

EXPLORING TEEN BOYS' EXPERIENCES OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AT SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

MAPPING ONLINE performances via mobile technology among a group of diverse male adolescents, this thesis investigates the personal and institutional circumstances navigated at a secondary school in London. Exploring how adolescent males use their mobile devices to participate in online communities, the research questions how male identity constructions and peer relationships online *shape* embodied relations at school (offline) and vice versa. Following a qualitative interpretivist methodology based on eight male single gender focus groups (n = 30, May 2015) alongside four semi-structured staff interviews, data is analysed under three themes of Technology, Community, and Performances of Masculine Heterosexuality.

Salient findings include the central tenet that mobile phone use blurs the space between school and outside of school (including home). Adolescent males describe versions of masculinity with regard to heterosexuality and girls that are distinct from those discourses performed around single-gender paradigms, often focused on violence. Technology is portrayed by the male adolescents as not static with school policy failing to acknowledge and respond to endemic picture and video exchange, free at the point of use. Social Networking Sites, accessed primarily through evolving mobile phones, transform relationships offline (e.g. ratings amongst peer groups) through online mediums (e.g. likes) and performances online (e.g. #soondelete) that only some schools may be familiar with. Banning mobile phones actively discourages transparent dialogue thereby reinforcing gendered stereotypes.

Developing digital responsibility within the boys themselves lies at the heart of helping schools respond to challenges presented by male adolescent engagement with their personal mobile phones. Triangulating the needs of the boys alongside developing parent & carer understanding of mobile phone and ensuring staff training is effectively deployed should reduce risk to age inappropriate material (e.g. pornography) as well as ensure future mobile use remains focused on preparing the boys for whichever technological advancements lie in their future.

Acknowledgement

Whilst this thesis concerns boys, it would not have been possible without six exceptional women: my Grandmother Maria Ottlyk, my mother Katarina Francis, my sister Claire Francis, my flat mate Fiona Sibley, my fellow EdD student Karen Coulthard and my supervisor, Professor Jessica Ringrose. This once in a lifetime opportunity would not have been achievable without their wisdom, love, kindness, guidance, cups of tea and jacket potatoes.

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own. Word count = 45,600

Reflective Statement

DIRECTED BY Section 9.2 of the UCL IOE EdD Handbook, the following summary covers the interdependent taught and research elements of the EdD course as a whole, highlighting the links between each component. Bound into my thesis, words included in this section are not taken into account when considering the word count of my thesis overall. A sequential approach is adopted, weaving my understanding of implications for academic and professional practice within the programme throughout. At the time of writing in March 2017, I am a sixth year part-time student having successfully progressed through each Annual Review without any concerns from my supervisor Professor Jessica Ringrose, nor any formal interruptions to my studies. Taught assignments from the EdD course were all completed with the 2011/12 academic year and judged satisfactory.

Foundations of Professionalism: Autumn Term 2011 / 2012

Assessed by Dr Clare Brooks & Dr Jacek Brant

My initial assignment considered teacher-professionalism with regard to increasing social media use by teachers and students. The use of three critical incidents evidenced the claim that professional boundaries are being blurred. In particular, I explored the concept of 'being seen' and how that can affect the consequences of teachers' use of social media.

Methods of Enquiry One: Spring Term 2011 / 2012

Assessed by Dr Mano Candappa & Dr Sue Taylor

Written as a proposal for exploratory research on how social media use might impact on the identity development of adolescents, my second assignment drew on concepts of subjectivities and power articulated within a post-structuralist paradigm. I engaged for the first time with Foucault and Butler to reflect on my positioning as a senior leader within my then employing school and how I define role as an 'insider researcher'. Employing a case study research strategy, my investigation into suitable research questions allowed me to consider innovative methodologies with the potential to provide suitable answers.

Methods of Enquiry Two - Sumer Term 2011 / 2012

Assessed by Professor Ann Hodgson & Dr Jon Swain

As a reflection on a somewhat mistaken research design (I attempted to use questionnaires to draw out data of an interpretivist nature), my third assignment allowed me to test out all aspects of the research cycle in a reasonably methodical way. I felt fully engaged with relevant sources of literature relating to methodologies and can now see how my musings lead to my final thesis research design. My research questions were arguably more appropriate for a thesis than MOE2 but the writing of this assignment allowed me to understand and the referencing criteria correctly as well as improve my ability to conclude effectively.

Institution Focused Study: submitted in February 2014

'How Do Social Media Create New Forms of Adolescent Identity?'

Assessed by Professor Jessica Ringrose and my second supervisor Dr John Potter

My 25,000-word study attempted to develop an account of areas and spaces in formal education which are normally blindsided in attempts to keep the whole institution going. As though to acknowledge fully the force and power of social media in the lives of young people, my presentation of salient data demonstrated how young people abnegate authority and irrevocably disrupt 'education'. I theoretically appropriated the notion of power alongside constructions of visibility and surveillance with a limited degree of success. My significant learning (once I dissected my feedback) was to be more focussed and yet more expansive with that focus when I approached my thesis. Put simply, I needed fewer research questions, fewer quotes and fewer pieces of data

alongside a greater quantity and quality of interwoven analysis to explore the development of theoretical insights.

Progress to Thesis: December 2014

Panel comprised of Dr Caroline Pelletier and Dr Jeff Bezemer

Explicitly aiming to develop a fuller understanding of new media methodologies and research into the field of social media, my proposed thesis initially considering online engagement over time. With a submitted working title of 'Identity Formation and Growth: The Impact of Social Media on the Circulation of Power amongst Adolescents', I began to seek ways in which versions of identity theory can be invoked in the context of construction of identity through the uses of online spaces. Without any intentional exaggeration, the panel itself and the subsequent written comments were easily my 'light-bulb moment'. I needed to clarify my focus, framing, aims and research questions whilst detailing how I would, as an insider researcher, shape and co-produce material. Following detailed written feedback, I focussed my energy during December 2014 and January 2015 on reflecting critically on both the constraints and potentialities of focus groups. The heart of the rationale for the research design became clear during this period and I decided to focus my energy on how works by Butler and boyd in particular offer a past-historic analysis of existing social media posts and so give no insight into the 'intention' behind any post. It was during this time that my supervisor and I identified a research gap in listening to the accounts of adolescent boys leading us (after many iterations) to an agreed title of "Exploring Teen Boys' Experiences of Mobile Technology at School".

At a more operational level, I also had to 'let go' of pretending to be a trained sociologist – my undergraduate degree was in pure maths but it wasn't until the thesis panel when I realised I was over-compensating with an unnecessarily complex prose style. Agreed in February 2015, my 'upgrade' after three and half years on the EdD course was the point at which I began to understand, internalise and start to act upon, the criteria needed to make a 'contribution to knowledge'.

Data Collection: Summer 2015

During April, May and June of 2015 I was arguably at my most prolific, managing to complete initial drafts of chapters for my introduction, research literature and methodology. In the same period, I carried out the data collection with my then employing institution. My timeline was only partially intrinsically motivated as I accepted a post in a different school from July 2015 and wanted to carry out my research in the school where I was established with good relationships with students and staff. Once I had my data secured, I took sometime between July 2015 and September 2015 to begin to code my data and simply just get my mind right. From the data it was clear that negotiations of privacy by the boys were commonplace within an increasingly unregulated environment. These environments permitted not just the observation of potentially harmful material but also the liking, commenting on and sharing of material which were shown to be outside the gaze (and thereby surveillance) of the school and family members.

Writing Up: October 2015 onwards

I took time out in San Francisco during my October 2015 half-term (my new school thankfully had a two-week break) and I returned with a data analysis chapter at an appropriate word length. Once again, I felt that completing a 'task' (e.g. thesis panel, first draft of a chapter) was actually the *beginning* not the *end* of the life of those words. Arguably my most significant supervision session came on Tuesday 22nd December 2015 when feedback from my supervisor evidenced a disconnect between my data analysis and my first three chapters leading to significant revisions. Throughout 2016 I edited my document removing overlapping areas of discussion and revising which section actually warranted a *section*. I moved from having four major themes (Technology, Self-Presentation, Community & Performances of Masculine Heterosexuality) down to three (I embedded the salient themes from Self-Presentation within the other three) and worked hard

remembering my IFS feedback to have fewer themes but to be more expansive within each focus. I continued to re-engage with relevant literature so that my editing became a cycle with my literature connected to themes derived from codes raised directly from my data.

Continually raising my self-awareness around discursive constructs of femininity and masculinity allowed me to investigate troubling implications. For example, when girls accept sexualisation, does it necessarily follow that girls must raise their self esteem or is this a diversion of attention away from the perpetrators of gender and sexually based violence? It would be simplistic to consider that social media is dangerous and that mobile phones themselves are now used as a tool of discipline instead of learning. Critiquing such assumptions challenges professionals within schools to balance the sociological preferences of families who have supplied the phones in the first place whilst reducing incidences of theft and cyberbullying.

Quality Assurance: November 2016 onwards

Having moved to Completing Research Status in October 2016, I was extremely grateful for the wisdom and guidance provided by my supervisor, second supervisor and internal reader, each of whom made a significant contribution to my final thesis. Jessica not only guided and assisted my research but also taught me how to engage, critically, with relevant research literature and how to present my arguments. John Potter always offered an alternative perspective and his often unexpected comments challenged me to reflect on technologies in new ways. Jon Swain, as internal reader, helped personalise my thesis by insisting on pseudonyms but more significantly facilitated me drawing out how discourse really was the underpinning structure for my analysis. Between Jessica, John and Jon I learned that all research is a compromise and that my efforts towards to contributing to knowledge have not been in vain.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT	10
	Research Context	12
	Research Questions	13
	Summary Contribution to Knowledge	14
CHAPTER TWO	THEORY & LITERATURE REVIEW	15
	Policy	15
	danah boyd	17
	Adolescent media cultures and mobile technology	18
	Physical Devices	18
	Social Networking Sites	19
	Cyber-Violence, Cyberbullying and Masculinity	19
	Humour & Attachment in Social Media Use and Production	21
	Critique of boyd's framework	22
	Analytical Approach	22
	Judith Butler	23
	Michel Foucault	23
	Discourse	24
	Intersectionality	24
	Gender	25
	Masculinity	25
	Hegemonic Masculinity	26
	Adolescent boys	27
	Multi-Cultural Schooling	28
	Adolescent Navigation of the Mobile Phone Ban at School	28
	Teacher Professionalism in Relation to the Mobile Ban	30
	Conclusion	31

CHAPTER THREE	METHODOLOGY & METHODS	33
Research Questions		34
Design of Study		35
Student Focus Groups		35
Staff Interviews		38
Ethical Issues		39
Account of Data Collection		40
Outline of Participants		40
Interview Protocol		42
Approach to Data Analysis		44
CHAPTER FOUR	DATA ANALYSIS	46
Technology		47
Surveillance		49
Mobile Phones on Site at School		54
Technical Devices		57
Maintaining Concurrent Profiles		59
Online Friends		61
Banging Likes		63
Cyber Bullying		65
Conclusion		67
Community		69
Transition		69
Family Members' Relationships with the Boys' Phones		71
Ethnicity		74
School Staff Professionalism in relation to Social Media		76
Peer Group Banter		78
Likes Within Peer Groups		81
Violence		83
Offline Societal Links		89
Conclusion		91
Performances of Masculine Heterosexuality		92
School Policy on Sex and Cyber Bullying		92
Stereo about Masculinity and Femininity		93
Porn and Girls' Bodies		97
Sexting and Revenge Porn		101
Conclusion		102

CHAPTER FIVE	DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION	104
	Mobile Phone Policies	104
	Contributions to Understandings of Youth Use and Production of Social Media	106
	Blurring the Space Between Home and School	106
	PSHE & ICT	107
	Access to Inappropriate Material	107
	Contributions to Community	108
	Primary Transition and uses of mobile technology	108
	Concealment of Mobile Devices	109
	Multiple Platforms	109
	Contributions to Performances of Masculine Heterosexuality	110
	Cyber violence, Masculinity and Girls	110
	Positive Online Role Models	111
	Limitations	112
	Implications for Professional Practice	114
	Summary	117
REFERENCES		118
APPENDICES		124
	Research Letter, Information Sheet & Consent Form	124
	Example Transcript from Yr11 Student Focus Group	127
	Summary Feedback to School	128

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

COMBINED WITH the capacity of mobile phones to freely exchange pictures and video messages, the rise of social media has introduced new platforms for student interaction both within and outside of school that blurs the lines of responsibility for students in school space. Research suggests that schools are inadequately developing appropriate resources to maximise young people's online engagements to benefit their learning, minimize privacy risks in order to aid social development and build resilience to both present and future challenges (Selwyn, 2006 & 2009; Livingstone, 2013). Schools would appear, however, uniquely placed to address these issues as a point at which student virtual identities meet with their real life peer group and their approach of social media. But how do the school context, policies and experience intersect to create issues and challenges? This thesis develops an account of both online and offline areas and spaces in informal education settings that are usually bracketed off as a parental concern (for example social media profile creation or free picture and video exchange) in the attempts to keep the institution, as a whole, moving forward.

As an experienced senior leader in a number of diverse secondary schools in London, performances of masculinity have permeated my carer to date. Whether coming out as a young gay teacher myself, designing timetables that have included aspects of single gender class groups or, more recently, running 'narrowing the gap' intervention projects in order to help boys 'keep up' with girls, the term 'boys' I have found to be synonymous with undesirable sociological characteristics such as temporary exclusion for poor (self) behaviour management, misogyny, or academic underachievement. And yet my experience also demonstrates exactly how bright, sensitive, supportive and academic boys can be. By exploring the online performances among a group of diverse male adolescents I am therefore able to investigate the personal and institutional circumstances that the boys navigate and which challenges and issues are facing them at an urban complex school in London. The thesis considers how schools react and how boys manage the range of issues presented by mobile digital technology in and around school.

At the time of data collection (June 2015) I was employed in an 11 – 18 mixed academy in northeast London that has consistently been awarded 'Good' in all Ofsted categories. The school currently operates a blanket mobile phone 'ban' whereby students are not allowed to carry their phones either on the way to school or when they are on site. Arguing in direct contradiction to Baym's (2013, p.44) conclusion that the 'work on on-line identity demonstrates a scholarly fascination with how anonymity can be used to invent alternative versions of one's self and to engage in untried forms of interaction, theoretically problematizing the notion of 'real self', my experience of working with and researching adolescents unequivocally indicates that teens primarily relate to

known peer networks rather than unknown groups (Beland & Murphy, 2015). Chapter Five informs a discussion of the implications for a withdrawal of the mobile phone ban and provides useful material when considering the implications for such a significant change in practice.

Recognizing Harris' (2001, p.480) assertion that 'school improvement is internally generated and internally driven', this thesis has developed my professional responsibilities through a critical re-engagement with salient literature. Specifically, this thesis allowed me to explore safeguarding and media studies whilst structuring an argument for how schools can protect, nurture and develop their male adolescents with regard to the current challenges faced by technological advancements including, but not limited to, cyberbullying alongside the creation and reproduction of age inappropriate material such as pornography. In practical terms, discussion around boys' experiences of mobile technology at school goes to the very heart of safeguarding and child protection for boys and girls. Acknowledging how atypical the school under investigation was, the cultural context whereby more than 60% of pupils speak English as an additional language, more than 85% of pupils self define as from a minority ethnic background and the school has over 50% of the cohort are defined as 'ever6' (that is they have been in receipt of Free Schools Meals provision in the last six years), the school operates in challenging circumstances in one of the world's great metropolitan hubs.

Situated within media performances of masculinity that are shifting and changing but also simultaneously constant in others ways, issues concerning identity creation (what is a 'lumbersexual?'), the influence of the mainstream film and television media (for example Christian Grey in 50 Shades of Grey) and the extent to which adverts can now reach young adolescent males through their mobile phones (for example whey protein shakes or 'movember') challenges schools to be pragmatic in their development of their leadership of syllabi presented. Indeed, use of mobile technology by adolescent males can be seen to simultaneously engage the distinct themes of popular masculine cultures presented by the mainstream media and localised school culture where there is an inherent dependence as well as independence from teaching staff. The thesis therefore contributes to debates around how adolescent boys engage with those school policies related to e-safety and the development of the 'whole child' through the Personal, Social and Health Education curricula. Specifically, the thesis explores how adolescent males describe versions of masculinity with regard to heterosexuality and girls that are distinct from those discourses performed around single-gender paradigms, often focused on violence. Describing technology as not static, school policy is shown failing to acknowledge (and therefore respond to) endemic picture and video exchange, free at the point of use.

Research Context

Acknowledging current key statutory guidance including 'Working together to safeguard children - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' (March 2015), the school works proactively to keep young people safe. The safeguarding arrangements, holistically, are underpinned by two key principles:

1. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and the organisation as a whole should play their full part; and
2. A child-centred approach: for the specific services to be effective, they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

Performing within established legal frameworks including The Children Act (1989) and the Equality Act (2010), the school has due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and works to prevent young people from being drawn into terrorism. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act received Royal Assent in February 2015 which means that from 1st July 2015, after the data was collected but before the thesis was written up, every local authority has a local duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Having been in position for two years at the time of gathering data in the summer term of 2015, the existing Principal inherited the current mobile phone ban whereby students in years seven to eleven are not allowed to bring their phones on site. This was a change from his previous school where mobile phones were allowed but students were required to place their phones in lockers during the day. Literature shows, however, that mobile phones have very different effects on different types of students. Indeed, Beland & Murphy (2015, p.17) found 'banning mobile phones improves outcomes for the low-achieving students... the most... and has no significant impact on high achievers'. Whilst implying low-achieving students are more likely to be distracted by the presence of mobile phones, it simultaneously implies high achievers can focus in the classroom regardless of whether phones are present. Contrasting my professional experience with the argument of the quote, this thesis questions the sociological implications of mobile phones when not considering academic achievement. Focused on a single secondary school with a historic and continuing mobile phone ban, this thesis contributes male adolescent discourses from students who have always owned a mobile phone during their ongoing secondary education.

As schools are *in loco parentis*, they have a legal responsibility to take on the functions and responsibilities of a parent / carer and therefore it would be remiss to ignore potentially harmful material accessed by adolescents. Translated as 'in the place of a parent', schools have a legal responsibility to take on some of the functions and responsibilities of a parent / carer.

Conceptually, this model can be exemplified by 2015's Prevent Duty whereby under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools must have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". Allowing institutions such as schools to act in the best interests of the students *as they see fit*, schools are not allowed, however, to action what would be considered violations of the students' civil liberties. The *in loco parentis* doctrine is distinct from the doctrine of *parens patriae*, the psychological parent doctrine, and adoption. In practice, the responsibility covers a wide range of principles and policies affecting a student's development, not least centred on an initial home-school agreement, behaviour and safety or both local and residential trips, meals emergency procedures (for example in the event of a fire or personal injury such as a broken arm in Physical Education). In an environment where the quality of communication between school, students and parents / carers is critical, the blanket mobile phone ban may reduce risk from robbery but inadvertently create an underworld of risk potentially more harmful with regard to pornography or grooming via social media. This thesis contributes to discussions around media practices, gender and adolescent development in the context of school, including how mobile phone use blurs the space between home and school as well as how social networking sites, accessed primarily through ever evolving mobile phones, transform relationships offline (e.g. ratings amongst peer groups) through online mediums (e.g. likes).

Research Questions

Integrating the studentship surrounding online media with meeting students', as well as schools', needs, the research aims to address Buckingham's (2007, p.178) still relevant argument that 'we are witnessing a widening gap between the culture of the school and the culture of children's lives outside school'. Wary of the criticism from Livingstone and Haddon (2008, p.320) whereby 'too often, questions are asked regarding parental regulation only of parents, neglecting children's responses to such regulation', this thesis explicitly focuses on male adolescent experiences. Despite acknowledgement that technology and social media significantly alter how adolescents engage with society, I am yet to find significant evidence that research has contributed significantly since Ito et al's (2009, p.3) summary that 'there is still relatively little research that investigates how these dynamics operate on the ground', where I understand 'ground' to mean offline experience at school and home. The specific research questions therefore underpinning my exploration are:

- How do adolescent males use their mobile devices to participate in online communities?
- How do male identity constructions and peer relationships online shape embodied relations at school (offline) and vice versa?

Contribution to Knowledge

Analysis within Chapter Four explores teen boys' experiences of mobile technology thematically via Technology, Community and Performances of Masculine Heterosexuality. My findings show, within the theme of Technology, that mobile devices blur the space between school and outside of school (including home). Moreover, there is no distinction between Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) with Information Communication Technology (ICT) when considering students who videos are seen to be viewed over one hundred thousand times. Access, predominantly but not exclusively via social networking sites, to inappropriate material (such as beheading videos via Facebook), challenges schools to refine safeguarding procedures. Within the Theme of Community, primary transition appears to be critical when considering both the devices and practices secondary school bring to their new institution on their 'day one'. Concealment of mobile devices can also be seen to play into a hidden culture where student perception of school staff is that staff are actively looking away. Multiple platforms coupled with various methods for communications within social networking sites (e.g. with Facebook, boys can post a status, comment on another student's status, belong to a group chat as well as send private messages) can be seen to complicate discourses around the obsolete online / offline binary. Finally, for the presented theme of Performances of Masculine Heterosexuality, the research found cyber violence with regard to masculinity transformed by mobile devices given the ease at which they can be accessed. Data further suggests that schools must do more to protect girls from potential coercion by boys. Finally, in an educational climate where teachers lead students by example rather than by telling them what not to do (e.g. walk on the left as opposed to 'don't run') positive male role models online should be developed by the teaching profession in order to support the online development of boys.

Chapters Two to Five

Chapter Two presents a synthesis of work already undertaken in the fields of gender, masculinity, online engagement and schooling, presenting some of the research gap that the thesis is responding to. Chapter Three presents the methodology applied in order to attempt to answer my research questions. Chapter Four examines, thematically, boys' experiences of mobile technology from this specific institution and discusses how a school mobile phone ban discourages transparent dialogue thereby reinforcing gendered stereotypes. Chapter Five discusses the professional relevance for teachers, secondary school leaders and governors from the discourses explored via the boys and teachers. Drawing conclusions including implications for further study, the chapter argues, for example, that addressing the root causes of cyberbullying lies at heart of any future safeguarding and child protection initiatives.

CHAPTER TWO – THEORY & LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter I present salient concepts with reference to scholarly literature which are of particular use to my research. I explain the meaning, nature and challenges associated with each concept so that analysis, presented within Chapters Four & Five, transition from simply describing a phenomenon to contributing to knowledge.

The first half of this chapter positions my research at the intersection of three distinct but connected fields, extending debates around mobile technology, adolescent boys and the leadership of schools in complex urban settings. I start with a discussion contextualising current policy issues leading into my positioning of danah boyd's research as the theoretical cornerstone of this thesis. I discuss mobile technology leading before critiquing boyd's framework which focuses on technology without adequate attention to discourse, identity and gender. The second half of this chapter presents my analytical approach. Included alongside research from Judith Butler and Michel Foucault, I discuss discourse, intersectionality, gender, masculinity and hegemonic masculinity in relation to how you I explore these issues shaping boys' experiences of mobile technology at school.

Policy Context

The policy context for gender and use of mobile technology at school is complex. Contextualising dominant policy discourses around the risk agenda for working class and radicalised male adolescents, Mac an Ghail & Haywood (2011, p.734) highlight 'a new vocabulary and accompanying semantics of: anti-social behaviour orders, not in employment, education or training, social exclusions, criminal behaviour orders, jobs and laddishness' suggesting a general policy context of failing boys and disaffection from school dominates, and has done for nearly 20 years (Epstein, 1998; Ringrose, 2013). Responding to and highlighting concerns around particular masculinities, my research explores the complex contextually specific discourses operating in this single secondary school under study. It is the negotiation and performance of masculine identity online that I aim to tease out, exploring which discourses of masculinity are performed. For example, McGee & Pearman (2015, p.514) argue that 'masculinity is socially constructed by a racial, economic, and gendered order' with expressions of masculinity 'often assumed to be arranged hierarchically with White, middle-class, heterosexual, non- disabled, thin men seen as the ideal embodiment of masculinity'.

Mining concepts of subjectivities and power articulated within a post-structuralist paradigm, Ringrose et al's (2012, p.9) summary that 'children are positioned in popular and policy debates as in the vanguard of new media developments' highlights the increasing focus on how adolescents develop their culture and attitudes from social media, constantly online, exhibiting themselves, connected to one-another. Indeed, Selwyn (2006, p.8) argues that 'schools continue to have an important role to play in providing equitable access and technology'. Children here are located ahead of adults in terms of mobile phone use as well as knowledge of content (for example around discussions on gender and sexuality where children gain knowledge from online sources as well as social media). More recently, Manago's (2013, p.482) argument that 'social networking sites could... be well suited to the project of maintaining hegemonic masculinity' (discussed below) provides a useful touchstone when contextualising the discourse of masculinity performed by adolescent boys and how social media mediates these performances in complex ways. Specifically, behaviours boys at school with regard to their mobile phones is influenced, either consciously or unconsciously, by their ability to perform aspects of their own masculinity. I explore how an ever increasing number of mobile social media platforms (not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, Snapchat and Askfm), are managed by adolescent boys.

Stephen Ball (2013, p.44) has reconstructed the problem of the 'history of contemporary education policy as a set of relations among games of truth and practices of power' as a history of 'classifications and exclusions and as a history of blood'. Moving beyond simplistic notions of 'problem boys' and offering complexity in accounting for their experiences of technology and representation, this thesis opens up debates centred on male adolescents' discourse within not just offline or online communities, but also across formal and informal neoliberal audit cultures. The extent to which male adolescents, via their mobile phones, recognise and question social norms and constraints contributes to the debates articulated by Ball and allows this thesis to investigate the reinforcement or refinement of socialised educational norms.

Set within a single secondary school as an empirical field, I position this thesis within the theoretical field of post-structuralism and in relation to research on technological environments where mobile phones allow picture and video exchange free at the point of use. I review literature that helps me to make sense of the research findings I gathered with adolescent boys via student focus groups across years eight to eleven in my employing school.

danah boyd

As a social media scholar, youth researcher and advocate employed by Microsoft Research, danah boyd's publications have consistently brought a media studies and sociological lens to bear on a contemporary issue. In this section I trace out what boyd says about technology as my starting

point foreshadowing theoretical themes (including intersectionality, Foucault, Butler and discourse analysis) to build upon boyd's work, offering an alternative perspective to boyd.

In 2014, boyd published her book 'It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens' via Yale University Press which presents a set of principles characterizing social networking (2014, p.11) whereby axiomatic properties of Persistence, Visibility, Spreadability and Searchability formed a bounded terrain upon which adolescents in her research create identities. Boyd's landscapes complicate interactions and profoundly change social dynamics within each of her named properties. Arguing (2014, p.5) that whilst endemic mobile phone use is not surprising to most adults, what was surprising was 'how little the teens actually used them as phones'. I understand here that boyd is referring to both making and receiving calls. Boyd continued (p.5) that 'social media plays a crucial role in the lives of networked teens' and it is the mediated interactions which sometimes, but not always, complement offline encounters.

With regard to Persistence, boyd contends (p.11) that 'conversations are far more ephemeral: they endure'. The *imprint* of any social media posts therefore leaves a residue or trail of evidence not found in face-to-face or even via voice calls. Visibility, boyd argues (p.12), challenges conceptual accessibility of any social post. Whereas some sites 'require users to take active steps' to limit the potential visibility of specific shared content, physical spaces, for example considering adolescent standing up in a full assembly hall, demonstrate that people 'must make a concerted effort to make content 'visible to sizeable audiences'. Provided the material is in a suitable format, boyd argues (p.12) that 'content can often be easily downloaded or duplicated and then forwarded along' making what people post online easily Spreadable. Given the prevalent discrete search engines (such as Google) or the search capabilities of many social networking sites (for example Facebook) maintains (p.12) that it is easy 'to surface esoteric interactions'.

In order to build upon boyd's framework which has emptied out reference to cultural context, background, identity and context of young people, my thesis works with the theoretical constructs of intersectionality and discourse to understand the identity, narratives and experiences of the boys in my research. Thinking about visibility in relation to gender and sexual power relations, Ringrose and Eriksson-Barajas' (2011, p.122) argue peer networks are 'operating within wider postfeminist, pornified media contexts which may intensify dynamics like sexual objectification of girls' bodies'. Whilst the effects of 'sexualisation' have been explored at length in relation to ideas of girls, vulnerability and risk, there is considerably less work that has explored the construction of masculinity in relation to theories of gendered and sexual power specifically that explores how boys perform the body and identity online (Siibak, 2010, Mac an Ghail & Haywood, 2011).

Adolescent Media Cultures and Mobile Technology

Buckingham (2007, p.81) argues that ‘children’s media culture is increasingly distinguished by a kind of pleasurable anarchy and sensuality’, leading my methodology to be designed around a single site and explores how, potentially, mobile phones are used as a resource for boys to gain status within the peer group. Authors including Robert Sweeny (2009, p.201) have contended that, with regard to social media, ‘there is no doubt that they have changed the ways that interconnected individuals interact with one another, engage with sociocultural issues and form identities’. Moving from voice calls previously conducted by landlines, mobiles have changed both what is communicated (e.g. pictures and videos) as well as the location at which material can be sent and received (moving away from residential houses to near permanent attachment to personal bodies). A tension exists, however, not just between students but also between students and staff in school contexts.

