

**'YOU'VE SEEN US!' : MASCULINITIES IN THE LIVES OF
BOYS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY (ID)**

David Charnock, MSc. Dip. Ad. Ed. RNMH

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Abstract

Masculinity is a complex construct negotiated by both men and women through social relationships. This negotiation is influenced by space, place and time. Schools provide an ideal place for masculinities to be organized and although controversial, culturally normative or hegemonic constructs of masculinity are shaped by boys. These hegemonic constructs are often formed of dominant behaviours that boys are required to portray if they are to gain access to male spaces. The result is that those boys who attempt to construct counter hegemonic masculinities find themselves in a subordinated position in relation to other boys. However, the need to establish difference as part of a masculine identity is crucial to the establishment of an identity as a boy. This potentially causes difficulties for boys and men with disabilities as they make their transition from childhood to adulthood. Access to the world of men can be closely guarded by non-disabled people and so disabled men can be persuaded to either conform, subvert or attempt to create an alternative masculine hegemony. For boys and men with Intellectual Disability (ID) little is known about their attempts to develop their gendered identities. This study aims to explore whether boys with ID have ideas of what it means to be a boy, what influences this and what ideas the boys have about their futures as men. Using an approach based on grounded theory, group interviews were conducted with 21 boys in 7 groups from a special school who were engaged in plans about transition from school to the adult world. Using a set of images which reflected normative ideas of masculinity and aspects of their own lives, the boys were asked to work together to negotiate the images relevant to their ideas about being a boy. Following this the boys were asked to produce art work about their expectations of life in the adult world, which were used as triggers for individual interviews. Three boys were withdrawn from the process as they experienced difficulty with the methods, while a further 2 withdrew as a result of personal circumstances or problems with school attendance. Therefore, 16 individual interviews

were conducted. As the boys talked about their current lives and their hopes for the future in both the group and individual interviews, the data was viewed as a continuous set. A grounded theory analysis of the data revealed a developing construct of masculine identity being established both outside and inside the interview room that could be identified as *the way we do boy*. This was indicative of the boys awareness of their boyhood in transition and participants were able to use their talk to offer insight into their thoughts about identity and their hopes and dreams for the future. *The way we do boy* is described in four themes: changes; ideals; experiences; vicariousness. **Changing**: becoming aware of changes in their environments that would transform *the way we do boy* to a way of doing man; **Ideals**: exemplars the boys held in mind that informed *the way we do boy* which included taking risks and having control; **Experiences**: and observations that influenced *the way we do boy*, using knowledge and their understanding of difference; **Vicariousness**: experiences through others. Findings demonstrate that the four themes were instrumental in assisting the boys to think about their identities. It is evident that the boys had used this to construct culturally normative ideas about being a boy in the school. However, the opportunities to practice their developing masculinity was limited and the boys talked about their struggles when their attempt to project their identities as boys resulted in the uncovering of their difference and vulnerability. This appears counter to a prevailing policy of inclusion for this group and so the challenge is to establish hopes for the future so that boys and men with ID can have access to the world of men. The analysis and discussion of this study is therefore developed into a theoretical model for working with boys and men with ID about their masculinity. With the addition of Thomas's (1999) work expressed as lenses, it is hoped that this will provide a practical model for use in services for both boys and men with ID.

List of Published Papers

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the boys who participated in this study. Thank you for accepting me into your world and letting me know how you want to be.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

‘...identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we come from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves!’ (Hall and du Gay, 1996)

Hall and du Gay (1996) set the tone for this thesis, inviting the reader to consider identity as multi-factorial; dependent on our view of self, the view of others and how these combine to help us become someone. For people with intellectual disabilities (ID) navigating a route that will help to realise this can be problematic. History, language and culture conspire to form a representation of ID that can lead to either restriction or emancipation. The representation of this group over time has arguably been the pivotal force that has constructed the identity of ID. Neoliberal policy makers have shaped a cartography over three decades that has released ID identity from within the walls of the institution to realise a place in the community. This emergence, both real and metaphorical, largely choreographed by family and professional carers needs now to be reviewed. It is time to acknowledge ID identity framed by other aspects of being human, to begin a new way of becoming *‘the way we do...’* rather than *‘the way you do...’*.

The introduction is intended to serve as a primary discourse in relation to masculinities and ID. Beginning with some brief thoughts about prevalence, the aim of the introduction is to first set ID within the context of historical change, an underpinning philosophy of ID and social policy. Initial thoughts about methodology are included next followed by a summary which will offer a rationale for the study, including a personal reflection on practice with young men who have ID, to give initial grounding to the thesis. Finally the structure of the thesis is presented. It is hoped

that in introducing the study in this way the consideration of masculinities in relation to the lives of boys with ID, or the absence of it, will begin to emerge. It might be suggested that an investigation of the experiences of boys with ID is long overdue. The lack of research involving boys and men with ID and my experiences in practice provides the impetus for this study. In essence it is the authentic voice of the boy and his experiences of being a boy with ID that I propose is absent from its long history.

Estimates of the number of people with ID known to services in England equates to approximately 2.2% of the population (Emerson and Hatton, 2004). When considered in relation to gender, approximately 3 out of 5 people diagnosed with an ID are male. It would be problematic to attach any significance to this slim majority of men to women in this field relevant to masculinities or femininities. Figures are more accurate for children of school age with boys outnumbering girls in the primary school sector almost 2:1 (Department of Education, 2010), which would suggest that greater attention is required for this group. However recent work by Wilson, Parmenter, Stancliffe et al (2010) begins to question the focus of published research papers taking as their central tenet an aspect of the lives of men or women with ID. Although limited in scope, Wilson et al (2010) offer a masculine perspective on the topics of published papers between 1996 and 2008. The authors conclude that researchers have presented a reductionist view of the lives of men with ID when compared to women, with a disproportionate consideration of risk and behaviour for this group. Wilson et al (2010) recommend that a more positive construction of the lives of men and boys with ID should be pursued, which detracts from a pathologized or stereotyped view of ID masculinity. These conclusions build on those expressed by Porter, Christian, and Poling (2003), who also comment on the stereotypical representation of men with ID in the research literature. This together with the dearth of research which

specifically focuses on more positive aspects of the lives of men with ID begins a discourse of masculinities for this group.

ID is comprised of a myriad of organic and psycho social anomalies that constitute a complex field of inquiry for researchers from a number of disciplines. Of this research field only two studies have begun to analyse issues of masculinity as they relate to the lives of men and boys with ID (Benjamin, 2001; Wilson, 2009). As mentioned previously, it could be argued that the focus of inquiry to date has been largely driven by a stereotypical notion of ID masculinity and that it is perhaps timely to begin to focus on more positive aspects of ID masculinities. This would help to complement some of the research that focuses on the lives of women with ID. Benjamin (2002) in her research with girls with special needs in mainstream education centres on their experiences as girls in the system not on their ID. This follows on from ground breaking work in the book 'Women with ID: Finding a Place in the World', which again highlights experiences of women with ID (Traustadóttir and Johnson, 2000). In essence, although the research evidence is small, the experience of being a girl or woman with ID has received some attention in contrast to that of boys or men with ID.

Historical change

'The social agencies have to intervene, to provide relief. To help us face up to it, as they say. Of course, but first of all to rid us of it, in a real or symbolic way, it all depends, or both at the same time.'
(Stiker, 1999, p. 7)

Stiker's (1999) thesis alludes to the complex dialogical relationship between society, citizenship and the anomalous disabled over time. He points to the desire to eradicate difference, '...but first of all to rid us of it', and suggests that this has emerged in different ways over history. The

inference is that although there has been a great deal of change in the lives of people with disabilities, society's desire to eradicate or hide away difference continues to be apparent in both subtle and presumptuous ways.

The history of ID has been well documented by authors who have given context to the lives of this vulnerable group (Morris, 1969; Kirman and Bicknell, 1975; Wright, 1996; Walmsley and Rolph, 2001; Wright, 2004). In addition a small group of authors have sought to give voice to people with ID living restricted lives, dominated by the representation of a stigmatized existence often isolated from mainstream society (Edgerton, 1967; Brechin and Walmsley, 1989; Atkinson, Jackson and Walmsley, 1997; Malacrida, 2006; Mee, 2010). These narratives offer a glimpse of how factors including productivity, identity as other (disabled identity) and sexuality have played their part in the lives of people with ID. Although scarcely written about, gendered identity has also been established as a significant factor in the control of people with ID, and subsequently society's view of them, in respect of both female and male biology and social identity (McDonagh, 2000; Walmsley, 2000; Stehlik, 2001; Brady, 2001; McDonagh, 2006; Carlson, 2010). These have included the aggressive control of female fertility based on assumptions regarding the danger of female sexuality (Walmsley, 2000; Carlson, 2010). Also the role of women without ID in the development and organisation of institutional and segregated care practices (Stevens, 2000; Carlson, 2010). McDonagh (2000) argues that men were considered diminished historically and unable to take their place in society as men. However, these narratives only reveal the tensions that arise between disabled identity and gendered identity at critical moments in history, not a continuous narrative of what it has been and is now to be male or female with ID.

Although incomplete, history offers a fascinating glimpse of the representation of people with ID over time. A representation coloured by a restricted view of gender based on conformity to the mainstream and risk associated with sexuality. Accounts of the segregated lives of people with ID end with the demise of institutional provision and the change to more community based care. What appears to be missing, specifically related to the context of this study, is how ID has affected the lives of men and if this has any bearing on our formulations of how this shapes the construction of masculinities for boys who are becoming men now.

Underpinning philosophies (Normalisation and Social Role Valorisation)

The past four decades of change in the lives of people with ID, across the western world, has been driven by philosophical and ideological constructs of normalized lives and socially valued roles. Osburn (2006) in his overview of Social Role Valorisation (SRV) attempts to demonstrate how the principles that underpin it can transform the lives of vulnerable groups ensuring that they have access to 'the good things in life' (p.4). The devaluation of people with ID throughout history is the catalyst that gives form to both normalization and SRV according to Osburn (2006), as it aims to address society's view of these devalued groups. The outcome of a reversal of a devalued view is best explained by Nirje (1999), who first formulated the principle of normalisation. Nirje (1999) was influenced by the oppressive conditions found in institutions in both Sweden and the United States. These experiences brought into sharp relief the impoverished lives of people with ID, apparently a result of their diagnosis and subsequent stigmatisation. In his account of his work, Nirje (1999) lists the seven principles that underpin normalization as reproduced in Figure 1.

1. A normal rhythm of the day;
2. A normal rhythm of the week;
3. A normal rhythm of the year;
4. The normal experiences of the life cycle;
5. Normal respect for individual and of the right to self-determination;
6. The normal sexual patterns of the culture;
7. The normal economic patterns and standards in their community.

Figure 1: Principles of Normalisation

The use of the word 'normal' extensively in the set of principles raises troubling questions about what might constitute normal for any individual or group of individuals in any given society. This becomes particularly troubling when Nirje (1999) argues for a 'proper use' of these principles for both individuals and groups of disabled people. Further confusion is triggered by Nirje's (1999) explanation of the application of the principles in practice.

'It is also on an understanding of how these patterns apply as indicators of proper human programs, services, and legislation.'
(p.17)

The use of such functional language by Nirje (1999) arguably distracts one from a focussed view of the devaluation of the individual and the subtle nuances of their experience of ID, offering instead a one size fits all approach based on principles that are now indicators of whether the outcome can be considered to be correct or not. It would appear that this outcome is intrinsically linked to the perspective of the person or group of people applying the indicators, influenced by their values and an ideological construct of normality. This perspective and not the lived experience of the person with ID is what then transforms society's view of that which they have previously cast as other. The accusation that the

principles are both ideologically and values driven is fiercely contested by Osburn (2006). However, Osburn (2006) concedes that decision makers might employ a raft of influences prior to considering implementation which, I would argue, also fail to acknowledge the individual experience of ID.

'Decisions about whether to implement SRV measures for any person or group, and to what extent, are ultimately determined by people's higher-order (and not necessarily conscious) values which transcend SRV and come from other sources, such as their personal upbringing, family influences, political and economic ideas, worldviews, and explicit religions. (p.7)

The danger here is that the representation of ID is either cast as devalued, based on what influences the decision makers, or valued, again based on what influenced the decision makers at the time. Neither representation can be argued to be influenced by the experience of living with ID today, as it is linked to principles which emerged from the lives of people whose experience was limited to institutionalized settings. This is arguably no longer relevant to people with ID.

Oliver (1999) offers another perspective in his critique of the normalisation principle, when he argues that economic and political values are dialogically linked to the creation and emancipation of devalued groups in our society. He goes on to suggest that the normalisation principle itself is responsible for creating and preserving 'the normal/abnormal dichotomy' (p.167). Oliver (1999) further explains that economic changes and the ways in which societies operate, mean that it is now too simplistic to assume that decisions can be made purely on the basis of what is perceived to be desirable and undesirable. In fact what is most important

in discourses with regard to normal/abnormal is the idiosyncratic nature of being human.

'...:difference based on gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, abilities, religious beliefs, wealth, age, access or non access to work, and so on.' (p.167)

This view recognises that our social, economic and political world evolves over time, that this will have an influence on the way we live our lives and that it is essential to take account of individual difference including in this case ID. The absence of an acknowledgement of masculinities and its effect on the lives of boys with ID is perhaps a place to start, this will be a major point of discussion throughout this thesis.

Policy

Although not always patently obvious, ID policy in the UK since the 1970s has been supported by the principle of normalisation/SRV and more recently ideas about social inclusion. UK governments have persisted over this time in promoting choice and control as an ethical panacea which can offer personalisation in both specialist and mainstream provision, evidenced by the most recent policy review (Department of Health, 2008). It is apparent that despite economic difficulties resulting in worldwide recession, the present coalition government have not wavered from this ethical position. This has been further strengthened by the exposure of poor practice in the private sector (Department of Health, 2012). There are clear parallels between the lives of people with ID and other disabled groups in the UK in terms of how policy is underpinned and supported. However, there are distinct differences in relation to the routes those different groups have taken on the road towards emancipation. These differences are clearly laid out by disability theorists in their accounts of the struggle for inclusion (Barnes, Mercer, Shakespeare, 1999; Priestly, 2003).

Unlike the field of ID, the philosophical underpinning of which according to Oliver (1999) establishes a dichotomous dialogue with regard to abnormality perhaps strengthening a view of other, the mainstream¹ disability movement have continued to own a social model of disability in their struggle against the medicalization and individualisation of their impairments. Unlike the philosophical basis of ID, the social model posits the point of change for people with disabilities away from the individual and their impairments and into the hands of society. In doing so the message is clear, it is society and the environment that disables not individual impairment. However, this has been challenged in recent years in a similar way to that of normalization for people with ID. The challenge lies in the accusation that the social model like normalisation neglects the individual's experience of their impairment and the consequences of this for the person (Thomas, 2001), something that will be returned to in the literature review.

Policy suggests that for people with ID the fulfilment of normalised aspirations are essential to becoming socially valued. In essence, government policy offers that inclusion in all aspects of community life is as achievable to people with ID as it is to their non-disabled peers (Department of Health, 2001; Department of Health, 2009). However, as presented above, the achievement of this is based on acceptance as a person with ID and not any other aspect of what makes that person human. To offer some initial focus on how this gender blindness may affect individual experience in relation to this social policy, a brief critique using one aspect of masculinity theory is used to demonstrate the importance of ensuring that the nuances of masculinity and femininity are recognised.

The white paper Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century (Department of Health, 2001) and the subsequent re-

¹ Used to distinguish all other impaired groups from ID.

development of it, Valuing People Now: a new three-year strategy for people with learning disabilities 'Making it happen for everyone' (Department of Health, 2009), have provided direction for families and services driving recent changes in provision. However, close scrutiny of these documents reveals that the only mention of the gendered identity of people with ID is that associated with men and women with ID living longer (Department of Health, 2001 p. 103) and specific issues associated with women's gynaecological health (Department of Health, 2001 p. 115). Most significant to this simple analysis is that in the second of the documents there are no references to gendered identity at all. In essence it is as though people with ID are genderless or that no importance is linked to their identities as men or woman. It could be argued that this is significant as the experience of gendered identity is so crucial to the way men and women live their lives. This is particularly relevant when the four guiding principles of the three year strategy are considered: Rights; Independence; Choice; Inclusion (Department of Health, 2008). My contention here is that these principles may be experienced and progressed differently depending on the gender of the individual. Although contentious, the notion of hegemonic or culturally normative masculinities may help in explaining the significance of gender blindness for boys and men with ID when policy is analyzed. Connell (2000) argues that dominance, aggression and competitiveness are produced as exemplars by boys and men in their construction of identity. Although controversial, this construct may offer some assistance in viewing the effect of masculinity on the realization of the four guiding principles (Rights; Independent living; Control; Inclusion) which operate as the scaffolding that supports current social policy in ID. It could be argued that gender blindness in policies for people with ID, in this case for boys and men with ID, ignores what effect gendered constructs, including dominance and competitiveness, might have on the realization of the principles. For example, if we were to utilize Connell's (2000) exemplars, we may need to consider dominance when discussing control

or inclusion for boys and men with ID. This may suggest a very different approach to planning for the future for boys with ID when perhaps compared to the future for girls with ID. However, as Connell (2000) would argue it is too simplistic to apply exemplars in this way as they are specific to the time and place in which they were constructed. It would therefore be necessary to establish what the exemplars are for boys and men with ID locally, as an initial investigation of masculinities. Consequently, without this analysis based on ideas about gender identity, the continuance of blindness to gender and its importance is at risk.

Personal Reflection

This study is influenced, by 30 years of practice experience with both children and adults who have an ID, either living in or making transition to life in the community; an academic journey which has been perturbed by the inequalities experienced by vulnerable groups and my own personal reflections of masculine identity.

First and perhaps most significantly my work with young men with mild ID during this period has raised questions regarding the ability of families and those employed to assist them, to help navigate a life pathway at a time when these young men were trying to develop their identities as men. I have been particularly struck by the struggles of those in an increasingly complex technological world, who have found it difficult to find their place as men in their communities. Additionally, the complex construction of social systems and the social relationships that build these, including connection within social media, have arguably set those with ID further apart from the mainstream. Different skills are now needed to be socially connected, not just intellectual but Information Technology (IT) skills. These factors have made social functioning, particularly problematic for persons with ID, with the potential for further isolation.

A formative experience early on in my career as a nurse illustrates the potential for conflict between the masculine and disabled self. This came when working with a young man with ID living with his parents after completing full time education. As he was viewed as only mildly affected by his impairment, he was not assessed as entitled to specialist services or help to make his transition to the adult world. Upon scrutiny this could be acknowledged as a sound and rational decision given his ability and potential for connection with other boys of the same age moving from full time education in his community. However, referral to specialist adult services came when his behaviour towards family members had deteriorated and his parents were struggling to find ways to cope. Despite initial hypotheses with regard to the cause of the changes in behaviour perhaps related to finding his place in the world, it transpired that this young man had in fact begun to find some success as an adult. Already a black belt in a martial art, he had trained as an instructor after leaving school and was now involved in guiding children in the sport. However, problems were emerging in this young man's life related to his relationships with family members and his attempts to form relationships with young men and women of a similar age in his community. In the home his attempts to change his status from child to adult male were thwarted by his step father who had difficulty accepting his step son's change in behaviour. In essence it appeared that the prevailing assumptions regarding this young man's impairment had a profound effect on his ability to practice aspects of his developing masculine identity in the home. In addition his younger brother, a teenager at the time, was also trying to practice aspects of his own developing masculinity and so the inevitable clashes were difficult for the parents to manage. Also, difficulty relating socially to people of his own age was having a profound effect on his ability to develop lasting relationships. This appeared to be linked to his inability to project his adult masculine identity upon a situation including young men and women who were much more intellectually able. As a

consequence he began to make connections with children who were younger than him as his success was much greater, something that worried his family. Although at the time we did not fully understand issues of masculinity, our hypothesis began to change to include struggles with change from boyhood to manhood. In addition it also highlighted the difficulties that young men with ID could experience as they attempted to explore their developing identities as men.

Reflections on my academic journey have also served to support developing ideas for this research study. A curiosity about vulnerability and inequalities for people with ID began during my studies towards a Diploma in Adult Education, which considered as its central texts the work of Paulo Freire and his work with oppressed groups. Following on from this my masters research considered the inequalities in primary health care for people with ID. It occurred to me during this journey that the disabled self was often at odds with mainstream society and that the development of identity was a significant element of this. Consequently, my career in nurse education has been greatly influenced by these ideas.

Finally a reflection on my own journey and the development of a masculine identity has helped to stimulate my interest in this field of research. In particular, it is the battles with a prevailing ideology of masculinity that have been of concern to me. Personal Transitions have been tough and so I consider that I am in a position to be able to think about this in relation to other groups.

Initial thoughts about methodology

It has become clear in the initial stages of this study that the history, philosophy and policy which gives context to the lives of people with ID, lacks the authentic voice of those it seeks to represent. Any choice of methodology therefore, must make as its central tenet the voice of the boy

with ID as he begins his journey into adulthood. This is of particular significance as this study aims to reveal a construction of masculinity that is personal to a group of boys and is potentially influential in the formation of their thoughts of futures in the adult world. It is therefore logical that qualitative methodologies are considered to allow this singular principle to be realized. I had a clear epistemological and ontological stance at the beginning of this study, to develop an understanding of the world as interpreted by boys with ID. In addition to end the study with a view of the social properties of that world through the boys' interactions with each other and me as researcher. A thorough exploration of this will be made in chapter 2 of this thesis.

Summary

Three motivations form the foundations for this study, these are: to question/critique the pathologizing of ID masculinity; to draw attention to the ignorance of gendered identity in the past; the problem of gender blindness within social policy. It is essential that consideration is given not only to the effects of ID on the person's life, but also how that person's gender simultaneously affects and influences the impairments that encompass an individual's experience of ID. Therefore it is timely to begin to consider masculinities in the lives of boys with ID, to provide a sense of its importance to their developing identities.

Social policy for adults with ID asserts clearly that we should rely at least in part on naturalistic supports and family involvement to offer sustained support to individuals (Department of Health, 2001; Department of Health, 2009). However, my experience suggests that it is not the support that is the most prominent issue at play here, but the mismatch between personal aims and ambition and access to the world of men and the opportunities that come with that.

Next, the structure of the thesis will be elaborated.

The structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 of this thesis presents a broad narrative review of the literature to contextualise the development of masculinity, taking as its initial focus a critical understanding of teenage masculinity, which considers culturally normative forms, the practice of masculinity and specific areas of study pertinent to the lives of teenage boys. This is followed by an analysis of literature that centres on the lives of disabled boys and men, and then, most relevant to this study, those with ID. Although limited, I hope that the critique of the inclusion or exclusion of masculinity in literature about ID will provide a foundation for the development and conduct of this study. This chapter is intended to begin a journey through normalised ideas of masculinity through masculinity that is affected by impairment. It is hoped that this journey will continue beyond this review to consider the lives of boys with ID in more detail. The summary of this chapter is preceded by an introduction to the research questions and the aim and objectives of the study.

Chapter 2 outlines the methodology and methods adopted to address the research question and the aim and objectives of the study. The theory behind the different research paradigms is discussed to demonstrate how choices were made about the design of the study. This includes the paradigm assumptions which have guided the approach to data collection and analysis. The design of the study is discussed with particular reference to research with children and the particular considerations necessary. Procedures are described to highlight the structure of the research from orientation through to analysis. The methods used in the study are presented and discussed to acknowledge the abilities of the participants and to offer a rationale for the development of the materials used.

Chapter 3 presents the interview analysis for the study conducted with teenage boys in a special school. Detailed demographic information is included to give context to the research and its conduct. Themes derived from the analysis are presented in visual form to highlight the structure and significance of the results. Each theme is then described punctuated by direct quotes from the boys who took part in the study and interpretation of their meaning. These findings are then explored in Chapter 4, in relation to relevant theories and research from the fields of masculinity, disability and ID. The analysis and discussion is then used to construct a theoretical model that is considered in relation to its practical application. A discussion of methodology is then included with consideration of future research directions which could be followed in light of this exploratory study.

CHAPTER 2 TEENAGE MASCULINITIES AND DISABLED MASCULINITIES: ESTABLISHING CONTEXT

Introduction

This chapter presents a narrative review of literature that explores masculinity among boys with and without disability. Specifically the review attempts to reveal, and give context to, the lives of boys and men with intellectual disabilities (ID) in relation to masculinities. The literature review will provide a site from which claims, evaluation and defence will emerge later in this thesis (Charmaz, 2006).

The review initially considers the lives of teenage boys whose life is not affected by disability, either physical or cognitive, to explore 'normalised' concepts of the construction of masculinities. Theories and the arguments that underpin the exploration of masculinities are first pursued, presenting a landscape on which to place new ideas for boys with ID. Culturally normative or hegemonic constructs of masculinity are then considered to highlight the controversies this raises and the consequences that emerge for teenage boys. The practice of masculinity is then analysed with specific focus on the lives of teenage boys. Next the review attends to current issues that appear to perturb accounts of 'doing boy'². Specific themes are chosen for further analysis as they have emerged from the literature but which potentially strike a chord with the lives of boys and men with ID. These themes are as follows: the body; relationships and sexuality; education and employment; health and mental health. Seeking to edify aspects of teenage masculinity in this way will hopefully aid our understanding when the construction of masculine identity is affected by ID.

² 'Doing Boy' is used by Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) to describe the practice of masculinities among boys. This and reconstructions of it will be used throughout the thesis when referring to the practice of masculinity.

To offer greater breadth, with regard to masculinities and disability, the review moves to consider the lives of men and boys with disabilities other than those that have an effect on intellectual capacity or ability. The barriers and restrictions that exist in the lives of people with disabilities will be presented here, to identify points of convergence with the lives of people with ID, in relation to the practice of masculinities. In particular, the disability movement and critiques of the social model of disability are used to reflect upon disability and contextualise lives lived arguably at odds with the rules of mainstream society. Issues associated with different impairment groups with particular reference to the competition for limited resources will not be considered in depth here. However, as Deal's (2003) account of a 'hierarchy of impairments' alludes, the possibility for further restriction for people with ID from the mainstream disability movement in addition to mainstream society is potentially a site for additional stigma. As Deal (2003) points out '...those ranked lowest in the hierarchy become even more vulnerable to the vagaries of social policy without the support of those who would be their comrades and defenders.' (p.907). However, what I hope will emerge in the context of this study is the extent to which boys and men with disabilities and those with ID are united by frustrated attempts to gain access to the world of men.

The final section of the literature review develops the components first presented in the introduction with regard to the lives of people with ID. It will mirror the previous section by developing a critique of the underlying philosophy and policy of ID to add to the context of the study. Although there is little research currently focussing on the issue of masculinities and men or boys with ID, the intention here is to use what exists to provide a secure foundation on which to begin building a model of masculinity and ID.

It is anticipated that the representation of a diverse literature together with the outcome of this study, will begin a dialogue leading to a counterpoint where the lives of boys and men with ID can be analysed. Each section of the review will end with a synthesis of the literature which then converges in the chapter's summary. It is hoped that the synthesis of the literature reviewed, will identify current debates pertinent to the lives of boys and men with ID. The research questions and the aim and objectives of the study are then introduced at the end of this review.

A discourse for doing boy

The scope of this review in relation to masculinities will broaden as it navigates away from the normalised ideas of masculinity to a consideration of its construction when disability is a significant part of everyday life. The intention initially is to present theoretical ideas about the construction of masculinities when disability is not part of life. Consequently, this should help in the analysis of the lives of boys with ID and the construction of ideas about being boys, helping to uncover the existence of both similarities and differences. Initial consideration will be given to general issues of masculinity and the study of it; hegemonic masculinity and the controversial debate that is present in the literature; popular ideas of being masculine among teenagers; finally four specific issues that emerge from the literature with regard to the lives of boys will be investigated. This part of the review is derived in the main from empirical studies with boys and those who support them, in addition the thoughts of academics in the field of masculinities is also included.

Connell (1995) in her work focussing on the reflections of men on their lives as teenagers calls for caution to ensure that boys and men are not made to feel bad about the development of their masculinity and of the feminism of the past. However, writing about the advantages that continue to exist for boys as they develop their identities as men, Connell (2000)

asserts that there has not been a reversal of fortune for men and boys; they have not yet completely lost the advantages ascribed to them throughout history. In fact Connell (2000) strongly asserts that boys and men, despite the advance of women in traditional masculine areas of life, are still a long way from being established as a 'disadvantaged group'. Moreover, Connell (2000) insists that it is the development of programmes that help boys and girls to establish a better way forward in dialogue with one another that is the key.

Research interest regarding masculinity has become an established field over the past five decades (Whitehead and Barrett, 2001). Increased focus in this area is perhaps indicative of wider public interest driven by the heightening fears associated with boy's educational performance, violence and criminal behaviour (Martino, 1999; Messerschmidt, 2000; Kimmel and Mahler, 2003). However, it is clear from the literature presented here, that along with areas of concern for boys there is a growing impetus to explore the issues raised about their lives within a framework of equality. Connell (2000) states that the research and anecdotes that surround this field of research perhaps have a profound impact '...for good or ill – in therapy, education, health services, violence prevention, policing, and social services' (p. 5). The impact of the women's movement on the lives of men since the seventies has, it is argued, had a significant effect (Connell 2000). Consequently, the construction of teenage masculinity and male identity has received increased scrutiny over the last two decades (Connell, 1995; MacInnes, 1998; Messerschmidt, 2000; Connell, 2000; Connell, 2001; MacInnes, 2001; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002; Connell, 2005; Gough and Robertson, 2010). Endeavours to create a 'men's liberation' group at the same time as feminism is noted to have failed as a result of the dominance of men and the material benefits of being male (Connell, 1997). However, Connell (1997) notes that not all men have equal access to these material benefits or as she terms them

'patriarchal dividends'. She particularly singles out working class youth as economically disadvantaged and gay men as not attaining the pervading hegemonic ideal of masculinity. Connell (1997) also suggests that those men who wished to join with feminists in their pursuit of equality were often in for a rough ride. This reveals the complexity of debates of equality when masculinity is discussed as part of it. It is therefore essential that we first understand the construction of masculinity and femininity, as a general foundation, as it relates to the lives of boys and teenagers.

MacInnes (1998) argues that masculinity and femininity are highly contestable phenomena existing in a constant dialectic relationship. MacInness' (1998) thesis suggests that masculinities are becoming increasingly impinged on and as a result the power and dominance of men is questioned, as women begin to act in roles and upon platforms previously thought to be the privilege of men. According to MacInnes (1998) men have to argue for the continued dominance of male power and as such masculinity is said to be in crisis. This 'crisis' is highlighted in studies in the work place where the difference in working practices and gender identity between men and women is located as the cause of 'strain on men' (Alvesson, 1998). 'Today's boys cannot assume the privileges their fathers could take for granted or assume to be natural' (MacInness, 2001 p.313).

Identifying phenomena relating to the construction of both masculinity and femininity in her observations of nursery education, Banyard (2010) notes that both children and adults in the system construct masculinity and femininity through dialogue and behaviour. This helps to maintain aspects of male and female identity which sustain the gender order and subordinates undesirable aspects that threaten to undermine it. She illustrates what she identifies as the 'trenches' of masculinity and femininity, which are carved out in the most formative years of

development as the classroom becomes the 'training ground' for future relations between boys and girls. This would appear to be both a precursor to and an intrinsic part of a 'crisis of masculinity', as the children pursue the development of their identities, while the adults around them negotiate and renegotiate their own gender order subsequently using this to shape the identities of their charges. As in Banyard (2010) Frosh et al (2002) in their seminal work regarding young masculinities, also locate the 'crisis' in other areas of education in our society, in the case of their research in secondary education. Moreover, they note that the 'crisis' can perhaps be identified in other areas of life which result in 'violence, criminality, uncertainties over relationships and identity, sexuality, employment and increasing levels of suicide' (Frosh et al, 2002; p. 75). Banyard (2010) however does not see the crisis as the result of a decrease in male power from the increased success of girls and boys reactions to this. Quite the contrary she locates the crisis of masculinity in the failure to address inequality in schools and in educator's assertions that the differences between girls and boys are natural. Cautioning against these reductionist views, Frosh et al (2002) argue that it encourages a view of the 'construction of masculinities' as problematic. Instead, they insist that it is the complex discourse that creates the problem that should beg our attention as we consider greater equality.

Connell (2000), although firmly in favour of a focus on equality supports the idea that the interest that men and boys have in maintaining the difference must be challenged. It is the ways in which these differences are enacted in models of gender that must be pursued. Therefore agreement in the literature, although not totally in favour of one explanation of a 'crisis' of masculinity, supports the idea that the dissembling and analysis of the discourse that supports the dominant order should be tackled to engage in work on equality.

Matters of equality are complex in the study of masculinities, as the battles and successes of the feminist movement may lead men to believe that the equality box as far as men and women are concerned has been ticked. According to Connell (2001) the threat of apathy as gender inequality appears to diminish in society requires a new model to identify continued barriers to change and then action to overcome them. The model suggested is that of the pursuit of equality in all aspects of society to effect real change. Constructing male identity and the struggle of men to change the way they think about this and their power, in the face of the changing roles of women, are the foundation from which a new discourse can be built. Warnings about a superficial reading of the 'crisis' and what men and boys should do about it are clearly illustrated in the literature. Connell (2000) advises men not to listen too hard to popular psychology that offers the solution of further partitioning between men and women instead of a changing discourse. The warning is that the new discourse must replace some of the knee jerk reactions by men in the face of the advances of women and the women's movement over time. New discourses with regard to the relationship between men and women can be problematic, particularly when the dominance of male power is presented and then represented by new generations of men. Connell (2001) somewhat reluctantly offers a definition of masculinity that focuses on the discourse that can unite both men and women in its construction; '...Masculinity'...is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture' (p. 33-34). The definition stresses the nature of the phenomenon and its internal and external influences. Masculinity is something that both men and women can occupy, that is co-constructed and affects other constructs in human identity. In this definition we can see that masculinity is not fixed but part of a dialogue which is specific to place, time and personal experience. This offers an alternative to more reductionist views like those of Davis

(2006) in his research with African-American school dropouts, when he asserts 'masculinity is a social fact' created through control at a time of movement between the child and adult social spheres.

The idea that women are involved in the construction of masculinity may cause some angst among men and boys. Despite this there is firm agreement that both femininity and masculinity are constructed in this way and this includes both the palatable and unpalatable aspects of them. The knotty issue of whether or not masculinity and femininity can both be included as aspects of both boy/girl and man/women is a problematic one. However, despite the strength of argument that this should be the case and diversity should be accepted in an equal society, the inequality of our present time dictates that biology is a strong definer of how society expects the different sexes to behave and live their lives (Connell, 2000). In her writing on the subject Connell (2000) locates the issue of selection in school as being a powerful force in the division between particular masculinities or hegemonies of masculinity. So what we have here is a complex schema of masculinity, boys are asked to select the one that they wish to embrace or are selected by those that manage the institution or those who inhabit it. This complex schema is inclusive of many conduits with a variety of endings, no one boy will pursue their masculine ideals in the same way or emerge as a clone of the boy next to him (Connell, 2000). Hegemonic or culturally normative ideas of masculinity offer men and boys access to an acceptable construct of masculinity. However there are dangers that these can become essentialist viewpoints that introduce binaries between masculinities and femininities that restrict and pigeon hole. Complexities arise when dominance and subordination are used by men and boys to produce counter hegemonies that bar access to the world of men for certain individuals. As this raises a number of complex issues the ideas of hegemonic masculinities are discussed in further detail next.

Culturally normative ideas (hegemonies) of teenage masculinity

It is clear that in the process of constructing a masculine identity, hegemonic masculinity which protects the 'legitimacy of patriarchy' (Connell, 1995), offers a cultural and time specific blue print for boys and men. Within the complexities of this blue print are the constructions of masculinity that are supported and those that are rejected (Connell, 2000). Wetherall and Edley (1999) point to the subordination of undesirable aspects of masculinity including anything feminine and the forcible subjugation of gay men. However these authors argue against an essentialist understanding of hegemonic masculinities, insisting that the position of men as gendered beings is much more complex, enabling men to be both complicit and simultaneously resistant to culturally normative ideals. However, Whitehead (2002) indicates that although complex the existence of dominant and subordinated male behaviour as part of hegemonic masculinities is indicative of the inequalities of gender. Also, Fitzsimmons and Lennon (2000) state that western society in most literature identifies hegemonic masculinity as hanging on 'heterosexuality, economic autonomy, being able to provide for one's family, being rational, being successful, keeping one's emotions in check, and above all not doing anything considered feminine.' (p. 141). Although this can be read as an essentialist descriptor of masculinity, it also indicates perhaps how difficult it can be to construct an acceptable identity as a teenager, particularly when presented with an ideal that is set in the context of a power dynamic between men and women.

The achievement of an acceptable identity as male supported by hegemonic ideals is both complex and potentially dangerous for teenage boys trying to carve out a future for themselves. Bird (1996) in her study of the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity in men only spaces, warns of the dangers associated with the oppression of non hegemonic behaviours that may challenge the status quo and work for greater equality. However,

it would be foolish to assume that all boys or all men subscribe to a dominant form of masculinity that is never challenged. Unfortunately, for most men and boys however the existence of hegemonic ideals can mean that trying to carve out an alternative can be problematic (Connell, 2000). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) explore the use of hegemonic masculinity yet further in their review of the development of the term in research. They conclude that the development of a construct of male identity for teenagers is made yet more complex as the interplay between dominant and subordinated masculine characteristics is contested. Swain (2003) in his research with 11-14 year old boys locates images of men in visual and print media as significant to the construction of a notion of being a 'real man'. Access to the 'world of men' was achievable by being 'active, physical, competitive, aggressive' (p.303), all of which map well to hegemonic representations of male dominance. Among the children's accounts included in the research subordination occurred when other children were seen to be 'doing silly things, playing infantile games, or associating too closely with younger children' (p.310). Other subordinated expressions of self were deficiencies in 'physicality/athleticism...displaying a lack of toughness...being too passive...showing a lack of effort' (p.310). Swain's (2003) study centres on the participants use of their bodies to support dominant masculinities and subordinate undesirable masculinities. He also identifies that boys can change the way they practice masculinities dependent on the setting. However, Swain (2003) also indicates that the participant's desire to use their bodies to rank and also to act out hegemonies of masculinity perturbed the efforts of schools to regulate them. Swain (2003) asks those responsible for boys at a formative stage of development, to be mindful of the struggles that are at play during this complex time.

Frosh et al (2002) in their research with teenagers use a construct of hegemonic masculinities which they and the boys term 'popular

masculinities'. It is apparent that this term was utilised to reveal not only the dominance of a particular boy, but also the apparent opposing differences between boys, girls and boys and other boys who did not meet the standards of masculinity required. The location of difference and the dialogue which this created appeared to be an important process in the development of the boy's identity. Similarly, the structure that this creates enables boys to decide what behaviours are subordinate and what are primarily masculine.

The polarisation of masculinity and femininity is discussed by Biernat (1991) who states that this occurs early in life and influences any judgements made when constructing identity. She goes on to discuss the rigidity of the development of stereotypical ideas of gender roles, arguing that this perpetuates the teenage boy's pursuit of a masculine ideal. The rejection of all things feminine among some groups of boys is discussed by Hay (2000) and Jackson (2002). In Hay's (2000) work the types of behaviours accredited to boys described as 'too tough' in the work of Frosh et al (2002), including problematic behaviour in the classroom, are perceived as compensatory strategies to maintain a fearsome identity that promotes extreme hegemonic masculinities. Jackson (2002) extends this argument by suggesting that the reinforcement of these behaviours simply presents this as an alternative construct of the masculine ideal as part of a selection from which boys can choose.

Chambers, Tincknell and Van Loon (2004) argue that the continuance of the subordination of boys, who did not reach the desired aspects of the masculine ideal, was crucial for the maintenance of masculine power and local hegemony. This was stated unequivocally by participants in their group interviews, who included the performance of dominant heterosexuality as vital to the development of teenage masculinity and the continuance of patriarchal structures. In a subsequent article the same

authors advocate encouraging critical appraisal of such hegemonic ideals in the classroom, although they assert that this would be dependent on the attitudes and culture governing individual schools and as such do not promote the exposure of such a critique to boys as part of a national curriculum (Chambers, Van Loon and Ticknell, 2004). Gorley, Holroyd and Kirk (2003) also found in their work that there was a definitive drive among teenagers to retain a position that protected and further instituted the idea that heterosexuality should be maintained. Similar to the study by Swain (2003), the researchers identify the use of the body, its shape and size and how it was displayed. Although they conclude that boys continually contest the hegemonic ideal, they recommend radical reform in the way in which physical activity is planned in the curriculum as they identify this as being intrinsic to the reproduction of the dominant powers of men.

Considering the hegemonic formation of the masculine ideal in this way might lead one to assume that the ideas generated are some how fixed and impermeable. However, it is important to stress that for teenagers constructing normalized identities, the influence of place, space and time ought not to be ignored (Swain, 2003). Archer and Yamashita (2003) identify this in their research with inner city working class male pupils. Indeed, the discoveries made regarding the construction of masculine identities by the boys demonstrated how 'local' masculinities can perturb and challenge widely held beliefs of how working-class men should be. In fact it would appear that carving out an opposing working class identity is vital to ensuring that you are known within your community. However, what is also highlighted in the research is the contestable nature of the construction of identity and the battles that can occur in relation to the trappings of working-class youth. Paechter (2003) argues that achievement is dependant on the teenage boy's successful or unsuccessful attempts to project their developing masculine identity on new social situations. Swain (2003) appears to agree with this position as

he posits physical practice of the body not as something driven by existing notions of 'doing boy' but as brought about through its performance. It is also apparent that even when the issues of patriarchy are challenged as in Coulter (2003) and issues of equity are discussed, boys continue to insist that they retain an idealised concept of masculinity including a component that favours men as the protectors of women. The contestable nature of the hegemony of masculinity in peer groups of males is also seen in the research by Swain (2003) who stresses that the hegemony is not always desirable. However, it is held up as the norm and something that all boys must measure up to if they are to meet the complexity of a developing identity as male. Also, although the influence of peers on the construction of masculinity is discussed in depth, the influence of adult associates including parents is not.

Johnston and Morrison's (2007) study involving young adult men ranging from 18 – 26, offers a slightly different view to those studies involving school age students. This appears to indicate that maturation results in an alternative view of hegemonies and how they exist in the lives of men. Although, a small study involving only eight participants it indicates the flux that exists in the practice of masculinity. The authors suggest that participants moved between hegemonic ideals of masculinity, if they were with a group of other men who subscribed to the same or similar notions, and a representation of self that existed between hypermasculinity and femininity. Therefore, if the young man found himself with a single or group of women he could change the way he practiced his gender to suit that situation. However, Johnston and Morrison (2007) warn against the idea that it is in the young mans control to change how his masculinity is presented. It is a complex interaction between place, social reward and a sense of personhood that converge to create an acceptable way of being. The men in the study accepted that they had to be comfortable with making concessions in order to present themselves in an acceptable way.

Johnson and Morrison (2007) conclude that the young men in their study had learnt that their understanding of self, its presentation and the environment could culminate in a reconstituted masculinity which is not wholly influenced by hegemony.

Hegemonic notions of how men and boys are, suggests that specific constructs of masculinity do exist to shape identity and its practice in the world. However far from being essentialist, the literature suggests that there is flexibility that allows men and boys to move between social groups while maintaining their male identity. It may be that the flexibility of the construct of male identity changes and develops for most men as they mature and grow within social relationships. To increase an understanding of how this works in relations to teenagers, it is necessary to consider in greater detail how the practice of masculinities operates to sustain concepts of being male.

The practice of masculinity

Multiculturalism in western society has given rise to a complex network of ideas about 'doing boy' and 'doing man'. Coupled with the diversity of its construction in a variety of institutions and groupings, this presents us with a complex web of identity formation which the boy or man has to negotiate. Moving on from the idea of hegemonic or culturally normative ideas of masculinity, this section considers the importance of practice when a masculine identity is being constructed.

Hall and du Gay (1996) in their writings about identity, bring together the critical point that identity is always evolving, never unified. They elaborate the idea that identity is multi-factorial and see identification as 'a construction, a process never completed always in process' (p. 2). In this way the development of identity is seen as an uncertain process which, in the course of development, is stuck with uncertainty. The authors maintain

the idea that the identity is 'never a proper fit, a totality' (p.3) and as such conducts its journey through comparison and the recognition of difference. 'It is grounded in fantasy, in projection and idealization' (p. 3). Again manifest here is the proposition that a dialectic is constantly at play, that our identity is constructed and re constructed through conflict, dialectic engagement, performance in place. Hall and du Gay (1996) present the idea of 'suturing', which helps to illustrate the complexity of identity construction. In the process of 'suturing' identities can be projected but may only partly be formed in reality, the fantastic being a necessary part of the process.

Hall and du Gay (1996) also give us a clear notion of how difference is brought into play when identity construction is in process as they see identity as, '...the position which the subject is obliged to take up while always 'knowing' (the language of consciousness here betrays us) that they are representations, the presentation is always constructed across a 'lack', across a division, from the place of the Other, and this can never be adequate-identical-to the subject process which one invested in them.' (p. 6). The obligation and comparison with the 'Other' conveyed by the authors here, is cognisant with the idea that there are both internal and external factors at play and thus is comparable with the construction of the masculine ideal, the hegemonic notion of 'doing boy' and 'doing man'. Hall and du Gay (1996) acknowledge in their work that the construction of identity is hugely political and that the need to see its complexity is a necessary step in its construct.

Empirical research in the area of identity construction and enquiries about how boys 'do boy', again point to the issue of 'crisis' and complexity in the process of its construction (Frosh et al, 2002; Jackson, 2002; Gorley et al, 2003; Swain, 2003; O'Connor, 2006; Dalley-Trim and Cook, 2007). Having presented what some may think of as a predominantly prescriptive

notion of masculinity, here I would like to use the literature to expand on the notion that the identity of an individual is evolutionary and constantly influenced by both internal and external factors. Frosh et al (2002) when considering the self concept of boys in their study identify that a hegemony of masculinity was an important construct which gave an explanation of how the boys attributed some aspects of being a boy in the school system. Interestingly though, the researchers found that the practice of this would also be used by boys to make explicit their distance from this popular view of masculinity in the schools while also making every effort to explicate their masculinity. The difference between boys and girls was also held up by Frosh et al (2002) as being something that boys worked hard to maintain. Homophobia was also established in the research as a significant part of maintaining a safe identity as a boy in the schools. The word 'gay' was used by boys to distance themselves from any one or any thing that did not ascribe to the status quo of masculine identity. Finally football was also significant for boys in their ideas about self. In an educational context it is perhaps the essence of boy's identity that acts to preserve their status in the hierarchy as one of 'the lads'. As Jackson (2002) posits in her research the practice of 'laddishness' helps to ward off attention that may be focussed on educational ability and against all odds ensures that your behaviour is never seen as 'feminine'.

