur-lined leather jacket were read as heterosexual working class 'townie/chavvy' femininity, but her thick spectacles were read as asexual, studious geek. Gemma performed a somewhat 'heteroglossic' (Francis, 2010) gendered, raced, class position which positioned her as odd.

Hey (1997, p125 citing Lauretis, 1984), described subjectivity, as the semiotic interaction of 'outer world' and 'inner world'. I have outlined how Gemma's outer world displayed a heteroglossia, and Gemma's inner world appeared to be equally non-normative. Unlike the stereotypical 'chav', Gemma was high achieving, had gained entry to this relatively high achieving sixth form to take A levels, and was thoroughly committed to her studies. Unlike the White working class women of Skeggs' and others' research (see e.g. Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007b), Gemma was far from engaged in overt performances of hyper-heterosexual femininities, of loudness, brashness and hedonism

(Skeggs, 1997). Quite conversely, as I go on to discuss, she described herself as 'quiet', and liked others who were 'quiet.' When Gemma was talking about the Smokers group I asked if she smoked and she replied: 'certainly not' and went on to say: 'I'm not a big drinker either [...] I don't really like the thought of like getting drunk just to throw up over someone [...]'. We can read this taste aversion as Gemma excluding herself from that from which she has already been excluded. She had strong class consciousness with a certain pride (or lack of shame) about her family's working class roots and, like others in the school, recognised the exclusionary nature of this middle class Smokers group. However we can also read Gemma's rejection of smoking and drinking as a certain performance of respectable femininity (Skeggs, 1997). Skeggs has argued that bodily excess (through consumption, sexuality, fecundity) are signs of moral deviance and have long been associated with working class femininity, while modesty and restraint is associated with middle class femininity (Skeggs, 1997). However, like the women in Skeggs' study, despite Gemma's attempts at ethical self governance (Skeggs, 2004, p. 73), Gemma's embodied White working class 'townie'/'chavvy' aesthetic meant she could not fully perform White middle classness, yet she also defied the stereotypical White working class femininity expected of her. I argue that this contradictory performance constrained Gemma's possibilities for embodying the enterprising subject of value.

8.2.3 Robert: the clown and special, disabled male femininity

A third student whose embodied identity saw him positioned outside of the symbolic economy of value was Robert at Stellar Academy. Robert was a White boy from a big working class family with Irish, Scottish and English 'all in one' heritage. Robert had significant health problems, telling me he had been born with severe scoliosis (curvature of the spine) and with severely reduced lung function. This meant that throughout his school career Robert had repeat hospital visits for operations and missed long periods of his schooling. Rather than try to hide his illness and disability through a 'quiet' identity, Robert made light of it by being the class clown, which brought him some 'popularity', not in a 'cool' way, but just through being 'well known':

> *I'm friends with a lot of people in this school because I'm very well known and very ... not about my [illness] apart from that ...people talk about how much I'm funny and how much ... well I used to do it a bit too much for attention. I think around year 7 I was actually ... I used to do stuff just to make sure I came out well in popularity.*

Robert's clowning was intimately connected to his (non-normative) body, and he joked about being name-called a 'pole dancer' by others because he has metal rods in his spine. He said he would play at being a contortionist by putting his legs over his head, or hanging fully suspended from the coat rails by his rucksack, like a rag doll. However, he was acutely aware this clowning

had a downside. He said the consequence was that he tended to hurt himself and he got into trouble with the Headteacher. Robert protested that it wasn't his fault, that he was trying to make people laugh, but 'no-one was really paying attention'. Like Paul, the boy with Special Educational Needs in Youdell's book *Impossible Bodies Impossible Selves*, Robert was trying to play the 'counter-school cool boy' – a normative White working class masculinity- but 'he doesn't quite get it right' (2006a, p. 127). Nobody really noticed and he is unable to accrue the (sub)cultural capital desired from this behaviour. For Robert, his ill body defines him: 'the only reason they know me is because of my illnesses,' 'they know how much I'm fighting to stay alive.' Using Youdell's (2006a, p. 127) work we can argue that Robert is constituted here in the context of multiple prior constitutions as 'special', as 'ill', so that his bodily practices are immediately defined in this way. This is despite similar 'clowning' behaviours being read differently on other (raced, classed and gendered) 'cooler' kids, such as the Football crowd. Citing Bourdieu (1991), Youdell points out that 'we all have a nuanced, practical sense of what constitutes, and is constitutive of, normal and non-normal practices and so normal and non-normal students' (Youdell, 2006a, p. 128). Thus like the boy with special educational needs in her study, Robert is constituted not only as an impossible student and learner, but as an impossible subject. Indeed here we can see that Robert makes attempts to sell himself as a marketable product, a commodity, but –embodying the wrong aesthetic- his displays of subjectivity devalue him.

Furthermore, Robert to some extent embodied Francis' (2010) 'male femininity'- he displayed a non-normative working class masculinity. Robert expressed non-normative gendered interests. Robert was studying BTEC 'Cookery' which he really liked because you 'get to go in the kitchen and actually try cooking ourselves'. Seeing similar parallels with Reay's *Shaun's Story* (Reay, 2002), Robert was 'in touch with his feminine side' and was somewhat of a 'mummy's boy', a closeness which had developed through his illness:

> *Every time I've had an operation , all the time I've had to stay overnight in hospital, she would always be right next to me. She would never leave my bedside and she would never want me to be in pain. She would always be next to me and she never left me. She never wanted to see her children get hurt. Even if there is bullying, school bullying, which I have had ... my Mum came down one time chasing the boy. It wasn't pretty for the teachers!*

The repetition of his mother's commitment here is quite powerful: 'every time', 'all the time', 'always'; 'she never wanted...', 'she never left me'- accentuating the intense emotional nature of Robert's relationship with his mother. We can draw parallels here with Tyler's imagined scenario, where he saw his obese self, sitting at home with his mother. Here closeness and dependency to their mother, for boys, represents an emasculation. Robert's non-normative identity saw him

bullied, once so badly that his best friend Janice telephoned his mother as Robert was so upset. Robert then did not 'fit' the 'monoglossic' gender-sexuality order (Francis, 2010) expected of White working class masculinity, and could not accrue value.

8.2.4 Kaden: mixed-race and non-normative hobbies and interests

Unlike many others, Kaden appeared to be completely oblivious to social differentiation among his peer group and appeared unconscious to the possibilities to use the interview situation as a means to perform the enterprising middle class subject (Byrne, 2003; Skeggs, 2004; Skeggs, 2005; Skeggs et al., 2008). Kaden was of mixed ethnicity but did not specify his heritage, and he was from an ostensibly working class background. Wessendorf argues that in super-ethnically-diverse contexts, 'otherness' becomes 'unpredictable as people are not easily categorised' (Wessendorf, 2010). The 'sign vehicles' (Goffman 1971)- the indicators and markers that make race more readable- are more complicated. As discussed in Chapter seven, Tanisha argued that in the urban school, dominated by Black working class and White middle class subcultures, mixed race students did not know where they fit. At Stellar Academy we also saw the Black students homogenised as gangster, and the White middle classes forming tight cliques. In this context Kaden, like other (non Black) minority and mixed ethnicities, is not easily read or positioned in a group. Whilst being mixed race immediately positions his identity as non-normative, and has the potential to trouble easy evaluations, Kaden also had interests and hobbies that were varied in terms of habituated classed and raced cultural practices, and were not gender stereotypical. As I show, this, coupled with his mixed ethnicity, meant he was not easily evaluated.

Stellar Academy sixth form was highly differentiated and segregated in terms of 'ability' and this meant Kaden was positioned outside of mainstream groups in the school as he was one of the few students studying at level 2 (GCSE equivalent). Kaden was studying BTEC Sport at level 2, as he had not acquired the requisite GCSE grades, to take BTEC level 3 (A Level equivalent) and he had failed GCSE Maths and was retaking it. As well as playing piano, Kaden liked a variety of sports, including Rugby *and* football, swimming, athletics, and was recently enjoying rock climbing and orienteering as part of his course. He also attended Woodcraft Folk- a kind of alternative, mixed gender youth club similar to the Scouts, but popular with the urban cosmopolitan middle classes (Williams, Jamieson, & Hollingworth, 2008). Thus Kaden's hobbies encapsulated a mixture of what would be read as 'typical' working class and middle class cultural practices. Like the Boffins in Francis and colleagues' study (Francis et al., 2010) whose behaviours- while not presented as particularly gender-transgressive, -were often seen as gender-inappropriate by their peers, Kaden's interests were not typically masculine. Though while Kaden's position in the school was

marginalised, he was not a Boffin. As I go on to discuss in section 5, Kaden had a diverse range of friends, across different 'tiers' in the sixth form. Kaden revealed that he had actually wanted to study Health and Social Care, but decided against it because he would have been the only boy. He told me has always wanted to work with children, and undertook his work experience in a nursery. Having decided to study BTEC Sport (an all-boy populated course) Kaden had reconciled that perhaps he would become a Sports coach and work with children in that way, and he was planning to help out with rugby coaching at school with the younger ones, to get some experience. Like Amber who we met in Chapter Five, with his varied and non-normative interests, we can observe how Kadan was subject to regulatory forces which demarcate and police subject and career choices for boys and girls. While he was prepared to admit his interests, he was not prepared to 'choose differently' and be 'the only boy' on a Health and Social Care course in an urban comprehensive school. Kaden embodies a 'multiplicity' (Braidotti, 2003 cited in Renold, 2008) where transformations can come about, but Kaden is still subject to the 'schizoid double pull' (Braidotti, 2006 p. 49 cited in Renold, 2008)- the magnetic pull of gender norms still pull him back to normativity.

In this section, through analysis of four participants Carl, Gemma, Robert and Kaden, I have demonstrated how the misfits failed to perform the enterprising subject of neoliberalism and hence failed to occupy the position of a subject with exchange value. I have argued that this failure in part comes about through their embodiment of either devalued White working class identities or non-normative identities, which were either devalued or failed to be read and thus had little or no exchange value in the urban school. In the next section I explore the ways in which the experience and narrative of 'problems' characterised some of these working class students' lives, further devalued their subjectivities in the symbolic economy of exchange.

8.3 Sticky problems and negative exchange value

In previous research with urban working class young people 'disengaged' from school (Archer et al., 2010), we found such young people often faced significant issues in their personal lives that loomed large in their narratives, such as difficult family circumstances or upheaval, the challenge of living with family members with learning difficulties or periods of serious illness. Indeed in chapter four I argued that, to some extent, these overriding narratives of 'problems' – having and being problems- characterised the working class mass of students at Stellar Academy, which positioned them in the school as unhappy objects of no value. Here though, I want to discuss problems related to the misfits in particular, as adding to an already devalued identity. These experiences of 'problems' emerged in several of the misfits' narratives. For some students these

experiences impacted on their school and social experiences and were intimately connected to experiences of bullying, and acute periods of unhappiness, not to mention distraction from their studies. Given the uneven social class and geographic patterning of health and wellbeing in the UK (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009) this is not surprising. Indeed, conversely, Savage and colleagues (Savage, Barlow, Dickens, & Fielding, 1992) document how the professional middle classes have been able to consolidate their position through cultural practices such as taking more care of their bodies, increasing their education, staying healthy -thereby making themselves more productive- a greater subject of value. I argue that these problems, fixed the misfits in unproductive locations, and while produced by social position, also came to be a source of identity that fixed them outside of normative subcultural groups. What is key here is how problems became etched on the psyche, interpellating them into a problematic subjectivity, as having problems became conflated with *being* a problem. Such a problematic subjectivity, I argue, has negative exchange value in the symbolic economy, as problems are sticky and proximity to problems is contaminating.

As we encountered earlier, both Carl and Robert's narratives signalled problems in their personal lives- Carl's 'reclusive' behaviour was read and interpreted as social dysfunction and subject to the regulatory gaze of a social worker, and Robert's physical ill health and disabilities dominated his life experiences. In both cases these problems came to define these boys' subjectivities. Robert admitted the only reason he is infamous in the school is because of his illnesses, and Carl had come to see himself as 'weird' and rationalise that his desire to play computer games on his own has shaped him a 'different childhood' to 'everyone else' who built social relations when they were younger. In Stellar Academy, Karen (a White working class girl) and Sarah (a mixed race working class girl) were, like Kaden, marginalised in the school in the level 2 tier. Both girls lived with foster carers and discussed significant problems in their family lives. Here though I discuss Gemma's experience in more detail, as a key illustration of the raced, classed and gendered stickiness of problems.

