What is the legacy for the women who accessed support from the full service extended school initiative?

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I, Nicola Bailey, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Contents

List of acronyms used in this thesis

ACE   Adult and Community Education

ACL   Adult and Community Learning

BIP   Behaviour Improvement Programme

BAME   Black and Ethnic Minorities

CALAT   Croydon Adult Learning and Training

CCT   Croydon Children's Trust

DCFS   Department of Children and Family Services

DCSF   Department for Children Schools and Families

DET   Department of Education and Training (Australia)

DfE   Department for Education

DfEE   Department for Education and Employment

DfES   Department for Education and Schools

ECM   Every Child Matters

ES   Extended School

ESSS   Extended School Support Services

FE   Further Education

FL   Family Learning

FLLN   Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy

FSES   Full Service Extended School

IMD   Index of Multiple Deprivation

LA   Local Authority

LGBT   Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender

NCS   New Community Schools (Scotland)

NHS   National Health Service

ONS   Office for National Statistics

OOSH   Out Of School Hours

PAT   Policy Action Team

PP   Pupil Premium

PRU   Pupil Referral Unit

PSHCE   Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic

SEED   Scottish Executive Education Department

SFA   Skills Funding Agency

TDA   Training and Development Agency

ToC   Theory of Change

WFL   Wider Family Learning

YES   Youth Early Support

Abstract

This case study set out to explore the legacy of the Full Service Extended School (FSES) which was introduced by the government in 2003 and was anticipated to address the attainment gap for pupils and help regenerate communities in disadvantaged areas. Based on a single FSES site in the Greater London area, the study set out to analyse its impact on women users' social and cultural capital, personal identity and changes within their relationships. Viewed through the feminist lens of public and private space, the women's experiences and opinions are understood within the context of their surrounding social structures. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected using a sequential approach, beginning in 2011 with a self-completed questionnaire which provided a quantitative profile of 175 users to understand who engaged with the services. This was followed with two semi-structured interviews with a sub-sample of the main cohort involving 19 women in 2011, and 13 of the same women in 2014. Findings show, that the main motivation for accessing services was for the women's own benefit, rather than the government's expectation of helping their children, although their child's associated link to the location of the support was a critical factor in their engagement. The women described how an increase in their confidence and skill base widened their social and cultural capital with associated changes in their identities, which in turn has significant consequences for their relationships, especially with their children. The FSES also had positive benefits to parenting, family / community relations and economic well-being. The research identifies the location of the FSES support as a hybrid of public and private space; a place for a safe and trusted transition for women to prepare themselves for fuller engagement in the public sphere. Finally, the research raises questions about whether the absence of such space

excludes a vein of society and creates the potential for an underclass[1] to develop from the

identified social and academic divide which spawned the FSES concept initially.

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[1] The term 'underclass' is used here to describe a strata of the adult UK society, who in my opinion, are overlooked, under-valued and under-supported by key institutions and social support networks because of lack of engagement.

Impact statement

The focus of this study is the under explored field of the FSES community / school initiative, and the impact it had on a group of women clearly identified as disadvantaged, accessing support services based in a single locality.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis elicited new findings, namely:

Motivation: The assumption that women attended the support services to help their children improve academic achievements was not so. They attended initially to develop themselves.

Hybrid space: The FSES base acted as a practical hybrid location for the feminist concept of private and public space and in doing so facilitated the possibility for women to transition from the domestic to the public sphere.

Identity: The FSES experience and input changed the women's identity through increased cultural and social capital which in turn developed their habitus.

It equally confirmed existing concepts, specifically:

Couples: Women who had a live-in partner or spouse achieved higher levels academically in comparison to single women (Benham, 1974; Rosetti and Tanda, 2000).

Parental mentors: Utilising cultural / parental mentors developed and maintained school community bonds to assist in developing the habitus of local adults / parents (Jo, 2013).

Individual and family benefits: the 'Family Learning' (FL) styled support produced similar outcomes to the original FL initiative (Balatti and Falk, 2002; Feinstein *et al.,* 2003, Feinstein and Hammond, 2004, Horne and Haggart, 2004; Haggart and Spacey, 2006; BIS, 2011: Cara and Brooks, 2012).

I suggest the new findings will be beneficial to both academic and non-academic parties interfacing with similar social and cultural fields, specifically for those connecting with the 'hard to reach' in both education and community studies.

The new information provides a fresh understanding of aspects of disadvantaged women, and those who are termed 'hard to reach', a frequently poorly identified section of society. The misidentification / lack of engagement of these women, I suggest, facilitates them being overlooked, which potentially generates and maintains an underclass. Relatedly, this raises potential for future scholarship and generation of further information on women from disadvantaged backgrounds, specifically with regard to the long term outcomes from school based social initiatives and other similar projects.