Physical Devices

Synthesizing the salient questions of this field, Buckingham (2007, p.177) argues that ‘the question is not *whether* to use technology, or even *which* technology to use, but *why* and *how* we should use them’. Studying the inherent tensions (Buckingham, 2007; Hine, 2013) and movement between online and offline performance allows this thesis to explore how male adolescent identity is sculpted at school in 2015 when data was collected. Omnipresent mobile phones amongst adolescents raise questions concerned with how technology can be embedded (or not) into student culture(s) at school. Arguing that technology is not neutral, Ringrose et al (2012, p.9) write that ‘the specific features or affordances of mobile phones, social networking sites and other communication technologies facilitate the objectification of girls via the creation, exchange, collection, ranking and display of images’. Here, images are ranked according to different discourses and how they are valued through the material culture and *economy* of the image exchange. The relationship is a critical one for this thesis as it argues that technology has the potential to reinforce or transfer traditional heteronormative gender binaries and associated exercises of power. Ringrose et al (2013, p.13) highlight how ‘technology provides new ways for value to circulate through images, and for value to become materially marked on particular bodies as part of the process’, and it is the destabilization afforded by mobile technology and social media where the potential to alter gendered norms appears.

Social Networking Sites

The extent to which social networks operate within digital platforms accessed via mobile phones shape adolescent male identity by being simultaneously inclusive (perhaps by encouraging large numbers of social networking sites ‘friends’) or exclusive (perhaps by reinforcing offline heteronormative binaries), raises questions for schools as to whether their current policy and practice are sufficient or, indeed, prepared for the challenges of the near future where mobile phone use is already endemic amongst adolescents.

More specifically, Marwick and boyd’s (2011, p.15) argument that ‘lacking any significant economic or political power, teens use status as an organizing structure’ seems to forget that there are other structural and discursive markers of identity amongst users. For instance, my interest is to look at how status is organized through discourses and gender discourses and their impact in shaping both online and offline performances of masculinity which are also culturally and racially specific. One method for organising status lies, again, with the ‘like’ button. Indeed, Payne (2013, p.10) explains how a ‘like’ flattens out a multiplicity of emotional responses to ‘become more about technical functionality, an unreflexive bodily response, a way of interacting with the media object without having to express individual motivation” Interrogating how such structures are created and maintained in environments often entirely outside of the gaze of the school or parents and carers, the apparent disconnect between curriculum and mobile phone use reinforces the rationale for my research and is analysed in Chapter Four. Indeed, Gerlitz & Helmond (2013, p.1358) argue that ‘like’ buttons (the ability to express enjoyment of support) found on such social networking sites transform ‘users’ affective, positive, spontaneous responses to web content into connections between users and web objects’ with a ‘like’ button seen as transforming peer to peer interactions as facilitated by mobile phones.

Cyber-Violence, Cyberbullying and Masculinity

As deliberate, often-repeated use of technology to harm or harass another person, cyber bullying remains, to a large extent, unseen by institutions such as my own, save for when highlighted by a victim in person. In their paper, ‘The Drama! Teen Conflict, Gossip, and Bullying in Networked Publics’, Marwick & boyd argue that (2011, p.23) ‘most teens do not recognize themselves in the “bullying” rhetoric used by parents, teen advocates, and mental health professionals. Data presented in Chapter Four stands in direct opposition to such a claim – the male adolescents researched emphatically situate themselves as well as their peers (as either ‘bully’ or ‘victim’) regularly.

Although Marwick & boyd (2011, p.23) contend that ‘technology allows teens to carve out agented identities for themselves even when embroiled in social conflict’, and it is the very *nature* of direct messaging between online profiles alongside status updates (to potentially thousands of others) that constitutes a public performance when a student is targeted online; constructing profoundly different discourses for the bully, the victim and the population who witness any action when compared to those offline. Wassdorp et al. (2015, p.483) go further by noting how some research ‘suggests that offline or “traditional” bullying has similar characteristics and correlates to those of electronic forms, other studies suggest there are some important differences’. Specifically, *magnitude* of a performance, when expressed and *seen* online to possibly hundreds of online friends, can significantly affect the impact of the incident offline. Conversely, however, the ability to ‘screen-shot’ any communication, utilizing the persistence of online communications can, in some instances, enable bullies to be sanctioned appropriately. This may in turn, it could be hypothesised, prevent certain bullies from posting online in order to avoid the creation of evidence. Referenced against and developing boyd’s axioms of *Spreadability*, Wassdorp et al. (2015, p.484) argue how ‘although cyberbullying may be repeated over time, a single incident can be repeated if the e-mail is forwarded to multiple people or posted online and viewed by multiple people’.

Cyberbullying is deeply connected to cultures of physical harassment in and around school, as I will explore in my findings, so that the offline and online need to be considered in tandem (see Koefed and Ringrose, 2014). Cyberbullying can happen twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week and can reach a student whether they are physically alone or surrounded by other people. Longstanding social inequalities along a clumsy binary or ‘bully’ and ‘victim’ are transformed through the ability to post anonymously and distributed with almost immediate speed to wide, often unseen, audiences. Debating the process of technological extension, Kember & Zylinska (2015, p.13) recognize that ‘we human users of technology are not entirely distinct from our tools. *They* are not a means to *our* ends; instead, they have become part of us, to an extent that the us/*them* distinction is no longer tenable’. There is no greater illustration of this than asking a teenage student what was the longest time they have been more than a few meters from their phone and the answer often comes back as a matter of hours.

Occasions where teachers are cyber-bullied by students are nearly impossible to quantify as most are dealt with ‘in house’. However, in the institution under investigation, several teachers were identified (by students) as having inappropriate Facebook security settings. This allowed access to personal details, including photographs from compromising situations. Whilst social media gives the author control over their own privacy, these tools cannot help safeguard professionalism if they are not used appropriately. For example, had a teacher’s safety and privacy settings been set appropriately, students would not have been able to access the photographs of a white member of staff who had ‘blacked themselves up’ at university causing significant repercussions in a school

where a minority of the students are white. The concept of student popularity as it relates to both social media use and schooling, with the inherent implication that in school students can be seen to vary their 'rating' based on public performance, raises questions about students' motivation in looking for staff profiles online. As Jackson (2010b, p.47) has argued, 'comprehending pupils' fears about being unpopular is key to understanding the constructions of identities in schools'.

Digital technology can be seen to *intersect* with masculinity when we consider how aggression is played out online by adolescent boys. Rethinking school violence involves considering more than student behaviour and prevention or management strategies (Saltmarsh, S., et al, 2012). Normative schooling practices such as mobile phone 'bans' can be part of the problem by driving cyber aggressions underground, completely out of the gaze of the institution. Instead, it requires that difficult questions be asked of educational institutions, their gendered power relations and systemic inequalities. Whether referenced as Digital Citizenship, Digital Ethics or Digital Wellness, how adolescents act when they are online should acknowledge online communities, popularity with regard to friends, followers or likes and the extent to which social media impacts on audiences both online and offline. Nevertheless, there exists a tension as cyberbullying can often be found within *known* networks. Wassdorp et al. (2015, p.487) contend that 'youth who were cyberbullied typically thought that the perpetrator was a "friend" or someone they "thought was a friend,"', raising questions as how to the 'victim' with cope with familiarity. Explored in Chapter Four, the physical context of violence and gangs shapes the formation of masculinity in the school under investigation whilst sexual double standards and sexting provide themes where discourses around the mediating role of social media are discovered.

Humour & Attachment in Social Media Use and Production

Guidance from social networking sites such as Facebook request that their users are 13 years or above when social media profiles should be created however there is no technical restriction preventing younger children from doing so. Reid (2015, p.31) argues 'the year group was understood by pupils to be hierarchically structured according to status, recognised by all pupils, regardless of their standing'. Peer hierarchy can also, aside for academic cohorts, be formed from unique peer groups involved in a variety of social practices. How these students engage with each other via their mobile phones as shown within Chapter Four to be overwhelmingly, but not solely, positive. Reid's (2015, p.41) argues that pupils 'describe their banter and play as a way to 'make fun' out of differences', leading to the transformation of 'often awkward differences into positive relations of conviviality, intimacy and friendship.' This is important in considering how humour and banter inform youth's deep attachment to social media, and I explore the role of humour in the discursive constructions at length. When discussing novel ways in which assemblages of gender,

sexuality and embodiment can be visualised and enacted online, Van Doorn (2011, p.536) argues that all three are '*reconfigured*' allowing social media users to distinguish them as virtual practices of becoming, rather than concrete properties rooted in a stable physical body. Complicated further by the ability of students to carry with their mobile phones with them, often concealed from teaching staff, the ease of access for online presence becomes as omnipresent as the capacity to find either a wireless connection or to connect via a hotspot means students could be seen as post human hybrid cyborgs (Ringrose and Harvey, 2017).

Critique of boyd's Framework

Crucially, although boyd's framework is critical to my research, I seek to go beyond her publications and add aspects through my research findings. For instance, boyd did not examine practices of performing masculinity (or femininity). Boyd's focus on technology without adequate attention to identity, gender and masculinity leads to assumed and essentialised gendered identities of her participants. In term, boyd's framework can be analysed with largely neglected gendered performance and power relations. As a school leader, I questioned whether boyd's structure adequately accounts for the performativity of power and surveillance in the way that the theoretical tools (discussed in this chapter) of Foucault and Butler allow. My goal was to build upon boyd's framework to construct a framework for examining a school-based and gendered view on mobile technology as the main medium for accessing social networking sites. My thesis therefore interrogates boyd's principles, exploring teen boys' use of their mobile devices and, more specifically, the relationship between online status and offline embodiment.

My research was interested in how boys their mobile phones to discuss their social media posts through narratives and used this to isolate discourses. As I will explain in chapter three, I adopt an interpretivist paradigm to mine the student experience and apply the theories from this chapter in order to explore the range of different discourses presented paying particular attention to gender, neglected by boyd (see Ringrose, 2015)

Analytical Approach

In this section, I discuss salient concepts in relation to how I am exploring each notion shapes boys' experiences of mobile technology at school, which build on boyd using key theoretical insights from the gender studies and sociology of education research.

Judith Butler

Reflecting on the co-constituted strategies boys and girls adopt in order to navigate the traditional constructs of gender, sexuality, race and class online, Judith Butler (2004, p.41) writes that ‘norms may or may not be explicit, and when they operate as the normalizing principle in social practice, they usually remain implicit, difficult to read, discernible most clearly and dramatically in the effects that they produce’. The extent, therefore, to which boys feel regulated, their understanding of the intentions underpinning the current school mobile phone ban and their evaluation of the level to which social media contributes to their offline identity and peer relationships raises questions into the suitability of the provision in place. Butler (2004, p.217) continues that ‘the question of how to embody the norm is... very often linked to the question of survival’ and it is through her reconsiderations of gender performativity and her questioning of social transformations that this thesis examines the impact offline of online behaviour and vice versa.

Butler’s (2004, p.212) assertion that ‘gender is complexly produced through identificatory and performative practices, and that gender is not as clear or as univocal as we are sometimes led to believe’, provides a second essential foundation when considering the intersection of the four previously highlighted foci (Visibility, Searchability, Spreadability and Persistence). Indeed, the emphases concerned with the *performativity* occurring through discourses of male adolescent social media interaction, via their mobile phones, at school alongside their offline personal, social and emotional development, underpins both the rationale for the thesis and this chapter in particular.

Michel Foucault

Operating in a pluralistic society in an age of rapid social and technological change, Foucault’s (1979, p.187) assertion that we become ‘subjects who have to be seen’ takes on a new angle in the virtual world for adolescents when viewed through a virtual lens where issues of visibility are key. Foucault’s (1984, p.53) statement that ‘the care of the self – or the attention one devotes to the care that others should take of themselves – appears then as an intensification of social relations’, questions the adequacy of the current policy and practice in place both on site at school as well via numerous social media platforms accessed primarily through mobile devices. Jackson and Mazzei (2012, p.56) emphasize that ‘Foucault’s work reminds us to study the *functions* and *effects* of power, not its origin’ and therefore this thesis centres deliberately on the discourses that emerge through boys’ discussions of their use of mobile technology rather their planned intentions or opinions or how they feel they should behave, hypothetically.

Foucault's (1979, 1984) sympathy for disempowered people and his exposé of social life as a network of power relations at the level of the individual allows us to deconstruct the narratives of male adolescents operating under increasingly performative agendas both offline at school and online via social networking sites. Foucault considers power as intentionally without a subject and his historiographical studies help to explain the underlying forces acting on single beings. Noting further Jackson's (2010a, p.505) evaluation that 'many feminists are concerned about the ways that unsophisticated and one-dimensional portraits of boys as underachievers are being used by the 'what about the boys' lobbyists to push for a 'right wing reassertion of boys' traditional gender dominance', the methodology in Chapter Three explains how I have approached the task of gathering reliable and robust data, without prejudice, in order to contribute to knowledge in the fields outlined.

Discourse

As the key notion underpinning not just this chapter, but the thesis in its entirety, *discourse* as a generalisation of communication within specific contexts was defined by Foucault (1969) as 'an entity of sequences, of signs, in that they are enouncements'. A such, *discourse* can be considered to be a social boundary, defining what statements are permitted on various topics, operating underneath the consciousness of individuals. Logical corollaries, for example *dominant* discourses as those sequences having power and / or influence over others or, indeed, *normative* discourses as those sequences focussed on shared values regarded as constitutive of social structures, follow immediately. Conceptually, I argue that the model of discourse is critical when thinking about what versions of masculinity are performed by adolescent males given their location with the educational establishment and not yet engaged with full time employment. Foucault's analytic strategy, whereby power is diffused into discourse not used as a power of coercion, can therefore be applied as a sociological approach in questioning everyday, socialised behaviour.

Intersectionality

Foreshadowing my data analysis in Chapter Four, it is useful initially to reflect on the extensive research previously undertaken with regard to intersectionality that provides, in Patricia Collins' (2000, p.66) summary, 'a conceptual framework for studying the complexities within historically constructed groups as well as characterizing relationships among such groups'. Even within a single gender paradigm, an intersectional lens can help us to understand the complex social context where community development, both online and offline, is understood to be interdependent with school improvement. More recently, Ringrose (2013, p.59) argues for an 'intersectional approach' which she views as an 'explicit engagement with race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability as axes of power

that organise educational experiences' making the case to look closely at performative and discursive aspects of intersectionality. My theoretical perspective adopts a post-structural intersectional framing designed to examine the discourses of boys' experiences given the advent of social media and mobile technological advancements. I do this by allowing the topic of male mobile technology use to provide a candid lens on potential social inequality, oppression of discrimination.

Gender

As Butler (2004) has argued, identity categorizations of girl and boy are often too restrictive, often producing a binary view of gender and sexuality limiting possibilities for other, more fluid formations, brings to light further critical concepts when debating identity creation amongst adolescents. Specifically, it is the *performative acts* that produce adolescent subjectivities online and the interpretivist nature of this thesis is designed to expose the subtleties of how such subjectivity is produced. The natural extrapolation is that gender is performed both individually and from a group, with or without an audience of the opposite gender or, indeed, to an audience at all. Swain (2006, p.318) further reflects how 'masculinity is a relational construct occupying a key place in gender relations; there are multiple masculinities; there is a hierarchy of masculinities; masculinity is a precarious and ongoing performance'. In the school under investigation, the male adolescents learn primarily in mixed gender classes although there are exceptions to this (for example Physical Education).

As Manago (2013, p.478) argues, questions are raised 'about how young men construct masculinity while embracing a kind of sexual self-objectification'. My thesis therefore allows adolescent boys to explore, collaboratively, issues concerned with self-presentation via social networking sites accessed via mobile phones as well as any possible inherent surveillance. Haywood & Mac an Ghail (2012, p.585) argue that 'one strategy to undo gender might be to let go of gender and consider how 'maleness' is constituted through particular cultural discourses' and it is through the theoretical positions outlined that this thesis contributes to the understanding of which online social interactions via mobile devices are physically adjacent to virtual performances by looking at maleness however it is presented.

Masculinity

Acknowledging Frosh et al's (2002, p.52) evaluation noting how 'masculinities... are presented as powerful but fragile, asserted and constituted in opposition to each other and to versions of femininity', this thesis adapts an appropriate framework to better understand the relationship between online status and offline embodiment when doing 'adolescent boy' through social media

affordances via the discourses presented. Building on Frosh et al's (2002) seminal work examining 'young masculinities' related to psychological issues including anxiety, depression and behaviour control problems as well as social policy concerns, this thesis contributes, through Chapters Four and Five, renewed perspectives and experiences from boys concerned with how they see themselves and how they experience the mobile technology available to them. Synthesised in detail throughout Chapter Five, the major canonical narratives about masculinity in London schools identified by Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (again p.10) were summarised in three parts:

1. Boys must maintain their difference from girls (and so avoid doing anything that is seen as the kind of thing girls do)
2. Popular masculinity involves 'hardness', sporting prowess, 'coolness', casual treatment of schoolwork and being adept at 'cussing'.
3. Some boys are 'more masculine' than others. This involves both racialised and class-consciousness.

Frosh et al's key findings (p.10) whereby '11-14-year-old boys have sophisticated understandings of the current contradictions associated with the negotiation of masculine identities' alongside 'many boys recognized that popular masculinity is pervasively constructed as antithetical to being seen to engage with schoolwork', my research responds to the idea that these are the key aspects of London masculinity.

Whilst Haywood & Mac an Ghail (2012, p.581) argue that 'traditional masculinities based on heterosexuality, homophobia and misogyny are becoming destabilised', they claim a different masculinity emerges that is 'still dependent on dyadic sexualities, albeit in a more complex and more sophisticated manner'. This thesis investigates what role digital technology and social networking may play in the performance of masculinity, including possibilities of destabilisation or, indeed, re-stabilisation. Mac an Ghail & Haywood (2011, p.738) previously argued that 'we need to explore the constitutive elements of... young men's identity work, in relation to emerging embodied selves and identities', but how does this work through digital relations and affordances? 'Sexting', as the act of sending sexually explicit messages between mobile phones, can often lie completely out of the gaze of institutions such as secondary schools. Ringrose et al (2012, p.9) highlight that 'sexting for girls can involve being subject to oppressive, racialised beauty norms and hierarchies around feminine appearance and body ideals' and the boys' experience of sexting is explored in Chapter Four.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Popularized by Raewyn Connell in 2005, the term 'hegemonic masculinity' had previously appeared in Frosh et al's (2002, p.3) book where they discussed the term within 'ways in which 'approved'

modes of being male are produced, supported, contested and resisted'. The term is central to the performativity of male adolescents both online and offline and continues to be a source of sociological debate. For example, Jackson (2010a, p.512) argues that 'the incitement to perform hegemonic masculinity in school is strong' whilst Harvey et al (2013, p.3) label when referencing Web 2.0 opportunities a 'complicated psychosocial terrain of masculinities'. The experiences of boys at school with relation to each other, to girls, to staff and to their parents or carers offers original student narratives with regard to both which masculinities are hegemonic in this context as well as when and where these hegemonic masculinities are disrupted. Indeed, Paechter (2003, p.71) argues 'part of the hegemonic processes that establish sex differences as important and sustain the dominance of masculine-marked knowledge is the naturalization of the development and awareness of these differences as an essential aspect of early child development, through participation in communities of practice of masculinity and femininity'. This thesis therefore considers contextualised discourses of masculinity whereby mobile phones have the potential to sustain gendered power differences and whether the discourses found amongst the social networking sites consciously reward such performances.

Reinforcing the justification for this research, Haywood & Mac an Ghail's (2012, p.581) recent argument that 'hegemonic structures that have been used to explain relationships within schools need to be reconsidered as the resources through which masculinities are made are subject to social and cultural changes' challenges schools to question what is a desirable masculinity in their male adolescent population. Manago (2013, p.479) recently discovered gender role ideals in the United States that 'promote male sexuality as homophobic, emotionally restrictive, promiscuous, and as having power over women'. I therefore, through my data analysis and subsequent discussion, show *which* versions of masculinity are hegemonic and which ones less dominant given the methodology applied and how these are influenced by social media.

Adolescent Boys

Recent social transformations around gender and sexuality have profoundly affected the environment in which adolescent boys are growing up. Symbolized by the passing of legislation to allow same-sex marriage in England by Parliament in July 2013, teenage boys in 2015 were surrounded by media debates on feminism, gay rights and immigration questioning assumptions on the role of the family and parenting in particular. The intersection of such profound transformations, identity creation and what it means to be male in the future challenges schools to educate their young people so that they are equipped for the challenges of today as well as tomorrow. Discourses in the media present adolescent males (for example by the former Prime Minister David Cameron following the London riots of August 2011 against a sensationalist

backdrop of anti-social behaviour orders (ASBO's), rising suicide rates amongst young men together with endemic, unregulated pornography, accessed by mobile devices and facilitated by high-resolution picture and video exchange.

Multi-Cultural Schooling

At a local level, boyd's principles are not referenced with regard to institutions such as schools where the exercise of power circulates between students, teachers and parents / carers in complex, multi-faceted dimensions. Indeed, Frosh et al (2002, p.20) have argued that 'there is evidence in our material that resistance to schooling can be a marker of ideal masculinity', the potential to investigate whether this conflict remains true, or whether it has been transformed after years of technological advancement, becomes clear. Further contextualising secondary school as the traditionally held location where an adolescent's character and personality are formed and maintained, retains a significant role to play in the development of adolescent identity. Without taking anything away from how important relationships between contexts can be, my project focuses on a specific institutional context, seeking only to position the male adolescents across four consecutive cohorts (years eight to eleven) in order to illicit potential age-specific differences.

Adolescent Navigation of the Mobile Phone Ban at School

As centres of learning and offline engagement between adolescents, schools may be uniquely placed to respond in a timely, professional manner to both current trends (e.g. free picture and video exchange) but the question is whether they are doing so – and if not, why not? What are the policy configurations and practices that impact on the treatment of mobile phones and how does this impact upon the construction and performance of masculinity? My research aimed to investigate the school leaders' responses to these questions through staff interviews. Whilst this may not always be the case, the school culture and quality of empathy present with the often-altruistic staff members renders it a frequently occurring situation. Sonia Livingstone (2013, p.25) suggests compellingly that 'everything depends on the interaction between users and their socio-technological environment, and the ways this interaction has been shaped' and it is at this academic cliff where this thesis conducts original research into the very essence of student engagement. Following this thread and aiming to expand upon our understandings of masculinity and mobile phone use, chapter Four explores how all students within this research owned their own mobile phone before the end of year seven with social media use predating the independent ownership of a mobile phone. Explorations around the creation of a masculine identity and the discourses surrounding that performance via mobile phone use have their foundations before the adolescent males have started their formal secondary education. Specifically, the boys researched explore what,

if any, space exists for students to engage informally with the curriculum via their mobile phones in an institution whose policy position bans phones.

Noting Frosh et al's (2002, p.91) reminder that 'boys are agents in their own lives', boyd's codes of Persistence, Visibility, Spreadability and Searchability cannot show us the decision-making process used, either consciously or subconsciously, when deciding what, or what not, to post via social media and how discourses relating to performances online relate to school. Boyd's principles do not provide the capacity for questioning the *power effects* behind any post, be they digital text, image or video. Comparably, the framework does not go far enough in explaining how posts are *received* either online or offline, by boys or girls, or indeed how they reflect on the author cumulatively, over time. So overall the research does not take into account enough the power relations of the *peer group* as part of how social media posts work and are responded to as organised around race, class, gender sexuality and other axes of power (Ringrose and Coleman, 2013). boyd referenced in her appendix (2014, p.215) how she interviewed '166 teens', with 63 participants described; 22 of whom self-defined as an ethnicity other than 'white'. My research responded to some of the gaps in this type of sample; none of the (n=30) male adolescents investigated would describe themselves as 'White-British' but a number would, depending on the question asked, refer to themselves as 'white' (for example a boy would describe himself his nationality as "Turkish"). Whilst the tools of Foucault and Butler can not illicit intention or effect, they go some way in framing the neo-liberal audit culture and allow us to analyse performativity as it can be evidenced both offline and online as well as the movement between the two. In order to frame the analysis, I adopted Foucault's analytic strategy in studying the deployment of power of subjectification through discourse. Specifically, discourses uncovered from the male adolescents in Chapter Four take on significance not for the degree of truth present in the performance, but, rather, in the ways they sustain or potentially disrupt the advancement of knowledge (i.e. what is *known*).

Neil Selwyn found (2006, p.11) in his article discussing the 'digital disconnect' between 'net-savvy' students and their schools that the 'most prevalent issue throughout all the responses were the overt restrictions and systems of control which many schools attempted to place on student engagement with the Internet'. The onus for providing a child with a mobile lies solely with a parent / carer if that is their intention, but the school is then implicated in the *regulation* of the device. The blurring of the boundary between school and home and the student rests, conceptually but not solely, on the notion of *responsibility* - to what extent does the student have the skills to be able to navigate the evolving landscaper of social networking sites with due diligence? To what extent do parents / carers ensure their children are using their mobile phones for the intended purpose? Personally, I was not given a phone by my mother until when I left home to go to university which is in stark contrast to the significant proportion of parents / carers in the school

I help lead who provide their children with phones at primary school. Moreover, it is the nature of the schools' engagement with digital technologies and students that is explored in Chapter Four.

Teacher Professionalism in Relation to the Mobile Ban

In spite of thorough staff induction practices, I have experienced countless incidents where students have obtained pictures of staff from their social media profiles that they would rather not be in circulation. In a minority of cases, these events have led to staff disciplinary action and in one case a staff member chose to move school. Arguing that, perhaps, the 'underground' mobile phone culture is in direct *response* to the systems and practice introduced on site by the school, it only takes a small percentile of negative relationships between staff and students for students to seek ever more creative opportunities to increase their popularity at the staff member's expense.

Many schools, including the institution where the data was gathered, model for students the public exam conditions to prepare the students for their public examinations. The possession of a mobile phone under exam conditions is strictly forbidden under the legal framework used to allow schools to operate as exam centres. As a case study in exactly how well students navigate the current policy position is, following an internal History mock examination in 2013, the Head of Year Ten entered the hall in order to search his cohort to see if any student was carrying a mobile device. It was explained to the students that if they handed their phones over voluntarily, the punishment would be less severe. Out of 140 students in the hall, 39 phones were collected and returned to parents / carers within a matter of days. Demonstrating the disregard for the institution's mobile phone ban, the example questions to what extent parents and carers are in support of the school's position or, rather, whether they actually support their child's navigation of the ban.

When considering education in the age of the social web, viewed from the technological and educational provisions of the previous decades, Neil Selwyn (2015, p.80) argues that this is 'perhaps most usefully seen as marking a set of continuities – rather than a set of radical discontinuities'. Against a background of high stakes testing, the increasing pressure on underperforming schools to convert into academies (as state funded schools independent of local authority control) and the seismic changes to exams (whereby GCSE letters grades are being gradually replaced with numbers alongside significant curriculum changes within nearly all subject areas), a potential mobile phone 'ban' raises questions as to whether such policy is part of a wider programme of narrowing the curriculum and exercising control or whether any 'ban' is temporary until more robust advice from central government is produced and acted upon. Selwyn (2015, p.72) continues that 'educationalists and technologists alike should strive to look beyond the rhetoric of the social web, and develop realistic and critical understandings of the 'messy' realities of social web technologies and education'. This thesis therefore explores discourses around mobile phone usage in a turbulent

climate where effective home, student and staff communication remains critical to both supporting parents / carers as well as encouraging responsible digital citizenship in adolescent mal

Noting Wellman & Guila's (2013, p.64) considerations of non-material social resources whose accessibility is mediated by new technologies, the extent to which 'emotional support, companionship, information, making arrangements, and providing a sense of belonging' can and are performed online by adolescent boys provides a critical lens. The example of a student attending an Information Communication Technology (ICT) lesson in a timetabled classroom on a desktop personal computer where large numbers of social media platforms are blocked, subsequently moving to discretely checking Facebook via an iPhone 5c on their supposedly banned mobile in the playground illustrates the seamless transition between forbidden and authorized technology as well as serving to depict the developed systems of negotiation employed by adolescent males in schools. The contrast between highly regulated environments such as classrooms with stringent child protection controls the contrast with entirely unregulated social platforms accessed via the latest smartphone could not be greater.

Conclusion

Thematically outlining previous research in the arenas of mobile technology, adolescent boys and multi-cultural schooling, I have highlighted the increasing need to listen to, both conceptually and practically, boys' experiences of mobile technology at school. Rooted in boyd's axioms of Persistence, Searchability, Spreadability and Visibility alongside the frameworks of Butler and Foucault, I have illustrated that discussion of gender discourses and their closely monitored performance through repetition and movement away from the norm is worth serious thought. Indeed, Paechter (2003, p.71) argues that 'young children hold particularly stereotyped views on what is appropriate for males and females, and strongly police sex segregation in their peer groups' and it is the discourses surrounding performances of heterosexuality in particular that are presented in Chapter Four.