Gemma spent her school years looking after (and looking out for) her sister who was a year older than her but severely autistic. Gemma admitted that this often meant she was associated with (and her reputation in the school tarnished by) her sister's 'anti-social behaviour', but I would argue, also by her sister's non-normative identity. She admitted: 'I took a lot of crap for her,' 'I took a fair bit of abuse from students in her year'. Furthermore, when Gemma was in the lower school her mother was diagnosed with cancer and spent a long period in treatment and at the same time her parents' marriage faced difficulties, almost leading to divorce. She also had

problems at that time with her estranged older brother. Gemma lamented that family 'crises' 'take up a lot of my time'. Gemma also explained that two close friends- also from White working class backgrounds- Kay and Delia had both suffered from depression in their teenage years, had become school refusers, and had both left the school as a result. Clearly, mental health problems can affect both working class and middle class young people, but Walkerdine and colleagues (2001) in their analysis of girls growing up from different class backgrounds, argue that the way in which mental health problems are interpreted and acted upon by schools is socially differentiated, where for working class girls mental health problems are misrecognised as disengagement from education. Gemma revealed this was indeed the case with her friends. She was angry that the school had done little to support the girls, and that Delia had been permanently excluded for her non-attendance.

I argue that 'problems' are in part a product of these young people's social position, but also come to produce it, as these young people are read as someone with 'problems'. To analyse these girls' mental health problems through a purely psychologised lens does not account for their social position in a school which was characterised by a polarisation of White middle class and Black working class students. In the particular relational space-time demographics of this school, 'problems' stuck to these White working class girls, who sat outside of any dominant subcultures of value, inhabiting a White and working class disavowed identity. As we saw with Tristan, identifying with the minority ethnic working classes (as opposed to the 'chavvy' Bermondsey boys of his previous school), embodying a minority ethnic working class identity, was a way of avoiding these negative associations of White working classness, and becoming a person of value. For Gemma and her friends, as White working class girls, however, without the embodied capital or resources to pass as middle class, and being too studious and quiet for any working class counter school culture, were unable to take up this position of a subject with value.

We can understand 'problems' as having negative exchange value. Ahmed argues that 'feelings can get stuck to certain bodies in the very way we describe spaces, situations, dramas. And bodies can get stuck depending on what feelings they get associated with' (Ahmed, 2007, p. 127). Gemma, was acutely aware of this. As she told the story of her friendships she apologised that it made her(self) sound 'depressing', as if her friends and family's experiences were somehow contaminating to her identity. We can see in Gemma's story an awareness of contamination - a fear that 'problems' which have negative exchange value can attach to you by association.

8.4 Avoidance of risk: the impossibilities of becoming the enterprising subject of value

In this penultimate section I argue that a third factor which positioned some of these students outside of the dominant system of exchange was their inhabiting of 'quiet' working class identities, in order to become educationally successful. I use as examples here three working class girls from Eden Hill School: Gemma and Francis who were White, and Helen who was British Chinese. As working class girls they did not have the resources (nor the risk taking subjectivity) to pass as middle class, however they were also excluded from the Black working class subcultures, and were unable to take up a position of a subject with value. Integral to their educational success, these girls all talked about taking on a 'quiet' identity – positioned in opposition to the Black working class loud, sociable identities. I argue that this 'quiet' identity is about 'going under the radar:' it is a risk avoidance strategy but it is one that coproduces their position outside of the symbolic economy of exchange. In Chapter Seven we saw for Lara- in her embodiment of the enterprising minority ethnic subject of value- significant risks were taken in eschewing her working class identity and dropping her Black working class friendship group in order to enter the space of the 'successful' middle class friendship group. She was acutely aware of the risks of entering this rebellious middle class group when she saw the possibilities of this group 'distracting' her from her academic studies. But we also saw how this had the potential to have backfired for Lara who found her middle class friends leave her behind for more high achieving sixth forms. However at Eden Hill school, this inhabiting of a quiet identity both produces and is produced by their exclusion from the working class subcultures, but also the rebellious risk-taking middle class subculture. This identity, I argue, is incompatible with the enterprising subject and –unlike Lara- thus positioned them outside of the symbolic economy of exchange, as subjects without value.

8.4.1 Gemma: quietness and the 'talent for deferral'

Gemma, who I have introduced in detail, was a studious and high achieving working class girl who had dreams of being rich. However, unlike the Smokers, her achievement did not come effortlessly. In order to pursue this fantasy of social mobility through educational success, she invested all her energy in her studies, which necessitated an adherence to a quiet, and focused identity, and an avoidance of anything that might risk compromising her success.

Gemma's desire to become educationally successful was all pervasive. I quote her detailed elaboration of her ambitions and her plans to realise them:

> *I took an attitude of [...] if I don't do my studies, how am I ever going to get into a situation where I can get out of it? Because with quite a lot of people it comes down*

to money, and if you can pay your way out of a situation- not that the money is the end of your problems, because it's not and it certainly doesn't buy you happiness, as I've seen quite a lot in my family. But yeah ... I'd like to get into a situation where I can work myself up to where I've got enough money to be able to like buy a house and have everything I want- because I want a lot. [...] I want a massive house with a library in, a gym, spare rooms. I want cars plural. I don't want much, just what everyone else wants really. [...] I'd maybe like to move into west London, sort of Wimbledon or maybe as far out as Kingston. I love Kingston. Richmond ... I love it there in those sort of areas, but they are quite sort of monied areas, and I need the money to live there.

Identity is produced in a 'phantasmic space' (Walkerdine et al., 2001, p. 140). In Hey's (1997 p.91) ethnography of girls' friendships she discussed how 'running away' represented the main feminine fantasy. For Gemma, education is her route to running away and to 'finding herself:' the self she desired to become. She dreams of being an independent woman ('not necessarily marriage, because I don't really think I agree with the whole concept of marriage') and dreams of economic and social stability, and leaving behind her difficult social circumstances.

This goal meant that Gemma had to be extremely focused, and this was evident in her 'quiet' identity, and her gravitation towards other quiet people, and away from those who were 'loud'. Gemma told me throughout school, most of her friends have been 'quiet:' 'my friends were really quiet and then there were groups that were really loud [...] and I tend to be friends with more quiet people.' Gemma was studying politics A level, and she confessed, 'I love an argument, but I don't like shouting. I'm not a confrontational person.' For Gemma, studiousness was an ultimate focus for her and she avoided social situations, which she saw as a distraction from pursuing academic success:

I don't really go to that many parties. I go to the odd one or two here and there, but I like to spend time getting my actual work done, because I have this thing ... I don't know why ...but I've always got this thing that I'll live my life later. I'll work, work, work, and I maybe tend to work a bit too much. But I'm a bit of a perfectionist, so doing something a bit rushed, I don't really like it, even though I get lazy sometimes and end up rushing my English homework for Tuesday morning, I don't really like rushing my work. I like getting it in my head, getting it right and in time.

Gemma's approach to her studies then- in contrast to the effortless performance of the masculine middle class self we saw with the Smokers in Chapter six- involved concerted effort. She will work 'a bit too much', 'not rushing', 'taking her time,' 'getting it right' to the point where she is prepared to live her (social) life later, when her education has been capitalised on. As Ehrenreich highlights with regard to the middle classes, Gemma must engender the 'talent for deferral' (1990, p.84), putting off her 'life' until she is successful. Indeed, the risks for working class girls in taking up rebellious behavior is greater (Skeggs, 1997). Earlier, I theorised Gemma's taste aversion to

smoking and drinking as an assertion of respectability- both in distinction from the unrespectable White working classes but also the White middle class Smokers group from which she is always already excluded. However, I also argue that, already marked as deficit, Gemma as a White working class girl has to work at being educationally 'successful,' thus drinking, smoking and partying was too great a risk. An aversion to smoking and drinking represents restraint. Smoking and drinking is messy and polluting, both literally, but also metaphorically in terms of her focus on her studies and risks seeping into and polluting her studies. This positionality renders her 'quiet' but also geeky: the pariah boffin of Francis' work.

8.4.2 Helen: minority minorities, niceness and an avoidance of the 'rude boy'

Helen was a British Chinese working class girl, who spent most of her time with her White middle class boyfriend and a quiet group of students in the common room who all studied science A levels. Like Gemma, Helen discursively distanced herself from the other 'loud' working classes. However, I argue here that, in this particular context -of an academic sixth form with a large White middle class cohort- Helen, despite her minority ethnic identity capital- of Chinese-ness read as educationally successful- was unable to become the acceptable minority ethnic subject of value.

In embracing a quiet identity, Helen positioned herself in distinct opposition to the 'Rude boys', many of whom she encounters in her business studies A level class:

> *I don't like the Rude Boy side that also does Business. It's kind of annoying. [...]They just act so stupid. That's what I think. It's just like they are gangster people. But yeah ... They just act stupid and one's really loud. One's just kind of rude in a way ...the way he just turns to do something, it's like: 'no!' And he's got a really loud voice as well. I'm like ... Oh, shut up! He's rude. But yeah. I don't really talk... there are like some people you don't really talk to in class and some people you do.*

Helen said she preferred to be friends with people who were 'nice'. Hey writes about how the middle class girls in her study defined themselves according to a 'criteria of goodness,' and this was central to friendship selection (1997, p.56). She argues that these represent classed and gendered forms of niceness. She found girls defined themselves (their 'niceness') against boy's messier, more overt behaviours (1997 p.57). There are clearly classed and gendered forms of distinction going on here for Helen, whose disidentification from the Rude Boys is explicitly gendered, but also represents attempts at performing respectability. Helen's narrative, however is also heavily racialised, where 'Rude Boy' and 'gangster people' denotes Black (working class) boys. Having a loud voice, and speaking their mind/being oppositional ('no!'), for the urban Black girls in my work with Archer (2007a, 2007b), is a positive identity. But for Helen, this way of being

is characterised not only as rudeness but as denoting stupidity. For Helen, again a working class minority ethnic girl in an academic sixth form, too much risk is involved in entertaining such 'loud' working class identities- as a working class girl these bodies present too much risk of contamination- of being kept/dragged down, of being positioned in a minority ethnic devalued identity. Indeed, Helen's avoidance of risk extended to her immediate family, epitomised in her father who she described as a 'crazy safety fusser' who worries when she even crosses the road. As for Gemma, becoming educationally successful for Helen involved a keen avoidance of risk through a 'quiet' focus on her studies.

However, as I discussed in Chapter Seven, embodying a studious identity is easier for students from certain raced, classed and gendered positions than others. Like Lara, Helen could be seen to embody the acceptable minority ethnic other- epitomising a Chinese identity of deference (Archer & Francis, 2005, 2006), valuing academic achievement (Reay et al., 2007), and thus having value to the White middle classes. Like Ed (one of the 'only' Chinese students) at Stellar Academy, Helen's positioning as 'hard working,' potentially buys her access to White middle class friendships. However, exchange value is relative. In our research with White middle class families whose children attended urban multi-ethnic comprehensive schools (Reay et al., 2011) we found White middle class students who were in a minority. These minority positions produced friendship with the acceptable minority ethnic others. However, it is important to understand value in relation to the 'field'. At Eden Hill school the abundance of White middle classes in the sixth form provides ample social capital for the White middle classes, and the (albeit) acceptable minority ethnic other - of value, but of less value - is an unlikely friendship choice for these students.

Even when the White middle classes are much fewer- as at Stellar Academy- such friendships across difference are characterised by semi-investments, where cultural difference is cloaked as lifestyle incompatibility (Gunew 2000 cited in Skeggs, 2004, p. 156). For example, as well as Ed, the Neeks' Muslim friend Fauzia comes to be accepted only in a semi-investment, as assumed insurmountable cultural differences (she cannot come to the pub) prevent her full integration into the White middle class group. She remained on the periphery of their sociograms and indeed their conversations. Indeed, such exclusion forces alternative spaces of value, which I elaborate on in terms of friendships in the last section.