The concept of hybrid spaces being located within educational settings is an under reviewed area, demanding greater academic exploration and offering the possibility to initiate practical research bases in which to further investigate social and gender based studies.

Both the new and the confirmed findings contribute to widening the existing body of knowledge within the field of school/ community initiatives. They therefore have potential to impact on and to inform a range of policies, practice and needs assessments, particularly for schools and local authorities, family and parenting focused charities and social enterprises.

Dissemination of the findings will be through journals, scholarly articles, and entries into specialist publications and possibly conference papers.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This mixed methods case study with longitudinal elements, set out to explore the legacy of the Full Service Extended School (FSES) initiative (Cummings *et al.*, 2005) for the adult service users who accessed support from a single school site in Croydon between 2011 and 2014. The initiative aimed to narrow the academic attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils (Cummings *et al.,* 2005). Its design included parent support services in recognition that parents and the home environment bear the most significant influence on a child's life chances (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Feinstein, 2003; Horne & Haggart, 2004; Reynolds, 2006; Scott *et al.*, 2006; Feinstein *et al.,* 2008; Park, 2017). This study sought specifically, to establish adult service users' views on the impact of the services on their own identity, their parenting and their wider relationships.

The study began with critical focus directed at identifying the nature of the service users. Other studies and projects assumptively categorised participants as disadvantaged based on location details such as their residential postcode and / or service access locations (Ranson and Rutledge, 2005; Cummings *et al.*, 2006, 2007; DCSF, 2009c). To gain better understanding of the interface between support and outcome I wanted a developed profile of the adults accessing the FSES support.

Given the nature of the FSES provision and that the strong majority of the FSES users were women I sought to understand their experiences through a feminist lens. Specifically, I review the location of the services in terms of the feminist dichotomy of the public and private spheres.

FSES were government led projects which began in 2003 (Cummings *et al.*, 2006, 2007; DCSF, 2009c) and focused on supporting academically and socially vulnerable

pupils in order to raise their levels of school-based attainment. Parent support was included as a strand of the delivery, either as family learning, community based adult education or social support services. All pupil centred aspects were evaluated by government appointed academics and other interested parties but they did not specifically focus on the impact on the adult participants.

The importance of community education and support for adults is widely acknowledged for its broader benefits in terms of health, civic participation and strengthening of communities (Balatti and Falk, 2002; Feinstein *et al.*, 2003; Feinstein and Hammond, 2004; BIS, 2011). This work, however, contributes to the less explored area of the perceived impact of community delivered basic skills on personal, relational and social development for adults, including the development and wider outcomes of social and cultural capital.

The application of a sequential mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2003; Bryman, 2006, Subedi, 2016), where quantitative data was collected first, brought clarity and understanding of the nature and background of the cohort and the subsequent interviews identified their views and perceptions of the support services. Both interview stages developed a progressive understanding of their motivations, experiences and the immediate and longer term impact of the services. Further, this enquiry explored the benefits of community support, linked with personal and social development. Following preparatory checks with pre and pilot questionnaires, all data was sourced from a single cohort on a single delivery site, within three specific time frames or stages which stretched over a week in June 2011, for collection of quantitative data, a week in July 2011 and another week in October 2014 for the collection of qualitative data.

1.1 Context of the study

My background as the researcher

With a background of working in areas of disadvantage, adult and community education and as a secondary school teacher, I have over 20 years' experience in the field of pupil / adult / parent education, engagement and support. Yet, it was within my role as an assistant head-teacher, and FSES lead, that I was able to combine these experiences and conduct this investigation into the impact of the FSES project for the adults engaging with its services.

In 2006, shortly after the FSES initiative was implemented in the UK, I was employed by a large, community-minded secondary school, which had been appointed as the borough's exemplar for integrated school / community support. My role was to lead the transition of the FSES concept into a working model, both for the school I was based in and to support other schools in developing their own ES services. I simultaneously oversaw a cluster of six feeder primary schools, geographically local to mine, with the aim of synchronising support across the cluster for maximum efficiency for both the families and the service providers.

Once structure and service plans for ES provision, across the feeder primary schools were in place, my daily in-school responsibilities included managing the FSES budget, over-seeing the engagement of the service users (pupils, parents and community members), recording uptake of services (activities / services, duration of attendance), recording impact and progress (developing tracking logs which related to wider pupil / school-based attainment and creating data records for each of the adult service users) against borough and school-based targets.

As the adult services and support grew in number and options, by 2008, staff recruitment, training and management became a growing element of my post. Similarly, as ring-fenced government funding for the initiative declined, my role expanded to include fund-raising through charitable grants and enterprise. The latter development also enabled me to create and chair a social enterprise in 2008 which I later registered as a charity, in 2013, providing support services for disadvantaged adults living within the Greater London area.