In a more recent study Dalley-Trim and Cook (2007) report on their observations of boys in the classroom. Although small scale, the analysis elucidates two contrasting constructs of the practice of masculinity, which incorporate both the use of the physical space and language resulting in similar outcomes for boys. The first is probably the more familiar construct of the hyper-masculine boy who uses misogyny and aggression to control and subordinate. The second is the class clown who engages similar language but in contrast to the hyper-masculine boys conducts themselves without aggression. The major difference then between the two constructs

of masculinity in these classrooms was that of threatening violence to achieve the objective of dominance.

O'Connor (2006) in her research with teenage boys and girls producing reflective written accounts of themselves with a specific focus on gender differences identified a large cohort of teenagers who were at the beginning of their teenage lives or in transition to adulthood. O'Connor (2006) notes the influence of religion; the research was conducted in Ireland, and also a prevailing definition of masculinity that stressed hierarchical power over women. Interestingly, the notable difference between boys and girls was seen in boys' non representation of friendships outside the family. O'Connor (2006) highlights the development of side-by-side relationships which support the notion of autonomy, being in control and pushing away emotionality and emotional attachments. She found that a similar pattern could be seen developing with girls who also had the side-by-side relationships, which is suggested as helpful to the affirmation of an identity as female similar to that which is put forward by the boys as male. The difference here is that the girls also maintained a sense of emotional attachment to others and were able to identify friendships in and outside of their families. This research suggests that the lack of emotional attachment and emotionality in general was a clear construct in the development of masculine identity for this group of boys.

The media in their expression of dominant boyhood portray the negative physicality of the dangerous hoodie making the streets unsafe for ordinary citizens or the failing school boy who is falling behind as girls do better academically. Sabre rattling of this kind has served to promote anxiety in often vulnerable groups who see the problem writ large in their own communities. Although we have seen a turn in the fortune of boys in school the overall picture is that of a negative stereotype of the hyper masculine boy or the diminished boy falling behind with his school work.

Papadopoulos (2010) in her report for the Home Office on the sexualisation of Young People in the UK begins by attempting to give some explanation for the construction of boy in today's society. In doing so she highlights the prevalence of negative images and messages that engulf the lives of boys. In addition, she focuses on the problem of the 'highly sexualised images of women' in magazines and the permeable barrier that now exists between mainstream and pornographic images and the objectification of women. It could be argued that the fracturing of the barrier is not only visible through popular men's magazines but can also be encountered in film and television, women's magazines and through computer gaming. (For a complete analysis of the world of men's magazines see Jackson, Stevenson and Brooks, 2001). Papadopoulos (2010) stresses that these images are culpable in the change in focus for both boys and girls towards idealised representations of femininity and masculinity and as a consequence these ideals are emulated at a younger age. Taking evidence from many sources to inform the writing of the report, she concludes that one aspect of the problem for boys is the lack of suitable role models. One such source is the White Ribbon Campaign UK: Men working to end men's violence against women (www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk, accessed 26.06.13). Its representative during hearings stated that '...the 'social scripts' given to boys once again centre around male dominance and control, with boys feeling that they have to prove their manliness by relating to girls either as sexual objects or in an aggressive manner'. The objectification of women is again raised by Banyard (2010) who notes the continued problem of the 'male gaze' and its impact on the scrutiny of women in society. However, Papadopoulos (2010) raises the issue of the scrutiny of both male and female bodies and the idealising of specific issues of size and muscularity for boys. It would appear that in today's society even boys are not immune to the pursuit of perfection and an idealised representation of the body.

The practice of a gendered identity for boys is a complex interplay between hegemonic ideas and opportunities to present your developing ideas about how you wish to be. As presented this is a complicated interaction between both internal and external factors. Four of these are worthy of more detailed discussion with reference to gendered practice. The body, sexuality, education, health and mental health are highlighted next as significant factors. As the body is intrinsic with regard to the practice of masculinity, this will be explored in greater depth first.

The body

When considering the practice of masculinity in the literature, the body its presentation and performance is a significant part of 'doing boy'. Physical education is also highlighted in the literature as having a clear impact on the formation of identity for both boys and girls. In this case it is the separation of physical education, the identification of sports as either male or female, the acceptance of stereotype and the dehumanisation in some sports that is the key to this. Frosh et al (2002) emphasize the traditional positions taken by the boys in group interviews when sport was discussed. Boys talked with confidence about their knowledge while ridiculing the position that they thought the girls took on the subject. In fact Frosh et al (2002) found that sporting prowess was a key feature in boys' narratives. In particular football was put forward as a 'key motif' in the construction of their masculine identity as mentioned at the beginning of this section. Gorley et al (2003) reporting data from 15 schools involved in a large study to elicit the views of 11-14 year olds about the body, call for a de-stabilisation of stereotypical notions of physical education within school. The researchers do not offer a prescriptive idea about how this can be done, but allude to the significance of other factors including culture, time and place. What they do ask for is a socially critical inquiry of current practices of physical education that segregate and exclude, towards a more gender relevant form. However, it would appear that their overall

request for physical education is one that only encourages and celebrates and does not in any case cause physical or emotional harm. What appears to be missing here is a logical critique of competitive behaviour and the relative benefits or disincentives of this. Surely, we have to argue that there are some aspects of competition that empower and prepare children for the adult world. Gorley et al (2003) conclude by clarifying that it is the violent aspects of masculine construction that is worthy of particular focus. This being the case an exploration of the causes of this and dialogue about how this might be prevented might be fruitful in an overarching critique of masculine and feminine identity.

The role of the body is also discussed by Swain (2003) in his research in UK junior schools. He initially points to the controlling forces that were clearly enacted in the school systems that participated in the research. However, Swain (2003) plainly demonstrates that there was a constant conflict between the type of boy the system was trying to effect and that which influenced the boys' lives when out of the gaze of those responsible for the system's mechanisms. Similar to other authors Swain (2003) found that the pursuit of 'status' was part of life for the majority of the boys in the study. An acceptable outcome could only be attained through comparison with other boys in that particular school system. The essential component of this attainment could be discovered through sport or through play in the playground. Swain (2003) describes a particular episode where football was not allowed in one of the schools. Interestingly, and I'm sure to the dismay of those in authority, far from eradicating the types of macho behaviours that had been associated with the game, boys were compelled to find other activities through which they could express dominant forms of masculine identity. Swain's (2003) observations of the games that boys played found that they were based on a test of 'speed, stamina and physical prowess'. Consequently, any attempt to fall short of or to subvert these expressions of male power and status were met by subordination.

For some boys in the study in one particular school this would include deliberately inflicting pain and physical power on others in order to sustain their status. The appearance of toughness among this group of boys was clearly difficult to sustain and took a great deal of strength and power to maintain it. However, Swain (2003) also found that in some of the schools this type of hyper masculine behaviour was something that was not accepted by male peers. Consequently, it was this type of behaviour that would be rejected in favour of other forms of masculine identity. This demonstrated again the contestable nature of the construction of masculinity and of its diversity.

Botta (2003) tested three hypotheses relevant to body image in their survey research among teenagers and the consumption of printed media. Significance was found in the changes in muscularity and eating behaviours for boys with reference to which magazines they read most and the comparison of their own bodies to the images they found in the magazines. Body satisfaction for boys was noted to be relevant to the images of men in sporting magazines rather than those associated with men's health/fitness or to fashion magazines. The appearance of the body has also been noted as significant in qualitative research with boys by Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2006), who state that in general boys only admitted to being conscious of their appearance when girls were involved or they wanted them to be involved in their lives. However, there is some contradiction among boys as the analysis of this research develops, with particular reference as in Botta (2003) to muscularity. The desire to be 'buff' was acknowledged by the boys in the study but with very clear motives related to performance in sport, self-defence and attractiveness to girls. The comparison of self to media images was not apparently significant in this study in comparison with Botta (2003). Boys in Hargreaves and Tiggemann's (2006) study were more concerned with comparison with boys of the same age rather than images in the media.

Incongruously though, boys who took part in the study were disparaging of talk of appearance or body image and there was no indication in the interviews that the boys were particularly interested in approaches to change this. However, the authors describe casual observations of the boys outside of the interview environment, which revealed that some of the boys were involving themselves in attempts to change themselves physically. Although, generally in interviews boys appeared happy with the fact that their bodies were in a state of change and unlike girls their bodies would be developing towards a masculine ideal.

Ricciardelli, McCabe and Ridge (2006) found that involvement in sport was vital to the performance of masculinity among boys. The use of the body and its display was a significant part of the boys' lives in the study, with a number of them engaging in more than one sport. Unlike the study by Hargreaves and Tiggemann's (2006), Ricciardelli et al (2006) found that the boys in their study used sport to begin a dialogue that included anxieties and the changes in purpose of their bodies. The researchers conclude that this had an impact on eating habits to assist boys with greater sporting prowess through the maintenance of power and stamina. Boys in the study connected the performance of the body and its presentation directly with success in sport and not with attractiveness. In addition, sport was used by the boys in the study to conform to hegemonic ideas of masculinity including strength and to reject the counter hegemony of weakness. As in Hargreaves and Tiggemann's (2006) study, Ricciardelli et al (2006) found that sport offered a suitable opportunity for body comparison with peers.

The use of the body and its presentation for boys is indicative of understanding sexuality and developing relationships. This is focussed on next to identify its relationship to the practice of masculinity.

Relationships and sexuality

Heterosexuality among teenage boys in particular is located as a strong force (Connell, 2000). The status that achievement of heterosexual engagement can have is a measure of where one is located in the 'doing boy' hierarchy. Connell (2000) goes on to demonstrate how media influences can also have a huge impact on the way that heterosexual masculinities are produced and reproduced in the school system. Banyard (2010) points to the objectification of women and girls as central to the development of heterosexual masculinities in our society. Drawing on both examples in the media and the representation of women through advertising, she alludes to the changing image of women as objects for the 'masculine gaze'. The objectification and sexualisation of the female body was also found to be an issue in O'Connor's (2006) research. She found that intimate relationships between girls and boys were not heavily referred to in the accounts of boys. However and somewhat worryingly, in some accounts the objectification of women was very clear in the accounts of contact between boys and members of the opposite sex. The affirmation of heterosexual identity is highlighted by O'Connor (2006) as an essential component of the boys' reflective construction of themselves. As such there appeared to be great comfort to be had when establishing this.

Future relationships are considered by O'Connor (2006) who found that when both boys and girls considered their own life plans, they shied away from the consideration of marriage or long term relationships. When this was put forward by participants it was rather conformist in nature.

However, O'Connor (2006) does acknowledge that the strong influence of religion in Irish culture may have something to do with the way in which both boys and girls in the cohort constructed this. O'Connor (2006) in her work highlights a possible shift from 'old dreams' (p. 117) including marriage and having children to academic aspirations, seeing the world of financial security through work ambitions.

The regulation of sexual identity was found to be a significant issue in research conducted by Chambers, Ticknell and Van Loon (2004). Focus groups carried out with 12-14 year old pupils of both sexes revealed a macho culturally normative idea of the performance of sexuality among boys. This was counter to the girls who viewed sexuality as a burden that was shouldered by women with regard to its seriousness and its control. Interestingly the research also reveals cultural differences as boys from an all Asian male group explored how they would present a different persona when with groups of adults from their own culture as opposed to time spent with other boys. Most worrying among all the boys who participated in the study were the behaviours aimed at policing the heterosexual norm. All boys risked victimisation if they strayed from this central path with regard to sexuality. As in Frosh et al (2002) the word 'gay' was used extensively by boys to derogate all behaviours that did not conform to the perception of what was culturally normative. This leads Chamber, Ticknell and Van Loon (2004) to conclude that the contention with regard to homosexuality was used extensively by the boys to control all aspects of behaviour not considered masculine which included sexuality.

In a further study by the same researchers, teachers are interviewed with regard to sexual morality among the teenagers in their care (Chambers, van Loon and Tincknell, 2004). The researchers explore the assumptions the group of teachers made about boys and girls with regard to sexuality and their lack of action with regard to misogyny in sex education work. Homophobic bullying by boys is raised as a particular difficulty by teachers and they reported struggling to protect homosexual identity. Worryingly however Chambers, van Loon and Ticknell (2004) only found that this was difficult for teachers when the bullying was perpetrated by boys on other boys. The homophobic bullying of girls by boys, which was widespread in both private and public sector schools, was not identified as problematic. Instead the cause of this was located in the maturity of the boy and not

related to any aspect of intent on the part of boys and therefore they were not called on to explain their behaviour. Finally the authors locate the difference between girls and boys with regard to sexual knowledge and maturity, concluding that teachers were comfortable with their involvement with girls but struggled to challenge the pervading orthodoxy of boyhood among the boys in their care. The authors call for a reframing of the behaviours of boys in schools and ask teachers to begin to develop a language to help them cope with sexual morality in a different way.

The construction of sexuality and its practice by boys is punctuated with uncertainty. There is clearly a need for a different approach to how this is viewed in school and wider society. It is clear that the context of education presents opportunity for the development of masculine identities. This is worthy of further analysis as presented next.

Education

Despite the influence of many other institutions on the creation of masculine identity, schools are considered one of the major environments where masculinity is formed (Connell, 2000) and where inequalities between boys and girls can be seen (Banyard, 2010). As presented above the construction of masculinity is a complex and intricate process involving many influences to develop a multidimensional multifaceted articulation of the self. This is seen both in education and the workplace as men and boys jostle for their position in the hierarchy. In school the lack of male teachers is posited as a primary problem in the development of ideas about 'doing boy'. Other concerns focus on the disproportionate representation of boys involved in violence in school (Connell, 2000). Concern about the achievement of boys as noted earlier persists and as Connell (2000) insists this is not a problem that can only be located in recent years. In fact in her investigation of the issues of masculinity, she points to anxiety about boys as far back as the 1960s appearing in

research from the United States of America. The media influence on the question of boys' attainment and the capability of girls to outplay their male counterparts in many aspects of education is not without comment in the literature. Nor is it absent from the newsprint media which appear to report with tedious frequency which group of boys is currently doing badly or how they might be on the brink of catching up at last. Polly Curtis writing in the Guardian Newspaper after the release of GCSE exam results in 2009, reports that boys are now overtaking girls in maths as the 'softer' elements of coursework have been dropped. This type of assertion shields the reality that despite this, boys still have the advantage as far as both society and education are concerned.

Strikingly in the school system the division of labour is noted as having a great influence on the construction of masculinity and femininity (Connell, 2000). The concentration of male and female teachers in areas that are constructed as gender specific adds to the reproduction of traditional constructs of masculinity and femininity. This feeds into a greater influence on curriculum in schools as areas of it are designated male or female. One of Connell's (2000) 'vortices', these so called 'boy's subjects' drive boys towards a particular construct with strong forces to include or subordinate boys as they move through the system. In perhaps obvious examples Connell (2000) draws on the underpinning of certain subjects that attract or repel boys as levels of engagement are played out. Wood work and metal work classes are identified as having their roots within traditional trades that are heavily dominated by men, whereas English classes with their emphasis on emotion are seen as being an area where boys are less easy to engage. My own experiences of school bear out Connell's assertions as subordination by male teachers and boys of others who did not show an aptitude for woodwork or metalwork or an overall high aptitude in English studies was often cruel and merciless. Both Connell (2000) and most recently Banyard (2010) have focussed on the language and attitudes of

teaching staff in our educational establishments. Connell (2000) notes an anecdotal example of a teacher, in relation to a particular task, asking for 'a big strong boy'. This example immediately makes one think of other examples and of the gender relations that are at play here as the boundaries between boys and girls begin to be set. Banyard (2010) writes about her contact with a teacher in training who reveals the extent to which language is used both in and outside the classroom to control the maintenance of a patriarchal hierarchy in the school. The account highlights the misogyny that is used in this example to comment on a girl's intellect or on clothing. Although not part of empirical research and offered as only one example, it is a stark reminder that patriarchal systems continue to have currency in schools which distracts from efforts to strive for a more equal society. Banyard (2010), points to a hidden curriculum at play in schools that continues to favour boys over girls. This may be indicative of what Connell (2000) calls the 'social facts' of the school system, which both boys and girls are part of purely by the fact that they enter the school building. However, she goes on to stress that both boys and girls have a choice and can choose to collaborate or be more subversive.

Discipline in school is also put forward by Connell (2000) as one of her vortices. It is argued that strong hegemonies of masculinity result in boys using powers to discipline others, whereas when hegemony is not secure a 'protest masculinity' (p.159) is created where courage in the face of a disciplinary regime and rebellion against that regime are held as exemplars of fearless masculinity. Sport in school completes the list of three vortices proposed by Connell (2000). Dominance, aggression and competitiveness are held up as exemplars of masculinity in sports departments in a way that is not seen in other areas of the school curriculum. Schools promote dominant male sport over any other and so boys' inabilities in this area of the curriculum are quickly revealed. The influence of the school

environment is key to the expression and development of masculinity. Illustrated as 'masculinizing effects' by Connell (2000, p. 164), the influence can be 'intended', 'unintended' or in some cases noted as not desirable but happen anyway. Again using the example of sport Connell (2000) argues that competitiveness in sport is a significant issue for boys as apposed to girls in education. The formalisation of this in the education system sets up one area of masculinity that boys must subscribe to if they wish to be part of the mainstream of ideas about 'doing boy'. Apparently in contradiction to this is the need to also develop positive relationships between people. However, as Connell (2000) establishes, in western society this feature of basic humanity has been marked as female. Therefore the development of competitiveness can be at odds with the development of these features for boys.

Connell (2000) considers the development of special programmes for boys in Australia to establish good 'personal development' (p. 165). This programme has set out to tackle some of the set ideas that boys are perhaps developing throughout their school lives. The programme is based on 'gender equity' and 'being positive'. In the UK the National Curriculum has set out directives to include Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) for all children throughout their schooling as a statutory requirement from 2011. Covering a number of issues from emotional wellbeing to sex education and relationships, the aim of the initiative is to change attitudes among children towards each other and their parents and carers. The extent to which PHSE can change the way in which masculinities and femininities are negotiated in school is yet to be seen. However, Connell (2000) in her consideration of the actions necessary to effect real change, asks for action that involves both boys and girls to provide a 'gender relevant' (p. 168) response to this issue. This should be done without reference to what she calls a 'certain kind of feminism' which

is accused of homogenising males and then apportioning responsibility uncompromisingly.

It would be simplistic to argue that only aspects of masculinity are those that must be analysed and challenged. Crucially it is necessary to analyse how various aspects of humanity are labelled as male or female, how these are then ascribed a set of attributes that are desirable or undesirable and also how these are then viewed by boys/girls or men/women. As Connell (2000) states; 'If we are not to pursue gender justice in the schools, then we are offering boys a degraded education – even though society may be offering them long-term privilege'.

Health and Mental Health

Men and boys are often ridiculed, in popular discourses about health, for their response to and dealings with various health issues. Familiar to most people are the anecdotes about the difference experiences of men and women with the effects of the common cold. The ideas of 'man flu' are now fixed in our collective consciousness. Connell (2000), illustrates this by revealing how health providers throughout the world are considering the importance of men's gender to a diverse array of issues; '...road accidents, industrial injury, diet, heart disease and of course, sexually transmitted diseases' (p. 4). Not only are these health problems linked to life style, but it can be argued that there are obvious connections here with risk taking behaviours involving driving, work and unprotected sex.

The pursuit of the masculine ideal, as Broderick and Korleland (2004) point out, can have an impact on the health of teenage boys. Their research, considering rumination and depression in early adolescence, focuses at one point on the hegemonic view that males should not be emotional or passive and that this 'violated the norms of appropriate masculine

behaviour' (p. 385). The researchers suggest a need for greater attention to the stress of the male gender role on adolescent males.

Swain (2003) in his research found that a particular focus on health for the cohort was that of being overweight. In particular, he found that this was used extensively to verbally abuse both girls and boys who did not match the norm for that peer group. Swain (2003) locates this as a significant hindrance for boys but also for girls in achieving status in the group leaving them to find other ways to access the hierarchy within the peer group. This was among a number of issues that were seen as subordinated by group members.

The powerful image that the literature presents regarding the normalised construction of masculinity by boys and men is both compelling and multidimensional. It is clear that masculinities are developed via a distinct dialogue that involves both girls and boys/men and women. The fixing of notions of masculinity/femininity appears to be a feature of age, with younger children taking up polarised positions from a young age. However, it is apparent from the literature that over time a greater flexibility emerges and both men and women become influenced by space, place and time. Hegemonic ideas of masculinity, although controversial, do appear to be a feature of the battles for identity occurring at a formative stage in development. In fact subordination would appear to be a crucial element of the development of identity for boys. In addition, the location of difference and its opposition to hegemonic ideas of masculinity is also considered necessary in identity formation. Finally the practice of masculinity, the development of the body, education, sexuality, health and mental health would all appear to have a significant effect on masculinity.

Teenage masculinity is constructed through a complex set of social relations. Hegemonic ideas are used to understand difference and to

dominate and subordinate. Sport and the use of the body are crucial for the practice of masculinity and to establishing yourself as one of the lads. The addition of disability to this mix has the potential to perturb our considerations of how best to view what may appear to be competing identities. This will be discussed next.

A discourse for doing disabled boy

Initially this section gives some context to the lives of people with disabilities and the development of the social model of disability. The review continues with the presentation of literature which reveals the battles between the disabled self and masculinities when dominant forms of masculinity are at play. In presenting this part of the review in this way I hope to reveal the contradictions and frustrations of a life lived as a man with impairments. In addition, this is included so that parallels with the lives of people with ID can be highlighted together with issues that have helped to exclude people with ID from the mainstream disability movement.

Policy context

The disability movement

The history of the disability movement has been documented by a number of disability theorists in recent times (Priestly, 1999; Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare, 1999; Priestly, 2003). All agree that the influences that created space for the movement's creation were multiple and diverse and mirror the development of other disadvantaged groups struggling for equality. One such group is discussed by Thomas (2001) as she notes comparison with the feminist movement. Thomas (2001) argues that feminism's focus on oppression helped to focus attention on disadvantage, marginalisation and exclusion long before the advent of disability theory. Thomas (2001) contends that this rich body of knowledge is one that can be drawn on by the disability movement to help in their critiques of the issues of disability. Carol Thomas has used this as an influence in her own

work over the last three decades some of which will be returned to later in this review.

The stated opposition to the dominance of non-disabled people over the lives of disabled people and the acquisition of autonomy over the self was clearly laid as a foundation for the movement (Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare, 1999). However, Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare (1999) have argued that association with an impaired group of any kind in this way can lead to the imposition of the status of other and thus creates distance from the majority. The policy of normalisation is particularly criticised by these authors, as it is argued it further entrenches the exclusion of people with disability from mainstream society, an issue that was briefly considered in the introduction and will be returned to later in this chapter when the lives of people with ID are considered. This offers an initial point of exclusion for people with ID from the movement, as those who support this group ascribe to it and disabled people other than those with ID wish to distance themselves from it. In its fight for emancipation and in opposition to the dominance of a medical model of care, the disability movement have forged forward with a social model of disability which has permanently changed the experience of having a disability in the west.

The social model of disability

The presentation of impairment in literature that focuses on the social model of disability is twofold according to Hughes and Paterson (1997). First society's response to impairment notes that people with disabilities have been cast as outside of what is judged by society to be normative. In fact the very mention of impairment tugs 'at the heart of the transformation of disability discourse from medical problem to emancipatory politics' (p.326). The growth of the disability movement as mentioned above and the subsequent development of an academic field of disability theory, has evolved the idea that it is society that must change the way in which it

operates in order to reduce the impact of impairment on individuals. Priestly (1999) suggests that similar to patriarchy, the dominance of the non-disabled has been at the root of social oppression for this group and the social model of disability has provided a radical response to it. Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare (1999) argue that it is the disabled movement that has challenged the status quo, ensuring that social policy challenges the dominant forces and administrative processes that have prevented people with disabilities from accessing mainstream life. In turn this has provided for inclusion and shifted the blame for the effects of disability from the door of the individual. Intrinsically linked to the concept of identity (Shakespeare, 2006) the social model of disability posits the barriers for inclusion outside of the individual into the social arena.

However, the social model of disability which deposits the blame for oppression in social structures raises a point of controversy for its advocates when individual experiences of impairment are discussed. French (1994) discusses four factors that directly affect an individual's experience of impairment. These four factors are: 'the point in life at which the impairment is acquired; the visibility of the impairment; the comprehensibility of the impairment and disability to others; the presence or absence of illness' (French, 2004; p. 17). The factors are indicative of a close association between the personal effect of impairment and society's view of it. Priestly (1998) develops these ideas when he asserts that, 'the focus should include not only a concern for what 'we do' and 'how we act' (are prevented from doing and acting) as disabled people, but also a concern for 'who we are' (are prevented from being), and how we feel and think about ourselves' (p. 46). Thomas (2001) draws on this and work that preceded the initial ruminations of disability theorists in her account of feminism and the creation of theories of oppression. In her feminist critique of the social model of disability, Thomas (2001) focuses on the binary division between the social and personal, arguing that the model's

presentation of this as dichotomous is problematic. The feminist view Thomas (2001) counters, centres on the idea that the personal experience of impairment is as relevant as the social barriers that exist outside the person. Simply, the social model of disability denies the personal experiences of living with impairment, thus ignoring the restrictions caused not by social structures but by the impairment itself. In her original thesis on this issue, Thomas (1999) argues that if there could be acknowledgement of the relationship between the social (disability) and the personal (impairment) spheres of life, it would then be relevant to consider what she terms 'impairment effects' (p.42). This term forms the first aspect of an analytical framework which provides for a view from the perspective of the individual of their experience of impairment. Thomas (1999) also provides for two other aspects which take note of the social sphere as it applies to the social model of disability. 'Barriers to doing' and 'barriers to being' represent the physical barriers in the built environment and the reactions and restrictions of others resulting in a judgement of the person's ability to realise their potential. Thomas (1999) provides a simple matrix, reproduced in Table 1, which gives guidance for the consideration of disability (disablism) and impairment effects.

	Barriers to doing Restrictions on activity	Barriers to being Impact on psycho-emotional well-being
Disability	✓	✓
Impairment effects	✓	✓

Table 1: Analytical framework (Thomas, 1999)

In presenting this analytical framework in this way, Thomas (1999) reveals a more rounded 360^o approach for the appraisal of the experience of disabled individuals that takes into account both the social and personal. As Shakespeare (2006) asserts '...people are disabled by society and by their bodies' (p. 56). Thomas (1999) argues that without this re-

development of a social model of disability the difference between men and women and their experience of impairment will continue to be ignored. Therefore, there can be no analysis regarding the effects of impairment on developing and sustaining an identity as a man or woman.

Connors and Stalker (2007) use Thomas's (1999) analytical tool to help in their research about children's experiences of disability. The authors had previously used the framework in their research involving disabled children's siblings (Stalker and Connors, 2004). Their concern in their 2007 study was that children with disabilities were most inclined to use sameness to describe their identity compared with children without disability. Connors and Stalker (2007) ruminate on the development of a social model of childhood but argue that the lack of disabled people as role models to help cultivate a language of difference frustrates this process. In addition, the absence of a forum to allow children with disabilities to share ideas about their impairments and their effects was again regarded as lacking. The twenty six children, who took part in the study, were able to talk about the effects that their impairment had on the activities that they engaged in on a day to day basis. Of the findings from Connors and Stalker's (2007) the children's talk about their experiences of how others reacted to them was probably the most significant. It would appear that despite their parents and carers insistence that they led valued and worthwhile lives their feelings of exclusion were extremely powerful. This would perhaps suggest that veneers created by the children in their talk of sameness rather than difference and their parents resolve to highlight value and worth was easily destroyed once they came in contact with people who lacked understanding or were intentionally unkind. Connors and Stalker (2007) conclude that Thomas's (1999) analytical framework was useful in considering the lives of the children who took part in the study. They note that the consideration of impairment effects was particularly useful and contend that the analysis of this might be helpful

when children are at a formative stage in the development of their identity. Of interest to the current study is that half of the children who participated were identified as having an ID and so the study appears to highlight some unifying ideas with regard to the experiences of disabled children with ID and those without. A particular limitation of the study as regards its usefulness in this review is that the researchers do not comment on any particular differences between the experiences of the boys and girls who took part in the study. Nevertheless, the study does add to an understanding of the lives of children with disabilities.

In an earlier paper by Skär (2003) semi-structured interviews are used to reveal the voices of twelve children with restricted mobility. Each child who participated was interviewed two or three times, to consider both childhood, growing up and the experience of disability. Skär (2003) uses a grounded theory approach in her study to allow for a greater connection with relationships and interactions during interviews. Findings from the study reveal the difficulties that the teenagers who took part experienced when trying to form relationships with peers. It is apparent that the main barriers to this were the physical environment and the limited opportunities that were then a result of this. Skär (2003) also notes that the reactions of peers without disability were an additional and particularly upsetting barrier for the teenagers in the study. It would appear that the teenage participants had a clear understanding of self, but this was often out of sync with an external view from peers. Again this would appear to indicate that the externalised view of self projected by the teenager was not fit for purpose and could be easily disrupted by the majority of non-disabled peers. Like Connors and Stalker (2007) Skär (2003) does not make reference to any difference with regard to the gender of her participants. However, Skär (2003) does include the teenagers comment on the role of parents and assistants who they described as a barrier to them attaining the goals of independence. Once more in this study the parent or assistant

is singled out as the individual who attempts to give value but is overprotective and so fails to prepare the teenager adequately for the world outside their impairment. However, it is worth noting that this finding is limited by the fact that it emerges from the talk of the teenagers during interviews. Parents and assistance were not interviewed as part of this study.

Hughes, Russell and Paterson (2005) conceptualise the lives of young people with disabilities perfectly in their review of the literature that centres on how social mobility further excludes this group. Yet again the young person with disability is faced by the limits of their impairments by a society that does not recognise that while physical barriers are addressed the individual effects of impairment are ignored. There is logic to the explanation of Hughes et al's (2005) argument that society's view of 'the good life' equates to being flexible and mobile. It can be argued that the effects of impairment are never neutral and so the likelihood for further exclusion is strong. However, Hughes et al (2005) state that their review concludes with ideas that are speculative and have not yet been part of emancipatory research with people who have disabilities.

The social model of disability is clearly a point of focus for disability and society, yet it requires some modernisation in order to move forward. One aspect it appears to have neglected is masculinity which will be considered next.

Disabled Masculinities

Gershchick (2000) in his essay on disability and gender indicates that impairment has an intense effect on the experience of being male or female. The study of disability and masculinities is a complex area as it attempts to analyse the effects of disability upon the construction of male identity. These complexities have been considered in studies that have

taken as their focus the experience of men with physical disabilities (Gerschick and Miller, 1994; Shakespeare, 1999; Ostrander, 2008). In all studies researchers have established the need for further investigation to consider the interrelationship between masculinity and disability. Gerschick and Miller (1994) document the extent to which men with physical disabilities reframe their masculinity in the face of barriers to inclusion in their communities. This reframing can take on a number of forms and aims to emulate or subvert widely held beliefs of how men should be in order to gain acceptance. The contrast of experience between able-bodied men and those with disabilities taking part in the research, is graphically illustrated highlighting that the disabled man is constantly at odds with dominant hegemonic views of what it is to be a man.

Shakespeare (1999) also draws on the experience of disabled men living in a world where they find themselves in conflict with dominant representations of masculinity. Unlike Gerschick and Miller (1994) Shakespeare (1999) notes in his analysis that this brings into sharper focus what unites both men with and those without disability. The basis for this is that the cause of disability is multi-factorial and can be a sporadic as well as a fixed state (Shakespeare, 1999). Behaviours associated with dominant forms of masculinity, are often allied to risk taking which Shakespeare (1999) argues could result in a change in able-bodied status. Combining this with the view that dominant forms of masculinity are as unobtainable to the able bodied as they are to disabled men, Shakespeare (1999) concludes that this could be exploited to unite both disabled and able-bodied men in a cause to reconsider dominant constructs of masculinity. To challenge these essentialist views of masculinity in this way will require able bodied men to learn from the experiences of disabled men (Shakespeare, 1999). Shakespeare (2006) develops these ideas in

more recent publications where he argues that the binary disabled/non-disabled should be reconsidered by men as a continuum.

Ostrander's (2008) work with men who have violently acquired spinal cord injuries (VASCI), also notes the frustration of these men when faced with a dominant social context of what it is to be a man. This position appears to support the idea that a challenge to culturally normative ideals of masculinity would be useful in assisting men with both permanent and acquired disability to be part of a reconstituted world of men.

Sport plays a significant part in the construction and continuance of masculine identity and it would appear that this along with the representation of the body is similarly important to men with disabilities. Robertson (2003) in his exploration of health promotion and its links with men and sport, sought to uncover the socially integrative meanings of sport and their relationship to health. Robertson (2003) found that men did not engage in sport to develop interpersonal relationships with other men but for camaraderie. Whereas for the men with disabilities studied, who had become disabled as adults, sport gave a link back to a masculine identity, which was now perceived to be lost. Therefore, Robertson (2003) concludes that sport serves to maintain dominant masculine ideals and that this discourse helps to secure the position of the non-disabled sportsmen as men. This dominance is further explored by Smith and Sparkes (2004) who specifically consider the metaphors that are often used to describe participation by disabled sportsmen. They note the significance of the fighting metaphor to describe their come back to the able bodied world. All of the participants in the study had received injury from sporting accidents associated with playing rugby and Smith and Sparkes (2004) conclude that these restitution narratives are firmly grounded in the hope that a restored body can be achieved. Again, this

rests on an assumption that the continuance of disability is not a desirable identity if one is to conform to the masculine ideal.

Moving away from the influence of the media and of sport, Murphy and Young (2005) raise concerns over parental restraint emerging from fears of sexual abuse and its ultimate affect on developing identity. Writing about both males and females with disabilities, Murphy and Young (2005) discuss the limitations placed upon this group resulting in restricted social contact and fewer intimate relationships when compared to their non-disabled peers. Suggesting that the development of social behaviours is largely experiential, Murphy and Young (2005) go on to present difficulties for males and females with disabilities in their development of a sexual identity. Coupled with physical difficulties developing during puberty, the combination of poor sexual knowledge and growing up differently could lead to a narrow view of what it might be to be a man or woman.

Media influences on the construction of male identity are discussed by Wilde (2004) in her investigation of the performance of masculinity in soap operas and their interpretation by men from both disabled and non-disabled groups. Interestingly, she concludes that the representation of masculinity within the soap opera genre was an alienating experience for most men in the groups. In her analysis Wilde (2004) specifically draws on representations of disability using the work of Gerschick and Miller (1994) to demonstrate how dominant hegemonic characteristics of masculinity are key in the development of these characters. Scriptwriters are often focused on developing reformative narratives to include the heroism of the fight to conquer disability. This perhaps then strengthens the pervading view of those watching that being disabled weakens your identity as a man and in order to reclaim a masculine identity this weakness must be overcome. It is interesting that Wilde (2004) singles out women and young people as main consumers of the soap opera genre. Not only does this

suggest that 'real' men refrain from watching soaps, but there is perhaps a feminization associated with its consumption. This may be significant in thinking about the viewing habits of young people who are constructing their identity. As presented earlier in the case of teenage boys the decisions about what is dominant and what is subordinate are already being made. If this is the case then teenage boys and their peers with disabilities may be using the characterisations in soap operas to further categorise disability as other and not valued.

The struggle for emancipation by people with disabilities has a long and rich history. The development of the social model of disability has been instrumental in changing the lives of men and women and societies understanding of them. However, as presented it may be that this has been enacted without a thorough understanding or critique of the limits of impairment or of disabled people as gendered. Perhaps counter to the call to recognise impairment is the study of masculinity which appears to favour restorative or conformist narratives in relation to men with disabilities. Finally, it is worthy of note that the lives of people with ID is absent from the disability movement and so the hierarchy of disability sustains the idea that they are not part of a wider struggle for emancipation. This appears to neglect the fact that people with ID are among the most vulnerable groups in our society worthy of the support from their disabled comrades.

Building a discourse for doing ID boy

The following presents literature specifically related to people with ID. Included here are that which specifically focuses on masculinity and that which highlights the potential difficulties faced by people with ID as they construct their identity. I begin with historical accounts of masculine identity, which is intended to critically explore issues of gender as it relates to boys and men with ID in the past and how this may influence lives today. It is hoped that this will offer insight to assist in the analysis of both

philosophical and political notions of ID that are currently influencing the agenda of support not just to boys and men but all people who have an ID in the UK. This section begins with accounts of masculine identity and men with ID from literature. This is done as the historical accounts of the lives of men with ID in the UK are limited.

History

History concerning the lives of people with ID, particularly in relation to the last 160 years, is both rich and at times disquieting, but is mainly concerned with institutional restrictions and practices. Often dominated by periods of segregation and isolation, early histories in this area describe lives lacking individual identity and confined by institutionalised standards of care. Public perception galvanised by political will, following the revelation of atrocities carried out in Germany during the second world war, and the widely published scandals of the treatment of people with ID and those with mental health diagnoses over three decades from the 1960s, collide in a growth of sociological discourse regarding the care of the most vulnerable in society (see Goffman, 1968; Edgerton, 1967). Philosophical concepts of normalcy have arguably been the liberating force that has developed both individualised approaches to care and a politicisation of the principles that govern the delivery of that care. Revolutionary is perhaps too strong a word to describe the changes that have occurred over the latter years of the second millennium and the beginning of the third, however these changes should not be underestimated.

To give this clarity the following will only focus on moments in the history of ID when the issue of gendered identity has been hindered by the overwhelming desire for care and control. Similar to Gleeson (2010) these moments are used to uncover the plight of people with ID in order to inform action for change today. Although Simpson (2007) in his work discusses the dominance of disability, colonialism and race in the context of the

educability of the intellectually disabled throughout the enlightenment, he stops short of a connection to the control of gender and sexuality and perhaps its pervading influence on the intellectually disabled today. Therefore, the following seeks to uncover the place of masculinity for boys and men with ID just prior to, during and after the decline of eugenic thought. This is done as both biological and social aspects of gender were prominent in the execution of these policies in restricting the lives of people with ID at this time. Tosh (1994), in his essay regarding the historical context of masculinity, considers when viewing any historical issue it is crucial not to consider one particular aspect of binary relationships. Therefore he argues that the consideration of the role of women through history is incomplete without also considering the lives of men, likewise rich and poor. It would appear sensible then to assume that when considering masculinity, in the context of this thesis, it is essential to establish a dialogue between the two binaries that will facilitate a rounded debate on the issue in question. Indeed without consideration of where intellectually disabled men and boys have been historically in contrast to men and boys without ID, part of the picture may be obscured and rendered incomplete. It is essential then that we understand, if only partially, the construct of masculinity at times when men and boys with ID have been scrutinised and methods of control were being introduced. In order to ground this dialogue a consideration of institutional care will first be pursued.

Institutional care

This period in the lives of people with ID focuses on the mid-19th century, when specific care for this group was being introduced albeit supported initially by charitable and not statutory provision. It is argued that since the beginning of this episode of the development of segregation and the care and control of people with ID together with the rise of eugenic thinking, little has been done to dispel the assertion that men with ID are diminished in some way and unable to fulfil any role that society expects of a man.

Unfortunately, historical accounts of the lives of boys and men with ID are scarce, particularly concurrent accounts of lives in and out of segregated environments. However, there are literary accounts from the authors of the time that can help to reveal some aspects of lives lived with ID. The literary characterisation of Mr Dick as a man of 'weak intelligence' in Charles Dickens' novel *David Copperfield*, according to McDonagh (2000), was representative of the lives of men with ID in the early and mid-nineteenth-century. McDonagh (2000) goes on to assert that this diminished illustration of disabled masculinity was largely associated with a lack of financial authority and a limited ability to exert power in a patriarchal society. However, it is apparent that the strength of this diminished status is what pervades in the novel and prevents Mr Dick emerging as equal to other men. McDonagh (2000) draws a comparison between this literary representation of Mr Dick and those representations of men with ID that appear in contemporary media, arguing that this diminished status continues to influence society's view of intellectually disabled men. On further scrutiny of the fictional life of Mr Dick it is clear that McDonagh (2000) fails to notice some successes that are apparent in his life. However, the crucial point remains that these successes are short lived, as he is constantly reminded by other characters including women in the book that he is not part of the group he aspires to, by way of his disability. McDonagh's (2000) critique of a life lived in Victorian society fails to acknowledge, in part at least, Mr Dick's frustration at his failure to attain life as a citizen of that society from the position of a masculine identity. It should be noted that the male characters in the novel are those who seek to subordinate and then maintain Mr Dick's position as diminished and so a consideration of masculinities at this time would be pertinent. This can be analysed in part by returning to the work of Tosh (1994), as he offers a historian's account of the lives of men and masculinity in Victorian society. Established is a socially constructed notion of being male that articulates a culturally normative manliness of the time which both boys and men would

attempt to attain. Tosh (1994) argues that in sharp contrast to the lives of girls and women who were shaped by biological function rather than a development of female identity, boys and men were viewed by their developing characters as men. Attached to notions of a culturally normative or hegemonic masculinity discussed earlier in this chapter, manliness as analysed by Tosh (1994), includes a number of essential characteristics for boys and men including: intellect; self-reliance; economic independence; sexual identity; exercising sexual desire. If we return then to the life of the intellectually disabled man in Victorian society, when segregated provision was being developed many aspects of this group's character and biology were being discussed in relation to intellect, economic viability, independence and sexuality linked to procreation. If this was the case then if applied to McDonagh's (2000) thesis, there is some substance to explanations of Mr Dick's fluctuating success as he attempts to be accepted as a man in Victorian life. In addition as the lives of men without disability were inextricably linked to positions of power across the different levels of society, it could be suggested that the life of Mr Dick is frustrated by his exclusion from the attainment of the characteristics of men at that time.

In accounts of private institutions investigated by Wright (1996) there emerges a slightly different account of the training and treatment of people with ID at the mid-point of the nineteenth century. This account suggests that just prior to the expansion of institutional care and the growth of support for eugenic protestations, some men with ID were seen as able to take their place in society with training and paid employment. Wright (1996), giving account of the analysis of historical documents, states that there have been moments in the history of people with ID that have unsettled general consensus with regard to the position of this group in society. Aghast at the appalling conditions in work houses and county asylums, charitable groups applied their efforts to the transformation of the

treatment of people with ID in private institutions. Wright (1996) states that in the case of men this gave an opportunity to learn a trade and then to return to the community to live and work alongside non-disabled peers. Although only available to a minority of very able individuals with financial support or sponsorship, these institutions flourished for a short period towards the end of the nineteenth century and were able to discharge both men and women into mainstream society. However Wright's (1996) analysis does not include any follow up after discharge and so it is unclear how successful the men were at achieving full inclusion in society. As Wright's (1996) work was based in one asylum in Surrey, there is evidence that the men discharged did not attend to that establishment. However, this was only one of many in that area, therefore it could also be the case that men may have returned to institutional life but in another asylum.

The founding of the Eugenics (Education) Society in 1907 resulted in a step change in how the lives of people with ID were thought about both socially and politically. King and Hansen (1999) offer a fascinating account of how the Eugenics Movement in the UK almost succeeded in persuading the government of the time to legislate for the compulsory sterilization of those deemed unfit by the controlling classes gripped by moral panic. King and Hansen (1999) do not, as it is not within the scope of the aim of their paper, pay any attention to gender aspects of sterilisation and its impact on the lives of both men and women with ID at the time. However, as there was a more vehement reaction to castration it is reasonable to assume that any policy if it had been implemented would have had more of an impact on women with ID than men. Although it is also reasonable to assume that if legislation had been passed, considering the number of sterilisations in other countries including Germany and the United States of America, the impact would have been widely felt across the ID community in the UK.

'The Cloak of Competence'

Following the demise of the eugenics movement and the change in legislation that allowed people with ID to be discharged, studies began to emerge of the struggles of vulnerable groups both as in patients of institutions and as newly discharged community residents (Edgerton, 1967; Goffman, 1968). Edgerton's (1976) research revealed that many of those discharge from institutions in the state of Florida, failed unless they were able to find a benefactor in their community who would be willing to attest to their abilities and good character. Some thrived on the challenge or became frustrated in their attempts to achieve what they had set out to do. Others swapped one form of institution for another, as they became trapped in their rented accommodation failing to make any inroads into employment or to the everyday way of life that most people took for granted (Edgerton, 1967).

Edgerton (1967) offers descriptive accounts of their lives. In particular what emerges from observations of the men discharged, is their on-going struggle with society's expectations of them as men. In one example of a married couple Edgerton (1967) describes the frustration of the man as he faces his limitations while attempting to provide for his family. This is made apparent through his struggles with patriarchal structures in the work environment as he attempts to challenge others and assert his own authority as a man. As a consequence he fails to maintain consistent employment and so finds himself in a vicious circle as he moves from job to job in an attempt to maintain his life outside of the institutional system. As Edgerton (1967) stresses, the cloak that these individuals weaved to protect them from the discovery of their incompetence was not fit for the purpose, and so those they came into contact with easily detect their attempts to hide their disability. In this example, as in all Edgerton's (1967) examples, it is not until the couple locate a benefactor to offer them support and 'coaching', that they learn to live more resourcefully in the

community. In fact Edgerton (1967) concludes that the location of a benefactor by those discharged from the institution was an essential component of their acceptance by the community.

Gerber (1990) in his critique of Edgerton's (1967) thesis draws attention to the lack of voice given to those who were part of the study. The premise of this argument is that the thesis presents a construct of ID that is distant from the person affected by it. Gerber's (1990) critique is published over twenty years after the original study and yet there is no reflection in the work regarding how different the lives of people with ID were at the time of Edgerton's (1967) study. In addition, there is no critical acknowledgement with regard to the possibility that people with ID may at the time have been silenced by their experiences in institutions and their sudden move to community life. It strikes me as most important that we acknowledge Edgerton's (1967) work as of its time and a snapshot of lives when deinstitutionalization was in its infancy.