8.4.3 Francis: avoiding the noise, removing the risk

Francis, my last example of risk avoidance, was a White working class girl who lived with her single mum, a teaching assistant. She had joined the sixth form at Eden Hill School from a lower

attaining girls-only state school, attended by predominantly Black and minority ethnic girls. This move can be seen as an aspirational strategy on her path to becoming educationally successful. However, as I go on to show, this manifested through a desire to seek 'quiet' and 'calm', and avoid the loud, 'noisy' and distracting Black working class school. She described her previous school as 'quite noisy and boisterous' and the girls in it as 'quite rough.' She compared this to her primary school where things were 'nicer and calmer' and to Eden Hill where:

> *It's just more of a nicer vibe around the school. Everyone is a bit more friendly, and you know if you bump into someone in the corridor everyone like always apologises. Today I've had a boy- I think he must have been about fifteen- opening the door for me. That was nice.*

She said at her previous school you 'won't find the politeness'. Race and class are never mentioned but they are implicit- Francis said lots of students in her previous school lived on council estates and came from single parent families. The girls' school is characterised as 'noisy', 'boisterous' and 'rough' and not polite (thus rude) which stands in stark contrast to Eden Hill school which is conceived of as 'nicer,' friendlier and full of apologies, and, with wealthier students, Francis admitted. This is an affective difference that can just be sensed in the 'vibe'. The middle class habitus of Eden Hill school comes across strongly in Francis' narrative, where people apologise in the corridor and even teenage boys hold the door open for 'ladies'. Francis' move to this higher achieving A level-only sixth form was a clear move to provide a conducive environment for her studies. She said at her previous school: 'it was hard to concentrate sometimes', 'some teachers just spent the whole lesson telling people off'. In her previous school Francis was in the top and middle sets in school, but the school also experimented with mixed ability, which did not help Francis' issues. She said she applied to Eden Hill as 'I really wanted a change':

> *I just got really bored of it really. It wasn't like ... it was okay to learn, but I thought if I was doing my A levels, I really wanted like somewhere with kind of more of an environment where I'd find it easier just to get on with the work. It was like I had been there such a long time, and it was a girls' school, and I was kind of like bored of it, just seeing the same girls that you'd been with since year 7 until you were 18.*

There are two rationales bound up here: needing an environment where she would find it easier to study (nicer, quieter, more polite) but also desiring a 'change' in terms of the people she associated with (Archer, Halsall, et al., 2007b). I argue here that 'bored' is code for needing a change – needing to 'escape' (Walkerdine et al., 2001) – to an environment where she could achieve academically with less anxiety and less 'noise', but also an attempt to move away from the 'same girls' – the unhappy objects of academic failure. The space of the more mixed (/less Black school) is more conducive to Francis' educational success. For Francis, staying at the Black

working class school was too risky, so the strategy was to minimise the risks associated with staying. For working class girls, educational success is conceptualised as a struggle against the odds (Walkerdine et al., 2001). Privilege for Francis is not automatically transmitted but depends on constant and purposeful activity to prevent downward mobility (Allat, 1993 cited in Walkerdine et al., 2001). While Francis moved into this new middle class space however, she found herself in a school as a White working class girl of no value, and all of the friends she made were with other students who were new to the sixth form, and outside of the main subcultural groups embedded in the school. It is to these friendships I now turn.

8.5 Social mixing, use value and the possibilities for an alternative value compass

> *[R]efusing what they are refused [...] adjusting their expectations to their chances, defining themselves as the established order defines them, reproducing in their verdict on themselves the verdict the economy pronounces on them, in a word, condemning themselves to what is in any case their lot,* ta heautou, *as Plato put it, consenting to be what they have to be, 'modest', 'humble' and 'obscure'. (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 471)*

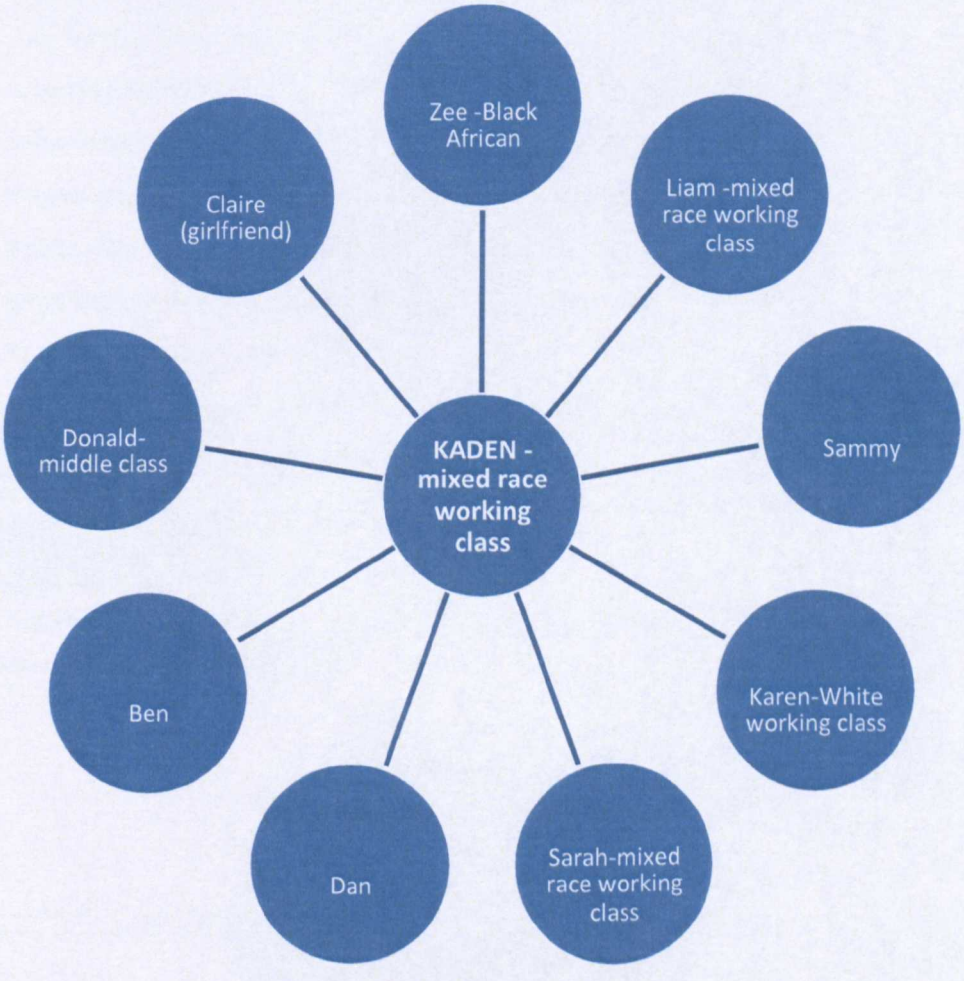
This position outside of the dominant system of exchange (that I have outlined above) restricted these young people's choices in terms of friendship. However, I also want to argue that this space of exclusion is the potential space for more genuine mixed friendships. While my findings in relation to this data are tentative, there are several examples which point towards the possibilities for more mixed friendships occurring outside the dominant systems of exchange, and I argue that there are at least glimmers here of an alternative value compass (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012). In this last section I discuss the misfits' friendships. I argue that the possibility for mixed friendships is with other 'misfits', with others who do not embody the enterprising subject. Drawing on Skeggs and Loveday's work, I argue that in this space there are other ways of being and doing – 'a different ontology' is generated that involves the circulation of local value/s beyond the dominant symbolic (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012, p. 490). Firstly it is with others embodying non-normative identities; secondly with other 'uneasy hybrids' who are avoiding risk; and thirdly through the use value of close friendships of trust and humility.

8.5.1 Minority identities, mis-fit and mixed friendships

Students who were mixed race, or, of minority ethnicities that were not represented in the spectacular displays of the subcultures, for example Kaden (mixed race, working class) and Helen, (Chinese working class), tended to have more mixed friendships. Kaden had very mixed friendships in terms of race, gender, academic orientation, and, it appeared, social class. He had a

close friend, a boy, who had moved to a private school in Sussex, where they 'do stuff like horse riding' and have 'loads of land,' who he visits regularly. He had a girlfriend that he had met at Woodcraft Folk camp, who lived in Derby, whom he has visited. Despite being in the 'lowest' tier, in school he was friends with a Black boy, Zee, who was in the 'top' A level tier; another boy, Sammy, who was in one of the middle tutor groups; and he had close friends in his tutor group including girls- Karen (White working class girl) and Sarah (mixed race working class girl). Karen and Sarah both studied Heath and Social Care, and Kaden had been friends with Sarah since primary school.

Figure 7: Kaden's Sociogram

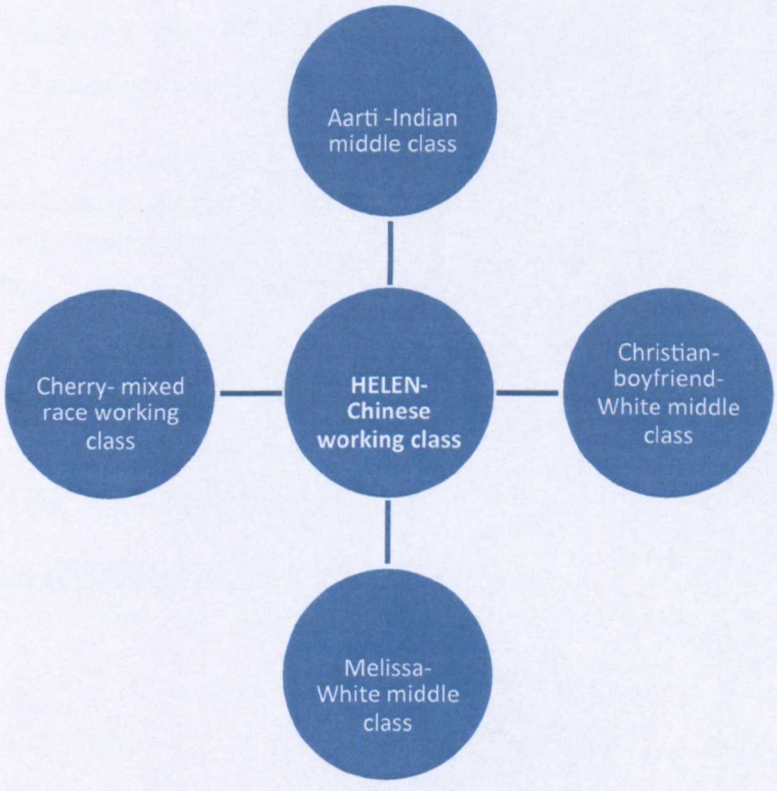


While Helen had no access to the dominant White middle class friendship group like Ed did at Stellar Academy, Helen - as a minority-minority ethnicity - found friendship outside of these subcultural groups. As a British Chinese girl, she was always already marked in a non-normative femininity (Archer, 2005; Archer & Francis, 2005, 2006), and she had mixed friendships in terms of gender, social class and race. Helen named four friends on her sociogram, including her boyfriend,

whom she spent a lot of time with predominantly in school. All four friends were of a different ethnicity and some different social class backgrounds. Helen disclosed that her friends tended to be from a range of income backgrounds. Herself in receipt of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), about half of her friends received EMA and half did not. Helen's boyfriend, Christian, who was White middle class (but also positioned outside the Smokers crowd in the 'geeky' quiet group). She had also maintained a friendship with a White middle class friend, Melissa, who she described as 'so English'.

For the students who were of a minority ethnicity, mixed friendships were somewhat inevitable. Helen talked about being the only Chinese student in her year group. However, what is interesting is the kinds of alliances made. As Tanisha claimed, the mixed race students had to choose where they belonged, or face confusion about their identity. Interestingly Cherry, one of Helen's friends who participated in one of the focus group, who was South American and North African, said something very similar to Helen: 'there is no one of the same ethnicity as me.' The implication by Cherry was that there was no other choice but to mix. Another of Helen's close friends, Aarti, was British Asian- another minority ethnicity that was in a minority in the school. She admitted that what she has in common with Aarti- despite Aarti's middle classness- is that they both understand about each other's more 'restrictive home cultures' (Archer, 2003) such as not being allowed out late at night. While Helen could not be valued and accepted into White middle class friendship groups, solace and use value was found with others excluded from these groups. However, like Lara, there is some evidence of Helen's White middle class friends' semi-investments. Moving on and moving up, Melissa had left the school to attend another high achieving sixth form in the area, making strategic choices in terms of social mobility, Melissa had left Helen behind.