In an age where the horizons of adolescents are less constrained by geography and more by the speed of their Internet connection, the requirement to hear the voices of adolescent experience within these digital technologies amplifies over time. Indeed, Bezemer & Kress (2014, p.2) argue 'there is a need to assess on each *occasion* of text-making what the social relations with an audience are, what *platforms* and *resources* there are for making and disseminating the text, what *local norms* are operating, and how they fit with what is to be communicated'. Whilst the focus of Bezemer & Kress' is primarily textual, my thesis explores *bodies* as well as texts through the boys' own descriptions. It is the *typicality* of the use of the ICT which has increased exponentially during my years as a teacher. Questions therefore exist as to whether the pastoral systems and structures

around growth and development are ahead, behind or parallel to the curriculum innovations within subject areas and therefore either potentially contribute to the blurring of the social boundaries between adolescent males and their school as well as between the boys and their parents & carers. Chapter Three explains my methodology and methods in exploring boys' lived experiences in a school which enforces a mobile phone ban.

CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY & METHODS

DESCRIBED BY the Principal as ‘a growing intercity multicultural comprehensive school in a very deprived area’, the research explores the experiences of boys in order to develop possible recommendations for professional roles within this school, but also for the secondary education sector, with particular reference to urban complex secondary schools serving increasingly diverse communities. Chapter Three begins by introducing where the research took place before outlining my research questions, design of study, discussion of ethical Issues as well as a full account of data collection and my approach to data analysis. As Yin (2009, p27) describes, ‘research design deals with a *logical* problem and not a *logistical* problem’ and it is the explicit aim of this scrutiny to harvest coherent, valid and lucid conclusions from my data in order to improve the current experience of adolescents forming their identities in both the real and virtual worlds.

Defining community here as a geographic locality that allows students to attend the school, the students and their parents / carers share many common characteristics and can be seen, sociologically, to be perceived as distinct, in some respect, from London itself. With 180 students on roll in each of Yr7 to Yr11, the ward in which the school is set has qualification levels lower than the borough as a whole and there is a smaller proportion of adults working full time. Consequently, there is a greater proportion of students, retirees, people not working because of long-term sickness or disability and people looking after the home and family compared to both the borough and London as a whole. The proportion of Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths in the ward is higher when compared to the borough as a whole whilst residents of the ward experience worse health and there are more people in unpaid care. There are fewer homeowners and private renters and, consequently, a far higher proportion of social renters. There have been no recorded incidents, in the five years when I have been employed here, of interpersonal, institutional or structural discrimination brought against it.

Framing the specific school context in more operational detail, the school has in place a raft of policies approved by the Governing body covering all functions of the institution that fail to address the key issues around mobile media use. Crook’s (2012, p.64) argument that ‘a close look at the intersection of educational practice and digital technology suggests tensions rather than transformations’, certainly holds weight when viewing the use of mobile technology by students in 2015. Indeed, the Community Cohesion Policy does not mention online communities explicitly and whilst an Anti Cyber Bullying Policy exists, it does not fill an entire side of A4, mentioning briefly that ‘pupils are not allowed mobile phones within the school environment’. There is no mention of how online communities of students may impact offline practice in the running of the school or vice versa. Moreover, explicit Information Communication Technology lessons as the

primary mechanism for delivered material related to E-Safety are delivered only for students in years seven and eight. Viewed collectively, the policies fail to guide either teaching staff or the school leadership when considering either how students interact with each other or, indeed, with the institution as a whole. Arguably out-of-date, the policies do not take into account endemic mobile phone ownership by the student population nor the technological advancements enabling instant (and often free) voice, picture and video exchange. Writing ten years ago, Buckingham (2007, p.76) argues ‘young people’s media experiences today appear very different from those of earlier generations’ providing a useful lens (as relates to being seen), in which we can begin to comprehend youth and digital culture.

Research Questions

RESPONDING DIRECTLY to the adolescent male ‘in crisis’ narrative dominating current mainstream media representations sociologically robust data concerned with adolescent male mobile phone is very much in the early years of being produced. Griffiths & Whitty (2010, p.111) critique cyberspace in so far as ‘boundaries become blurred as it is often difficult to ascertain what, exactly, is a public domain and, what is a private domain’. Applied to concepts of home and school, the research looks for how the intrinsic capacity making devices both *social* and *mobile* is mined for the boys within the project. It does this by gathering evidence of creativity of profile design, surveillance and understanding of privacy settings. In so far as they are able, the answers to my research questions produce an examination of how *visible* social media profiles are understood to be by both authors and readers alongside the ability (perhaps taken up) to create multiple profiles on the same social networking sites.

The specific research questions therefore underpinning my exploration are:

- How do adolescent males use their mobile devices to participate in online communities?
- How do male identity constructions and peer relationships online shape embodied relations at school (offline) and vice versa?

Drawing on an interpretivist methodology centred on exploring dominant and normative discourses by male participants aged 12 – 16, the questions are pertinent to my employing institution as there has been a blanket mobile phone ban in place since before my arrival in September 2010. With relation to popularity and gender, Harvey et al (2013, p.7) summarise that ‘social networking sites... offer boys new ways to claim and exchange value, such as the tagging of designer goods and circulation of pictures of girls’ bodies’. The research therefore explores the

impact offline for the boys in this institution of such associations. This fuelled my interest in how the boys in my research perceive changes to their interactions and relationships over time (if at all) since potentially large numbers of digital connections are established, saturated and maintained.

Design of Study

OPERATIONALLY I am maximising my position as an ‘insider researcher’ having worked as a senior leader in my employing institution for four and a half years at the time of carrying out the research (May 2015), with a methodology firmly rooted in the trust placed into me by students, parents / carers, teachers and governors. My extensive knowledge of the context and ethos of the school affords me a unique perspective to explore how school contributes or not to the present situation surrounding boys’ use of mobile technology. Having completed my Institution Focused Study within the EdD successfully involving interviews with students and staff in the same environment, the duality of my position as both leader and researcher has already been established.

Student Focus Groups

Concentrating primarily on focus *groups*, a certain irony exists as the updating of one’s social media profile is a solitary experience to a group audience; but there are strong methodological justifications for doing so. Whilst the practical focus group may be the first time these students have articulated in public (offline) the intentions behind their online identities, it will certainly not be the first time they have operated within these peer groups as the groups were constructed amongst known offline peers. Through focus groups, *levels* of influence could potentially be explored including, not exclusively, school to boys, media to boys and peer-to-peer at school. Robards (2013, p.228) suggests that online research profiles may be unethical, where other researchers suggest the great utility of the online data collection (Ringrose and Harvey, 2015). However, as a teacher in the school under research, becoming online ‘friends’ with any student is prohibited by established safeguarding codes. So being a teacher researcher made it impossible for me to collect online data from the students’ social media accounts, instead I could only discuss their posts after the fact with them through interviewing. Students were instructed to bring in phones so they could consider their posts, but I did not collect any data from the phone personally, only the talk generated through their interaction with their phone. Consent for this form of data collection involved obtaining a signed document from students which was counter signed by parents / carers (c.f. Appendix). Aside from the consent form, none of the parents or carers contacted me to discuss the project either before, during or after the recording of the focus groups.

Based in part on the design of Crook's (2012, p.67) investigation with 53 focus group interviews in 17 secondary schools with students aged between 13 and 15, I focus on my employing institution in order to investigate how male adolescents discuss their social media use between Yr8 to Yr11 (thereby covering ages 12 – 16). The focus groups themselves were semi-structured in nature to permit a flexibility and freedom which Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007, p.98) note allow the researcher to 'probe their interviewees and follow new ideas or insights as they emerge', albeit exploring *collective* phenomena rather than individual ones. The open nature of semi-structured permits new ideas to be brought up and debated by the participants, captured within the set framework being explored. The impact of my position *in* the focus groups of course shaped the material generated as I could not escape either the perceptions of my character as a white, mid-thirties male nor my relative position in the school as a leader with an office etc. I do maintain, however, that there were greater potentialities in conducting the groups personally, not least with gathering high quality information personally; ensuring consistency between the groups and spotting co-occurrences as and when they appear.

Critically, the ability to approach my research questions rested on both what the students brought to the focus groups as well as what was discussed within them. The two male focus groups of four pupils each from years eight, nine, ten and eleven ($n = 30$) were asked to bring their mobile phones with them even though they are currently 'banned' by school policy. Consent was sought so that the students 'dropped off' their phones in my office in order for them to be handed back at the end of the day at the beginning of the focus groups. Whilst it would never be possible to fully plan for all unpredictable observer effects, my relationship with the students was already established and therefore my exploration of the technology with them, in my opinion, did not significantly change the well-known associations I have. Each focus group lasted approximately 50 minutes and each group was fully aware that they were being recorded as this formed the basis of my introduction with the device in the centre of a round table for each. Given the perceived audiences attached to social media sites, I was most interested in how the boys performed in off line groups and therefore decided to not interview the boys individual as Frosh et al did.

One of the first questions from my interview protocol was to ask the students to 'walk through' a particular 'event' (perhaps taking and posting of a 'selfie') that they believe has had an impact in both their online and offline communities. The material presented was therefore only physically *recorded* by the verbal student description. The mode of data collection was therefore recording the sound of adolescent male voices without recording the screens. Noting the argument from Bezemer & Kress (2014, p.21) that 'young people today develop *repertoires* of text making competencies in response to shifting social demands and technological affordances, with profound effects on what 'text' looks like', it was the verbal description of their practice which was collected

to be analysed. That being said, if a boy chose to hand his phone to me so that I could see exactly what he was describing, I did not refuse the invitation but ensured I clarified, verbally for the transcript exactly what I thought I was seeing.

The methodology rests firmly on *what* from their domains they choose to discuss within the group as well as *how* they present it in public offline. Subsequent questions asked *why* they chose that particular example as well as asking them to describe the reasoning behind deciding not to select others. Livingstone & Brake (2010, p.76) argue that ‘social networking sites... represent a moving target for researchers and policy-makers’ where these online profiles act for and on behalf of the adolescent, as both expressions of facets of identity performance as well as a lightning rod for the exchange of text and images. Situated amongst their peers with personal interview questions from me, the data mined is likely to be considerably different than that via individual interviews. However, these transformations present a re-contextualisation of individual online presence to an offline group discussion which offers continual opportunities for generating ideas, depending understanding reflecting on practice. The *group* constructions afforded me a much-needed focus on narrating the experiences of mobile technology use to effectively address my research questions.

Acknowledging that identities performed in online spaces may not necessarily reflect those produced elsewhere, my methodology explores how the boys discussed various performances of masculinity. Without defining sociological categories (for example ‘masculinity’) directly with the adolescents, I employed a range of methods to discuss aspects of everyday life to shed light on gendered dynamics (for example discrimination or violence). Single gender focus groups were constructed through my understanding of boys’ gender - I did not ask the boys to define their (potentially non-binary) gender before, during or after the sessions. Given the institutional economic circumstances the in which the school was situated, I ensured that at least one participant in each focus group was labelled by the school as Ever6. It would be impossible to understand whether an issue of ‘class’ becomes phenomenologically significant from such a sampling strategy. However, the decision does allow me to investigate issues surrounding acceptable use of technology based on class. Given the various ethnic and religious self definitions of the students at school where only five per cent label themselves as ‘White British’, my sampling focused not on ethnicity or parental religious grouping although discussion around the similarities and differences in these areas did predictably appear. Practically, I approached two friendship groups in each year under investigation and asked for volunteers. In all cases I always had two willing advocates and subsequently approached further students (either Ever6 or not) to create the groups of four, twice in each cohort. It is worth noting here that I chose not to differentiate the samples based on technological affordances (for example those boys with an iPhone) even though branding and technological capability was expecting to feature heavily in the boys’ discourses.

Operationally, the focus groups were all held in a classroom on site at school between three and four o'clock once the school day had officially finished but whilst enhanced curriculum activities are on going. When gaining consent from both students as well as their parents / carers, it was necessary to specify that the student owns, personally, a mobile device capable of visual digital capabilities; that is at least picture messaging. The groups themselves were facilitated personally and recorded digitally for immediate transfer to my personal computer (to avoid saving the material onto the school network) and then destroyed from the memory card. I transcribed all of the material personally. There was no adjustment to the already robust safeguarding procedures in place at school that included informing the students both via the consent letters and in the groups themselves that if I believe they are in danger I would pass the necessary information onto the named Child Protection Officer. Whilst Livingstone and Haddon (2008, p.314) argue that the risk agenda is 'insufficiently reflective of children and young people's own agenda of concerns', my interview protocol was structured around the tension between online and offline movement. It was therefore not explicitly aiming to generate age-inappropriate data although this is discussed in more detail in

Staff Interviews

In order to understand the views and challenges for the school and staff relationship to the boys and policies etc. I also conducted four individual staff interviews. These interviews, alongside the student responses and the literature review detailed in Chapter Two, along the themes of schooling, mobile online presence, gender and issues related to boys and masculinity, highlighted salient issues around parental understanding of their boys' mobile use as well as stereotypes on masculinity and femininity from the teachers themselves (particularly when referenced against fixed term exclusions, levels of attainment and persistent absence). Specifically, I led one-to-one interviews for an hour each with the Lead Behaviour Mentor, the Head of Year Nine, Vice Principal (Pastoral) and the Principal. These interviews stood deliberately in contrast methodologically against the student focus groups for a number of reasons. They were, however, semi-structured in nature (following a guide to serve as a checklist of topics) and were conducted once all student focus groups have been completed and initially reflected upon in June 2015. Whilst Seipold (2014, p.48) argues that 'assumptions of what mobile learning is and the goals of mobile learning are fluid', the four participants were each able to offer a unique insight. Their views on what they understand the institution is *teaching* the students as well as what the students are *learning* with regard to male adolescent identity creation in an environment enforcing a mobile phone ban are discussed in Chapter Five. Indeed, it was the ability of these adults to be *expansive* within their foci that lead me to believe individual interviews presented the best method for flexible data collection.

The distinct hierarchies with regard to position, pay or personal relationships between the four staff members ruled out a focus group as a realistic method of data collection. McWilliam & Jones (2005, p.119) have argued “safe’ teacher identities come wrapped in their own barbed wire’ and, of course, I shaped the material generated of the individual interviews as I conducted them personally although I attempted to position as a researcher, in contrast to my position and associations within the school. In order to minimize any potential awkwardness, I asked the staff who participated in my IFS to speak to the new participants once consent has been sought in order to alleviate any fears or misunderstandings. Given Burgess’ (1985, p.79) conclusion that interviewing is based on ‘the intense nature of the relationships established between researcher and the researched’ I also allowed each participant to select the room for their individual session to ease ethical tensions and often started with a cup of tea.

Ethical Issues

OPERATING WITHIN the British Educational Research Association’s (BERA’s) guidelines (2011, link in references) on ethics in educational research, ethical and pastoral responsibility to my students and staff was always at the forefront of my mind. Whether considering participants as collaborators or as essential to the wider intuitional context of the school researched, consent was sought in an appropriate manner and continually checked to ensure openness, privacy and the right to withdraw. Specifically, when considering the ethics of online research by reflecting on the contexts of ‘home’ and ‘school’, Furlong and Davies (2012, p.50) note that ‘the boundaries between different institutions are increasingly blurred’. Indeed, this thesis elaborates not just on the ethical considerations in that clumsy binary, nor in the blurring of boundaries between the two, but also in what now feels an estranged *third space*; accessed online, typically via hand-held devices. Neither the notions of ‘home’ nor ‘school’ adequately reflect the adolescent experience whereby, for example, groups of students might be physically together offline but are posting via a variety platforms seen by audiences in person as well as in other locations; perhaps simultaneously or after a time delay. Students at my school do bring mobile phones onto site and access their social networking sites in areas other than classrooms (for example the multi-use games area) and throughout their residences (for example between rooms, or when staying with relatives). Traditional safeguarding controls (for example blocking websites via key terms accessed via search engines on the home PC or computers at school) will have no impact on what material is delivered to the student’s devices.

McNiff & Whitehead (2009, p.20) comment that ‘practitioners frequently collude in their own subjugation’, but it is precisely the fear of this collusion that has begun to develop a form of suspicious professionalism in my leadership and research. When considering the ethics of studying

one's workplace as an insider researcher, my experience and position at school have thus far exposed me to countless incidents where I have been required to investigate and act on direct observations of social media profiles from students and staff. In a minority of cases, this has led to fixed term exclusions for pupils and formal disciplinary outcomes for staff. Noting both the advantages (for example ease of access and flexibility of interview times) and disadvantages (for example familiarity leading to a diminishing of objectivity) from being an insider researcher, I applied the lessons learned from my Institution Focused Study (for example allowing greater time for participants to navigate their own answers). Handled badly, the research had the potential to compromise effective working relationships with colleagues or prevent such studies taking place in the future. Moreover, concerns relating to trust could be broken between students and staff that may take generations to put right. Clarifying the ethics of the research questions and the very aims of this proposal, the implications for allowing students to present their discourses on topics including gang violence and revenge porn challenged me to ensure that my professional role was not compromised. Throughout my time gathering data, I continued to be employed by the institution researched and therefore could not entirely ignore an internalised degree of surveillance on behalf of the school. The students were all informed at the start if they raised a safeguarding concern which needed reporting as they were in danger, I would pass that information on but would make explicit that I was going to do so.

In particular, considerations around children's media culture where research is formed both with, and on adolescents, challenges researchers to ensure fully informed consent by both the participants and their parents / carers is fully understood and accepted. Sensitivities around avoidance of harm, clarity of the right to withdraw at any stage of the research and absolute honesty together with transparency of process are heightened through an age-appropriate context-specific methodology. The Principal of my school, as *gatekeeper*, was always aware of when and where the focus groups were taking place although specific information including the student's names was kept confidential. There was no intention to diminish the self-esteem of the adolescents, nor to invade their privacy or to cause them an unreasonable amount of stress. Indeed, the mutual trust between the participants and I, but more importantly between the participants themselves, was essential in maintaining confidentiality and anonymity. There was no covert observation of the students' social networking profiles or triangulating their responses with participants not in their specific focus groups.

Account of Data Collection

Outline of participants

Due to student work experience commitments, the two Yr10 focus groups were held first comprised of: Group A (Denzel, Simba, Jerrell & Ebrahim) and Group B (Arslan, Emre, Samuel & Samuel) followed by year eleven to avoid final preparations for their (then) imminent GCSE's. Yr8 and Yr9 followed before the May half term. In each group, the second group was composed of 'Ever6' students, i.e. students who, with regard to the January School Census, have been eligible to apply for Free School Meals in any of the previous years, as well as those currently eligible. Foreshadowing the analysis, an example demonstrating how the nature of my methodology elicited discussion between participants often permeated with humour, one Yr11 group, when asked about bullying noted:

- Ayo: Moses is not cyberbullied because he doesn't have a mobile phone
Oliver: He wouldn't know
Moses: What's the point of cyberbullying someone if they can't see it?
All: Laughter

Whilst Moses did have indeed have a mobile phone, it transpired to be his inability to connect to social media that resulted in the boys conflating the obsolete hardware with not having a mobile phone at all.

Initially constructed around students in year eleven who had previously been involved in research both with me personally (e.g. in my Institution Focused Study) as well for the school, I was lucky enough to work with eight Yr11 boys who I had previously taught. Eight Yr10 boys offered to help me with my research having heard about previous projects whilst the year nine boys were selected from a request made to a class I had previously taught. Wary of criticism from McGee & Pearman (2015, p.513) who argue that a 'gendered and racialized narrative of Black male adolescents in urban spaces is one often fraught with deficit-based assumptions', students were collectively chosen to represent the school although the sample was not stratified to ethnicity. For example, a key participant in Yr11 (Shakur) asked his brother in Yr8 (Sahib) to support the research and the remaining participants grew from there. Ethnically, 80% of boys were born in London but none would self-define as 'white British'. Allen (2015, 225) argues, when considering popular discourses on Black male identity, that it is 'critically important to find ways to disrupt majoritarian discourse that perpetuates deficit thinking'. The relationship born through providing an excellent education through my curriculum area therefore goes some way to providing a platform for these boys to perhaps discuss any racially differentiated masculinities.

To summarise, the groups researched were constructed with the follows participants, all of whom were born in England:

Focus Group & Date Conducted	Pseudonyms (n = 30)	Parental background
11A: 30.04.15	Shakur, Oliver, Moses & Ayo	Somalia, Nigeria, Ghana and Nigeria
11B: 01.05.15	Tariq, Mehmet, Riyadh & Mohammed	Afghanistan, Turkey, India & Pakistan
10A: 23.04.15	Denzel, Simba, Jerrell & Ebrihim	Nigeria, France, Jamaica & Turkey
10B: 24.04.15	Arslan, Emre, Samuel & Michael	Albania, Turkey, Gambia & Jamaica;
9A: 07.05.15	Pawel, Tomasz & Arda	Poland, Bulgaria & Turkey
9B: 08.05.15	Can, Janus, Emmanuel & Andrzej	Turkey, Poland & Nigeria
8A: 14.05.15	Jakub, Igor & Fabian	Poland (3)
8B: 15.05.15	Sahib, Nelson, Montel & Olu	Somalia, Jamaica (2), Ghana

Interview Protocol

My understanding remains that we can never know with certainty the *extent* to which a response is truthful. Noting Walkerdine's (1989, p.271) Foucauldian inspired conclusion that 'the purpose of examining the conceptualizations which form the bedrock of modern practices is to draw out the terms which are key to the regime of truth which is constituted in and by the practices', my ability to present, analyse and discuss such discursively informed practices was restricted by the first of June 2016 deadline but not to the extent that significant truths were left uncovered. Chapter Four analyses the extent to which Walkerdine's (ibid) post-structural notions of 'truth' can be answered in this context. However, this thesis, in line with poststructural research methods, searches for discursive accounts that arrive through interviewing.

The challenge in constructing interview questions was to channel the theoretical concepts around identity, visibility and performance from Michel Foucault and Judith Butler to draw out discussion that would help to understand boys' experiences of mobile technology at school. I drew upon previous research from studies by Sonia Livingstone and Jessica Ringrose, whilst working to ask questions of students that would elicit useful discussion. My collection strategy was consistent throughout the eight focus groups but the semi-structured nature of my approach allowed for the groups to lead the direction of the discussion. Sequentially, I approached each focus group using the following strategy:

- i. Discrete online events presented by the students (e.g. a Facebook status update). Each contributor was asked to explore *what* was presented and *how* they have presented it. In some cases, students focused on one aspect of the event (e.g. what is seen) but choose to

backstage other aspects (e.g. what is said in a video). Each student within the relevant focus group was then asked to respond to the given presentation.

- ii. Boys were then asked to describe an events which they chose *not* to present and their reasons for *not* doing so. Again, each student within the relevant focus group was then asked to respond to the given description.
- iii. Given the first two discussions, these boys were then asked how their presented examples impacted (or not) *offline* relations at school?
- iv. *Subsequent* discussions once all individuals have presented their personal events. In a number of cases the boys evaluated similarities and differences between the examples discussed.

As a direct comparison, Selwyn's (2009, p.171) study, focused on social science undergraduates, found many students using Facebook as a 'space for contesting and resisting the asymmetrical power relationships built into the institutional offline positions of student and university system', developing what he labelled "backstage' opportunities to be disruptive, challenging and resistant 'unruly agents". The tension described, between both backstage and frontstage (Goffman, 1959), as well as between online and offline, has a clear synergy between the undergraduate students and the adolescent students in my research when concerned with the *performance* of identity via mobile technology at school.

Approach to Data Analysis

CONSIDERED COLLECTIVELY, I analysed the eight student focus groups alongside the empirical materials through the four previously given distinct approaches applying a discourse analysis approach. Rooted in Gee's (2011, p.10 - 19) Discourse Analysis Toolkit, I approached my transcripts through my understanding of Gee's Deixis Tool (how what is said to context), Fill in Tool (based on what was said, what needs to be filled in to achieve clarity), Making Strange Tool (what would an outsider find stranger here) and finally his Subject Tool (asking why subjects have chosen topics as well as what they are saying about those topics). I isolated discourses from the discussions within my data sets before grouping them into themes. Each initial first-level thematic coding approach had codes determined inductively. My approach was Foucauldian in the sense that I interpreted the boys' discourses as a culturally constructed representation of their reality. The discourses themselves I allowed to define subjects under exploration (e.g. maintaining concurrent profiles) in order for the data to frame what language allowed the boys to do. Similarly, I continually questioned what data was being presented as a truth or a norm, alongside how any particular truth or norm was presented in front of the group. Whilst questioning the boys' performances in their groups, I also asked myself what interested are being *mobilised* by their given performances and

which specific actions and practices were made possible by their way of communicating and normalising their practice.

I did not use any specific software programs readily available save for the highlight function on Microsoft Word. My experience had taught me that whilst such programs were good for tabulating phrases or key words, the critical identification of specific meanings of concepts, beliefs and ideas were best derived by sight. I was interested in complex perspectives and links between themes and had developed a very particular lens based on my literature review. Addressing Miles & Huberman's (1994, p.299) challenge to 'combine theoretical elegance and credibility appropriately with the many ways social events can be described', I attempted to ensure consistency between the theoretical framing (schooling, mobile online interactions, gender and masculinity) and the anchoring of the discussions to my research questions. Following this process, second-level coding groups established a number of themes to enable evaluations surround my research questions.

Teacher interviews, conducted after the completion of all student focus groups, empowered me to question the relationship between studying online media and meeting students' needs. Indeed, the extent to which the staff believe social media or mobile technology is a 'distraction' provides a useful context in understanding whether there is scope to lift the mobile phone ban in the immediate future. Practices of learning that may include creative solutions such as the promoted use of Instagram in the Art curriculum, for example, provide a necessary cornerstone when describing the social relationships both between staff and students and between the students themselves. Furthermore, Harvey et al (2013, p.3) argue that new technologies 'facilitates new processes of representation, interaction and circulation, in which social networking sites offer the possibility for users to create content that can be distributed widely and archived online'. The institutional *value* attached to such facilitation enables conclusions to be drawn in Chapter Six relating to the benefit of this research to both subsequent research and immediate practice.

Specifically, themes presented are:

Technology: Surveillance, Schooling, Physical Devices, Maintaining Concurrent Profiles, Online Friends, Banging Likes & Cyber Bullying.

Community: Transition, Family Members' relationship with the Boy's Phones, Ethnicity, School Staff Professionalism in relation to Social Media, Peer Group Banter, Likes within Peer Groups, Violence & Offline Societal Links.

Performances of Masculine Heterosexuality: School Policy on Sex and Cyber

Bullying, Stereotypes about Masculinity and Femininity, Porn and Girl's Bodies, Sexting & Revenge Porn

Dissemination

An accessible report of one side was produced and discussed with the senior leadership team in June 2016. At that time, I had moved to a different school so it proved an enlightening visit back to my old workplace to thank colleagues for their support and help them to prepare to share the findings with their cohort as well as with schools facing similar challenges through established networks.

CHAPTER FOUR – DATA ANALYSIS

DATA GATHERED is presented thematically (via Technology, Community and Performances of Heterosexuality) around key concepts extracted from the eight diverse student focus groups and four individual staff interviews. The overall aim was to answer the research questions set out from Chapter Three:

- How do adolescent males use their mobile devices to participate in online communities?
- How do male identity construction and peer relationships online shape embodied relations at school (offline) and vice versa?

Analyses are anchored through a critical engagement of the risk agenda articulated by Livingstone and Haddon (2008, p.314) described as ‘insufficiently reflective of children and young people’s own agenda of concerns (in which viruses, bullying, identity abuse, fraud spam and face hate figures much higher than pornography or even stranger danger)’. I therefore focus on both potential and actual risks these boys navigate via their exploration of mobile technology at school through discourses presented within the peer focus groups. The results respond directly to the needs identified in the rationale and cover such diverse issues as transition from primary school, parenting, violence and sexualized cyberbullying

I applied Gee’s (2011, p.10) discourse analysis Toolkit to find discursive themes in the data. To interpret how discourse creates identity and power, I adopted Foucault’s analytic strategy in studying the deployment of power of subjectification through discourse. Youdell (2010, p.64) articulates this approach noting how the development ‘identifies the constituted and productive nature of knowledge at the same time as it underscores the indivisibility of power and knowledge’. By considering the performativity of discourse whilst focusing on the effects of the performance of that power, I examined the capacity within the boys’ speech and communication (within a known peer group) to not simply impart information but rather to construct and perform an identity. In this way I challenge the concept that each boy has an identity which forms the source of secondary actions (e.g. gestures). Instead, performances feed into the construction of identities as *caused* by performative actions and behaviours. Youdell continues, when considering how productive these knowledges are, that ‘they create the world in their own terms as they set out the boundaries of what is knowable’. As a masculine performance by way of a discursive process, social power can, in this way, be seen to be formed through strategies embodying intentions of the individual. I note that these strategies rest beside those of the individuals engaged with them.

TECHNOLOGY

NEITHER STATIC nor obsolete, technology can be seen to evolve faster than schools or adults are prepared for. Selwyn (2006, p.5) writes that 'educational commentators have long feared a disconnection of new generations of technology-rich students from their technology-poor schools' with evidence from this research providing evidencing of mastery within highlighted examples. Explored thematically through Surveillance, Schooling, Physical Devices, Maintaining Concurrent Profiles, Friends, Banging Likes and Cyberbullying, this section of Chapter Four commutatively presents an identity landscape not just accessed but created by the students researched. The imaginative and resourceful practices highlighted together suggest that mobile phones are prevalent to the extent that the students cannot imagine a world without them.