My work with the FSES/ ES initiative offered a unique insight into the implementation and manifestation of the UK's version of the international initiative designed to tackle social and educational division. My previous work in areas of disadvantage and teaching demonstrates my interest in addressing social disadvantage through the medium of education. It is therefore unsurprising that I was fully committed to the concept and delivery of the FSES project, or that I was interested in the progress and outcomes for the adult service users. Yet, my interest for this research project was driven by the nature of change within my FSES role which created the opportunity to view the wider set of processes associated with the FSES concept, specifically in relation to the adults' engagement with the services and their personal outcomes.

My previous background in curriculum design and staff management within Adult and Community Education (ACE) heightened my awareness of adult motivation and engagement in community learning settings and use of community services. It also provided me with a range of experiences of adult uptake and engagement. In turn these offered a contrast to my observations made during my FSES role and initiated the base of my enquiry into the FSES processes and manifestations. Yet, despite my personal interests, I was keen for this research to be led by the adults, that is, I wanted

the voices of the service users to direct the study rather than it be shaped by hypotheses born from previous FSES work and findings.

The FSES background

Although the initiative had been implemented years before in the US and Australia, the FSES was new in the UK and although similar to other school / community initiatives (Dryfoos, 1998; Cummings *et al.*, 2005; Smith, 2014) it was unique in its trial. It operated then as a fresh approach to a repeated social / educational concern, which I believed deserved an open framework in which to register its impact, at least for those who engaged fully with its services. Inviting the adults to shape their own descriptions on motivation, purpose and sense of outcome, offered opportunity for them to express themselves freely. It also presented chance to listen afresh and created the possibility to seek to understand, in a new or different way, words which may have been said before. Given my previous background and my role within the FSES, I clearly have interest in outcomes for adults, particularly in areas of disadvantage. Arguably though, I was also well placed to understand, what the interviewees had to say, their references, inferences and therefore could provide a comfortable, practical and emotional space for their conversations. It was within this role and context that I undertook the following research and analysis.

Originating in Australia and the US during the late 1990s, the notion of 'Extended Schools' (ES) was adopted in the UK as a government initiative. It provided a response to the localised effects of global social change such as community fragmentation, polarisation of wealth and changes in employment (Kirner *et al.*, 1998). These social changes impacted negatively on vulnerable young people and their families and their communities. The term ES was used to cover a wide range of local policy initiatives

aimed at addressing basic skills (James *et al.*, 2001), home / school relationships (Dryfoos and Floyd, 2000), social attitudes and behaviour (Tett, 2000). ES development can be traced back to 1997, when the Labour government acknowledged that together, poverty and associated social concerns were creating pockets of highly disadvantaged areas (Howarth *et al.*, 1998). One of the ways in which the government responded to this was by developing a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001), which spawned 18 interrelated Policy Action Teams (PATs, numbered 1-18). These addressed a range of factors of exclusion affecting significantly disadvantaged areas. PAT 11, focused on exploring ways schools might work more closely with disadvantaged communities to help meet community need and raise achievement (Dyson *et al.,* 2002); it was known initially as 'Schools Plus'. This concept was further developed and became the 'extended school policy' by the early 2000's and was considered to be a serious response to a growing social and academic divide.

Increased government commitment to extended provision prompted the creation of an initial 61 FSES in 2003-04. Their launch coincided with the policy response to the Laming Report, Every Child Matters (ECM) (DfES, 2003), which helped promote FSES as the ideal reaction for co-ordinated / joint service working. Confidence in their potential to deliver on multiple policy agendas was so strong that prior to completion of the planned three year Full Service initiative (FESE), the government declared its intention for *all* schools to offer the core elements of the FSES. This slim-line version of the provision was known as Extended Schools (ES) and was expected to be available across all UK schools by 2010 (Cummings *et al.*, 2007). Much of the confidence to spread the initiative was based on models from the US (Dryfoos, 1994), rather than findings from the UK. Although there were issues with the evaluations of

the FSES interventions, particularly regarding consistency of provision and assessment of outcome, the ES service roll out continued. Unfortunately the dilution of the initiative presented further evaluation difficulties and with a change in government in 2010 the funding for disadvantaged pupils was repackaged as pupil premium (PP), shifting the focus back to schools and pupils and thereby largely excluding the direct engagement with parents and the community.

The initially perceived success of the FSES prompted government to target all schools (FSES and ES) to provide a core offer of support services, which included:

- A varied menu of activities, combined with childcare, from 8am-6pm, five days a week, 48 weeks a year

- Community access to school facilities

- Parenting support, including family learning, transition information, parenting programmes

- Swift and easy access to targeted specialist services, for example, speech therapy, drugs counselling (DCSF, 2007).