Figure 8: Helen's Sociogram



8.5.2 Uneasy hybrids: the use value of the old and new

The White working class students, Gemma and Francis also found themselves in a minority identity and were thus more likely to make friends across difference. However, I also argue that this came about through potentially occupying an 'uneasy hybrid' (Lucey, Melody, & Walkerdine, 2003) identity, which I argue, involved holding on to 'old' friendships as well as making new ones. As Keane argues, of her working class students in Higher Education:

> *Feeling subserviently positioned and thus 'not sure' of the new world, compartmentalising facilitated a sort of between worlds existence, allowing tentative commitments to the new world to be made whilst still maintaining security through some rootedness in the old. Of course, having this 'old world' may also have meant less commitment to the new. (Keane, 2011, p. 456)*

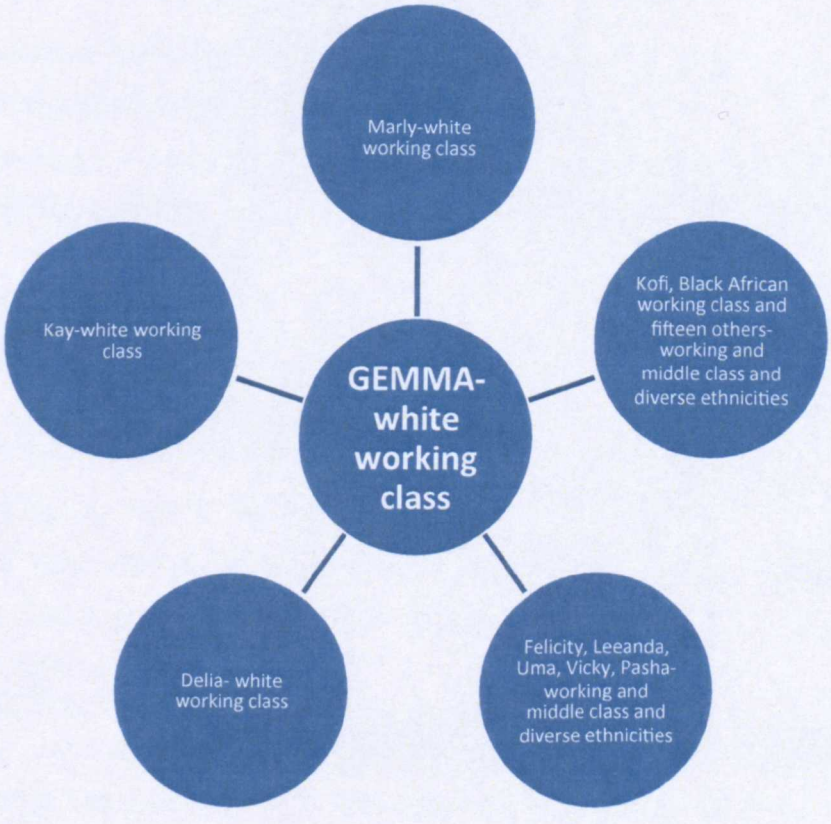
This uneasy hybridity manifested in friendships which involved this tentative investment in the new, but very much a rootedness in the old. Reay and colleagues (2001a) argue that for the working classes becoming educationally successful, the 'improved self' has to be balanced against retaining a loyalty to working class roots and maintaining a sense of authenticity. This 'balance' can be seen to manifest in friendship choices.

As I argued in chapter three, at Eden Hill school in particular, the move to sixth form disrupted friendships for many of the working class students, and Gemma was no exception. Kay, Delia and Marly, Gemma's three White working class friends had all left the school, and this had changed the social composition of Gemma's friendships. Gemma explained:

> *Most of my friends [in the lower school] were actually White lower class, poorer people, which is quite odd [...] when I was in the lower part of the school, it tended to be quiet White people who were from poorer backgrounds. Now it tends to be quiet people from any background or any colour or ethnicity.*

Now Kay, Delia and Marly, the 'quiet' working class girls had left, Gemma had made a new close friend, Kofi- a Black African working class boy- who had joined the sixth form at Eden Hill from a lower performing boys' school. However, holding onto the 'old' while tentatively embracing the 'new,' Gemma also retained her friendships with Kay, Delia and Marly.

Figure 9: Gemma's Sociogram



Similarly, Francis's position as a (White working class) minority in a new sixth form, had some inevitability to her mixed friendships. She had an array of different friends both inside and outside Eden Hill, and from her previous school, who had now moved on to other schools and colleges.

Francis, like Gemma was also friends with Kofi, the Black African working class boy who joined the sixth from another state school. Like Gemma too, Francis had retained her 'old' friendships. Francis' best friend –Marlena (mixed English and African heritage) was a long term friend from her previous girls' school. Marlena's mother was a sociologist working on HIV research and they had moved to Africa but Francis and Marlena remained friends and when Marlena returned from Africa, they both applied to Eden Hill sixth form. Of the eight friends in her close circle, only two had attended Eden Hill lower school. The others were all from elsewhere. Francis had a few friends who attended the sixth form at Eden Hill but had to leave after Year 12 as they did not achieve the necessary AS grades: one who was now taking a vocational course in horticulture (Chenai); another, Sally, was looking for work; and Sara was taking a cookery course at a Further Education college. Four of her girl-friends in her close circle: Fran and Vicky, Kofi and Keegan had come from lower achieving schools with large intakes of African students, situated in more working class neighbourhoods. As well as friends taking vocational courses or looking for work, Francis had a number of friends who were academically 'aspirational'.

Being from a working class background herself, telling me that her parents had never been to university and were a bit unsure about how to help her achieve this goal, and having attended a predominantly working class school previously, being at Eden Hill has given her access to academically-geared friends with professional parents who *had* been to university.

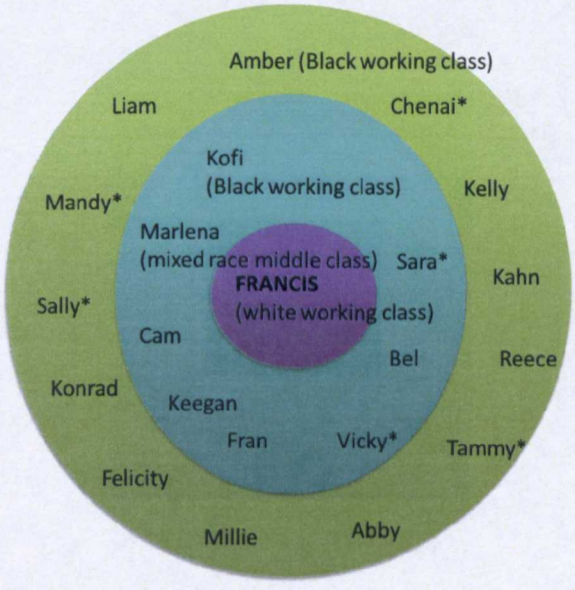
> *There is a real mixture [of friends]. Like half of them are quite...they want to just do like arty things and they are not that bothered about going to university. But quite a lot of my friends...I'm not sure if it is because of the [middle class] area we're living in and because their parents went to university, but they are really, really keen on like going to good universities, and some of them even applied to like Oxford and stuff.*

Konrad and Mandy had applied to Oxbridge, and Kahn had applied to study medicine. Jess, came from a 'quite good background' and 'her grandparents have quite a lot of money' and 'she is always making extravagant plans where you spend lots of money', but Francis says none of her friends have '*really* posh parents.'

Neither Gemma nor Francis had lost touch with their working class friends who have left to pursue vocational options, but as White working class girls they are not easily able to fit into the dominant subcultural groups in the school (White middle class and Black and multi-ethnic working class) however they are both making new friends on the outside of these groups, with other 'misfits' like them, those whose classed, raced gendered ways of being do not render them access to the subcultural groups either. However, while Francis had access to middle class friends, all her

middle class friends were in her outside circle and her working class (mixed ethnicity) friends in the inner circle. These middle class friendships, again, appear to be semi-investments.

Figure 10: Francis' Sociogram



*denotes friends outside of Eden Hill school.

8.5.3 On not judging: humility, close friendships of trust and use value

While being positioned outside of the dominant system of exchange acted as an exclusionary force, and was one in which opportunities for friendships could be more constrained, what my data suggests is that this space – outside of a value economy premised on exchange- is where friendships appeared to be based more on use value. What was important for the misfits' friendships –particularly those with 'problems' -was trust, and an unconditionality. Problems became a source of mutual support, but also importantly , these problems are located in social inequality. For some, as we saw with Gemma, this meant holding on friendships with those similar, but for others this meant that ethnicity or gender did not matter- it was someone who was 'there for you' that counts.

As I outlined, Gemma had maintained both these friendships with her White working class girl-friends through the difficult times, and now both girls are much happier and are taking up vocational studies at college. Despite having negative exchange value, the girls' 'problems' seemed to be a source of mutual support: they had a use value. Of Kay she said, what they had in

common was 'her family are always going through some sort of crisis or other, as are mine' and when they see each other they bond because they can 'have a moan' together.

Both Carl and Robert had close friends who were girls, and for both, these were friends they had maintained a bond with, even after the girls had left the school. Carl had a significant relationship with a girl, Ruby, who is his 'closest female friend'. He said he has known her since they were in the same classes when they were thirteen or fourteen. This took the turn from a romantic relationship ('we had a crush on each other and stuff') to just being 'really close friends.' Even though she is no longer at the same school, he says 'I haven't seen her in months, but I still talk to her on the phone. We always call each other'. When I asked Carl if he hoped this would evolve into a romantic relationship again, he said: 'I'd like to keep her as a friend because she's my closest friend, but it is not certain that life goes the way you planned'. Robert's best friend was a girl, Janice, who he has been best friends with since primary school. He claimed 'we will always be best friends'. She had left in the sixth form to go to college but when she was in school she always looked out for him. He told the story of when a boy had bullied him in class Robert had left the class upset and Janice thought he was crying outside, so phoned his mum, who then came down to the school to find the boy who did it. 'She thought it really got to me, like, and hurt my emotions' but Robert, playing tough, insisted it was a misunderstanding and was not that bad.

These close friendships- which centred around support with problems and 'shared emotions'- overshadowed other aspects which might accrue social capital that might have more external currency. In Putnam's (2000) terms this was 'bonding' not 'bridging' capital. We can conceptualise bonding capital as having 'use value'. Most of the middle class students I interviewed could tell me what college their friends were at; what courses they were studying; what qualification this would enable; and what their friends wanted to do career wise: all important in terms of exchange value and access to social mobility. For the 'misfits', this was not something they foregrounded: they often did not know or couldn't remember such things. For example when I asked Robert what Janice was doing he said he didn't know: 'it's hard to keep up', 'I think she went to do hair and all that'. Indeed when I asked Carl what Ruby did, he said 'just college' vaguely. Carl elaborated:

> *Actually I haven't talked to her about university. I don't talk to her about things like that. She's more of a...how shall I describe it? More of a person who talks about feelings, like a more intimate friendship, sort of thing.*

For these students, friendships, based on trust and care, were central to their being. As we saw with Tyler's relationship with Udell, their friendship centred on trust. Robert, Carl and Helen all

said that the most important quality in a friend is trust, and that they are someone you can trust with a secret. Carl elaborated:

> *Those are actually the only people I talk to whenever I have problems and they are just the people that I trust the most. [...] a person that doesn't judge you based on your actions, but even if you make several mistakes along the way, they're still willing to- you can still rely on them for support and stuff like that. They are generally like the family you get to choose sort of thing...family- only like you get to choose, so that they're always there for you whenever you need them, and they are not there to judge you. They are just there to support you [...] the main thing I look for is reliability, so it is not that- not reliability per se, but whether or not they are trustworthy, so I can actually go to them with my problems, and I can trust them with that, so they won't go all around and slate me or tell other people my problems.*

Unpicking Carl's narrative, reliability and trustworthiness are key. 'Someone who is always there for you' (who would run into the burning building for you, in Tyler's words) means total investment, not semi-investment. We can see that central to friendship was a lack of judgment: an avoidance of playing into the evaluation process. We can understand how 'going around' 'telling other people my problems' plays into this process of judgment and evaluation. For these young people living non-normative identities which positions them as both having problems and as being problems, genuine friendships of trust are invaluable, in a use- sense.

Furthermore, being quiet and overlooked means not being subject to scrutiny: to value judgments, denigrated for being value-less. The misfits are young people that 'live value differently in the conditions of constant devaluation' (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012). For Carl this 'quietness' was conceptualised as humility:

> *It's the people themselves and their frame of mind, if a person's humble, then you- either you respect that person...like me being humble to someone else, I would earn their respect by being so, and I would earn their respect because they're on the same wavelength as me being humble. There is none of that instant hostility or anything like that. It's just a simple thing. It's just about our business and nothing serious. It's um ... but there's other people who's not so humble. They're always ... they're too over confident and they're just always on the hype looking for trouble or whatever.*

This humility of the 'misfits' lies between (outside?) the over-confident middle class entitlement and the 'rude', 'loud' working classes. Carl's statement about friendship stands in stark contrast to Tyler and Damian's narratives of performances of loudness and sociability- being the partylightner. 'It's just about our business', implies friendship is explicitly *not* about show and performance. This is Skeggs' and Loveday's (2012) different kind of 'value compass'. It's about producing identities in opposition to the mainstream.