Normalization and Social Role Valorisation (SRV)

The following section develops the analysis of normalisation and SRV begun in the introduction at the beginning of this thesis. Fundamental issues of autonomy and gender blindness in the development and application of normalization and SRV will be progressed.

Whitehead (1992) in his critique of the social origins of normalisation indicates that the onus is on people with ID to conform to the majority and a single dominant construct of normalcy. The criticism is based on the call to a measure of social value that when held up against other issues of individual identity, ethnicity or gender, loses its potency as it fails to acknowledge individual difference. Brown and Smith (1992) in the same publication praise normalisation for its achievements during a time when institutional practices were abundant and a collective switch from oppressive

service provision to normalised environments was necessary. They argue however that this approach perversely deprived people with ID of their connections to other people going through the same experience, simultaneously removing their desire to be acknowledged as individuals and of their strength as a collective. Exchanging one form of powerlessness with another is located as the central problem with the principle of normalisation (Brown and Smith, 1992).

Developing the argument in relation to separation and disempowerment with regard to the normalisation principle, Walmsley (1994) cites this as the cause of isolation for people with ID from other disabled groups and consequently the disability movement. She argues that the focus on socially valued roles has cast people with ID as devalued, laying the cause of their problems firmly at their door. This, Walmsley (1994) asserts, is in opposition to other disabled groups whose fight for emancipation has been grounded in contentions regarding societal barriers outside of individual experiences of impairment. Agreeing with Brown and Smith (1992) Walmsley (1994) commends normalisation and SRV for the changes that have occurred in response to the restrictive and oppressive practice of the past. However, she argues that further change is not possible without the introduction of the authentic voice of people with ID and that other factors including gender should be considered. Race, Boxall and Carson (2005), attempt to address the possibility of reconciliation between the social model of disability and SRV. However, this is argued not on the basis of engendering or strengthening ties between oppressed groups but commandeering certain aspects of the social model to enhance SRV. These ideas are useful in establishing the need to acknowledge external barriers to the achievement of socially valued roles, but this continues to identify people with ID as devalued and ignores any analysis of other factors excepting this achievement. Race, Boxall and Carson (2005)

conclude their argument by adhering to this narrow focus without a full critique of the relative advantages and disadvantages of SRV.

Current debates, which centre on normalisation principles and SRV in services, argue autonomy is promoted without a sufficient critique of concepts of vulnerability and a detailed analysis of the complex challenges staff face when attempting to balance choice and control with vulnerability. Fyson (2008) argues that this balance should help to inform plans for people with ID and that it is detrimental to view choice, control and vulnerability as dichotomous. It could be proposed that this lack of a critical approach is born of the desire in services to create distance between the systemic disadvantages of the past and an aspiration to offer individualised services that facilitate involvement and autonomy. Unfortunately, the vulnerability often felt by staff when considering the possible negative consequences of their decisions may be in conflict with this desire. It is asserted that far from denying service user autonomy this critical balance may foster a greater understanding of need (Fyson, 2008). The legitimacy of discussions focussing on the subtle balances that support ethical decision making and the externalising of the problems and difficulties faced by professionals, are perhaps the key to successful practice and not adherence to policies of normalcy.

Deeley's (2002) account of in depth interviews with 21 individuals working with people who have ID, is a fascinating insight into the tussles that take place between those who support a prevailing and dominant inclusive ideology and those who apparently support an outdated paternalist ideology with regard to the care of people with ID. Deeley (2002) states that the dichotomous tug of war between staff not only occurred for those from apparently opposing camps, but also for those individuals who struggled to take on board the prevailing and dominant orthodoxy of normalcy. Incomprehensibly, Deeley (2002) appears to dismiss these

struggles insisting that the only way forward in creating a pleasant work environment for staff is to 'create a shared ideology that, while acknowledging professional differences, retains overall consistent and practical goals. This would necessitate supportive training for professionals, involving clear policies and guidelines based on an unambiguous and pragmatic interpretation of normalisation.' (p.33). There is no attempt to suggest here that the current dominant orthodoxy of normalization should be challenged, or that the real crux of the matter with staff in her study who were either 'normalisers' or 'paternalists', was that tensions about risk are worrying and concerning for staff teams and neither normalization or paternalism offer a definitive solution to the problem. In addition there is apparently no thought with regard to the different impact on the lives of men and women with ID and how we should think about the challenges that gendered identity brings. It is clear from earlier discussions in the introduction that the philosophy of normalisation does not offer a clear framework for considering the individual experiences of people with ID, either from a disabled or gendered perspective.

Pursuing another way perhaps of thinking about 'normality' and people with ID, Fisher (2007) argues that it is the restricted reading of 'normality' that can be problematic for people with ID. Citing the experience of the family of children with ID, Fisher (2007) argues that families are often urged to fit a particular frame of 'normality' that is beyond them and their child. In her analysis Fisher (2007) appears to defend parents who might argue that a happy life for their family may not be via the dominant public perception of what 'normal' is and that alternatives may exist. She goes on to argue that it is the lack of motivation to challenge concepts of 'normalised' existence for children with ID which added to the stress felt within families in her study. In fact in one example (Fisher, 2007) positive aspects of a child's identity were often pathologized by people outside the family. In this sense the child was identified as deficient and the expectation of parents to work

to help the child to conform to a socially constructed concept of 'normality' was made more complex by this view. Fisher (2007) argues that the parent participants in her study were finding ways of questioning these concepts of 'normality'. They were reported as finding their own ways based on constructs of interdependency.

Focussing specifically on an aspect of gender, Brown (1994) in her critique of the principles of normalisation and the pursuit of a sex life for people who have ID alludes to the difficulties experienced when aiming to attain societal expectations. Writing about the development of relationships, she states that these are on the whole based on conditions set by carers, including perhaps incongruously the demonstration of the skills of independence and financial management not the ability to develop connections with others. These conditions, Brown (1994) asserts, can only be met by a small number of people with ID who then are granted permission to establish an identity as a couple and set up home together. Brown (1994) concludes that conditions like these are placed in the way throughout ID provision and act as barriers with only the achievement of them giving access to normalised lifestyles.

Manthorpe, Walsh, Alszaszewski et al (1997) offer another perspective on gender in their account of normalisation. In their consideration of risk and risk assessment with people who have ID, they refer to gender difference in the types of risk that are most likely to be taken by men and women. In an interesting example, Manthorpe et al (1997) describes a normalised activity often perceived as critical to integration, going to the local pub. Manthorpe et al (1997) point out the dangers of failing to take into account the gendered risks associated with drinking behaviours. Specifically relating this to masculinity, the authors allude to the dangers of risk and the complexity facing staff trying to implement the philosophy of normalisation without analysis of gender issues. It is argued that this adds an additional

and complex dimension to the adoption of normalisation as a dominant ideology in services. In relation to this Manthorpe et al (1997) appear to suggest that the analysis of gender is crucial if we are to help people with ID challenge the inequalities that they often face. They also advocate an individualised approach to risk and risk management as they believe that blanket approaches do not help to solve these complex problems. However, the authors fall short of suggesting that normalisation itself should be reviewed or challenged but that policy and guidelines can help staff put these approaches into practice. In their conclusion Manthorpe et al (1997) point to conflict that exists between staff and their managers with regard to risk and normalisation, while staff fight for the autonomy of their clients organisations have more paternalistic motives in mind.

It is clear that there are difficulties with the constant tussle between a desire for normalized lives and concerns of risk and vulnerability. Clegg (2008) questions the continued use of the principle of normalisation as an indicator of quality, arguing that these philosophies simply highlight service and staff failure without prompting the necessary debate to establish productive service evaluation. This is arguably linked to two opposing views of ID, constructs of normality and paternalism, that held in a suspended dichotomous dialogue, fail to consider that the continuum that holds them together may be helpful in establishing clear approaches based on individual need.

Policy context

Initial discussion in the introduction revealed the kernel from which the proceeding arguments are grown. The aim is to add to the discourse developed in the review thus far regarding the specific context of ID in relation to masculinity. Specifically that policy makers, despite the rhetoric of personalisation, continue to design policy that maps to a standardized and homogenous view of people with ID. Young and Quibell (2000) argue

that what is missing is the stories of real lives that include the experience of living with an impairment or disability. Without this the gap that exists between people with ID, their lives, how that appears in policy and in the view from society cannot be connected. That is not to say that the policy of the past three decades has failed to transform services for this group, or that lives have not been changed as a result of this transformation. However, it is argued that policy has unsuccessfully recognised the idiosyncratic nature and individual experience of ID and the impairments that are related to it. This has resulted in systemic problems and confusion at the level of direct contact with people with ID, as regards responsiveness to individual need. This is supported by the view of Clegg and Lansdall-Welfare (2010) who argue that a new approach is now needed, they conclude that ‘...continuing to put effort and resources behind the ideas that have shaped services for 35 years is unlikely to yield further significant change (p. 68).

Valuing people: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century (DoH, 2001), suggests that the creation of opportunities to fulfil potential in mainstream society is the only way to assure a permanent change in society’s view of this group. Given the correct level of support, it is argued people with ID can be enabled to play an active part as members of their communities. In theory then this increased presence in mainstream society can lead to a greater sense of social inclusion for this group. However, Levitas (1998) argues that social inclusion, although an important descriptor of ‘in and outsiders’, should be used to help challenge our thinking, developing debates which centre on the rights of people with ID to be accepted as citizens. Bates and Davis (2004) develop this argument further by suggesting that without the progression from discussion of social inclusion to a discourse of citizenship for people with ID, the role of this disabled group in society will not change. Perhaps then in thinking of the development of citizenship for people with ID we need

also to think of the characteristics necessary to be a citizen. It could be hypothesised that the development or construction of these characteristics is an essential component for the development of citizenship in everyday life.

Social policy, as it relates to ID, of the last three decades is brought into focus by Burton and Kagan (2006) as they seek to unravel the messages that underpin the most recent developments. The authors indicate that it is critical in any critique of recent policy to realise how certain themes have been sustained across all administrations over the decades. Focus is given to the neoliberal stance of the Thatcher and Major administrations, which advocated economic freedom, privatisation and a reduction in size of the private sector. Burton and Kagan (2006) indicate the surprise of political commentators at the time that these ideas were carried forward by the Blair government and firmly rooted in social policy regarding the lives of people with ID. However, the identification of social exclusion and as a consequence the establishment of the binary of exclusion/inclusion created by the last Labour government is singled out as contrary to the neoliberal philosophy. Burton and Kagan (2006) suggest that the dichotomy established by this binary allows the assumption that certain groups, including people with ID, are immediately identified as excluded. This in turn has shaped notions of what is desirable and what should be done to move people from exclusion to inclusion. Burton and Kagan (2006) assert that people with ID have therefore been cast as distant from the mainstream by policy makers driven by a focus on exclusion/inclusion. Escape from social exclusion is therefore governed by a neoliberal position that independence is what sets you free and introduces you to the mainstream. Burton and Kagan (2006) muse on this stating that it is this individualistic stance which removes us further from the human condition and interdependence. In addition, the authors suggest that there is a danger of cynicism as there is a lack of focus on the complexity of ID and a

lack of assessment with regard to diversity and individual experiences of it. Although gender is not mentioned specifically by these authors, they also highlight the ignorance of the 'preconditions for human growth and development' (p. 310) and wonder if the current principles of social policy for people with ID will deliver real inclusion. This is of course speculative as it is not linked to specific empirical research regarding the lives of people with ID. However, there is evidence with regard to UK government policy and the extent to which its philosophical underpinning disadvantages those who have difficulties with communication (Clare and Cox, 2003; Concannon, 2006; Whitehurst, 2006). Advocated is a greater need to take account of the views of all those involved in the care of individuals.

Professionals working with people who have an ID, may currently be trapped by aspirational goals to facilitate client autonomy and the need to make complex decisions about a person's future which may foster dependency. This situation is further compounded when considered against policy that appears to disadvantage people with ID who have difficulty with communication (Barnes, Newman and Sullivan, 2004). Clapton (2008) has argued that the current dominance of managerialism, the application of management methods to human services in Australia as in other capitalist societies, supports prevailing ideologies of normalcy. The author argues that this is detrimental as this approach draws services away from a focussed engagement with individuals. Wilson, Clegg and Hardy (2008) echo this sentiment proposing that the greater understanding of the service user, as a product of secure lasting relationships, may help professionals' with the tensions they experience in their work.

Redley and Weinberg (2007) in their ethnography of self-advocacy, comment on the development of social policy as it relates to the lives of people with ID. While asserting their commitment to ensuring that the ability of the individual is recognised, they argue that current policy ignores

the individual experience of impairment and its effect on life. They point to a dangerous precedent in social policy aimed at people with ID and their families that the expectations of self-advocacy, independence and ability collaborate to hide the specific needs of children and adults with intellectual impairments. The danger lies in the concern that the ignorance of specific needs will result in individuals not having their needs attended to.

Other authors highlight the possibility of further inequalities emerging as a result of policy (Fyson and Simons, 2003; Kisby, 2007). In their analysis of one aspect of care for people with ID, Cambridge, Carpenter, Forrester-Jones et al (2005) highlight the intricacies of providing a service to such a diverse group. Not only have professionals to have the necessary skills embedded in a systemic approach, but they also need the ability to provide flexibility when user needs change or when the process of decision making becomes more complex.

Concepts of citizenship for people with ID, of concern regarding social acceptance and the emergence of theories of social capital cloud the mix further as they appear to make the delivery of services to people with ID yet more complicated (Johoda and Markova, 2004; Kisby, 2007; Fisher, 2007). The conceptualisation of the provision of service to people with ID is therefore driven by an intricate philosophical base yet raises further dilemmas for examination.

Policies of inclusion for people with ID are especially prominent in education. In fact the mainstreaming of children with disabilities as opposed to segregated education has been an integral part of social inclusion policy advocated by recent governments (Cooney, Johoda, Gumley et al, 2006). However, the success of this policy in ensuring that children have the right to education alongside their non-disabled peers

may be producing some worrying side effects. Cooney et al (2006) in their research consider the perception of stigma, social comparison and future aspirations in a group of sixty-three 15-17 year olds with mild to moderate ID attending mainstream and segregated education. They found that those in mainstream education were more likely to experience stigmatized treatment than those in segregated settings. In addition, they found that all participants rated themselves highly in comparison to children with more severe ID and lower in comparison to their non-disabled peers. Although seeing themselves as inferior to non-disabled peers in the mainstream setting and at higher risk of stigmatising treatment, the authors acknowledge that it may be beneficial to realise difference early on to enable better coping strategies. However, Cooney et al (2006) admit that their measures may have been inadequate in eliciting the experiences of stigmatisation in the group of students from segregated settings. However, it does highlight the difficulties of the progression of the individual with ID when faced with what appears to be a dominant construct of ID which overrides all other constructs.

Transition and its management in special schools is discussed in research by Pilnick, Clegg, Murphy et al (2010). Using conversational analysis the researchers consider eight review meetings where transition was discussed. Similar to Cooney et al (2006) the researchers highlight the problems faced when the dominant construct of ID is present. In particular Pilnick et al (2010) analyse how professionals struggled to dismiss the unrealistic expectations of the person with ID who was the focus of the meeting. In one excerpt from the meeting participants avoid any suggestion that the expectation of a boy with ID to become a police officer is not reasonable. The researchers conclude that staff are trapped in a bind between the policy of choice and control and the unrealistic desires of the person with ID. They argue that staff must work to guide people with ID towards realistic goals.

The politics of ID is structured around an inclusion/exclusion binary within a dominant orthodoxy of choice and control. However, this fails to acknowledge the idiosyncrasies of their impairment or the effects of their gender. The following considers ID and issues of masculinity.

Intellectually disabled masculinities

Literature which focuses on masculine behaviours and ID mainly gives attention to issues of sexuality (Cambridge and Mellan, 2000, Cambridge, 1999, Thompson, 2001). Although this can also be said of the literature considering the identity of men with other disabling conditions (Shakespeare Gillespie-Sells and Davies, 1996), in contrast attention would appear to be aimed at wider issues including the development of a disabled masculine identity that may or may not conform to the hegemonic ideal as presented earlier in this chapter.

Contemporary researchers considering the experience of community living for people with ID focus on aspects of identity or on challenges to the development of identity. In their research with men with ID focussing on issues of sexuality, Cambridge and Mellan (2000) note the difficulties experienced by this group when developing their sexual identities. In particular difficulties with expression of thoughts and ideas associated with the construction of sexual identity are discussed. Additionally, Cambridge and Mellan (2000) highlight influences that they suggest may be problematic in the progression of work with men who have ID, perhaps having detrimental effects on the construction of masculinities. The first issue they identify is that the majority of those currently working to support people with ID are women. Although not supported with empirical evidence, this issue is considered problematic for men with ID as they look for help to interpret their world. It could be reasonably assumed that this may have a direct influence on how men with ID develop their identities. In

addition to this issue Cambridge and Mellan (2000) assert that those engaged in sexuality work with men with ID on the whole are men who identify as gay. Again it is argued that this may potentially have an effect on the delivery and progression of this work and upon the lives of men with ID.

Interestingly Shakespeare et al (1996), in their interviews with people with disabilities, focussing on issues of sexuality, include an individual with a ID who alludes to problems encountered during transition and a lack of preparation for adult life. The young man speaks of his confusion at being expected to act as a child throughout his school years and then the sudden change in expectation when he became an adult. Perhaps this confusion and lack of understanding is a result of a direct correlation between his late awareness of behaviours expected of an adult and a lack of support from others to help contextualise the processes of transition or to explain future roles.

The construction of masculinities by boys with ID has been investigated by Benjamin (2001), in her project with boys labelled as failing in a special school. Benjamin's (2001) thesis relies on a masculinities critique of the behaviour of the boys in the classroom, with specific reference to her gender and sexuality. It is clear from the study that the boys produced and reproduced culturally normative masculinities in reaction to their status as failing and being part of the special school system. Benjamin's (2001) argument hinges on the fact that limited experience and social interaction was to blame for their rigid conformity to these culturally normative forms of 'doing boy/doing pupil'. In response to this Benjamin's (2001) project aimed to introduce a feminist classroom to simultaneously change academic achievement and challenge laddish behaviours. Although limited, this project begins a discourse with regard to boys with learning disabilities and a developing masculine identity. However, what is not

clear in Benjamin's (2001) work is the extent to which this behaviour was normal in relation to age, academic achievement and gender in comparison to other boys outside the special school system. In essence it may be problematic to draw conclusions that magnify difference without consideration of what might be normal behaviour for boys discovering their identity.

Wilson (2009) in his thesis of an ethnographic study which considered the lives of men and teenage boys with moderate to profound ID, introduces the construct of 'conditionally sexual' from his interviews with care staff. Held within this construct is the theme 'conditionally masculine' which, similar to Benjamin (2001), identifies the significance of environment. However, unlike Benjamin (2001) Wilson (2009) comments on the problematic influence of the feminised environments on the lives of the men and boys in the study. Arguing that this has neither an entirely negative or positive effect on the lives of men and boys, Wilson (2009) nevertheless recommends that 'An environment where conditionally masculine may progress toward a more wholly valued notion is required' (p. 350). This recommendation is made so that positive masculinities can be supported and the stereotyping of men and boys as diminished, discussed earlier, can be reduced.

The history of men with ID presents a complex representation of diminished masculinity which fails to become part of mainstream life. It is clear that services have moved and the life of people with ID as regards their visibility has been transformed. Normalisation/SRV that once provided the catalyst for these changes is arguably limiting further progress by continuing to insist that people with ID should be compelled to fit the prevailing ideas of normalcy. Social policy in the UK moves forward with this underpinning philosophy regarding people with ID as excluded unless they conform to individualism and independence. This negates the

individual experience of impairment and dismisses the human condition which favours interdependency. Current research with boys with ID regarding their identities as men is beginning to question the relevance of current philosophies without a detailed investigation of the role of gender in the lives of this vulnerable group. Without detailed investigation it will not be possible to consider the place of people with ID in society today.

Summary

The development of a secure identity as male is a complex task initially conducted in the formative years of life. This requires a sophisticated set of skills to interpret local hegemonies and the influences of context and performance in the moment. The addition of disability incorporates another layer of complexity that requires the individual to come to terms with difference and the idiosyncrasies of individual impairment. ID has a long history of the ignorance of gender in relation to a positive explanation of its relationship to human development. The limited research in this area calls for a positive approach to be adopted so that boys with ID can be helped to develop their ideas and successfully access the world of men.

Introducing the research questions

This research was conducted to begin a discourse between normalised constructs of 'doing boy' and 'doing ID boy' to uncover the twists and turns experienced by male teenagers with ID as they pursue their journey into adulthood. It is hoped that the voices of the boys will emerge from this research to help inform debates about transition, but also about how boys with ID experience their lives as male. The lack of empirical research in this area has raised a number of questions that are worthy of investigation. The context for the study, presented in the introduction, and the analysis of relevant literature provide the rationale for the study leading to the research questions.

Research aim

To explore whether boys with ID have ideas of what it means to be a boy, what influences this and what ideas the boys have about their futures as men.

Objectives

- To find out if boys with ID can articulate a view of being boys.
- To find out what influences these ideas.
- To explore the ideas that the boys have about their futures as men.

Research questions

1. How do boys with ID talk about their masculinity?
2. What does this reveal about the influences on their ideas about their futures as men?

The method for conducting the study is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3 METHODS

Introduction

Research involving children and teenagers should take account of their ability to determine their future and that of the world around them. As the adults of tomorrow, notice should be taken of their influences and how this plays a part in their development (Greig, Taylor and MacHay, 2007). Leading on from initial thoughts about methodology presented in the introduction, this chapter will describe the rationale for choosing the research methodology for this study, the research strategy and methods. I hope to show how the chosen paradigm and the postulates that underpin it are suited to this investigation. In addition, I will make transparent how the complexity of work with people who have ID and the assumptions often made about their lives can perturb the very essence of research and its processes. This will be returned to as the specifics of the research process are discussed later in this chapter. Discussions of this nature are viewed as essential as there is a danger that speculation about people with ID, their abilities and relationship with the world around them, can lead to the wrong choice being made about research methods (Aldridge, 2007). The choice of methodology and methods discussed here are therefore specific to the needs of people with ID and personalized to be cognisant of this.

The alternate paradigm and the postulates that underpin it

Decisions regarding the choice of paradigm and adherence to the postulates can be challenging and involve a great deal of thought and deliberation. Once the paradigm has been decided, there can also be contentious issues to address in relation to the choice of methods. Bryman (2008) highlights this contention when he states that the choice of method for research is not always arrived at without certain motivations being present. In fact he argues that the choice is often driven by thoughts and

experiences that have influenced the exploration of the work. These thoughts and experiences have already been discussed in the introduction to this thesis and include a career in ID services, curiosity about the place of males with ID in the world and an academic journey. In addition, this has been influenced by a scoping exercise with parents of and people who work with both boys with and without ID (See Scoping Exercise Report Appendix). The conclusion of this gave support to the idea that it was timely to give voice to boys with ID developing their masculine identities. In addition, it gave further focus to help construct the methods. In particular, the scoping exercise confirmed that the practice, 'try outs', of gendered identities was important to boys and so this influenced the development of images of men and boys engaged in gendered activities; that friendship and camaraderie was important and influenced the selection of participants within friendship groups; the desire to fit in was also an important aspect of the findings of the scoping exercise which influenced the freedom given to the boys with regard to the development of methods.

A key to the choice of methodology when working with people who have ID is the question of inclusiveness and the need to ensure that the voices of this group are heard. As presented in the previous chapter, the policy position strongly favours inclusive practices in all areas of the person's life (see DoH, 2009). However there is an anxiety, that the voices of people with ID are often drowned out by the dominant voices of the mainstream population (Goodley and Moore, 2000; Mathers, 2005). Therefore, central to the choice of methodology, strategy and method of data collection was that those involved in the research should be heard.

The alternate paradigm promotes the idea that multiple realities exist which are connected to form a constructed whole (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). Inherent here is the rejection of positivist assumptions which are supported further by the idea that researchers do not distance themselves

from the phenomenon and are encouraged to acknowledge their relationship to it. 'The magnificence of this work exists in its capacity to create rich descriptions and understandings of social life.' (Walker and Myrick, 2006 p. 549). Greig, Taylor and MacKay (2007) stress the interplay between the child's own perspective, social determinants, context and culture. They argue as do Maykut and Morehouse (1994) that the researcher and the research subject are inextricably linked within the context of the research environment and that the extraction of one aspect of the phenomenon under investigation is not possible. This emphasises again the distinctiveness of human subjects when compared to the natural world.

As the background work for this study was completed, including a scoping exercise (see Appendix A) and a proposal emerged, it became clear that the absence of existing theory regarding the lives of teenage boys with ID was an indicator that hypothesis development and the testing of this would be problematic, speculative at best. Furthermore, the research of others who attempted to put forward a new knowledge of the lived experiences of teenagers without ID were, on the whole, united in their use of an alternate qualitative approach allowing the voices of participants to be revealed. A hypothesis could have been reached both from reading related research about the lives of boys and men with ID, results from the scoping exercise and the experiences of the researcher and supervisors. However, without specific knowledge and published opinion about boys with ID and masculinities the hypothesis would have been complete guesswork on the part of those involved in the study. It was felt that a leap of this nature would not have benefited the lives of those it sought to uncover; neither would it have delivered the type of rich data to stimulate debate about this topic.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) argue that the qualitative researcher does not seek to eliminate the intricacy of the environment that surrounds a particular phenomenon or eradicate the interactions that are influenced by it; instead they draw from this in the construction of theory. This is in stark contrast to the quantitative researcher who narrows down the investigation to focus on one aspect, allowing for a larger sample and generalisable findings. Patton (2002) uses an interesting metaphor to establish the function of the qualitative researcher as 'lifting the veil' to study what is going on behind it. Highlighted here is the necessity of getting close to the phenomenon to develop the theory to explain it.

A number of approaches could be utilised to consider a particular phenomenon using qualitative methodology. Phenomenology was considered to help describe the lives of boys with ID and how they developed their masculine identity. This approach would have offered a description of the lives of boys now and helped to theorise their futures as men. However, the difficulties of suspending the researchers own preconceptions about the phenomenon would have been problematic given previous practice experiences. A Narrative or Case study approach would have also offered a logical approach for this study as they consider the lived experience of a particular individual or group at a specific moment in time. Although these approaches may have offered the ability to speculate about the futures of boys with ID, it would not have revealed the interactions that the boys had with each other and how these helped shape their ideas of their futures as men. Ethnography would also have been an appropriate choice as it lends itself to immersion in a particular community and the opportunity to become a participant observer. As Byman (2008) indicates being a participant observer enables the researcher to understand phenomena from the position of the participant, to learn the language of the group and to connect with verbal behaviour. Although tempting, participation in this way with a group of boys with ID was

considered problematic as it was thought that they would potentially struggle to accept a researcher into their environment in this way. Also, from the outset of the research interaction and the effect of others on the lives of boys with ID was considered to be a fundamental element of the consideration of the phenomenon. This led to discussions about Grounded Theory and its qualities of reflexivity, flexibility and originality. As the phenomenon under investigation had not been considered in depth before, it appeared logical to engage with an approach which as Charmaz (2006) states offers the researcher an opportunity to ‘...direct, manage, and streamline your data collection and, moreover, construct an original analysis of your data.’ (p. 2). Additionally, this approach could enable a social constructionist approach to the work based on the work of Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Charmaz (2006) that considers research data and the analysis of it to be socially constructed and reflective of how it was originally produced. In this way masculinity, its construction in the here and now and its future imaginings, could be captured to allow theoretical ideas to emerge.

In summary, choosing the research paradigm became a crucial element in the creation of this research study early on in its inception. The desire to ensure that the voices of teenage boys with ID were heard throughout the study was a critical point of thought. Assumptions that are often made about people with ID and the impact that their disability can have on the research process are influential, having a direct impact on the choice of research tradition. Silverman (2005) argues that no method of research is fundamentally better than any other. However, ethically, morally and also politically for this group the aspiration for this study was to ensure that teenage boys with ID themselves could affect the outcome. Any resulting service or policy change that might affect their lives resulting from the findings would at least have been derived from a close connection with them, which is a challenge for both researchers and those who work in

services. Participation appears to be a key to success, nevertheless the population in question are arguably the most affected by communication difficulties and so it can be problematic to say that the view of someone or a group of people with ID can be obtained easily. However, without some attempt to gain the view of the person with ID, as Mathers (2005) has argued, the population as a whole could be overlooked and any subsequent change fail to incorporate their needs and rights. In addition the issue of representativeness can also be critical when deciding on a particular topic to research and how to research it. The focus of this research was to establish what it was like to have an ID building ideas of what it was to be a man. For this study there were no pre-existing theories to test and theories that emerge from research with teenage boys without ID although informative as regards a foundation only identify difference as subordinate. Theory had to emerge from the data set generated by the methods used in this study.

Approach based on Grounded Theory (GT)

Fassinger (2005) citing the work of Cutcliffe (2000), describes GT as the interrogation of the meanings created in social relationships, the grounded theorist attempts to discover how groups of people define their realities on the basis of their understanding of interpersonal interactions. As a methodology for researching Strauss and Corbin (1998) conceive GT as a way of thinking about the world. Simply, this methodology represents the idea that theory can emerge from the data or is grounded in it (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 cited). David and Sutton (2011) offer an interesting analogy to assist novice researchers in their selection of GT as a methodology for their study, as they describe the effect of a lightning conductor and its purpose to earth a church tower. The authors go on to relate this effect to GT in their description of grounding. 'Grounding is designed to allow reality to filter up, but at the same time being grounded ensures that research is not just the projection of a lightning bolt from the blue (imposing

our ideas on reality).’ (David and Sutton, 2011; p. 191). Greig et al (2007) in their presentation of the methodology draw on the disagreement between the original authors of this research methodology as evidence that it is difficult to use. GT is often presented as revolutionary and yet it is also focussed upon as the most disputed of qualitative methodologies (Walker and Myrick, 2006; David and Sutton, 2011). The split between the original authors of the methodology may encourage the researcher to choose between a Straussian or Glaserian model of progressing a grounded theory in their research (Walker and Myrick, 2006). The difference in analysis between the original incarnation of GT and its revision first by Glaser and then Strauss, appears to be the basis for this choice. However there are other more fundamental differences that are apparent in the epistemological foundations for the development of GT as Glaser’s background is influenced by empirical positivism, while Strauss was inclined towards a combination of pragmatism and symbolic interactionism (David and Sutton, 2011). The development of ideas particularly in the writing of Strauss and Corbin (1998) led to accusations of naïve empiricism by Glaser as ideas regarding analysis developed. However, despite this it is the interplay between deductive and inductive techniques that single GT out among other qualitative methodologies. Again stressing the iterative nature of this methodology, Strauss and Cobin (1998) build on the interplay that exists as a strength of this methodology. Charmaz (2006) moves this on further as she alludes to the abductive nature of the investigation. ‘In brief, abductive inference entails considering all possible theoretical explanations for the data, forming hypotheses for each possible explanation, checking them empirically by examining data, and pursuing the most plausible explanation’ (Charmaz, 2006; p.104). It is this attitude that establishes this approach to research as one that builds theory which is grounded in the data that has been produced.

Returning to the work of Strauss and Corbin (1998) it is clear that this approach is designed to take seriously what the group being researched say. Most appealing is that GT provides a platform from which the researcher can use their creative attributes and apply them flexibly so that a sense of vision can be provided (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Conscious of the need to engage with participants, grounded theory offers the opportunity to do this while as Patton (2002) states ensure that the results and findings are 'grounded in the empirical world'.

Patton (2002) proposes that grounded theory is currently the most influential research strategy in the tradition of qualitative research in the social sciences. However, in his work regarding methodologies and their application in social research, Bryman (2008) reiterates Glaser's warning suggesting that researchers could be accused of engaging in naïve empiricism by using GT for their work. It is the criticism regarding naïve or narrow empiricism that caused divergence in the promotion of the methodology between Glaser and Strauss, as reported by Charmez (2006), that has perhaps lead to it remaining so popular as a qualitative research methodology.

It was clear throughout the planning stage for this study, that the iterative nature of GT would be useful. Walker and Myrick (2006) describe this as the movement between parts of the research process. Although this traditionally begins with first analysis, it became clear early in the process of the study that movement between the different parts of the study would be necessary. This included reflection at all stages as described later, which suited the population for this study, allowing influence and change throughout the evolution of its design. This offered a reflexive, flexible and creative approach, essential to ensuring that throughout the study crucial data was not missed and methods could be adapted and moulded to suit the requirements of the participants. As Charmaz (2006) states GT is an

attractive methodology for researchers as it allows them to apply the approach in ways that suit their focus.

Choice of data collection method

Greig, Taylor and MacKay (2007) in their text on doing research with children ask researchers, and in particular novice researchers, to take a broad view of methods for data collection. It was important in this study to ensure that two distinct features of the group were considered when establishing the methods for gathering data. First that their needs as children in the research process were established and then used to develop methods. Second that their individual needs associated with their ID were taken into account. In view of this, creative approaches including a sorting exercise and use of art work as triggers for group and individual interviews were adopted to maximise participants' relationship with the researcher but also with the generation of data for analysis.

Consideration regarding choice of methods for the study was essentially about learning from the inside about what life was really like for teenage boys with ID. As Charmaz (2006) in her thoughts about choice of method indicates that the method can give the researcher opportunity to see vistas enjoyed by those on the inside not usually available to those on the outside. Charmaz (2006) also points out that the research position and the methods used can help the researcher to perhaps question the assumptions that those on the outside make about the participants and their lives. This was of particular importance to this study, given that participants are perhaps some of the most vulnerable and misunderstood individuals in our communities. Paying attention to the nature of the participants, their place in the world and of how interrelationships are played out is essential if methods are to gather sufficient data (David and Sutton, 2011). Predominantly, the fact that participants were children, in this case teenagers, and also had a ID were points that had to be well

thought-out regarding choice and also execution of data collection methods. It was clear from the outset that time would have to be spent getting to know the boys in the school to establish how they were themselves involved in the construction of their identities. As Greig, Taylor and MacKay (2007) state children are 'co-constructors of meaning' (p.158) and as such can participate fully in research that is about their lives. However it is worth noting that methods have no mystical qualities, they are merely an enhancement to the researcher's view and do not 'provide automatic insight' (Charmaz, 2006).

Charmaz (2006) warns that the choice of data collection method will dictate what phenomena you will see at what point you will do this and how then you will understand them. She states that the choice of data collection methods should assist in answering the question set for the research and help to use it creatively and penetratingly. This is not about randomly ripping away the phenomenon's flesh to get at what lies beneath, but incisively exploring the elements of data to extract its meaning. Data gathering should be a gentle precise and intellectual pursuit to explore what is really happening.

The key in working with this group was to find methods that engaged them, were understandable and could help in building trust with the researcher so that data could be gathered.

Research with children

This section develops the idea that the lives of the teenagers involved in the study were central to establish what special considerations were taken in to account when developing the methods. Interestingly, some researchers go a little further in their debate of this, insisting that with particular regard to qualitative research methodologies it is their flexibility that will enable children to have an effect on aspects of the research

process with a particular emphasis on how the methods of data collection evolve over time (Grieg, Taylor and MacKay, 2007). This was certainly a point of focus when deciding on what methods would be used in this study.

Kelly (2007) accounts for the benefits of choosing a qualitative methodology to conduct research with children with ID as it offers the agility necessary to include creative methods to gather data. She also expounds the virtue of getting to know the child involved in the research to enable data collection. Particularly talking about the use of interview techniques with children, Kelly (2007) notes that children often use unconventional ways of communicating and so the interview method is best suited to this as children are happier in a one to one interaction with the researcher. Reflexivity is crucial if researchers are to be effective in ensuring that the voices of children are heard (Kelly, 2007), of importance in this study. The re-negotiation of roles in the research process and changes made to research methods are now clear components of research with children. Taking this argument further, Kelly (2007) argues that it is methodological reflexivity that can ensure that children affect what happens during the data collection phase, the research questions to be studied and the analysis of their words.

Building a rapport with the child in preparation for the interview and involvement in the research process is acknowledged as an essential component of research with children (Kelly, 2007; Grieg, Taylor and MacKay, 2007). Often in research with adults it is the immediacy of the rapport perhaps minutes before the interview begins that establishes if the participant will be able to talk. Research with children is much more complex in this regard as it can take a number of face to face contacts with the child to enable rapport to be built to give data collection a fighting chance. Kelly (2007) in her research states that it was ethically correct to make sure that she had contact with the children involved in the research

several times prior to the interview taking place. During these meetings rapport was established but also it helped the child to understand the process of research and the methods being used. It was at these meetings that Kelly (2007) was able to listen to children as they made suggestions about how the task proposed for the interview might be changed so they understood it better, but that they also had the options necessary to allow for full participation. It was this relaxed and reflexive approach to the research process that established the relationships but also enabled communication. Kelly (2007) states that it also helped to challenge power relationships between the child and the researcher.

Observation/Orientation

In accordance with the approach of Kelly (2007), it was thought necessary early on in the design of the study to incorporate a period of observation/orientation to the environment chosen for the study, in this case a special school. As the data collection phase of the study was due to take place during the summer term at the school, it appeared logical for the observation/orientation period to take place just prior to this in the previous second half of the spring term. The purpose of the period was three fold: first as pointed out by Kelly (2007) getting to know the children appeared relevant to ensure that a rapport was built and that the children would be happy to talk to me about their lives; second that the rapport built with the children would help to evolve the methods for data collection and to ensure that they would be designed in a way that would encourage participation; third it seemed appropriate to use the period almost like a participant observer, in that I would become part of the fabric of the school in order to evoke trust in potential participants and their parents and carers.

Group interviews

Initially group interviews were thought of as a potential way for eliciting the views of the teenage boys sampled. During a short period of observation

and getting to know the boys, it was established that friendship and alliance groups existed in all the years sampled. These observations supported the findings of the scoping exercise (see appendix X), which suggested that camaraderie was acknowledged as important by those who supported boys with and without ID. The reasoning behind the use of group interviews was to give an opportunity to see how a small group from the same class and friendship group constructed ideas of what it was to be a boy when presented with a set of triggers. This would also create the interactions between boys to reveal the boys' construction of what it was to be a boy. Fraser and Fraser (2000) write of the usefulness of group interviews when people with ID are involved in studies, as it offers a forum allowing group members to have a conversation about topics that are important to them. Particular attention is given to the use of this method when the research on a particular topic is limited. It could be argued that this concurs well with the GT methodology when initial analysis of the data is conducted early on and used reflexively to develop other methods. Fraser and Fraser (2001) also stress that when using this method it is advisable to use triggers that interest the participants. Crucially according to Fraser and Fraser (2001) this enables participants to engage and gives them the opportunity to explore ideas related to these interests. However, in their study the points of interests that created the triggers for the group interview were derived from staff and carers rather than from the participants themselves. In this study, it was vital that triggers were developed in an eclectic way, by observing and speaking to both participants and the people supporting them. Logically it was hoped that this would predict greater success as the participants would be able to acknowledge aspects of their own lives in the triggers used.

It was important that the teenagers had some control in their first encounter with a research process. David and Sutton (2011), propose that group interviews create an interaction between participants that offers them

command of the situation creating a group dynamic. It was important that the dynamic was central to this initial stage of data collection, given that the way boys performed in the group and interacted would possibly generate more data in relation to the performance of masculinity. However, as David and Sutton (2011) argue there is some disagreement as to whether or not the dynamic itself generates bias or further depth. As the research was aimed at giving this group a voice any chance that there could be a greater depth to the process, in the sense that it could be more democratic and participatory, appeared to be a risk worth taking.

One of the singular concerns when thinking about the use of group interviews in the research was that of dominance among the participants. This is addressed clearly by David and Sutton (2011) who give a balanced account of the dangers and also the benefits dependent on the particular topic. The position here is that the researcher either works hard to counter dominance within the group ensuring that all have their say on the topic, or that dominance is used to gather more data about the dynamic being created by the group during data collection. Certainly, in this study I was interested in what people wanted to say, but I was also interested in how the group dynamic operated particularly when the focus was the construction of masculinity.

The issue of acquiescence was a central consideration when preparing to work with groups of teenage boys with ID. David and Sutton (2001) warn of participants wanting to give the researcher what they want to hear. This was of particular significance in this study as not only was I part of the process and potentially an impact on data collection in each of the groups, but I was also required to have a chaperone in the room. In all cases the school offered a female classroom assistant to fulfil this role as not only did she know the teenage boys well but also had an established relationship with them. My initial concern with this was that it would strengthen the

problem with acquiescence in the group. However, again this offered another facet to the group interviews, as it perhaps mimicked the impact of adults on the construction and negotiation of masculinities outside the interview room.

Individual interviews

The group interviews gave the opportunity to consider group views on the construction of masculinity; it also gave another opportunity to develop rapport with those who had agreed to participate. This helped with both the preparation and the conduct of individual interviews with the teenage boys, to begin to uncover their ideas about their futures as men. Before going on to give a descriptive account of the interview process, as part of the procedure, the intricacies of interview as a method are discussed.

Interviews enable participants to be reflexive and offer the participant the opportunity to talk about experiences, sometimes in ways not available to them in everyday life (Charmaz, 2006; David and Sutton, 2011). It was considered that the interview would give the opportunity for participants to talk about issues that they may not have been able to talk about in a group interview and to clarify their personal position. Charmaz (2006) describes this as an opportunity to gather more data to use during the analysis phase of the process. During the observation/orientation and initial group interviews, I had begun to understand and appreciate the lives of the teenage boys who participated in the study. It appeared logical in progressing the study to choose individual interviews as a next step in data collection. This allowed for more in-depth conversations and the opportunity to follow hunches as they arose with the participants (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz (2006) offers a short list for the interviewer which I came to view as an essential guide to the role of the interviewer as reproduced in the following figure 2.

- Go beneath the surface of the described experience(s)
- Stop to explore a statement or topic
- Request more detail or explanation
- Ask about the participant's thoughts, feelings, and actions
- Keep the participant on the subject
- Come back to earlier point
- Restate the participant's point to check for accuracy
- Slow or quicken the pace
- Shift the immediate topic
- Validate the participant's humanity, perspective, or action
- Use observational and social skills to further the discussion
- Respect the participant and express appreciation for participating

Figure 2: Role of the interviewer (Charmaz, 2006; p. 26)

This establishes the idea that the interview allows for creativity and flexibility as central to the interview method of data collection. David and Sutton (2011) offer a theatrical metaphor when they describe the role of the interviewer as simultaneously performer and audience. However, it is clear that interviewers should be mindful of the impact that they have on the interview process and that of the interviewee. Charmaz (2006) makes particular reference to character and identity and their influences on the relationship that builds between the researcher and the participants. This brings in to focus the issue of power relationships in interview situation and again Charmaz (2006) warns that the dominance of one individual in the interview may have a great impact on many aspects of the process itself. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) make an interesting observation about the power relationship and how the interviewer should work hard to make the interviewee feel that they are a collaborator in the process of data collection. In my work with the participants for this study it became necessary early on to establish quickly and simply what role the teenage boys would play in the process. The simplest way of doing this was to ask

the teenage boys to help me with the work that I was doing in the school. This immediately set the idea that they were collaborating in the process by participating in both the group and individual interviews. Of particular help in respect of the establishment of control for the participants, was the establishment of their 'conversational prerogatives' (Charmaz, 2006) in figure 3.

- Break silences and express their views
- Tell their stories and to give them a coherent frame
- Reflect on earlier events
- Be experts
- Choose what to tell and how to tell it
- Share significant experiences and teach the interviewer how to interpret them
- Express thoughts and feelings disallowed in other relationships and settings
- Receive affirmation and understanding.

Figure 3: Participant's 'conversational prerogatives' (Charmaz, 2006; p. 27)

These prerogatives were born in mind during each individual interview, providing a sound foundation on which to establish the interview process. However Gilbert (2004) suggests that in interviews with people with ID, it is not only the verbal responses of participants that should be responded to and interpreted. Additionally, we should also acknowledge and work with the silences. In essence, the methods chosen involving people with ID must be tailored so that control and also data gathering can be centred on the participant. Essentially, the interview must be supple enough to flex and mould itself to how the participant wants to tell their story.

The tailoring of the interview was as much to do with the provision of suitable triggers as it was the position of the participant themselves. Bryman (2008) indicates that the preparation of an interview guide is an

important element in the process of the conduct of research as it helps participants to open a window onto their understanding of the world. In addition it also ensures that '...there is flexibility in the conduct of the interview' (Bryman, 2008; p. 442). The difficulty in conducting interviews with people with ID dictated that I consider an interview guide that was of interest to the participants and did not rely on complex questions. Research by Driessnack (2006) offered a method of conducting interviews with children that appeared to provide a flexible and potentially stimulating tool that could be controlled by the participant. 'Draw and tell' uses children's drawings to open up discussions regarding a particular topic. Driessnack (2006) describes this approach to guiding interviews as 'a child-centered and child directed approach to self-report that incorporates children's drawings for their facilitative effect rather than as a direct method for interpretation' (Driessnack, 2006; p. 1416). Most attractive was that the boys who participated in the study could direct the course of the interview themselves through the representation of their lives in their drawings. Additionally, there would be no concern with regard to the quality of the drawings or in learning a different process of analysis for drawings as these would not be included as data themselves. It would only be the voices of the participants as they talked about their drawings and the questions that grew from this as part of the individual interview that would produce the data for analysis. Following interviews it was considered necessary to establish how the interview was for the participant and to also reflect as the interviewer on the conduct and process of the interview (Maykut and Morhouse, 1994; Charmaz, 2006; David and Sutton, 2011). This further strengthened the reflexive nature of data gathering for this study.

Both Charmaz (2006) and David and Sutton (2011) agree that interviewing fits the grounded theory methodology well as it has the flexibility and direction to achieve the data necessary for analysis. This fits well with an

iterative approach as early analysis of data can help to shape encounters with other participants.

Trustworthiness and Authenticity

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) propose two questions relating to the trustworthiness of qualitative research. 'To what extent can we place confidence in the outcomes of the study? Do we believe what the researcher has reported?' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; p. 145).. Ideas of credibility as part of trustworthiness are reiterated by Bryman (2008) as he cites the work of Guba and Lincoln (1994), as they offer alternatives to the positivist reliability and validity. The essence of this is the establishment of an alternative view to an essentialist position with regard to the discovery of truth. Credibility begins a journey that draws the researcher away from a singular view of truth and towards the idea that multiple accounts are possible. It is the account of the research itself which determines if others will accept it.