When considering youth culture, the uniqueness of social media as a largely open communication platform at the fingertips of adolescents allows for the re-negotiation of social boundaries. Every student interviewed whose phone had the capacity to access social media used their device to do so on a daily basis. When asked what social media meant to one year ten group, a student responded with:

Emre: Social media means everything to me! For me, I think, a phone would be quite pointless if there was no social media apps on it!

DF: OK so what apps do you use?

Emre: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Askfm basically everything!

This response, far from being isolated, was the norm. The boys, across all year groups, felt a strong emotional bond to their social media online identity that was accessed primarily through their mobile phones but often supplemented at home via a laptop or online games consol. The few exceptions to this rule who were unable to gain access to the Internet through their technologically obsolete devices, felt mixed emotions when describing their ability to access their (still present) online personas. One year eleven boy articulated his situation, when asked how he felt about not being able to access social media profile via a mobile phone, with:

Moses: Isolated, sometimes I can feel isolated because people can be on their phones on the bus or listening to music and I would be there, maybe playing Duelquest... they just have to contact me a different way, I mean some people can't contact me cos at the moment I can't collect numbers on this phone as I don't really want to bring out the phone so obviously people aren't really going to contact me that much... everything I do most of the time is face-to-face... compared to everybody else I can feel a bit down but I'm used to it.

Accepting the fact that his ability to communicate is almost censored by his (perceived) inadequate mobile phone, the boy regulates his interactions with possible new friends by refusing to be seen with his own phone. As Van Dijck (2013, p.172) argues with regard to connectivity, 'opting out is hampered not only by built-in technical or commercial hurdles, but particularly by social impediments... the pressure of peers, friends, and colleagues to stay in the realm of online connectivity turned out to be immense'. The negotiation of the less than desirable phone affected this student when interacting with both other boys and girls for the first time. Initial impressions appeared to warrant the most significant deception whilst when friendships were established the motivation to conceal the device become less pronounced.

Taken together, the previous two examples illustrate a suspicion present in the older year groups that did not surface during any of the four groups held with year eight or year nine. Indeed, typical responses there were along the lines of the following conversation:

Igor: There was some dog with a human face and it looks like one of my friends so I posted it on my wall

DF: Ok and did you tag that person into the picture?

Igor: No, but people knew it was a joke

Conceptually, this example does, however, illustrate the practice of using the technology available for 'indirects' where students insult each other, often within friendship groups, in order to boost their own popularity and 'ratings'. Ringrose et al (2013, p.312) argue boys and girls talked about a system of 'ratings' in which 'boys gained respect for being involved in fights, being popular with girls, having 'swagger' and wearing designer clothes' as part of an ideal, culturally specific expression of masculinity. Theoretically the notion of an 'indirect' lies at the intersection of harassment and humour; whilst the above example can be seen as a form of banter within a known peer group, the potential negative practice is also commonplace. If a student is on the receiving end of the public post, they are not at liberty to respond in public as this would result in acknowledgment that the original post was aimed at them. Heirman et al. (2016, p.1125) note further that during adolescence, 'peer interactions arguably hold the greatest importance for individuals' social and behavioural functioning'. With respect to 'indirects', we see that an interaction, in and of itself, can be viewed as significant to both the author and the intended unmentioned victim of the post. Conceptually, an 'indirect' relates in interesting ways to boyd's four axioms of *Visibility Searchability, Spreadability* and *Persistence*. Whilst specific posts may be highly *visible*, it is only through a lens connecting the post to the intended 'victim' that a performance can be seen by specific audiences. *Searching* for the name of a 'victim' would not highlight the indirect

posting but the material can still be *spread* via normal technical routes. The persistence of the post remains at the mercy of the author can therefore be seen to transform an exercise in humour or bullying.

Surveillance

Derived originally from the Greek myth of Panoptes as a giant with a hundred eyes who was therefore a very effective watchman, I understand Foucault's 'Panopticon' as a metaphor for modern disciplinary societies and their inclination to normalise. When considering this lens relating to being seen, the permanent visibility created by social media is argued to be the very extrapolation of Foucault's ideas, extending even further than critics of evolving technology such as closed circuit television cameras in retail outlets may have contended (Zuboff, 1988). Indeed, an integral aspect of Foucault's (1997, p.108) conception of power was how endemic it was; it cannot be located and therefore resides through our actions and us. Social networking sites and instant messaging accessed via mobile technology complicate the notion of both those under the panoptic gaze as well as those who conduct the viewing. Lupton (2012, p.236) argues that, paraphrasing Foucault, 'panopticon was representative of a new form of power, one in which central surveillance and monitoring of individuals was combined with those individuals developing voluntary self-management techniques' and it is through her reconsiderations that we find a contribution to knowledge within this thesis. For example, the extent to which teenage boys as emerging adults understand the permanency of any posts online is highlighted through the following illuminative exchange between a year ten group:

Jerrell: Everyone is kinda posting regular now, like, every two days, like some people don't post, for instance Denzel, he just never posts but he's always online, like he'll just be reading through everyone's posts

DF: How do you know he's online?

Simba: Cos of the green circle

Jerrell: And because when you come to school he knows everything that is going on

Simba: Preeing all the time... he just watches, he's just preeing something

DF: Is that how you would describe yourself?

Denzel: Yeah

As an extension of the concept of panopticon, student Denzel is seen through the presence of the green circle indicating online activity on Facebook. Conceptually useful here is the touchstone of 'sousveillance' which I understand from Mann & Ferenbok (2013, p.19) to mean 'watching from below'. Etymologically derived from replacing 'sur' (over) with 'sous' (under), sousveillance can be

known as ‘undersight’. Whilst the boys have no centrally-controlled hierarchically organised act of surveillance, student Denzel, is, himself, an object of information and appears, from this exchange at least, to not engage as a subject in communication. His reasons for this remain unclear, however his performance offline, remaining knowledgeable about all that occurs, demonstrates his power of surveillance. The complication comes as the role of ‘watcher’ is not a *distinct* position and all boys interviewed adopted both the position of watcher and poster to varying extents.

Reflecting on the social media landscape inhabited by adolescents where there are no physical school gates, pre-determined uniforms or teachers observing and judging communications, the concept of *surveillance* can help us empathise with the boys’ practices. Facebook, as an example, can be seen as a panopticon but can individual users be placed in the same relationship to each other? Whilst high levels of commentary about surveillance did appear throughout the student focus groups, the boys’ online presence, connecting intimately with Foucault’s panopticon when applied to being *seen*, particularly as participation to all social networking sites is *voluntary*. Lupton (2012, p.240) argues that ‘power relations implicit in surveillance technologies are not necessarily coercive or repressive’ and the endemic use of mobile phone social networking sites suggests a *vulnerability* in the performance of masculinity online as the boys are opening up their lives to others for observation. Within the example above lies an interesting mastery over the group through knowledge, both in terms of the quantity and quality of knowledge seen. Whilst boyd (2007, p.126) argues that ‘people cannot currently acquire the geographical coordinates of any person in unmediated spaces, finding one’s *digital body* online is just a matter of keystrokes’, it is the access provided by mobile technology which facilitates the omnipresence surveillance, whilst the *body* itself is located via *persistence* rather than a geographical location or physical presence. It can be argued, therefore, that a social media profile belonging to a male adolescent does not require a ‘digital body’ to be ‘present’. Instead, the public performance to certain audiences produces a display of existence visible, searchable to others but with a fleeting persistence. A disconnect was repeatedly highlighted, however, between the monitoring of the mobile phone as a safety device (perhaps as an emergency contact or a regular system of ensuring safety or the way to or from school) by their parents and carers and peer social connection from the boys’ perspective accessed *via* mobiles which remained largely unsupervised. Many parents have conversations with their sons about both perceived and real offline links.

The twin concepts of *surveillance* itself, by which I use the concept to mean the monitoring of behaviour with the purpose of influencing, directing or protecting, and *panopticon*, as relates to being seen as a conscious, permanent visibility as a form of power, can be used to help describe the *methods* in which boys track and act upon online posts. Social media users can be seen to carry out constant surveillance with an explicit purpose of influencing and directing their peers’ behaviour.

Jackson and Mazzei (2012, p.57) contend that according to Foucault, 'there is not a rational subject presiding over practices; the rationality of practices is found in the relations in which they are inscribed' and when used to describe the field of possibilities social media constructs, students may be expected to react to each other in ways they may not necessarily contemplate offline. Moreover, Popkewitz & Brennan argue that (1997, p.4) 'Foucault's work is illustrative of a move within critical traditions to focus on knowledge as a material element in social life' and it is the construct of *knowledge* that this thesis explores. For example, when re-counting a description of the school he led before the one in question, the Principal explained how, in terms of the significance of serious events engaging the behaviour for learning policy, that:

CT: It was not so much the mobile phones because the policy was very clear-cut, where the issues was, was the social media in the evenings and early hours of the morning where it completely took over and dominated their social lives.

Whilst this illustration was centred on an entirely different context, the example is useful to contribute to the understanding of why the school kept in place the previously inherited mobile phone ban. Explicitly, the staff member is demonstrating a blurring of boundaries between where the surveillance of school and home are conflated. Echoing work around risk addiction, Deborah Lupton's (2014, p.27) reference to 'the 'time-drain' of using social media' alongside the 'importance of not becoming 'addicted' to using them to the detriment of other work' when researching academics across the globe raises questions as to whether the boys researched in my study or, indeed, the pupils referenced by the Principal at his previous school, understand and can therefore begin to navigate, the addictive nature of social media. Implicit within this argument is the concept that staff surveil students both for content (e.g. appropriateness) as well as the addictive nature, although this is noted without comment on whether adults are, themselves, becoming addicted to social media, the member of staff appears to be saying that there is a pronounced disconnect between student engagement with social networking sites at home as opposed to on site at school. This causes concern not only as those online communications are brought offline into school on the following day but also that there is a potential dereliction of parental responsibility. Indeed, it is the *invisibility* of the actual mobile phones but the *visibility* of the social media profiles to family, friends and potential unknown acquaintances that the Principal highlights. Banning phones attempts to make boys' phones invisible by driving their use underground although research such as this thesis constructs opportunities for such discourses to emerge. Marwick and boyd (2011, p.2) continue that 'teens use the affordances of social media to gather attention, involve themselves in others' lives, and manipulate "public" perceptions'. Student use of social networking sites as a visible terrain open to peers but not necessarily the school, questions whether the power institutions such as schools exercise over boys is changed. For example, a physical fight can be

broken up in the playground by staff on duty but the transmission and republication of sexually explicit material may go unseen to the school unless reported by the young people. Without arguing that all offline fights were visible before, this shift in visibility, permeated through an ever-increasing digital networks, affects peer-to-peer relationships as well as peer-to-institution interactions

Bouvier (2012, p.37) asserts that 'social networking sites have been thought to offer new opportunities for more careful management and presentation of self in social networks and friendship communities'. Indeed, when considering what post one group of year eleven boys would not press the 'like' button for, and therefore observe but remain invisible in their observation, they noted:

Ayo: There's those one that say 'if you're a Christian like this and if you don't, you'll go to Hell' but I just say to myself 'God knows what I believe'

Oliver: But Facebook is weird you normally see those horses and human ones

Shakur: Just disgusting things

Oliver: Like for example when I had just started Facebook and I'd see something like a page called 'ah, when your mum calls you to get the remote from upstairs' and you like the post cos you relate then they'll start sending posts like nothing to do with their title

Referencing religion, bestiality and the operational common ground of still living under the roof of a parent or carer, the passage demonstrates both the variety of material accessed via social media by mobile phones as well as argues that the boys questioned have, by year eleven, developed a certain wisdom in refraining from not 'liking' inappropriate material. In relation to the 'Like Economy' conceptualised by Gerlitz & Helmond (2013, p.1349) where they note 'user interactions are instantly transformed into comparable forms of data and presented to other users in a way that generates more traffic and engagement', it is the *refrainment* of repetition that can be argued as heavily influenced by peer audience, school surveillance, family monitoring or an increased maturity. Performances via social networking sites can be argued to be related to *who* is watching, or, for that matter, not watching. Whilst Bouvier's research (2012, p.47) questions how Facebook users select identity categories for self-presentations by asking 'which (identity) categories do they foreground and which do they background?', Gerlitz & Helmond (2013, p.1354) argument that 'the Like economy contributes towards a decentralisation of actors involved in value creation'. Read together with my data above, user engagement and corresponding identity markers will become increasingly dependent on like buttons and liked content. With regard to performances of masculinity (not limited to physicality, heterosexuality or violence), identity construction can

therefore be seen to be influenced by public (to either known or unknown audiences) expressions of liked content.

An interesting debate surrounds the extent to which the boys understand the visibility of their social media profiles as they relate to boyd's other axes of Persistence, Spreadability and Searchability. Without a visible profile or public post, the boys care not for the other three. However, the visibility of the post accompanied by privacy settings deliberately not enabled, permits the profile or post to be found under a search, shared via authorized or under-authorized friends and hence increases the tenacity of the original contribution. One member of staff, when discussing the interpersonal skills of the boys at school, questioned the extent to which the boys:

DE: Understand social norms, peer group pressure and so forth... mobile phones have been a major problem, social media use is a major problem because the boys don't realize it can be tracked and they can be seen

Presenting an argument that teachers can (and do) exercise the potential to *surveil* their pupils at least in part to protect them (and other), the risk to the students of producing evidence that the school may use to argue that the students have brought the institution into disrepute is real. The understanding of the issues presented by the boys themselves, however, contradicts the staff member's low expectations of the students. An example would be the following extract, where a year nine boy dissected the mentality of those who post about fights succinctly:

Zeno: Social media is quite narcissistic and like everyone has to be a certain way but it's also about how much you want to kind of take down the other person with you, in that sense... If you post about a fight it's like you want it to carry on.

Social media accessed via mobile phones therefore appears to augment the impact of the offline event. Indeed, Kofoed & Ringrose (2013, p.10) argue 'bodies interact with and plug into technological machines creating whole new assemblages and new rhizomatic movements. Affect flows via these connections, and subjectification happens, shaping affective possibilities'. The relationship to physical fighting here centres on the role of any audience; in my experience very few fights occur simply between two boys and are more often than not a product of a large group environment whereby the boys can see no route to escape save for assaulting another student in a serious escalation of their present environment. Moving *beyond* boyd, the example offers an additional axis to consider in that the posts on social media themselves can actually contribute to negative actions both on and offline. Boyd's four axes remain, for me at least, relatively passive in the past-historic positioning of the student behind the post. My experience in school indicates that

when disagreements from social media are brought to school staff attention even as swiftly as the following morning, boys may have resolved their dispute on the journey to school before stepping foot on site. Schools can therefore be seen to access material from the past and are often not engaged (present tense) with cyberbullying. This being said, the year nine boy above argues that posts remain *live* and can continue to provide material for future interactions.

Mobile Phones on Site at School

Whilst Seipold (2014, p.35) argues that ‘mobile learning is not limited to a technology-centred view but it encompasses didactic aspects, as well as learning that is evolving’, an interesting anomaly arose in the research where an academically gifted year ten student explained:

Arslan: I write, I’m, um, writing a novel

DF: You’re writing a novel on your phone?

Arslan: Well, ideas, cos Nokia is a Microsoft phone they have this service called ‘one drive’ and I have 30GB of free storage so I can put all my documents there.

Demonstrating how mobile phones can be used to augment or, indeed, replace school writing, mobile phones can create the affordance to write a novel given the sheer scale of the memory available on an accessible handset. As a gifted student who has been ear-marked as a potential Oxbridge candidate, the illustration serves to demonstrate a form of masculinity where achievement is performed and celebrated via his ‘learner identity’. The relationship between academic underachievement also resulted in prolonged maintenance of a specific current handset, often for many years, clarified by a year eleven student who was used to meeting his parent’s often unrealistic expectations:

Ayo: I have a blackberry, pay-as-you-go... this is my ‘discipline’ phone, because I got bad grades and haven’t been doing well at school, my mum didn’t want me to have a good phone... I mean I was going to get a better phone but they said no because my grades were not as good as they were meant to be

Indicating that an aspect of status can be compromised by a less than desirable phone, the example illustrates how a mobile phone can be seen to embody the intersection of student learner identity and parental expectation of learning outcomes and discipline. The ability of parents to influence, financially at least, the individual device for adolescent males is clear.

As the main site for acquiring knowledge and developing certain key skills, schools remain central to the preparation for adult life. The school teaches an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) curriculum without students having a mobile phone in their hand; where the syllabus notes the fact that all students own a phone in mind. Explaining how he adopted a more pragmatic tone than his predecessor, the current principal inherited a mobile phone ban but noted how:

CT: We have introduced the rule that if a kid travels for more than half an hour, then I am prepared to let them bring it in as long as they are prepared to hand it in to Student Services

Whilst a minority of students at the school under exploration have been given permission to hand their phone into the school officially, the change in policy has created problems, including the proliferation of mobile phone use at the central bus stop used by the vast majority of the students at the end of day. Problematic for school staff in terms of duty rotas for staff points, students who have regained their phones at the end of the day openly use their devices resulting in staff unable to differentiate between those who are authorized to have a mobile device and those who concealed them during the day. Subverting the mobile phone ban and further blurring the boundary between *home* and *school*, the bus stop location demonstrates the inadequacy of the policy position for this school as well cumulatively reinforcing a space whereby the students, not just boys, can only use their phones (e.g. by taking Snapchat videos of each other) without fear of confiscation or reprimand. None of the staff questioned were under any illusion that some students do flout the new rule and use their phones behind locked cubicle doors in the bathrooms.

With a compulsory ICT lesson for every student in year seven and eight, the school maintains a commitment to teaching students how to use social media responsibly. For example, a member of staff explained how:

JZ: We do a lot of work around radicalisation following the changes to the statutory duty... but we are not the only people that influence young people, that more often than not it's their peers that influence one another.

Peer influence via social media accessed primarily through mobile phones can potentially be seen to therefore have an increasing impact on male adolescents as the ban effectively removes discussion around mobile phones from any context other than peer interaction. The challenge comes, however, in how much can be taught in a single period of 60 minutes per week coupled with the fact that the majority of the students are already accessing social media from their mobile

phones before even starting at secondary school. In terms of safeguarding, the school responds proactively to any changes in legislation but there does not appear to be much statutory guidance with regard to social media and mobile phone use save for the practically obsolete criteria of some applications to not create a profile before the age of 13 (e.g. Facebook).

Personal, Social, Health and Education (PSHE) curricula are regularly reviewed and incorporate a number of safeguarding elements. Whilst ICT is taught as a discrete timetabled subject to students in years seven and eight, PSHE is taught across all five cohorts although due to the pressure implicit in studying three separate sciences, those students who are to be entered for distinct GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics have an additional period of Science which replaces PSHE. The ablest science students therefore do not have an explicit PSHE lesson in years nine, ten and eleven. Nor is there an attempt to integrate ICT and PSHE within the same subject space. Delivery of the PSHE objectives is moving from a more autocratic model where staff were delivering pre-determined lessons, primarily via PowerPoint, to one in which the students lead the curriculum for the future. One member of staff explained how the dialogue with students is evolving:

JZ: For example, they told us ‘with sex ed, what we don’t need is the sciencey bit’... so what we really need is how we empower young people around the idea of consent and those kind of things.

Exemplifying how the school feels the system works well but could be developed even further, a situation was described by staff where a student, via her Facebook and Instagram accounts, made threats to another student about coming in to ‘stab them’. School staff were alerted after being called by the mother of the potential victim as well as having concerned students highlight the situation to trusted staff. The student in question was unaware (or decided that she was happy to face the consequences) of her threats having a *Persistence* by leaving key details *Searchable* via social networking sites which had significant *Visibility* to the hundreds to students (as both a potential and actual audience) and *Spreadability* of the threat which resulted in staff access. Both male and female students reported the threats to staff indicating, in this case at least, that the reporting to the institution was neither a masculine nor feminine trait – an argument which is supported by my experience. In this particular case, an investigation was opened up so that the social media profiles were observed by staff who were then able to see the ongoing public conversations. Print outs were taken and a number of individuals who were involved were spoken to. It appeared that the disagreement between two old friends had started six months previously and the social media applications, accessed via mobile phones, had been used as a vehicle to gather support for opposing camps. The staff noted that a response would have been better delivered had the incident been caught sooner or, indeed, if the students themselves had spoken to staff rather than getting to the

stage where parents are liaising directly with the school. The mobile phone ban can therefore potentially be seen to contributing to the delay in reporting such incidents to the school, raising questions as to whether the ban increases the risk of offline violence.

Technical Devices

Having been given a mobile phone on the day I left for university as an eighteen-year-old, the early age, often primary school, at which the students researched were given their first mobile phones shocked me. Acquisition is explored further at the start of the third section of this chapter (Community) by investigating the primary to secondary transition. The physical mobile phones currently owned by the students I listened to, and their application of the predominantly free technologies available, is presented alongside an emotional connection to both the hardware and software engaged with. Whilst Favero (2014, p.178) argues that ‘a creative practical engagement with new technologies of communication is conducive to an increased awareness about the characteristics of new visual communication practices’, the knowledge of technology of the students under investigation was beyond my already high expectations. Whether considering the *financial* cost of pay-as-you-go or contracted phones, brand new or second-hand (from sites such as www.ebay.co.uk) devices, or the detailing surrounding cellular or data packages, the boys spoke with an informed economic authority.

Illustrated through inventive language, the students overwhelmingly indicated a preference for products that are at the very cutting-edge of available technology. One year ten student when asked why he had requested an iPhone from his parents, described how:

Denzell: I used to have a Blackberry, but then I realised... blackberry, blackberry wasn't reigning any more.

Related to masculinity through the concept of reigning either over other brands or owners of less desirable mobile phones, the prevalence for either Apple's iPhone or Samsung's Galaxy far exceeded the demand for other brands. Unlike my understanding of general adult practice where the norm is wait for a contractual upgrade before selecting the 'next-best' mobile device, the boys navigated their family members providing their devices in a multitude of ways. Typically, upgrades were given as reward as exemplified by one year nine student:

Arda: After the exams then I got a Samsung Galaxy S3 as a reward... then we went on holiday and I broke that phone – it was in the pocket of my swimsuit and I went in the sea, so, yeah, I was really upset after that

DF: Why were you upset?

Arda: It was a huge responsibility to me, this phone, and I had just forgotten it in my pocket!

Once gone or broken, as in the case above, the loss of a mobile often lead to tears of sadness at the time but provoked laughter in the focus groups through a shared sense of forfeiture. Explicitly referenced to responsibility (the boy had full ownership of the device) as well as forgetfulness (wilfully jumping into the pool without consideration given to personal belongings held in pockets), the example invoked a caring and empathetic masculinity from the other boys in the focus group via common sense of loss.

Etymologically, the word 'translation' comes from the Latin for 'bearing across'. When considering what information, the mobile phones *translate* to the students in addition to voice calls, whether it be text, still or moving images, we can question whether because of device itself something gets lost, or, indeed can be gained. Favero (2014, p.178) argues that 'in the context of GPS-based technologies and practices, images 'tells us much more than what appears visually within the frame'. The *excess* meaning therefore attached to each image conducts what Favero goes on to describe as the 'materialization of movement and memory'. The supplement of importance into a variety of networks and relations can be used to argue that mobile phone screens enhance what they are presenting. In terms of how the boys actually use the technology at their fingertips, it was clear the younger boys called their parents more, particularly on the way home from school. Noting that Livingstone and Brake (2010, p.76) conclude that 'youthful practices are best characterized by the flexible intermixing of multiple forms of communication', this chapter opens up critical discussions around both traditional academic and contemporary professional boundaries. E-mail was universally ignored whilst the popular messaging platform 'WhatsApp' was described as social media due to its group chat capabilities. Depending on the boy in question, the proportion of time spent serving the Internet, listening to music, texting and watching videos varied significantly, as one would expect from such a range of participants. Indeed, given the social nature of mobile phone use whereby the boys regularly look at each other's phones, the translation of meaning amplified by the colour screens playing moving images. As an example, one year eleven boy describes how:

Oliver: I share videos with people, so if I see a funny video I might share that so people on my Facebook can see it

DF: How often do you do that?

Oliver: Maybe once a day?

Whilst the mobile phones operated by the boys had the capacity to take and store videos of often extremely high quality, it was the sharing of videos for the benefit of others that was demonstrated as a typical behaviour. Indeed, one example provoked an extended debate that surrounded an internationally trending instance of an optical illusion:

Samuel: One day I got home and I looked and there was this dress, just this one dress, and when people look at it, different people see different colours.

Arslan: Different phones have different screens, different computers have different screens, it's the way that the pixels are arranged on the screen, it creates a slightly different view of colour... so the dress is actually black and blue but people said it was white and gold!

Sparking debate via social media platforms such as Facebook, online messaging platforms such as WhatsApp and off-line conversations, the example given demonstrates how considerations given to screen resolutions can maintain discourses around perception of colour. Previously the colour screen was the preserve of the rich and famous but is now far more accessible. Whilst none of the students who participated in the research had an Apple Watch, it was certainly on their list of requests for future purchases.

Maintaining Concurrent Profiles

Multiple profiles on social networking sites were often created in order to both navigate the surveillance of parents and carers as well as to provide the opportunity to present distinct online identities. Continuous negotiation between various domains required time and management, with the practice demonstrating the boy's awareness of potential monitoring by family members concerned with the *amount* and *types* of contacts on the profile. Similarly, the boys constantly operated across several platforms simultaneously. Van Dijck (2013, p.163) argues that 'users need platforms to voice their opinions and creative expressions, while platforms need users to funnel their expressions in pre-sorted formats'. The content of the platforms accessed (and the profiles within those platforms) exhibits a tension, therefore, between the impulsive and the pre-meditated. An example of the practicalities here comes from a year ten student who describes:

Emre: So I can be on my phone on Facebook and on my computer I can on Twitter... and I'd use them together at the same time

DF: How many hours do you spend doing that?

Emre: If I was to be honest, after I come back from school which is at 3:30 roughly until about seven or eight o'clock

Whether this student was exaggerating about his social media use in order to impress the focus group I cannot be sure. In his paper debating undergraduate student use of Facebook at university, Selwyn (2009, p.173) argues that there is 'no cause to perpetuate either the utopian or dystopian discourses'. Highlighting a potential excessive screen time, what is clear is that the student has thousands of Facebook friends as well as over a thousand Instagram followers (corroborated by his peers) and that the level of attention given to each social networking site must have been nurtured with some serious commitment.

Manago (2013, p.481) argues that 'youth's articulations of their identities on social networking sites often appropriate pop culture multimedia, brands, and symbols'. I imagine in the same way that bedroom walls, doodles in scrapbooks and autographs used to (and perhaps continue to). Given the nature of the research questions posed and the fact that I did not actually look at the boys' posts which lead to very few explicit brands mentioned outright and no symbols save for those related to Apple and Samsung. The software used, however, extending past social media, was a topic of constant discussion but not always one the students were, surprisingly, willing to share with each other. One example, surrounding a year ten boy who liked to download television series (sometimes legally, sometimes illegally) onto this mobile phone, explained that:

Simba: I have an app called 'watch series', and I watch stuff on that, and I have another app that I can't say cos certain people will take that app... like it's an app that I use for movies.

DF: Why would it matter if somebody else had the same app as you?

Simba: Cos it will get around school and people will use it

Suggesting that certain applications are desirable for exclusivity, this student was in a focus group which I would describe as 'friendship' group, he was unwilling to give up what could be seen as a competitive advantage over his peers. By 'friendship group' I mean the students chose to spend time with each other outside of normally timetabled lessons both in school and out of school. Extrapolating this finding, Van Dijck (2013, p.6) suggests 'it is a common fallacy... to think of platforms as merely *facilitating* networking activities; instead, the construction of platforms and social practices is mutually constitutive'. Linking the quote explicitly with the reference, it is clear that the boys select which platforms to communicate on and which to withhold. My understanding here is that creativity, enabled by the evolving technology, can ensure that the media is both intentionally and unintentionally *social* or not, by keeping choosing aspects (e.g. movie application) to demonstrate.

Online Friends

When considering peer-to-peer online relationships, the students offered an illuminating insight into not only how large numbers of online ‘friends’ were established, but also how they are maintained. Acknowledging Sweeny’s (2009, p.210) conclusion that ‘more connections do not equal more understanding, more equality or more justice’, when questioned on the number of Facebook friends they currently maintained the older year groups were correlated with higher numbers of connections up to a point. One year eleven boy explained how, on Facebook:

Shakur: There’s more than 3,000 but I haven’t accepted them all... I stopped accepting people cos I noticed I had a lot of, um, cos I used to make videos on Facebook and then I was getting some exposure.

Referencing boyd’s axiom of visibility explicitly, exposure in this case can be seen to represent both a positive and negative adjective. Whilst online popularity is correlated to offline popularity, there appears to be a limit above which a certain number of friends whereby the the addition of any subsequent connections proves undesirable. Not only does this example highlight the extent to which accepting friendship requests has permeated the community in which these students operate, the quote also serves to underline the magnitude of the audience online; this student has connections to more than three times the roll of the school he attends. When probed on what exposure meant to him, the boy continued:

Shakur: Everyone basically watched them, there was a lot of views, videos would reach a hundred k, I think it was just me talking about somebody, a celebrity, I was just filming myself, on my phone, in my house, no one else was there, it was about Amber Rose, she’s bald and she had something on her head she shouldn’t have had on cos it made no sense cos she’s bald, it was some towel thing on her head but you’d normally wear it if you had hair, she had no hair, so I decided to talk about it.