Conclusion

The final chapter of this thesis has explored the identities of those students outside of the dominant subcultural groups, and my attempt here has been to theorise their position as outside of the exchange value economy. I have explored three key ways in which these 'overlooked' students- a range of White and minority ethnic working class young people- fail to perform the enterprising subject of value which excludes them (as they exclude themselves) from access to the social and cultural capital of the subcultures. Through discussing the experiences of Carl, Gemma, Robert, Kaden, Helen and Francis, I have explored how both marginal and non-normative classed, raced and gendered identities can devalue subjects through association with devalued (White) working classness, or through unintelligibility – through not being able to be read as the valued White middle class enterprising subject. Further I have explored how, for these young people positioned in spaces without value, 'problems' disproportionately attach to these bodies, which further devalues, or even carry negative exchange value. I then explored 'quietness' as a risk avoidance strategy, which, while locking them outside of the dominant systems of exchange, positions these young people 'under the radar' and out of sight of value judgments. Lastly, through illustration of the friendship patterns of some of the misfits, I explore this space – outside of exchange value- as a potential space for more mixed friendships- a space for non-normative identities, but also for an alternative value compass, based on use value.

To close the final part of my thesis, I have shown how different space-time relationalities and intersectionalities, which are written on bodies, produce different possibilities for friendships, but that this is ultimately caught up in a process of valuing. Possibilities for mixing into White middle class friendships are highly constrained. This space is one in which the 'good mixer,' embodied in Black sociable masculinity is appropriated and prosthetised; and friendship with the acceptable minority ethnic other are characterised by semi-investments. For the misfits- multi-ethnic working class students who stand outside of dominant cultural groupings in the school- genuine investments in mixing are an everyday reality but this is, by virtue, a space of use value which does not have exchange. My tentative claim is that unconscious investments in use value produce an alternative space but one in which opportunities for social mobility are denied, or perhaps more rightly rejected. However, this remains a topic for further investigation, for a future study.

Conclusion, discussion and implications

Initially this study set out to explore the notion that socially and ethnically mixed schooling might break down barriers and reduce antagonism between groups; provide space for mutual understanding through cultural learning, and ultimately provide chances for greater equity. The alternative outcome of course is that inequality is simply reproduced in a mixed environment. This research sought to get to the heart of this debate through empirical study, in order to develop the theoretical tools to examine social mixing.

This thesis positions itself somewhere between panicked and unpanicked (Noble, 2009) notions of mix and mixing, providing a critique or challenge to a fundamentally depoliticised community cohesion rhetoric, and blind policy promotion of mixed communities, which both fail to account for structures of inequality and power imbalances. Challenging the static, fixed, cardboard cut-out notions of identity that epistemologically underpin much of the existing research on ethnic relations and community cohesion, this thesis has emphasised and theorised the multiply constituted and locationally contingent notions of identity and difference. Developing a sociology of social mixing in urban schools, this thesis aimed to advance our theoretical understanding of social mixing. This involved analytically holding in tension race, social class and gender; attending to social mixing as a process, and a process underpinned by value, which is intimately connected to educational success and the promise of social mobility.

The context for this study was London. London is a superdiverse world city, yet increasingly divided, with a growing polarisation between a racialised rich and poor. A gentrification of urban areas has seen an increase in (White) middle class participation in state urban schooling, coupled with, at the same time, declining opportunities for working class urban youth and emergent antagonisms between youth cultural groupings. Through empirical research in two socially and ethnically mixed London secondary schools, I explored what the possibilities are for social mixing (through mixed schooling) leading to greater equity, and sought to identify the social, cultural and institutional processes, by which this is enabled or constrained. I had four key objectives:

1. To examine the patterns of young people's friendships in two urban schools as a lens to explore social mixing among urban young people
2. To explore the role of the school and wider institutional processes in facilitating or constraining social mixing among its students
3. To examine the discursively informed practices and processes which lead to differentiation and stratification in urban young people's friendship groupings

4. To investigate the processual nature of social mixing through attention to the socio-spatial contexts and moments in which social mix leads to social mixing

In meeting these objectives I hope to have contributed to new and emerging theorising on intersecting identities of social class, race and gender and the mixing of these identities.

This thesis took urban young people's friendship as a lens to explore social mixing. Through holistic case study of two London schools, I explored the role of urban schools- as diverse socio-spatial, discursively constituted, contexts- in this process of mixing. My thesis involved understanding identities as fluid, shifting processes rather than fixed categories, focusing theoretically on the importance of the affective, discursive construction of identities. I conducted open, narrative informed, interview-based research, which sought to explore how young people constructed difference and differentiation themselves. In doing this I hope to have brought new insights into how we can study social mixing theoretically- attending to the complexities of race, social class and gender beyond the cardboard cut outs- but also how we can understand these processes for the better.

In the remainder of this chapter I summarise each of my chapter findings before moving on to discuss my overarching findings and the major contributions of this study. I then discuss directions for further research and theorisation in relation to social mixing, before concluding this thesis with final thoughts for action.

9.1 Overview of the chapter findings

Part One of this thesis was devoted to review and analysis of the existing research and literature and to setting up what are complex theoretical, methodological and analytical concerns of the thesis. Essentially, my position- formed through my previous experience, and grounded in the sociological literature- has been to examine social mixing with a methodological and analytical focus on identities (and the mixing of those identities) of gender and social class, not just race/ethnicity. My approach has been to understand, and thus to study, identities as fluid, shifting, context specific, and (per)formed through discourse, but also to situate these potentially agentic processes in wider structural constraints. Following Shildrick and MacDonald's (2006) recommendation, this thesis explored social mixing in young people's friendships with attention to structures, cultures and biographies. Parts Two to Four then formed the main discussion of the findings of my study on social mixing in urban schools. Part Two focused on institutional processes, and constructions of the urban schools in my study at the level of discourse (objective 2 and 3). Part Three explored the discursive structuring, differentiation and stratification of students'

school-based subcultures (objective 1 and 3) and Part Four the micro-located politics of social mixing in urban schools, through a focus on students' individual biographies and friendships (objective 1 and 4).

This thesis has examined processes of valuing: how certain subjects or groups generate or accrue value and how this process produces constraints on social mixing, but also social mobility through education. In Part Two I showed how the different 'social logics' (Bradford & Hey, 2007, p. 600) and institutional processes operating for the two schools produce different possibilities for mixing. I identified the affective processes of valuing in operation in urban schools, at the level of discourse: how the 'good mix' is underpinned by value, and how this generates good (and bad) feeling. I have shown how value is attributed to the White middle classes as emblems of educational success, while the Black working classes come to embody the unhappy, value-less repository of academic failure. I revealed how processes of *selection* at sixteen- an element of exclusivity and the expulsion of the unhappy objects of academic failure- ironically generates a sentiment of happy smiling multiculturalism at Eden Hill school; while processes of *inclusion* at sixteen, and the inclusion of the unhappy objects at Stellar Academy, produce the sentiment that a degree of structured segregation is necessary, and thus mixing is inevitably partial.

In Part Three through analysis of four school-based subcultures, the Football crowd, the Performing Arts girls, the Neeks and the Smokers, I demonstrated how school-based subcultures are not only structured by social class, race and gender, but are integral to the (re)production of these very identities, in the school context. I showed how the subcultural groups, through the productive constitution, come to stand for particular raced, classed and gendered positionalities, even though the ostensible class, race and gender identities of their members might be more diverse (Griffin, 2011). Furthermore, I demonstrated how these subcultures tended to produce relatively normative or 'monological' performances of gender (Francis, Skelton, and Read 2009), class and race, which contributes to their intelligibility. Finally I argued that the identities of these subcultures, inscribed on the body, generate differing levels of legitimated capital, whereby I have identified the White middle class Smokers group as the ultimate subject of value: the ideal cosmopolitan neoliberal subculture, legitimated by the urban school.

Part Four looked at these processes of valuing in more detail. I focused on individual students' biographies to explore the micro-located politics of social mixing (Amin, 2002 ; Jacobs & Fincher, 1998). With attention to the nuances of space-time embodied relationalities and intersectionalities (Hopkins, 2008a) that make possible social mixing, I explored social mixing in terms of use value and exchange value. I explored the constrained and partial nature of mixing

through discussion of the exchange value of three working class minority ethnic students in their attempts to access White middle class friendship spaces. Part Four concluded with a deliberate focus on the non spectacular (Roberts, 2012) as the missing piece of the puzzle. Presenting analysis of the 'misfits-' those students outside of the subcultural groups- I theorised their failure to become the enterprising subject of value, but I also explored the potential for these students to operate an alternative value compass (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012) and to theorise the possibilities for genuine social mixing in terms of use value.

9.2 Major findings and key contributions

Centrally the overarching contribution this thesis makes is to assert friendship making as a classed process. Fundamentally this is about connecting social mixing with *social mobility*. Social mixing is a form of social capital accumulation, or indeed loss. By making apparent this connection, education becomes central to this process. So in the context of the school, we can understand youth subcultural formation- and these performances of class, race and gender - as a classed process, where the friendships made and reinforced in this subcultural space make class (race and gender).

This research suggests that the White middle classes mix least. This is not unsurprising news – indeed both Butler (2003) and Reay and colleagues' (2011) work has suggested this. However, this thesis provides us with a framework to understand why. The middle classes mix least because they have more to lose from mixing. Because mixing entails a transgression from performances of normative social class, race and gender, bodies becomes less easy to read. For the White middle classes, this means a kind of dilution of their embodied White middle classness, which potentially results in a loss of White middle class privilege. Educational success is perceived as central to upward social mobility. Thus educational success- or the embodiment of the ideal learner which cites educational success- is key to the system of exchange. What is being exchanged are embodied resources: selves. Friendships are a social capital and in the symbolic value economy the selves that have more exchange value are selves which embody the ideal neoliberal learner. The ideal neoliberal learner is the subject of value, while working class and certain minority ethnic bodies are a resource with less exchange value, or indeed negative exchange value. So we can understand White middle class management of acceptable minority ethnic friendships not only as about investments in the Other with the right kind of educationally oriented values, but also investments in the right kind of bodies that hold more value. This is an affective process in which good and bad feeling circulate in this symbolic economy and stick to certain bodies. The way in which White and Black working class bodies are read as unhappy objects of educational failure is

more fundamental than their genuine educational successes and aspirations. Proximity becomes a promise. Operating like contagion, proximity to the unhappy objects associated with educational failure risks identity contamination: a rubbing off of embodied educational failure onto successful bodies, diluting their success in the process.

What I provisionally argue through chapter eight is that unintelligible subjects – uneasily read classed, raced and gendered bodies- find themselves outside of this symbolic economy. Unintelligible subjects fail to embody the enterprising subject of value and become sticky with negative affects. 'Misfits" embodied identities thus have no exchange value. However, I also propose that friendship-making then, outside of this exchange value economy, is by default premised on use value. The production of unintelligible subjectivities thus potentially operates an alternative value compass, albeit through a process of constant struggle. Generating their person value 'through investment and connections to others rather than investments in distinction and self,' (Skeggs & Loveday, 2012, p. 487), for the excluded who exclude themselves from that from which they have already been excluded (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 471), attempts at *belonging* are difficult. Here making *alliances* (Serano, 2012) in spaces outside of the dominant value system, alliances premised on use value, becomes imperative. While the misfits' exclusion is oppressive, I also hope the misfits provide us with a promise to live lives differently, with the potential for the production of an alternative kind of self.

9.2.1 Contribution to theorisations of value and affect

I hope this thesis provides a valuable, tangible, empirical application of both Skeggs' (2004) theoretical work on *Class, Self, Culture* and Ahmed's affective theorisation of multiculture, in a coherent fusion. Beyond textual and media analysis, my thesis applies a cultural class analysis to the everyday lives of young people as they attend an urban mixed school. Like Ahmed, I give close analysis to text, but in the form of interview narratives, to explore how affects circulate within everyday discourse. My analysis, whilst predominantly text based and not ethnographic, plays close attention to discourse and the ways in which language is performative and carries around and unpacks affects from within it –each expression containing within it a tacitly acknowledged but viscerally felt unconscious imaginary. Through using this approach I have generated an affectively constituted understanding of social mixing, bringing a critical analysis to the discourse of the 'good mix' (Byrne, 2006), to show very explicitly how 'feeling good' becomes attached to other kinds of social good (Ahmed, 2007), through the inclusion and exclusion of others. Ahmed prompted that we ask 'who' or 'what' gets seen as converting bad feeling into good feeling and good into bad, attending to the 'points of conversion' and how they involve

explanations of where good and bad feelings reside (Ahmed, 2007, p. 126). In my empirical analysis, I have shown how schools are phantasmic spaces, which contain within them the promise of happiness and success, but where the attribution of value- to different bodies and ultimately selves- is cut throat.