The earlier Full Service schools models additionally offered:

- Adult learning, a range of provision including basic skills, non-accredited & accredited courses, work based qualifications

- The development of ICT literacy

- Health promotion

- The localisation of national services, e.g. housing, health, social care. (Cummings *et al.,* 2007; DCSF, 2009a).

For both FSES and ES models, adult /parent education was included as a strand of the delivery, either as family learning which aimed for family members to share learning through intergenerational activities (Learning and Skills Council, 2004), or as adult community education and social support services. The latter being focused exclusively on the adult /parent and linked with social, health and housing services.

The inclusion of adult and community members in both the core and full service offers reflected the significant role adults were seen to have by government, and to play in supporting a child's learning and well-being (DCSF, 2009b). Indeed, the positive effect of parental involvement on children's learning, pupil achievement and narrowing the gap in attainment levels between socially disadvantaged pupils and others, has been widely documented (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Feinstein, 2003; Horne & Haggart, 2004; Reynolds, 2006; Scott *et al.*, 2006 and Feinstein *et al.,* 2008). Equally, barriers to parental involvement have been acknowledged as including poor parental experiences, low confidence levels and restricted basic skills (Feinstein *et al.*, 2004; Haggart and Spacey, 2006; Feinstein and Sabates, 2007; DCSF, 2009a, Goodall, 2012; DET, 2013; Gorard and See, 2013) highlighting the need to deliver support not only to pupils but to parents as well.

The term 'parents' referred to both mother and father or male and female carers of a child and was the most common term used to describe the adults with children whom engaged with many of the documented community initiatives. Yet, in the majority of cases, findings from projects which reported on parental involvement, including FSES and ES identified the great majority of the 'parents' / significant care givers, were women, either mothers or carers (Williams *et al.*, 2002; Grant, 2009). Although this is readily acknowledged, few reports discussed their findings in terms of a theoretical

framework, in particular one which provides a feminist perspective upon their context of input, methodology, outcome or environment (Hill Collins, 1990; Gilligan, 1993; Deveaux, 1994).

This study, however, embraces these issues and concludes that gender related bias in the form of intersectionality (that is, social oppression associated with gender issues, such as racism and classism (Hill Collins, 1990)), the public and private sphere divide and cultural patriarchy had direct bearings on the outcomes for the women and their families. It acknowledges the existence of the feminist public / private space and further, its role in changes in identity for the women in terms of the location of the parent support services and adult education programmes (ibid). The use of the school and its settings emerged as a comfortable hybrid (i.e. a social space where the women's domestic experiences were valued within a public space). The school site became a blend of both public and private spheres which facilitated the women's needs and engagement. Indeed the cultural mix of the interview cohort highlighted issues of intersectionality, which will be examined later in this thesis.

In recognition of the service users, this piece of work draws on theory from the fields of gender and feminist study, identity and power, social and cultural capital to consider the situated work from the empirical fields of education, specifically that of adult and community. To date the evaluations of FSES have focused on pupil progress and parental interactions; this research though, aims to understand what the adults gained for themselves, and how their personal changes related to their identity and their relationships with others.

The specific adult support services offered on the single school site used for this study were:

Courses – Lower than level 1[2] (included first aid, make up and beauty, crafts, basic reading, basic literacy / numeracy, introduction to IT / childcare)

Level 1+[3] - from GCSE basic level through to full NVQ level 3 with associated literacy and numeracy (including literacy, numeracy, childcare, IT)

Support – parent support advice, social worker support, housing and health teams

Work opportunities – volunteer programme

On site facilities – day nursery, pre-school, crèche, fitness suite

Adults could progress across the course levels dependent on their skill base.

All other non-accredited services were open to them at any time.

1.2 Rationale for investigation

All strands of both FSES and ES delivery have been evaluated either generally or with specific focus as part of national evaluations. They are, however, openly recognised to have been problematic in gathering a clear set of outcomes, mainly because of the varied nature of the FSES offer across the country, and as Cummings *et al.* stated,

> *'FSESs were characterised by considerable diversity as schools charted their own directions in response to what they understood to be the situations they faced' (*Cummings *et al.,* 2007, p.2*).*

The content of the evaluations are then, more summaries of the schools' approaches, *"rather than, say, the impacts of particular activities, or the outcomes generated directly or indirectly by DfES funding'* (ibid, p.14).

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[2] Non accredited basic skills and leisure courses and accredited basic skills courses up to the equivalent standard of an average UK 11 year old

[3] Accredited courses equivalent to UK 1-9 grade GCSE through to UK A-C grade at A' Level standard

Indeed,

> *All (FSES) were located in, or served pupils from, Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) areas. Since these areas were selected because of their relatively high street crime levels, the first wave of FSESs overwhelmingly served areas of social and economic disadvantage.*' (ibid, p.6).