Given that the video in question was only seven seconds long, the fact that a sixteen-year-old boy can obtain over one hundred thousand views demonstrates the capacity of free technology (in this case YouTube) to create and distribute popular content. View counts at this level would not have been possible without the significant amount of friends who ‘shared’ the post and commented on it with reduced security settings therefore enabling the video to go ‘viral’. Indeed, Nahon & Hemsley (2013, p.3) argue ‘Virality’s prevalence in contemporary society is an emergent feature of the interconnected social media platforms that together have created a dynamic *social infrastructure*’. Quantifying received friendship requests across associated social networking platforms was

impossible to calculate. Technology did allow, however, this student to be ‘followed’ on Facebook and his five subsequent videos, all comedic in nature, garnered over a hundred thousand views on Facebook also. Wuebben (2016, p.77) concludes that like any social sensation tied to the advent of new technologies, ‘having a high number of likes or going viral is not inherently positive or negative’ and hence reinforces previously discussed ‘ratings’.

Several of the boys held a false sense of security when considering how meaningful the confirmation of online friends could become, although this was not the case for all students interviewed. Bouvier (2012, p.41) notes how other authors have focused on the ‘interactive nature of self-presentation on social networking sites’ and quotes boyd and Heer (2006) in suggesting that ‘users are key in shaping the presentations of others as they provide their own comments and Wall postings’ leading to a suggestion that any moral panic over vast numbers of contacts and influences may be unfounded. The complex nature of adding a friend when a student has not physically met them but suspects they might meet, is articulated by one year ten who elaborated:

Denzel: It’s like basically... say I was searching for this one person... and this person had all three of these people as their mutual friend... I may not actually know this person...but because all three of these people may... I’m under the impression that they know this person, because of their mutual friends, I would add the person.

Maintaining a contact as a visible performance (for example as a publicly acknowledged Facebook friend) can therefore be seen to be a permanent display of popularity in quantitative terms but the large numbers involved have created restrictions on what level of communication are acceptable. Moreover, the decision to accept friendship requests on sites such as Facebook was not without deliberation. When students chose to bring up which lens they used to judge suitability (for some) echoes previously articulated ‘stranger-danger’ discourses, those students were sceptical about profiles which did not include a clear picture of a person’s face as a main profile picture. Participants were not asked explicitly about safeguarding concern but what is significant here is the student above evaluates potentiality based on the number of mutual friends raising further questions as to what other ‘criteria’ are used to filter unknown contacts. This is the logic used to affirm suitability and degrees of being known. Van Dijck (2013, p.12) concludes ‘it is far from transparent how Facebook and other platforms utilize their data to influence traffic and monetize engineered systems of information’. Without necessarily arguing that social media is dangerous, the unregulated environment in which teenagers make connections raises significant questions as to whether established safeguarding procedures (for example when considering the exchange of pornographic material) are maintained.

Banging Likes

The culture of online ‘likes’ was discussed at length in all focus groups. As a medium for simultaneously letting an author know that you appreciate or sympathize with their status, photo or video, a ‘like’ publicizes your agreement to the author’s friends, the individual who ‘liked’ the update as well as potentially anyone else who views the status depending on privacy setting. Gerlitz & Helmond (2013, p.1353) describe when exploring Facebook’s attempt to make the entire web more social a ‘Like economy: an infrastructure that allows the exchange of data, traffic, affects, connections, and of course money, mediated through Social Plugins and most notably the Like button’. Within this research, these boys were resolute in their explanation that the predominant factor (even above number of friends) in performing popularity is the number of likes achieved on recent posts. This finding begins to explain how affordances of youth popularity are created through online technology. From a technical point of the view, the debate around the number of friends a particular social media profile publishes has become decidedly disingenuous. That being said, Gerlitz & Helmond (2013, p.1359) continue: ‘If a friend responds to a like with another like or a comment, this activity is exposed to yet another set of users’ leading to the engagement in a barter system. Specifically, with the advent of ‘follow apps’, students can, and in some cases did, gain likes for certain pictures or increase the number of views by spending time completing the activity for others. Establishing a direct link between online ‘likes’ and offline embodied relations at school, the engagement with ‘follow apps’ exemplifies how important popularity is in both fields when these adolescent males consider performances of their own masculinity. Justifying the methodology for this thesis whereby I chose to research within my (now old) employing institution, I am, at the time of writing, unable to find any academically verified research into ‘follow apps’.

A year ten student describes, exploring in front of his peers for the first time with a honesty and assumption of privacy due to the situation he found himself in, how he reached a thousand Instagram followers:

- Ebrahim: So basically I post a picture, and say you’re not satisfied with the amount of likes, you go on the app, like other people’s pictures, then you get coins for it... then you can trade in the amount of likes, but it’s like half’
- DF: So if you like 40 pictures...
- Ebrahim: You’d get 20 back... you pick on a specific picture you want, then you trade in.

The extent to which this practice has resulted in the number of friends explored by the students under investigation remains unclear. What is more certain, however, is that a large number of friends coupled with a significant number of likes remains desirable and the boys are finding

increasingly creative methods to *perform* popularity and increase their ratings. Given that humour and banter permeates this section of Chapter Four, it is clear that the ability, tendency and skill to provoke laughter and provide amusement appears central to the boys' discourses around their own performed masculinity online. Kehily and Nayak (1997, p.69) argue humour can be an 'organising principle, deployed to position pupils within differing dominant and subordinate peer group sexual culture'. Notably, the boys appear, alongside possible other reasons, eschew the available privacy controls in order to increase their popularity and ratings by maximizing their online friends and potential likes. Across all four of boyd's axioms, it appears that to be seen as visible via a social media presence is desirable both in front of girls and boys. One year eight student succinctly put it:

Olu: You can find me, cos if you put it on private, you wouldn't bang likes on Facebook.

One interpretation is that a 'like' can boost self-esteem (Van Dijck, 2013). However, this is specific to the cultural context and here relates to racialized teen boys in a certain sub culture. Whilst McGee & Pearman (2015, p.514) argue there remains a 'shortfall in research concerning the constellation of internal factors that support as well as challenge the healthy identity development and academic trajectories of Black males during their high school years', a popular (in both the online and offline sense) year eleven student explains how:

Mehmet: For example, if you get a like, you feel happy, you feel as if, I'm just saying it's as if you feel a little bit happy, getting the notification.

Creating an infrastructure that, according to Gerlitz & Helmond (2013, p.1361) 'not only allows transactional data to be mined instantly, but also allows it to be attached to individual user profiles and multiplied' the receiving of a 'like' can be seen to boost self esteem. Drawing on Foucault's emphasis on the effects of power, the next illustration connects an increase of 'likes' with a sense of public popularity:

Olu: Obviously if you don't bang likes people won't rate you

Sahib: For us, if you bang a lot, if you get a lot of likes, you'll see how popular you are

Documented by Harvey et al. (2013), the relationship between likes and ratings is becoming increasingly established. They argue (2013, p.9) 'value can be acquired and exchanged through the production, tagging and circulation of images, and is negotiated through comments, 'likes' and offline discussion'. Van Dijck (2013, p.13) continues the argument by noting that 'the choice for a "like" button betrays an ideological predilection: it favours instant, gut-fired, emotional, positive evaluations. Popularity as a coded concept thus not only becomes quantifiable but also

manipulable.’ My understanding here is that discourses around the *visibility* of the versions of masculinity performed with the knowledge that the enactment is potentially, indeed perhaps hopefully, noticed by known and unknown audiences. Discourses around the performance of popularity via a ‘like’ button were present amongst boys of all year groups and was most easily accessible via mobile phones. Expectation of what a ‘good’ number of likes was increased, as anticipated, with the number of friends. A year ten boy still surprised me, however, by explaining how:

Emre: Likes really do matter to me because if my picture got like twenty likes an hour, in the first hour, I’d think something was really wrong with my picture, that’s way too low

Quantitatively, the number of ‘likes’ a Facebook post or Instagram picture receives validates whether the online performance will remain visible over time. Mapped against the concept of persistence in Boyd’s (2007, p.126) framework, we see that those posts with insufficient likes are not chronicled for the future. In terms of the use of technology, some students, if they anticipate they may achieve a low amount of likes, may label the particular status update, picture or video with the caption ‘soon delete’; sometimes, but not always, presented as a hashtag (i.e. #soondelete). Demonstrating what is arguably a form of vulnerability as a performance of masculinity, a year ten student explains what ‘soondelete’ is to them:

Michael: It’s a caption with the photo.... they’re basically saying ‘ah, I don’t really like this photo, I’m going to delete it soon’ but if they get like a lot of likes they’ll leave it up.

The only exception to the removal of a less than popular post came when certain posts were placed publicly for a predetermined person to see. In that case, if somebody likes a post, and it was only that person who was the intended audience, then the post would remain. Moreover, Bouvier (2012, p.41) argues that ‘what as yet remains to be more fully explored and documented are some of the more precise ways that users do present themselves for specific groups of others’ and the need to investigate student discourses with regard to the maintenance of their public performances is strong.

Cyber Bullying

Boyd’s (2007, p.126) concepts of *searchability* and *persistence* help us to frame the argument that student’s behaviour online has changed due to the fact that penalties have been put in place,

including external exclusions. Whilst Marwick & boyd (2011, p.1) have claimed that ‘networked dynamics reconfigure how drama plays out’, students are connected through mediums including ‘likes’, ‘friends’ and ‘indirects’ all of which can be seen as contributed to ‘drama’. Wassdorp et al. (2015, p.487) go further in noting how ‘research shows that when the cyberbullying message is public (e.g., posted on a social media site for many to see), it is more emotionally damaging than cyberbullying that occurs privately (e.g., texts or e-mails). Where we consider cyber bullying as incorporating both intimidation and humiliation from known and unknown sources, the following example illustrates that often the performance online is designed not only to cause distress, but also to influence other’s opinions of the bully’s online identity:

Olu: I’ve been in a group where there was bullying... there was these two people an they kept arguing non-stop, both boys... we told them to bless it out so they stopped as it was going too far... they were saying ‘I want to beat you up, I want to shank you’... but they were trying to get attention from other people so that people can know that they’re bad.

Underlying the case in point is the technology enabling the students to constantly respond to each to other. The school in question deems the following categories as instances of cyber-bullying: Text message bullying, Picture/video clip bullying, Phone call bullying, E-mail bullying, Bullying through instant messaging & Bullying via websites. Indeed, if one student has been externally excluded for cyber bullying, the cohort is immediately aware and their performance online in bullying others is normalized via the understanding that evidence produced might be used against them. Ringrose & Renold (2010, p.591) argue that the effects of the bully discourses often led to ‘demands for an explicit recouping of gendered norms of behaviour; for boys to be heroically and ‘playfully’ violent and for girls to be repressively and secretly ‘mean’’. Via mobile phone and social networking sites, there is no need for the boys to go home and sit at their laptops. Nor, indeed, do they need to wait until they get home in order to respond to the latest post. The rate of escalation for the bullying is therefore magnified by the fact that the boys access their social media profiles via their hand-held devices.

Placing the risk of cyber bullying at the forefront of policy creation can ignore the pleasurable aspects of young people’s engagements. However, the risks cannot be overestimated even if the majority of cases do not end up going off-line. One case in point illustrates how by year ten, the boys had a wisdom to spot the cyber bullying that was of no real consequence:

Simba: Most of the time it’s just stopped before it comes to anything, it will just be like ranting, words

Jerrell: Yeah, everyone just looks at it like ‘it’s happened online, why are you bringing it into school?’ kind of thing.

Denzel: Yeah, it’s cyberbeef

All: Laughter

Jerrell: I’ve never heard that word before!

Simba: We’d say it was moist, the situation would just be moist, they should just leave it

Jerrell: Like, if you’re going to say something, just do it, don’t be talking

The younger years, year eight in particular, had greater concern with the presence of sexually explicit images and whether any response would constitute cyber bullying. Whilst they were clear that additional involvement by commenting on posts fanned the flames of the bullying, they also understood that posting something against someone else’s will formed an aspect of cyber bullying. For example, one boy explained:

Olu: Comments make it cyber bullying... let’s say you’re having an argument and put something bad about someone and they don’t want you to post it, that’s cyber bullying.

In the same group, when the next boy was asked if they had seen any cyber bullying, the student nervously responded:

Montel: Probably seen it, images, really bad images... or nude photos with bad comments ... and if they’re popular it could put their rating down...

Understood as an explanation for if a nude picture of a person was circulated, that person’s popularity would decrease, this quote can be used to argue that the boys’ interpretation of the dangers of cyberbullying centre on ratings and status rather than mental or physical well-being. Salter & Croft (2015, p.1) argue that ‘the paradox is that minors who engage in such activity appear to be criminalized in arguably inappropriate ways by child pornography statutes while adult perpetrators have been, at least until recently, almost immune from legal sanction’. The accessing of age inappropriate material is explored further in the fourth section of this chapter on Gender.

Conclusion

Via reconstructions of the histories of individual microsystems, Van Dijck (2013, p.175) distilled a process of *normalization* describing how ‘certain meanings of “sharing”, “friending”, “liking”, “trending”, and “following” managed to gain a dominant meaning’. She argues that the ‘culture of

connectivity' has 'manifested itself in the intense negotiations among platform operators and users over the meaning of online sociality and creativity'. Indeed, Gerlitz & Helmond (2013, p.1348) summarise a specific *process* (of which there are many) by noting now 'Facebook's Like buttons enable multiple data flows between various actors, contributing to a simultaneous de- and re-centralization of the web'. With regard to the boys' experiences of mobiles phones, I have shown that the physical devices transform the ability of these boys to connect within peer and non-peer group cultures.

COMMUNITY

DEFINED SOCIOLOGICALLY, the term ‘community’ can mean a collection of people in a geographical area (for example surrounding a secondary school), a collection of people within a specific social structure (for example parents / carers of students in a school), or, without given physicality, a sense of belonging or mutual togetherness. Indeed, McQueen et al (2001, p.1929) define community as ‘a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings’. Regularly used as a ‘catch all’ term, the phrase ‘school community’ can include any individual or group who has had interaction with the school. I define this deliberately in the widest sense possible so that past students of the institution, future students from feeder primary schools, local shops and businesses as well members of the public (for example church groups) who hire the school building at weekends are also included. With specific regard to adolescent boys and their mobile phones, community comes often not from the physical interactions at the tangible site but through the social networking sites accessed primarily through their devices. Whether initially thought of via traditional media outlets (not exclusively television and radio) the culture of endemic mobile phone use challenges boys to identify with, and negotiate around, new formations of online masculinities such as courage, independence and assertiveness. Siibak (2010, p.419) argues that the ‘new media environment does encourage expression of alternative masculinities and eliminate the need for purely stereotypical masculine self-presentations’ whilst Bouvier (2012, p.44) continues that ‘there is also a debate around the extent to which there is... no essential identity but rather one that is in flux’.

Linked in part to offline friends via schools and sporting clubs, specific social networks are also often linked to certain trusted family members but have the capacity to establish networks within local, national and international communities without the need for establishing an in-person relationship first or, indeed, ever. Knowing no geographical barriers to connections, the boys who took part in the research demonstrated unique and surprising associations, creating their own version of community. This subsection of Chapter Four explores, thematically, primary to secondary transition, the role of parents and siblings, schooling as an institution, student engagement with teaching and support staff employed, violence (both online and offline) and finishes with a discussion surrounding offline societal links.

Transition

Passage from primary to secondary school marked a significant milestone in the social development of all participants interviewed. Every student questioned had gained access to a mobile phone

before they reached the end of year seven at secondary school when they were 12 or 13. In the majority of cases, social media use predated the independent ownership of a mobile phone. Typically, a response started along the lines of:

Arda: Ok so I got Facebook firstly around year six, when I was eleven... I got it because everyone was transitioning from MSN to Facebook and I got it for that reason... it seems quite appealing because you could play games, share your scores online and I'd like the feeling at that age

DF: So when you had it the first time how old did you say you were?

Arda: I said I was born in 1984.

Biologically below an age where they are 'allowed' to create a Facebook profile and therefore are *allowed* to participate in that specific online community, the quote illustrates the ease at which students can navigate the published criteria for initially creating a profile. Indeed, the boys make reference to George Orwell's seminal dystopian novel mapping omnipresent surveillance which, in itself, demonstrates both humour and an almost challenging approach to the surveillance of Facebook. The process of social media creation and therefore access on online social networking communities appears to have been, in the majority of cases, without parent or carer involvement. Mobile phones, on the other hand, incurring a financial start up cost for want of a better turn of phrase, had parental engagement from the outset.

Feeder primary schools adopted different approaches to mobile phones ownership on site with one student explaining:

Fabian: We got envelopes where we put our phones... we used to have a tray and put all of our phones in and one time this guy took my friend's phone and he went to the toilet with it and started going through it and then he took it home... the person's dad had to come in to get the phone after they called him.

Whilst the system described works in principle for a small school where there are, say, less than 60 students per year, the model is impractical for an institution that has 180 students in each year group. Whilst impossible to extrapolate from a single case study, it would be naïve to think that opportunistic theft is purely the preserve of hardened adult criminals. Had the incident above happened for a year nine boy's phone, for example, there could well have been a physical altercation. Moreover, some local primary schools did not appear to have a policy with regard to whether students could, or could not, bring them onto site. One student explained how, after being given a phone at age eight years old, that:

Emre: There wasn't a policy against it so I thought I might as well bring it into school"

DF: Ok, and what did you use the phone for?

Emre: Well it was 'simless' so I just used it for music and...

DF: So you couldn't make any calls?

Emre: It was just the satisfaction of having a phone!

Demonstrating that mobile phone desirability can be centred on the aesthetic and performative aspects of the technology to a peer *community* rather than the ability to actually make a call, the above example reveals exactly how early mobile phones become an essential (for example with regard to status or popularity) rather than a luxury item. That being said, once cellular and data capacities were enabled, the phones were used for the intended purpose by parents of communicating with parents. One articulate year eleven boy explained how:

Riyadh: I got my first phone when I was in year six... the main purpose I got it for was because I started to go to school by myself so my mum was worried that, she wanted to be able to contact me in emergencies and to text me, to see if I'm home, and that's the same name now

Daily liaison with parents or carers was commonplace and often cited as the primary reason for receiving an initial mobile phone whilst the boys were at primary school. Although the medium of communication changed from text message to WhatsApp, there exists a tension nonetheless between parents' safety concerns, school surveillance (or the potential abdication of duty of surveillance via a mobile phone ban), control issues exercised by the phone owner themselves and the peer group interactions forming the bounded terrain in which social networking sites are built on. It can be argued that whilst there is a temporal overlap, the *needs* of the parents / carer are distinct requirements from the needs of the school (exercised by the teachers) and distinct again from the adolescent boys themselves requiring persistent reflection, negotiation and potential action in both the online and offline spheres.

Family Members' relationship with the Boys' Phones

As the primary provider of mobile phones to the boys in this research, parents and carers have a unique role in providing both financial and developmental support with regard to emerging technologies. Viewed alongside the interdependent relationship between a parent's own mobile phone and that of their children, technology has the potential to reinforce existing relationships and dynamics between parents and carers and their sons. The dichotomy appears, however, that

in spite of the backdrop of the school, the risks associated with carrying valuable technology were obvious. One teacher noted how:

JZ: We had a year eleven boy who lost his phone last week, and that was a six-hundred-pound phone when he was declared homeless three years ago

Illustrating the disconnect between parent / carer income and the financial expense some families chose to associate with a mobile phone for their son, the example serves to demonstrate both the importance of maintaining a technological performativity associated with current trends as well as the carelessness of youth. Systems for monitoring therefore had two main objectives – the first was to ensure the boys were operating within agreed financial parameters whilst the second focused on issues concerned with safety including sexting, cyberbullying and safe use of the internet (avoiding potentially age inappropriate material). Whilst Ringrose et al (2013, p.307) argue ‘penal and pedagogic responses to ‘sexting’ are particularly aged and gendered’ there appears to be no evidence to show this is inherited through a single gender parent – adolescent relationship.

The relationship between a parent or carer’s social media profile and that of their son is also complicated. One articulate year ten boy noted:

Denzel: I follow my mum on Instagram, to see what she’s doing, but I don’t let her follow me back
DF: Did you have that conversation with her?
Denzel: All the time! She’s like ‘when are you going to follow me back?’
DF: What do you say?
Denzel: I say ‘maybe at Christmas’.

The stalling tactic reveals that the boy in question maintains the relationship from a position of strength, as if it was *he* who had provided the mobile phone in the first place. The relationship is complicated as the device is provided by the family but the social connections navigated through the mobile device are led by the boy. Referenced against boyd’s axioms, it could be argued that the *persistence* of some of the posts from the boys’ social networking sites are preventing the boys from being as transparent as the parents in this case. Indeed, it can be argued that because historic posts are both persistent and searchable, perhaps questionable posts will forever prevent some boys from opening up access to their family members. Given that these boys have grown up immersed in digital technology, it is no surprise that they have developed interactions which have the potential to subvert tradition parent / child boundaries. Exemplifying shifting power dynamics between boys and their parents / carers, social networking sites accessed via mobile can be seen to empower

boys and disempower parents / carers through the boys operating surveillance mechanisms over their parent's usage whilst preventing reciprocal monitoring process as exemplified by the example above. What is perhaps interesting is the repeated dialogue which, in this case above at least, shows no signs of altering the flow of information from child to parent. The banter between parent and child goes some way, however, in highlighting how enjoyable the use of social media can be when there is constructive dialogue based on trust. Location based micro-blogging features of sites such as Facebook have enabled parents to confirm the location of their children when they log in and post their location. Boys therefore navigate their individual privacy settings in complex ways by agreeing to initial social networking connections, performing their location (by, perhaps, 'checking in') as well as allowing their performance to be published within specific networks. Both potential and actual distribution of online photos can therefore be seen to be shared with a far larger audience when compared to offline, printed photographs (c.f. boyd's Spreadability).

Notwithstanding parent / carer control, additional family members played a significant role in the procurement and maintenance of both mobile phones and social media profiles. Specifically, family members often legitimized the creation of Facebook profiles before the official published age (13). Facebook, once a user profile is created, can be used to connect to other 'friends', send individual and group messages for free, post status updates and share photos, videos, games as well as receive notifications when other linked users update their profiles. Through its universal desirability and endemic coverage, the platform can be seen to provide a cornerstone of online interactions through an established community. One Y8 boy, who started using Facebook when he was in Y6 by noting on the application that his age was 21, felt that he wasn't lying as every person in his Y6 class had Facebook which excused his deception. He explained:

Fabian: I was like ten but my sister made it for me so I could keep in touch with my family... she's 30 now.

The sister in the case above was 17 years older and, from the boy's position at least, was ensuring that expectation on use remained clear. Useful conceptually at this point to differentiate between the social networking sites referenced, the sociological functions can be seen to affect the participant's usage. With regard to the example above, Instagram can be seen to be correlated to those users who spend more time on social media sites, not just Facebook. Indicating that associations are differentiated by individual, the examples goes some way to reinforce the assumption that Facebook has permeated all age groups whereas Instagram and Snapchat are still the preserve of the young, although generalisations here are limited by the scope of my study.

Sibling popularity had a direct impact on the popularity of the younger relative. One year eight boy, who was popular in his own right, summarised that:

Sahib: I know a lot of people because of my brother, he's like three years older, and he goes to parties, so I get known through him, so some people just add me but sometimes I just meet people

Exemplifying attendance at a party as a marker of popularity, the boy notes that his older sibling's popularity can be transferred, at least in part, onto his own rating. Sibling influence can be seen, therefore, to reflect student 'ratings' in both offline (at school) and online (via social networking sites) spheres directly, although each sibling case is necessarily distinct. Ringrose & Harvey (2015, p.214) claim that conversations around ratings are highly gendered arguing that, sexual negotiations are 'complex, networked rationalities through which digital images materialize gender differences'. Single gender sibling relationships (e.g. brother to brother) complicate interactions by simultaneously providing an opportunity for increased *trust* yet transforming relationship which is not, by its very nature, sexual.

Ethnicity

Youdell (2010, p.11) has argued in her research that 'it appears that Black boys' status is inscribed through their almost universal desirability'. Evidence gathered suggests partial support for Youdell's assertion. Following a discussion with a year ten focus group around who could get the highest number of likes in the shortest time, the boys noted:

Jerrell: There's Rodney in our year...

Simba: He has like 3k

Jerrell: Whenever he posts anything even if it's 'going to school today' he'll get minimum a hundred likes

DF: Ok, why?

Simba: There's a term we use; it's called 'loaf'... like 'you loaf him'

Denzel: "yeah, someone who follows someone, like a 'beg friend'

Whilst the Black boy under question is a good friend of the group being interviewed, there was an honest acceptance that he holds a desirability that these boys do not own. The group in question, where three or the four boys would self-define as Black with another as Turkish, were all academically successful as evidenced through their position in the top sets for curriculum areas which set by ability (for example mathematics and science). In an institution where underachievement by any ethnic group was not statistically significant, it wasn't possible to explore

ethnic desirability given the sample size involved. Moreover, through a strategy sampling only boys, the desirability of either a particular individual or group of individuals might not, necessarily, have been a topic of choice especially given the methodology whereby the boys were in focus groups of their peers.

In contrast to Youdell's (2010, p.5) synthesis that the notion of institutional racism 'offers important insights into how African-Caribbean students can attend schools which appear to have developed and be implementing equal opportunities policies and still be significantly *more* likely to be excluded (suspended or expelled) and *less* likely to attain benchmark educational outcomes than their counterparts from other racial or ethnic groups', no evidence was found that this was present at the school. Indeed, there was no suggestion that either internal or external exclusion from school was reported via social networking sites from any of the focus groups. Perhaps due to the intake of the school where groups who could perhaps be seen as *minority* ethnic in certain work places (for example the police force) were in the majority as part of this school community, it can be argued that social media created additional opportunities for the boys to define themselves out of racialised low-achieving adolescent male discourses. Indeed, the presence of male middle and senior leaders who would describe themselves as either Black or Minority Ethnic was highlighted, as a contributing factor to high expectations of all boys. Culturally, with such a large number of boys who would define themselves as children of immigrants, the high expectations placed upon their shoulders ensured that complacency and underachievement did not follow the national picture. Indeed, when discussing how the boys felt they were fitted in to the national picture, one year nine group explored how:

Arda: I think as a group we're quite different from the stereotypical boys here... for example after the election I was angry

Zeno: I finished reading the communist manifesto

DF: That makes you different how?

Arda: The norm seems to be macho, about rap

Pawel: We listen to chill music, like chill out.

Indicating that diversity may actually be seen as strength at school, the example goes some way to demonstrate a child-centred institution where debate and variety help rather than impede identity creation. Whilst Allen (2015, p.212) argues that 'Black students... may resist the behaviours needed to be academically successful in school such as studying in the library, participating actively in class or doing homework', these non-Black students (by self-definition) articulate a version of masculinity where academic excellence is revered (via reading complex literature). Critiquing potential macho norms of masculinity in school, the ability to differentiate themselves from the

perceived (or actual) hegemonic norms allows this particular group of boys in particular to navigate alternative versions of masculinity by creating their own set of ratings. By further differentiating their taste in musical genres, these boys are performing a sophisticated aspect of masculinity placing their own musical taste in 'chill out' above those who listen to 'rap'.

School Staff Professionalism in relation to Social Media

Increased ownership of mobile phones challenges institutions such as schools to re-write policy in order to incorporate a nuanced understanding of students' lives with phones. Staff, both teaching and non-teaching, must protect themselves in an age of social media where students have access to information that can shake up power relations and relationships of control between staff and students. Applied to both student and staff social network usage, Heirman et al.'s (2016, p.1120) synthesis that 'random friendship acceptance clearly poses a threat to internet users' online safety in general and specifically to the state of their online privacy' challenges to schools to ensure that students (independently), staff (independently) and the tension between staff and student profiles are navigated professionally.

On first joining the school new staff receive induction to facilities, including networks, e-mail and intranets. Staff and students are presented with a 'code of conduct' to which they must adhere with regard to E-learning and Anti-Cyber Bullying although instances have occurred demonstrating a potential disconnect between policy and practice. For example, one member of staff found her mobile phone number compromised in the sense that older students were able to identify it and distribute it (via Facebook and text message) after she had given it to a student who attends her church group. A different member of staff was placed in a difficult position after photos were found and circulated of his time at university where, for a fancy dress party, he, as a white man, 'blacked himself up' to become a member of the 'Cool Runnings' bobsleigh team. Bridging the two examples is what we can define as the staff negotiation of their own risk. Reflection on school policy by senior leaders and the application of that policy by all educators is therefore of critical importance when considering the maintenance of professional standard. Staff responsibility to protect their own professionalism is now, as I expect in most schools, a standing item for new staff induction in the September professional learning and development days before term starts. As one student explained:

Mehmet: I've tried to get onto your Facebook
DF: Mine?
Mehmet: The security is really high
Tariq: He's an anti-paedo, an opposite of a paedo!
All: Laughter.