My thesis provides an empirical application of Skeggs' (2004) theoretical ideas to explore how class is made through institutional processes and subcultural practices in urban schools. In doing so I highlight the school as key site for class-making. Through close analysis of diverse young people's friendships and associations I apply her idea about how race can be a mobile shifting signifier, which attaches to different bodies in a classed process. Through analysis of the differently located Black working class and White middle class subcultural identities, I explore, through the Neeks and the Smokers, how White bodies can appropriate Black culture (e.g. the Neeks through the Wire and the Smokers through the party) but Black bodies cannot perform Whiteness in the same way as they are already inscribed and read as Black (for example Damian and his failed attempts to generate exchange value become user-friendly). Through my analysis of the 'misfits,' I also begin to explore Skeggs' project to look beyond exchange value, to investigate how different forms of devalued personhood are lived, and posit the idea of exploring non-normative friendships as alternative value compass (Skeggs and Loveday, 2012).

9.2.2 Advancement of understanding of class processes, gentrification and schooling

Working on the research on *Identities, Educational Choice and the White urban middle classes* with Reay and colleagues (2011) has been fundamental both methodologically and theoretically, in informing both my focus on young people's experiences of mixing as an under-researched area, but also in my starting point to unpick the unacknowledged normality of Whiteness and middle classness as privileged identities (Reay et al., 2007). This thesis has advanced our understanding of the operations of White privilege and middle class privilege, within a framework of a cultural class analysis, and with attention to the psychic landscape of both class (Reay, 2005) and race (Ahmed, 2007). Bourdieu's theoretical tools (Bourdieu, 1984, 1997; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) have clearly been imperative to this thesis in connecting social mixing with social mobility. Bourdieu's work has been crucial to understanding the ways in which cultural (and social) resources accrue economic value, and the way in which the education system is key in this circulation of cultural and social resources.

I contribute here a deeper understanding of how social relations in schooling engendered by gentrification play out for young people. Too often in discussions of class colonisation, only the

actions and experiences of adult middle class parents are heard. I have shown that in gentrified schools young people have undeniable agency in inhabiting and recontextualising the 'choices' of their parents to send them to mixed schools, but that structural position exerts a powerful force on these young people's possibilities. My comparison of two urban schools reveals fascinatingly this 'bounded agency' (Evans, 2007) or the constrained horizons for action (Hodkinson et al., 1996) even for the middle classes. My analysis suggests that in urban mixed schools when the middle classes are in a minority, or a majority, there are different possibilities for mixing. When they are in a minority, boundaries become sharper/harder (the 'specialling' process we saw at Stellar Academy) but when they are in a majority they are 'taking over' (Eden Hill School).

I have provided new focus on working class and minority ethnic perspectives on gentrification and social mixing and I have shown that minority ethnic and working class young people are both explicitly and implicitly aware of the 'game' and the unequal playing field, but also how this awareness is taken up differently by young people, involving collusion, complicity and resistance.

I have contributed new analysis to understanding of the inequalities inherent in schools' academic structuring – ability grouping, sixth form organisation and the structuring of academic versus vocational provision. In examining the effects of this academic structuring on opportunities for social mixing and social interactions and friendships, I have advanced, and complicated, our understanding of the ways in which academic structuring reproduces inequalities, beyond a focus on the learning impacts. I have complicated our simplistic understanding of: school mix equals better outcomes immensely by illuminating the ways in which school organisation may profoundly facilitate or mitigate outcomes, and by decoupling academic outcomes from social benefits or 'goods'.

In my previous research with Reay and colleagues (2007; 2009), we revealed the constrained possibilities for the urban mix-seeking middle classes to act 'ethically' in a social context that is inherently and structurally unequal (privilege appeared to win-out). In this thesis I extended this insight to show the challenging situation that urban schools face, to act as a leveller of social inequality. The two schools in my research were schools which were in some ways 'colonised' from the start. They were schools set up by the middle classes, with a view to generating inclusivity, community cohesion and social mixing. However, like Zizek's (1997) multiculturalist, the White middle class urban school project can be seen to operate as a disavowed, inverted form of racism, in that the White middle class student acts as ideal, universal, normative subject, against which the minority ethnic and working class Other must try to (but can never quite) match up. I thus have contributions to make to our understanding of staff in colonised schools like this.

Staff in these schools were trying to do 'good,' but in clearly structurally unequal conditions. However, I also illuminate the ways in which staff reproduce the idea of class and race divisions as naturalised, thus perpetuating the unacknowledged normality of Whiteness and middle classness. The findings of my thesis suggests that schools- through a greater critical and reflexive understanding (and perhaps by engaging their demonstrably reflexive students in these debates)- can make a small difference, within the wider structural constraints of racist and hierarchical education system.

9.2.3 Bringing structure back in to youth subcultural studies

In drawing on Skeggs' cultural class analysis, intersectionality and gender performativity theory, this thesis provides invaluable contribution to debates in youth studies about subculture. While the need to 'bring structure back in' to understand youth affiliations has been acknowledged as an imperative (Blackman, 2005; Shildrick & MacDonald, 2006), subcultural theory has been in desperate need of updating. Griffin has begun to do this work (with Brown) (2011), and I found her applications of Skeggs' work an exemplary guide, to extend this application further and to test-run a cultural class analysis of subculture.

I hold onto classic subcultural theorisation: that structural inequality can be read through cultural processes (Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 1988), but update this with a cultural class analysis. Further, through understanding subcultural ritual (Clarke et al, 1981) as classed, raced and gendered practices. I advance our understanding of subcultures as classes (raced and gendered)- not simply through their membership- but through enactment of classed (raced and gendered) performances and practices of differential value.

Subcultural theory has an analytical focus on the subculture as the unit of analysis. Furthermore, research on popular culture and multiculture tends to take the site of mix as the unit of analysis. Such approaches can caricature the subculture, or indeed the instance of mixing or multiculture, by emphasising the key facets- the spectacular, as opposed to the everyday. However my analysis does not begin with the subculture, nor the instance of mixing: by having a broad and diverse sample of young people, going about their daily school lives, I take as my starting point the identities and subjectivities within subcultures and the friendship patterns emergent, and explore how these produce subculture and produce mixing or not. What I show is how this is permeable and changes with space-time. Disrupting the idea of subculture, I show how it is the coalescing of what friendships do together which forms them as a subculture. But also it is this approach that draws attention to those outside of subcultural formation – those in the 'borderlands' (Hey, 1997). This has led me to an analysis of the normative pull of subculture (as opposed to the spectacular),

and how subcultures reproduce (class, race and gender), as opposed to, or as well as, transgress. This highlights that youth subcultures are perhaps not the key site to explore social mixing. A return to an analysis of the interaction of subculture and schooling (vis a vis Willis, 1977; Hey, 1997)- largely overlooked in (post)subcultural studies- has (re)drawn attention to the integral role of education and schooling in shaping, structuring and (re)producing youth identities.

Traditional subcultural theory has focused on White working class (heterosexual) masculine subcultures. There is little theoretical attention to the intersecting identities of social class, gender, race in subcultural studies. A methodological and analytical focus on gender and subculture enables us to understand girls' structurally different positioning, subculturally but also in the context of education, but also enables a focus on systemic masculine hegemony, which is all the more apparent through the lens of education. While there is attention to the White middle classes in education studies, there is little attention to White middle class subcultures in youth studies. Through comparison of Black working class subcultures and White middle class subcultures, and attention to the differing embodied capitals operative in these friendship fields, I advance our understanding of Blackness in relation to Whiteness, and of the operations of class privilege, as opposed to a focus on marginalisation and disadvantage. Through analysis of processes of mixing, I move beyond a 'deadweighted,' deterministic conceptualisation of social structures of class, race and gender by looking at social structures as processes, which are constantly shifting.

Through analysis of boundary crossing and attempts at mixing, I explore the way in which power underpins attempts to inhabit a 'hybrid' 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994), and explore what the costs are for those who traverse those boundaries. I understand the free-floating, mobile nature of youth cultural and popular cultural styles and interests through the lens of power, as cultural appropriation. As some styles are more readily taken up and appended by White middle class masculine bodies –I reject the assertion of a 'youthful will to classlessness' (Thornton, 1995, p.167) revealing it to be a smokescreen to hide (White) middle class advantage.

9.2.4 Contributions to feminist education research on identities

In informing my methodological focus of social mixing on friendships, Hey's (1997) ethnography of girls' friendships has been an implicit foundation to this work. Her situating of the study of girls' friendships within both cultural studies and feminist education research, has informed my fruitful transdisciplinary approach, and has been invaluable in informing my understanding of friendship-making as inextricable from wider structural processes. Furthermore this study, along with the crucial work of other feminist academics researching in education, has informed my theorisation

of identity, but particularly my theoretical tenacity to the importance of gender (Francis, 2010; Leathwood, 2006).

What is interesting to reflect on is what appears to have changed (and what has remained the same) in London schools since Hey's (1997) research. While Hey's study was not about social mixing, we can still reflect on the social relations within the school. What is clear in this time is that London has definitely become more 'superdiverse' (Vertovec, 2006), but this has not necessarily resulted in greater community cohesion, but nor in greater conflict either. What appeared to be different to my London schools was in Hey's school (as in George's (2007) and Youdell's (2006)), was a large White working class contingent of students. This may only be a function of the locale(s) chosen, but an interesting difference is that Hey's research revealed much more overt racism circulating among young people than my study, but nevertheless my research found similar segregations in friendships by race. Hey found that racism policed the boundary between Black and White friendships- but with my study these divisions were more subtly maintained, through assertions of lifestyle choices.

My research also contributes further to understanding and theorisation of 'minority' / 'disadvantaged' positions of young people in schools. For example, Youdell's (2005) paper on 'identity traps' construct Black boys as 'trapped' in their negative identities by school practices and positionings. However, my thesis shows the spaces for agency. For example, with Tyler, the Black African working class boy in my research, I show how Tyler can see the game – and he crafts his place in it. My work shows Black boys can disrupt and resist, despite the constraints on the outcomes.

I advance Francis' work on the reproduction of identities in education by holding in tension class and race as well as gender. Francis and colleagues' work on high achieving students, and on popularity in schools, has been crucial to this thesis in theorisation of normative or 'monological' performances of gender (Francis, Skelton, and Read 2009). That is, how high achieving and popular students maintain their status through a convergence towards gender stereotypical performances. However, Francis and colleagues paid little attention to the interaction between gender, race and class, and my work takes their theorisation of gender normativity and extends this to a theorisation of (popular) school-based subcultures as reproducing a class and racial normativity, as well as gender. Bringing together theorisation on gender performativity and gender normativity, with theorisations about the 'ideal student' or the 'ideal learner' (Archer, 2005; Leathwood, 2006; Youdell, 2006) we can understand how these gendered practices (underpinning high achievement and popularity) are differentially structured by social class and

race. What is different about the Neeks in my research, and the Geeks or Boffins in Francis and colleagues work (2009, 2010)- or perhaps what is different about my *analysis*, is a theorisation of the (embodied) cultural capitals the Neeks hold, which underpin their position of class and race privilege in the school.

9.2.5 Contributions to theorisation on intersecting categories of difference

I hope my work advances theorisation on identity, by offering a concrete framework for theorising gender, race and social class, in a model in which there is no degenerative competition for primacy of any identity category (Valentine, 2007, p. 11). Perhaps race and gender theorists would dispute this though. Furthermore, while intersectionality has become a handy catch-all term (Hopkins, 2008a), which means everything and nothing, my empirical attempts to work with intersecting categories has been greatly aided by Hopkins' conceptualisation of space-time embodied relationalities and intersectionalities (2008a). This has been a crucial kaleidoscopic analytical tool. Through perpetual shift, focus and refocus, this tool keeps in tension the operations of multiple identity categories; their relations to others; their embodied enactments; and their position in both time and space, in a rhizomatic, way that is transformative, not additive, nor indeed reductive.

9.3 Directions for further theorisation and research: beyond categories?

I have found this research on urban youth and social mixing, theoretically exciting and expansive. I propose two discrete but interconnected areas for further research and theoretical development. These areas begin with social mixing; expand outwards, but then come back to social mixing. The first area I propose is further theorisation of in-between and non-normative identity spaces. This begins with gender theory but doesn't end there. The second area is about researching the evaluation of bodies in the symbolic economy. Again this begins with the claims of my thesis around social mixing, but the possibilities for application have transferability elsewhere.