Unsurprisingly then, and despite the diversity in the implementation of the initiative, there were commonalities across schools, such as *'a recognition that these (*barriers to learning*) were related to what were seen as family and community problems'* (ibid, p3).

Yet, despite this acknowledgement, there was no specific national review of how much actual or perceived change was brought about by the FSES provision for adults, families and /or community problems or where they had impact (Cummings and Dyson, 2007). The evaluations were instead focused on the schools and pupils' outcomes (Cummings *et al.*, 2004; Horne and Haggart, 2004; Cummings *et al.*, 2005; Ranson and Rutledge, 2005; Cummings *et al.*, 2006, 2007; DCSF, 2009c) rather than the actual community users / parent participants. This culmination of these circumstance and existing outcomes prepared the path for the aims and objectives of my enquiry.

Additionally, few previous reviews of FSES, ES or other similar community projects specifically developed a detailed personal and demographic profile of the cohort engaged in their provision (Ranson and Rutledge, 2005; Cummings *et al.*, 2006, 2007; DCSF, 2009c). As targeted initiatives, they focused on those living in areas of deprivation and therefore, by association, were aiming to engage those more vulnerable to health, social and educational disadvantage (Mirowsky and Ross. 2003;

Wilkinson and Marmot, 2003; World Health Organisation, 2010). Yet, often the most vulnerable are the hardest to reach (McDonald, 2010). It was therefore imperative for me to gain an understanding of the nature of the cohort who accessed the services in order to understand the wider ramifications of the initiative's impact.

1.3 Aims and objectives of the Study

This is an exploratory, mixed methods, longitudinal study of a single case (Yin, 1981; Buchanan and Bryman, 2007). The empirical data responded to enquiry on:

- a demographic profile of the adult learners

- their motivations for engagement

- their expectations

- their perceived outcomes

- their perceptions of enabling / restricting factors

- changes in their identities and their relationships.

In turn, the analysis offered responses to the following five research questions:

1. What were the socio-demographical characteristics of the adults who accessed extended services provision? What was the profile of the adult service user in terms of age, level of qualification, marital and living situation, their ethnicity, support services accessed, voluntary work undertaken, how did they travel to the school site, car ownership, accommodation type, employment status and civic engagement?

2. Motivation and expectation: What were the adults' motivations to access community support services?

3. Experience: How did the adults describe their experiences of the community support services?

4. Impacts / outcomes: What, for the adults, was the impact of the services on a range of outcomes, i.e. relationships, behaviour, further study, civic engagement, employment, self-care, attitudes, aspirations and the role of parenting?

5. Plans: What did the adults plan to do next and were their choices related to their FSES experiences of the community support services?

These research questions were addressed through exploration of adults' expectations, motivation, outcomes, demographic profile, enabling and restricting factors and interpersonal / family relationships. Specifically the work was analysed through the lens of feminism and theories of identity, power and social and cultural capital. A conceptual description of the setting is illustrated in Figure 1,
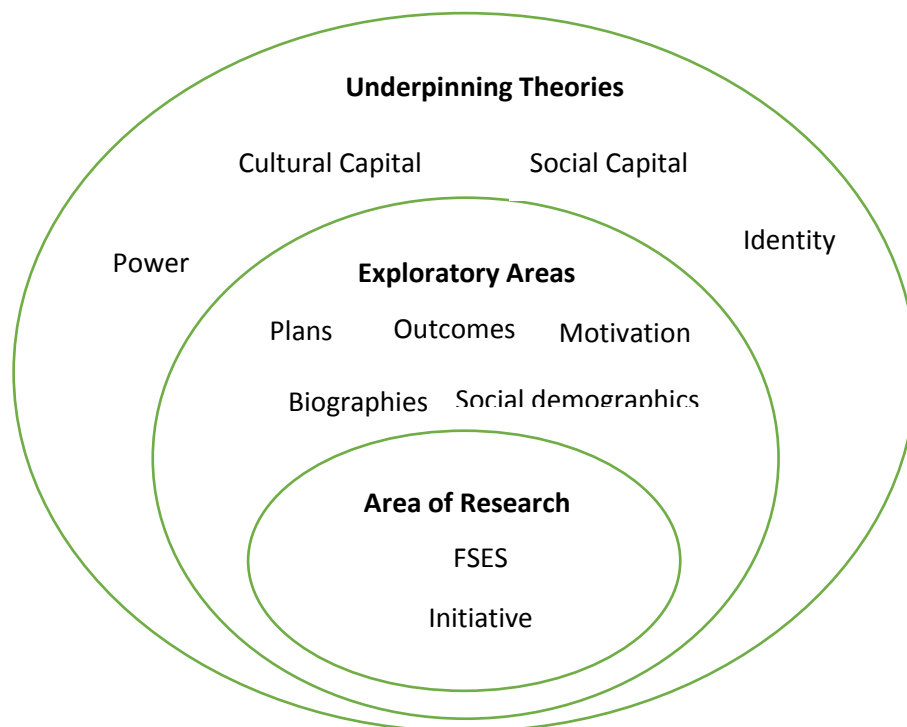
Figure 1. Contextual setting of research focus (adapted from Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

1.4 Approach to research

As a unit of research this project is presented as a single case study (Yin, 1981) focused on services offered to parents and members of the local community, which included a variety of non-accredited and accredited courses, volunteer packages with associated placements, parent and family support and intervention, as well as a range of onsite facilities.