With relation to discourses surrounding teachers and social media use, the fact that the students *knew* me, and had for the best part of five years, potentially serves to justify my methodological choices in setting up this project. Describing a complex relationship perhaps justifying my methodological standpoint, it appears the boys are interpolating my position and affiliation with them through a discourse concerned with fear of potential adult abuse of power. That being said, it is *their* establishment of my position as an adult who could protect them which raises questions as to whether my masculinity contributes to the defence of the youth under my (then) care. It remains impossible to hypothesize accurately whether this particular group of students might have given a similar response to an interviewer who was not part of the institution's community. The example does demonstrate, however, how boyd's Searchability axiom applies to staff as well as students. Whilst risk to my professional reputation was real and cannot be underestimated, even this conversation ended with laughter.

Contentiously, an issue involving teaching staff searching students for mobile phones whilst they were on site appeared a number of times in discussions with both students and staff. One member of staff, when referring to receiving information that there was an increase in mobile use at the bus stop, explained:

BN: We go around with my little red box, me and the behaviour team, usually about three or four of us... everybody's bags are on the table and emptied, and then we go around and check one by one...

With clear references to both Foucauldian surveillance boyd's axiom of visibility, the time consuming albeit sensitively handled practice happens at least once a half term for each group in the school. The member of staff continued:

BN: The children are getting really good at hiding them... for example in their shoe, down the side of their socks, the girls tend to do it in the waistband or in the bra

Student to teacher relationships are somewhat strained by the process but, conversely, there are those students willing to indicate, in private at least, where the latest hiding places are, whether that be a box by the window sill or the far riskier strategy of hiding a phone in a folder on the desk. During one 'sweep', the above member of staff once confiscated 29 mobile phones. For each of those students, without exception, a parent or carer would need to pick up the phone personally. The system is understood by all and, perhaps as recognition that the phones are always returned safely, no member of staff has ever had a student refuse to hand over the phone once identified.

External exclusion, for this issue at least, appears to be an efficient deterrent with echoes of Foucault's (1979) synopsis that schools serve similar social functions as prisons in that they control and regulate people. Sociologically, both the mobile phone ban as policy and the practice of random searches places teachers in effect as a prison guard, moving well beyond the enabling of learning through quality first teaching. The implications of such a change in professionalism of educators in schools raise questions relating to how schools lead their non-teaching staff (in this case a Behaviour Mentor who is also a Head of Year) to support the students, the teaching staff, the leadership and the wider community. This example marks a sociological watershed whereby the staff have moved from a culture of surveillance to one whereby the exercise performed in public in front of students, staff and ultimately parents and carers by insisting that mobile phones are collected by a responsible adult. As discussed previously, the boys have responded to the movement from passive to active surveillance by creatively concealing their phones and using them strategically so as not to get caught.

Peer Group Banter

Mobile phones, through their almost instantaneous processing speed accessing either a cellular or data network, have afforded social media applications the opportunity to run programs as if they were top-of-the-range laptops. Indeed, Bouvier (2012, p.57) argues that 'new genres of communication can bring the possibilities of new forms of communicative activities and new forms of interaction' with one of the most interesting developments surrounding the creation, maintenance and saturation of 'groups' within either application such as Facebook or via specific programs designed to cater for clusters of users such as WhatsApp. Long gone are the days when I used to pay 20 pence per text message in 1999. In today's world, text, picture, video and voicemail exchange can be sent for free even without a contracted mobile phone package. One year eight group describes, when asked how often they post in group chats, that:

Nelson: Everyday, like he sent me a voicemail today... him and *** send most voicemails cos they're jokes...

Sahib: That was that one, it went like 'one day, me and Jeremy, we had two girls, one was called sweetcorn and one was called pepperoni'

All: Laughter.

Recording and sending a voice-note appears to be, for this particular group at least, the preferred method of communicating any message longer than ten words, accessed via the microphone present in all mobile phones. Having observed the group message chat, humour plays a large part in the interaction for this mixed gender construct. Zappavigna (2012, p.152) argues that 'humour

in social media is a subarea of internet humour research in which there has been little work to date' and the boys who took part in this research project undoubtedly used humour far more than I had expected. Related to offline 'banter' and 'lad culture', the use of humour is seen as a desirable form of masculinity, not just to impress girls. Indeed, Reid (2015, p.24) found that 'interactions of humour and laughter enable peers to address their differences (and a wider context of prejudice and racism) lightly to address serious subjects playfully and so to 'make fun out of' what could potentially divide and distance them". Data gathered from this research project argues that humour permeates the lives of the boys involved to the extent that the work of both Boyd and Frosh et al require a fundamental theoretical update. Indeed, Kehily and Nayak (1997, p.69) argued ten years ago that 'humour is a technique utilised for the regulation of masculinities and the negotiation of gender-sexual hierarchies within pupil cultures' and it is partially through mobile usage that humour has been transformed and brought online.

Gaming was widely discussed as part of the performance of masculinity, as an area both enjoyed personally as well as performed publicly, reinforced potential pigeonholes that one might expect when considering boys' use of their personal mobile phones. Indeed, even the types ('adventure', 'drifting', 'role-play') and names ('Clash of Clans', 'Bad Piggies') of applications accessed had the potential to repeat clumsy gender assumptions. Boys' self-presentation via games accessed through mobile phones (for example through swearing online when they wouldn't offline) can be seen to transform discourses around use of prohibited language, potentially altering the perception of masculinities. Discussed as a key aspect of gender and online performance, Valerie Walkerdine's (2007, p.30) work on gender and video-games notes how 'masculinity is multiple, produced in multiple sites and requiring different and contradictory performances' and there exists a clear relationship between the performance of multiple masculinities on social networking sites and their performances via video games, both of which have the potential to be accessed via mobile phones.

Social media allows the creation of sub-groups which profoundly disrupts traditional offline hierarchies found in school. When asked about participation within group messaging, one year eight group discussed how:

Sahib: I'm in like five groups... one group is like for (name of school), and that's boys and girls, there's like 13 people, just year eight... then there's football squad... I'm in a tmg group, take man's girl... I'm in another football group... I'm in market road group like football tournaments on Fridays

DF: Ok, tell me a bit more about tmg?

Sahib: There are a lot of boys in that group, people from different schools, like maybe 40, some girls but mostly boys.

The 'tmg' group was not single gender but undoubtedly centred on young men and their 'girlfriends', a term that meant different things to different participants. Manago's (2013, p.479) conclusion that 'because masculinity is often defined in contrast and as superior to femininity... men's sexual online displays provide an opportunity to explore shifts in gender and power that are connected to new forms of self-representation in technologically mediated social interactions in Western societies'. Aside from the sociological construct whereby a girl could be 'taken' as if she was a possession, the 'tmg' label also implies, through the word 'take', a change in 'ownership' without consent from either the girl or the initial boy. Salter & Croft (2015, p.11) argue that 'as digital and online technology is integrated into social and sexual life, it can operate as a new medium for the reproduction and intensification of relational and gendered coercion'. Jackson (2010b, p.47) argues that 'the performances required to "fit in" are gendered... fear of not fitting in frequently leads to the reinforcement of normative gendered ways of being, thereby reinforcing inequalities of power and status'. Camaraderie as a performance of masculinity within and across the groups was overwhelming positive and supportive. However, heteronormative performances were reinforced via the focus groups with the boys who took part in the 'tmg' group chat.

Group messaging appeared to be heavily influenced by cohort and maturity level. A tension exists here between the gendered performances of the younger boys and those three years older. Noting Sweeny's (2009, p.201) conclusion that 'technologies... challenge notions of authenticity, authorship and authority', the use of group technology to present oneself varied decidedly with age and whether the groups were single gender. For example, the year elevens did enforce a single gender group and their online performances were markedly different compared to when girls were present in the group, if not necessarily observing every comment. They explained:

- Oliver: In the boys one there is more dissing, more banter between us, I wouldn't say personal banter but if I was to cuss S, I'd say something to him but if we were in a group together with girls I wouldn't know who he's trying to impress or not, I wouldn't make myself look better in that group chat
- DF: Can you give me an example of something you'd say in either group?
- Oliver: For example if I was say 'you stink' or you smelt today or something like that but I wouldn't say that in the group with girls, cos then they'd think 'he's a stinky boy'.

Demonstrating a peer group loyalty and integrity, the example highlights how the group chat mirrors what I understand to be 'playground' joking around amongst friends in the sense that the presence of girls heightens awareness of the boys' language around one another. McGee & Pearman (2015, p.536) suggest in their study that 'culturally grounded competition might resemble

what our participants described as playful bantering to solve a problem the fastest or explaining the answer the quickest' but develop their argument to note 'after a few moments of enjoying victory, the triumphant student aides whoever who may be struggling' suggesting that banter reinforces positive offline peer group relationships.

Boys' experiences of presenting themselves via social media accessed primarily through their mobile phones allowed them to perform aspects of their identity in a variety of ways. When considering the opportunities presented via established applications such as Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter, the interactions between the accounts as well as between their online and offline personas illuminate a complex web of identities based on humour, possession of girls (e.g. 'tmg') and navigating of unsuitable (but easily accessed) material navigated on an hourly basis. Mikami et al. (2010, p.46) argue that during adolescence 'peer interactions arguably hold the greatest importance for individuals' social and behavioural functioning' with parent and peer contact dominated discussions for these boys, more so than traditionally explored privacy controls. As a masculine performance, economic aspects of independence (for example not carrying your mum's phone around) appear critical to all groups as a movement away not just from a potential background of poverty but also as a marker of when to engage with off line peer groups.

Likes within Peer Groups

Boys were acutely aware of the need to manage their own online profile so that they did not present associations with individuals known to be gang members. Expected performances that included bandanas, knives and hoodies were immediate 'no-go' areas for the boys (further detail on context and how this situation operates can be found in the subsequent 'Violence' subsection). The major concern, however, was managing parent and carer expectations. As one year ten group described:

Simba: They will start making assumptions and I just can't be ready for that, like that talk

Denzel: There's some guys, some of them are like currently at our school, they're not really gang members, they're actually nice people, they just associate with them... like I won't make friends with a guy that's shot a guy, like the real deal, but people around them.

The example underlines the need for robust safeguarding measures currently in place within the school given the ease at which the last student casually mentions that he has met someone directly who has shot someone else. At this point in the research it was necessary to inform the students,

in line with safeguarding procedures, that I would need to pass the information on. Complicated further by relaxed privacy controls on social networking sites, the group went on to debate how:

- Ebrahim: It's better to have 50 likes from strangers than 20 likes from friends
- Denzel: Like the thing is, if all my friends, like my close friends, liked one of my pictures, I would rather prefer 50 strangers liking my picture because they don't know me, so the picture must be banging they took time out to like my picture even though they don't know me.

From the boys' perspective, therefore, the management of a particular social media profile is married closely to the prohibition of accepting, or being seen to accept, likes and friendships requests from individuals deemed unsuitable for parental surveillance. Page (2012, p.181) argues that 'practices of self-branding and micro-celebrity operate on a continuum which reflects and reinforces the social and economic hierarchies which exist in offline contexts' going on to explain how 'construction of identity' becomes a 'product to be consumed by others'. What is interesting here is the boys view a significant presence in 'wider' circles as more important than ratings within immediate physical neighbourhoods. Potentially handling followers as an accumulated supporter base, the boys intentionally develop and maintain their base as a performance of masculinity. There appears, moreover, to be a disconnect between gaining likes through sites such as Facebook where, it is assumed, a larger majority of the audience are known, either offline or through friends of friends, when compared to picture posting sites such as Instagram.

Outside of the school's localized community, the boys access violent material via the data connection supported by their mobile phones. Aside from responses concerning film or anime (Japanese cartoons, either hand drawn or compute generated), the examples offered up by the focus groups were clearly unsuitable viewing for boys so young. One year ten group explained how:

- Denzel: I watched one yesterday, it was a woman... I think she, I don't know, um, it said that she touched her daughter in some way, so then another woman got up in MacDonald's and started to beat up the mother and got the daughter to beat up the mother too.

Watched for humour, the group held an extended debate as to whether watching clips such as the one outlined differentiated the viewer from the filmmaker who created the movie on a mobile phone. The discussion, tellingly, moved onto the 'report' functionality where the boys noted:

- Ebrahim: So basically if you find something, that's, like, inappropriate, report it, they'll ask you for a reason, you can tell the person to remove it
- Jerrell: Honestly now, did you report it?
- Denzel: No.

It seems that not only was this example not reported, but also that only one member of the group had ever reported anything back to the application's owners. Indeed, the boys seemed even less likely to report something of concern even when compared to their hesitation around liking or commenting on material that made them feel uncomfortable. When asked how often they saw material that concerned them, the same boys responded with:

- Michael: Like, once a week?
- DF: Ok, and do you report these things?
- Michael: No, but, like, I need to see what's happening... cos it shows you the view count, like 25 million, and if there's a lot of views I want to see what's going on.

Referring to the previous discussed topic of surveillance, it appears that the fear of missing out is a greater motivation to watch material *they* don't think they should be watching when compared to any concern unsettling videos may pose.

Violence

In this section I understood *violence* as the intentional use of physical force, whether threatened or actual, violence permeates the boys' lives. Any criminal, or potentially criminal act, is first run by the school through the community police officer and through the established internal multi-disciplinary meetings where specific safeguarding concerns are analysed and action plans put in place for vulnerable students. With regard to social media (accessed via mobile phones), Page (2012, p.182) argues 'to be made searchable is at once narcissistic (enabling the self to be found by others, and gain an audience as a sign of status) and to become the subject of surveillance (scrutinized in the service of a third party's self-promotion)'. All students can therefore be seen to have a 'live action feed' where any violent incident has the potential to be broadcast immediately via social media. Mobile phones have fundamentally changed the way information is shared and violence, as a specific, accessible subject matter, illustrates this perfectly. A year nine focus group described how:

Arda: I remember there used to be fights almost every other week here and someone created a page called 'today's beef' where the 'beef' stands for fights, and it just used to post what happened in school

Zeno: Like a live-action news feed.

As an example highlighting the community from which the boys in this research project are drawn, in 2015 eleven of the 180 students on roll in year nine were educated off-site meaning that they do not visit the school and may never come back depending on their progress at various alternative provision centres. The sample for this thesis drew students who were attending the institution and therefore these students did not contribute to the research. Of those eleven, eight are boys and have been removed for a variety of reasons not limited to drugs (either bringing them on site or supplying), defiance to staff and fighting. Whilst these 'alternative provision' did not physically attend school every day, they maintained online connections with the students who did attend school as well as offline relationships through youth groups, sports clubs and living, by construction, in the same environment as the school due to admissions criteria for the school whereby priority is given to those families who live close to the physical school building.

Whilst this research is not histographical in nature, and therefore cannot explore whether behaviour at the school has changed, consideration can be given to how the boys' use of technology under investigation has changed during their lifetimes. Indeed, the technology available to the boys under investigation enabled what boyd defines as the Spreadability of data. In the focus group above, boys were tagged *into* the page mentioned and were often tagged multiple times as an entire friends list could be connected instantaneously. Describing how they have seen fights between boys and boys as well as between girls and girls, a year eight focus group evaluated that the impact of older students can have mixed consequences for the longevity of the cussing. When pressed on what the impact of older student involvement is online, they mentioned:

Fabian: Sometimes positive, sometimes negative... like they'll start cussing that person as well

Jakub: They will make the fight more intense, they'll be like 'beat her up for saying that'

Moving once again from a Foucauldian sense of surveillance to the point where additional actions (in this case insulting via social networking sites) are visible, the example can be read in many ways. Across boyd's axioms, there is an increased visibility as students are drawn to the event either through offline conversations or via the increased audiences caused by additional postings from previously silent members. Gerlitz & Helmond (2013, p.1360) note how, 'within the Like economy, data and numbers have performative and productive capacities... they can generate user

affects, enact more activities and thus multiply themselves' arguing that the *cyber* dimension intensifies both contact and audience. A sensitivity grows, therefore, around the searchability of the event as more potential audiences investigate the situation. It can be argued that the persistence of the event indicates either a greater chance of either being referred to at later date (for example by the school in establishing who wrote what) or, conversely, that posts may be deleted as they could prove incriminating to those who post threats. The Spreadability of the online posts, by their very construction and amplification through additional authors, serves to complete boyd's bounded terrain. What is not clear, however, is whether such practice is consistently replicated across all year groups or, indeed, what role (if any) gender plays in the performances. What is clear is that incitement to harm another child would be taken very seriously by the school had they been made aware which, in this case, it appears they hadn't.

Confrontations that I had assumed might have made it online hadn't, indicating that there existed a certain level of violence the community would not post direct material such as pictures or videos on. The most significant conflict I personally had to deal with involved three year eleven boys (not interviewed) who were involved in a physical quarrel with an adult male after school one day. The event involved significant weapon use (planks of wood, belts and bricks) and was an immediate 999 call once I was present. One year ten group discussed the fight and mentioned how:

- Arslan: Nothing of the actual physical fight was posted, just comments on the fight, so people were like 'did you see it' and others were like 'what fight?' and then they'll start a conversation, like 'inbox me, talk to me about this'
- Michael: But mostly I just messaged people about it I didn't update

Whilst a significant number of students who witnessed the fight had mobile phones in their possession, none chose to either film the incident or take pictures. The example also highlights how discussion of the event was swiftly moved from one public sphere (comments) to a semi-private realm within peer networks (direct and group messaging). This movement, when considered in contrast to the previous paragraph, argues that boys in year eight post freely with regard to violence but boys in year eleven move discussion away from the public gaze. Surveillance (and sousveillance) accessed via mobile phones can therefore be seen to transformed by age when considering online and offline actions in order to publicly acknowledge (or not) violence.

With regard to robbery, the boys detailed a variety of offline events primarily focused on their mobile phones. Aware anecdotally that boys could be targeted for their mobile phones whereby personal information could be gleaned or private photos pass into the wrong hands, the research detailed a typicality of stop-and-search by gangs of youths that was both alarming and simultaneously accepted by those researched. No evidence was found of boys using their mobile

phones as a protective device save for instances contacting parents and carers with regard to time leaving the school site or progress across long distances via public transport. Describing an attempted robbery, a year eight group detailed how:

- Fabian: Some people came from behind us, like two boys and three girls, and they were like ‘why are you walking so fast?’
- Jakub: And then we stopped, innit, cos it was me, him (Fabian) and his brother... they took his brother’s phone and then they gave it back to him
- All: Laughter.

Pressed on why the phone was returned, the boys explained how it was an iPhone three and therefore not worth anything to the robbers. The mixed gender group who stopped them didn’t appear unusual whereas my assumption until this point was that the majority of gangs were single (male) gender. For the event above, the boys noted how they managed to run to a relative’s home nearby, but not before one of the female members of the attacking group had recognized him from school and therefore encouraged the others to leave them alone. Harvey et al (2012, p.4) argue that ‘ratings’ can be understood to be a form of ‘gendered capital that could be exchanged for safety and movement’ around local areas potentially inhibited by gangs. Interviews from that research indicate that boys who travel through areas where they are not ‘known’ risk having their phone or other personal belongings taken. Whilst appearing initially to focus on the physical commodity of the mobile phone itself, a tension remains between the boys and how ‘known’ they are which can often be initiated and maintained through performances on social networking sites. Conceivable robbery was highly correlated to the geographical area the boys found themselves in. Given Harvey et al’s (2013, p.7) conclusion that ‘swagger’s potential as symbolic capital is highly situated’, I was wary about believing every story that the boys told, particularly in single gender peer groups (although this of course doesn’t mean it wasn’t real). However, the following example was triangulated through my experience at school and raised significant concerns relating to the violent exposure seen by the boys in the research outside of school. What started as a straightforward debate detailing where some year eight boys would, or wouldn’t get robbed, the debate lead to:

- Olu: If you go to an area your area has beef with, then you get robbed, cos they’ll know you’re from that area
- DF: So being known means you’re safer in some areas but at a greater risk in others?
- Olu: Yeah, around here people all know M’s brother... and MH and SH are bless but the worst I’ve seen is somebody get stabbed, that was Monday, last Monday... SH had beef with another gang and the gang must have come to SH and they

stabbed one of the boys, he was year ten, still, goes to GL... I was just there playing football

Demonstrating complex discourses focused on material realities shaping the content on mobile phones, issues around the physical context of violence and gangs continue to shape aspects of masculinity both at school and online. From a scholarly perspective, what might have appeared as a shocking narrative centred on knife crime did not come as a surprise to the remainder of the group although the group discussed how information of this nature was not communicated via mobile phones. The adjective to be 'known' did not appear to have a specific meaning (for example known for being 'good at football' or 'part of a gang') but was related to the boys' online social media presence. The incident above happened at midnight raising questions as to how or why the boy who witnessed the attack had permission to be out so late on a school night ostensibly playing football. For this boy in particular, however, it was not the first time he had seen somebody stabbed in the first person. He explained how:

- Olu: There was that party in my area on Friday and I was there and there was a fight and a boy got stabbed... he was at the party
- Sahib: You shouldn't have been at that party
- Olu: Some guy had beef with another guy at the party... and they got the baseball bats from the bins and bushes... they hide them there from before... one of the guys went to fight and he asked me for me belt to fight with but I said no
- Nelson: These people are crazy! We were all in the group chat and he just texts us 'I'm at a party down my estate' and he said 'I'm going, safe you lot' and then he came back late and didn't even reply.

Concerned both for their friend's attendance at the party and the lack of communication via the group chat accessed via their mobile phones specific language used, particularly the term 'safe', suggests that the author is reminding the audience to reduce risk and look after themselves. Following his salutation, there was no further update from the boy who attended. This lack of contact generated a concern on behalf of the group and supports the argument that that a critical aspect of peer group masculinity is concern for your friends. Witnessing the multiple stabbings at different events, the boy at the centre of attention spoke at length but summarized:

- Olu: We just want (London borough) to be a safer place for young children.

A separate discussion from the alternate year eight group, detailed how, after a 20-year-old brother was threatened with a knife because he didn't hand his phone away straight way, he didn't post online due to:

Jakub: Cos then say if your family sees it

Fabian: They'll know that you're weak, someone else will try and rob you.

Implying that the performances online have a direct correlation to future risk of robbery, the example raises questions as to whether online 'ratings' or 'swagger' (Harvey et al, 2013) are transferable between offline recognition and social networking sites profiles and postings. Conceptually it is useful here to consider that each male adolescent has a rating offline as well as online. A tension clearly exists between the two but it would be overly simplistic to say there is a proportional correlation. At times, popularity online does not *transfer* offline. For example, a student may have the same number of physical friends sitting with them at lunch as those involved in a group chat. Similarly, offline popularity may not necessarily increase a student's 'ratings' online. *Possession* of the online and offline rating simultaneously rests, however, with the same individual. The example further questions whether the system of 'ratings' is applicable only to teenagers with the implicit assumption that, at 20 years old, the parameters for recognizing an individual's 'rating' become less important as age increases.

In helping us understand the boys' actions with regard to violence, boyd's axioms provide a rich terrain useful in which to position my data. Critical incidences of the exercise of institutional power teach young people that they can, and do, get caught for misdemeanours but as sole preventive measure we cannot hope to prevent such cases in the future. Tellingly, one member of staff described how they were informed that a student at the school under investigation visited another school to have a fight in uniform. The student questioned denied involvement until a Snapchat video surfaced of the fight placing the student at the other school. Whilst not the first student to deny a misdemeanour until evidence is produced apportioning guilt, the student in question, it could be argued, felt that they sincerely had a chance of escaping justice save for the advent social media and boyd's concepts of *Searchability* and *Persistence*. Contrasting with the previously illustrated example whereby the fight was so severe that no images or videos were posted, the scrappy nature of the fight coupled with the brazenness in visiting a rival school ultimately lead to an exclusion for this boy who could deny his involvement no longer. The Principal of the school noted that:

CT: The Metropolitan Police are now saying that 80% of attacks on youngsters are for mobile phones.

Referenced against the commodity of mobile and the inherent economic value it contains, the example does not provide information relating to content (for example cyberbullying) and or online performance. There exists a tension navigated by both students and their parents / carers as to whether using a mobile phone in public (for example leaving school at 16:00 on a weekday broad daylight) either increases or decreases the risk of an individual being stopped by a potential assailant. Moreover, once a crime has been committed, McAlinden (2014, p.193) argues ‘The community... may have a much larger role in promoting victim and offender resilience than they are afforded at present’. Arguing that the public can play a constructive role in facilitating offender redemption as well as victim safety, the persistence of living within a community whereby your robber may be your next door neighbour or Facebook friend challenges these boys to navigate not just to what extent new friendships are formed but how existing connections are maintained or severed.

Offline Societal Links

In this section, I begin by noting how society maintains complex, multi-faceted relationships with new technology. Whether considering the influence of television in the riots in the Parisian suburbs in France in 2005 or the announcement on live television of the jury’s decision acquitting the four white police officers accused of assaulting the black Rodney King in Los Angeles in 1992, media sources access via evolving technology can often be held responsible for unrest in a simplistic and myopic manner. With regard to institutions such as my own, Buckingham (2007, p.75) argues that ‘if most schools have remained relatively unaffected by the advent of modern media technology, the same cannot be said of children’s lives outside school’ before going on to argue (p.75) that childhood is ‘in some respects, defined by the modern media’. Moncur et al (2016, p.126) continue with ‘online representations of self are increasingly kaleidoscopic... Performative representations of self are not necessarily truthful’ raising questions as to whether the mobile phone *ban* at school actively encourages students to normalise deceptive behaviours. In our case, the boys researched were acutely aware of the technical affordances which differentiated known networks (e.g. Facebook) as opposed to those profiles constructed with a degree of anonymity (e.g. Askfm) The creation of such systems may not intentionally be to provide a cover for bullying, but the masking of identity is a premeditated response in order to camouflage online activities.

Played out underneath the public performances seen by all, the boys steering of their own activities often came into contact with age-inappropriate material for example pornography, sites containing (often excessive) swearing as well as those which encourage vandalism, crime, eating disorders etc. Whilst Frosh et al’s (2002, p.19) influential summary stated that ‘boys’ voices, often heard only as threatening, can convey subtle, complex and contradictory narratives of growth’, the routing of

one's own profile around topics and themes they were not happy to engage in was fascinating. In a year ten group, the boys held a long conversation around the militant Islamic State currently occupying large sways of Iraq and Syria:

Arslan: The ISIS beheading video, I didn't even click on that, as soon as I saw it I just scrolled past... there was a Mexican cartel beheading and the thumbnail was literally a woman's head being cut off and it was absolutely horrible I just had to scroll past that too.

Christine Blower, then the general secretary for the National Union of Teachers noted (a year after my data was collected) in the Guardian on the 5th April 2016 that 'Evidence shows that grooming by extremist groups happens mainly on social media sites, not on school premises'. Situated against the government's Prevent strategy, designed to tackle to extremism, the Prevent policy itself can be conceptually described as variation of a panopticon system whereby students can be profiled via school surveillance. Arguing not only that the Prevent policy was ineffective, the radicalization of Muslim youths (in particular) lies increasingly outside the traditional power regime of schools, particularly those who enforce mobile phone bans and do not include effective e-safety as part of their personal, social and education education curricula. Indicating further that the 'scroll past' is a viable strategy for not watching a particular video, the impression left of seeing that the video *existed* was sufficient for the moment to be saved in their long-term memory and discussed at a later date. Demonstrating how these boys filter content in sophisticated ways, there is, perhaps, a curriculum issue raised for the school in preparing a pedagogical intervention to equip students when similar material is presented in the future. As Robert Payne (2013) theorizes with his concept of 'Virality 2.0' the current 'language of intimacy and generosity' attached to digital phenomena such as 'sharing', 'spreading' or 'participating' actually 'obscures the fact the content that spreads seemingly instantaneously and unchecked is not always safe, consciously shared, or actually deemed likeable by those who spread it' The opportunity for social media to create viral possibilities for violent and sensationalist content is not limited to religious radicalization but the school as a site of experimentation and peer learning can be engaged to reduce the risk to exposure to inappropriate material.

When considering an 'abuse' video, a boy in the same group as the paragraph above noted:

Emre: I've seen one video of a woman hitting her baby with a pillow, like, hard... to this day I still don't know why that comes up on my feed

DF: And it was called 'woman kicking baby' and you still chose to watch it?

Emre: Yeah but sometimes it has an option where if you look at the video it plays by itself if you just stay over the thumbnail for a period of time... it shows it without volume but if you click on it then there's volume, that's the only difference.

For those boys who had not changed the automatic 'play all' setting on Facebook (assuming they are aware of the functionality), for example, each video scrolled across started immediately and they were therefore far more likely to view in its entirety than at least the first few seconds. Settings within the social media applications present on mobile phones therefore play a significant part in whether or not the students will watch a specific video. Whilst the settings themselves cannot help boys deal with societal violence, it is the boys' navigation and filtering of online content enabled (or disabled) by security settings which allows (or blocks) their *witness* of such violence. How and why the boys filter content appears to be entirely based on the individual's preferences which is allowed to occur given the operation of social networking sites accessed via unregulated mobile phones. In an environment many boys entered as a safe space for gaming and connecting with family and friends before they even reached secondary school, it is more than problematic for such content to be delivered in secret, outside of the gaze of either school or home.