9.3.1 Beyond gender theory: researching mis-fit

The role of sexuality is neglectfully background in this thesis. Through this thesis I have come to an understanding of gender and sexuality as inextricably interlinked. Indeed I understand the productions of masculinity and femininity as inherently sexualised. Beyond this thesis I want to think more about understanding gender/sexuality and the regulation of gender/sexuality as an organising principle of the state- a non-essential system of oppression (Butler, 1990, 1993, 2004), but one which is central to this dominant symbolic value system which makes class. I want to

explore the maintenance and regulation of gender as classed process. I see Taylor's (2007) work, for example on working class lesbian lives a productive starting point here.

In this thesis gender has been central to the theorisations of social mixing, despite gender usually being silenced. Indeed what has been crucial about work in gender theory, for this thesis, is to highlight the fundamentally constructed nature of categorisations of gender, and how gender categories do not precede the performative act: the subject only becomes intelligible through action (Butler, 1993). This work has been vital to my theorisation of gender but also race and class. In subsequent work I want to explore further the spaces of mixedness available through disrupting these categories. But I also want to bring to this work a class analysis, which enables us to study how transgressions and disruptions are unevenly and unequally mobilised by different classed bodies.

This study has sparked the desire to further the exploration of the 'misfits:' both the 'misfits' featured in this study and indeed others who could conceptually fall into this category. Work on gender explores non-normative performances and productions of femininity and masculinity as a potential means of destabilising gender categories. For example Francis and colleagues' (2010) explored concepts of 'monological' and 'heteroglossic' gendered performances drawing on Bakhtin's work. Renold (2008) draws on Deleuze and Guattari's work to theorise the 'tween girl' space as a serious site for troubling gender- 'right in the middle of girlhood and womanhood'- this is a mixed space in and of itself, a rhizomatic space which has the potential to destabilise the gender enacted in it. Both studies explored the possibilities for tomboyism to disrupt the heterosexual matrix, as an 'embodied moment of becoming Otherwise' (Renold, 2008, p. 132).

In this work, masculinity (and femininity) is theorised as a free floating signifier which can enable moments or instances of 'male' femininity and 'female' masculinity (Francis, 2010; Renold, 2008). Indeed we need to theorise this in relation to Skeggs' conceptualisation of Blackness as a mobile cultural style that can attach to different bodies (Skeggs, 2004). This work explores the possibilities for such non-normative instances to 're-work and reconfigure' normative femininity/ masculinity and indeed normative racial categorisations (Renold, 2008, p. 149). Francis argues however that:

> *The accentuation of particular, resonant, signifiers of gender help to mask or distract from other aspects of production which might otherwise disrupt the monoglossic façade. (2010, p. 490)*

That is, non-normative performances of gender –or embodied moments of disruption- have to be understood in relation to the amalgam of gendered performances cited by particular bodies.

Disruptions are often balanced by other normative performances or acts. Citing Butler, however, Renold (2008) argues that, in this space of mixing:

> *Something is persisting and surviving, and the words of the master sound different when they are spoken by one who is, in the speaking, in the recitation, undermining the obliterating effects of his claim. (Butler 2004: 201).*

Butler is arguing that while non-normative performances of gender, can be simply mimetic, and still reinforce gender binaries and racial hierarchies, their performance is still subversive and contains the seed for change. Renold (2008) however, poses that 'queer subversions' are only sustained from places of power. Indeed Skeggs' work suggests that subversions of race can be acquisitive and prosthetic, and only certain bodies and positionalities can append or prosthetise race successfully. The misfits' working class embodiments, non-normative performances and position outside of regimes of popularity in the school, might position them as power-less, but to what extent can we conceive of the misfits as enacting 'queer subversions' and conceive of the alternative value compass as an ultimate source of power to disrupt? Or to what extent are queer subversions operating inside the dominant regimes of exchange?

I propose further work in the field of social mixing will usefully involve more detailed interrogation and application of gender theory and queer theory. More detailed study of Butler's canon provides a necessary point of departure, as does Halberstam's work (1998, 2005), but also pursuing the theorisations of the 'schizoid' spaces of neoliberalism of Delueze and Guatarri (2004 [1984]). Ahmed's (2006b) application of queer theory would also be a useful starting point to begin to think about classed 'orientations' and 'disorientations' and how queering might disrupt classed hierarchies.

Theoretical feminist work in education then has 'troubled' or 'queered' gender categorisations, and begun to theorise gender/sexuality as more of a 'mash up' (Enke, 2012, p. 12), a multiplicity, a medley, than the binary-straight-jacket-heterosexual-matrix would have us believe. Butler asks why cannot the framework for sexual difference itself move beyond binarity into multiplicity? (Butler, 2004 p.197 cited in Renold, 2008). Further research on social mixing thus needs to ask: must the framework for identities of social class, race and gender/sexuality be rigid and straight jacketed? Why cannot these identities move into multiplicity? Indeed recent work I have read in transgender/transfeminist studies offers us an insight to think beyond binary gender, and indeed beyond categorisation (Enke, 2012). Trans studies have dealt with the 'categorical insufficiencies' (Enke, 2012, p. 3) of gender to relate to transgender lives, and have had to work with theorisation of the space between binary gender, or indeed beyond gender.

Work in cultural studies has long adopted this position. Back (2003 [1995]) in his detailed analysis of the '90s musician Apache Indian, writes about how Apache refused to categorise himself, he advocates a 'fusion'. While we need to understand Apache in a context in which society can, and will, categorise him, I can also see how a refusal to be aligning yourself to specific categories, 'troubles' these very categories themselves, and perhaps provides a space for things to be imagined differently. If we mix up the very categories themselves, we can conceive of social mixing. In further research in this area, cultural studies on cultural mixedness needs to be brought together with queer theory on gendered mixedness. Understanding diaspora (Brah, 1996) and multiculture (2003 [1995]) as mixed space; 'tween' identities as a between space (Renold, 2008), transgender acting across space, further research on non-normative classed raced and gendered bodies is imperative. However, through my analysis of the misfits, I would also want to ask who has the power to refuse categorisation, to use this to their advantage; what are the resources they bring to this transgression; and who is constructed as odd, as value-less through this process? While theoretically we can think about multiplicity, empirically work has always found a force towards normativity. In future work I would want to explore how this force towards normativity might be bound up with classed processes.

9.3.2 Researching the evaluation of bodies in the symbolic economy

Further work in this area of social mixing would usefully build on my theorisation of classed processes, and processes of the evaluation of bodies and subjectivities. Indeed this work is beginning to grow. McDowell (2012), in a recent paper in the journal of *Youth Studies*, discussed the ways in which embodied differences are read, and constrain opportunities in the labour market. Specifically she argued that forms of working class 'protest' masculinity have increasingly less utility in the new (neoliberal) world of both 'high tech' and 'high touch' work of the service and knowledge economies. What is required is a more cosmopolitan subjectivity- enterprising, adaptable, risk-taking – which she argues, is a more 'prosthetic' masculinity. Indeed, my analysis here of the White middle class Smokers group points to this cosmopolitan enterprising subject position. However, in research with Allen and colleagues (Allen, Quinn, Hollingworth, & Rose, 2012, and see Allen and Hollingworth 2013), I explored how students looking for work in the creative industries discursively produced themselves as these kind of subjects. But only some could produce themselves and be read in this way, and for some it is not a desirable identity position (see Allen, 2008). Discursive constructions however only capture part of the picture in this symbolic economy of bodily evaluation. McDowell argues that 'embodied characteristics of young workers are a crucial part of their acceptability' (2012, p. 578). She claims that in this new symbolic economy:

> *Employers read the surface signals of bodily demeanor, dress and language as indicators of the underlying qualities they are seeking or more typically as characteristics they are careful to avoid (2012, p. 582).*

Evidencing this reading of bodies and processes of valuation however is much more difficult. Burke and McManus' (Burke & McManus, 2009) inspiring study of Higher Education Art school admissions processes has the strength that, as researchers, they were present at a sample of admissions interviews and were able to study the micro-processes of inclusion and exclusion, and the real-time evaluation of bodies and selves in this process.

As with my research with Allen and colleagues, this thesis began to explore these micro-processes of valuing taking place in friendship-making through a predominantly discursive analysis. However my methodological approach was not sufficient to study the minutia of the reading and evaluation of bodies. Moreover, I was only able to speculate about the *potential* for these processes to constrain and enable opportunities, based on other research in the field. The time constraints on the fieldwork for this study limited the ethnographic possibilities, but ethnographic work, exemplified in Youdell's (2006a) work would be a genuine consideration for further research to study this.

There are a number of avenues for future research that emerge from these new theoretical insights. In terms of the characters in my research, such as Damian and Tyler, I ponder will they 'fit' in the world of both Higher Education and work in this new economy, and how will mixing play a role in this? A follow up study which re-contacted my participants, now four years on, would be fascinating and hugely revealing of student's expansion or contraction of friendship networks beyond the transition from compulsory schooling, and the role of these friendships in access to opportunities. Indeed further research into the workings of use value and exchange value could usefully be made by focusing the lens on friendship loss, and the processes by which people lose friends in the symbolic economy of value- which bodies are lost and why.

Concluding comments, spaces for action, and why there are no policy recommendations here

> *Our status is backed by the solid buildings of the world but our sense of personal identity often resides in the cracks. (Goffman, 1961, p. 320)*

> *There are more places to be desired than those guaranteed by the centre [...] the centrifugal pull of dominant meanings, in their turn, provokes the creation of other cultural configurations capable of generating alternative, subversive and contesting desires and discourses. (Hey, 1997, p.126)*

De Certeau's (1984) conceptualisation of power presents a difference between strategy and tactics. In his theorisation, power-full institutions wield power strategically through structures, with omnipotence and omniscience, while power-less subjects are both subject to the hegemonic power-full, but also enact power through micro-tactical manoeuvres: manoeuvres in the dark. This thesis demands to know what tactics might bring down the solid buildings. Butler argues for a politics of disruption, and this politics of disruption is tactical. A deliberate disruption of identity categories –a jailbreak from the straightjacket of categorisations and classifications of gender, race and social class- is a tactical move which has the potential to destabilise hegemonic structures of oppression. Every act of identity transgression is political: it disrupts, and it shakes the foundations in its disruption. However, so far the structure remains intact, but day-by-day it is looking increasingly unstable. De-investment in this dominant symbolic economico-cultural value system, and reorientation towards an investment in alternative systems of use value provides the promise of happiness. If there is anywhere I would like this thesis to have impact, it is here.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter to schools
2 December 2009

Dear Mr X,

Re. Education research on young people and community cohesion

I am carrying out some research on schooling in [London Borough] and I am writing to ask whether your school would be interested in participating in the research.

The aim of the research is to explore the extent to which young people in schools in [London Borough] mix, or have friends across different social and cultural backgrounds, and their views on this. Social integration and community cohesion are important government concerns and key issues on the citizenship curriculum but little is known about young people's experiences and views on this.

I hope to carry out discussions with pupils from two different secondary schools in [London Borough]. I hope to interview some students both in groups, and individually; and would also like to interview some teachers, and other key practitioners. The age group I hope to focus on is 14-16 year olds.

I am interested in the [X school's] involvement in the [London Borough's] Schools' Learning Partnership (XSLP) and its aims to promote links across the state and independent sectors, to explore what the schools have in common and to capitalise on the opportunities to learn from each other. I would hope this research would feed into the work of this partnership, [X Schools'] student voice programme or similar endeavours.

It would be great if you could contact me and let me know whether your school would be able to participate in the research.

The research could take place over a few days spent in the school and would ideally take place in Spring term 2010. I can be as flexible as possible to suit the schools' timetable, and I would go out of my way to alleviate the administrative burden.

I am happy to meet with you (or, of course, another designated member of staff) or talk over the phone to discuss this further. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Sumi Hollingworth

Senior Research Fellow

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Appendix 2: Information sheet

LONDON metropolitan university

IPSE INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES IN EDUCATION

Education Research on Young People, Friendships and Schooling in London

I am looking for students aged between 16 and 18 years old to participate in some research on friendships in London

Who am I? I am a researcher at the Institute for Policy Studies in Education (IPSE) at London Metropolitan University.

What is the research? I am researching young people's friendships in London. The study will be based in two secondary schools/colleges in London. I want to find out what is important to young Londoners in their friendship choices; what influences friendship groups; what issues cause conflict if any; whether there are differences between different schools and what students think about the topic.

What will it involve? The research will involve a one to one, informal face to face interview. Later on I will also run some discussion groups.