The fieldwork took place between 2011 and 2014 and was separated into two distinct stages. The quantitative data was collected first; beginning with 175 semi-structured, self-completion questionnaires, consisting of a mix of open and closed ended questions. These were completed by 165 women and 10 men accessing one or more of the FSES provisions in a single week in June, 2011. These were used to identify the characteristics of the service users, such that it drew a profile of those engaging with the provision from the school / community site. The male and female participants were reviewed in their own right but during the preliminary data analysis, the number of males was judged to be too small a minority to draw any conclusive inferences and therefore no further analysis of them was pursued.

The qualitative work followed, and was carried out in two stages of individual, face-to-face interviews held at two separate times, the first in July 2011 and the second in October 2014. In total the data was generated through 32 semi structured interviews (19 in 2011 and 13 in 2014). These focused on the adults' motivations to access support and their experiences of them, and explored their perceptions of the impact of the support accessed; both for them and their relationships with others, both in the short and longer term. Each stage used the same core group of questions which covered the areas of motivation, limiting factors to success, personal impacts, and

change to their sense of identity, relationships and civic engagement. The second wave of interviews asked additional questions about activities that had happened since the first interview, around three years before, for example, changes to relationships, change to motivation, areas of personal development, aspirations and perceived barriers to progress[4]. Although the length of time between each interview was the same for all participants it did not necessarily reflect a shared length of time engaged with services.

Summary

Both the FSES and ESs initiative, are relatively under-researched aspects of education. This study sets out to make a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge of adult / community and community school studies, specifically from a feminist slant. Despite community based programmes, including adult learning, stretching back as far the 18th century (Smith, 2014), the wider effects and outcomes of community based support remain unclear (Cummings *et al.*, 2011); particularly from the point of view of the women learners and their identity. To date the majority of the research on FSES and ES intervention, and similar provision, such as, Sure Start[5], FL and a wide range of other parent / child studies has been focused on outcomes for children and young people rather than the adults themselves (Ashton, 2004; Ofsted, 2006; Smith, 2014). Although the programmes were inclusive of both adult men and women, typically the uptake by mothers and other women was frequently over 60% and often much higher (Williams *et al.,* 2002; Horne and Haggart, 2004; Scott *et al.*, 2006). This prompts the need to acknowledge the dominant number of women in pupil

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[4] Although the participants were interviewed twice, the interviews were not linked at an individual level.
[5] Sure Start: A government lead programme aimed to give every child the best start in life. Sure Start services were based mainly in areas of disadvantage and served children four years and below and their families. Support included family health, early years care and education. www.early-years.org/surestart/

/ parental involvement / engagement programmes. This is one of the reasons that establishing the outcomes for the women is reviewed from a feminist perspective.

Firstly though, developing a transparent profile of who the service users were and what their social and academic status was, became imperative to the study, specifically with regard to the subsequent understanding of the impact of the FSES/ ES initiative. Given the projects set out to target disadvantaged communities, it is essential that time is taken to confirm whom the services engaged in order to best utilise and better understand any significant outcomes.

The study aims therefore are to provide better understanding of the social phenomena of the FSES in order to inform future practice and contribute to a wider understanding of community learning. Specifically I maintain that the research adds:

Detail to understanding of the longer term impact of FSES on identity and relationships

Wider explanation of women's engagement with community services

Identification of what the women perceived to be attributable elements to positive FSES outcomes

New discussions on the effect of FSES creating a feminist private space within a public sphere

1.5 Thesis structure

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction. Outlines the context, rationale, aims and objectives, research questions and the overall approach to the research.

Chapter 2: The setting. Offers a geographical profile of the area in which the study took place. It moves to describe the local authority area framework of the initiative and the immediate delivery site.

Chapter 3: Background to the study. Presents a review of the FSES evaluations and the associated challenges as well as focussing on the community support programme and adult education needs.

Chapter 4: Theoretical framework. The theoretical concepts of social and cultural capital, identity, power, empowerment and public and private spheres are identified in relation to the FSES initiative.