The establishment of member checking (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) or respondent validity (Bryman, 2008), is something that is central to the credibility of a study. Early on in this study it was an ambition to make transcripts of individual interviews available to the boys and consenting parents, to allow them to check and add annotation. However, it was quickly decided that this was not practicable for two reasons. First that the boys had limited literary skills, related either to their ability to read or their comprehension of what was written. Second that the boys would require additional support from another person to access the interview transcript and then help to add any annotations. The limited time given for data collection for the study and the need to begin analysis as soon as possible after data collection dictated that member checking was not possible. However, as the study progressed informal discussions did take place with staff in the organisation which provided some context/validation for some

of the boys talk in the interviews. These included discussion of initial impressions and findings which helped to confirm some of the ideas being put forward.

One particular discussion with the assistant head of the school centred on my impression of the boys' closeness to one particular member of staff. The boys held this young man in high regard and during our discussion I spoke about my observations and how the young man had been spoken about in interviews. The outcome of the discussion was that the assistant head introduced a male volunteer into the classroom in the year groups of those participating in the study. Interestingly, the boys were resistant and hostile to the introduction of someone in this way. Although difficult at the time, as it appeared to the assistant head that my impressions had been wrong about the boys, this strengthened a growing belief that the boys needed to be in control of their ideas about masculinity and that included others that they might engage with to shape those ideas. This appeared to introduce some credibility as it confirmed that I understood the social world of the boys who were participating in the study.

The transferability of qualitative data is intrinsically linked to the 'rich accounts' that are produced from the data (Bryman, 2008; p.378). These accounts are provided to others so that they can make a judgement with regard to the transferability of the findings to other groups. It is clear from this study that the accounts provided offer some interesting points of departure with regard to the lives of boys with ID. In addition it offers a spring board for speculation with regard to the future of boys with ID. However, caution has to be applied concerning the parameters that exist in the lives of this group of participants. These include intellectual ability and their status in a school for children with special educational needs. Charmaz (2006) urges researchers to think about the usefulness of their grounded theory relating to the contribution the research makes to a better

world. Certainly the aspiration in relation to the findings of the study on the lives of boys with ID is that there will be both intrinsic and extrinsic effects.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) indicate the importance of working with a team and building an audit trail to ensure trustworthiness or dependability (Bryman, 2008). This has been a fundamental part of the structure and process of this study, first with two experienced health care researchers and then finally with one.

Authenticity with regard to qualitative research relates to a set of criteria that Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest as cited by Bryman (2008). These include: Fairness; Ontological authenticity; Educative authenticity; Catalytic authenticity; Tactical authenticity. However, Bryman (2008) notes that these have not been widely used by researchers. Of more relevance to this study are the criteria set out by Charmaz (2006) in her discussion of the evaluation of grounded theory studies. Included are questions that analyse credibility; originality; resonance and usefulness as they relate to new insights and revealing the authentic voice of the participants.

Ethical issues

Ethical approval was received from the University of Nottingham Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Ethics Committee (see Appendix B).

The issue of informed consent and research when involving children and teenagers, is highlighted by Grieg, Taylor and MacKay (2007). The authors clearly articulate a practice for this that is cognisant of the individual rights of the child and recognises that they should have influence on issues that affect their lives. It is acknowledged that to work with children researchers must gain the consent of the person who has parental responsibility for the child. However, the researcher is also clearly directed

to discuss the research with the child involved and to gain their assent to participation in the research process.

When involving children with ID who are able to understand what is required of them, the approach to consent should be the same. Kelly (2007), writing of her experience of research with children with ID, states that access can be a particularly complex issue when children are involved in the process of research. Negotiations are often necessary with the child themselves, their parent/carer and, if another institution is engaged in the research process, other adults who have some responsibility for the welfare of the child. It is necessary to ensure that children are involved in the process of consent, but just asking the child to agree is not enough to make sure that the data gathering method is either legitimate or appropriate in this case. However, as presented earlier by Kelly (2007), there should be some room for flexibility and change in the research process, and so understanding needs to be established with all parties with regard to the potential for the evolution of the study design over time. In Kelly's (2007) research the process of consent to involvement in her research was initially agreed with the parents who consented on behalf of the child, but then children themselves were also consulted to gain both their agreement and permission to interview. The issue of adults as gatekeepers is one which presents a problem for the researcher and the research process, in that their role can be restrictive (Kelly, 2007).

Prior to conducting the study ideas regarding the view of children with ID as part of mainstream society were discussed with the two supervisors for the study. Consideration was given to the inclusion of a mainstream group of teenage boys in the study cohort, this would offer a coherent link to the scoping exercise conducted as a precursor to this study. However, on reading the available literature it became clear that there was a sufficient corpus of evidence which demonstrated an understanding of the lives of

teenagers without ID. Also, although it could be argued that from an inclusion perspective people with ID should be incorporated within a study that aims to hold them within the context of mainstream society, it was felt that this might dismiss their views in favour of much stronger ideas from mainstream groups. In fact Mathers (2005) and Goodley and Moore (2000) came to the conclusion in their studies that there was a danger that more dominant opinions at the analysis phase may cause the needs and rights of people with ID to be lost. It was agreed that a sensible way forward would be to maintain this as an exclusive study while data about boys with ID and their lives is so limited.

The process for gaining informed consent from those with parental responsibility for the teenager and assent from the teenagers themselves to participate in the study is detailed when the procedure is described later in this chapter.

Sampling strategy

A purposive sampling strategy was adopted initially for this research. Described by Bryman (2008) this approach to sampling ensures that there is a close relationship between those purposely selected to take part in the study, the purpose of the research and its questions. It became clear early on in my relationship with the school that almost all teenage boys in the identified year groups were interested in the study and my reason for being in their classrooms. This generated an imperative for the study to try and involve as many of the teenage boys as possible from the outset. Alternative strategies were considered and as theoretical sampling is so closely associated with Grounded Theory (GT) it appeared logical to include this in the decision making process. Cutcliffe (2000) describes this sampling strategy as central to GT as it allows for further data collection and therefore further sampling of potential participants in order to add to the richness of the data and conceptual understanding. Bryman (2008)

agrees with this position and states that this strategy for sample identification is suited to the iterative nature of the GT methodology. The movement between sampling and reflection is regarded as fundamental to GT procedures. However, Cutcliffe (2000) concludes that as long as the sample strategy is described fully, there should be no problem with the interpretation of how participants were included. Mindful of this it can be stated that although purposive in nature, the sample strategy was not devoid of reflection and was informed by an iterative approach. In essence potential participants were purposefully chosen for their closeness to the tenets of the study; however, there was movement between sample, data collection and then back to sample in order to achieve richness and theoretical saturation.

In all research that considers the views or lives of people with ID the issue of group representation must be addressed. Inclusion criteria for this research did not profess to gather together a representative group of teenage boys with ID, as the methods adopted to gather data require that participants have the ability to communicate verbally. Aldridge (2007) debates this very point and reaches a similar conclusion in his establishment of criteria for inclusion based on participants' abilities. It is also of particular note that as the field is under researched and little is known of the views of individuals in the population (Mathers, 2005), the study is of particular significance and timely given that the political view rests on the assumption that people with ID need the same things as the rest of us, albeit that they need additional support to achieve or meet those needs. Unfortunately as Mathers (2005) asserts we lack knowledge of the population's experiences so that the person's needs and rights are not overlooked.

Procedure

The research procedure began with an initial conversation with the deputy head of the school to gain access to a meeting of parents and teaching staff to discuss transition planning for all pupils from 14 – 19 years of age. Procedure for the research then began with a period of Observation/ orientation followed by the start of group/ individual interviews. The following figure shows the procedure as it was planned. This includes methods, initial analysis (line by line coding, see data analysis) and is indicative of the iterative approach to this study based on grounded theory. Subsequent to this the elements of this procedure are described in detail.

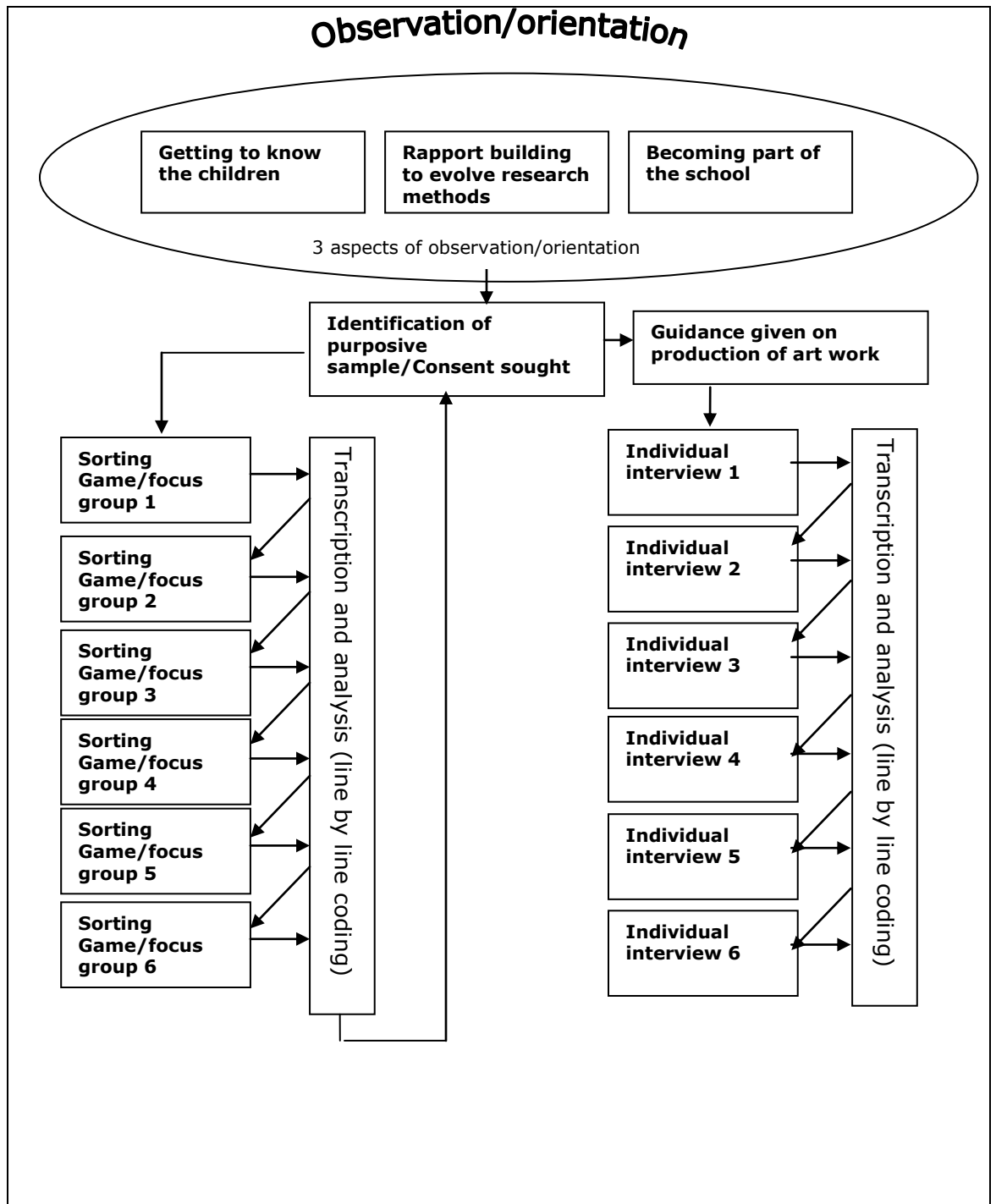


Figure 4: Diagrammatical representation of the process of data collection and analysis.

Observation/orientation

The three aspects of the observation/orientation period were planned for action as follows. The first and third aspects were planned for by an initial meeting with a member of the senior teaching team in the school who put together a 4 week programme. The programme spanned a four week period in which time could be spent with each of the year groups who were in the process of transition from school into the adult world, in this case 14-17 year olds. This ensured that I was close to those boys who could be potential participants, allowing me to select a sample and build a rapport with them. Additionally, this period of time offered the opportunity to assume the position of classroom assistant helping pupils with their work and interacting with them following the normal patterns of the day. Also this gave the chance to consider what the boys liked to do and how they interacted best, influencing the development of the methods used in the study. In essence this period helped to develop rapport, but most importantly an understanding on the researcher's part of the idiosyncratic and nuanced behaviour relevant to the practice of their identities as boys.

The sample

Although the sample strategy has been clarified it is necessary to establish some of the issues of inclusion for participants involved in the study. The research environment was a small community special school with a mixture of abilities in each of the year groups. Potential participants were selected after agreement was reached on their ability to cope with the methods of data collection and that they had established relationships with others in their year. Decisions were made after discussions with staff involved in the education of the teenage boys and also following my own observations in the classroom. I was quickly able to make judgements about strengths, limitations, ability to engage with tasks and to follow instructions. The youngest of the sample were selected from year 9

(approximately 13 years of age) as this was the year when transition meetings/ discussions were taking place and decisions were being made about futures after school. Teenage boys from year 12 (approximately 17 years of age) were the oldest in the sample chosen as they were preparing immediately for life after school. The remainder of the sample was made up of those teenage boys in the years between 9 and 12 (approximate age range 14-16 years) as they represented those at different transitional stages.

Gaining consent

As all those involved in the research were under the age of eighteen, parental consent was sought. In addition, as suggested by the ethics committee of the medical school at the University of Nottingham a facility was included on the consent form to allow the teenager themselves to sign if they wished. It has to be said that this did cause one or two interesting difficulties for the participants chosen for the study. Firstly, I found that asking for signatures from some individuals lead to discussion of what a signature was. Many students have not yet been asked for a signature for anything in their lives and in particular nothing associated with the school. Many students relied on their ability to write their names.

The process to gain consent was executed with the full backing of the school. Information was sent out to parents at the end of my induction period. This information was accompanied by a covering letter from the school confirming my presence in the school and also asking for their help. This information with covering letter was followed up approximately two weeks later by a telephone call to make arrangements for a meeting to explain the research further and to ask if they would be willing to give support to their son's participation. Concerns from parents mainly centred on whether information could be traced back to the child or worse for most families their home address. I was able to give assurance to parents that

this would not be an issue as all transcriptions would be anonymised. A helpful factor with this was that after the parent had signed I also signed to agree my part and assign a unique number. All transcripts of both the sorting exercises and individual interviews would show the assigned number next to the person's statement.

Interestingly, most of the consent for participation was given by mothers and rarely by the father. In fact, if I spoke to the mother I found that I was more likely to arrange an appointment immediately with them. If fathers were approached initially they were much more anxious that their wives should be there. (For copy of the consent form see appendix C and for the information sheet appendix D).

Interview triggers

Group interview: A Sorting exercise.

Prior to conducting this part of the data collection an idea emerged regarding providing the participants with a task to do during the focus group. It became necessary to think about methods to use to help the boys to talk about their experiences as boys, although this was full of challenges. Although group interviews are favoured by ethnographers to enable this, with subjects with ID whose communicative abilities can be varied the method needed to be developed to help them to engage. In part, it was thought that the development of this would start with the time spent working alongside the boys in their classroom (see observation/orientation). Engaging boys in conversation about the things that they enjoyed and in the concrete realities of life at school provided initial ideas of images that could be used to trigger conversations in the group interviews.

Using images to stimulate discussion the aim of this part of the method was to allow small groups of teenage boys with ID to focus on an initial set

of images representing culturally normative or hegemonic forms of masculinity as identified by Frosh et al (2002) in their work with teenagers without a learning disability. Images were chosen to represent heterosexuality, toughness, power and authority and competitiveness and include both images of men, teenagers and people with ID. This set of images was further expanded with the images suggested by conversations I had with the boys and my observations in the school. It was planned that no interpretation of the image was given during the sorting exercises; instead groups would be encouraged to offer their own stories and discuss the following questions: Is this something that men do?/Is this something that you do? Is this something that men should not do? Is this something that you wouldn't do?

To give the activity a visual appeal and certainty as to where images could be sorted, a board was created divided into two sections as in figure 5. Using recognised colours for stop and go, red and green; red representing something that men should not do/something that we wouldn't do; and green something that men do/something that we do. To further establish a colour coded system for sorting, the place where images were placed prior to sorting was painted amber to indicate that these were waiting to be sorted. A white rectangle on each side of the board represented a holding place where images could be placed when an initial decision had been made. A final review period towards the end of the sorting exercise was included to give the group the opportunity to review the sorted images prior to a final decision and placing them in either the red or green boxes.

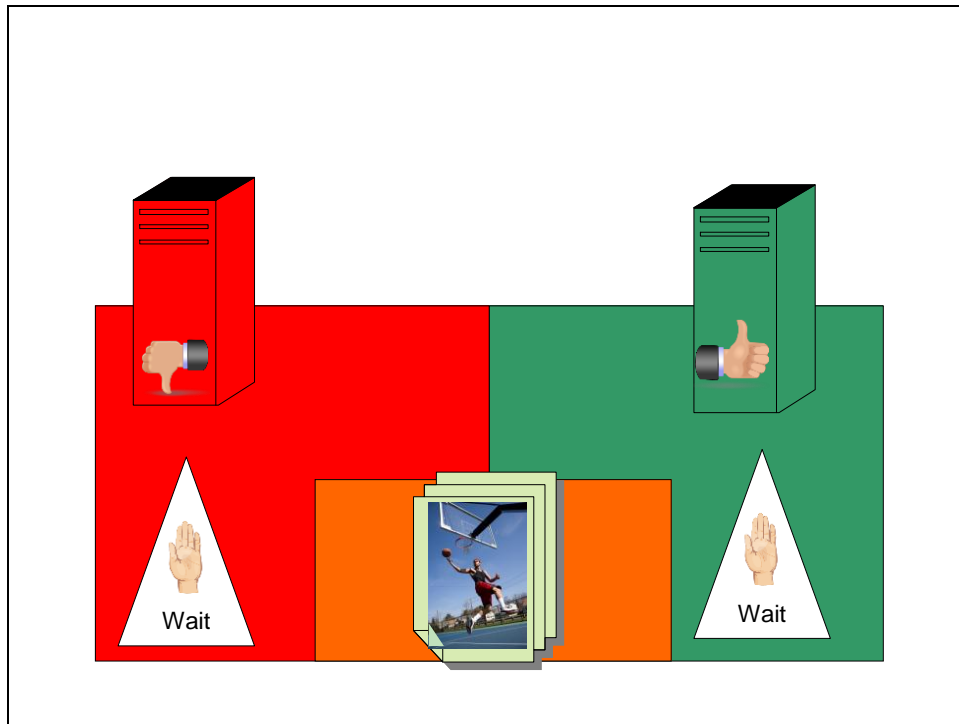


Figure 5: Graphic of the sorting exercise board.

Participants were encouraged to make an initial decision and place the image on the side of the board that represented their collective decision. Images that caused irresolvable disagreement either were placed on the side representing the majority view or left in the amber box to be considered again. To stress once again each image was considered for two stages of sorting an initial phase and then a final stage. Disagreement was a point for further analysis and objections from individuals who were not happy with the majority decision were encouraged. At the end of the exercise participants were then given the opportunity to review their thoughts and then to give their final decision before placing each of the images in the red or the green box. The sorting exercises were recorded and then transcribed verbatim as presented in the data analysis section later in this chapter.

The researcher's input was minimal with questions asked if points of curiosity arose. Limitations were only imposed if it was felt that the

discussion may tumble out of control and this may have a negative impact on the experience of research involvement for the teenage boys.

Individual interviews: using the boys artwork

It is customary when decisions are made to use a semi-structured interview approach, to provide an interview schedule to participants prior to the interview taking place. In this study more creative means had to be adopted so that the boys were provided with a trigger that they were familiar with and that they could access easily. Kelly (2007) in her discussion of methodological issues with children with ID, notes that every effort should be made by the researcher to personalise the interview. She also indicates that it is pertinent to think carefully about the language used in interviews both to elicit a response and how that response may be conveyed by the participant. Consideration early in the development of the procedure for the study turned to the avoidance of language as a trigger for scheduling the semi-structured interviews. Initial deliberations centred on the use of photography as a tool to allow participants to develop their own triggers for use in their one to one interview. However, it was decided that there would be insufficient time in the study to give justice to this approach. In addition, there was concern with regard to the technical ability of participants, the cost to the study and the risk of the inappropriate use of equipment by boys or those in contact with them. Finally a decision was reached that 'draw and tell', described earlier, could be utilised. To do this existing art classes in the school could be used to encourage boys to produce art work that could be utilised in the interview to stimulate conversation. The advantage of producing the trigger in this way was three fold: the boys already attended weekly art sessions lead by a teacher they liked and respected; the art room could provide a range of media for the boys to produce their art work; the production of the artwork (interview trigger/schedule) did not interfere with the curriculum of the school and so the time to do this was absorbed in the school day and not in study time.

The following description presents the process for the development of the trigger and the conduct of the semi-structured interviews.

Of the 21 boys who formed the sample for the study, only 16 were invited to attend for individual interview. The reasons for not inviting 5 of the sample are presented in the results chapter of the thesis next, but these were either as a response to personal circumstances, long term absences from school or problems engaging with the first method of data collection. Although, the aim of the initial process was to encourage the boys to provide their own interview schedule, in the form of a piece of art work, they were given an initial brief developed by me as the researcher with input from the head of art in the school. The brief offered direction for the creation of images, but also on how to create that image. Initially the boys were asked to produce the art work based on *'my life when I leave school'*. This was significant as thinking about life beyond school was a point of discussion for all the boys as they all had either been part of the development of a transition plan or were already at the point of discussion with regard to the implementation of that plan. Creativity was encouraged by the provision of all that the art room could deliver for the realisation of the boys' imagined futures. However, this was restricted slightly by a suggestion from the head of art for the school who gave guidance on what the majority of boys in the school had found interesting in past art lessons. His concern was that the session should be leisurely so the boys would not confuse what they were doing with the production of assessed pieces as part of either non-vocational or vocational courses. As a consequence, a method was adopted from sessions that occurred once course work had been completed. This involved giving the boys a piece of A3 size paper folded so that it was divided into six sections, offering six separate windows or vistas for the boys to populate. It could be argued that this process restricted the boys' creativity, although what this did result in was immediate engagement with the task as the boys were familiar with this

way of working. A possible consequence though of providing an initial media on which to produce the art work, was that the majority of the boys (n=15) chose to produce their work using conventional art materials including paint and coloured pencils. Only one boy decided to produce a collage of images from print media to represent his future. However, a small minority of the boys (n=3) made the decision to ignore the brief in part by rejecting the folded paper and choosing to use a single unfolded piece of A3 paper. This gave the opportunity to provide a single vista onto their future or, as one boy did, provide a map which presented a very fluid journey into their life beyond school. In addition to the familiarity that this session offered resulting in engagement with the activity, this approach also played to the strengths of the boys in relation to their abilities to produce art as part of curriculum activities. This was particularly true of the boys who enjoyed producing comic strips or those who enjoyed drawing things that they were particularly fond of.

Once produced the art work was stored in the school ready for the individual interviews. At the beginning of each of the interviews the art work produced by the boy was presented and an initial conversation related to their memory of creating the work was conducted. The interview then took on the form of a conversation triggered by the art work. Generally this progressed in a linear fashion as the boys took me on a journey through their various representations of their lives. Others were able to pick out aspects of each of the representation to illustrate what they thought their lives would be like as they finished school.

Data Analysis

The process

Strauss and Corbin (1998) in their advice regarding analysis, describe it as an imperfect journey with many obstacles to negotiate along the way. The process of analysis in grounded theory is methodical yet creative and

flexible and does not rely on set stages for its conduct (Walker and Myrick, 2006). Nevertheless, it is clear that the journey charts a course that encounters various levels of interpretation and conceptualisation towards the construction of theory (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The principal aim of the analysis of qualitative data is to describe from the perception of those involved in the research; the organisation of the data relevant to their scope; to theorise about potential frameworks that are pragmatic and explain what is going on (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). 'qualitative data analysis seeks to organize and reduce the data gathered into themes or essences, which, in turn, can be fed into descriptions, models, or theories.' (Walker and Myrick, 2006; p. 549).

Consideration of the data and grounded theory methodology dictated that a number of components were necessary for the analysis. Under the umbrella of the constant comparison method coding was used at various levels to achieve theoretical saturation. Memo writing was also used to inform and shape the analysis.

Analysis in qualitative research dictates that the research should become close to the data that is being produced (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Bryman, 2008; Walker and Myrick, 2006). As previously presented, the time spent with participants in the school was indicative of the building of rapport and close relationships with participants. This progressed through to time spent with the boys in both group and individual interview situations. In turn this resulted in closeness to the data as I had been involved directly with the facilitation of these and the transcription of all interviews. Despite this it was necessary to read the transcripts closely and carefully to allow for initial coding. This offered an opportunity for utilizing the data as proposed by Mykut and Morehouse (1994), this encouraged the identification of 'chunks or units of meaning' as an initial definition the issues emerging from the data. Charmaz (2006)

offers a useful schema for approaching a researcher's initial relationship with the data, which was useful to a novice researcher as reproduced in figure 6.

- Remain open
- Stay close to the data
- Keep your codes simple and precise
- Construct short codes
- Preserve actions
- Compare data with data
- Move quickly through the data

Figure 6: A code for coding (Charmaz, 2006; p. 49)

Charmaz (2006) describes initial coding or initial fracturing of the data as open and exploratory fuelling a search for theoretical possibilities. In this she proposes a number of questions that the researcher might ask of the data at an early stage. These questions include 'What process(es) is at play her? How can I define it?...What does the participant(s) profess to think and feel while involved in this process?...what are the consequences of the process?' (p. 51). These appear to be in part reflections on four sets of questions proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) related to sensitivity to the data, theoretical ideas, practical and structural questions and those for guiding methods and analysis. Both Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Charmaz (2006) warn novice researchers that the questions should not be adhered to as a prescriptive list to be followed obediently. Nevertheless, the questions proposed by Charmaz (2006) were useful to hold as the researcher during initial analysis as part of a reflexive approach to the data and gave momentum to the maintenance of an iterative journey. In particular for this study, it offered the opportunity to notice and describe behaviour as part of analysis. In addition, this early stage gave permission to notice and describe the subtle nuances that were part of the boys' engagement with the research methods.

Charmaz (2006) describes three different approaches to initial coding that can be used by researchers framed by the constant comparative method. In the study it was important, as discussed earlier, to ensure that the boys' voices could be heard. Initially an attempt was made to code line-by-line to ensure that problems or processes would not be missed. This offered a number of opportunities to work closely particularly with the data as it was created in the interview by the boys with regard to their ID.

The close proximity with the data through transcription and then line-by-line coding focused on what was said but also how it was said to identify nuances. Memo writing was central to the development of focused coding and the construction of theory. Interpretation of the work of Charmaz (2006) with regard to memo writing gave the opportunity to make some recording of how boys used language in their exchanges about a particular issue. The memos were used to focus on ideas and to suggest changes as the data collection progressed. In addition these could be revisited, reviewed and revised in a creative discourse

Summary

This chapter accounts for the decisions made with regard to the design of this research study. Critically the study was based on a GT approach to the design, collection of data and its analysis incorporating both reflexivity and an iterative stance. The development of methods involved creativity to ensure that they suited the needs of the participants involved in the study. They included group interviews incorporating a sorting exercise as the trigger in place of an interview schedule; 'draw and tell' as part of semi-structured interviews to encourage participants to tell their stories. Participants were selected via a purposive sampling strategy, as apposed to the more traditional theoretical sampling strategy usually associated with GT. This was dictated by the requirements necessary for inclusion in the

study; ability to communicate verbally and ability to participate in the methods used. With reference to literature with specific regard to children and children with ID, methodological and practical issues have been discussed in relation to the use of the innovative and perhaps unorthodox format for the conduct of both group and individual interviews.

The findings of both the group and individual interviews are presented next, followed by a discussion of the implications of these.

CHAPTER 4 GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

Introduction

Presented here are the emergent themes from the data gathered from the boys who took part in the study, framed by a single phrase which conceptualizes the essence of being male and intellectually disabled *the way we do boy*. The voices of the boys unite to offer a construction of their identities as boys in the school and their thoughts about their future as men. Although the methods for gathering the data were designed to consider two different aspects of the study both the here and now and thoughts about the future, the iterative approach adopted drew together the corpus of qualitative data into a chorus of sound that illustrated a life lived with impairment. It therefore appeared logical to approach the data as a continuous expression of boys in the moment, as they revealed their lives as boys and the possibilities of their futures as men. As a consequence the two data sets were combined in the analysis.

This chapter begins with a presentation of the characteristics of the participants including their pseudonyms and individual transcript identifiers. Themes and sub themes are then presented from the analysis including interview extracts and my interpretations of them.

Characteristics and transcript identifiers of the sample

As the study focuses on the experience of being a boy with ID only boys were selected, gender is not included therefore in the demographic data which follows.

Table 1 represents both demographic information and the identifiers used to situate both group interviews and individual interview transcripts. The teenage boys recruited from year 8 found the process of the group interviews complex and the sorting exercise difficult to comprehend. As a result the group interview data which included Tim, Wayne and Neville (Group 1) could not be included in the analysis. As a result these boys were not invited for individual interview. This decision was made after reflection on the conduct of this group interview and difficulties with transcription. Other ways of gathering data from these boys were explored, but none of these methods were perceived to be practical or achievable in the time allocated for the data collection phase. In addition two other participants, although able to engage with the materials in the group interview, could not attend for their individual interview. One boy, Lewis, experienced a close family bereavement. Geoff, the second boy, had intermittent difficulties with attendance and so individual interview arrangements were missed and it was not then possible to rearrange within the time allocated.

Pseudonym (Participant number)	Race/ethnicity	Year Group	Age	Focus group (Transcript reference)	Individual interview transcript reference	Attended individual interview	Interview Data included in analysis
Tim (21) ³	White British	8	13	Group 1 (T/G1)	T/T21	×	×
Wayne (12) ⁴	White British	8	13	Group 1 (T/G1)	T/W12	×	×
Neville (01) ⁴	Dual Heritage	8	13	Group 1 (T/G1)	T/N01	×	×
Andy (03)	White British	9	14	Group 2 (T/G2)	T/A03	✓	✓
Simon (11)	White British	9	14	Group 2 (T/G2)	T/S11	✓	✓
Ryan (13)	White British	9	14	Group 2 (T/G2)	T/R13	✓	✓
Malcolm (08)	White British	9	15	Group 3 (T/G3)	T/M08	✓	✓
Philip (18)	White British	9	14	Group 3 (T/G3)	T/P18	✓	✓
Peter (17)	White British	9	14	Group 3 (T/G3)	T/P17	✓	✓
Ian (09)	White British	10	15	Group 4 (T/G4)	T/I09	✓	✓
David (10)	Asian	10	15	Group 4 (T/G4)	T/D10	✓	✓
Sam (07)	Black Caribbean	10	15	Group 4 (T/G4)	T/S07	✓	✓
Patrick (14)	White British	11	16	Group 5 (T/G5)	T/P14	✓	✓
Chris (19)	Asian	11	16	Group 5 (T/G5)	T/C19	✓	✓
John (04)	White British	10	15	Group 5 (T/G5)	T/J04	✓	✓
Geoff (06) ⁴	White British	11	16	Group 6 (T/G6)	T/G06	×	×
Steve (16)	White British	11	16	Group 6 (T/G6)	T/S16	✓	✓
Harry (20)	White British	11	16	Group 6 (T/G6)	T/H20	✓	✓
Gary (02)	White British	11	16	Group 7 (T/G7)	T/G02	✓	✓
Craig (15)	Black Caribbean	11	16	Group 7 (T/G7)	T/C15	✓	✓
Lewis (05) ⁵	White British	11	16	Group 7 (T/G7)	T/L05	×	×

Table 2: Demographic and transcript identifiers

³ Unable to engage with focus group material or tolerate a one to one interview.

⁴ Attendance issues, therefore not able to attend one to one interviews.

⁵ Unable to attend one to one interview due to family bereavement.

Demographic information extracted from table 1 shows that the sample were purposefully selected from year groups beginning to start or be involved in meetings to develop transition plans. Figure 7 demonstrates that almost three quarters (66.7%) of the sample were drawn from years 9 and 11. It also gives a sense of where boys, at one moment in time, were located in the school and so on this occasion the majority of those boys who could engage with the methods used to gather data were found in years 9 and 11. It is of note that year 9 is a time when transition plans are being discussed for the first time and year 11 is when plans are increasingly being used to develop strategies for a successful move to adult life.

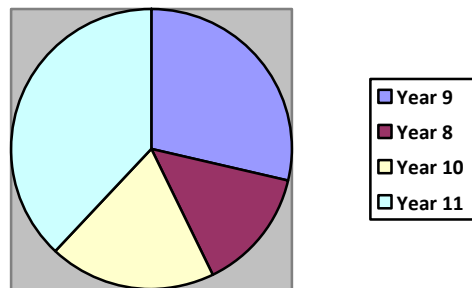


Figure 7: % of sample in each year group

Figure 8 shows the age distribution of the sample almost echoing the previous chart.

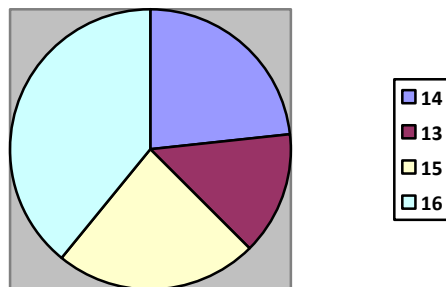


Figure 8: Age distribution of sample.

It is of note that over three quarters (76.2%) of the sample were White British and the rest of the sample (23.8%) of Asian, Black Caribbean or Dual Heritage as shown in figure 9.

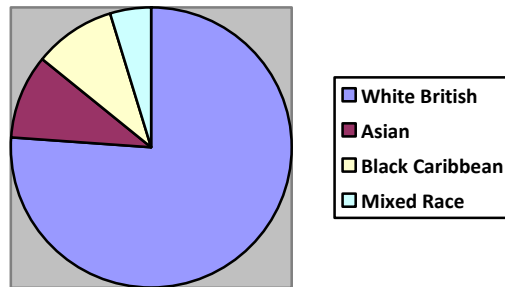


Figure 9: Ethnic origin as % of sample.

Overview of analysis

Presented next are the emergent themes from the analysis of both the group interviews and the individual interviews. These emergent themes appear as represented in figure 6 below. The themes and sub themes that emerged can be conceptualized under one unifying phrase, '*The way we do boy*'. This incorporates how ideas about being a boy were constructed and perhaps what underpinned thoughts about development from childhood to adulthood.

Four themes emerged from the data:

Changing: becoming aware of changes in their environments that would transform *the way we do boy* to a way of doing man;

Ideals: exemplars the boys held in mind that informed *the way we do boy* which included taking risks and having control;

Experiences: and observations that influenced *the way we do boy*, using knowledge and their understanding of difference;

Vicariousness: experiences through others.

There are also links between themes: changing and ideals; experiences and vicariousness.

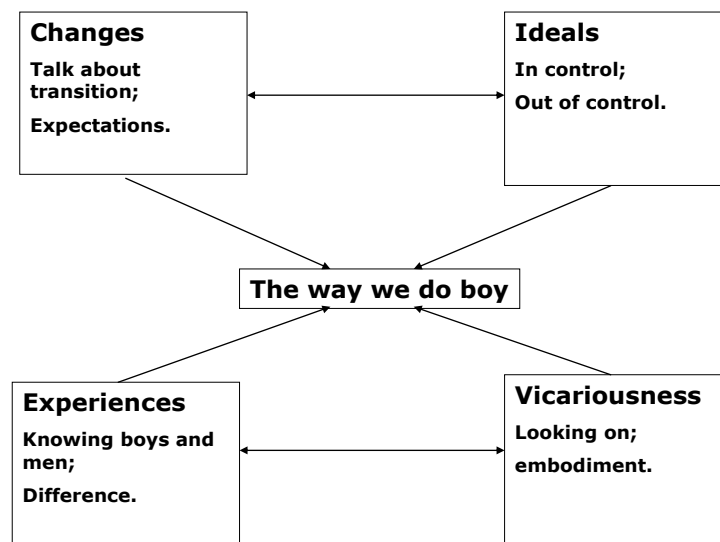


Figure 10: Presentation of analysis in diagrammatic form.

The remainder of this chapter will present the themes illustrated by interview excerpts to reveal the voices of the participants. Changes have not been made to the group interview or individual interview extracts as this would interfere with the authenticity of the words of those involved in the research. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of individuals and description is kept to a minimum to prevent identification.

A Prelude to the analysis and the way we do boy

All participants involved in both the group interviews and the individual interviews were eager to talk about how they conducted their lives as boys. In some of the extracts that follow in the presentation of the findings, there is a tangible almost celebratory account of boyhood from the participants. In some cases this is about informing me of their credibility, at other times the boys were deliberately playful as they attempted to educate, surprise or shock those listening to their accounts. The time spent in the school developing and then conducting the research resulted in interesting exchanges in both group and individual interviews when the boys would exclaim '*you've seen us!*'. This was used to remind me of the time I had already spent watching them play football, engage in computer gaming and participating in other curricular and non-curricular activities. It also served to remind me of their lives under the constant observation of adults. The boys assumed that as I was an adult I should know the answers to their questions without asking. As time moved on and I became an established part of their environment, the boys' words were sometimes used to control my participation in their conversations. This control was used to exclude or mock on occasion, if I didn't understand their terms or the actions they were describing.

In presenting this analysis, it is important to make clear that the boys' voices and their talk is pertinent to their lives as boys. Although influenced and at times shaped by their special needs, it was not always identified by it. In essence the boys would indicate that this is *the way we do boy* and that is different from the way other boys might do it. It may not always be framed by other aspects of personhood but it is our way and that includes our disability.

The way we do boy as the foundation of their masculinity emerged from exchanges between boys, perhaps establishing a base from which to build

ideas of how it is done and to give support to that position. In addition, the methods used offered the boys a platform to express their ideas often joining together to give nuanced accounts of their lives. *The way we do boy* is grounded in the voices of the participants and should help to support our understanding of their lives.

Changing: becoming aware of changes in their environments that would transform the way we do boy to a way of doing man.

All the boys who were able to participate in the study understood that their lives were changing as part of a transition planning process in the school. Their involvement in this process began at the age of fourteen and was a clear trigger indicating that change was being discussed with regard to their futures in the school and beyond. As a result, ideas about future opportunities for education, work and ideas about where you could live were already established in the minds of the boys.

This theme encompassed two sub themes; ***talk about transition; expectations***. Their conversations in and outside the interview room were shaped by expectations about their transition and what the future might be like for them as they grew older. The boys' talk focussed on expectations about getting older, changes in relationships with family members and others who were part of their support network. Structures in the school helped the boys regard each year group as different from the previous one and to identify how progression was instituted in the school. This was linked mainly to the advent of vocational studies, as the delivery of these subjects slowly moved from the school to local colleges. This instilled in the boys an expectation that transition to adulthood included further education systems and lifelong learning. In addition, expectations from teaching staff and the boys' own expectations of life beyond school changed over time; this was particularly marked by moves to the ⁶16+ unit in the school. Those boys under the age of 16 were largely taught in the

⁶ Equivalent to 6th form department in mainstream schools.

main building of the school, but had to pass the 16+ building on entering and exiting the school. The boys often commented on seeing students in the common room making drinks and snacks for themselves and playing on the Nintendo Wii at breaks and at lunch time. Although not factually accurate, the boys' observations led them to regard the move to 16+ as a transition to a more laid back less intense environment. Speculation about what happened in the unit was often reinforced by boys placed with groups of children younger than themselves in the main building, but attached to the 16+ group for vocational modules. These students often acted as scouts returning from sessions with 16+ students with stories for the younger boys about what the near future might hold for them. These stories were made more attractive with accounts of the group's latest visit to laser quest⁷ or plans for a residential trip⁸. Accounts of academic or vocational work were limited in favour of accounts of leisure pursuits. These stories helped maintain a keen interest in transition for the boys. Boys would engage each other in these stories editing and controlling them for maximum effect.

In both the group and individual interviews boys' talk about change included **talk about transition**. This centred on them eventually leaving home to begin a life on their own or with friends. The influence for this appeared to derive from their own transition journey and from their observations of older siblings leaving home to go to university or to enter the world of work. This talk initially emerged when the boys were presented with images of, or were asked about domestic tasks in the home. Boys were able to connect images and talk about hoovering and cleaning, broadening ideas of living independently and moving away from

⁷ A place of entertainment using team combat described on its website as 'the world's best known and most exciting brand of Laser Tag game'.

⁸ An annual event arranged by the school to an outdoor pursuits centre giving the opportunity to stay away from home.

home. Here Andy, Simon and Ryan react to the question of who should perform domestic tasks. Is this something that you do?

Andy: Mostly women.

Int.: Mostly women do you think Simon?

Simon: Mostly women do that.

Ryan: Actually, that really sort of...now a lot of men are doing it, like if they're single.

Int.: Yeh? So when you leave home, go and live in your own place?

Ryan: Mm.

There are two points of change that Ryan's talk about domestic tasks highlights. First the other boy's experience of women as central to domestic tasks in the home may be challenged by transition to independent living. Second that a life away from the family as a single person is a possibility for boys in the school. Ryan gives form to his talk about living independently by using an observation, '*men are doing it, like if they're single*', offering a new formulation to educate other boys helping them to realise that this could be part of their lives too. The talk between the boys introduces ideas about life after transition and thoughts about having control and independence. Having control as a part of growing up was mirrored in a conversation between Philip, Peter and me when discussing the role of men in relation to domestic tasks.

Philip: I do hoovering in the lounge, but not in my bedroom because I like my bedroom messy.

Peter: My dad does the pots and my mum does the washing and my mum does the cleaning, she cleans the bathroom and she cleans the toilet.

Int.: So in your house, the jobs are shared?

Peter: Yes, I do clean up my room.

Philip and Peter continue to develop a concept of *the way we do boy* that includes involvement in essential domestic tasks, by demonstrating a willingness to be involved at home. However Philip also ensures that during the conversation he introduces the idea that he has control and can refuse to Hoover his own bedroom, maintaining his space just the way he likes it. Presenting further ideas of engagement in domestic tasks, Peter talks about his dad's contribution to this at home. Although it is clear, despite my attempt to suggest otherwise, that tasks are not equally divided between men and women in Peter's home, the idea nevertheless begins to form that this is a legitimate part of a concept of *the way we do boy* and also part of a future concept of being a man. Peter's assertion that he cleans his room may be an attempt to introduce an alternative view to that of Philip's, '*Yes, I do clean up my room*', providing an opposing iteration about controlling your own space.

Talk about change, in relation to domestic life, was not always illustrated by an image of harmonious relationships between men and women. In some of the boys talk this was used to highlight difference between men and women, often strengthening an idea that transition through to adulthood could result in the boys remaining outside the domestic sphere. Here Simon reveals how he believes his dad and step mum have come to a decision about who controls the domestic environment.

Int.: What about you Simon? What's your experience of that Simon, does your dad do the hoovering?

Simon: Well no. because my step mum, ...cause he's married to my step mum now, is erm...(names step mother) is usually like, if something wrong she moans and groans at him...

Simon presents an alternative formulation as part of a concept of *the way we do boy* that proposes that housework is the domain of women. The risk of getting something wrong in this domain is bearing the brunt of '*moans and groans*'. In other interview groups, boys tended to support the idea that certain tasks like housework were the domain of women and men would not get themselves involved in this. This appeared to trigger an idea with many of the boys that they should not involve themselves in things that girls or women do to defend their practice of masculinity. The image presented to boys which produced talk in the next excerpt included domestic tasks and caring for children.

Philip: Hoover no, men don't normally do hoovering.

Peter: No. Aw that's dangerous!

Peter's reference to danger is a reaction to a photograph of a man who is hoovering while carrying a baby. Philip is clear that men would not involve themselves in this domestic task, while Peter is concerned that the combination of domestic and child care activities might result in an adverse situation. Most interesting is the way the boys manage the development of their talk while in the presence of a female chaperone. It could be suggested that without the chaperone the talk may have developed differently. However, the presence of a woman in the room mirrored the environment outside the interview as the boys spent most of their school day supervised by female members of the staff team. Talk between boys was rarely conducted in private away from the supervision of an adult. Arguably then, ideas were continually shaped and re-shaped in an environment that was open to the influences of adults including women. Therefore the presence of a female member of staff while the boys talked about their lives was not unfamiliar to them. Although the female chaperones were not excluded from the group interview, they all chose not to speak while recording took place. However, despite this the boys

referred to them as the interview progressed and endeavoured to be considerate of their reaction, or the feelings they might have about the content of the boys talk. This was particularly true when the group made a firm decision about saying that men would not do a particular task. Philip in one of the group interviews attempted to offer the chaperone an opportunity to respond.

Philip: I think (names chaperone) will reject that.

Despite never receiving a response during recordings boys were very aware that others, including the female chaperone, may have alternative ideas about how boys and men were in the world. In fact their often narrow views were regularly challenged by female staff members. However they often remained determined to move forward with their own ideas despite the omnipresent adult in their lives. In essence although a crucial influence on the changing lives of boys within a very narrow matrix of influences, the adult was only part of how the boys began to shape *the way we do boy* and their hopes for their future. To further illustrate this the following excerpt progresses the boys' talk insisting that men should not be involved in housework as this was the domain of women, despite a female chaperone again being present.

Chris: I just don't do that.

Patrick: It's dominated by women.

John: They've just dominated the place.

The constant presence of women in the lives of the boys who participated in the study is perhaps indicated by the final words of John in this excerpt. However, this did not mean that their experiences of an emerging journey into adult life did not include men in all areas.

John: My dad? Erm...cleaning up...
Int.: Yeh?
John: Er...er...garden sometimes...
Chris: (laughs)
John: ...well a lot of times actually, and erm fixing the computer when I need it OK that's it.
Int.: OK. And what about you Patrick what does your dad...
Patrick: My dad sometimes do the cooking and cleans the toilet...
(laughter)
Int.: Right.
Patrick: And vacuum.

Chris's laughter is significant here and is perhaps indicative of his alternative experience, as at the time he lived in an all female household where all his needs were met by them. Despite this, the others in the groups are not derailed from their attempts to develop talk about changing and *the way we do boy*. One particular boy had a very different experience of the tasks that men and women did. As his mum was not always well enough to do housework his father had to shoulder the majority of the work both in and out of the home.