When and where will it be? I will be carrying out the interviews over autumn term 2010. The interviews will take place in school and I can meet you at a time that suits you.

What will I use it for? This research will form the basis of my PhD thesis but I also intend to publicise the findings and hope to make a positive contribution to policy in the area of education, youth work and community relations. I will also inform you and your school about the findings.

Your identity will be kept anonymous and not given to anyone beyond the project team. You don't have to participate in the study and if at any point you decide you don't want to participate you can just let me know and I will not use any of your comments.

If you are willing to take part, please complete the pro-forma, or email me. Please pass this flyer on to others in your sixth form!

If you would like any more information about the project please feel free to contact me at IPSE on 020 7133 4170 or by emailing:

Sumi Hollingworth, Senior Research Fellow, IPSE

s.hollingworth@londonmet.ac.uk

Appendix 3: Individual interview guide

Tell me a bit about the school, as someone who doesn't know it

Tell me about people in your school. How do students get on in the school on the whole? What are the different groups? Which groups are the most popular? What makes them popular? [e.g. academic, peer status...]

Tell me a bit about the local area and what it is like for people of your age

Tell me about what you know about other secondary schools in the area [prompt about differences]

Tell me about yourself [prompt- what subjects they are studying, whereabouts they live/grew up/ went to primary or secondary school]

Explain that I want to know about friendships

Tell me a bit about your friends

(Ask them to draw a friendship map including gfriend/bfriend/partners but only family if they class them as friends)

Then ask them to tell me first about 3 close friends

Questions to ask around each friend:

Tell me about how you came to be friends

What qualities do you value in a friend? and what would you avoid?

Tell me about what you do together as friends

Try to ascertain about each friend: similarities/differences

Age, year group,

Subjects studying

Sets/ ability groups

'academic ability'

outside school

live near?,

housing

family/social background

ethnic/ cultural background

religious background

hopes/ dreams/ aspirations

End: Collect pro-forma with basic demographic information from each participant

Appendix 4: Focus group guide
Section A. Social Mixing (half an hour)

1.Tell me about what influences friendship groups in the school?

As prompts, I put statements on the table (prepared from anonymous statements in the individual interview transcripts) and then ask them to discuss which they think is true and also which untrue/ they don't agree with

For example:

a. 'Friendship groups are totally mixed: they are made up of all different ethnicities'

b. 'Black and white pupils are quite divided in this school'

c. 'The friendship crowd who are into football tend to be from a more working class background'

d. 'Football unites people from different backgrounds in this school'

e. 'You tend to be friends with people from the same culture as you'

f. 'different social or cultural backgrounds don't matter to friendships'

g. 'Friendship groups are all about style and music tastes'

h. 'students who come from a more wealthy background don't mix as well with everyone else'

Make sure I prompt here about 'class' and 'race'

or prompt 'what would your statements be about friendship groups in the school?'.

Social mixing and community cohesion

Explain that what I have been interested in, in my research is the social mix of the school, and the extent to which students in year 12 and 13 mix with others from different backgrounds to themselves. [i.e it is a very mixed school, but is there social mixing?]

Explain that in my research I am interested in what the government refers to as 'community cohesion'

2.What do you think of when I say 'community cohesion'? [what does it mean to them, do we have the same understanding?]

Show them the local council definition and discuss how this concurs/ differs from their perspective discussed

Definition of community cohesion used:
Building community cohesion can be described as working towards a set of social relationships where:
• There is an absence of tension and harassment between people of different cultures, races, ages, faiths and lifestyles.
• There is mutual understanding and respect between people of different cultures, races, ages, faiths and lifestyles.
• There is positive inter-personal contact and engagement within daily life between different 'groups'.
• While respecting diversity there are some shared values between different groups about acceptable/unacceptable behaviours and attitudes.

From Local Council Booklet 'A Sense of Belonging'

3. Do you see your school community as cohesive?

If there are conflicts [tension], where are their conflicts?

'Respect of difference?'

'Positive contact and engagement?'

'Shared values?'

[Throughout: What do they think about mixing? does it matter?]

Section B. Understanding inequalities (half an hour)

Explain that I also want to find out if 'mixing' has an impact on how students think about difference and inequality. And introduce the two questions.

4.What types of people do well in life?

Use the below as prompts but only if they don't mention or don't get talking.

- intelligence
- hard work
- rich families/inheritance
- doing well in education
- what school you go to
- networks- who you know
- racism
- talent
- What social class you are born into

5.Why do some people do better at school than others?

put 4 statements on the table and discuss

e.g.

- if you are from a middle class background you are more likely to achieve better grades at school and college
- If you work hard enough at school you will get good grades
- When students get put in ability groups or 'sets' those in top sets do well while those in the bottom sets give up
- It is mainly down to family and whether your parents care about your education and help you to achieve well

End: Collect pro-forma with basic demographic information from each participant

Appendix 5: Staff Interview guide
(Always ask for examples)

Background:

Tell me a bit about the school, as someone who doesn't know it [diversity of pupils and staff, catchment, academics, ethos, history]

Tell me a bit about the local area

Tell me about what you know about other secondary schools in the area [prompt about differences]

How is this school seen in the local area? [prompt-reputation]

Tell me about your role in the school

Explain that I want to know about friendships

Main school:

Tell me about students in the (main) school:

What are the different friendship groups you could identify, if any?

What makes them identifiable [clothes, social activities, music, where they socialise]?

Which groups are the most popular? What makes them popular? [e.g. academic, peer status...]

How much overlap do you see? do they integrate or are they quite separate?

How do (young) people get on in the school on the whole?

How central/important are student friendship groups to school policy?

[e.g. community cohesion agenda- how does the school interpret it?]

6th form:

Tell me about the 6th form:

What are the different friendship groups you could identify, if any? What makes them identifiable [clothes, social activities, music, where they socialise]?

Which groups are the most popular? What makes them popular? [e.g. academic, peer status...]

How much overlap do you see? do they integrate or are they quite separate?

What do you think the main influences are on young people's friendships?

[show slides and ask them: 'which of the following do you think are the most important, and why?]

Subjects studying	Aspirations
academic 'ability'	where they live
family/social background	ethnic/ cultural background
religious background	Sets/ ability groups
Primary school /previous school	Age, year group
gender	Interests – i.e. music, sport, clothes etc

When discussing these slides ['students have identified certain groups they see in the school...']:

e.g.

What role do you see sport playing in influencing friendships?

What about gender- how much do boys and girls mix friendships?

Some staff and students have told me about the academic 'Pathways' at this school (streams) do you see this as having any influence?

Previous schools:

I'm aware that some students in 6th form come from other schools previously-

How do you see this affecting friendship groups?

How well do they settle in?

Does the school have any particular arrangements to integrate these students?

Can you tell me something about **the social provision** in the 6th form [e.g. extra curricular activities, social spaces provided]

(if not already discussed)

One of the things I'm interested in the extent to which young people mix with others from different social and ethnic backgrounds...

What is your opinion on this, from what you know of pupils in this school?

Do you think this school is typical/ a-typical in this respect? [of London state schools, of the region, the country]

Do you think that social mixing is important? [reasons]

What do you think are the key issues in relation to social mixing? [what facilitates it, what hinders?]

End

Appendix 6: Demographic proforma template

A short questionnaire about you:

1) Name:

---

2) Gender:

M	☐
F	☐

3) Which school/college are you at? [*please write in*]:

---

4) Where abouts do you live? [no need to write exact address, just your neighbourhood]:

---

5) How old are you? ☐

6) What year group are you? ☐

7) If you were at another school before 6th form, please write the name and location here:

School name	Location

8) What are you CURRENTLY studying? [please write as many subjects as you are taking]:

Qualification (Eg. A level, BTEC, GNVQ, GCSE)	**Subject** (e.g. maths, childcare...)

9) Do you receive EMA?

Yes	☐
No	☐

10) How would you best describe your ethnicity? [*please write in*]

---

11) Is English your first language?

Yes	☐
No	☐

a) If not, what is your first language? [*please write in*]

---

12) Do you intend to go to University?

Yes	☐
No	☐

13) Did either of your parents go to University?

Yes	☐
No	☐
Don't know	☐

13) What is your housing status?

Owner occupied	☐	Council rented	☐
Private rented	☐	Housing Association	☐
Other	☐		
Don't know	☐		

14) Do you have access to the internet at home?

Yes	☐
No	☐

15) What are your parent/s occupations?

(Please write in)

Parent	Occupation

Thank you! (your details will not be shared beyond the research team).

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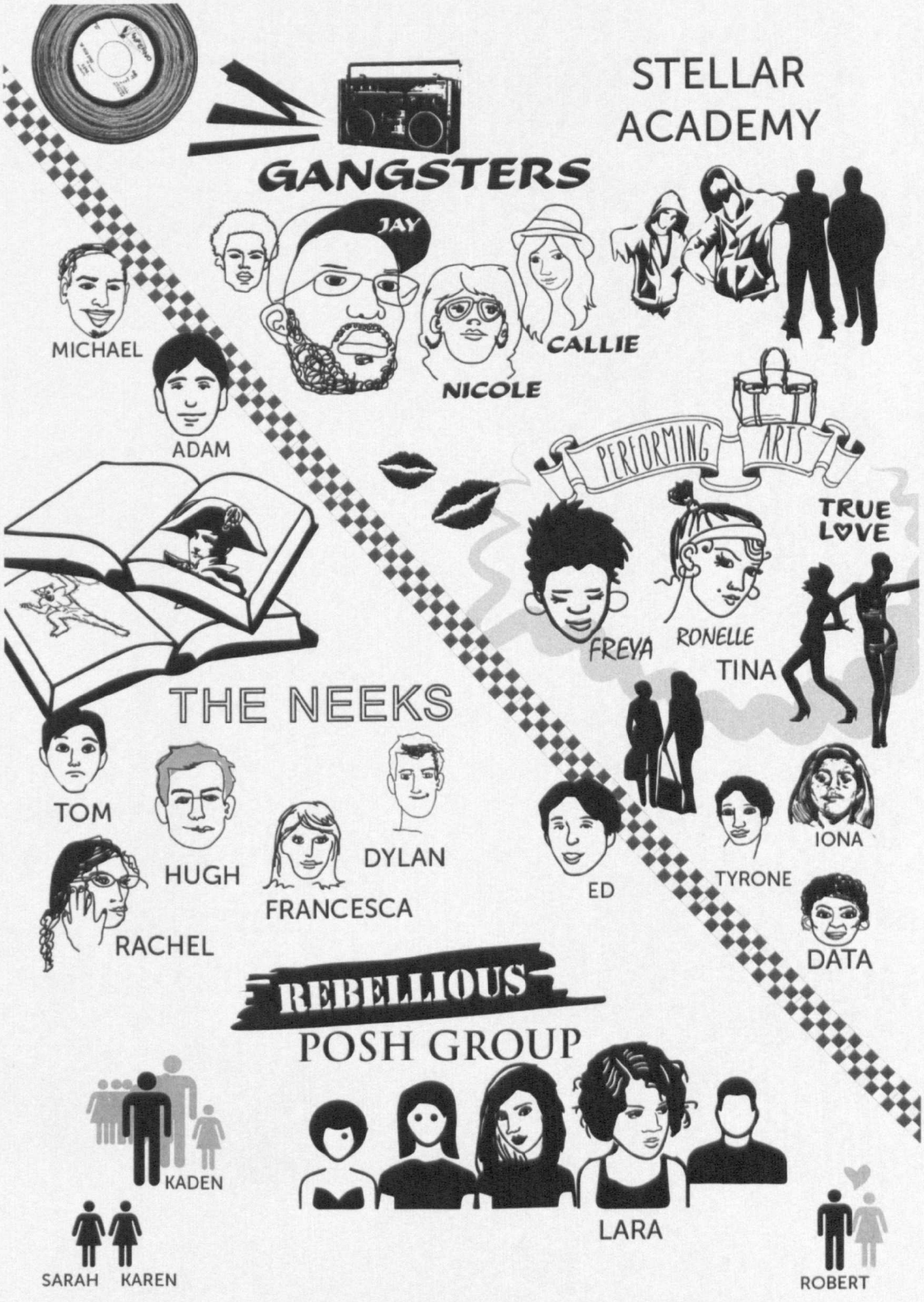
Appendix 7: Illustrative diagrams of the friendships and subcultures

Friendships and Subcultures at Eden Hill School

Friendships and Subcultures at Stellar Academy



Illustrations created by Jessica Wright, 2013 http://uk.linkedin.com/pub/dir/Jessica/Wright