Conclusion

Through deliberations on primary transition, parenting, siblings, schooling, teachers and violence, this subsection of Chapter Four has painted the picture of a rich socially mediated terrain where the boys' mobile phones can both challenge existing community relationships as well reinforce others. Access to the curriculum appeared to be an area where both staff and students agreed mobile phone use had improved the educational provision in place. Whilst the provision in place is not referenced in any of the institution's policies, in practice staff have begun to navigate the ban by allowing visible mobile phone usage during Saturday and holiday interventions, as well as encouraging the downloading of specific applications to improve learning (e.g. mathswatchvle.com). Whether downloading mark-schemes for specific exam series without the print or enriching the material from board specifications, the devices were seen as a quick, cheap (often free) and efficient way of supplementing learning. Favero (2014, p.166) argues that 'with the spread of new technologies, the last decades have witnessed the growth of new image-making practices that are more attentive to context, social relations and materiality', and it is the latest generation of mobile phones that has led to an unprecedented production of images and the often unexpected consequences that puts the ownership and the right to distribution in the hands of adolescents.

PERFORMANCES OF MASCULINE HETEROSEXUALITY

EXOLORING POLICY and stereotypes regarding how the boys investigated regard similarities and differences between feminine and masculine discursive constructs centred on mobile phones, this subsection of Chapter Four examines how boys perform masculinity as ‘different’ to femininity and girlishness to proclaim superiority. Thematically presenting the data gathered in order to contribute to the discourses surrounding male adolescent use of mobile phones in 2016, sections on school policy on sex and cyber bullying, sexuality, sexualized cyber-bullying, sexual double standards, sexting, revenge porn and, finally, are included. Reflecting on the previously discussed themes of Technology and Community, this final subsection of Chapter Four shows the context specific gender *norms* of boys performing masculinity in this school.

School Policy on Sex and Cyber Bullying

Allowing students to report incidents of sexualized bullying directly remains critical. Many examples were given by staff and students related to pictures circulated and reported to senior staff following established routines. One typical example describes how:

Riyadh: I mean, generally, let’s say a person in school is getting bullied and you then went home and found a picture of that person all edited up and made to look different...

The example serves to help staff and school leaders begin to differentiate between bullying (in its widest sense), cyber bullying (online) and sexualized cyber bullying building on the literature in Chapter Three. Primarily conveyed by students who were not involved in the initial stages sharing of inappropriate material, the students who come forward to inform on their peers putting their own peer group relationships at risk. Complicated by websites such as ‘ask.fm’ where any students can ask, often anonymously, questions ranging from ‘do you like my hair’ to ‘how many boys have you slept with’, students are habitually surprised by bombastic and deeply offensive comments. Whilst a minority of students use their ‘street’ name and can be identified by the school community, most do not. The institutional system of taking a screen shot and printing out the specific offensive material is therefore not always effective in bringing the perpetrators to justice. At the most extreme level, community police have become involved and students given cautions for the behaviour.

Raising significant safeguarding concerns and reinforcing the need for practical recommendations embedded in all secondary schools to protect girls from potential coercion, an example was given by a member of staff describing how oral sex on a boy by a girl was performed and filmed. Illegal through a variety of disciplinary procedures for the boy, not least receiving a blow job from a

person under the age of 16, be filmed having it done and having the film distributed, the behaviour of the girl is comparably illegal. No data was gathered to suggest that the school had informed the boys I researched that is against the law the make and distribute child pornography. The film itself was circulated although the data gathered did not make clear what happened to the girl, nor whether the boys were aware of sexual harassment legislation. Whilst the school does run specific female groups dealing with body image and over sexualized behaviour but there was no evidence of any such intervention for boys; safeguarding incidents experienced by the institution remained different for girls and boys. Conceptually it is useful to consider here how examples described above *support* either the girl in question or future potential coerced potentially challenging the ineffective nature of bullying policy to adequately address the range of activities going on. Furthermore, the Anti Bullying Policy of the school was not written to address needs that arise from a lack of understanding within male peer groups centred on gender equality in their treatment of girls online and offline. Responding to fresh challenges faced by changes in the character and quality of online posts, the school has been proactive in constructing an approach to work alongside external agencies in such cases. Rather than calling social services multiple times a day who may then recommend the school liaises with parents and carers directly, relationships with 'hard to reach' clients are at a place in some cases where the *machinery* relating to *referral* is handled 'in house'. Moncur et al argue (2016, p.126) 'as children mature and move towards adulthood, their views of normative representation of self online may be at odds with those of their parents'. One teacher, when describing three female students posting inappropriate pictures of themselves and pleading for the school not to inform parents, noted:

JZ: You weigh it up but if you think about it, you want the parent to *respond* because that is telling us that the adults have *not accepted* this as normal behaviour

Explaining further how each of the three sets of parents responded in different ways, with each response as reported by the teacher as acceptable (one parent burst into tears and couldn't talk to her child, one started to lecture her child before trying to reason with them and then bursting into tears, and then the other one was full of expletives), it is often (but not always) the *relationships* with the parents that ensure the safeguarding controls are in place.

Stereotypes about Masculinity and Femininity

Reminiscing on his single gender (female) selective non-fee paying previous school, the Principal observed how, for a minority of upper school (Key Stage Four) students, social media use became:

CT: A real problem to the extent that it dominated their life from the moment they went home to the moment they went to bed... and were probably doing it to the early hours of the morning.

Depicting a reliance on social media use (primarily accessed via mobile devices) data gathered presented no such dependency. Some students made references to social media reliance of girls anecdotally, for example:

Emre: Girls who like attention, girls who like attention gain attention on social media

However, it was the staff who presented arguments that stereotypes existed around female mobile use. When pressed on how students would respond to having their phone confiscated, the responses presented held typecasts:

BN: Confiscate a girl's phone and that's next to dying... confiscate a boy's phone, he's not happy about it but he could live the night without it.

Aside from the unsubstantiated generalisation, this quote does allow us to question the extent to which boys at school *perform* their unhappiness at having their phone confiscated. Experience has shown me that boys sometimes narrate their masculine identity against the weaknesses of girls or femininity in order to perform masculinity although this didn't surface in my research. Given the previously described 'searching' of students for their mobile phones, the above quote may link not just to staff projections around gender but also linked to how the girls use their mobile phones with reference to keeping safe. It is less plausible, but not impossible, that such strong feelings around confiscated phones are related to student access of material centred on learning and teaching. Moreover, the maturity with which the boys were able to deliberate their online presence was surprising. A typical response involved humour within the focus group:

Arda: To be honest no... I know boys who like to take pictures of themselves and post to Instagram and I know girls who like to play girls and they shouldn't fight but they do

Zeno: You know girls?

All: Laughter

Reflecting on what 'play girls' mean to these boys, the phrase links to heteronormative assumptions around appearance and behaviour (for example winding other girls up) rather than feminist discourses on abortion on equal rights, for example. The quote above also serves to highlight the

camaraderie between the boys and sums up the cusp of puberty where the boys begin to establish independent relationships with girls, occasionally outside of the surveillance of their known (male) peer groups.

Siibak (2010, p.415) argues that (with regard to her research on the social networking site *Rate*) ‘the number of photos where men could be viewed as engaged in romantic activities like hugging or kissing was remarkably low... only 2 percent of the sample consisted of photos where some kind of a romantic activity was visible’. Data gathered from my participants (having not observed the boys’ social media sites personally) supports the argument that discussion of romance either on social media or in general is not normal in the age group(s) researched. Returning once again to my specific research questions focused on participation in online communities and the impact of peer relationship online at school (offline), I was keen to investigate male adolescent practice within, or indeed in spite of, institutional policy including (but not limited to) the Behaviour for Learning Policy and the ban on mobile phones on site. Similarities and differences between how the boys perceived their own mobile phone use and how they perceived their female peers to be using theirs proved illuminating throughout the research. Initially quite naïve in their responses, even some highly articulate boys demonstrated what could be classed as ignorance:

Arslan: I think girls are a lot more, write more, um, I don’t know how to explain this, in terms of psychology, girls, um, instinct, they’re trying to impress men, I’m saying by instinct, like cave men and rituals and stuff

All: Laughter

Arslan: I’m being serious... they want to have that vanity there to pour that attention on them... boys rarely do that... I think what is different is that girls, I think they think phones are more not as an accessory but more like a necessity whilst I think boys think of it as like a tool, as a utility.

Raising questions as to whether this response was a performance for the focus group to demonstrate, perhaps, the held view girls are more dependent on likes and attention, the example above could be read in a number of ways. It struck me when listening to this boy that his explanation was the first time he had considered, let alone articulated in public, his thoughts on whether there existed a difference between female and male social media via mobile phone use. The idea of girls impressing boys and girls seeking attention online is a common discourse about girls and sexuality online. Indeed, Ringrose & Harvey (2015, p.207) note how ‘the style, angle and proportions of images of girls’ bodies circulating through digital social networking were a source of avid attention’. Rich in bombastic language, the example above shows a boy quick to generalize, perhaps as a reflection of his own experience rather than a robust critique of female phone use.

The example goes further than being a flippant response sociologically, and offers a contribution as what the 'default' position is when boys in groups describe girls.

Year eleven students were notably more sanguine in their analysis of potential areas of difference between male and female mobile phone use. One boy surmised that:

Oliver: Before it was like ah, girls take selfies on their phones, this and that, girls message all the time ... some boys take a selfie, some boys are on their phones a lot... the massive differences that we had on the phones before it's narrowed down so much.

Indicating that female students were early adopters of social media and their male peers are catching up to a normalized level, the case in point suggests mobile phone use has evolved for boys and any potential historic anecdotal division may be closing. Evidencing an individuality of response not found within the staff interviews, the student reflects on the fact that there is no 'normal' practice when it comes to use of selfies presented by social media and accessed by mobile phones with photographic capabilities.

Manago (2013, p.480) argues that 'because hegemonic masculinity is about persuasion... it opens up ways to consider the strategies young men can employ to undermine conventional masculine ideals while still positioning masculinity as superior to femininity'. A number of instances of such *persuasion* were raised in the focus groups supporting the argument given. One discussion with year nine moved swiftly from media culture around rap music into sensitivities around misogyny:

Arda: Let's say there's a song by Eminem whose lyrics are quite sexist... people will say 'oh he's a great rapper, he's honest, he's street smart, I'm going to follow what he does'

Zeno: There's this horrid macho-ism amongst boys like in the way you have to talk up to girls to get them to go out with you like almost as though you have to own them.

Indicating an awareness in much of the media the boys are exposed to whereby women can be objectified and yet sometimes do not actively resist misogynistic portrayals, the boys can be seen to stand in opposition to such rappers together with the messages presented around girls. These boys are not readily susceptible to such messages due to both (or either) the work of schools (primary and / or secondary) as well the environment created by parents and carers. The data demonstrates how these boys in particular are critical consumers of media, questioning aspects of

mainstream media representations of boys as perpetrators or architects of misogyny. Social media, accessed via mobile phones, can therefore be argued to demonstrate how boys in general are receptive to feminist discourses and can actively resist specific *discourses* of misogyny.

Porn and the Bodies of Girls

Research that explores boys accessing sexually explicit material and most of their information about sexuality from the internet were confirmed by a number of student groups. For example:

Riyadh: The moment you hit a mature age, say 13, a teenage boy will use their phone for pornography, it's quite true... at secondary school you hear about it so much it's just a natural thing to talk about.

Whether 13 can act as a 'mature age' remains a relative measure for these boys. What became clear, however, was that the boys under investigation did not appear to have any reservations in talking to each other about observing sexually explicit material. Acknowledging that sharing material happened frequently for music and games but less regularly when concerned with images of girls or of themselves, the boys' performances in self-censoring the sharing of explicit material implied a wisdom when considering boyd's Spreadability axiom. Specifically, reproduction of material via message exchange or reposting did appear frowned upon.

Contradictory discourses are evident if we analyse one year eight boy who noted how, with regard to mobile use capturing pictures and videos created by girls:

Nelson: We don't use it like they do cos like Olu said they show their body parts and like if we did that then girls or people would have said that we are getting gassed for who we are.

It is unclear which 'parts' the boy was referring to. The adjective 'getting gassed' refers to an over-inflated sense of personal reputation whereby the individual almost preaches to those around him or her. The parts referred to, for this group of boys at least, appeared to centre on low-cut tops and short skirts. A tension exists, however, between how the boys describe cyber bullying and ideas presented by staff who can be seen to perpetuate stereotypes by interpreting posting practices to female self-esteem. One teacher noted:

JZ: We've seen more girls putting pictures of their body image... boys, I have to say, we haven't seen anything with the personal images

Viewed as a significant transformation of boyd's *visibility* axiom, the gendered differential between boys and girls raises questions surrounding why girls have posts seen by the school and boys have not. Ringrose & Dobson (2012, p3) highlight narratives that 'constitute female sexters as shamed, humiliated and in need of psychological help' whilst the boys' stories in the films Ringrose & Dobson deconstruct and left unexplored. It may be, of course, that boys do post such images and it is the school whose surveillance hasn't accessed them. Alternatively, the example may highlight what is a social media 'norm' for girls and the disconnect between their practice and that of boys. What is clear, however, is that dominant discourses about sexting exist, focusing on how girls hold responsibility for their own harassment. Lack of surveillance of boys by the school in this research can therefore be seen to be complicit in the inequality of scrutiny between boys and girls and their use of social media accessed via mobile phones.

Manago's (2013, p.494) reasoning that 'young men may yield to alternative forms of masculinity, but at the same time continue to maintain dominance by constructing femininity as foils to the fantasy of being unencumbered by social obligations'. Media, accessed predominantly by mobile phones for the young men under investigation, remains at the precipice of identity creation and masculinity. When considering which aspects of masculinity and femininity the boys navigate regularly, one group noted, when pictures were posted by a popular girl in a mixed gender group chat:

- Olu: I don't mind, still, it's just banter, she takes a lot of slips
Nelson: And she's kind of peng still
Olu: We just want good influences... good influences are where we can all share jokes together, not where people get too emotional too quick.

Noting the ever-evolving lexicon of teenage youth ('peng' is synonymous with attractive, 'slips' are pictures taken on a mobile phone without the subject being aware), the motivation behind the girls' repeated motivation to take a 'a lot slips' is unclear. These boys' treatment of the girls, whereby they appear to accept the capturing of their picture, raises questions as to how this process *fits in* to a broader treatment of permission the boys grant the girls. A tension exists between the 'capture' of the slip without the object of capture seemingly aware and the potential (and somewhat likely) sharing and posting of the slip to peer groups both online and in person. An interesting hypothesis here relates back to 'being seen' (Foucault, 1980) to the extent that the girl maybe *allowed* by the boys to engage in such practice because she is attractive. This is possibly combined with the potential for the posts themselves to increase the *visibility* of the boys captured by the short videos, perhaps increasing their *ratings*. Indeed, Ringrose et al (2013, p.313) argue 'Negotiating images

contributes to a peer hierarchy where boys and girls stake out positions in the popularity ratings'. What remains unclear, as a corollary to this hypothesis, that perhaps if the girl was neither attractive (through the boys' paradigm where humour and quick-wittedness are positive traits) or was not a friend (in either the online or offline sense), her behaviour would be tolerated either by the individual or by the group.

Without exception, there was a marked paradox when considering the contact with and reproduction of partially nude images of boys and girls. In no case did any boy present even the semblance of a revealing picture of themselves or, indeed, of anyone else. In fact, the opposite was found to be true which, it can be argued, can be traced back directly to my both methodological decisions for this research and my personal relationships with the students in questions. Indeed, students were keen to present formal shots of themselves and their families either at weddings or family gatherings. These pictures, it transpired, also had the greatest number of likes. Affected by the methodology of this research where the boys were not solely presenting to me to their peers simultaneously, the role of the school as an additional dimension to the construction of the data as the data was gathered in a classroom with the boys sat in full school uniform.

Manago (2013, p.482) recently argued that 'irony allows men to disavow associations with all things feminine, thus a hegemonic status quo is maintained even as men adopt practices associated with femininity' and this was certainly found to be true. Clothing has, for example, changed what is currently perceived as either masculine or feminine. As a child growing up in the 1980's and 90's in London, wearing a pink shirt, an earring (in either ear) or publicly acknowledging the use of a wide range of toiletries was to publicly perform a homosexual discourse. The pictures presented by the boys in this research, however, included all three elements with no suggestion of a movement away from the heterosexual norm. Moreover, an unregulated *currency* of partially clothed females (presumably heterosexual) permeated a number of discussions without the ability of the boys to observe the irony of their own situation. Pressed for a more detailed case study, the language of the aforementioned focus group began to describe a female student at significant risk from her peers. The telling dialogue included:

- Shakur: So say there's this girl (gives name) ... she could be classed as a victim
 because everyone and I mean everyone across London hates her
- DF: Why do they hate her?
- Oliver: It's not like she's a victim
- Shakur: She's done it to herself
- Oliver: She's done it so many times it's nothing

Shakur: She has sent so many naked pictures... she aggravates people, gets them mad and says 'come fight me I'm here' and then not appear at the place.

Use of the term 'victim' in this case does not mean a person injured or tricked through no fault of his or her own. As a discourse around masculinity, the quote above situates the boys' context and experience whilst demonstrating how they understand their relationships with this one specific girl. Indeed, Salter (2015, p.2) argues that 'the public feminine body is conflated with pornography in contrast to the range of meanings that can append to the public masculine body'. An argument exists that the hatred is *accepted* because the girl in question *should* have acted differently. Because the girl *shouldn't* have allowed the images into the public domain, they should therefore expect abuse. These boys use the term 'victim' as a negative adjective with the distinct connotation that she allows herself to be a victim and as such is more than a sign of weakness, it is a description of a lack of ability to be anything but an object which has lower 'ratings'. Conceptually the agreement that this girl has 'done it to herself' essentialises her position and portrays her as both the author of her fate and the person who suffers the consequences. The boys continued to argue their case that the girl in question is in the wrong for her posting practices, mentioning how, on the actual posts of her fully naked body:

Shakur: People comment and say 'you should go die'
Ayo: They just cuss
Oliver: And they'll tag other people
Shakur: Yeah and that's what you see on Facebook, some have thirty thousand comments, it depends on how much people have seen it.

Raising questions as to whether the images of the girl are or are not a problem for the school as an institution, individual school policy (for example PSHE or e-safety) fails to address the complex national picture around rape culture. Collectively, current school policy dictates that the student is no longer in mainstream education and therefore falls out of the jurisdiction of many of the local schools. But is this a justifiable position of the school to take with the dissolving of online-offline space? Is there a greater expectation for schools to educate about gender equality including sexual harassment and illegality of trading on underage girls' bodies? Indeed, if she is not on site to complain to the staff in person, I wonder how the abuse will ever stop. This research raises further questions in relation to the international research on this topic that misogyny online both experienced and perpetuated by the boys in unregulated environments including social networking sites can, potentially, act as a marker for an acceptability around the culture of sexual violence and rape.

Sexting & Revenge Porn

Understood by the boys interviewed as images or videos produced *with* consent but distributed either during or after a relationship *without* consent, revenge porn permeated a number of discussions and can be seen to be an unwanted facet of all four of boyd's axioms of Persistence, Visibility, Spreadability and Searchability. Indeed, Salter & Croft (2015, p.2) note recently that 'erotic material manufactured consensually could be misused in the context of an abusive relationship'. Demonstrating their understanding of all four axioms underpinning boyd's without reference to the sociological terms, one year eleven boy noted:

Ayo: The thing is, once someone shares the photo it's out there forever like even if you delete the original photo the copies of the photo are still around everywhere it's going to haunt you for life.

Specifically, persistence can be found in the term 'haunt', visibility in the phrase 'out there', spreadability in the expression 'copies' and searchability from the implication that once deleted, the picture still exists and can be accessed via exploration.

Conversations around *blame* and *fault* provided insightful in understanding how these boys viewed girls online. Operating within the privileges of being white and male I continue to work on my understanding of the language used by certain boys almost lead me to stop one particular focus group and intervene. Instead, I kept quiet during the focus group and allowed discussion to flow which I feel I will need to address with the specific boys once I gain permission to go back to my old employer. Jackson argues (2010b, p.39) that 'fear is powerful and pervasive in English schools and central to many education discourses' and as a leader of a diverse student communities I am not in a position to leave some of the comments left unchallenged, even if I chose to in June 2015. From the data gathered in its entirety, it appears the school promotes a message of girls to be *afraid* of their peers and that their sexuality is shameful and if something happens it is girls' fault, they are to blame. The legality of circulating images and videos is discussed further in Chapter Five where the self-awareness of the boys questions the curriculum they digest and the adequacy of the school policy (not solely focused on the mobile phone ban). Clearly if the school is implicitly promoting rape culture (which can be seen to follow the same logic as victim blaming) then a significant aspect of the school culture must change. One dialogue in particular, ran as follows:

Shakur: There's bullying all over, there's exposing of... obviously there will be these, you know, no offence, there will be stupid girls that would just like to spread body images, nudes, pictures... and then some idiot will expose

the photo and then everyone will cyber the girl... sometimes the girl may just have just annoyed the guy and he'll just do it... normally it's because they're in a relationship or something like that and they trust someone, they have feeling for each other, but once feelings go, you know...

The idea that a girl could 'annoy' a boy and this is then used as justification for distributing material without consent raises questions as to how the boys arrived at this moral positioning. Ringrose et al (2013, p.311) argue 'It appears to be a major compliment to be asked for photos, but girls must also become proficient in negotiating requests'. What is clear is boys do not understand the law around distribution of images or videos and they have a sexual double standard where girls are shamed for being provocative, thinking that this might be an appropriate response, particularly given the previously stated unregulated environment in which social networking sites are accessed via mobile phones.

Salter & Croft (2015, p.3) argue that 'the characterization of revenge porn victims as a small group of 'dumb' women who failed at the neoliberal project of self-management is contested by social research that demonstrates the normalization of digital and online technology within sexual life'. This quotes stands in direct contradiction to the analysis from the previous sub-section which showed how normal it was to come into contact with female images of this type but not male. Salter & Croft (2015, p.4) continue that 'revenge porn maps onto existing power inequalities in the visual economy in which men share pornography with one another to affirm masculine bonds via an objectification of women, often with strongly derogatory overtones'. When pressed on how often such material was seen, the boys in that specific focus group agreed that on average at most twice a day but at least twice a week. Positioning the Salter & Croft research as it relates to the youth I am researching, the data suggests that accessing material is *normal* and that such material can be shared without fear of negative reprisals for the individual who shares

Conclusion

Through considerations around stereotypes, similarities and differences between boys' and girls' use of mobile phones, femininity as a set of attributes traditionally performed by women, sexualized cyber bullying and revenge porn, this final subsection of chapter four illustrates a complex terrain navigated by the boys who lead the focus groups. Perhaps as a result of my position at school as an openly gay man, no references were made to either homophobia or homosexuality in any of the student or staff interviews. Indeed, Wassdorp et al. (2015, p.487) 'youth perceive that adults have less familiarity and knowledge dealing with cyberbullying, and thus they may not know how to help'. Contradictions within myself extend to the tension between school leader and academic

scholar as well reporting on groups of (performed) heterosexual boys which was not my personal discourse growing up. The ongoing policy and practical concerns raise questions which ask whether not only is the mobile phone ban at school necessary but also whether it supports an implicit rape culture which the Behaviour for Learning policy in particular fails to capture. If there is no modelling of behaviour around phones, how can we expect digital citizenship to be developed? Haywood & Mac an Ghail (2012, p.581) argue that 'homophobia is indicative of immaturity' and therefore it is conceivable the boys did not want to present an image based on exclusion, save for the tension previously explored between boys and girls.

CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

RESPONDING TO arguments raised throughout Chapter Four, Chapter Five draws out the salient issues to show what was significant and how these issues relate to potential further research. Structured along the given themes of Technology, Community & Performances of Masculine Heterosexuality, this portion sums up major findings before ending with two discussions – one on the limitations of the research and another detailing specific recommendations and ideas about what could potentially happen next.

Mobile Phone Policies

Foreshadowing the direct answering of my research questions, the mobile phone ban in operation at the school under investigation is, at best, a waste of time and, at worst, actively contributing to a disconnect between the student population and the educators employed. What was clear, and matched my experience exactly, was, in the words of the Principal with regard to mobile phones on site:

CT: We can say they are not openly used regularly in the school.

My research has suggested, time and again, that life accessed via mobile phones amongst these students is an incredibly complex, nuanced experience. I have illustrated that the ban is a Foucauldian exercise in discipline and punishment, meant to regulate the students around appropriate rules and forms of learning at school. What is also apparent is how conversations between staff and these boys around mobile use have been constrained by the ban in place. Moving the conversation past the binary argument of ‘should we lift the mobile phone ban?’, this thesis has opened up new discussions with regard to how boys use their phones whether there is a ban in place or not. One of the central implications from my findings therefore, is that I that schools must move their discussions beyond narratives of ban / not ban and accept the endemic use within current practice as the practical starting point from which to build strategies.

As I flesh out further below, delivering a curriculum integrating aspects of Personal, Social & Health Education simultaneously with Information Communication Technology, potentially through tutor-based or drop-down day activities, has the capacity to keep discussion around mobile phones in normal everyday discourse and could therefore be seen as part of a partial solution to some of the risks highlighted by the boys in the study. It is the practical implications of such an approach involving all students, staff and families where a difference can really be made.

Throughout this thesis I have drawn upon dannah boyd's axioms of Persistence, Visibility, Spreadability and Searchability as the cornerstone of my conceptual framing in order to answer my research questions:

- How do adolescent males use their mobile devices to participate in online communities?
- How do male identity construction and peer relationships online shape embodied relations at school (offline) and vice versa?

In as far as they can be answered through narratives, boyd's axioms have allowed me to analyse *participation* with mobile devices and social media from student focus groups and staff interviews. Visibility was considered carefully when social media profiles were created via mobile devices (for example by selecting a false age) and more obviously within group chats where performance of masculinity varied depending the audience of the specific group. Searchability was referenced with all students who accessed social media networks via their mobile phones but did not enable restrictive security settings so that posts, pictures and likes were searchable and visible. Persistence was explored by considering the archived nature of social media. Spreadability, as by topics capable of being *spread*, was found in particular when the boys discussed liking and commenting on images and videos of girls as well as posts targeted at group chats (for example within the mixed gender 'TMG' – take man's girl).

With regard to shaping embodied relations offline as well as how offline incidents were brought online, humour was used widely as a visible mechanism to increase ratings and to present idealized masculine stereotypes. For example, the 'tmg' group (take man's girl) described by boys from year eight allowed boys and girls to publicly (online) perform a variety of interdependent relationships. Boyd's axiom of visibility was investigated when considering the tension between online followers and offline friends in school. Persistence was demonstrable through the ability of all members to scroll back through the online narrative. That being said, potentially searchable acts of *violence* were observed offline and only discussed in personal what's app mobile use due to the boys heightened understanding that such discussions would have difficult consequences if they fell within the gaze of the adult and school public. Indeed, boys reflected carefully on the persistence of their social media profiles when they made the transition from primary to secondary school. In particular, they explored their accumulation of online 'friends', the culture of 'likes' and the avoidance of parental surveillance with regard to potential gang memberships. Evidence was further provided that mobile devices themselves were conceptually *spread* between family members (for example a farther or elder sibling) upgrading their phone and 'handing down' their old (wiped) handset to a child or younger sibling. The ability of material such as gossip or a specific image to be circulated and

amplified via mobile devices allows for a magnification of whatever is presented, arguably reinforcing certain gender stereotypes.

Contributions to Understandings of Youth Use and Production of Social Media

My research has illustrated how technological advancements including significant image and video exchange, multiple profiles and group chats across various social media platforms, were capitalized upon by the participating boys given the mobile technology and social networking sites accessible in 2015.

Blurring the Space Between Home and School

Chapter Four demonstrated a blurring of the boundaries between the boys' conceptual understandings of *home* and *school*. Historic endemic mobile phone has created a culture whereby these boys are unaware of what life is like without a mobile device. Statutory guidance with regard to social networking sites and mobile phone remains an underdeveloped resource for schools, save for the obsolete criteria whereby some applications to not create a profile before the age of 13 (e.g. Facebook). Van Dijck (2013, p.4) notes that 'as a result of the interconnection of platforms, a new infrastructure emerged: an ecosystem of connective media with a few large and many small players' implying that a focus on the key players (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) could provide significant benefits when schools plan how to re-engage with pupils online. One interesting dimension that goes against the idea that a mobile ban can serve to stop students from risky and social activities is students' use of social media for learning: students detailed highly evolved systems of using mobile technology to aid their learning through downloading mark schemes, taking pictures of each other's revision notes and forming online study groups.

Throughout this research, data has shown how the *mobility* of portable devices alongside their *independent* ownership and management can empower boys to navigate their masculine (and non-masculine) performances, both offline and online. One adult noted after admitting that she doesn't check her own children's phones enough that:

BN: I do think parents should check their child's phones more... the only reason why I feel comfortable with my kids is that they've usually got their phone out in front of me and they're usually showing me whatever it is on their phone...

Relevant to this study as an example of where a school could influence parent / carer practise through better dialogue, an argument exists that for a child to show their screen to someone else

then they are prepared for that screen to be analysed. There was no evidence collected of these boys handing their mobile phone to a parent / carer with unrestricted access to social networking profiles (including text messaging and WhatsApp).