Chapter 5: Methods and methodology. The epistemological orientation, overarching methodological principles and research tools are described and related to the key characteristics of the sample and research design. The sample is described in greater detail and ethical considerations are also discussed.

Chapter 6: Quantitative analysis and findings. The framework for analysis is explained and leads on to descriptions of the three stages of analysis within this section; frequencies, contingency tables and logistic regression. The quantitative research set out to draft a profile of the service user from the frequency data and resulted in separate, detailed male and female descriptive portraits being drawn. The

cross tabulations explore for significant associations between categories of characteristics and key outcomes, which when found were further interrogated for predictability through logistic regression.

Chapter 7: Qualitative analysis. The strategy for analysis is given as a five stage framework, the first four of which are stages of codings. These in turn are followed by the creation of a coding matrix which offers a visual grouping of outcomes across both stages of interviews.

Chapter 8: Findings from the qualitative data. The data are grouped under their associated theories and linked with exemplar quotations from the interviewees. Significant associations are identified and are later briefly reviewed in contrast with the qualitative findings.

Chapter 9: Conclusion and discussion. A summary of work is drawn in relation to the research aims, objectives and outcomes. The purpose and findings of the work are discussed in full before reviewing and responding to the main research questions. Acknowledgement is given to the contributions this work brings to the existing knowledge within the field of community and adult education. Limitations of this work are recognised and suggestions for further research is outlined, including the proposal of the emergence of a new hypothesis.

Chapter 2: The setting

Introduction

The setting and the background for this research has clear significance for understanding the exploration of the FSES initiative. As a concept designed to tackle social and educational challenge this chapter goes to some length to illustrate the reality of the circumstance in which users lived. In this chapter I will present geographical and socio-economic data to generate a framework to better comprehend the findings from both the qualitative and quantitative research.

As a construct designed for social change, 'extended services' was a politically driven approach to tackling identified links between social disadvantage and poor educational attainment (Mortimore and Whitty, 2000; Levacic and Woods, 2002; Banerjee, 2016). The initiative, modelled on other international intervention programmes and similar to the New Community Schooling programme in Scotland, went through several stages of development in the UK. Eventually in 2002, it became known as Extended Schools Demonstration Projects. The purpose of these projects was to identify the benefits and challenges for a range of pupil and parent school based services whilst tackling social and educational deprivation (Dyson *et al.,* 2002). Following positive but non-specific project evaluations in terms of their potential to contribute to the renewal of disadvantaged areas and their communities (Dyson *et al.,* 2002; Cummings *et al.*, 2004) and to address child focused social concerns (DfES, 2003), FSES was launched. Its inception, however, had an additional focus as it coincided in response to the Laming Report, Every Child Matters (ECM) (DfES, 2003). The report concluded that lack of co-ordinated working practices across support services contributed to the premature death of the child, Victoria Climbie. The ECM policy required local authority

children's services to act more coherently in order to address issues of child poverty, associated low levels of attainment, and improved outcomes for both children and their families; FSES presented as the ideal vehicle to promote joint working practices to these ends. The concept was hailed as something of a panacea (Ofsted, 2008) which helped it gain further government commitment, propelling the swift move from FSES to ES (Cummings *et al.,* 2007).

This research focuses on a single secondary school site in Croydon, a borough with a complex profile with vast differences in its residential information across its electoral wards. Like other FSES schools nationally, Croydon FSES schools were located in areas with high levels of disadvantage. Although it shared many similarities with other boroughs chosen to host FSES, each was unique. (The Identification of the borough helps provide a clear framework and context in which to better understand the outcomes. From an ethical stance there is no conflict of confidentiality for the research participants or school based information, either currently or in the future).

The FSES / ES services were created for and used by those from the local and wider community. Therefore to appreciate the women's interaction with the services there is need for a descriptive backdrop during the time of their development. Indeed, the nature of the initiative evolved through developing local policy, coupled with the practicalities of the on-site facilities. These will be identified in order to understand the nature of the services offered.

2.1 Borough of Croydon

Situated in south west London, Croydon remains the largest town without city status in Western Europe (Till, 2012). At the time of the research its resident population was the largest of all the London boroughs and was estimated to be 342,000 of which 36%

were Black or minority ethnicities (BME) (CCT, 2009).The borough's largest ethnic groups were white British (59.8%), black Caribbean (7.9%), Indian (7.5%), black African (5.6%) and other white (4.8%). A significant number of its residents were asylum seekers and refugees, 685 of which were unaccompanied minors (Croydon Council, 2009). Indeed, the displacement of migrants from across the globe, coupled with the location of the Home Office UK Border Agency (immigration) in the town centre, has given Croydon a constant, slow shifting cultural mix across the borough.

During FSES development unemployment was approximately 0.5% higher than England's average (7.6%) (Croydon Council, 2009). The borough's main industry 'services' reflected a relatively weak skill base, which was associated with a relatively low rate of pay (CCT, 2009).