Lewis: Erm...mummy's off sick...
Int.: Yeh?
Lewis: And she doesn't but sometimes mummy does then as well.

Interestingly this series of excerpts demonstrates how the concept of *the way we do boy* could be developed through the boys' experience of how things were in their lives now. Also on occasion these changes began to take shape in the interview room when the boys would offer alternative ideas as an attempt to present a different view of a potential future. Despite strong traditional talk about the roles of men and women, the boys

could use their experiences to show that alternative ways of being were possible within a limited scope of practice.

The boys' **talk about transition** focussed on their lives as part of the school system as well as their lives at home. However, this talk often centred on very different goals for boys participating in the study. Craig in his interview located change in relation to his life at school and transition from interdependency to greater independence with age.

Craig: Making my own way to school...when I'm seventeen.

At first this might appear to be a rather trivial change when we compare this to Craig's contemporaries outside of the special school system in the UK. However, for Craig and other participants, transport to school was an integral part of life in a special school. The provision of transport is necessary as pupils tend to be spread over a large geographical area. In context then Craig's talk signifies a momentous change moving on from the offer of transport to school on a daily basis, to making the journey independently.

Seemingly less trivial but by no means less important was Simon's view of transition from school to young adulthood. Here Simon articulates the idea that there could be a number of routes to take beyond school.

Simon: It depends what you do, what you want to do. You might go from school all the way to work or you might go from school to college to work.

Simon's view encapsulates a desire to be in control of the future, '*It depends what you do, what you want to do*', as he lets me know that change is about making your own decisions. However, Simon's view was

not one held by many of the other boys, as their experience of others who had moved through the school was of a unitary transition through the 16+ unit to college. This was promoted directly and indirectly by the school and by the boys themselves as the facts and mystique of a route via the 16+ unit were presented and represented. It is worth noting that Simon, along with a small number of other boys, had siblings who had taken different routes either into further education or to employment and so this helped to formulate an opposing idea regarding other possibilities.

Another experience that had the potential to change a purely linear course through 16+ was the advent of work experience in year 11.

Ian: Well I don't really know yet, 'cause when I get my work experience I might get a job there. They might offer me a job so I might not go to 16+.

Similar to the view of Simon, Ian could envisage opportunities outside the unitary pathway presented by the school. However unlike Simon, Ian's hope of getting a job began to crystallise as one of the employees, acting as his work experience mentor, suggested that he had the skills and competencies necessary to be employed. This helped Ian to see a different end point to transition beyond that which currently dominated the school, that of transition through 16+.

Ian: I want to be different from them.

Int.: Yeh?

Ian: Someone different.

This was a poignant moment in Ian's interview, bringing with it the revelation that transition could help you become a different person and an opportunity to be in employment. Ian enjoyed school and had many close

relationships with fellow students but a desire to be different from the others was clearly articulated. However, as time progressed the influence of other boys following work experience persuaded Ian to stay at the school and progress to the 16+ unit with them.

Moving away from home was prominent in **talk about transition** and ideas about moving into adult life. Boys' relationships with their parents and leaving home were an issue for most of the participants. Living with your parents was something that the boys expected to change.

Ryan: Yes, I'm with my parents now cause I've got no choice.

Int: What about when you're older?

Simon: Live on your own.

Andy: Yeh.

John supports this further in his interview when he expresses his joy at the idea of finally leaving home.

John: I'm going to move sadly, my parents will cry boo hoo hoo! And I'll go boo hoo hoo, I really don't want to leave and I'll put my arms like this (punches the air) 'kerching!' I've left!

Like John, boys regarded leaving home as a transition to the adult world. However, Malcolm offers a cautionary tale using his observations of his brother leaving home.

Malcolm: No. Well my brother didn't sleep at my house he used to sleep at his girlfriends, but now his girlfriend's jacked him off⁹

⁹ The brothers relationships with his girlfriend had ended.

so he stops at my house again so I've got to sleep on the bottom bunk.

Of interest here is Malcolm's story of the fragility of maintaining a life outside of the family home. There is a realisation that the move to the adult world may not always go smoothly and the dream of independence and control may not always result in a permanent change. In addition, there is an acknowledgement that his brother's failure to move away from the family home, has perversely resulted in a loss of independence for him. Malcolm's talk of change and the disadvantages this potentially brings is indicated in a move in his position in the home, as his older brother moves back to live with his family, and also a physical change in position as he is relegated to the bottom bunk.

Talk about real observations of the joys and pitfalls of independence and life away from home were outnumbered by opposing iterations of fantastical ideas of an independent future. Whether this was expressed, as in the drawings the boys created as a trigger in their interviews, in terms of work; representations of luxurious homes; top of the range cars; the latest computer consoles; these were indicative of the boys hope for permanent change far removed from their current circumstances.

Ian: I'll have my own games room.

Int.: Yeh, nice big tele?

Ian: Yeh, it will be like a mansion I think I would get.

These ideas of change were much more common among the boys than real life observations of what the future might hold for them. This encapsulated both **talk about transition** and life changing for the boys and also an **expectation** for something better, something wonderful. Interestingly these ideas were not challenged either inside or outside the

interview room during the course of the study. As a consequence the boys' notions of independence were marked by an almost utopian view of their lives as independent adults in control of their lives.

In many of the group and individual interviews the boys described how sport, particularly being good at football, was important to them. This was part of a set of **expectations** which became part of the concept of *the way we do boy*, enthusiastically supported and expected to remain part of life into adulthood. When the boys were asked to draw pictures of their futures, these included football shirts and on occasion full sized football pitches in the grounds of their luxury mansions. In addition, their observations of football on television and in school influenced talk of who could be involved and at what level. In this excerpt Philip and Malcolm discuss how their observations and experiences had influenced their thoughts about football.

Philip: It used to be only men. It used to be only men who played football first.

Int.: It used to be. So what's changed?

Philip: It's because girls want to start playing football with you a bit, it's a good sport.

Int.: It's a good sport. Why is it a good sport Philip?

Malcolm: Because they probably like football?

Philip: Because they erm...they watch it on telly and they want to like feel them playing and they want to start playing.

Philip and Malcolm's talk about football was influenced by its dominance outside the classroom, while they attended school, and time spent at home both watching and playing the sport. Boys outnumbered girls in the year groups selected for the study and so the competition for space was often dominated by them. Communal spaces outside the classroom were divided into areas for play, sporting and relaxed sedentary activities. As the boys dominated both play equipment and the football/basketball area, girls wishing to engage in physical activity had to join in games the boys played or alternatively restrict themselves to sedentary activities on the periphery. Although the girls had to conform to the rules of the boys in these areas, their presence helped to challenge the boys' preconceptions with regard to gendered practices as illustrated by the excerpt from Philip and Malcolm's interview. This was of course dependent on the girls' display of skill, which had to be at least equivalent to that of the boys. Being good at football was an essential part of *the way we do boy*, if girls wanted to join in they had to be good too.

Boys who participated in the study talked of their **expectations** of developing sexual relationships as both a welcome change and something that required caution. However, very few boys acknowledged the connection between bodily change and attractiveness in the pursuit of a sexual partner. John was one participant who regarded his own physical development as an essential component of relationship formation.

John: Muscles, yeh.

Int.: You think that's what girls like?

John: Yeh, some girls; a lot of girls like muscle.

Int.: OK.

John: Look at mine!
(laughter)

Although tongue in cheek John's comments may illustrate a developing anxiety about the importance of the body and one's image in attracting a partner. On the whole participants were more concerned with the mysteries of initially approaching someone as a prelude to beginning a relationship. In this excerpt between Chris and John, humour is used to establish talk about the trials and tribulations of changing relationships.

Chris: Well, I can't ever find a...I can't even find any girls that...I can't even find any good girls you know. Every time I see them they just...just not very good.

John: Do you get...do you get embarrassed then Chris every time you see a girl?

Chris: No I don't, I just simply walk...I just simply put...take a bucket and pour them over them, that I don't like them.

John: What? You pour a bucket! No wonder no girl wants to go and marry you!

(laughter)

Chris: Only joking.

The boys **talk about transition** and their **expectations** of their changing lives, not only contributed to a concept of *the way we do boy* but also began to establish ideas about their futures as men. The strength of a pervading discourse about progress through the school to the adult world emerges as a strong driver for change. However, this also acts to restrict opportunities that offer an alternative to progression in a special school unless able to understand, from their observations of others, that

alternatives might be possible. This serves to limit the scope of practice for the boys in establishing alternative identities in transition separate from their ID, probably resulting in alternative views being less potent for the boys, perhaps restricting opportunities to explore different notions of change and weakening a broader concept of *the way we do boy*.

The next theme connects to the ideas of change for the boys as it establishes a desire to consider ideal representations of both boyhood and manhood.

Ideals: exemplars the boys held in mind that informed the way we do boy which included taking risks and having control.

In both the group and individual interviews, boys were eager to put forward their ideas of *the way we do boy* in relations to ideals about boys and men. This appeared to hinge upon informing me and other boys participating in the process of two important factors. First that ideals could include men being **in control** of situations or events, but also ideals might be referenced by how men could be **out of control**. Although this may appear slightly incongruous this relates to men, particularly fathers, taking risks and a desire to be like them. However, as will be seen later in the theme when boys focussed on situations that made them feel vulnerable where men and boys were acknowledged as **out of control**, it was viewed as undesirable and sometimes boys and men could be seen as flawed as a result of it. When discussed the boys in the study work hard to distance themselves from these flawed representations which jar against their conceptualisation of *the way we do boy*. It appeared that the boys in developing a construct for *the way we do boy* and the ideals which influenced this, required me to be aware of what they perceived as flawed to ensure clarity.

The following extract is interesting in that Chris uses an opportunity in one of the group interviews to give information about a digital TV channel that

he regarded as essential viewing for him and the other boys in the group. In doing so he emphasises what he perceives as an ideal representation of men and the effect that might have on behaviours in boys and men.

Chris: 'Scuzz' it's channel 364. It's really good to get to listen like heavy rock music and listen to your favourite band. And it makes you want to go ever so fast like in a car and you're like (makes noises like a speeding car) like that.

Chris emphasises how listening to rock music might make you feel and how it may influence men to become **out of control, to take risks**. Chris's account changes as he gives prominence to the excitement of the speeding car, offering real appeal for other boys to begin to see the relationship between this and an ideal of masculinity. Chris seals this account, as an offering for *the way we do boy*, by emphasising the noise of the car to capture the imagination of the group. Finally, Chris adds to his story by imagining how being **out of control** might feel.

Chris: It gives you the excitement inside you.

In this excerpt John, Patrick and Chris provide what was a typical conversation between boys focusing on risky behavior, sport and the thrill of unexpected events.

Chris: What would really be good, every time you did the racing you like do the crash and then you're just like...

John: I think the crashes are the best.

Patrick: And it seems like it's a bad injury...

Chris: And you break all the bones in your body and then you have to pay a medical bill or something.

This is illustrative of an enjoyment of talking about risk and danger in sport, the observation and the enjoyment of which appeared to galvanise a boy's position in the group. Of significance here is that the boys take the concept of *the way we do boy* as observers enjoying the thrill and danger of the event.

As mentioned previously, being good at football was a dominant force in the lives of the boys who took part in the study. This was particularly so for the youngest of the participants who filled all their spare time, while at school, inhabiting the small tarmac covered football/basketball area in the school grounds. Observations of the boys at break times would centre on this area as they would move quickly to occupy the space after being dismissed from their classrooms. The boys would use this opportunity to demonstrate skill, challenge other boys and on occasion male members of staff too. One particular boy would take a prominent role as the referee for these games complete with yellow and red cards to assert his authority and take control. This was accepted by the other boys who played, as the role of referee was often acknowledged by the boys as an ideal and an acceptable way of **being in control**. These games developed on similar lines each time as the boys challenged each other often trying to mimic what they had seen in a football game on television. One particular young male member of staff who the boys had known for some considerable time, he was the son of a teacher at the school and had also worked as a volunteer prior to beginning full time work as a classroom assistant, took a particular interest in the boys' games when on playground duty. The boys knew a great deal about this individual and regarded him as a significant person in their lives. One idea that appealed to the boys was that he had been and was still a successful sportsman in the local area. On entering the grounds he would head straight for the boys' playing football. He would often join them and would demonstrate his skill, not in an aggressive way but in a way that instantly identified him as one of the group. At this

point the play would change as the boys would call out for his attention so he would see them. This gave them the opportunity to show off their skills and the new tricks they had learnt. Even for those boys who did not have the highest level of skill compared to others, their display would be met with encouraging words and confirmation that they were improving. These exchanges were important to the boys as they drew them away from the classroom and established an ideal of *the way we do boy* in the school. It also offered a strong message to newcomers both students and staff that this was an established way of being for them.

In addition to playing football boys talked about watching the game at home, often alone but on occasion with their fathers, brothers or other male friends. In the following excerpt Philip, Peter and Malcolm exchange ideas about their favourite aspect of football.

Philip: I like people that does slide tackles people.

Malcolm: You might have an accident with a friend.

Peter: I like when 'em to get a red and a yellow card.

Malcolm tries here to remind the others about their own games and that **being out of control** and taking risks on the football pitch could result in injury to someone who you regarded as a friend. However the ideal of tackling, of taking a risk and the application of sanctions for football players in the boys talk was strong. Tackling was regarded by all the boys as an essential component of being good at football, often overused or misjudged but always celebrated as the ball was won and the victor seized their opportunity to dominate the game and display their skill as a footballer. The majority of boys would shape their talk about tackling, which was viewed by some as risky, into something that revealed one of the limited opportunities in which they could be in control and talk of success.

Alcohol and its use by men was an ideal put forward by some boys who regarded this as an essential aspect of their development into adulthood. Interestingly talk about alcohol was used by the boys to demonstrate how men could be both **in control** and **out of control** dependent on the circumstances. Either way this was something that was a desirable aspect of a future ideal of masculinity. Simon and Ryan were eager to establish the idea that drinking alcohol was not only a right of passage but also part of the essentials of growing up.

Ryan: Getting bladdered!

Simon: Erm...getting drunk and having fun.

Although Simon and Ryan refer to a future ideal for them they developed their talk, with the help of Andy, by establishing the benefits of drinking for them as a spectator sport and also as an opportunity for gain.

Simon: Just having a drink...getting drunk and fighting!

Andy: Getting drunk and buying X box 360s!

Int.: Getting drunk and buying something?

Simon: Yeh, that's what my brother (name) said, he said his dad got drunk yeh and bought him an X box 360.

Ryan: My dad was drunk once and he gave...I got this erm...like you know when you get Shell and you get free Ferraris...he had this £100 proper one on top of the shelf and he said, 'do you want that one?'. Alright OK, I'll have your one so...

Int.: Really?

Ryan: So I've got that in my bedroom.

Ryan took pleasure in recounting how he benefited from the spoils of his father's drinking. However, he moves on to demonstrate his knowledge of

the different roles drinking might play in the lives of men and of his future as a man. Here Ryan makes a distinction between having drink in the home and drinking outside the home.

Ryan: The only time my dad has bottles of beer is if it's like the F1s on and we're with Granny and Granddad, when we go round and we watch the motor sport.

Int.: Right.

Ryan: That's the only time...or if he has lots of friend round then he has...then that's the only time he drinks at home.

Philip regarded drinking in the following excerpt both as an opportunity to be with dad but also to do something that he saw as the domain of men.

Philip: Yes men do this more than girls. My dad did this last night and I did. I wasn't drunk.

The gendered aspects of drinking and the subsequent role of women emerged later in an exchange which included Peter and Malcolm.

Malcolm: Yeh, women can go out for a quiet drink though.

Int: They can. Do you think it's something that men do more or...

Malcolm: Mans does try to take the biscuit more.

Philip: I think men do it more (laughs).

Peter: Men more.

Philip: Men do it more.

Malcolm: Or the women go with them.

Malcolm's assertion that men 'take the biscuit more', accompanied by laughter in the group, appeared to relate to the excitement of using alcohol,

losing control and consuming more than women. The distinction between men and women was significant as it was almost universally supported by the boys who participated. Boys indicated that they regarded this pastime as dominated by men and that women could be part of it but were often on the periphery.

Philip: My mum, my mum goes less clubbing now than she used to do.

Int.: Right.

Philip: Cause I go out with my dad.

The role of women was clearly established in this way with only one exchange emphasising more negative aspects of **being in control**, using alcohol to dominate or manipulate women.

Ryan: Taking girls in as well...

Simon: With erm...with...

Ryan: Vodka.

Simon: Vodka, beer, all kind of...stuff.

The notion that alcohol could be used by men in this way was a powerful one and perhaps an indication that the boys were influenced by a narrow set of ideas. One boy projected his ideas of drinking and having fun into thoughts of the future with a very specific role for a teenage girl in the same school who was his current girlfriend.

Gary: Well if I...let's say maybe in a few years time, me and (names girl) went to the pub and I got drunk I would say to her '(names girl), can you please drive?' and she goes 'Why?' 'Because I'm too drunk to drive'.

Talk which included ideas of drinking involved boys having fun and being with friends, but when this talk included women there were specific roles for them. These ideas included women being more amenable to their advances and also playing specific roles to protect their safety when they had drunk too much.

The older boys in the study as well as emphasising the fun and social aspects of drinking were also eager to offer a note of caution about the dangers of drinking to excess and **being out of control**.

Chris: Yeh, and also Patrick as well.

John: I probably will one at a time, but not all the time like those drug addicts.

Chris: Yeh, but don't you think don't you think you should go on the drinkaware.co.uk website, you might get some information there. I just thought, every time it shows a beer advert it sees like a title saying drinkaware dot co dot uk website, like a subtitle so just a teeny bit.

Talk involving drinking behaviour added to an ideal of what the future might be like as the boys moved into the adult world. However, the older boys were aware of how there were aspects of drinking that could lead to flawed representations that they were determined to distance themselves from so they wouldn't become *'like those drug addicts'*.

Being in control emerged as a theme in a number of distinct ways. First there was the control that was exerted on the boys from staff in the school or from the educational systems. Also there was the control used by boys to shape each other's behaviour in and outside the classroom. Finally, there was control which came from inside the group and individual interviews.

While making my observations in the school prior to data collection, I noticed how control was put in place by staff in the school. The staff team were mainly female while the management team who wielded the greater power were mainly men. This led to interesting discourses particularly between female staff and boys when behaviour deteriorated during lessons. It was interesting that on the whole behaviour was managed better by female staff in the classroom than male members of staff, who tended to rely on aggressive measures to control the boys' outbursts or ignorance of classroom rules and etiquette. However, despite this female staff felt they had to resort to threats of sending the boys to the male head teacher's office even if the situation had been resolved.

Experience of other men in the school, particularly male teaching staff, was significant in the development of the boys talk about control. Boys were very clear about how male teaching staff in the school used discipline and how the experience of this was different than the way female staff used it. For example, as presented previously, female teachers were more likely to threaten sanctions involving male teaching staff including the head teacher than their male counterparts. The male teaching staff included two older men who had reputations that preceded the boys' attendance at the school. It was understood by the boys that if control was lost in any part of the school, it could be regained when either of these teachers were summoned. In my observations of female staff in the school I soon realised that despite their obvious skill in classroom management, they would use the names of these teachers to strengthen this even if it was not necessary. This gave a clear message to the boys that even though in the minority the men in school were the most dominant and powerful members of the teaching staff. Interestingly, a new younger male member of the staff who struggled with the boys' behaviour at times and frequently had to be rescued by female classroom assistants did not change the view

the boys had of male control. In fact they often treated and spoke about him in negative ways giving clear distance between him and the other males in the school including themselves. In this excerpt, Ryan gives thought to the potential for anarchy if male teachers were not in control.

Ryan: the only problem is if there wasn't any men teachers in the school, and like (names student) blew off who's going to stop him if he chucks a...cause (names male teacher) usually comes and restrains people cause he's so big.

Despite the fact that the boys' behaviour could be controlled well by female staff the dominant view expressed by Ryan here is that without male staff the boys would be out of control. Interestingly, as a result of the success of female staff in relations to behaviour management, this was counter to their experiences in the school and yet their talk of the strength and dominance of men continued to be prevalent.

In another exchange between John and Patrick, they act out their fantasy of boys misbehaving in class. My observations in the school indicated that they were probably least likely to realise this fantasy, but they playfully use this to include the idea that the way we do boy could incorporate **being out of control**.

Patrick: You get pelted with tomatoes.

John: Yeh.

Patrick: You get pelted with tomatoes, OK.

John: Getting stupid answers, like 'no get out.' 'no I won't get out, make me!' (laughter)

This was translated to talk about other images where strength was acknowledged as a crucial specification to do a particular role or to demonstrate manhood. Here Ryan refers to images of soldiers and the difference between men and women in conflict situations.

Ryan: ...cause men are...cause men you know that men use a lot of brute force that's pretty good in the army, but you can't just sort of say 'well let's negotiate not shooting me' you can only say that at someone who's got no gun and someone's holding a gun to your head.

When presented with other images of men in roles perceived as dominant by the boys in the group, their reaction was clear as far as placing them within a concept of *the way we do boy* based on their experiences. Here the boys are looking at images of soldiers.

Philip: More men, all the men in this country of them are boys and men. Because they are afraid.

Int.: Girls are afraid...

Philip: ...of everything!

The fearlessness of men is introduced here to support talk of *the way we do boy*, but also to offer this as part of a transition from boyhood to manhood.

When the boys considered images of superheroes their talk was full of the stories that had appeared in block buster movies. This talk was not all about the adulation of these heroes, but on occasion how fallible these characters could be. This is particularly true of the following excerpt from a group interview involving Chris and John.

- Chris: *It's like a thrilling action adventure, superman flying like that...*
- John: *You think I wish I could do that?*
- Chris: *Next thing he does that he stays still when he flies up for five hours.*
(laughter)
- Chris: *He falls down! You know spiderman, you know every time he like swings around he just like does that and swings and la de dah de dah...then the next thing then he falls into the garbage...*
- John: *Oh, is that when he obsesses over Mary Jane yeh?*

Chris maintained similar talk when considering images of men doing dangerous sports. Again he illustrates the fallibility of men by giving accounts of fear in extreme situations.

- Chris: *yeh, but the thing is...what happens...the other times like...the other times you go in a bi-plane and like look down and say 'oh good lord', and the next thing a heart attack, your heart rate's going like (mimics heart beat), like that. It's like 'Oh god, I can't do it!'*

In both group and individual interviews the boys were not averse to expressing fear about dangerousness and taking risks. In the next excerpt Craig and Gary have a very blunt exchange.

- Craig: *(laughs) Just the men do that.*
- Gary: *If I were doing that, I'd be shitting myself!*

I was struck by the boys' ability to tolerate admissions of fear from one another, to state categorically that they would struggle to fulfil this

particular ideal. Perhaps here we have a clear indication that the boys were comfortable enough with each other to reveal their apparent weaknesses and that this was for them an ideal and an acceptable part of *the way we do boy*. This is not to say that in the classroom and playground away from the recording equipment the boys didn't display their fair share of bravado. However, they were able and happy nevertheless to accept flaws in one another.

The acceptance of flaws and fallibilities, although tolerated by boys in the study had their limits with regard to conceptualising *the way we do boy*. In this exchange Philip makes a statement about his reaction to fear which is abruptly halted by the other boys in the group interview.

Philip: Yeh they do scream like girl I do yeh.

(Malcolm and Peter laugh)

Int.: What does it mean to scream like a girl?

Philip: I don't know...Edward do they call you a woosey? (Malcolm laughs) Oh no.

(Malcolm and Peter laugh again)

Philip: I don't know (slight embarrassment)

Int.: Do people call you a woos if you scream like a girl?

(Malcolm and Peter laugh again)

Philip: No I don't know.

Peter: That's not a nice word is it?

Int.: Well it's a funny word isn't it that sometimes people use.

(long pause).

Although at other times boys had demonstrated acceptance when there were admissions of fear, in this case the focus changed to one that could not be either desirable or acceptable at any cost. The difference in this

excerpt appears to be the firm rejection of being like a girl or doing anything that was even slightly linked to femininity. Philip's embarrassment as he realises that the group's laughter is not supportive, shapes an understanding between them in the interview room that screaming like a girl and being identified as a woos was not ideal. In fact it was something that should be kept at a distance.

The education programme in the school was based on an even mix of academic, vocational studies and leisure activities. Most afternoons were spent engaging in activities that relied on the development of skills to prepare students for work or to broaden their ideas of leisure. There was a clearly liberal stance taken in the school regarding the involvement of girls and boys. Girls were as likely to excel at rock climbing as boys were at cooking. One of the vocational modules offered within the 16+ department was floristry and as mentioned the boys were diligently given their opportunity to follow this brief course at a nearby college. Interestingly, although many vocational modules were run by the school this one was singled out for particular celebration on a display in the 16+ teaching area. Each of the boys, who had taken part in the course, was photographed holding the arrangement they had made at the end of the course. This led to the inclusion of an image in the set presented during the group interviews which showed a man flower arranging. Although this was presented to me as a cause for celebration and the boys were often complicit in this, the presentation of the image in the group interview was met with a very different response.

Chris: Why do you want to do floristry instead Patrick?

John: Would you do it everyday? Men are not supposed to do gardening. Well, would you do that everyday? You know for a job or something like that?

Patrick: No.

John: No exactly.

John is vehement in his questioning of Patrick in his attempt to clearly control the talk developing in the room. This is done with great clarity as the boys shape an idea of their developing masculinity towards adulthood. The response to this image became much clearer when I joined in with the discourse posing my own question to John.

Int.: Would it be something you might think of doing for a living?

John: A living?

Patrick: No!

John: Nooooo!

Int.: OK.

John: I could never do that!

This exchange clearly demonstrates that the boys want to control the developing talk including the ideas being constructed and as a consequence what I might take away from it. I as the interviewer am left in no doubt that being like a girl could not be a part of *the way we do boy* and so the boys use their talk to distance themselves from it.

While at the school it was interesting to notice how incidents in and around the school had an immediate impact on the way the boys thought about ideals of masculinity. In this excerpt Ryan reminds the group about some graffiti that appeared in the school during a weekend when the school was closed.

Ryan: On the back of the thingy post...erm basketball hoop, remember when those weirdoes put gagging and demon and things.

Ryan is quick to identify this behaviour as outside of an ideal of *the way we do boy*. This is supported by other boys who identified the destructive and **out of control** behaviour of gangs as an undesirable ideal. In this excerpt, John and Chris discuss the desirability of gang membership to an ideal of adult masculinity.

John: I know a lot of people in the gangs. It's like they act all muscley and then it's me it's 'Hi Bob', 'Oh hi John'. 'Yo man what ya doin in front of me!'

Int.: So do you think it's something that men should get involved in...gangs?

John: No!

Chris: No, that's wrong...that is absolutely wrong!

John: Yeh, gangs they put people in corners going 'Yo man what ya doin in our corner?' 'Yo man I've got a gun and I look like black spider man.'

John initially begins this exchange with some insight into the bravado and character play used by gangs to intimidate. He also suggests that gang members have two personas, their own and their gang's. However despite John's comic interpretation of gang culture, both he and Chris are united in their rejection of this as part of an ideal of *the way we do boy*.

Talk including that referenced by ideas of sexuality was used by the boys, perhaps as a way of controlling the developing ideas of *the way we do boy*. In the following extract between John and Chris, stereotyped homophobic iterations are used to disassociate themselves from the images shown of gangs.

Chris: *These people do you think they wear pink outfits do you think, do you think they're wearing pink?*

John: *Maybe, maybe they're pink underwear and when they go home it's like (uses stereotyped camp voice) 'Oh, that was such a tiring day'.*

Chris: *No they get a pink cerise, pink trainers.*

In the following exchange John and Chris develop their talk about boys and men **being out of control** with Chris first attempting to speak for the whole group.

Chris: *We don't like bloody violence.*

Int.: *You kind of want to separate yourselves.*

John: *Yeh, you want to separate it...*

Chris: *All you do is walk away, or just stay away from them...*

John: *Well if somebody punched me first I would give them a right good punch back, yeh. Or if somebody insulted someone I knew I'd be like, 'don't insult them!' (demonstrates throwing a punch).*

Chris: *If you start the fight that's not good.*

Int.: *OK.*

John: *If you start going, 'come on lets fight' and it's like 'no I don't want to fight'. (demonstrates throwing punch and the fight continuing).*

Int.: *OK.*

Chris's assertion about 'bloody violence' is interesting as it demonstrates his desire to clarify how violence directly involving them as victims or defenders of their own person is not a desirable part of *the way we do boy*. Already there are clear distinctions for this group about their own

construction of masculinity and how they act in relation to it, forming a clear foundation for practice in the school.

In the following exchange John and Chris continue their talk about violence while looking at images of men fighting and fights involving children in the playground.

John: Fighting!

Chris: No that's not by girls.

John: Well I see girl, I see girl fights and boy fights. Everybody fights even children, you see children get their...

Chris: Yeh, they have the same problem in real school.

Interestingly here there is a desire to clarify that this is not just a boy thing and although the images represent a male bias, John wishes it to be known that girls can fight too. Chris also offers a pertinent unifying statement that this is not just a problem for the school environment that he and John attend but also for '*real school*'.

Ideal representations were a key component of *the way we do boy*, as they constructed ideas of how men were in their lives referenced by thoughts of control. Observation and the boys' talk illustrates the importance of men in their lives and helped them to convey animated stories of an anticipated future in the adult world. These observations, similar to that of the previous theme, are limited by the opportunities available to them. In addition, talk about boys and men out of control although in an ideal position which included power often rendered the boys as vulnerable and cast as other. In essence *the way we do boy* could reveal both ideal representations of masculinity that the boys wished to be associated with and its flawed opposite that the boys wished to distance themselves from.

The next Theme develops the idea that the experiences of the boys had a profound effect on what they thought and how this might develop the concept of *the way we do boy*.

Experiences: using our knowledge, understanding how we are different

The boys' observations of the world around them and their direct **experiences** helped to shape the concept of *the way we do boy* in school and outside school within a limited set of opportunities to practice masculinity. These experiences crystallised and began to form in their talk together both in and outside the interview room demonstrating their knowledge with regard to **knowing men and boys** and **difference**. This theme has a close relationship with the subsequent theme, **vicariousness**, as it was the boys' ability to experience by living through another that helped to fill in the gaps left by the limitations of their direct experiences.

In the following excerpts the limited experiences and opportunities to practice masculinity are demonstrated by the boys' knowledge of how men and boys are and how their experiences result in the development of ideas in the interview room. In this excerpt involving Chris, John, Patrick and myself as interviewer the boys use humour to strengthen a view of women, to exclude them, as this helps to shape *the way we do boy*.

Chris: No me neither.

John: You should see it Patrick.

Int.: Is it different from men's football John?

John: Yeh, they don't lift up shirts!

(laughter John and Patrick)

Chris: John, that's disgusting what you've just said.

(laughter John and Patrick)

Chris: It's not very nice.
Int.: I don't think they swap shirts at full time.
John: No! (laughs)
Chris: I don't find that funny, they only do that in eighteen stuff.
Int.: Yeh?
Chris: The you know what.
Int.: Right.
Chris: The disgusting ones!

As the ideas from this experience begins to take shape in the room, Chris works hard to counter the objectification of women by John and Patrick. Attempts by Chris to correct and shape John's talk about women, are met with laughter from both John and Patrick and there is playfulness in the room as the ideas grow. Chris struggles with the misogyny that this talk suggests, which is perhaps magnified again by the presence of a female chaperone in the room during the group interview. Certainly there is a profound effect on Chris as he endeavours to challenge the observation the other boys talk about so as not to offend the chaperone. However, the experience and John and Patrick's use of a combination of misogyny and humour work to silence Chris and the dominant idea and rigid acceptance of how men might view women is pushed to the fore.

Generally experiences regarding gender played a part in the boys' talk about sport. This was particularly evident when the boys talked about women and men competing separately. Talk became contradictory as they tried to use their limited experiences to make me understand that they had heard that some behaviours or occurrences could be construed as sexist, but it is their lack of understanding and limited experiences regarding the application of these ideas that represent more rigid ideas about the practice of masculinity.

Ryan: Yeh they are 'cause the... 'cause you're not allowed to do girls with men, they have two separate things because it's sexist isn't it.

Ryan understands that inequalities between men and women are an issue and implies that sexism may be at play here. However, he is referring to images of athletics where track events are traditionally separate. Again this group interview was conducted with a female member of staff acting as a chaperone. Ryan was acutely aware of the risk of offending the chaperone and so he was careful to ensure that any offence was minimised. Later in the interview Ryan again attempts to explain his position, but instead becomes confused in his attempt to explain a position of equality in sport.

Ryan: It's sexist if you do that!

Int.: Why is it sexist?

Ryan: 'cause, you're saying like oh no you're a woman you're too weak to do those things.

Int.: So they have separate races because?

Ryan: Because it depends like...

Simon: Depends.

Ryan: Erm...men hit it harder but women hit it lower so it's hard hitting different ways.

Although Ryan's attempt to develop talk of equality is pursued, the eventual conclusion is a return to a more rigid idea of the experience and practice of masculinity based on strength.

Similarly in other groups boys wanted to be considered as not sexist and to maintain talk of equality with women. In this next excerpt John expresses

a desire to inform me of his and other boys' position with regard to equality and yet his laughter may reveal a more rigid alignment to ideas of dominance.

John: I hope we're not sexist! (laughs)

Although when the boys talked about images of dangerousness and risk taking through sports this elicited a view that reveals again their limited experiences and their preference to align themselves to rigid notions of *the way we do boy*.

Chris: Yeh, but...you've just got to be they should have a speed limit on how...what they have to do is like when you're going round corner you've got to like slow slow in and then speed up out.

Later in the interview John strengthens the idea that risk taking is part of the practice of knowing boys and men.

John: Yeh. Some women think oh my god that's too dangerous why would people watch this kind of stuff.

However, interestingly for one boy, his experience with regard to dangerous sports, did involve his mum.

Andy: Men, because women are probably not interested in it.

Ryan: My mum is, she likes ¹⁰F1, so do I.

¹⁰ Formula 1

Ryan's mutual interest in formula 1 with his mum was used again later in the interview to try to influence its course and shape the view of others in the group. In this next excerpt Ryan and Simon join together to try to influence Andy's view of women in motor sport.

Andy: I don't really, women mostly do sports don't they?

Ryan: That is a sport!

Simon: That is a sport!

Ryan: It's called ,motor SPORTS! It's in the name!

Simon: Sport, sport SPORT!

Andy: Yeh, but women...shut up...shut up!

Andy's attempt to maintain his position in the exchange is difficult given that Ryan and Simon are so dominant in their view of the image and their experiences of it. Although there is a demonstration of flexibility to accept that other ideas about men and women are possible, Ryan and Simon return to a position that is rigidly held by the boys as a part of the concept of *the way we do boy*, dominance.

On occasion the image of men from different media could be persuasive in changing the boys' ideas of what could be or could not be exclusively male. In the next excerpt the boys have been shown an image of a man and his motorbike. The image is from a television programme called 'American Chopper', exclusively presented by men. The boys are considering if this is something a man would or would not be involved in. In the excerpt Chris presents the dominant image of the programme in order to stress part of the concept of *the way we so boy*.

Chris: Because I like the man in the grey...he has a grey...this old man has a grey beard and also glasses a...a...an old Tee shirt with the holes in them. And

he's got like muscles and he speaks like in an America accent, (in and American accent) 'ay, make sure you get all the stuff there, we gotta...'

Chris emphasises the physical attributes of the presenter, perhaps to convince others in the group that his experience legitimises an image for *the way we do boy* which includes muscularity and strength. This helps to add to a dominant discourse about the physical attributes of men and how they should appear moving from child to adulthood.

Some of the older boys in the school who were a year or two away from leaving, had gym memberships or had attended the local gym with the school during physical education sessions. This gave them a strong view of distinction based on their experience in this environment and potential differences in motivation for men and women. In this excerpt John, Patrick and Chris discuss their experiences of the reasons men and women choose to attend gyms.

John: Women go to get thin, and men to get strong.

Patrick: Men go to get muscles.

John: For muscles.

Chris: Yeh, for biceps.

John: You don't see many women with muscles only ones where you see on the thing with giant ones.

Chris: Only you two have seen it.

(laughter)

Humour again plays a part here in strengthening the consensus of the boys regarding the different reasons for men and women attending the gym. The boys' talk represents a clear distinction between the desire for muscularity and strength in men and an opposing motivation in women.

The sense of disgust from the boys provides support to their talk, '*You don't see many women with muscles...*', strengthening further the conclusion that women have different motives for attending a gym. This view is further supported by the inclusion of ideas that link muscularity and attractiveness for men, an idea that clearly emerges from the boys' experience of observing people in the gym.

Int.: *So men generally go to build muscle, why do you think that is?*

John: *Attract girls really.*

There is a real connection with the presentation of the body and masculinity that is not present in the interviews with younger participants. It was apparent perhaps that this fitted well with other talk about strength and the practice of masculinity that the boys wanted to exclusively assign to male identity. In the following short extract, Ryan expands on this by explaining male behaviour associated with his understanding of masculinity illustrated by two particular characteristics.

Ryan: *'cause a lot of men don't, a lot of men really boisterous and just want to put they just want to put things together and...men like...a lot of men like physical things.*

Later in his individual interview, Ryan sustains the development of his talk about the behaviour of men and strength in relation to an understanding of masculinity and a particular approach to life. Conversely in this excerpt he begins to construct an alternative story for women that not only strengthens the position of masculinity for men, but also is perhaps indicative of both his experiences in school and at home.

Ryan: Like if someone...if there's...like...erm. A locked cabinet, a man might try to yank it open or a woman might try and...stick something down it to bend it open.

The idea that women might be more considered in their approach to tasks was an interesting one. It is perhaps logical to make some links here with the boys' experience of women as opposed to men. Later in the interview Ryan returns to these ideas, but this time he begins to develop talk about difference between men and women based on intellectual ability.

Ryan: Depends in which way...'cause...women think more than men, when just like a lot of men if there's a door what they can't open and it's important they'll just try and smash it...like open and they'll...or women try and stick a metal thing down it to peel it open.

The idea that men and women deal with situations in different ways was something that was developed by other boys interviewed for the study.

Simon: Women err...like softer than men because men erm...usually use brute force to get further. Women take it nice, so they've got more strength at the end.

Maintaining the idea of strength as a clear difference between men and women, Simon develops his idea that there appears to be a subtle change suggesting as Ryan did that women are much more considered in their approach resulting in greater success and advantage. However, talk about strength in men and the boys' experience of that emerged as a clear distinction in some of the sorting exercises when the boys were presented with images of men as active. First John comments on an image of a man fixing a car.

John: Yeh, women don't like those kind of things really.

In another group's sorting exercise, Chris comments on the same issue stressing the physical attributes required by men to do a task.

Chris: Yeh, but only men do it because they need to be strong.

Returning to John's group, he gives another reason why women may be less suited to doing this kind of practical task.

John: It's dirty!

Int.: 'cause it's a dirty job?

John: And they'll break a nail.

Int.: And they'll break a nail?

(Group laughs)

Although disparaging and misogynistic, the boys are working together to put forward a view that then galvanises them around the concept of *the way we do boy*. This view was not only attached to strength but also to other aspects of the practice of masculinity. In the following excerpt, Ryan comments on the drinking behaviours of men and women. Although in the previous theme talk about drink was linked to an ideal, in this excerpt Ryan is clearly talking about a difference between men and women.

Ryan: Actually, you know a lot of...like...soft...like sparkly drinks like Bacardi Breezers aiming big kids like that where little women go, cause a lot of women buy them instead of buying a pint of beer...

Int.: So do...

Ryan: Only Tom boys really do that...
Int.: So do men and women drink different things?
Ryan: Er...yeh...some drink the same but some drink different...

Interestingly, in this excerpt Ryan moves from a position of inequality to that which suggests that women may want to be like men. This was typical of Ryan's desire to be balanced in his view of men and women based on his experiences.

On occasion the boys bought more than one experience to bear on their developing talk. In the school all the boys engaged in lessons to teach them how to prepare food. Although, the boys appeared to enjoy these lessons and teaching was very effective, praise or being successful was not always a desirable outcome for the boys. In fact there were times when the boys deliberately sabotaged their food or rejected the attention of teaching staff. However, as this was something that the boys were very familiar with an image was included in the sorting exercise to trigger discussion. In the following excerpt it is clear that the boys have taken influence not only from what they had done in the school but from home and from the television.

Simon: Men and women.
Ryan: Yeh men and women. 'cause there's famous women chefs and my mum and a lot of women cook and my dad can cook...sort of...and there're lots of famous men chefs.

Ryan and Simon were boys who did not enjoy the cooking sessions in school and yet here they work together to be balanced and reasonable when presented with the image of men cooking. However in other groups

boys wanted to highlight the difference between what men and women would be involved in.

Chris: Baking...cooking.

John: Cooking? Is that cooking?

Chris: Men can make hamburgers and put them on the bar-b-q in America.

John: Yeh, but we don't mostly do it do we. Women do it.

The urge to put distance between them and something that women did more than boys and men was probably related more to the boys' desire not to be like girls rather than for women to be acknowledged as dominant in it. The boys were often eager to make a distinction between their involvement in an activity and how it might be for women, even if this was only by stressing a particular way of engaging in the activity, the man in charge of the bar-b-q. In this exchange John and Patrick are looking at men cooking in the kitchen. John and Chris work together to change the noun from cooking to catering again perhaps to make distinct that they are not engaging in what girls and women might do.

John: Yeh, but we don't mostly do it do we. Women do it.

Chris: We do catering on a Monday.

As the conversation moves on the distinction is developed further as the boys talk again about gender difference with regard to what may be cooked by men and women.

John: Oh erm...burgers, chips erm...

Chris: Pizza.

John: Pizza, yeh. All those things.

Chris: And pizza's!

John: And when mum comes back she brings back the healthy stuff.

This talk adds further to a concept of *'the way we do boy'* for these participants that is definitely what boys do as opposed to what a girl might do.

One topic of interest dominated by boys in the school was that of comic books and comic book heroes. Girls were never part of conversations that centred on the latest comic book hero film or computer game.

Observations in the school confirmed this and were particularly evident when a new film or computer game for their highly prized consoles was released. The film helped the boys to support ideas about hegemonic masculinity involving control and strength. However, in the interview room Simon and Ryan were again eager to develop ideas that were inclusive of girls and women even if their experience was contrary to this. In the following extract Ryan offers some detail on the presence of women in this genre.

Simon: There's spider woman.

Ryan: Cool!

Simon: There is.

Andy: No there isn't!

Ryan: There is in the futuristic one where there the woman...where he's in the future and he's got a cape.

Once more Simon and Ryan attempt to use dominance as part of *the way we do boy* to influence Andy, as they try to convince him that women can be part of what, in Andy's experience, is a genre dominated by boys and men. However, in another excerpt from the same interview Ryan and Simon return to more familiar talk with regard to the involvement of girls

and women in comic books. Here the enjoyment of girls and women in the world of comic books is tempered by the introduction of age and not gender as a major influence on this.

Int.: ...and boys like more?

Simon: Yeh, mostly boys.

Ryans: Yeh, but some girls do.

Simon: Yeh, some girls do.

Ryan: Like when they're young they think, Yeh!

Simon: I think boys and girls.

There is a definite connection between these boys as they attempt to shape their ideas about *the way we do boy*. Simon and Ryan continue to refine their talk about boys being permitted to enjoy comic books into their teens and beyond. The refinement is again linked to other perceived differences between men and women.

Ryan: Yeh, but it depends what...but women...

Simon: Women sort of like to discuss with each other...and it's unfair.

Ryan: You know girls, it's sort of at what age, cause a lot of girls, not many boys follow it to their teenage years, and practically no girls follow it to their teenage years.

In this Simon and Ryan restore the dominant position giving themselves permission to pursue their love of comic book heroes. Simon states that women like to discuss with each other, this may be reference to the girls and women in school who appeared to enjoy social contact while the boys buried their heads in a comic book or stared at a video screen. Ryan in his final statement gives permission for the enjoyment of comic books for him

and his peers. Not many boys follow it to their teenage years but most of the boys in the school did. If you were closely attached to your computer console, as most of the boys were, then there was no way to avoid the world of the comic book hero and perhaps their influence on your developing ideas.

Gender differences were raised to further refine *the way we do boy* to support the idea about not being like a girl, although in both group interviews and individual interviews it was often expressed in simplistic ways. This is particularly evident in Philip's statement about cartoons.

Philip: If you wasn't a boy I never actually like cartoon, but now I do.

This love of cartoons was an area of distinction for John and Chris too.

John: Yeh, we watch superhero's erm... we don't see many women watching it...

Chris: No I don't.

Again some boys attempted to shape a different way of talking about differences between men and women with a focus on equality. However, this was essentially based on experience linked to a particular image from quite a limited repertoire.

Andy: But mostly men do drumming.

Simon: Yeh, mostly men do drumming.

Ryan: Not really, I've seen loads of bands with girls who are the drummers.

Disagreements about particular images were often based on whether they had experienced something themselves. In Andy's group he was presented with an alternative view to his own. A view that was not his experience, but was the dominant experience of the two other boys in the interview. In this next extract, John is clear about what he has seen and therefore can't conceive that his experience would not be the only view.

John: Well, you don't see many girls learning guitar, as many as men.

Boys involved in the research wanted to ensure that along with gender distinction there also needed to be a distinction between types of boys. In this way they were able to continue to construct *the way we do boy* as distinct from what girls and women might do. In the following exchange Ian and Sam offer a context for their involvement in shopping activities.

Ian: (laughs) Wimp's!
Int.: So Ian says that shopping's for wimp's.
Ian: Yeh.
Sam: It is.
Ian: But not in games shops though.

This talk is also evident in other groups as can be seen in this exchange between John, Chris and Patrick.

John: Yeh, clothes shopping. You don't like shopping. Neither do I, but I like going games shopping.
Patrick: Yeh.
Chris: Yeh, she picks the most stupid ones that I don't like...
Patrick: DVD shopping.
John: Yeh, DVD shopping.

Chris: ...and she has a stroppy mood with me.

There was a close association with control for the boys in certain areas of their lives. It was clear that their mothers or main carer exerted a strong influence in many areas of the boys' lives. However, there were some activities that were sacred to them which could not be influenced and so they were determined to ensure that they could use their control.