Personal Social and Health Education & Information Communication Technology

Research suggests that boys in this investigation make no distinction between Personal Social and Health Education and Information Communication Technology. There appears to be no benefit, therefore, in continuing to plan curricula, potentially delivered between distinct timetabled lessons, where Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) are not fully integrated. When considering students who create and post videos which seem to be viewed over one hundred thousand times, technology, for these students and staff at least, is part of everyday life and culture. Bringing ICT and PSHE into the same subject space could potentially raise the profile of mobile phone usage leading to an engagement with both policy and practice currently not in place. Highly developed self-management processes enable male adolescents to construct and perform various facets of their identity including humour and revenge porn with varying degrees of external visibility. Cultures of 'friends' and 'likes' have developed within technological advancements to transform how students digest information through 'follows' and monitor the actions of their peers. For example, through considerations around Panopticon, the green circle of Facebook (which identifies users currently online using the app) enabled these boys to surveil their peers (demonstrating visibility and searchability with a fleeting persistence) whilst simultaneously performing a vulnerable masculinity in choosing when, and when not to comment or like. Mental health, as a prospective topic with both the ICT and PSHE curricula remains beyond the reach of the majority of schools due to the lack of training. PSHE curricula need to be supported both with individual expert advice for those staff who request it as well as the sharing of best practice by charitable organizations.

Access to Inappropriate Material

Mobile devices have been shown to be the main site of access to inappropriate and potentially illegal material online, predominantly but not exclusively, via social networking sites. Social networking sites, accessed primarily through ever evolving mobile phones, transform relationships offline (e.g. ratings amongst peer groups) through online mediums (e.g. 'likes') and performances online (e.g. #soondelete) that only some schools may be familiar with. My research demonstrates exactly how complex and difficult the task lying ahead of school is when refining safeguarding procedures. Social networking sites such as Facebook have been shown to promote beheading

videos outside of the surveillance or school staff or parents and carers. Recognised by one participant teacher, she describes how:

JZ: There is another world, say, in the cyber environment that we haven't tapped into ... there are occasions where something goes wrong in that cyber world and is brought to our attention but certainly that area, we've not used enough of the student's input with their voice to actually say 'what is going on out there? Tell me more, tell me what's happening in your life'.

Arguing for a proactive rather than reactive strategy around engaging with mobile use, the example goes some way to highlighting the uninterrupted burden of being constantly online as an adolescent. Van Dijck (2013, p.21) argues that 'connectivity derives from a continuous pressure – both from peers and from technologies – to expand through competition and gain power through strategic alliance'. Portrayed by these boys as not static with school policy failing to acknowledge and respond to endemic picture and video exchange, free at the point of use, the term 'pressure' can be understood as critical aspect of peer group performativity. Implications from such a 'pressure' include potential expectations to be visible, to keep abreast of the developments amongst peer groups and to actively engage when others assume non-passive audiences.

Contributions to Community

Outside of the physical school environment, data gathered showed very little evidence of engagement with online communities that were not directly linked to school. Given that religion is a large part of these boys' lives both in and outside of school, these boys did not discuss experiences with local church or Muslim groups.

Primary Transition and uses of mobile technology

Research suggests that behaviours and cultures surrounding mobile phones use are established within Year Six (at primary school) and brought to secondary school on the student's 'day one'. Transition from multiple primary school sites with varying policies regarding mobile phone and social media usage brought out a number of tensions within focus group discussions. All students had mobile phones and social media access before they arrived at secondary school arguing that student responsibility for mobile phones must be a collaborative venture between primary and secondary phases. Universal mobile phone desirability is tempered, both financially and developmentally, by family circumstance in terms of procurement, maintenance and occasional surveillance. Recalling how schools are *in loco parentis*, they have a legal responsibility to take on the

functions and responsibilities of a parent / carer and therefore it would be remiss to ignore potentially harmful material accessed via by their students. Parents and Carers provide the physical mobile phones but the school is then implicated in the regulation of the device and the social networking sites accessed via the phone.

Concealment of Mobile Devices

Data gathered suggests that not allowing students access to their mobile devices whilst on school site can be seen to play into a hidden culture whereby student perception of school staff is that staff are actively looking away. Indeed, these boys described developed strategies for camouflage and concealment in order to avoid confiscation or theft from peers. Stolen mobile phones by other pupils raised a number of issues relating to embodied relations at school between staff and pupils. Centred primarily on the Physical Education changing rooms, students cannot bring their phones with them when they participate in sport. Boys could also not hand their devices into a secured area as they were officially 'banned'. Consequently, the blazer pockets of those boys who were engaged in sporting activities were 'patted down' by potential thieves. Potential theft is then occasionally identified once a proportion of the boys have left the changing rooms meaning that the incident is no longer 'isolated' to a specific area of the building. One male teacher then describes how:

DE: You have to use your relationships and have 'off the record' conversations that lead you to the key people that probably did it... and you have to sometimes get to the point where it's 'I'm not interested in sanctions; I just need the phone back'

Demonstrating a peculiar form of hegemonic masculinity where the investigating teacher, normally a head of year or behaviour mentor, is 'one of the boys', the strategy does not appear to be successful as the vast majority of phones are never recovered. The victims nearly always tend to be boys who have made inappropriate choices. One example that comes to mind centres on a very bright student who on one Saturday school was playing with his phone openly – taking pictures of staff notes on the board. At the PE lesson the following week the phone was stolen from his jacket pocket and never recovered.

Multiple Platforms

Complicating discourses around a simple online / offline binary, 'being online' does not necessarily involve any visible action save for logging on. Chapter Four demonstrated how these boys navigate a variety of methods for communication on their mobile devices, often varying within social

networking sites. For example, on Facebook, boys discussed they could post a status, comment on another student's status, belong to a group chat (e.g. Take Man's Girl – TMG) alongside banter with peer groups as well as send private messages. There was demonstrable evidence that whilst the younger students posted freely about violence, the older students moved their discussions away from the public gaze but kept the communications online (e.g. by moving to direct messaging).

Contributions to Performances of Masculine Heterosexuality

This thesis explored how the major canonical narratives surrounding masculinity in London schools identified by Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002, p.10) played out in the school under study and how these were shaped through uses of technology to perform the self and group identity. These included exploring whether or not:

1. Boys must maintain their difference from girls (and so avoid doing anything that is seen as the kind of thing girls do);
2. Popular masculinity involves 'hardness', sporting prowess, 'coolness', casual treatment of schoolwork and being adept at 'cussing';
3. Some boys are 'more masculine' than others. This involves both racialised and class-consciousness.

My research found some evidence of all three aspects but what came across as more significant were echoes of Swain's (2006a, p.335) conclusion where he 'found typologies to be too simplistic, limiting' going on to argue that typologies were 'restrictive and unable adequately to illustrate the real-life complexities of pupil identities that were often multiple, fluid, and contradictory'. Limited commonalities and trends were found but these were not always the case. For example, staff identified a difference in how boys and girls responded when a mobile phone search in a classroom resulted in confiscation. Similarly, romance was an element felt by the boys to be an aspect girls debated on social media but boys did not. Data gathered, like Jon Swain's, confirmed that classifications according to general type were not in a position to adequately reflect the complex and individual discourses from the boys. Data gathered supported another of Swain's (2006b, p.330) conclusions that 'boys at school negotiated alternative or 'personalised' ways of doing boy which seemed to be generally acceptable within the peer-group culture'. My thesis has showed how this works via mobile technology. For example, boys sent 'voice notes' into group chats which often lead to increased status and subsequent banter.

Cyber Violence, Masculinity and Girls

Research found cyber bullying is transformed by mobile devices given the ease at which devices can be accessed and used to post, comment, like and share material. Presented against the

background illustrated in Chapter Four, these boys were not given the tools to negotiate changing social norms with regard to the world accessed via their mobile phones. Indeed, the norms identified through my discourse analysis (whereby boys maintained a highly visible online performance) lead to an escalation, for example, in the magnification of specific incidents cyber coercion. Younger boys, for example, spoke of concerns relating to sexually explicit material in a manner profoundly different from how similar topics were spoken about offline. My Data suggests that schools must do more to protect girls from potential coercion by boys. My thesis provided demonstrable evidence that these boys lacked reservations in sharing sexually explicit material with each other. Indeed, a dominant discourse relates to sexting whereby these boys felt some girls hold responsibility for allowing sexually explicit pictures to be taken and then subsequently distributed. Conceptually the idea that these referenced girls were *victims* goes some way in beginning to understand why these boys were able to circulate pictures so freely in stark contrast to incidents involving violence when only other boys were involved. Jackson (2010a, p.517) argues that ‘we must resist strategies to tackle laddism that rely on and reinforce gender stereotypes... we must be careful to avoid what Delamont (1999) refers to as a ‘discourse of derision about girls and women’. Data gathered argues we also need strategies for addressing how masculinity can be discussed and negotiated in ways that address sexual consent respect and rights (Ringrose et al., 2012). Age differences contributed to this debate, not least where our data showed older students in Yr11 enforcing a single gender group chat whilst younger years did not.

Positive Online Role Models

Most tellingly, if there is no modelling of behaviour around phones anywhere else for the young people to experience, should we only expect things to get worse with a ban in full operation? Rather than prevent any movement from offline to online, the mobile ban appears to delay the use of social media until the device can be taken out of concealment (for example at the bus stop). In an educational climate where teachers lead students by example and positive modelling rather than by telling them what not to do (e.g. walk on the left as opposed to ‘don’t run’), male role models online should be developed by the teaching profession in order to support the online development of boys. Manago (2013, p.480) argues ‘there are multiple ways of being a man, but they are all positioned in relation to the hegemonic ideal’. The *hegemonic ideal* I have found to be a relative term in that even a single academic year’s difference can provide significantly different peer group culture and ethos. More work is required with boys such as these, in schools such as these, to rupture potential discourses where femininity is viewed as inferior to masculinity, reducing the impact of any potential implicit rape culture. Indeed, promising resources around teaching boys feminism are hard to find but do exist via sites such as which include the following examples of

online intersectional feminist content featuring articles on racism, religious intolerance, sexism, class, body dysmorphia and homophobia:

- <http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/05/boys-sexual-entitlement/>;
- <https://feministteacher.com/2011/03/29/teaching-boys-feminism/>
- <http://www.genderandeducation.com>

Limitations

Haywood & Mac an Ghail (2012, p.581) noted how ‘a shift in broader cultural perceptions of homosexuality is leading to a recalibration of masculinities that is based upon inclusivity’, there was no mention of homosexuality from any of the students in any of the groups; nor from any member of staff. Perhaps because my position as an openly gay man, the students chose not to bring up the topic. On reflection I did not need to pause any of the discussions around homosexuality as it was not brought up explicitly leading me to not examine sexuality in any depth save for the performances of heterosexuality the boys brought up via the focus groups. I doubt very much that the students *colluded* to not mention either male or female homosexuality, but the fact remains that homosexuality was not brought up in any of the eight focus groups. Jackson (2010a, p.512) argues that ‘men teachers who subscribe to hegemonic masculinity – which includes being an effective disciplinarian – are valorized and accrue considerable social power’. As someone who has previously led on Behaviour & Safety for three years, recommending exclusions where appropriate, leading staff training, running public exams and communicating with all students through assemblies, I understood my position to have accrued *social power*. An irony exists, therefore, in an environment whereby male homosexuals are likely to be viewed as the least hegemonic version of masculinity, this research found that my status in the school allowed me conduct research as the *right type* of gay man who didn’t discuss his sexuality in the focus groups. Had I been asked, of course, I would have confirmed my sexuality but this situation did not develop.

Parent and carer involvement in the project was also an aspect I deliberated for a long time over but decided against due to the practicalities and, I suppose, my inexperience in conducting research at doctoral level. All research is a compromise and if I had included parents it would have made it a different study. Without question, injecting an element of ‘parent voice’ alongside pupil and teacher narrative could have ‘completed the triangle’. Ultimately I could not to include the parents of the boys in the study as I didn’t want them, the adolescent males, to even consider the possibility that I would attempt to match their data with that of their parents. An alternative here consisted of potentially accessing a ‘new’ group of parents and carers who had perhaps an element of institutional involvement either by writing in to request that their son carry a mobile to school or had imaginably been to the school to collect a confiscated phone. Their opinions around consent and their understanding around what, exactly, their sons are using their mobile phones for could

have generated fascinating results. Indeed, Johnson et al (2013, p.145) argue that 'to fully understand people's reactions to potential privacy threats or actual violations it is imperative to also measure their trust in the privacy threat' and research with parents and carers might have led to judgement around the extent to which trust has been placed in the institution when it comes to looking after their children.

It was undoubtedly optimistic to suspect that given the limited time I had to conduct the focus groups other significant sociological aspects were not raised. Issues regarding community housing were not brought up which came as a surprise. The absence of any mention of employability or health (either physical or mental) probably rests more with my methodology and the manner in which I conducted the semi-structured focus groups rather than indicating that these variables do not have an enormous impact on the lives of those researched. That being said, an important aspect of leading an urban complex secondary school in London rests on enabling community cohesion so that the institution can help the parents realize their aspirations for their children. Whether investigating those second and third generation English-speaking sons of immigrants (for example either African or West-Indian), those boys who at first appearance may appear 'white' but actually very rarely speak English at home (be they Turkish or Polish) or those students who are new to the country (particularly those who have arrived within the last few years and may still be at a beginner level of English), the potential for strengthening arguments within this thesis is clear. Mac an Ghail & Haywood (2011, p.730) continue that 'schooling is located within post-colonial urban spaces, marked by fracturing classes, fragmenting genders, plural sexualities and new ethnicities' and the opportunity to investigate broader spectrums within the same institution are not diminished due to the publication of this research

Finally, sampling 30 students was challenging in several ways. First, I decided against selecting any students from year seven, a decision I now regret given how significant primary to secondary transition became to the research. It would also not have been beyond the realm of possibility to include two student focus groups from local feeder primary school although this would raise additional ethical considerations. Potentially selecting focus groups from other local schools may have added an additional depth to the project, as would being far more specific with criteria used for selection within the school under investigation. For example, I had access to data specifying students who had previously had their phones confiscated for ringing in classrooms. Similarly, I was aware of students who were excluded for theft of mobile phones (both educated on site and at alternative provision centres) and, indeed, excluded for other reasons. There had, as mentioned previously, been no exclusions under the current Principal for refusing to hand over mobile phones. However, students who had been excluded for violence for aggression of a sexual nature may have produced different results.

Implications for Professional Practice

A possible solution to the challenge faced by schools such as the one under investigation lies in keeping discussion in the normal everyday discourse between staff and students (for example between form tutors and their tutees). Options here would include a technology focus on a regular basis, perhaps once a half term incorporated into a weekly Teaching and Learning briefing. Specific topics might then be tackled by either curriculum leads (e.g. Head of Art in student use of Instagram) or a pastoral lead (e.g. Head of year Nine) or via the Designated Safeguarding Lead (perhaps on revenge porn).

Moving forward, the school would do well to investigate the iRights framework (located under <http://irights.uk>, October 2014). Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ratified by the British Government in 1991, schools should recognise children's rights to expression and to receiving relevant information. Providing a set of principles by which adults, parents and young people could negotiate their online engagement, schools similar to the institution investigated can use both this research and the framework in order to update both policy and practice. Enabling children and young people to access the digital world with their mobile phones creatively, all five guiding rights were found within discourses presented via student speech. Specifically, I detail below how discourses mined from these boys suggest partial engagement in a school which contravenes the values attempting to be established:

- The Right to Remove: With regard to *removal* for ease of editing and deleting, evidence was found those boys who applied the hashtag 'soondelete';
- The Right to Know: When considered who *holds* their information and what it is used for, the boys demonstrated evidence that they can expand their list on contacts (for example by gaining followers through the use of 'follow apps') and removing unwanted contacts (by unfollowing or deleting entirely);
- The Right to Safety & Support: *Safety* was discussed at length, both in terms of avoiding theft and keeping aspects of their personal information (e.g. their home address) offline;
- The Right to make Informed and Conscious Choices: Empowered access through a number of years navigating the school's bans and potential surveillance by families and peer lead to concrete evidence of *informed choices* being made with regard to participation with social networking site accessed via mobile phones;
- The Right to Digital Literacy: Evidence of developing *digital literacy* to access the knowledge and to be taught the skills to use, can be found by a mastery to create and critique digital technologies is not yet in place.

Developing digital responsibility within the boys themselves lies at the heart of helping schools respond to challenges presented by male adolescent engagement with their personal mobile phones. Haywood & Mac an Ghaill (2012, p.585) suggest ‘one way to disengage the ‘artificial polarities’ that regulate gender is to explore how particular attitudes, behaviours and practices are being rearticulated or reassembled in ways that are not intelligible through the identity category of masculinity’. Triangulating the needs of the boys alongside developing parent & carer understanding of mobile phone and ensuring staff training is effectively deployed should reduce risk to age inappropriate material (e.g. pornography) as well as ensure future mobile use remains focused on preparing the boys for whichever technological advancements lie in their future. Van Dijck (2013, p.176) argues that ‘the ecosystem of connective media needs watchful caretakers and diverse gardeners in order for it to be sustained’ and it is via schools that teachers can lead the debate adolescent mobile phone and social media use through high quality, professionally robust continuous professional development.

In relation to the material issues of digital technology and economic conditions, schools in a similar position to the one under investigation could potentially offer to sell inexpensive phones to parents and carers (in effect flooding the market) to reduce the risk of theft. Those parents and carers who wanted their child to have a device on them for making and receiving calls on the way to and from school could do so, whilst the chance of robbery would be reduced. Chapter Four detailed how social media sites (online) augmented offline relationships but drew attention to the fact that parents are primary influence with regard to these boys’ individual devices. The current practice of searching students is far from ideal and raises questions around personal space and legality. Whilst the system of random searching of classes may work in practice (in that sense that phones are found and confiscated) as well as a potential deterrent to encourage students to leave their phones at home, one teacher articulated a collective sense of unease:

CT: I know some staff feel uncomfortable around the searching of kids... I don’t know why, but it is something I feel uneasy about... last year when we had to search a class because a knife had gone missing from DT which I felt very comfortable doing as the consequences were not worth thinking about...

Highlighting an institutional benefit of searching that goes beyond finding banned mobile phones, the institution in question, like I assume many schools, has the rare incident of students either bringing in forbidden materials (for example drugs or weapons) or removing potentially dangerous weapons for secure areas.

Consequences derived from this project immediately contribute to my professional role even though I am not employed by the school in question. Having taken up a new position in June 2015, I am now in the position to embed key principles to an entirely new cohort of adolescents whilst maintaining contact with my previous leadership team. One teacher when interviewed appeared to use the interview itself as a period of reflection and noted:

JZ: The issue is about what we make as normal and what we normalize... so we need to understand what is normal for young people and challenging that.

Surprising in the rhetoric used which may have been extracted from an article on *normalization* referenced to either Butler or Foucault, the idea that we need to *challenge* the norm does not necessarily hold true. Indeed, wisdom demonstrated by the boys in *not posting* in public with regard to significant acts of violence, it could be argued, should be replicated with regard to sexualized cyber bullying. One teacher went so far as to note that:

CT: I'm just not yet convinced that this massive push on ICT is necessarily improving teaching and learning... what I think it does do, and this is perhaps a sexist point, but it is perhaps relevant, is that for boys especially it engages them...

With that in mind, social media companies need to be engaged with directly with regards to gender so that trends can be identified and reported back to schools directly.

Raised repeatedly by both staff and students, the concept of a 'cheap phone shop' is certainly a practical suggestion I have already begun to investigate for my new school. Based in part on what a number of schools already have in place with 'hardship' clothes, the idea would be to allow mobile phones so long as the school took no responsibility for lost or damaged phones. Whilst maintaining a cupboard full of new but incredibly basic shoes works as a deterrent to prevent students from wearing trainers to school, I am investigating whether the principle has any significant benefit over maintaining a traditional mobile phone ban. Coupled with an explicit strategy in making it more difficult for students to bring in a non-cheap phone (for example by asking the students to bring in the identification numbers of the phones or by asking for a twenty-pound deposit in case staff need to take time to search for a phone), the safeguarding aspects highlighted in Chapter Four remain of paramount concern. Additionally, the use of proactive material direct to parents (for example information leaflets on the latest social media craze) continues to divide staff. On the one hand, informing parents of potential current or safeguarding concerns sounds eminently sensible, but only without either winding up the adult community un-necessarily or perpetuating a problem by extending 'shelf-life'. A recent example of where such mass communication has been used

effectively was by an East London school who sadly lost three bright sixteen year olds who left to fight for ISIS. Parents here needed to be reassured that their children were safe at school. Whether this strategy would work with examples of local employment opportunities or revenge porn is yet to be fully investigated. On a practical level, the boys suggested many ways in which the mobile phone ban could be *challenged* as an action research project in itself. One such example came at the very end of my last focus group:

Sahib: I think we should do like a one-week trial where every can bring their phones if they want to and then if the trial goes well, and there are no thefts, then we can bring our phones in.

As a group, these specific boys had a lengthy discussion fully engaged with both their position in the research as well as demonstrating a willing to help lead student voice in the future. A solution exists potentially with a trial running either running at the very start of the Autumn Term (i.e. September – explicitly to include inducting new year seven students) or at the end of Summer Two (i.e. Mid June – once year eleven have sat their GCSEs). Indeed, the criticality the boys from the above focus group used to assess the impact of whole school initiatives such as the daily 30-minute tutor time or house / year assembly was refreshingly straightforward and sincere.

Summary

Data has shown, time and again, that for these boys at this school, the mobile phone ban in operation is, at best, a waste of time and, at worst, actively contributing to a disconnect between the student population and the educators employed. Concealment of mobile devices alongside the navigation of an unregulated environment via social networking sites challenges schools to address the coercion of girls,. Furthermore, multiple platforms coupled with the blurring of boundaries between boys' concepts of *home* and *school* require schools to engage effectively with feeder primary schools in order to ensure secondary transition acknowledges and acts upon endemic mobile phone usage.

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APPENDICES

Consent Letter

13th April 2015

Research Project

Exploring teen boys' experiences of mobile technology at school - April 2015

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am writing to let you know about a research project I am involved in and to ask for your consent in interviewing your son.

I am currently investigating how mobile phones are used by teenage boys and in what ways social media (applications like Facebook, Twitter etc.) contribute to forming identity. I am interested in what ways school policies relating to technology (for example banning mobile phones) affect the development of a young person's identity.

I have enclosed an information sheet with this letter that I hope will be useful in answering some questions you may have. I would be happy to answer any additional questions you may have via the email address below.

If you and your son feel that you would like to be part of this project please complete the consent form and return it directly to me.

Yours sincerely,

David Francis

(contact details given)

Information Sheet

Exploring teen boys' experiences of mobile technology at school - April 2015

Who will be in the project? There will be two groups of four students interviewed together as focus groups in each of years eight, nine, ten and eleven. There will also be some staff interviews.

What will happen during the research? Each focus group will meet once for 45 minutes and will happen on site, in a classroom, during the academy day.

What questions will be asked? I will talk to you about things you do on social networking sites and the current academy policies. We will talk about experiences of cyberbullying, the ICT curriculum and your use of mobile phones.

What will happen to you if you take part? If you agree, I will record the sessions and type them up later. I am not looking for right or wrong answers, only for what everyone really thinks.

Could there be problems for you if you take part?

I hope you will enjoy talking about your experiences. Some people may feel upset when talking about some topics. If they want to stop talking, we will stop. For example, if something upsetting comes up like bullying you can say you don't want to be part of the interview at that point.

Will doing the research help you?

The research will mainly collect ideas to help adults/children in the future about any risks with mobile technologies and whether schools like ours could be doing different things to help student development.

Who will know that you have been in the research?

I will not tell anyone else what you tell me unless I think someone might be hurt. If so, I will talk to you first about the best thing to do but it is likely I will tell (Safeguarding lead's name). I will keep the tapes and notes in a safe place, and you will be able to choose the name I use to describe your answers. The name of the school and community will also be changed so that no one will know who said what.

Do you have to take part?

You decide if you want to take part. Even if you say 'yes', you can drop out at any time or say that you don't want to answer some questions. You can tell me that you will take part by signing the consent form.

Will you know about the research results?

I will send you a short report by March 2017

Thank you for reading this leaflet.

Consent Form

Exploring teen boys' experiences of mobile technology at school - April 2015

Parent / Carer

I have read the information sheet about the research. (please tick)

I allow my child to be interviewed (please tick)

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student

I have read the information sheet about the research. (please tick)

I agree to be interviewed (please tick)

Name: _____

Advisory: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher

Name: David Francis

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Worked Example – Thursday 30th April 2015, Yr11

The extract below is given to highlight steps taken moving from participant account, through emerging themes to final theme included in my data analysis:

(conversation turns to how many Facebook Friends each boy has)

S: to be honest with you I've lost count... there's **more than 3,000** but I haven't accepted them all... I stopped accepting people cos I noticed I had a lot of, um, cos I used to make videos on Facebook and then I was getting some exposure

DF: what does that mean?

S: not exposure exactly, but it started becoming viral on social media...

M: what does that mean?

S: everyone basically watched them, there was a lot of views, videos would reach a hundred k, I think it was just me talking about somebody, a celebrity, I was just filming myself, on my phone, in my house, no one else was there, it was about Amber Rose, she's bald and she had something on her head she shouldn't have had on cos it made no sense cos she's bald, it was some towel thing on her head but you'd normally wear it if you had hair, she had no hair, so I decided to talk about it

DF: ok and how long did you talk about it for?

S: seven seconds, and then I put it up and by chance it just...

O: He put it on Facebook

S: yeah, I had a **hundred thousand views** from Facebook but a lot of people shared it, but they weren't all friends cos it was public innit so anyone could just view it and share it

DF: ok so how often does that happen to you?

S: since that video, cos I made a few more videos, and they've all done the same thing, about five more of them.. some of them were, I mean one of them was because it was the end of 2014 I just made a video, like a collage of funny videos, just from my phone, it's called 'clipstitch', was just funny videos of my brother, my family, it was obvious they were my family

DF: so do they know you have a video of them that has a hundred thousand views?

S: my dad told me not to do it again but my brothers, because I've used their pictures before and they didn't say anything, my brothers don't really mind

DF: is that linked in any way to your Snapchat?

S: yeah cos I put my Snapchat in the description then a lot of people added me onto my Snapchat

DF: so how many followers do you have on **Snapchat**?

S: **more than a thousand**, but I post every day... **Instagram a thousand and something**, but I don't post frequently, I only have like six posts, but they're all from Facebook

D: ok, one more question, you said your videos were just your dad and your brothers, was that deliberately all male?

S: cos I don't have a sister, it was just funny

Given the **numbers** included (3,000 friends on Facebook, 'more than a thousand' followers on Snapchat and a 'thousand and something' on Instagram) it was clear that 'friendship' numbers online far surpassed the number of students in a particular cohort (180) or even the school. The reach of **100,000** enabled me to mapped this example to boyd's concept of Visibility how many p and extend the link to Nahon & Hemsley's discussion of virility leading to a subtheme of 'Online Friends' within 'Technology'.

Feedback to School – Summary Findings

Dear xxx,

Thank you once again for your support of my research during Sum2 in 2015.

As you know, my thesis focused on exploring teen boys' experiences of mobile technology at school, underpinned by the following research questions:

- How do adolescent males use their mobile devices to participate in online communities?
- How do male identity constructions and peer relationships online shape embodied relations at school (offline) and vice versa?

Within the write-up, I chose to present the data thematically and have summarised the key findings below. I found the mobile phone ban in operation is, at best, a waste of time and, at worst, actively contributing to a disconnect between the student population and staff. I argue that schools must move their discussions beyond narratives of ban / not ban to accept the endemic use within current practice as a platform from which to build upon. Talking about mobile phone use, keeping it in normal everyday discourse, may be a partial solution to some of the risks highlighted by the boys in the study.

Do let me know if you have any time so that I can present some of professional implications in a little more detail!

All the best,

David

Technology

- Mobile devices blur the space between school and outside of school (including home);
- Boys saw no distinction between Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) with Information Communication Technology (ICT) and it is perhaps worth integrating this curriculum areas (potentially even as a single IT'd lesson);
- Access, predominantly but not exclusively via social networking sites, to inappropriate material (such as beheading videos via Facebook), challenges schools like ours to continually review what material is being viewed and what impact this may have.

Community

- Primary transition is critical when considering both the devices and practices secondary school bring to their new institution on their 'day one';
- Concealment of mobile devices can be seen to play into a hidden culture where student perception of school staff is that staff are actively looking away;
- Multiple platforms coupled with various methods for communications within social networking sites (e.g. with Facebook, boys can post a status, comment on another student's status, belong to a group chat as well as send private messages) can be seen to complicate discourses around the obsolete online / offline binary.

Performances of Masculine Heterosexuality

- Research found cyber bullying transformed by mobile devices given the ease at which they can be accessed, whether there is a 'ban' in place or not;
- Data suggests that schools must do more to protect girls from potential coercion by boys;
- In an educational climate where teachers lead students by example rather than by telling them what not to do (e.g. walk on the left as opposed to 'don't run') positive male role models online should be developed by the teaching profession in order to support the online development of boys.