Although rare, experiences of being different were explored by the boys when they talked about adversarial encounters and the fights that occasionally were the result of these. In their conversations the boys were able to talk about their experience in both mainstream and special school sectors. In the following excerpt Chris recounts an experience in a mainstream school where he had felt victimised. His feelings of difference are magnified in this account as he regards the response of the teacher as unfair.

Chris: These fights, you know these bullies at (names mainstream school) they had a fight with me, I just... and all the time I get into trouble. And you know the other time right in this lesson I accidentally wacked my hand on the teachers face like that...

John: You accidentally wacked them on the head?

Chris: Yeh I did because (names two other boys), those two dimwits got me into trouble and they had to put me out.

In Chris's talk we begin to see that *the way we do boy* is perhaps inextricably linked to his experience of difference and the consequences of others' understanding of that. For Chris his victimisation at the hands of

the bullies and the lack of action to prevent this is a point of frustration for him. His attack on the teacher as a consequence of this frustration results, in his view, in unfair sanctions for him as he is *'put out'*. Chris's experience tells him that his own difference, suggested by his disability, deprives him of justice in this situation as those more able continue to regard him as other and as diminished. The talk of rejection from mainstream school was common among the boys participating in the study. Ian and Harry would talk about their experience of being taught outside the classroom away from other children. Harry eventually took the initiative and walked out of the school he was attending at the time after becoming frustrated with the amount of bullying he received.

Harry: Because of all these lads getting annoyed with everything, getting stressed with all this stuff so I just walked out.

In this environment Harry could not be part of a mainstream idea of being boy that included dominance for him and others who were regarded as different. The frustration this caused led him to special school provision where he could be part of a way of doing boy with others. Talk about their own difference was rare and yet very powerful. It was perhaps a crucial element of constructing an alternative way of being, a way **we** do boy. In another excerpt from Harry he appears to recognise how difference, related to his impairment, may have a lifelong effect.

Harry: I know my autism might hold me back, because they assess you or something because they still have disability discrimination things don't they; they can do that.

A brief exchange with another group perhaps demonstrated again the idea that the boys wanted to disassociate themselves from their experience of

difference, even though this revealed on occasion a desire to be connected to less desirable ways of behaving. Here Sam engages his group in talk of teenagers calling someone names.

*Sam: I like it when erm...teenagers were calling someone a Granddad
(group laughs)
Ian: (Laughing) granddad!*

Although slightly unpalatable, this excerpt reveals a desire to be associated with mainstream boyhood with a demonstration of strength, dominance and control over others. In addition, this may be indicative of the boys showing how others can be outsiders/ scapegoated/ figures of fun instead of them being cast in this role.

Experience and the boys' view of the world clearly influences the way they think about themselves and others in their lives. The presence of women in their lives and their experiences of this resulted in nuanced accounts that appeared to see an intellectual difference between men and women which was unexpected. Boys' view of the difference between men and women oscillated between traditional ideas and a desire to countenance equality. Again this is observed through a narrow aperture revealing a limited scope for practice based on their experiences.

The next themes links to experience but presents boys' talk that is much more primitive and of a lower order, that of the vicarious viewpoint.

Vicariousness: experiencing the world through others

Vicariousness as a theme emerged from the accounts of boys who spoke about the lives of others. This theme has two threads to it; the first identifies the boys as **looking on**, experiencing constructs of masculinity

through the lives of other boys and the men; the second illustrates the boys' lives through the computer games that they played, which featured prominently in the lives of the majority of the boys who participated in the study.

The first of the threads in this theme does not regard vicarious as living through the life of another, but experiencing an aspect of the *way we do boy* through the lives of other boys and men. It is reasonable to add at this stage in the analysis that many of the boys did not live with their birth father. This on occasion, for reasons not expanded on by the boys, introduced tension with regard to step fathers' value as role models. However, boys could often think about men who they had met through their step fathers as having a legitimate claim on aspects of masculinity particularly in thinking about how life could be once adulthood had been reached. These links with other boys and men were often made to demonstrate another way of being perhaps to maintain your place in a conversation with other boys and with the interviewer. Also, these vicarious experiences of masculinity could be used to add to the development of a construct of *the way we do boy* in the school.

The experience of what they had seen at school and in the home played a huge part in the boys' view and their developing concept of what could be included and what could not be included in *the way we do boy*.

Interestingly, there were fewer distinguishable experiences that appear to come from the world outside school or home again revealing the lack of opportunities for the boys to practice aspects of their developing masculinity. This was true except when images of individuals included in the interviews were recognised by the boys. These included sports celebrities and images of the console games they were familiar with. Vicarious experiences among the boys in the group or individual interview shaped ideas that were out of reach for the boys, giving the opportunity to

introduce new ideas to the concept of *the way we do boy*. In the following excerpt from an interview with Philip, Peter and Malcolm there is reference to celebrity lifestyle when presented with the image of a famous sportsman and his motor bike.

Peter: Wow look what he's done with that sporty seat!

Philip: Yes I think men do it more means yes.

Malcolm: Is that Rossi?

Peter: Well that's his name.

One could argue that two processes are apparent here, first the excitement for Peter as he describes the sporty seat and then stepping forward again to confirm Malcolm's assertion that the picture may be an image of Valentino Rossi. In this exchange there is no move to dominate and force an opinion on another in the group; instead we have a gentle approach to developing talk about the image. Influencing and informing each other, perhaps a process of construction is taking place within the exchange between the boys and horizons are stretched slightly. This approach of gently constructing ideas and confirming knowledge was mirrored in another exchange, this time between Patrick, Chris and John when the same image was presented.

Patrick: Valentino Rossi.

Chris: You can see the Italian flag just there.

Patrick: Some women do motorcycle racing.

John: Yeh, but not many you don't see many.

Again the concept of *the way we do boy* is further enhanced in the interview and Valentino Rossi is first identified, then Chris adds to our knowledge by telling the other boys that the sportsman is Italian. Unlike in other exchanges where the boys were determined to include both men and

women in this pursuit, John retrieves this from Patrick by claiming this aspect as dominant for them and something that men can enjoy more. This may be due to the strength of this image as it includes a famous and successful sportsman. Nevertheless, the image provokes a vicarious enjoyment of an image that represents dominance and control and of a desire to claim this as part of their concept of *the way we do boy*.

For Ryan the idea of escape and a vicarious experience of something different gave him the opportunity to add being 'goofy' as an expression of *the way we do boy*. Although he enjoyed the amusement of the other participants, expressing humour via vicarious experience was a strong aspect of *the way we do boy* for many of the participants.

Ryan: I wish I lived in a Wallace and Gromit world.

Int.: Why do you wish you lived in a Wallace and Gromit world Ryan?

*Ryan: They live in a village and all these goofy things would go off.
(laughter).*

Ryan: Like a dog in a plane.

Links with the lives of other boys or fantasies about how boys might behave informed some of the talk of boys as they ruminated on vicarious experiences. This helped some of the boys invest in notions of boyhood being created and established for them not as participants but as vicarious commentators. In the following exchange Simon works hard to establish his position. The group are looking at images of rock musicians.

Simon: No I'm not interested in any of those.

Int.: Ryan you're interested?

Simon: My step brother Scott would be interested in that.
Int.: Right, in the guitarist...
Simon: He's got four. Actually, no he's got 5.
Ryan: But your step brother I'n't here,
Int.: Right
Ryan He's somewhere else I'n't he.
Simon: Yeh but, I said my step brother would want to do that and
he's got guitars.

Eventually Simon is allowed by Ryan to make his point and establish that vicarious experiences of the lives of other boys are valid when thinking about *the way we do boy*.

Pictures produced by the boys were full of images that they had no direct experience of, but had indirect vicarious experience through the lives of others close to or connected to their lives. All of the cars drawn were luxury models, top of their range and often had many additional features. In the following excerpt, Ryan discusses the car in his picture and the reasons for choosing that particular make. Although he has clear Xenophobic reasons for not choosing an alternative, his reason for choosing the make he places in his picture is related to the fact that his father's boss drives the same model.

Ryan: I just like BMWs they're really executive and sort of...i don't want a Lexus they make me think of big snobby Germans with massive double chins, and they have their cigarettes in the car and go (mimes someone smoking) like that all the time.
Int.: So you don't want that. I thought BMWs were German cars aren't they?
Ryan: Yeh, they're German, but Lexus make a big snobby thing.

Int.: Oh right.

*Ryan: (acts out person with posh car) Oh look at my Lexus!
(laughter)*

This excerpt demonstrates Ryan's love of a particular car, but also its status and of how it might suit him and his future as a man. In addition there are some clear reasons for including this within a construct of *the way we do boy*, as negative connotations are placed on the Lexus to provide some distance between it and an acceptable construct of masculinity.

The second thread of this theme centres on the enthusiasm the boys had for their consoles and the games they could play. During most days when I observed the boys in their classrooms, conversations took place between them about the games they were playing or what they might buy next. In addition, a reward for completing a piece of work early was to have access to the computer in the classroom. Invariably the boys immediately engaged in familiar internet games. On one occasion Ian arrived at school looking tired and slightly jaded. When I chatted to him, he informed me that his local supermarket had begun to sell a brand new game, desired by most of the older boys in the school, at a minute past midnight. He was proud to say that he had been first in the queue and had returned home to start playing. On going to bed in the early hours of the morning he had achieved the first level of the game and had now moved on to the next. In many of the conversations I had with the boys about the games they were playing, it struck me that the games were not only very accessible to them but during play they could be **embody** the characters.. Generally the characters were hyper masculine and were extremely successful in their virtual world. This success could be easily extended to the boys who played without necessarily revealing to other boys how well they were doing. Invariably when boys talked about their success the first boy would

place themselves at one level of a particular game and then the next boy would try to beat that. When the latest Grand Theft Auto game was released while I was at the school, the boys competed on a daily basis until all levels were complete. I suspect that some of the boys are still unable to complete the game although they stated at the time that they had many months ago. This gave the boys the opportunity to practice dominance and control as part of a masculine identity.

In the following excerpt Philip demonstrates how pervasive gaming was in his life.

Philip: Football, yesterday I played...oh was it yesterday? I think it was yesterday I played cricket on my play station. I played on my PSP on the bus yesterday and...

For Philip, escape from reality into the virtual world was accessible wherever he was even on public transport. He could be a successful cricketer one minute and a superhero the next. Gaming gave the boys a great deal of excitement, escapism and anticipation of what might be next to enter the gaming market. In this next excerpt, Ian ruminates on what might happen in the future to gaming.

Ian: It will be more, more different games more action in the games.

Int.: Better graphics?

Ian: Yeh. More action and better graphics.

Int.: Right, OK. So how much is that going to cost do you think?

Ian: More than the PS3 though.

Perhaps indicative here from the conversation with Ian, we have a sense of what gaming means to his life and to other boys in the school. Games equal living more exciting lives vicariously through the lives of the characters and practicing aspects of masculine not available to them in the real world. Ian takes these ideas further in the following extract, when he thinks about how he can make the games even more accessible to him as the technology moves forward.

Ian: Yeh, and then I had to go on E-Bay and get My PS3. So I'll be doing that with my PS2 then when I get my PS4.

Int.: So you keep your PS3 and you get your new PS4.

Ian: Yeh. Well the PS3 will be down stairs though or i might give it to my brother.

The fact that the PS4 is not yet on the market is not important here. Ian's ideas to keep those things he loves close to him and accessible are part of a plan to maintain this in his life. The knowledge Ian possessed regarding gaming and the gaming world was incredible and he often acted as a source of information to other boys on the next game coming into the shops.

Ian: I've finished Ironman.

Int.: Oh have you?

Ian: Yeh. So I've got to wait to get the Incredible Hulk now.

Int.: Yeh? So you like things that are real action that you have to work through.

Ian: The Black Knight's coming soon as well.

Int.: The Black Knight? What's that?

Ian: Batman.

Similar to other boys most games were part of three particular genres either sport, the anti hero¹¹ or in Ian's case superheroes. Others like Andy while enjoying the action elements in the games, preferred to play games with fighting as the main focus of the gaming.

Andy: The action and the adventure.

Int.: Yeh?

Andy: Stuff like that. Sword fighting games.

Int.: Sword fighting games. Are they your favourite?

Andy: And shooting games.

Andy went on to underline his preference for games later on in the interview.

Andy: I've got some fighting games. I've got Prince of Persia, South time for the PS 2, halo 2 for the X-Box, for the normal X-Box, and I'm hoping that I might get my X-Box 360 to get Halo 3 and Assassins Creed.

At the time of data collection Andy was due to go into hospital to correct a congenital health problem. This had prevented him from engaging in more physical activities in the practice of masculinity. Gaming gave him the opportunity to be like the other boys and feel what it might be like to be dominant, to take risks and be in control.

In the main the boys played games independently, although in one example from John the opportunity to join others in a virtual world was being explored.

¹¹ Example Grand Theft Auto.

John: Yeh, I do play those a lot of the time as well as others.

Int.: Do you play it on your own, or do you link up with people over the internet?

John: Well, as in the World of War Craft¹² I can play with other players at an instant.

Int.: Right?

John: So I just Log in and there's all those people that you've got you can't go on single player mode now.

This appeared to offer opportunities for John to meet with others and discuss the games they liked to play and to share ideas. The fact that this all took place in a virtual environment was not important to John.

John: Well we do have our little chats about what's...we don't say like what our names are and everything.

Int.: No?

John: Or where we live, we just talk about things, about like what we should do on this certain place. Or, like we talk about, really complain about stuff that is really annoying on the game and everything.

The significance of being anonymous is important to John. If no one knows who you are then they don't have any access to other information about you including that you have an ID. There are also other benefits to being anonymous in a virtual world in that you can work collaboratively towards the same goal without the hindrance of your ID getting in the way.

¹² A popular internet based fantasy games with the possibility to connect with people playing across the world.

John: 'cause there's different areas with as many people and you can join up with them as well. So I was in this instance and all of a sudden this creature we killed it of course and then something happened it just went off and then on and then she was there again and of course we were at full house so we had to kill her again. It just kept on happening so we had to run out of the instance and reset it all and everything.

Later on in the interview John describes another occasion when those on line had to collaborate to fix a problem.

John: There was like two dead bodies there when we came back and then we went there again it didn't happen again but with other ones it did and we were quite annoyed at it. We weren't annoyed 'cause we got extra things with it, but we were annoyed that it actually did happen when we were resting and everything.

John talked enthusiastically about his time joining with others to play his favourite game. The anonymity appeared to suit him and gave him a valued role as part of a team. It's impossible to know if others joining in the game had an ID or not, but this helped John to draw himself away from his identity as other or diminished in some way. At one point during the interview John spoke of age limits for the game with particular reference to the upper range for him and boys at the school.

John: It is quite interesting playing it still you can still...the game that I'm playing right now you can play at a certain age, but I had someone which was 106 playing once.

This suggests that John is looking for permission to take the games and his gaming on to adult life. Andy does the same when he talks about his father's involvement in computer gaming.

Andy: Well, he plays on the Wii sometimes but he doesn't play on the Play Station or X-box.

Int.: Right?

Andy: 'cause he says that some of the games make him dizzy.

Int.: Right?

Andy he doesn't like that. He says it makes him dizzy.

Arguably both John and Andy in their discussions about games and gaming find ways of including this in *the way we do boy*. In addition they clearly make it possible, from the examples that they give, to incorporate this into a future view of themselves as adult men. Simon also gives support to the notion that gaming can be part of a construct of masculinity beyond *the way we do boy* in the school.

Simon: Shall I start with my dad's?

Int.: Yes please.

Simon: Sega, sega advanced, a play station a play station 2 and a Wii and when my step brother (name) comes we got a X-box 360 as well and a play station 3.

Simon in the next excerpt considers a much earlier proposition for retaining games and gaming during transition assisted by the school.

Simon: No, no, no, you don't get money. It's like there's games... a play station 2 and X-box 360 and play station 3, in that big room.

Int.: OK.

Simon: No not the big room just the one you see people in.

Simon is referring to the room in the separate 16+ unit attached to the school. The room he's referring to is visible from the car park and so when arriving at school pupils can be seen playing on various games consoles. As mentioned previously, this is often talked about by the boys in the school and is one of the reasons there is some enthusiasm to stay on at the school beyond the age of sixteen.

Summary

The talk developed by the boys in the sorting exercise and interviews offer an invaluable insight into their lives. Through their conversations the participants have given form to *the way we do boy* in the school and the changes, ideals, experiences, and vicariousness that have and continue to shape this. The boys' insights are illustrations of their lives now, but also offer a glimpse of how they wish to shape their lives as men in the future. Their understanding of themselves and their interpretation of the lives of others, although referenced by limited opportunities, paint an extraordinary landscape which brings both opportunities and restrictions into sharp relief. In addition the boys appear to construct through their talk a way of doing boy that includes dominance; talk about risk taking; being good at football; not being like a girl; strength; control and independence; using humour. These offer a way of being for the boys in the school and provide a measure for other boys who might join them in the future. The next chapter examines these findings and considers them as they relate to theories of masculinity, disability and research in the field of learning disability.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how boys with Intellectual disabilities (ID) talk about their masculinity and if they have ideas about what life might be like when they become men. It has taken as its purpose the unveiling of the voice of boys with ID about being boys, what influences this and what this means for their future as men. In this chapter I shall discuss the emergent themes from the group and individual interview data in the context of previous research to evaluate and defend the claims made about boys with ID. The discussion will centre on the aims set for the study with regard to culturally normative or hegemonic ideas of masculinity and its context including the practice of masculinity. It is also driven by the four themes that have emerged from the analysis, changes; Ideals; experiences; vicariousness. They reveal either an aspect of the boys' view of the world and of masculinity (changes; experiences; vicariousness) or an aspect external to the boys' view that shapes 'the way we do boy' (ideals). A brief discussion of hope concludes this section introducing ideas about reasonable expectations for the lives of boys and men with ID. From this a theory of *the way we do ID boy to man* is built grounded in the boys' talk and the themes that have emerged from the analysis of it. Consideration will be given to a logical iteration for the theory which is intended to mirror the boys' talk about their lives. This logic will provide a scaffold from which the theoretical model can be built, presenting the canons that are central to a concept of masculinity framed by impairment. The boys' eloquence in positing their view of themselves and *the way we do boy* will be discussed throughout in consideration of their ability to be architects of their own destiny. Reflections on the methodology, including a personal reflection of my experience of working with the boys during data collection over a period of six months while working at the school, will be explored. The implication of these research findings will also be discussed with regard to future research, but also their

significance for boys with ID, their carers, families and professionals working in the field.

Building theory from the discourse of *the way we do boy*

The intention here is to begin to build an explanatory theoretical framework from *the way we do boy* grounded in the analysis of the boys' talk about their lives. Firstly, the analysis will be discussed in relation to the development of *the way we do boy* as a masculinity blue print for the boys in the study. The conclusion of this will then give rise to placing ID masculinity within a context which can provide a firm foundation for action. Literature will be used to extend the discourse of ID boyhood giving strength to the theoretical ideas through the construction of a practical model for implementation. The logic for a theoretical model will be presented followed by its properties and structure. Finally, the model will be discussed with regard to possible application. In doing so it is hoped that the research questions:

1. How do boys with ID talk about their masculinity?
2. What does this reveal about the influences on their ideas about their futures as men?

can be answered, but also emerge as one that can be proffered beyond the conclusion of this study with other boys with ID

'The way we do boy' as hegemony?

The initial objective for this study was to discover if boys with ID were able to articulate a view of being boys. It is clear from the analysis of the boys' talk and my observations of them that they were able to jointly construct ideas of how they lived their lives as boys. Most striking were the limited opportunities the boys had to construct a concept for *the way we do boy* which was a feature of all the emergent themes. Opportunities for the

practice of the boys' developing ideas of masculinity can be identified throughout the analysis as restricted to school; home; the football/basketball court; the virtual world. Despite this the boys were able to offer a nuanced view of how life was for them now and how life might be in the future. Of significance was how limited opportunities could offer experiences and ideas about ideals of masculinity either through their direct involvement or vicariously through the lives of others. However the issue remains whether it is useful to establish a hegemonic construct for boys with ID, if this helps boys to gain access to the world of men and so advance our understanding of the process of change and transition in relation to gender.

Banyard's (2010) conclusion that the classroom environment is a training ground for future relationships is useful in further advancing an understanding of the boys' talk regarding the development of their identities. Despite Banyard (2010) working with younger children without ID, her account accords with the prominence of the school in the boys' talk and its influence during a formative time of change. The clarity of this influence permeated ideas regarding their place in the school and the spaces used to develop those ideas, including the interview room throughout the conduct of this study. Participants were often very certain of the way that they performed their part as boys in the school. These expressions were often linked to hegemonic or culturally normative aspects of boyhood similar to some of those identified by Frosh et al (2002) as 'popular masculinities', involving "...sporting prowess...dominance and control.' (p. 77). In Benjamin's (2001) work it is the rigid adherence to culturally normative ideas of being a boy in particular being macho and competitive, in her analysis of the school lives of boys with ID struggling in the school system, that she argues is the result of their limited experience and social interaction. This is also true of the lives of boys in this study as they too tended towards a rigid set of dominant ideas about masculinity

that can be located in the analysis of their talk which appeared to include: dominance; talk about risk taking; being good at football; not being like a girl; strength; control and independence; using humour. However, like the boys in Benjamin's (2001) study it is the adherence to these normative ideas of being boys which acknowledged their shared experience of boyhood with other boys in the school, boys without ID, but perhaps most importantly their difference from girls. In this sense it is perhaps useful for boys with ID to be able to own a set of normative ideas to help locate a place in mainstream boyhood, be that from a limited set of experiences practiced in a restricted set of environments.

For the boys in this study, as in the study by Benjamin (2001), it was the lack of opportunity beyond school and home that shaped and influenced ideas about being boys. Although there was rigidity on occasion with regard to how they wanted to be viewed as boys, there was some flexibility when they talked about difference and the acceptance of flawed masculinity although this had its limits. As in the mainstream literature (Connell, 2000; Whitehead, 2002; Frosh et al, 2002; Swain, 2003; Dalley-Trim and Cook, 2007; Banyard, 2010 Dalley-Trim and Cook, 2007;) the boys did work to subordinate undesirable aspects of doing boy, but this was rarely aimed directly at another boy in the group. Collectively, the boys were extremely supportive and caring of one another's ideas. They displayed affection and support for each other's views and worked together to accept or reject the images presented to them during interviews. However, there was one particular exception when a confession of weakness was too much for the boys in the interview to accept as part of a concept of *the way we do boy* (see extract with Philip on p.g 163). The silencing of Philip here is key to the way the boys shaped *the way we do boy*, which identified screaming like girls or being a woosey as clearly a subordinated aspect of boyhood. Being different in this way was clearly

not acceptable and yet being different was part of the boys' lives as many had experienced the negative effects of not fitting in.

Difference and the vulnerability that this could reveal was an important aspect of the boys' talk about their lives. Their dislike of and desire to put distance between their way of being and the behaviour of other boys and men who bullied or left them feeling vulnerable, was an essential part of the concept of *the way we do boy*. In the interviews the boys were happy to talk about their experiences as boys, but were careful not to allow their ID to obscure that. This is evidenced not by what the boys talked about but what they neglected to talk about, their ID. Rare talk about their ID was often accompanied by accounts of rejection by boys and men without ID. This was supported by the stories that I had heard outside the interview room about school careers marked by rejection from mainstream provision as illustrated by Ian and Harry (see p.g. 185). In actual fact all the boys in the study had experienced inclusion in mainstream education but had moved to the special education sector when this had failed. Of interest was how the boys' talk about their lives and the future could reveal the fragile nature of the construction of their identities as boys. Craig's desire to find his own way to school for the first time at the age of seventeen (see p.g. 144), is perhaps indicative of a dilemma for the boys in developing a credible identity as male. There is no doubt that the change Craig identifies calls for aspects of *the way we do boy* including risk taking and strength both of which the boys identified as important. However, the actual activity exposes how limited their lives were and how different that life is compared to boys of a similar age without ID. The boys' talk in this study reveals a quandary between a context that encourages them to think of themselves as boys first and the practice of that which reveals vulnerability and difference. It is perhaps evident that access to 'the good things in life' (Osburn, 2006; p. 4), in this example greater independence, is influenced not only by normalised ideas but also the influence of gender

including how differently boys might think about independence. Yet without an understanding of difference including the idiosyncratic nature of being human and the effects of impairment (Thomas, 1999) on the boys' concept of independence, an essential piece of the jigsaw is missing. Indicated here is the idea that those who support boys with ID should begin to assist them to acknowledge that the ideas they have about their futures, may be affected by gender and also how their ID impacts on those ideas. Without this there is a danger that boys are encouraged to weave their own cloak of competence as in Edgerton's (1967) work that can easily be torn down heightening risk and strengthening an identity as diminished. As in Connors and Stalker (2007) the boys' reluctance to use a language of difference may perversely add to this problem outside the protected environments of school and home.

Developing the idea that difference in the lives of boys with ID is a significant consideration, it is important to make a comparison between the lives of the boys in this study and that of boys without ID who participated in the study conducted by Frosh et al (2002). Popular masculinities for the boys in the study conducted by Frosh et al (2002) involved "hardness", sporting prowess, 'coolness', casual treatment of schoolwork and being adept at 'cussing', dominance and control.' (p. 77). The issue of 'hardness' for the boys in the study was different from that expressed by Frosh et al (2002), in that although there were confrontations in the school between boys these were often few in number. However, there were expressions in the groups regarding how well the boys could handle themselves if challenged in any way. Interestingly though, a clear etiquette was stated in the conduct of fights that was particular to this group of boys (see Chris and John p.g. 167). Chris and John have a clear idea about conduct here that you could demonstrate 'hardness' by walking away, but be able to defend yourself if necessary. The ultimate wrong was being seen to start the fight in the first instance. It is perhaps the difference in approach by

the boys in this study that again singles them out, magnifying their difference. As mentioned previously the boys involved in the study had been victims of bullies and in some cases had left a mainstream school as a result of it (see Chris p.g. 184). Chris offers an interesting account of *'these fights...'* being intrinsic to the experience of being bullied. Once more it is perhaps the practice of the alternative to a dominant hegemony of 'hardness', which exposes both difference and vulnerability.

One aspect of the boys' lives which offered the opportunity to escape difference was through the computer games that they played. This was a surprising finding from the study, but one that was revealing of their desire to vicariously embody masculine characters and practice strength, control and independence. The image of the assassin roaming the virtual world in search of his next victim was one that could be successfully achieved by any of the boys in the study (see John p.g. 195). John's description was typical of the boys' talk about the games they played. In contrast to the work of Frosh et al (2002), 'hardness' was something that could be introduced in different ways. It could be the descriptions of real activity, although often at odds with the dominant hegemony, or of successes on a virtual level offering equal access to the world of boy on equal terms. A risk of playing these games was that it may strengthen undesirable aspects of the boys' developing ideas of masculinity. This could include control which over time may raise negative effects associated with the perception of violence as suggested by Deselms and Altman (2003). In addition the characterisation of hyper masculinity in the games may have a negative effect on perceptions of gender roles as described in the work of Dill and Thill (2007). However, potentially this is useful as the virtual world offered the boys an additional space for gendered practice where no one could tell you that you were wrong or criticise your performance compared to other boys. Following analysis and the emergence of this finding a paper was produced for publication which investigates this further (see appendix H).

The conclusion of the paper suggests that the virtual gaming world may present an opportunity to engage with boys and men with ID about masculinity and gendered practice. As a consequence this engagement may provide a catalyst for engaging in ideas about difference including how this exposes vulnerability.

Frosh et al (2002) introduces a canonical narrative that states that 'Some boys are more masculine than others' (p.77), in response to their participants' talk about hyper masculine individuals. The image of the hyper masculine individual in their work was one that was surprisingly rejected by boys in the study, particularly when the boy lacked the interpersonal skills to counteract an extreme masculine persona. Interestingly in the current study images of the hyper masculine characters in games were accepted and happily embraced by the boys. However, real representations of hyper masculinity caused the boys to work hard to distance themselves from it, as in their talk about counter ideals of vandals and gang members (see p.g 166-167). Unlike participants from the Frosh et al (2002) study struggling to counteract the extreme masculine persona, the boys in the current study responded by either talking in derogatory ways about this or relating it to their experiences of being bullied. Their derogation and rejection of these images connected to their vulnerability, was perhaps indicative of their experiences of difference and a fear of being regarded as diminished by others and therefore not being regarded as fully masculine.

Dominance and control as parts of a concept of *the way we do boy* was played out in the school and in the interview room. However, in contrast to the boys who participated in Frosh et al's (2002) study limited opportunities existed again for the boys in the current study to practice these aspects of masculine identity. Despite this limitation the boys were able to construct ideas of dominance in the school and in the interview room. One

example of this was an exchange between the boys when they played with ideas of dominating or controlling in the school via role play (see Patrick and John p.g. 160), also in the group interviews when the boys negotiated the relevance of a particular image to their lives. However, there were moments in the classroom when boys were disruptive and didn't get on with the work set by the teaching staff, but the boys were aware of the consequence of their actions and the immediate controls that would be put in place. This is represented through the words of Ryan in his description of the sanctions imposed on boys in the school (see p.g. 160) The issue for boys in the study was not only their attempts to dominate and control a situation, but the further establishment of the ability of other men without ID in their lives to control and dominate them.

Being good at football was a definitive way of demonstrating your identity as a boy in the school, revealed in the boys' talk and my observations. This presented the boys with another perspective for gendered practice within their limited set of opportunities to perform ideas associated with dominance, strength and control. This accords in part with the work of Swain (2003) who contends that access to the 'world of men' is connected to being 'active, physical, competitive...' (p.303). These ideas were intrinsic to the lives of the boys in the school and related well to their attachment to football. This activity gave the boys opportunity to perform, to prove themselves, to show off their skill and subordinate others by demonstrating the latest tackles. What might again be surprising here is the boys' ability to locate and then subordinate difference within a concept of '*the way we do boy*', given that their lives were often framed by accounts of difference related to their identity as other attending a special school and their rejection from mainstream provision. However, this appeared crucial to an understanding of the gendered identity of this group of boys and the necessity to establish difference so that a clear culture for '*the way we do boy*' could be instituted. As Frosh et al (2002) point out in their research

the location of difference between boys in their study was an important factor in establishing a masculine identity. In Frosh et al's (2002) study these differences were associated with a way of doing boy influenced by place, time and the response to the practice of masculinity in the school. The boys' desire in the current study to be acknowledged as boys with true dominant and masculine identities was clear from the interactions I had with them. They were not interested in being viewed as boys with ID, but they were eager to ensure that I was clear about how they were male. However, as mentioned previously difference played a central role in the boys' lives often emerging from encounters with boys and men without ID. Being good at football offered a place and time to practice masculinity in relative safety and to receive responses from peers and adult staff about *the way we do boy*. Similar to their time spent in the virtual world of gaming the boys were protected from comparison with other boys without ID and from those who might tell them that their way of doing boy was wrong. Essentially, being good at football appeared to protect the boys from the risk that their impairment may reveal their vulnerability instead offering an opportunity to just do boy.

Being good at football also accords with the practice of masculinity and the body in sport. The boys in Frosh et al's (2002) study also identified football as a 'key motif' as the boys talked about the construction of a masculine identity. In addition, Swain (2003) also noted the strength of football in a developing construct of masculinity within school systems. However, the difference between the study of the body in the literature and the boys in the current study was that their bodies were used purely to display their love of football and how that helped them to do boy. The body was not used to demonstrate power or to dominate other boys as this was too close to their own experience of this in mainstream education. Nor did there appear to be any desire to use sport to change the way their bodies looked as in Hargreave and Tiggemann (2006), or to have the opportunity to

compare their developing bodies with other boys as in Ricciardelli et al (2006).

One aspect of the boys' developing concept of *the way we do boy*, initially devoid of the effect of their ID, was that related to masculinity and activities perceived as feminine. Using another of Frosh et al's (2002) canonical narratives, we can perhaps begin to understand how the boys began to structure ideas about being a boy in the school and then to ruminate on how that might translate as they became men. On occasion the boys' talk gave prominence to boys maintaining 'their difference from girls (and so avoid doing anything that is seen as what girls do)' (Frosh et al, 2002; p. 77). This became starkly apparent when the boys were shown images of men engaged in what the boys perceived as feminine activities. One image had been included in response to the involvement of some of the boys in a floristry class to emphasise what had been put forward as a new ideal for boys in the school. This had been celebrated as a great success in the school, but the boys' response to this in the interview room was definitive and they used the moment to firmly maintain that they were not like girls. This emerged again in their experiences of cooking which they saw as a female activity distinguishing what they did by using the word 'catering'. More subtly the boys developed ideas to maintain their difference by establishing how certain aspects of their lives might change over time. Philip in his interview (see p,g. 156) clearly identifies where boys and men are more dominant when it comes to going out and drinking in clubs. Philip establishes that over time this is a male activity, the difference between men and women is that over time women eventually change their behaviour. These findings from the analysis support an aspect of masculinity negotiated by the boys which does concord with the mainstream literature (Frosh et al, 2002; Swain, 2003).

In furthering the analysis of the boys' perception of their difference from girls and women, there was one finding that emerged from the boys' talk in this regard which contrasts with the research by Frosh et al (2002). This was in relation to the boys in the current study and their identification of intellectual difference between men and women. Although similar in some ways to conclusions about the views of public school boys towards state school boys with specific reference to intellect in the work of Frosh et al (2002), it is interesting that the boys in the current study only make reference to intellect in relation to their experiences of women. First Ryan (see p.g. 176) and then Simon (see p.g. 181) suggest that there may be a difference. Simon's assertion that women's use of intellectual skills was unfair is interesting and introduces an experienced difference between the boys and the women in their lives. It is worth noting again that the boys interviewed experienced a female dominance in all areas of their lives and so we might assume that Simon's protestation is about being outsmarted on a regular basis, establishing an intellectual difference between him and the women in his life. Ryan's idea is much clearer as he states that *'...women think more than men,'*. Again we could assume that Ryan's experience of the world is of women who use their intellect much more skilfully than either him or his school friends. Potentially this finding could have a huge impact on boys with ID and their developing identities as men compared to that of men without ID. Unlike conclusions by Wilson (2009), it does appear that women did have an effect on the lives of boys in this study. There was a clear attempt to counter the dominance of women in the boys' talk in their attempts to distance themselves from all things feminine. It therefore suggests that the context or place for the practice of gendered ideas must be considered in relation to those who create it and those who occupy it including boys and men with ID and their male and female supporters. In doing so it is most likely that a positive and valued construction of ID masculinity will be supported and the diminished ideas of it reduced as recommended by Wilson (2009).

The use of humour in interviews by the boys was also significant in establishing *the way we do boy*. Similar to Dalley-Trimmm and Cook's (2007) representation of the class clown, the boys in this study would use humour in conjunction with misogynistic language to shape *the way we do boy*. An example of this can be found in talk between Chris, John and Patrick (see p.g 169-170), as they work together to exclude women from aspects of football. It was outside the scope of the current study to involve girls as participants and so there is no evidence that the boys used humour and misogyny in an aggressive way to exert dominance or control over them. However, there were moments in the school day when I felt that the boys worked to deliberately exclude girls, unless they could conform to their way of being as in their football games.

It is clear that in this part of the discussion focussing on the development of hegemonic ideas, the boys in this study conformed to a particular concept that can be articulated as *the way we do boy*. This concept included dominance; talk about risk taking; being good at football; not being like a girl; strength; control and independence; using humour. It is essential, if we are to view this as hegemonic that this is understood within the context of the changes, ideals, experiences and vicarious view apparent in the talk of the boys talk in the interview room. Although there are striking similarities between this and research involving boys without ID, in the case of boys with ID this concept could have either positive or negative outcomes with regard to developing masculine identity. *The way we do boy* could be useful in identifying shared experiences with other boys with or without ID and difference from girls and women, to provide access to the world of boys and men. Alternatively, as has been shown, the concept could also reveal counter hegemonic aspects of masculinity in the form of difference and vulnerability. The lack of opportunity to experience and perform aspects of gender may be indicative of the fragility of the concept

of *the way we do boy*. The interview room gave the boys in this study a forum to talk about their lives as boys. Therefore a recommendation may be to engage with boys with ID proactively in their pursuit of a gendered identity by engaging them in talk about masculinity. As Benjamin (2001) suggests, without assistance to problematise a developing masculinity, counter hegemonic ideas of boys with ID as excluded and displaced may not be challenged. However, a major threat to the access of boys with ID to the world of boys and men is posited in the research by Frosh et al (2002). They found that for the boys in their study intelligence played a significant part in the development of masculine identity. 'Nonetheless, popular masculinity does require an insouciant sharp-wittedness that runs counter to 'stupidity', and this seems to be drawn out of the image of the hegemonic ideal as fast and cool, never to be a dupe.' (p.81). The complexity of access then for boys with ID lies in the crux of this statement, that difference as it applies to intellect is a major stumbling block when boys with ID wish to be regarded as boys first.

Context in relation to *the way we do boy* is an important point of discussion in relation to the practice of gender and so the discussion expands on the ideas presented thus far to further support ideas for a theoretical model for the investigation of this in practice.

A context for 'the way we do boy'

The boys who participated in this study were engaged in new beginnings as they encountered changes through their transition to adult life within a limited range of contexts including the school, home, the football/basketball area and the virtual gaming world. As presented in chapter 1, masculinity is described as a contested phenomenon in the literature and discussions regarding its negotiation are framed by a dialogical relationship between men and women in a context influenced by place, space and time. Connell's (2001) definition may help to further an understanding of

masculinity in context as it relates to the lives of the boys who participated in the study. Connell (2001) states that '...Masculinity'...is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture' (p. 33-34). Juxtaposing the definition with the analysis of the boys' talk, helps to give form to a deeper understanding of a context in which changes were beginning to take shape indicating a move from the child to the adult world. The practice of masculinity for the boys both in and outside the interview room established the concept of *the way we do boy* contextualised by the limits of: place, limited to the school, home, football/basketball area and the virtual world of gaming; bodily experience, framed by impairment; personalities, tinged with vulnerability; their culture, suggested by their place in the special school system. The limits of practice, as discussed previously in relation to hegemonic ideas of masculinity, were a significant part of how the boys negotiated with each other and the adults in their lives, throughout transition and in their expectations for a future as men.

It could be suggested that the uniqueness of *the way we do boy* was also affected by gender relations in a context where the most predominant adult figures were women. As discussed previously, analysis of the boys' talk does uncover to an extent the effect of women on their developing identities. The presence of women was a clear part of the context from which the concept of *the way we do boy* emerged. They were present at a formative time of change, were part of their experiences of being boys, listened to them talking about ideals and their vicarious experience of the lives of characters in games. In fact it was in the group interviews where a female chaperone was present that the boys debated issues of equality even if the conclusion favoured them as boys or men. The reaction of boys in the study to women and girls in their lives, including distancing themselves from all things feminine, may aimed at countering their own

experience of difference or of others perceptions of them as diminished as in McDonough (2000). Therefore, it is perhaps relevant to suggest that the role of women in the lives of boys and men with ID is considered.

However, it should also be acknowledged that the most prominent accounts of the ideals of masculinity for boys included powerful images of men in control either in lessons or at break times. This included both positive and negative accounts of the influence of men on the lives of the boys who took part in the current study. The most positive account was that of the classroom assistant encouraging the boys to be good at football. Of most significance here is that the boys were in control of how the construction of *the way we do boy* was assembled and they were discerning about who could be involved in that. Consequently, the context created on the football/basketball area was significant to the development of the boys' developing identity as male. It is perhaps relevant then that consideration of the role of women should be investigated in conjunction with the role of men within contexts that help boys and men with ID to practice gendered identities.

The boys' desire to follow a normalised route through transition to adulthood was a strong driver from the boys themselves and also from staff in the school. There appeared to be a predominant fear that the boys should not be disappointed and so issues of vulnerability and risk in the world beyond the school were to an extent hidden and so rarely talked about by the boys. Only one of the boys could identify a possible pitfall when he experienced the problems his brother had when he left to live with his girlfriend. This was associated with the expectation that the context for life as a child would change to a different context for adult life. The revelation that this change could be temporary and uncertain was a worrying discovery. John's view about leaving home (see p.146) is perhaps indicative of parental fears as their sons make their move from the

family home to a more independent context. Fyson's (2008) view that a balance should be struck between choice, control and vulnerability is perhaps pertinent here. The complex vulnerabilities that are at play are a fertile ground from which to generate new ideas that value independence, including all the good things that can emerge from this, balanced with regard for the boys' desire to control their lives whilst having a clear view of the idiosyncrasies of ID. Using Fisher (2007) it may also be a point of contention that families are encouraged to affirm their children's pursuit of independence as they regard this as something that is expected of them without a thorough analysis of the effect of a child's impairment. Further complexities may be assumed as change that is considered as part of a goal of normalised existence may not be critiqued with regard to issues of gender. Manthorpe et al (1997), may offer some clues to this when they consider the gender issues associated with a simple normalised pursuit, going to the pub. The authors acknowledge that there are gender differences between men and women when drinking behaviours are considered. This was certainly something that the boys in the current study were aware of, including how men might take risks when they drink alcohol. Manthorpe et al (1997) conclude that even with a simple normalised activity thought about gender are crucial. Although limited, this may offer some hint that the context for gendered practice should be acknowledged as we consider how people with ID can live as part of communities.

Ideas about *the way we do boy* were constructed through their talk about their lives and through their behaviour within the context of school. This appears to correlate well with the views of both MacInnes (1998) and Banyard (2010) who account for the contestable nature of masculinity and femininity as it is shaped and re-shaped through dialogue. The accounts given by the boys also add to Banyard's (2010) contention that boys and girls occupy the 'trenches' of masculinity or femininity which are carved out

in school life. In a sense the boys were establishing a hegemony of *the way we do boy* to add definition to those 'trenches' and to place themselves as strong proponents of boyhood in the school environment. The realisation of the boys' ability to construct ideas about their boyhood and of their masculinity in the school was clearly identified both in observations of them and in their talk. However, the boys who participated did not at this stage appear perturbed in anyway by a 'crisis' in young masculinities as suggested by Frosh et al (2002). They were aware of each other's lives as boys and of the lives of men, but this offered only a limited view of masculinity and the opportunities that this might bring. Although the school provided support for the boys in relation to their academic and vocational development, there appeared little in the way of assistance to help them navigate the changes in their gendered lives. In addition, there appeared to be little focus to help the boys make sense of their lives as boys and of future possibilities or to establish their position as boys in the school and project ideas of what that might mean for them in the future. Evidence for this was apparent in the lack of contexts offered for the practice or exploration of gendered lives outside of the football/basketball court or for a short period of time within the interview room for this study. It is clear from the words of the boys that they had a genuine curiosity about their lives and the lives of others and yet they lacked the support to challenge the inequalities that were likely to increase as they moved from boyhood to manhood as highlighted in the previous section. The challenge with regard to the equality of men and women suggested by Connell (2001) is too simplistic to apply to the lives of the boys interviewed as part of this research project. Although the boys did not outwardly identify themselves as unequal due to their masculinity, their impairment had a huge effect on their developing identities as men and of their understanding of what was ahead. In essence the boys were unaffected by the equality debate faced by men and women at this stage in their lives, although they were concerned by sexism and not being seen to

be unfair, their own impairment was a much more powerful yet unspoken indication of their inequality as part of the wider social context.

Being a boy with ID had an established identity that was specific to the experiences that the boys had in the context of the school environment. Opportunities were limited, but this did not prevent the boys from articulating ideas of what they were and what they ultimately wanted to be. There were times when the boys experimented or fantasised about what boys should be like and again these were referenced from experiences that they had encountered in the present and the past. Therefore, although limited the school provided the context from which *the way we do boy* was established and practiced.

What about hope?

The discussion raises a number of concerns regarding the limited gendered lives of boys with ID and their struggles for a masculine identity. These concerns raise issues with regard to difference and vulnerability within a context that is supposed to enable full inclusion and access to an ordinary life. The analysis presents a predominantly gloomy picture of boys developing a concept for *the way we do boy*, while struggling with counter hegemonic representations that regard them as different from the mainstream and having a diminished masculine identity. It is pertinent to pause then for a moment at the end of the discussion to ask a question regarding the present and future for boys with ID, what about hope? Weingarten (2010) in her essay concerning the construct of hope in western societies uses the modifier 'reasonable' to re-focus our thinking, helping in a pursuit of hope when the odds are not stacked in our favour. Weingarten (2010) describes reasonable hope as, '...consistent with the meaning of the modifier, suggests something both sensible and moderate, directing our attention to what is within reach more than what may be desired but unobtainable.' (p. 7). In the context of this study, this indicates

an active approach to assisting boys and men with ID to consider goals that are within their reach as opposed to those that might be dictated by the pervading ideology of normalisation and inclusion. Weingarten (2010) goes on to build on this central message by insisting that reasonable hope is not an isolated individualised quest, but requires the help of others to create actions. She asks those who are in roles to support others to, ‘...cultivate a practice of identifying realistic goals and pathways toward them for ourselves and for others.’ (p. 9). The concept of reasonable hope provides a scaffold on which to begin to build a future. It does not have a linear trajectory but is flexible enough to provide a safety net when plans do not reach their expected goals. Finally, Weingarten (2010) makes a comparison between reasonable hope and innocent hope which was often supported by those involved with the boys in the study. ‘Public life is rife with contradictions as is family life. Reasonable hope is easier to sustain since it does not get dashed, as innocent hope may if contradictions emerge.’ (p.10). In essence reasonable hope presents us with an alternative way of thinking that enables realistic change in this case for boys and men with ID. These ideas can be fostered within an open model for the consideration of the lives of boys and men with ID as discussed next.

The logic of an explanatory theoretical framework for ‘ways of doing ID boy to ID man’

Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe grounded theory development as emerging from the relationship between themes which explain the phenomenon that has been explored. They envisage the culmination of this process as an ‘explanatory theoretical framework’ (p.22), which encompasses the essence of the findings and a foundation to a new field of knowledge which can be expanded by further research. The explanatory theoretical framework presented here aims to delineate the boys’ understanding of their developing masculinity now and how they

might be supported to think about their masculinity in the future. Unlike positivist theory development which is determinist and relies on causality, interpretive theory development 'calls for the imaginative understanding of the studied phenomenon' (Charmaz, 2006; p.126). Taking a constructivist stance on theory as in Charmaz (2006), the explanatory theoretical framework that follows is intended as an interpretation of a social constructed phenomenon that has emerged from the voices of boys with ID. As such it includes processes of reflexivity and allows for indeterminacy, instead of providing explanation of the connections between the research themes.

Logic for an explanatory theoretical framework of 'ways of doing ID boy to ID man' is presented next to provide foundation for a theoretical model grounded in the data. It is derived from the themes from the analysis and the discussion of these. It provides a hopeful starting point from which the practice of masculinity for boys and men with ID can be considered.

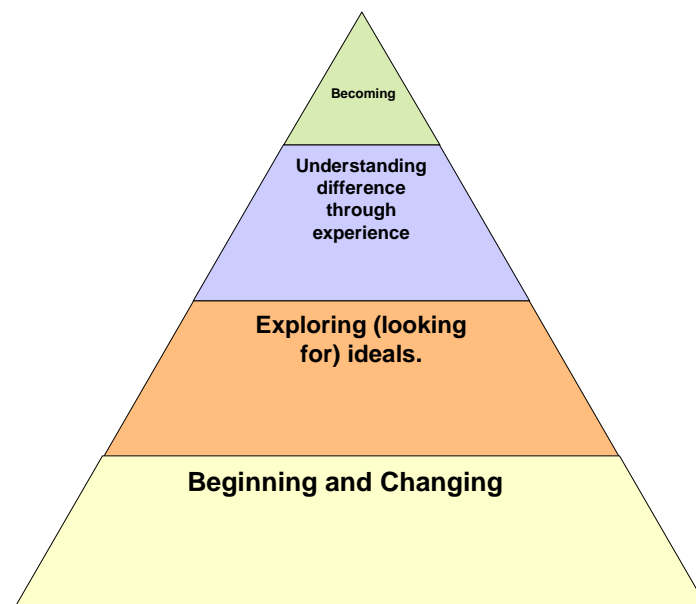


Figure 11: The logic for an explanatory theoretical framework of 'ways of doing ID boy to ID man'(see appendix E for larger version).

Figure 11 offers a diagrammatical representation of the logic for a proposed explanatory theoretical framework. The logic indicates a transition for boys with ID to adulthood and beyond. It can be viewed as a progression from beginning and changing to becoming or as a solid stable structure from which to construct a theoretical model for *ways of doing ID boy to ID man*.

At the time of data collection, the boys in this study were engaged in conversations and meetings about transition. This new beginning represented a route that would lead them through a course of change to adulthood and new lives as men. For the boys in the study this led to the exploration of ideas and formulations about what life might be like for them in the future. The context for the boys' lives at this time supported a logical progression that enabled the boys to explore ideas about where they would live, ideas about employment and new relationships. A negotiation of what was and could be part of their lives was an intrinsic part of this exploration. Understanding difference was often a rarely spoken aspect of doing boy for those in the study and yet talk about difference often revealed poignant moments of vulnerability or the realisation of intellectual difference. Engaging with boys and men with ID about these experiences and their potential impact on masculinity would appear to be a logical point of focus. Finally, the logic of an explanatory theoretical framework based on the analysis of this study would suggest a consideration of the boys' position as observers and how this might be usefully engaged with in thinking about developing masculinities. In essence this refers to the boys' ability to observe the lives of others and establish ideas that might influence their developing identities. The representation of the logic for the development of a theoretical model is deliberately pyramidal in design, as this indicates strength of structure but also that disregard for any aspect of the logic would render the model unstable.

The properties of 'ways of doing (ID) boy to man'

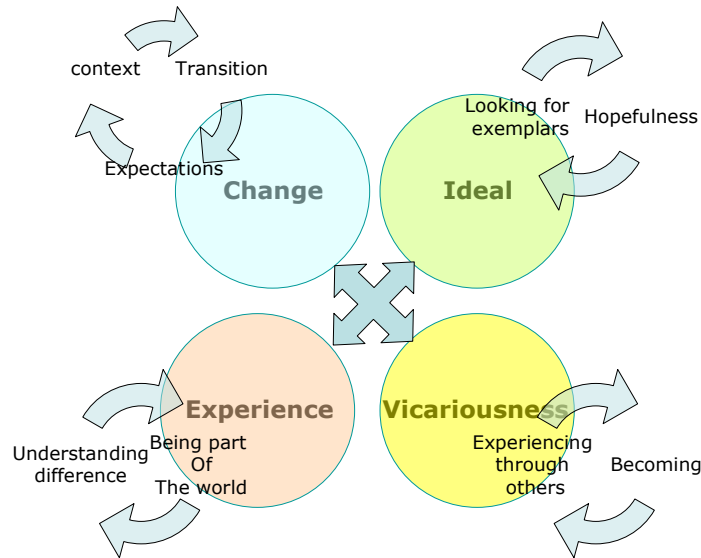


Figure 12: An explanatory theoretical framework for ways of doing ID boy to ID man. (see larger version appendix F)

Proposed here is a theoretical model which is a formulation intended for practical application when working with teenagers or men with ID (see figure 12). It takes as its central concept a way of doing boy that is grounded in the words of boys with ID themselves. It is not intended as a linear process to follow, but a dynamic format that should be explored by boys and men with ID and those who support them. Nor is it intended as a format on which to build a plan that should be implemented. In essence it is intended as a way of supporting a journey of discovery and clarifying contexts for developing ideas about masculinity. The model puts forward four main aspects to guide thinking and discussion with regard to *the ways we do ID boy to ID men*: change; ideal; experience; vicariousness. These aspects are orbited by points of focus, offering a way of thinking about the four aspects. The points of focus are presented in a circular fashion to

denote both the influence each can have on the other and also to convey constant movement within the model.

Change suggests that context, transition and expectations are points of reference to raise awareness of the changes that can transform lives. These are the things that we must pay attention to, helping to understand the position of boys and men with ID in the practice of their developing masculinity. In the current study the key contexts for the development of ideas about masculinity included the school, home, the football/basketball area and the virtual gaming world. In the analysis it was clear that context played a significant part in the boys' developing ideas about their identities. Therefore context, including structures of support surrounding boys and men with ID, must be examined to consider the effects of these on a developing masculinity. Transition is an established part of the lives of young people with ID. However, it would be remiss to only acknowledge this as part of the lives of young people with ID as other transitional points are likely to occur at other points in the person's life. This is a dynamic part of the model as it indicates change throughout life not just from school to the adult world. Finally, expectations appear as a point of focus of change. The intention of this is that the expectations of boys and men with ID are discussed in a reasonable way and they are encouraged to consider realistic goals. In addition it is hoped that this will also encourage those supporting boys and men with ID to acknowledge their own expectations for the futures of those in their care. It is hoped that this will encourage an honest dialogue with regard to the expectations of all.

Ideal helps to channel attention on the search of ideals of masculinity within the development of male identity. Consideration is given to looking for exemplars with boys and men with ID to aid in their development of a masculine identity. As indicated in the analysis of this study it is acknowledged that exemplars can be those which present positive

representations of masculinity, but also boys and men with ID should be given the opportunity to explore negative examples of masculinity too. This reflects that access to the world of men is built upon both positive and negative constructs of being male. Boys and men with ID should be given assistance to consider the balance of these and how they can be performed. Hopefulness for an achievable ideal for boys and men with ID is also included as part of the model. Influenced by the work of Weigarten (2010), this offers the opportunity to consider reasonable hope when considering the examples that boys and men with ID might uncover. It is expected that this aspect of the model will encourage discussion with reference to what is acceptable and culturally normative with regard to a construct of masculinity for boys and men with ID.

Experience of the world of men is raised as a particular aspect of the model to acknowledge what is currently available to boys and men with ID. In turn we begin to acknowledge the desire to be part of the world of men perhaps beyond their current experience. In addition, experience of difference and what that means to the boy or man with ID is essential again to acknowledge both the positive and negative effects of difference in the lives of this group.

Vicariousness is included as an aspect of the model to acknowledge how boys and men with ID can be on the periphery, but still have a sense of masculinity through the experiences of others. It is also included as the boys' opportunities for direct experiences were limited and vicarious experiences helped to fill in the gaps. This is particularly pertinent as it offers possibilities for the development of ideas about masculinity that go beyond the limited opportunities that the boys in the current study talked about. Experiencing through others points to the boys' ability, in the current study, to vicariously embrace the lives of others and their developing identities as men. Becoming then refers to the boys' vicarious

view of boys and men becoming someone different, echoing the words of Ian in the presentation of the analysis (see p.g. 168). Also, again with reference to the boys in the current study, this may mean working alongside boys and men with ID as they embody culturally normative characteristics of masculinity. For the boys in the current study this would require engaging with them in the computer games they loved. This values the development of ideas about masculinity gained from a vicarious point of view and considers this as relevant to the lives of boys and men with ID. However, it also offers an opportunity to join with the boys in questioning problematic aspects of masculinity including misogyny and the objectification of women.

To develop the model further the practical application of it will now be discussed.

Applying the explanatory theoretical framework of ways we do (ID) boy to man

The application of the model as it is described above is a useful tool to help practitioners ask questions about the lives of boys and men with ID. However, it lacks a secondary analytical layer to address the daily struggles that were encountered by the boys in the current study. As the counter hegemonic constructs of difference and vulnerability played such a poignant part in the lives of the boys in the current study, it would appear reasonable to consider an addition to the model to allow for greater scrutiny of these issues. This will help to identify the effect of difference on the lives of boys and men with ID and its impact on their experience of vulnerability. This will also help to address the counter hegemonic representation of masculinity described in Benjamin's (2001) work as excluded and displaced which leads to a diminished construct of masculinity for boys and men with ID.

Clear analysis of each aspect of the model and the points of focus used to consider lives of boys and men with ID is required to ensure that both difference and vulnerability are clearly addressed. The work of Thomas (1999) may offer a layer of analysis that will help to consider the model's aspects more closely and help practitioners remain curious about the intricacies of developing masculine identities. Although derived from work with disabled women, Thomas's (1999) work nevertheless offers a cohesive approach to the consideration of individuals who are oppressed by society. This can easily be adapted to provide a set of focussed lens to consider each aspect of the model and the points of focus, to advance an analysis of the lives of boys and men with ID as they navigate the constant change in their lives. Described in detail in Chapter 1, the following provides a description of each concept in Thomas's (1999) work and how this might be utilised with the theoretical model for ways we do ID boys to men.

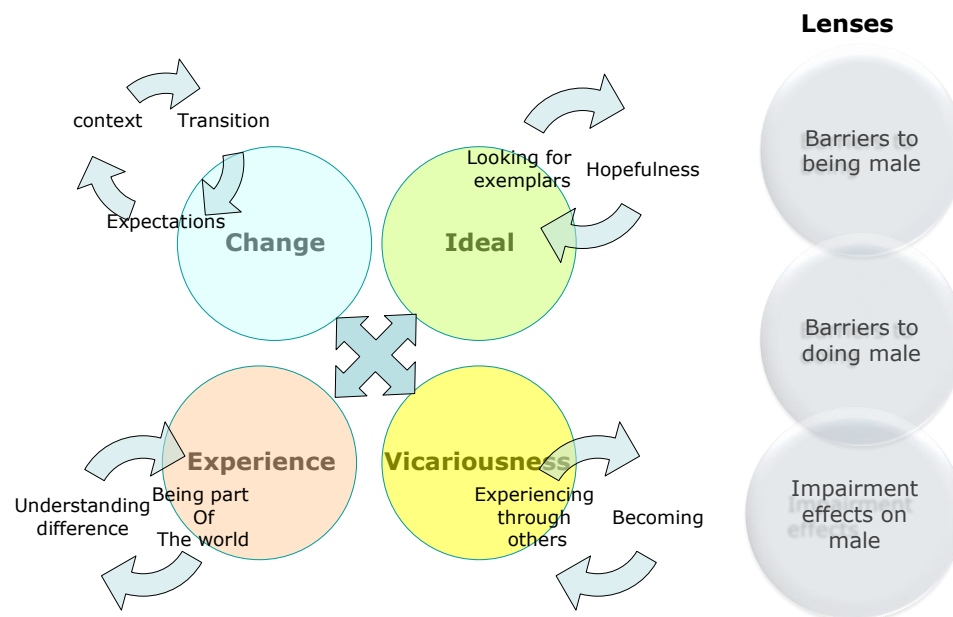


Figure 13: An explanatory theoretical framework for the ways we do ID boy to man including Thomas's Lenses. (see larger version appendix G)

Figure 13 presents the theoretical model again, but this time it is shown with Thomas's (1999) lenses suffixed by the word male to indicate an analysis of masculinity. The central question used to focus thoughts of masculinity for boys and men could be a development of that posed for this study.

How do boys and men with ID talk about their masculinity and what does this reveal about the influences on their ideas about their futures?

Barriers to doing male

Commensurate with existing understandings of the social model of disability, Thomas (1999) presents this as physical barriers in the built environment or in financial systems. For the boys in the study their desires to progress and grow in their masculinity were framed by a number of environments as discussed previously. However, this was not evaluated in an obvious way with the boys as they moved through the school with discussions of the barriers that lay ahead. This first lens can be used to view one of the aspects of the model to analyse concerns with regard to physical or financial access to a developing idea about masculinity. If used in conjunction with change for example, it gives the opportunity to consider physical or financial barriers to providing contexts, realising expectations and transition in the practice of masculinity.

Barriers to being male

Thomas (1999) regards this as the reaction of others to the impairment of the individual and the judgement of their ability to realise their potential. The boys in the current study were aware of the reaction of others and how that on occasion led to the exposure of their disability and subsequently their vulnerability. This lens is useful as it raises issues with regard to the consideration of masculinity and ID and how best to enable boys and men

to reach their potential. This accords well with the concept of reasonable hope (Weigarten, 2010), as it would help practitioners to analyse achievable goals for both boys and men with ID. This lens might be used in conjunction with ideals to analyse an individual's potential to achieve aspects of the exemplars they have discovered. Like hope, are ideas reasonable and can the individual realistically achieve them?

Impairment effects on male

The final lens considers the individuals' experience of their impairment. Thomas (1999) describes this as the limitations that come from an individual's existence with their impairment. Put simply if the first two parts of the framework are the lenses through which to view the external barriers presented to the individual, this third lens offers a view from the perspective of the person and their impairment. Although controversial this offers the opportunity to give, in the case of boys and men with ID developing a perspective on their masculine identity, a 360 degree analysis of how potential problems might affect the individual's move into adulthood. Used in conjunction with vicariousness we can help the individual to view the effect of their impairment on becoming.

Although complex in design, this theoretical model offers a practical approach to assist boys and men with ID in their pursuit of a valued masculine identity. In addition, the model offers a unique format that is grounded in the analysis of the lives of boys with ID on their journey of discovery from child to adulthood.

There are three key messages that emerge from the research and the development of the theoretical model aimed at those who support boys with ID and the services that provide the context for their lives.

- Supporters of people with ID become honest about the possibilities available to them;
- Services for people with ID begin to make space for gendered practice;
- There is clarity with regard to impairment and its effects on peoples' lives.

Discussion of Methodology

This study has allowed me to analyse how masculinity is both constructed and co-constructed by boys with ID. Grounded theory has offered the opportunity to apply methods flexibly and produced a theoretical stance through both reflexivity and creativity. The iterative nature of this approach to qualitative research has enabled early analysis and the testing of ideas as the study has progressed. Conclusions drawn from the voices of the participants boost possibilities that extend far beyond the requirements for academic award, to a potential for changing the lives of boys with ID.

Assisting boys with ID to find their voice to hopefully influence the course of their lives has been the strongest feature of this research. I have been struck by the participants' ability to offer eloquent and nuanced accounts of their lives from their perspective sometimes with forcefulness but also with great humour. In accordance with the experiences of Vanderbeck (2005) there were occasions when the process of interviewing the boys offered them the opportunity to not only critique and police their own masculinity, but also my own experiences of being male. However, unlike Vanderbeck (2005) this did not result in challenge, but gave me a deeper understanding of how the boys gave form to their ideas. In essence it helped me to become part of their circle, invited to take my place in their world.

I valued the opportunity to observe and become part of the lives of the boys who agreed to take part in this study. This enabled me to understand

how they interacted with each other and how best to group them together for the group interview which included the sorting exercise. In addition, it allowed for more relaxed and informal group interviews as the boys were familiar with me as they had spent so much time with me in the school. Likewise, following the group interviews boys were happy to meet with me individually to talk about the pictures they had drawn. The inclusion of a chaperone on the direction of the ethics committee was cumbersome at first as arrangements for data collection had to coincide with the availability of classroom assistants. Additionally, I was concerned that the introduction of another adult in the room during interviews would limit the boys' ability to be frank about their lives. However, I quickly realised that this only mirrored the context of the boys' everyday lives. As the boys were constantly under the watchful gaze of adults they were not fazed by this and were able to be open about the topics under discussion. Although not directed to, all the women who volunteered to be chaperones remained silent while recording took place and sat unobtrusively in the corner of the interview room.

The iterative nature of the methodology chosen for this study was useful as it allowed for simultaneous data collection and analysis. This allowed for new ideas and the tailoring of interviews to the individual needs of the boys that took part in the study. It also allowed for the removal of images from the sorting exercise that boys found too confusing or difficult to interpret. On one occasion it also allowed for the withdrawal of images that conveyed intimidation, in the case of images of gangs, or violence, in the case of images of boys fighting. This had to be done as prior to one of the group interviews one of the boys was attacked by a gang of youths near to his home.

Although useful, the length of time I spent in the school was potentially risky as there was a danger that I would become too involved. As I

remained with the boys for the majority of the school days only withdrawing to conduct interviews during the data collection phase of the study, I had to regularly reflect on the closeness of the relationships that were being built between me and the study participants. There was a clear need to set appropriate boundaries both in the context of the interview room and in the classroom during the boys' regular lessons. This was achieved by working with the staff in the school so that in my contact with the boys I was clearly considered as a member of the staff team. A photograph of me on the staff board in the entrance to the school also helped the boys to consider me in this way.

It should be recognised that as the researcher for this study with a background in intellectual disability nursing and many years of experience working with people with ID, the generalisability of my perceptions of the boys' talk during interviews should not be assumed. I can appreciate that the perceptions and interpretations of a different person in a different context could contrast markedly from those described here. In addition, consideration should be given to my influence in both the group and individual interview due to my experience in the field and my interest as the researcher. Therefore, the findings of this study should be interpreted with this context in mind.

The purposive approach to the selection of participants for this study and the nature of the enquiry dictates that this small group of participants cannot be assumed to be representative of all boys with ID of a similar age. However, by taking into consideration questions of trustworthiness and authenticity, the researcher has endeavoured to ensure that the results are believable (see chapter 2 of this thesis 'Trustworthiness and Authenticity'). Also, the data was subjected to careful and systematic scrutiny via a constant comparative method and then considered in relation to relevant theory and research as discussed in this chapter. It must be

stated that analysis of interviews with a different group of participants may have differed to the one reported in this study, in which support was given to a clear construct of masculinity. As similar research has not been conducted to consider the lives of boys with ID it is not yet possible to compare anything with the findings from this study.

The final comment to make regarding the limitations of this piece of research is associated with the abilities of the boys to communicate fluently in the various interviews. Unfortunately, as a consequence although all interviews were transcribed, certain individuals do not appear in the analysis section of this thesis. This does not mean that their interviews were not included in the corpus of data from this study during the analysis process. However, quotes were chosen from those boys who represented the theme or the sub-theme in the most eloquent manner. Therefore the findings of this research cannot fully account for all the voices of the boys who took part in the study.

Of real value in the study was the opportunity to become part of the school and build relationships with the boys and the staff who supported them. In doing so I was able to develop an understanding of the importance of the special school for the boys as a place of refuge from the hustle and bustle of the mainstream.

It should be noted that this research is not devoid of my influence on it and despite best efforts my experiences both in practice with people who have ID and my academic journey have shaped the course of this study to some extent. As a consequence my voice can be heard in the narratives that accompany the boys' discourse about their lives. Although this could be regarded as problematic, I have ensured that my voice does not drown out the voices of those who experience their lives on a day to day basis. Consequently, the theoretical framework echoes the voices of those who

participated and gives hope to other boys with ID whose lives could be changed by it.

On a return to the school following the conclusion of my six months of observation and data collection, I enquired after John who was one of the key participants in the study. I discovered that he had left the 16+ unit months after beginning his courses. As I had got to know him, John had told me that he hoped to be a games designer. Encouraged by one of the staff in the school John could see no potential barriers to him achieving his dreams. He himself had done some research on what he needed to do and how he might achieve his goal. However, on enrolment at the 16+ unit and being assigned to college courses outside the school, John realised that being a games designer was not going to be available to him after all. John was devastated and left the school to remain at home with only limited access to his local college. I wondered if, had there been consideration of barriers to John becoming a games designer earlier in his school life and some honesty about what he was able to achieve, John may have understood and been more content with his future.

Future research

Although theories of the construction of masculinity have been useful in formulating a concept of this for boys with ID, further work should be conducted to reveal how this translates when boys with ID become men with ID. At the end of the previous section I reflected on a return to the school and John's experiences as he entered 16+. This suggests that a follow up study with the participants who took part in the study would be a useful first step. This would involve boys the youngest of whom would have just left the special education system and the oldest who would now be in their early twenties. The context and structure of their lives now would offer an insight into how their hopes and dreams have progressed since their time in school. In addition it would be interesting to check out if

the participants continue to be influenced by changes, ideals, experiences and vicariousness in the same way.

The study highlighted the role of female carers in the lives of boys with ID and there were questions that emerged from the literature regarding this. It would seem logical to conduct a study that was able to answer two specific questions to find out if this has an impact on the lives of boys and men with ID. First it would be pertinent to establish how many women are currently employed in direct care work with boys and men with ID in comparison to male care staff. This could be done using a quantitative method, perhaps a survey, to all providers of ID services to children and adults in one geographical area. Following this and the analysis of it, volunteers could be sought from each provider to participate in qualitative semi structured in-depth interviews to with both female and male care workers to consider the similarities and differences of their approach to the care of boys and men with ID. This would help answer the question, do care workers in ID services acknowledge the gender of those they care for? The conclusion of this study would offer the basis for further discussion with regard to gendered aspects of care.

Finally as the study culminated in the construction of a theoretical model for ID masculinity, it would seem relevant to attempt to consider its application. Participatory action research could be used to reflect on the development of the model and use it as a problem solving tool to address the issue of gender in a service for people with ID. Working closely with a team of staff in a service for people with ID a community of practice could be established to evolve the ideas begun in the current study.

Concluding statement

This study serves as an exploration of the development of culturally normative ideas of masculinity by boys with ID attending a school for

children with special educational needs. In addition, it endeavours to give voice to the boys' ideas about the men they hope to be in the future when they leave school. Their accounts present a complex tapestry of how their lives are now and what hopes and dreams they have for the future. They have engaged in group and individual interviews and have shared their ideas in talk with me as researcher and with their peers. This has made it possible to explore their lives and to build a theoretical model for '*the ways we do ID boy to men*'. The analysis of the data has helped to bring into sharp relief the contrast between lives lived apart from mainstream society and the lives of other boys without ID, from existing research, who live socially included lives as part of their communities. Additionally, the study reveals how the participants talked about their desire to be like those other boys and eventually take their place in the world as men.

Little research exists that considers the lives of males with ID and masculinity, therefore this study provides a rich and detailed description of this phenomenon as experienced by a small group of boys. The study reveals how this group of boys with ID have constructed a concept of 'the way we do boy' at a time when the development of their identities is at a formative stage. In doing so this has raised questions about the significance of the boys' ID to the development of their identities. In addition, the research has highlighted the influences that have helped to shape 'the way we do boy' for this group. These include: changes; ideals; experiences; vicariousness. The analysis of this uncovers a limited palate of experience and opportunity which is in part contained by the boys' impairment. Through analysis and by listening carefully to their voices, observing them and participating in their lives, it has been possible to begin to speculate about the future for boys with ID.

Significant in this study is the lack of concern for gendered identity in the distant and more recent past, from the perspective of history and the development of policy. It could be speculated that this ignorance,

historically by the societal anxiety leading to the suppression of gender and more specifically sexuality for both men and women with ID, has indirectly led to the exclusion of gender as part of identity from domestic and political spheres of care. However, from the perspective of masculinity we may have lost along the way the real influence of gender on the lives of boys and men with ID and consequently real opportunities for connectivity between the experience of impairment and the desire to be like non-disabled peers. In turn we may have become blind to the idiosyncratic nature of ID boy and manhood and its potential for making better sense of the lives of this group. Perhaps then it is time to rediscover the effects of masculinity on the lives of boys with ID as they determine their ways of being and doing in the world.

Participants in this study were in the process of transition from school, based in the special education sector, to adult provision for people with ID and mainstream environments. In many cases, planning was in place to move into specialist provision in mainstream further education colleges. On occasion boys would anticipate that their move from the special school would follow the route they'd seen a sibling travel. These ideas were underpinned by a supportive culture in the school, the foundations of which were in normalised inclusive ideologies of ID. These realities were uncovered in the boys' talk about incidents of oppression from their placement in mainstream school environments and experiences of confrontation in their communities which often jarred with their vicarious view of the lives of other boys and men. This talk is set within moments of gender practices that arguably have left metaphorical scars for the boys and have shaped the boys' view of less favourable ideas of masculinity. However, life within the protective confines of the school and the prevailing ideological view of mainstreaming offer fertile ground for boys to grow ideas of a life devoid of the labels of impairment and replete with the trappings of adulthood. It might be suggested that this hope and view of

the world, without consideration of the effects of impairment, may render this group vulnerable to serial disappointment as they attempt to follow the plan they have either set for themselves or had set for them. Idealised notions of normalisation and inclusion in the lives of people with ID is one which produces the unquestioning drive towards a goal that shapes itself to the dominant ideas of what it is to live a normal life in society. Although well meaning and morally scrupulous, it may be that those involved in the lives of people with ID have become blind to society's expectations and what is acceptable today; blind to the effects of impairment and ignorant of its impact on society. It is perhaps time to rethink service models that support the development of hopes that are unachievable and expose the individual to risk and potential danger. The critical message here is a plea for the development of honest approaches that help people develop achievable ideas, shaped by them and informed by the effects of their impairment within the context of their view of society and society's view of them. In this way an acceptable difference might be achievable which allows access to the mainstream, but also permits unique ways of being within a tolerant society.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

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Appendix H An explanatory theoretical framework for the 'ways of doing ID boy to man' including Thomas's Lenses. (see larger version appendix D)

Appendix A

Influence and the Construction of Masculine Identity

By

David Charnock, MSc., Dip. Ad. Ed. Cert Sytemic Family Therapy, RNLD.

Submission to The University of Nottingham for consideration of upgrade from MPhil. to PhD studies.

April 2007

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1. Introduction

This report aims to demonstrate progress with research studies focussing on the development of masculine identity, offering evidence to inform a decision for upgrade from MPhil to PhD. The report is structured to show elements of the review of literature in this area and to offer a flavour of the research that is on-going. Included are emergent themes from analysed interviews carried out with adults who have teenage children or who work with teenagers with or without learning disabilities. The report will conclude with considerations for further research. In addition, Appendix I and II are included to show dissemination of initial ideas via poster and at a research seminar to peers in the learning disability field.

Building an identity as a teenager is a process we all go through to discover the part we might play in the adult world. It would be reasonable to argue that the cognisance of disability, including realisation of difference, directly affects the way a teenage boy with a disability constructs his identity and the ideas of the man he will one day become. However, it is clear from current political discourse that the construction of an acceptable masculine identity is as problematic for some boys without disability. Writing in the Times, Rosemary Bennett (2006) reports on Conservative Party plans for future social policy should they come to power at the next general election. She states that anxieties are raised by reports that working class white boys appear to do much worse at school than peers from other ethnic groups. Unsurprisingly, responsibility for this is placed with those charged with supporting these individuals, which it is argued mirrors the anxieties of the Labour Party who have pushed forward with parenting initiatives.

This work aims to begin a dialogue to uncover the twists and turns experienced by male teenagers and their learning disabled peers as they pursue their journey.

2. Literature review

The first part of this report seeks to examine what has been written about the most prominent dimensions of the experience of growing up as male with and without a disability. A search of databases was carried out to identify literature that:

- discussed the issue of masculinity or male identity.
- had been published and makes reference to teenage identity.
- made discrete reference to hegemonic masculinity.
- related to children, teenagers and men with disabilities including learning or intellectual disability.
- was based on research findings.

It is important to note that no particular time frame was applied to the search, as a number of significant texts regarding learning disability were identified as important for the review. This is organised under sub headings.

2.1. Mainstream masculinity

MacInnes (1998) argues that masculinity and femininity are highly contestable phenomena existing in a constant dialectic relationship. Consequently, the power and dominance of men is questioned as women begin to act in roles and upon platforms previously thought to be the privilege of men (MacInnes, 1998). Men have to argue for the continued dominance of male power and as such masculinity is said to be in crisis. This 'crisis' is highlighted in studies in the work place where the difference in working practices and gender identity between men and women is located as the cause of 'strain on men' (Alvesson, 1998). According to

Connell (2001) the threat as gender inequality appears to diminish in society requires a new model to identify barriers to change and then work to overcome them. Constructing male identity and the struggle of men to change the way they think about this and their power, in the face of the changing roles of women, are the foundation from which a new discourse can be built. New discourses however, are problematic when the dominance of male power is represented by new generations of men over and over again.

It is clear that in the process of constructing a masculine identity, hegemonic masculinity which protects the 'legitimacy of patriarchy' (Connell, 1995), offers a cultural and time specific blue print for men. Whitehead (2002) indicates that these patterns of male behaviour suggest the existence of dominant and subordinated male behaviours, which are indicative of the inequalities of gender. Also, Fitzsimmons and Lennon (2000) state that western society in most literature identifies hegemonic masculinity as hanging on 'heterosexuality, economic autonomy, being able to provide for one's family, being rational, being successful, keeping one's emotions in check, and above all not doing anything considered feminine.' This then indicates perhaps how difficult it can be to construct an acceptable identity as a teenager. Particularly, when presented with an ideal that is set in the context of a power dynamic between men and women. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) explore the use of hegemonic masculinity yet further in their review of the development of the term in research. They conclude that the development of a construct of male identity for teenagers is made yet more complex as the interplay between dominant and subordinated masculine characteristics is contested.

2.2. Teenage masculinity

Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) in their research with teenagers use a construct of hegemonic masculinities, which they and the boys term 'popular masculinities'. It is apparent that this term was utilised to reveal not only the dominance of a particular boy, but also the apparent opposing differences between boys, girls and boys and other boys who did not meet the standards of masculinity required. The location of difference and the dialogue, which this creates, appears to be an important process in the development of male identity. Similarly, the structure that this creates enables boys to decide what behaviours are subordinate and what are primarily masculine. The polarisation of masculinity and femininity is discussed by Biernat (1991) who states that this occurs early in life and influences any judgements made when constructing identity. She goes on to discuss the rigidity of the development of stereotypical ideas of gender roles, arguing that this perpetuates the teenage boy's pursuit of a masculine ideal. The rejection of all things feminine among some groups of boys is discussed by Hay (2000) and Jackson (2002). In Hay's work the types of behaviours accredited to boys described as 'too tough' in the work of Frosh et al (2002), including problematic behaviour in the classroom, is perceived as a compensatory strategy to maintain a fearsome identity that promotes extreme hegemonic masculine identities. Jackson (2002) extends this argument by suggesting that the reinforcement of these behaviours simply presents this as an alternative construct of the masculine ideal as part of a selection from which boys can choose.

The pursuit of the masculine ideal, as Broderick and Korleland (2004) point out, can have an impact on the health of teenage boys. Their research, considering rumination and depression in early adolescence, focuses at one point on the hegemonic view that males should not be emotional or passive and that this 'violated the norms of appropriate masculine

behaviour'. The researchers suggest a need for greater attention to be paid to the stress of the male gender role on adolescent males. Conversely, Chambers, Tincknell and Van Loon (2004) argue that the continuance of the subordination of boys, who did not reach the desired aspects of the masculine ideal, was crucial for the maintenance of masculine power and local hegemony. This was stated unequivocally by participants in their focus groups, who included the performance of dominant heterosexuality as vital to the development of teenage masculinity and the continuance of patriarchal structures. In a subsequent article the same authors advocate encouraging critical appraisal of such hegemonic ideals in the classroom, although they assert that this would be dependent on the attitudes and culture governing individual schools and as such do not promote the exposure of such a critique to boys as part of the national curriculum (Chambers, Van Loon and Ticknell, 2004). Gorley, Holroyd and Kirk (2003) also found in their work that there was a definitive drive among teenagers to retain a position that protected and further instituted the idea that heterosexuality should be maintained. In particular here the researchers identify the use of the body, its shape and size and how it was displayed. Although they conclude that boys continually contest the hegemonic ideal, they recommend radical reform in the way in which physical activity is planned in the curriculum as they identify this as being intrinsic to the reproduction of the dominant powers of men.

Considering the hegemonic formation of the masculine ideal in this way might lead one to assume that the ideas generated are some how fixed and impermeable. However, it is important to stress that for teenagers constructing normalized identities, the influence of place space and time ought not to be ignored. Archer and Yamashita (2003) identify this in their research with inner city working class male pupils. Indeed, the discoveries made regarding the construction of masculine identities by the boys demonstrated how 'local' masculinities can perturb and challenge widely

held beliefs of how working-class men should be. In fact it would appear that carving out an opposing working class identity is vital to ensuring that you are known within your community. However, what is also highlighted in the research is the contestable nature of the construction of identity and the battles that can occur in relation to the trappings of working-class youth. Paechter (2003) argues that achievement is dependant on the teenage boy's successful or unsuccessful attempts to project their developing masculine identity on new social situations (Paechter, 2003) It is also apparent that even when the issues of patriarchy are challenged as in Coulter (2003) and issues of equity are discussed, boys continue to insist that they retain an idealised concept of masculinity including a component that favours men as the protectors of women.

Interestingly in all the studies mentioned authors do not include the position of disabled masculinity as a possible construction, which is approached separately in the literature and is presented next. Also, although the influence of peers on the construction of masculinity is discussed in depth, the influence of adult associates including parents is not.

2.3. Disabled masculinity

The study of male identity becomes complex when attempting to consider the effects of disability upon its construction. Gerschick and Miller (1994) and Shakespeare (1999), have considered these complexities with men who are physically disabled. In both studies researchers have established the need for further investigation to consider the interrelationship between masculinity and disability. Gerschick and Miller (1994) document the extent to which men with physical disabilities reframe their masculinity in the face of barriers to inclusion in their communities. This reframing can take on a number of forms and aims to emulate or subvert widely held

beliefs of how men should be in order to gain acceptance. The contrast of experience between able-bodied men and those with disabilities, taking part in the research, is graphically illustrated highlighting that the disabled man is constantly at odds with dominant hegemonic views of what it is to be a man.

Media influences on the construction of male identity are discussed by Wilde (2004) in her investigation of the performance of masculinity in soap operas and their interpretation by men from both disabled and non-disabled groups. Interestingly, she concludes that the representation of masculinity within the soap opera genre was an alienating experience for most men in the groups. In the research Wilde (2004) specifically draws on representations of disability using the work of Gerschick and Miller (1994) in her analysis to demonstrate how dominant hegemonic characteristics of masculinity are key in the development of these characters. Scriptwriters are often focused on developing reformative narratives to include the heroism of the fight to conquer disability. This perhaps then strengthens the pervading view of those watching that being disabled weakens your identity as a man and in order to reclaim your masculinity you must overcome this weakness. It is interesting that Wilde (2004) singles out women and young people as main consumers of the soap opera genre. Not only does this suggest that 'real' men refrain from watching soaps, but there is a feminization associated with its consumption. This may be significant in thinking about the viewing habits of young people who are constructing their identity. As presented earlier in the case of teenage boys the decisions about what is dominant and what is subordinate are already being made. If this is the case then teenage boys and their peers with disabilities may be using the characterisations in soap operas to categorise disability as undesirable.

Sport plays a significant part in the construction and continuance of masculine identity and it would appear that this along with the representation of the body is similarly important to men with disabilities. Robertson (2003) in his exploration of health promotion and its links with men and sport, sought to uncover the socially integrative meanings of sport and their relationship to health. Robertson (2003) found that men did not engage in sport to develop interpersonal relationships with other men but for camaraderie. Whereas for the men with disabilities studied, who had become disabled as adults, sport gave a link back to a masculine identity, which was now perceived to be lost. Therefore, Robertson (2003) concludes that sport serves to maintain dominant masculine ideals and that this discourse helps to secure the position of the non-disabled sportsmen as men. This dominance is further explored by Smith and Sparkes (2004) who specifically consider the metaphors that are often used to describe participation by disabled sportsmen. They note the significance of the fighting metaphor to describe their come back to the able bodied world. All of the participants in the study had received injury from sporting accidents associated with playing rugby and Smith and Sparkes (2004) conclude that these restitution narratives are firmly grounded in the hope that a restored body can be achieved. Again, this rests on an assumption that the continuance of disability is not a desirable identity if one is to conform to the masculine ideal.

Moving away from the influence of the media and of sport, Murphy and Young (2005) raise concerns over parental restraint emerging from fears of sexual abuse and its ultimate effect on the developing identity. Writing about both males and females with disabilities, Murphy and Young (2005) discuss the limitations placed upon this group resulting in restricted social contact and fewer intimate relationships when compared to their non-disabled peers. Suggesting that the development of social behaviours is largely experiential, Murphy and Young (2005) go on to present difficulties

for males and females with disabilities in their development of a sexual identity. Coupled with physical difficulties developing during puberty, the combination of poor sexual knowledge and growing up differently could lead to a narrow view of what it might be to be a man or woman. Interestingly Shakespeare et al (1996), in their interviews with people with disabilities, focussing on issue of sexuality, include an individual with a learning disability who alludes to problems encountered during transition and a lack of preparation for adult life. The young man speaks of his confusion at being expected to act as a child throughout his school years and then the sudden change in expectation when he became an adult. Perhaps this confusion and lack of understanding is a result of a direct correlation between his late awareness of behaviours expected of an adult and a lack of support from others to help contextualise the processes of transition or to explain future roles. Issues attributed to men with learning disabilities will be explored next.

2.4. Learning disabled masculinity

Literature which focuses on masculine behaviours and learning disabilities mainly gives attention to issues of sexuality (Cambridge and Mellan, 2000, Cambridge, 1999, Thompson, 2001). Although this can also be said of the literature considering the identity of men with other disabling conditions (Shakespeare Gillespie-Sells and Davies, 1996), in contrast attention would appear to be aimed at wider issues including the development of a disabled masculine identity that may or may not conform to the hegemonic ideal as discussed previously.

The following presents some literature specifically related to people with learning disabilities. Included here are that which specifically focus on masculinity and that which highlight the potential difficulties faced by people with learning disabilities as they construct their identity. I begin with

historical accounts of masculine identity, which may be crucial in helping us think about how this is constructed, starting with a literary description of learning disabled masculinity.

The literary characterisation of Mr Dick as a man of 'weak intelligence' in Charles Dickens novel *David Copperfield*, according to McDonough (2000), was representative of the lives of men with learning disabilities in the early and mid-nineteenth-century. McDonough (2000) goes on to assert that this diminished illustration of disabled masculinity was largely associated with a lack of financial authority and limited ability to exert power in a patriarchal society. However, it is apparent that the strength of this construct is what pervades in the novel and prevents Mr Dick emerging as equal to other men. McDonough (2000) draws a comparison between this literary representation of Mr Dick and those representations of men with learning disabilities that appear in contemporary media, arguing that the construct continues to influence society's view of learning disabled men.

Bartlett and Wright (2001), giving account of the analysis of historical documents, states that there have been moments in the history of people with learning disabilities that have unsettled general consensus with regard to the role of this group in our society. Aghast at the appalling conditions in work houses and county asylums, charitable groups moved to transform the treatment of people with learning disabilities in private institutions. Bartlett and Wright (2001) state that in the case of men this gave an opportunity to learn a trade and then to return to the community to live and work alongside non-disabled peers. Although only available to a minority of very able individuals with financial support or sponsorship, these institutions flourished for a short period towards the end of the nineteenth century and were able to discharge both men and women into mainstream society. However Bartlett and Wright's analysis does not include any

follow up after discharge and so it is unclear how successful or unsuccessful the men may have been.

Robert Edgerton (1967) in his seminal work 'The Cloak of Competence: Stigma in the Lives of the Mentally Retarded', gives us some insight into the post discharge experiences of men and women with learning disabilities in the United States. Edgerton (1967) offers descriptive accounts of their lives. In particular what emerges for the men discharged, is their ongoing struggles with society's expectations of them as men. In one example of a married couple Edgerton (1967) describes the frustration of the man as he faces his limitations while attempting to provide for his family. This is made apparent through his struggles with patriarchal structures in the work environment as he attempts to challenge others and assert his own authority as a man. As a consequence he fails to maintain consistent employment and so finds himself in a vicious cycle as he moves from job to job in an attempt to maintain his family's lifestyle. As Edgerton (1967) stresses, the cloak that these individuals weave to protect them from the discovery of their incompetence is not fit for the purpose, and so those they come into contact with easily detect attempts to hide the disability. In this example, as in all Edgerton's examples, it is not until the couple locate a benefactor to offer them support and 'coaching', that they learn to exist in the community. In fact Edgerton (1967) concludes that the location of a benefactor by those discharged from the institution was an essential component of their acceptance by the community.

Contemporary researchers who consider the experience of community living for people with learning disabilities focus on aspects of identity or on challenges to the development of identity. In their research with men with learning disabilities focussing on issues of sexuality, Cambridge and Mellan (2000) note the difficulties experienced by this group when developing their sexual identities. In particular difficulties with expression

of thoughts and ideas associated with the construction of sexual identity are discussed. Additionally, Cambridge and Mellan (2000) highlight influences that they suggest may be problematic in the progression of work with men who have learning disabilities, perhaps having detrimental effects on the construction of male identity for this group. The first issue they identify is that the majority of those currently working to support people with learning disabilities are women. Although not supported with empirical evidence, this issue is considered problematic for men with learning disabilities as they look for help to interpret their world. It could be reasonably assumed that this may have a direct influence on how men with learning disabilities develop their identities. In addition to this issue Cambridge and Mellan (2000) assert that those engaged in sexuality work with men with learning disabilities on the whole are men who identify as gay. Again it is argued that this may potentially have an affect on the delivery and progression of this work and upon the lives of men with learning disabilities.

Brown (1994) in her critique of the principles of normalisation and the pursuit of a sex life for people who have learning disabilities alludes to the difficulties experienced when aiming to attain societal expectations. Writing about the development of partnerships, she states that these are on the whole based on conditions set by carers, including the demonstration of the skills of independence and financial management. These conditions, Brown (1994) asserts, can only be met by a small number of people with learning disabilities who then are granted permission to establish an identity as a couple and set up home together. Brown (1994) concludes that conditions like these are placed in the way throughout learning disability provision act as barriers with only the achievement of them giving access to normalised lifestyles.

For teenagers growing up with learning disabilities, the development of normalised aspirations is increasingly encouraged. However, as presented above, the realisation of these aspirations can be problematic. What is clear is that current government policy offers the impression that inclusion in all aspects of society is as available to teenagers with learning disabilities as it is to their non-disabled peers (DoH, 2001)

Valuing people: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century (DoH, 2001), suggests that the creation of opportunities to fulfil potential in mainstream society is the only way to assure a permanent change in society's view of this group. Given the correct level of support, it is argued people with learning disabilities can be enabled to play an active part as members of their communities. In theory then this increased presence in mainstream society can lead to a greater sense of social inclusion for this group. However, Levitas (1998) argues that social inclusion, although an important descriptor of 'in and outsiders', should be used to help challenge our thinking, developing debates which centre on the rights of people with learning disabilities to be accepted as citizens. Bates and Davis (2004) develop this argument further by suggesting that without the progression from discussion of social inclusion to a discourse of citizenship for people with learning disabilities, the role of this disabled group in society will not change. Perhaps then in thinking of the development of citizenship for people with learning disabilities we need also to think of the characteristics necessary to be a citizen. It could be hypothesised that the development or construction of these characteristics is an essential component for the development of citizenship in everyday life.

Policies of inclusion for people with learning disabilities are especially prominent in education. In fact the mainstreaming of children with disabilities as opposed to segregated education has been an integral part of social inclusion policy advocated by the present government (Cooney et

al, 2006). However, the success of this policy in ensuring that children have the right to education alongside their non-disabled peers may be producing some worrying side effects. Cooney et al (2006) in their research consider the perception of stigma, social comparison and future aspirations in a group of sixty-three 15-17 year olds with mild to moderate learning disabilities attending mainstream and segregated education. They found that mainstream pupils were more likely to experience stigmatized treatment than those in segregated settings. In addition, they found that all participants rated themselves highly in comparison to children with more severe learning disabilities and lower in comparison to their non-disabled peers. Although seeing themselves as inferior to non-disabled peers in the mainstream setting and at higher risk of stigmatising treatment, the authors acknowledge that it may be beneficial to realise difference early on to enable better coping strategies. However, Cooney et al (2006) admit that their measures may have been inadequate in eliciting the experiences of stigmatisation in the group of students from segregated settings.

The literature fails to acknowledge the need to give support to individuals as they develop their ideas about how to live resourcefully in their communities. However, it does highlight the difficulties of the progression of the learning disabled individual when faced with what appears to be a dominant construct of learning disabilities which overrides all other constructs.

3. Expert scoping exercise

3.1. Aim

To investigate if adults in regular contact with adolescent boys with and without learning disabilities, support or dismiss dominant forms of masculinity as this group construct their identities as men.

3.2. Objectives

- To explore the relevance of dominant forms of masculinity to those engaged with adolescent boys, as parents or in their professional or voluntary work.
- To place dominant masculinity in the context of learning disabled and non-learning disabled male identity.
- To identify the meaning given to dominant forms of masculinity by parents, professionals or volunteers working with adolescent boys with or without learning disabilities.
- To identify additional narratives of dominant masculinity supported by parents, professionals or volunteers working with adolescent boys with or without learning disabilities

3.3. Method

A qualitative methodology has been used for the initial part of this study, informed by phenomenology as the philosophical underpinning (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). As it was important that the researcher and participants were able to understand what was being researched, grounded theory was considered relevant (Strauss and Corbin, 1998)

3.4. Research instrument

Data was collected by means of a semi-structured interview. Interviewees were selected creating a purposive sample to represent a number of views (e.g. school teachers, parents, youth leaders, community workers) on the research focus, and asked if they would consent to a recorded interview of approximately 45 minutes. Respondents were presented with images (see Appendix III) representing hegemonic forms of masculinity (as identified in the work of Frosh et al, 2002) as topic headings and asked supplementary

questions to elicit discussion and reflection on the topics. Finally, participants were invited to propose additional dominant forms of masculinity based on their contacts with adolescent boys.

3.5. Recruitment of participants

Participants were adults (eighteen years old and above) who worked with or were the parents of adolescent boys (age range 14 to 18 years) with and without learning disabilities. A purposive sample was constructed with an aim to recruit a maximum of twelve people.

Volunteers were sought by approaching individuals known to the researcher. The purposive sample was divided into two groups, those with regular contact with adolescent boys without learning disabilities and those who were parents of or regularly worked to support males with learning disabilities. It was hoped that the sample would represent the views of parents and community youth leaders where possible, providing a diverse view of the topics presented at interview. Participants were contacted directly by letter or, if an email address was known, electronically.

3.6. Procedure

Prospective participants were contacted by letter or email introducing the study and asking if they would be willing to take part. The letter included a tear off slip and a pre-paid envelope included for its return. An information sheet was sent with the letter and in the case of email contact was included as an attachment.

On receipt of the tear off slip or positive response to the email, participants were contacted by telephone to arrange a mutually convenient venue, date and time for interview.

Prior to the start of the interview, participants were given a verbal explanation of the study, including a description of the process of tape-recording, and presented with a consent form to complete and sign.

Following transcription of each interview, participants were sent a copy of the transcript and asked if they wished to add anything. Participants were specifically asked not to change anything on the transcript. Subsequent to this transcriptions were prepared for analysis.

3.7. Data analysis

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher ready for analysis. Data was analysed to generate theory using a grounded theory approach as described in Maykut & Morehouse (1994).

A process recommended by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) which they term the 'constant comparative method' was adopted to analyse all the transcribed data. This process included the division of transcripts into units of meaning that were coded and simultaneously compared. The emergent categories were discussed and refined, relationships and patterns across categories were analysed which hopefully present a greater understanding of the people involved in the research. The researcher and supervisors were involved in initial analysis of the data.

3.8. Initial results and discussion

The following offers a flavour of the data currently being gathered and the themes that have begun to emerge during analysis. Data is presented under emergent theme headings and show the views of those who are parents to or work with teenagers with and without a learning disability. The format is an attempt to show the contrast between the lives of teenagers with learning disabilities and their non-disabled peers.

3.8.1. Emergent theme 'try outs'

The first of the major themes that began to emerge was 'try outs'. This emerged during conversations about the teenagers, without learning disabilities, playing with new ideas and constructs about their identity. In doing so supporters talked about teenagers learning what was acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and gave them an idea of what might be permissible when they became a man and made the transition to the adult world.

In using the prompts to represent hegemonic categories, those that represented heterosexual relationships lead those interviewed to speculate on teenage boys' first encounters with girls. A youth leader interviewed spoke of the effect that this had and how the boys would work to change their usual behaviour to try and attract the opposite sex. This was particularly of note when the scouts were on mixed camps:

“...mixed camp, well not mixed but there will be other groups, girl guide groups around and the older boys again tend to be keen on that...there is some evidence of grooming which is absent on the normal camp so they tend to be a little bit feral, I think if you give them half a chance, where if girls are present they tend to be less feral.”

Similarly in an interview with a mother, she described how her son was trying out his authority by subverting the rules imposed by his school:

“...they're not supposed to wear hoodies to school, but (son) always wears his hoody to school and he thinks that the head teacher is a wally, so although he can see very clearly that they are in you know have certain power over them he bucks against it all of the time...”

In respect of the scout leader's account of developing sexuality, this would appear to support accounts in the work of Frosh et al (2002), Chambers et al (2004) and Gorley et al (2003) as the boys perpetuate the dominance of heterosexuality as part of the local hegemony. Also, the view of Parchter (2003) that teenagers need new social situations in which to rehearse new behaviours and learn from the feedback received, may have congruence with the explanation by the mother of her son's behaviour. What is interesting with both of these examples is that they appear to show that in the relative safety of a scout camp or in the school, teenage boys are able to try out new ways of behaving with little harm to themselves or others around them under the watchful eye of adults who are there to help to correct that behaviour. Even if you do think that the person watching over you is a 'wally'.

3.8.2. Emergent theme 'getting recognition'

This theme is contrasted by those who live or work with teenage boys with learning disabilities. The emergent theme here was 'getting recognition', in the sense that they needed to try to attain some sort of status in their environment or community. A teacher in a special school described how in his experience teenage boys with learning disabilities were more likely to acquiesce to the demands of adults in order to attain status within the school:

“...they sort of try to put themselves at the top of the pecking order by doing what staff want and er you know being quite compliant, whereas I think that might be the reverse in mainstream.”

T/S-02

An interview with a community worker engaged in work with teenage boys with learning disabilities, exposed how acquiescing with the desires of

others to 'get recognition' can result in very negative accounts of the development of status in a group:

“...he (a gang member) was talking about the learning disabled lad and was saying, 'Oh he's crackers he is, when he gets out you know he can nick anything. He's absolutely brilliant, nick cars, motorbikes when he gets it in him he can do anything he can'. And really really looking up to the lad with learning disabilities.”

T/R-09

In this case the teenager without learning disability is perhaps looking up to the teenager with learning disabilities, arguably recognising his skills in the gang. However, this has negative connotations in that the teenager without learning disabilities is reported as referring to the teenager with learning disabilities initially in a disparaging way, 'Oh he's crackers he is...'. This may be an attempt to temper the description of skill and recognition by ensuring that the teenager with learning disabilities is maintained in his position as other. Perhaps here we see account of the cloak that is so transparent to the teenager without learning disability as similar to the accounts in Edgerton (1967). Also, the conditions of achievement similar to those in Brown (1994) actually make it more difficult to be successful and that the risk of trying to match up to these conditions can come at a high cost.

3.8.3. Emergent theme 'friendships and camaraderie'

The theme of 'friendships and camaraderie' emerged from those interviews with people who had some contact with teenage boys without learning disabilities. The development of relationships with other teenage boys appeared particularly relevant if a specific task was involved, as described by a mother whose son maintained his attachment to a childhood group:

‘...but he goes because he plays the trumpet and so he goes to boys brigade. There’s a group of boys there, quite a small group but they’re boys that he’s known since he was four or five so he’s grown up with all of that...’

T/A-04

Questions about groups and teenage boys did offer further congruence to the theory that ‘friendship and camaraderie’ was mainly based on common interest (Robertson,2003). This is highlighted by the youth leader:

‘There’s a, the ones who tend to be badgey tend to be individualistic they tend not to go to groups. And the sporty ones tend to be group, they tend to be, they may do football together as a separate activity so they tend to gel together. So, yes there is a grouping and it does tend to depend on what sort of erm interests the boys have.’

T/C-16

3.8.4. Emergent theme ‘Desire to fit in’

The ‘desire to fit in’ for teenagers with learning disabilities, contrasts with the pursuit of ‘friendship and camaraderie’ for those without learning disabilities. It would appear that teenage boys with learning disability were on occasion willing to go that extra mile to gain acceptance from a particular group. This is demonstrated by the description of the community worker:

‘I think it’s a little bit of a desire to fit in, in they get in with a gang of friends and a lot of the time er because they’re seen as learning disabled and you know the thick one in the crowd, they’ll do, they’ll go one step further than their friends to impress them and to try to fit in and you know to get themselves a reputation.’

T/R-03

Again this desperation to align with non-disabled individuals can on occasion, it would appear, lead the teenager with learning disabilities to go to extreme lengths to attain a position alongside other males. This attempt to reframe identity and to align with dominant forms of masculinity as a condition of access appears to coincide with the research of Gerschick and Miller (1994). Also this may be indicative of a desire to fight the disability in the hope that you can subvert the restrictions that the label may impose.

A teacher interviewed talked about the school's attempts to ensure that teenage boys with learning disability were able to fit into and get access to positions of responsibility in the school to assist in their development:

'...we will often give them responsibility for looking after and helping with younger students and less able students and that is something that they do really regularly...and we sort of actively, and in a positively structured way, we do that in school with work experience placements for some of our sixth formers who want to go and help in the nursery and with the younger students in the school.'

T/S-03

These attempts perhaps go some way towards helping individuals understand their future role in the adult world, eradicating the confusion felt by the young man reported in the research of Shakespeare et al (1996).

This section of the report has endeavoured to give a flavour of the data collected to date and its relevance to existing literature. In addition, it is hoped that the contrast between themes emerging from interviews with those who have contact with teenage boys with and without learning disabilities have been highlighted.

4. Conclusion and future research

The 'crisis' of masculinity reported in the literature focussing on mainstream masculinity appears to have added to the anxieties which centre on the role of women in our society. A call for men to change the way in which they position themselves in the debate on equality and the apparent worry concentrated on the development of young masculinity, presents complicated conditions in which to develop an acceptable identity. Add to this the fluidity of what is dominant or subordinate within the local hegemony and there is little wonder that teenagers in some groups desperately hang onto traditional views of what it is to be a man.

Disabled masculinity presents an equally complex picture as reformative narratives of what it is to be a man with a disability are constructed and subversion or acquiescence is adopted as a method of accessing mainstream masculinity. Teenage boys and men with learning disability lack the opportunities and perhaps the right information to access mainstream society and combat the strength of the construct of learning disability. However, the recognition of difference may help to develop the coping strategies to assist the individual in their pursuit of inclusion.

The presentation of the analysis of the developing data set highlights the contrast in themes between those without and those with a learning disability. For those without a learning disability there is some congruence with existing research that focuses on the development of male identity. The supporters of teenagers with learning disabilities highlight the difficulties of living with a label that may elicit the help of those in the pursuit of an acceptable identity or may lead to the exploration of negative ways of gaining acceptance. Although there is little empirical evidence specifically related to the development of male identity to support the

themes, there is associated literature that identifies the difficulties associated with growing up with a learning disability.

Although the development of this research is useful in establishing the influences on the construction of masculinity from those who are in contact with both teenagers with and without learning disabilities, it is apparent that there is sufficient evidence that concentrates on the latter to recognise the similarities and differences that exist. Therefore, it would appear that the continuation of research that focuses on teenage boys with learning disabilities would help to further knowledge of the twists and turns of the journey they have embarked on. Mindful of this, I would advocate a next step along this research path to include the investigation of the views of teenage boys with learning disabilities themselves. As such appendix IV proposes the next stage in this research endeavour.

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Appendix B

Please quote ref no: **A/1/2008**

Direct line/e-mail

+44 (0) 115 8231063

Louise.Sabir@nottingham.ac.uk

Professor Penny Standen

Professor of Health Psychology & Learning Disabilities
Health Psychology and Learning Disabilities

B Floor, The Medical School

QMC Campus

Nottingham University Hospitals

Nottingham

NG7 2UH

Sciences

Medical School Research Ethics

Committee

Division of Therapeutics &

Molecular Medicine

D Floor, South Block

Queen's Medical Centre

Nottingham

NG7 2UH

Tel: +44 (0) 115 8231063

Fax: +44 (0) 115 8231059

21 January 2008

Dear Professor Standen

Ethics Reference No: A/1/2008 - Please quote this number on all correspondence

Study Title: Constructing a male identity: investigating the ideas that teenage boys with learning disabilities have about their future.

Lead Investigator: Professor Penny Standen, Professor of Health Psychology & Learning Disabilities

Co Investigators: Mr David Charnock, PhD Student, Community Health Sciences, Dr Martin Anderson, PhD Supervisor/Senior Lecturer in Mental Health, School of Nursing.

Thank you for submitting the above application which was considered at the Medical School Research Ethics Committee at its meeting on 17th January 2008. The following documents were reviewed:

- Application form dated 19/12/2007
- Research proposal dated January 2008
- Volunteer information sheet dated January 2008
- Volunteer consent form dated 19/12/007

This study was approved subject to the following concerns:

1. The Committee would like you to justify the reason for using groups of 3 as opposed to individual interviews for the sorting task. We felt it quite likely that a dominant individual would shift the results.
2. We would like to see a copy of the letter to the school and an outline of the proposed presentation.
3. The information sheet seems at different occasions to be directed towards either the parent or the subject please unify and rename it "Parental and Volunteer Information Sheet".

4. In accordance with GCP the Committee would like to see that wherever possible the subject was involved in consent and suggest that the consent form should have a place both for the parent to sign and also for the volunteer to sign if they want to .
5. Please confirm the age range which you state as 14-17 in the protocol and 13-17 under question 17 of the application form and 13-19 on the information sheet. Please correct and make consistent.
6. We note under question 22 that you will tell participants and their carers the likely action should sensitive information be disclosed. We think this should be on the information sheet and we'd also like this spelt out more clearly who will be informed. It would be useful to have a name of some member of staff who will deal with any issues.
7. We would also like to know that the interviewer/investigator will be chaperoned and that the interviews will take place in the presence of a third party. This is standard to protect both the subject and investigator.

Please reply to the specific comments that we make listing our comments first and then give your response underlined, this will make it much easier for us to confirm that you have indeed done what was asked and will speed the processing of your revision. You should also highlight all the changes that have been made in any documents you resubmit.

On receipt of a revised information sheet and clarification of the above issues I am empowered to give Chair's approval.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R C Spiller', written in a cursive style.

Professor R C Spiller
Chairman, Nottingham University Medical School Ethics Committee

Appendix C

Parental and Volunteer Information Sheet

University of Nottingham
School of Community Health Sciences
B Floor, The Medical School
Queens Medical Centre
Nottingham
NG7 2UH

Title of Project: Constructing a male identity: investigating the ideas that teenage boys with learning disabilities have about their future.

Investigators: David Charnock, PhD Student
Penny Standen, Professor of Health Psychology and Learning Disabilities
Martin Anderson, Senior Lecturer in Mental Health

Healthy Volunteers Information Sheet

Thank you for your interest in this research study. This information sheet is provided to explain why the research is being done and what it will involve so that you, with the help and support of your parent/carer, can decide whether or not to take part. Please take time to read it carefully and to discuss it with others if you wish to do so. Do

contact me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

Teenage boys with and without learning disabilities may be influenced by many things when thinking about what kind of man they want to become. They may be exposed to role models from films and the media or from their everyday lives, which help them develop their ideas. However, as we know from existing research, many idealised role models are difficult to copy. This study aims to find out what ideas teenage boys with learning disabilities have about their future. In particular, we want to find out what they already know about the role of men in their communities and their expectations of their own role as a man as they move into the adult world.

What does the study involve?

The study will involve two elements, a sorting exercise and a taped interview. Firstly volunteers will be asked if they would like to take part in a sorting exercise*, which will involve the sorting of images into those that men are involved in and those that men should not be involved in. This exercise will be done with groups of 3 volunteers and their discussions regarding their choice will be taped for analysis. Second, groups from years 9 to 12 (age range 13-17) will be asked, after negotiation with teaching staff, to create a story board in any medium they wish to explain what expectations they have of adult life. Following the creation of the work, each volunteer will be invited to an interview* to talk about it. This interview will be tape recorded and transcribed for further analysis. A typed version of the interview will be given to the volunteer and checked for any inconsistencies, parents are asked to help with this.

Both the sorting exercise and interview will be conducted in the presence of a chaperone/third party.

This person will be an existing member of school staff

Why have I been chosen?

You have been approached as a male student of the school in year 9, 10, 11 or 12 (age range 13 – 17) or a parent of a male student in those year groups. Parents/carers are asked to offer support to their sons' throughout the process.

Does my son have to take part?

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. If your son does decide to take part he is still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What are the risks of taking part?

This should not be a negative experience. If for any reason you do not want to participate in the sorting exercise or answer any questions during the interview you may do so.

What are the benefits of taking part?

Although there will be no immediate benefit to you or your son, the information obtained will help identify how young people with learning disabilities move into adult life.

What will happen if my son discloses sensitive information during the sorting exercise or interview?

If this occurs then the sorting exercise or interview will be stopped immediately. The information will then be discussed with Mr Drabble, Deputy Head, and left with the school to make a decision under their policies.

Will information be kept confidential?

All tapes of group sorting exercises or interviews together with the typed versions will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, treated as strictly confidential and will only be accessible to the research team. Any information about your son that leaves the research unit will have his name and address removed from it so that he cannot be recognised.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The typed versions of the interviews obtained during the research study will be analysed, written up and assessed. Some of the findings may be published in professional journals but subjects will not be identified in any report or publication.

What should I do if I want to complain?

If you wish to complain, or have any concerns about any aspect of the way in which you have been approached or treated during the course of this research study, please contact Penny Standen (Tel: 0115 9709247, email: p.standennottingham.ac.uk) in the first instance. If no satisfactory outcome is achieved you should then contact:

The Chairman of the Ethics Committee Secretary
The Dean's Office
B Floor, The Medical School
Queen's Medical Centre
Nottingham
NG7 2UH

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Nottingham Medical School Ethics Committee.

Who should I contact for further information?

If you have any queries please contact:

David Charnock (PhD Student)
University of Nottingham
School of Nursing

(0115) 8230919
07717660624

Appendix D

Title of Project: Constructing a male identity: investigating the ideas that teenage boys with learning disabilities have about their future.

Name of Investigators: David Charnock, MSc.
Professor Penny Standen, PhD (Professor of Health Psychology and Learning Disabilities) **Supervising investigator**
Dr Martin Anderson, PhD (Senior Lecturer in Mental Health)

Healthy Volunteer's Consent Form

Please read this form and sign it once the above named or their designated representative, has explained fully the aims and procedures of the study to you

- I voluntarily agree to my son taking part in this study.
- I confirm that I have been given a full explanation by the above named and that I have read and understand the information sheet given to me which is attached.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study with one of the above investigators or their deputies on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.
- I agree to the above investigators contacting my sons' general practitioner [and teaching or university authority if appropriate] to make known my participation in the study where relevant.
- I agree to comply with the reasonable instructions of the supervising investigator and will notify her immediately of any unexpected unusual symptoms or deterioration of health.
- I authorise the investigators to disclose the results of my participation in the study but not my name.
- I understand that information about my son recorded during the study will be kept in a secure database. If data is transferred to others it will be made anonymous. Data will be kept for 7 years after the results of this study have been published.
- I understand that I can ask for further instructions or explanations at any time.
- I understand that my son is free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason for withdrawing.

Parent/ Carers Name:
Childs Name:.....
Address:
Telephone number:

Parents Signature: **Date:**

***Childs Signature:** **Date:**

I confirm that I have fully explained the purpose of the study and what is involved to:
.....

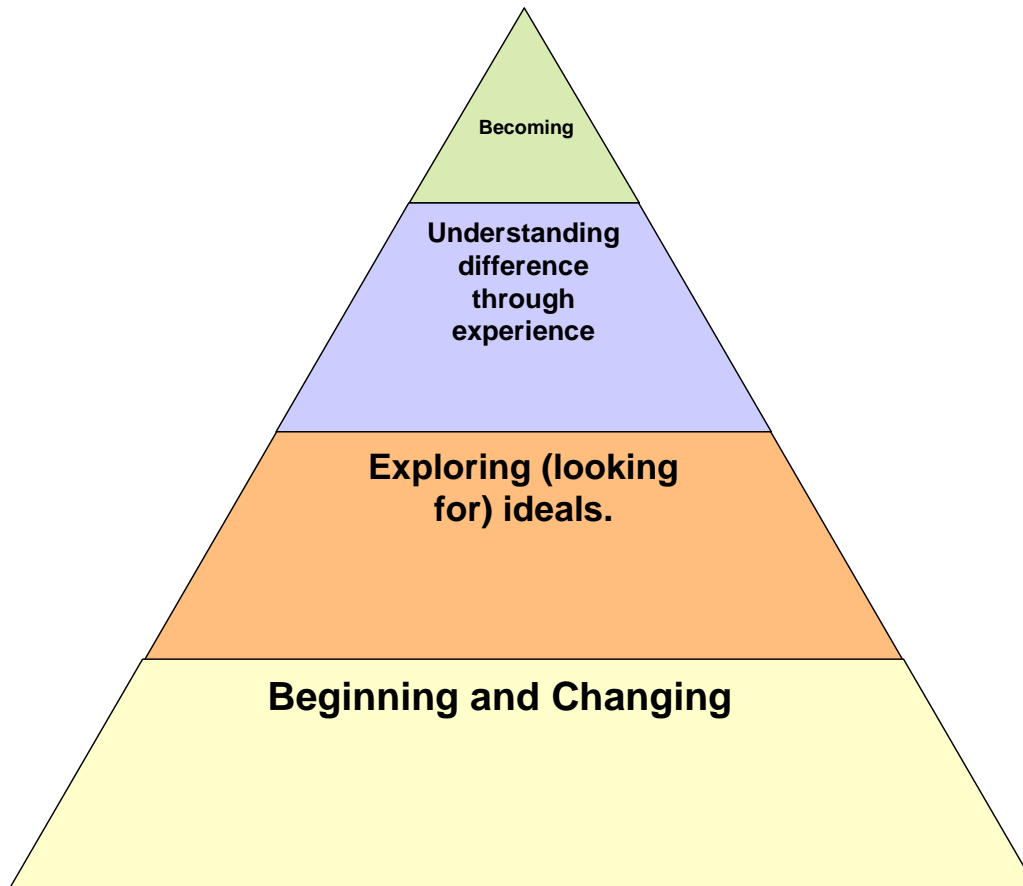
I have given the above named a copy of this form together with the information sheet.

Investigators Signature: **Date:**

Study Volunteer Number:

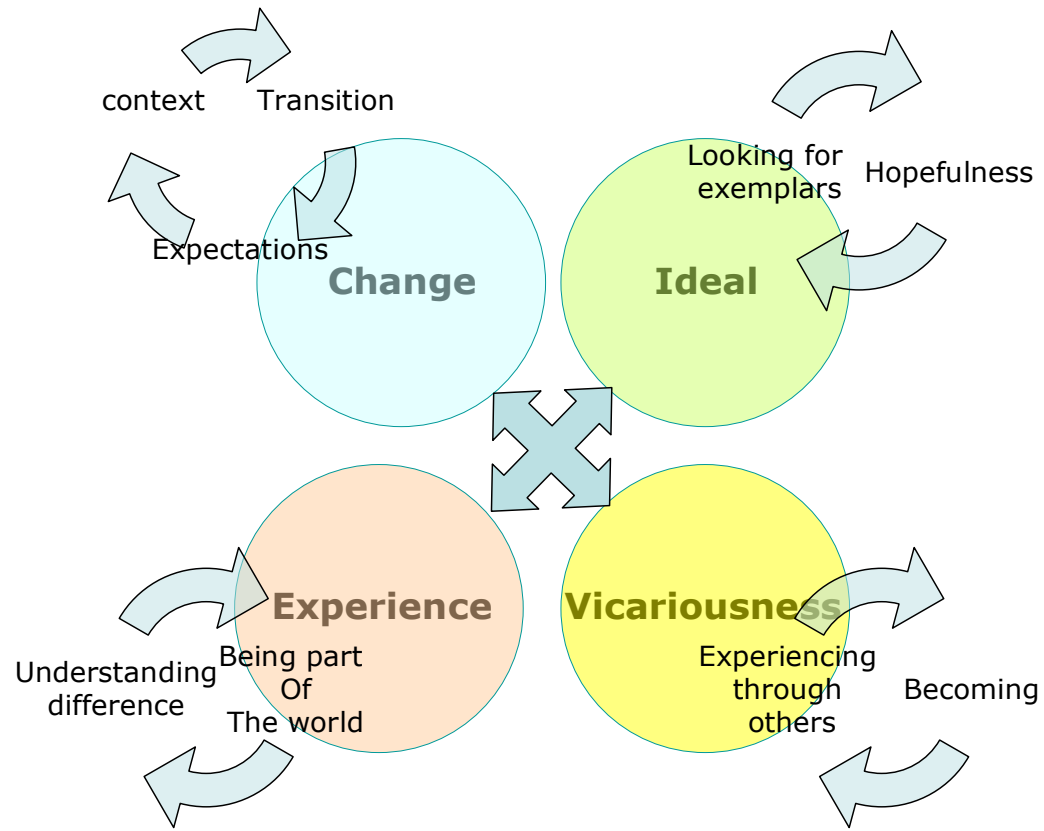
***The child may choose to sign as they wish.**

Appendix E



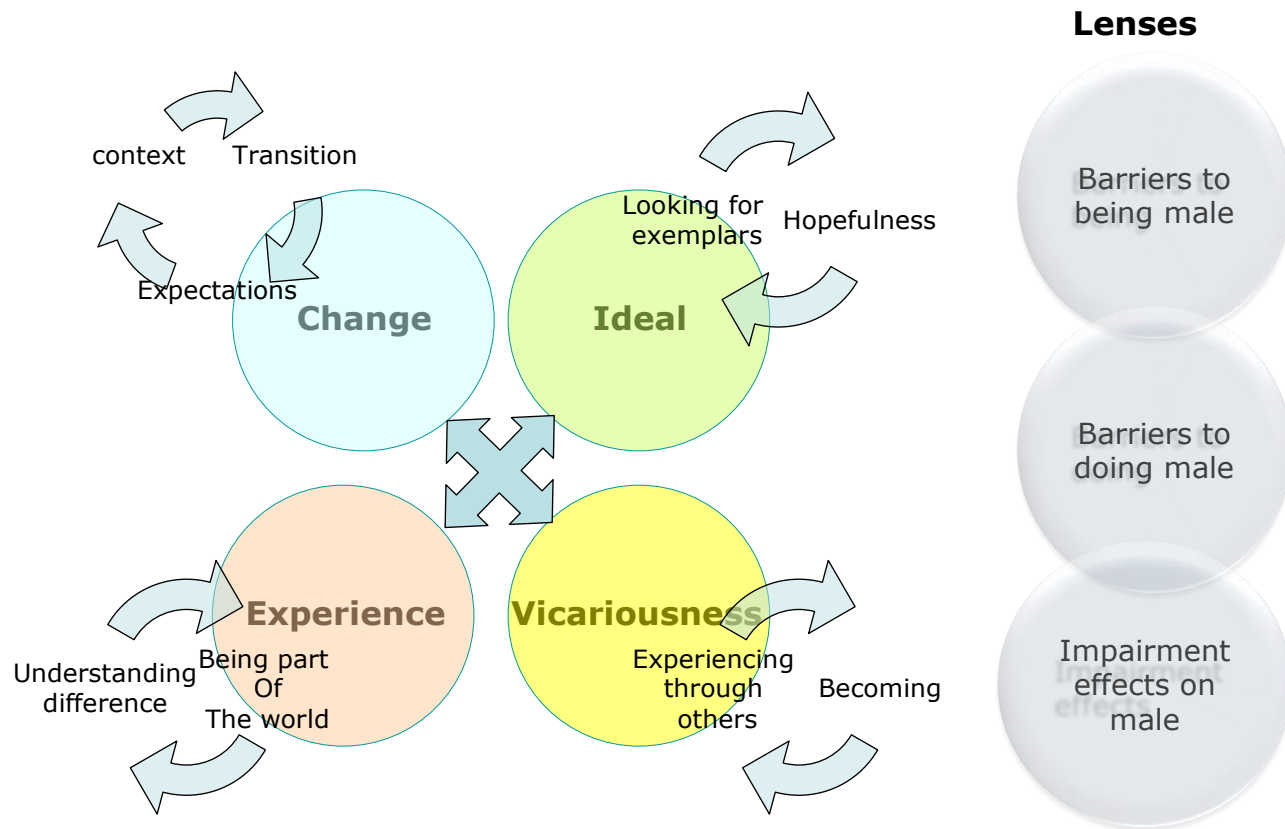
The Logic for an explanatory theoretical framework of 'ways of doing ID boy to man'

Appendix F



An explanatory theoretical framework for 'ways of doing ID boy to man'

Appendix G



An explanatory theoretical framework for the 'ways we do ID boy to man' including Thomas's Lenses.

Appendix H

Second-hand masculinity: Do boys with intellectual disabilities use computer games as part of gender practice?

D Charnock¹, P J Standen²

¹Division of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy, University of Nottingham,
Nottingham, UK

²Community Health Sciences, University of Nottingham,
Nottingham, UK

¹*david.charnock@nottingham.ac.uk* ²*p.standen@nottingham.ac.uk*

^{1, 2}*www.nottingham.ac.uk*

ABSTRACT

The process of gendered practice in the pursuit of masculine identity is complex with many obstacles and hegemonic forms to negotiate on the journey. Add to this the multifaceted and diverse nature of intellectual disability (ID) and the opportunity for normalised gendered practice is further complicated. Focused on the talk of boys with ID, this paper offers an account of the development of ideas about masculinity to show how gaming may offer a space for gendered practice not available in other areas of the boys' lives. The paper tentatively argues that gaming may offer an opportunity for the boys and those working with them to explore gendered practice safely to facilitate the construction of their identities as men and to challenge problematic images of the hyper-masculine ideal found in these games.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of a gendered identity, its performance and refinement is a process that both boys and girls navigate to construct ideas about the men and women they will become. Research into masculinity is now an established area of study, but contemporary research considerations of the influence of gender for boys with ID and their developing identities remains limited. There has been no consequent consideration of what methods could be adopted to help boys with ID develop their ideas of the men they wish to become. In contrast the study of male identity has been considered in studies that regard this from the perspective of men who are physically disabled (Gerschick and Miller, 1994; Shakespeare, 1999; Ostrander, 2008). In these studies researchers have established the need for further investigation to consider the interrelationship between masculinity and disability. Gerschick and Miller's (1994) seminal work documents the extents to which men with physical disabilities reframe their masculinity in the face of barriers to inclusion in their communities. This reframing as part of gendered practice can take on a number of forms and aims to emulate or subvert widely held beliefs of how men should be in order to gain acceptance. The contrast of experience between able-bodied men and those with disabilities taking part in the research, is graphically illustrated highlighting that the disabled man is constantly at odds with dominant views of what it is to be a man. However, it is also apparent in research with boys and men without disabilities that the route to manhood is not without its complexities.

It is clear from the mainstream literature with regard to masculinity, that in the process of constructing a masculine identity, dominant or hegemonic forms of masculinity which protect the 'legitimacy of patriarchy' (Connell, 1995), offer a cultural and time specific blue print for men. Within the complexities of this blue print are the constructions of masculinity that are supported and those that are rejected (Connell, 2000). Whitehead (2002) indicates that the existence of dominant and subordinated male behaviour is indicative of the inequalities of gender. However, it would be simplistic to assume that all boys or all men subscribe to a dominant form of masculinity. Unfortunately, for most of these men and boys the existence of the hegemonic form, even at a distance, can be problematic as they navigate their way

towards an acceptable masculine identity (Connell, 2000). Frosh et al (2002) in their research with teenagers use a construct of hegemonic masculinities which they and the boys term ‘popular masculinities’. This term was utilised to reveal not only the dominance of a particular boy, but also the apparent opposing differences between boys and girls and boys and other boys who did not meet the standards of masculinity required. The location of difference and the dialogue which this creates appears to be an important process in the development of male identity. This view is supported by Swain (2003) who argues that the world of men is governed by a hegemony perceived by boys and that this is supported by visual and print media.

Considering the hegemonic formation of the masculine ideal in this way might lead one to assume that the ideas generated are somehow fixed and impermeable. However, for teenagers constructing normalized identities, place, space and time are influential (Swain, 2003; Archer and Yamashita 2003). Research also highlights the contestable nature of the construction of identity and the battles that can occur in relation to it. Paechter (2003) argues that achievement is dependant on the teenage boy’s successful or unsuccessful attempts to project their developing masculine identity on new social situations (Paechter, 2003) Swain (2003) agrees with this position as he posits the physical practice of the body not as something driven by existing notions of ‘doing boy’ but as brought about through its performance. The challenge remains how best to help boys with ID develop their masculine identity in a safe and effective way.

Virtual reality and its potential for use in the education of people with ID has received some attention over the past two decades (Cromby, Standen and Brown, 1996; Standen and Brown, 2005; Standen and Brown, 2006). Most recently Hopkins, Gower, Perez et al (2011) have demonstrated its effectiveness in improving social skills for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The use of computer based technology as a tool to assist educationalists in their work with people who have ID is supported for school age children (Langone, Shade, Clees et al, 1999; Mechling, Gast and Langone, 2002; Mechling, 2006) and young adults (Cromby, Standen, and Brown, 1996; Lancioni, Oliva, Meazzini et al, 1993; Brewer and White, 1994; Lancioni, Van den Hof, Furniss et al, 1999; Lancioni, O’Reilly, Singh et al, 2005; Mechling and Cronin, 2006; Mechling, Gast and Krupa, 2007) with ID. Although reporting on small groups of participants, this research shows how computer based technology can be used to improve educational achievement for this group. Little current research centres on children with ID who engage with computer technology not just as an education tool, but through the choices that they make in their lives outside school. However, Orsmond and Kuo (2011) report on the use of computers by adolescents with ASD and suggest that participants were using this by choice and could access it independently.

The purpose of the main study, from which the results for this paper are drawn, was to explore whether boys with ID had a culturally normal idea of what it means to be a boy, what influenced this and what ideas the boys had about their futures as men. This paper will focus on the boys’ use of games as a potential space for gendered practice and their experience of second hand masculinity via the hyper-masculine characters typically found in many commercial games.

2. METHOD

2.1 *Participants*

A qualitative methodology was adopted to elicit the views of participants with an ID about their lives as boys. Twenty one boys (see Table 1.) who were engaged in a process of transition in years 8 to 11 were recruited from a school for children with special needs. Consent was gained from the boys themselves and from their parents.

Table 2. *number, year group and age of sample*

Number of participants	Year group	Age of participants
3	8	13-14years
6	9	14-15years
4	10	15-16years
8	11	16-17years

2.2 *Procedure*

The primary researcher initially spent six weeks in the school observing the boys and preparing materials for the group interviews. Participants were divided into five groups based on their age and friendship group

following guidance from the boys themselves and teaching staff at the school. Each group took part in a sorting exercise as described below and then each individual was asked if they would like to progress to individual interview. Of the 21 participants 4 were either not interviewed as a result of their ability to engage with materials in the group interviews (n=2), or did not attend for interview at the time arranged (n=2).

2.2.1 *Group interviews.* First group interviews were conducted involving the boys sorting images of men doing various activities. The development of the bank of images used in the group was informed by the work of Frosh et al (2002) and the earlier observations made by the primary researcher. Groups were asked to sort the images into two piles: images that the boys did not support as masculine and images they did support. Conversations between the boys while negotiating decisions were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim prior to analysis.

2.2.2 *Individual interviews* Boys were asked, during art classes as part of the school timetable, to produce in a medium of their choice visual representations of their predictions of their lives as men. These were then used in the interviews as a trigger for discussion. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim ready for analysis.

2.3 *Analysis*

Using NVivo 9 to store and organize the transcripts, a constant comparative method of analysis was used following each episode of data collection until saturation was achieved. Six themes emerged from the analysis of the group and individual interviews supported by a seventh overarching theme which emerged from the participants' view of themselves as *'The way we do boy'*. One of the six themes which emerged from the boys' talk about the lives of others was Vicarious (second hand) masculinity. This theme has two threads; the first identified the boys as looking on, experiencing constructs of masculinity through the lives of other boys and the men in their lives; the second, which forms the focus of this paper, illustrates the boy's lives through the computer games that they played.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The scrutinized lives of the boys who participated in the research and their deep sense of being regarded as other became a focal point when conducting both the focus groups and individual interviews. Boys were eager to talk about how they conducted their lives as boys, in a very tangible and celebratory account of boyhood from their perspective. Expressing a credible account of boyhood in poignant and playful ways was an essential part of their talk. Boys were careful not to frame their accounts in the context of difference or allow their ID to dominate their accounts of their masculinity. The time spent in the school developing and then conducting the research resulted in interesting exchanges when the boys would exclaim *'you've seen us!'* This was used to remind me of the time I had already spent with them watching them play football, engaging in computer gaming and participating in curricular and non-curricular activities. An alternative and equally credible explanation of this could be that *'you've seen us!'* was an expression of the ever watchful eye of adults in their lives. So aware of being watched and scrutinized in all areas of life, the boys may have assumed that I was fully aware of everything. Interestingly the only aspect of their lives that could not be scrutinized in this way was their interactions and activity in the virtual world of games.

In their exchanges with both me as researcher and other boys, participants spoke of their games consoles and how gaming was essential to the construction of their identities as boys. Used in part by the school as a reward for the completion of academic work, gaming was also valued by the boys as an independent pursuit free of the restrictions of others. In the virtual world, inhabited by their favorite characters, the boys could be successful and heroic, achieving beyond what would be expected of them in the real world. The analysis of both the focus groups and individual interviews appears to suggest that the boys used games as a space for gendered practice and also as an opportunity to experience second hand a construction of hyper-masculinity through characters in console games.

3.1. *Games as space for Gendered Practice.*

In the school opportunities for gendered practice were limited as the school day was framed not only by the curriculum but also by the ever watchful eye of adults, who controlled both classroom areas and communal spaces. However, it was clear to the boys with ID that virtual spaces were relatively un-policed by others

and could be easily accessed and some spent as much time as they could in these spaces:

Philip: Football, yesterday I played...oh was it yesterday? I think it was yesterday I played cricket on my play station. I played on my PSP on the bus yesterday and...

These ideas about the significance of accessibility are echoed by another boy who describes his strategy for ensuring that he has the latest console to play games on. Cost is not an issue only that it is available and that access is assured.

Ian: Yeh, and then I had to go on E-Bay and get My PS3. So I'll be doing that with my PS2 then when I get my PS4.

Int.: So you keep your PS3 and you get your new PS4.

Ian: Yeh. Well the PS3 will be down stairs though or I might give it to my brother.

The fact that the PS4 was then and is not yet available is not important here. Ian's ideas to keep those things he loves close to him and accessible are part of a plan to maintain this in his life. The knowledge Ian possessed regarding gaming and the gaming world was incredible and he often acted as a source of information to other boys on the next game coming into the shops.

The subordination of masculinity on the grounds of ID was a regular experience for the boys

Chris: These fights, you know these bullies at (names mainstream school) they had a fight with me, I just... and all the time I get into trouble. And you know the other time right in this lesson I accidentally wacked my hand on the teacher's face like that.

John: You accidentally wacked them on the head?

Chris: Yeh I did because (names two other boys), those two dimwits got me into trouble and they had to put me out.

Yet in the virtual world they could be dominant and competitive without fear of reprisal from others. Solitary games gave boys the assurance that their success, or lack of it, was a matter for them and could not be compared with other areas of their lives or referenced by their ID. Growing confidence opened up an opportunity for one teenage boy to explore gendered practice as part of an online gaming group. The virtual world became a space for spontaneous engagement with others, where intellectual ability was not a pre-requisite to inclusion as was apparent in other areas of the boys' lives.

John: Yeh, I do play those a lot of the time as well as others.

Int.: Do you play it on your own, or do you link up with people over the internet?

John: Well, as in the World of War Craft I can play with other players at an instant.

Int.: Right?

John: So I just Log in and there's all those people that you've got you can't go on single player mode now.

The immediacy of contact between John and others is clearly appealing. Talk centres on unfettered access and a joining of equals. The assumption is that ID is unimportant or in recounting the events in the virtual world it is not important to focus on difference. John uses this opportunity as a springboard for testing out a way of being in what he regards as a safe environment.

John: Well we do have our little chats about what's...we don't say like what our names are and everything.

Int.: No?

John: Or where we live, we just talk about things, about like what we should do on this certain place. Or, like we talk about, really complain about stuff that is really annoying on the game and everything.

Enthusiastic talk about solitary gaming or joining with others as part of a virtual world was common among those interviewed. In particular the anonymity appeared to suit the boys and gave them the opportunity to try out ways of being male that was not available to them in other areas of their lives. For those joining with others in virtual spaces to play games, this appears to help draw them away from their embodied identity as intellectually disabled, giving a sense of a gendered identity equal to others. The need to maintain this as an opportunity for the *way we do boy* also emerged in talk about age limits for gaming.

John: It is quite interesting playing it still you can still...the game that I'm playing right now you can play at a certain age, but I had someone which was 106 playing once.

Armed with this sort of information, perhaps slightly exaggerated in the account, boys could argue for gaming to be part of life well into adulthood and eventual old age. Talk of others' involvement in gaming also helped to strengthen boys' accounts of gaming as a space for gendered practice.

Simon: Shall I start with my dad's?

Int.: Yes please.

Simon: Sega, sega advanced a play station a play station 2 and a Wii and when my step brother comes we got a X-box 360 as well and a play station 3.

The maintenance of gaming as an opportunity for boys was also supported by the school and became a focus in talk regarding making the transition from the main school to provision for 16 to 19 year olds known in the school as the 16+ unit.

Int: What's good about 16+ and staying on?

Simon: You get money.

Int: You get what? Oh you get some money (Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)). I can see a theme here Simon! (Had talked about making money when older, winning the lottery was a favourite).

Simon: No, no, no, you don't get money. It's like there's games...a play station 2 and X-box 360 and play station 3, in that big room.

Int.: OK.

Simon: No not the big room just the one you see people in.

Philip, John and Simon's accounts give a position for gaming in their developing ideas of their gendered identities. Although John's account is slightly different in that he joined with others to play games, the dominant factor is the boys' desire for autonomy and independence through an unrestricted medium for testing how to be boys without the complication of disability.

3.2. *Games as a construct of hyper-masculinity.*

Those interviewed enjoyed the experience of being part of a world populated by hyper-masculine characters where they could be a successful cricketer one minute and a superhero the next. Gaming gave the boys a great deal of excitement, escapism and a sense of anticipation as they wondered what might happen next in their virtual worlds. Games equated to living a more exciting life through the embodiment of hyper-masculine characters.

Ian: I've finished Ironman.

Int.: Oh have you?

Ian: Yeh. So I've got to wait to get the Incredible Hulk now.

Int.: Yeh? So you like things that are real action that you have to work through.

Ian: The Black Knight's coming soon as well.

Int.: The Black Knight? What's that?

Ian: Batman.

Favoured characters populated games which included sport, superheroes or the anti hero (villain or criminal). The un-problematized representation of the hyper-masculine and the actions of characters were particularly attractive to the boys.

Andy: The action and the adventure.

Int.: Yeh?

Andy: Stuff like that. Sword fighting games.

Int.: Sword fighting games. Are they your favourite?

Andy: And shooting games.

Preferences were often underlined by those interviewed.

Andy: I've got some fighting games. I've got Prince of Persia, South time for the PS 2, halo 2 for the X-Box, for the normal X-Box, and I'm hoping that I might get my X-Box 360 to get Halo 3 and Assassins Creed.

The types of characters in these games are tough and in control of their destinies, something that the boys admired and wanted to emulate.

John: 'cause there's different areas with as many people and you can join up with them as well. So I was in this instance and all of a sudden this creature we killed it of course and then something happened it just went off and then on and then she was there again and of course we were at full house so we had to kill her again. It just kept on happening so we had to run out of the instance and reset it all and everything.

Later on in the interview John describes another occasion when those on line had to collaborate to fix a problem.

John: There was like two dead bodies there when we came back and then we went there again it didn't happen again but with other ones it did and we were quite annoyed at it. We weren't annoyed 'cause we got extra things with it, but we were annoyed that it actually did happen when we were resting and everything.

Talk of success and dominance over others was something that was in stark contrast to the lives of the boys in the real world.

These findings raise interesting issues regarding the boys' developing identities and their masculinity. Time spent using computers appeared to be driven by the boys' enthusiasm for games and the opportunity to engage in activities independently. Similar to the view of Orsmond and Kuo (2011) who suggest that although solitary, computer use by people with ASD indicated independence, the boys were able to control this for themselves free from the interference of the adults in their lives. The development of independence and control by the boys differs from the finding of Foley and McCubbin (2009) purely as a result of the lack of external control over how they used the computer and what games they played. It could be suggested that this independence and control could be linked to gendered practice and that the boys, who lacked opportunities to try out aspects of dominant forms of masculinity, were using computer gaming as a conduit for testing this out.

The effect of gaming on the boys' persona is another aspect that should be questioned as a result of these findings, particularly as they favoured games that allowed them to embody hyper-masculine characters. Although changes in the perception of violence could not be identified in this study as in Deselms and Altman (2003), it could be argued that games played by the boys strengthened ideas of power and control as aspects of masculinity. In addition, the hyper masculine characteristics of male characters in the games and the boys' view of them may be problematic in the development of future ideas of gender roles as found by Dill and Thill (2007) in their research with teenagers. However, these games may offer the opportunity, as part of a clear strategy, to help the boys to question both desirable and undesirable aspects of masculine identity. Although the images of men and women in the games are problematic (Burgess, Stermer and Burgess, 2007), the games may offer a way of challenging thinking about masculinity and the objectification of female characters that engages the boys in a medium that they enjoy. The practice of popular masculinity in the work of Frosh et al (2002), in which they offer 'hardness' as a representation supported in activities with other boys, may offer opportunities for working with boys with ID who enjoy gaming. For the boys with ID in the study this could mean testing out their experience of being 'hard' or tough through the computer games they play. The image of the lone assassin roaming the virtual world in search of his next victim is a representation of toughness that could be successfully achieved by any of the boys in the study. Hardness could be indicative of successes on a virtual level, offering equality of access to the world of boy and eventually the world of men. The challenge would be in working alongside boys with ID to help them analyse the representation of masculinity in the games and contrast that with the reality of their developing gendered identity.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The narratives developed by the boys in the sorting exercise and interviews offer an invaluable insight into their lives. Through their talk the participants have given form to *the way we do boy* in the school and the experiences, changes and influences that have and continue to shape this. The boys' insights are illustrations of their lives now, but also offer a glimpse of how they wish to shape their lives as men in the

future. Their understanding of themselves and their interpretation of the lives of others, although referenced by limited experiences, paint an extraordinary picture which brings both opportunities and restrictions into sharp relief.

Gaming is an important part of the boys' lives and is perhaps indicative of a developing independence and control not available to them in the real world. Through the boys' talk their enthusiasm for the games is clear and solitary games offer the opportunity for freedom and a chance to practice aspects of gender identity. It is suggested that the engagement with games by boys with ID can be used to widen their opportunities for gendered practice and question aspects of dominant masculinities including their construction. Further research needs to be carried out to establish how boys with ID use games and if these are in fact influential in the formation of gendered identities.

Acknowledgements: Thanks to all those boys who took part in the study, to teaching and support staff who helped by acting as chaperones during group interviews. Particular thanks to the head and governors of the school for allowing the research to take place.

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