In terms of standard indicators Croydon was not ranked as one of the most deprived London boroughs (21 out of 33) yet, it did have wards that were amongst the most deprived in England and Wales (CCT, 2009) and it was within and around such wards the FSES provision was established. The decision to place the FSES here was a strategic response by the local authority to address local need and central government concern.

The census of 2001 showed just over 82,000 residents in Croydon were children and young people (birth – 18yrs, (30.5%)), which was the highest population of children in any borough in London. The average profile for educational attainment at secondary level was lower than that for London and England and the number of school exclusions across the borough was higher than both London and England averages (Croydon Education, Research and Statistics Team, 2007). There were 1087 children in the care of the local authority, the most of all London boroughs (Crayford, 2007).

This borough's profile, with its acknowledged level of deprivation, as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), (2007) coupled with the general levels of educational attainment, all combined to identify Croydon as a location for two of the first 61 FSES during 2003-4 (DfES, 2003). A direct policy intervention served to raise the borough's own measures to tackle poverty and improve outcomes for pupils and their families.

2.2 The local authority

The LA's strategies to address the broader determinants of education and health that affected its residents were presented in several local authority documents, including Croydon's Community Strategy (2008-2011). This was a single, statutory, overarching plan for all services affecting children and young people in Croydon which linked directly with Croydon's 'New Local Area Agreement' (2008-2011). The aims were far from new; Croydon had a history of plans to improve the lives of its residents, especially in terms of meeting the needs of young people. Its efforts were evidenced in engagement with a range of area based initiatives such as Education Action Zones, Excellence in Partnerships and Behaviour Improvement Programmes where the focus was on improving the basics of teaching and learning and school leadership. Yet, despite over a decade of programmes of this nature, there still existed a general academic underachievement within specific groups, such as, male Black African and Caribbean heritage. White working class families, that is, those in receipt of free schools meals (FSM) and children in local authority care (CCT, 2009), also struggled to achieve academically. The FSES initiative provided a positive model to enhance attempts to reduce the gap in performance between these various groups across the borough.

2.3 Profile of the immediate research area

The FSES secondary school base used to collect data was part of a cluster of schools consisting of five primary schools and a single children's centre. Sitting geographically close to the secondary school, they were based within four densely populated electoral wards.

Data from the IMD showed two of the wards local to the FSES had more overcrowded living conditions and families living in rented social housing than most other wards within the borough. Equally, both had a high percentage of lone parent families, yet, many were not using their allocated Child Tax Credits. Generally, the unemployment rate in 2001 was above the upper quartile at 5.1%, with one local area ranking in the 4th highest rate of unemployment across the whole of Croydon. (Erskine, 2008). The lack of employment reduced the opportunity for families to move into less densely populated areas. For other families overcrowding and being without a car or van was balanced with living close to one of the main locations of employment, which increased their opportunity of work.

In the four wards situated in the immediate vicinity of the FSES, just less than half the people were white British (46%) (Croydon Council, Census 2001). Whilst Indian residents were the largest BME group, accounting for over 12% of the local population, closely followed by Black Caribbean residents (11%) with a total of a third (32%) of residents born outside the UK.

The living arrangements and the socio-economic profile of the areas contributed to local residents having the lowest life expectancy of any ward in Croydon. The percentage of residents on incapacity benefits was the highest in the borough (Job Centre Plus, 2007). Residents also had the highest rate of dental decay, one of the

highest conception rates in under 18 year olds (7%) and the largest percentage of people per household, with an average of 1.5 persons per room (Croydon NHS, 2004).

It was this profile of the ward's residents, together with the secondary school's attainment data and its well established links with the community that determined the local authority's decision to locate a full service extended provision in the selected school during 2004.

2.4 The school site

The school's awareness of community need was reflected in its on-site access, community provision and general openness to community support. The school was located on a large open space which was laid out as sports grounds surrounding the buildings, a commodity which was limited within the wider peripheries of central Croydon. The grounds and the school had a long standing history of site hire to local community groups for sport and leisure workshops and to families for special occasion events which helped embed its services and its access as a significant site within the local community.

The grounds also hosted several demountable buildings, one of which was a 36 placement, privately run, term-time day nursery which was built chiefly to address the low childcare sufficiency rating across the local authority. It also offered unemployed parents the opportunity to return to work or study and for the teachers and other school staff it offered discounted nursery rates. This helped to recruit and maintain the best possible pupil support across not only the main secondary school but also the local cluster of primary schools, something that had become problematic because of the profile of the area.

Additionally, there was a local authority funded pre-school and an early Years Resource Library supplying toys and activities to local childminders and care settings at subsidised prices. A free crèche was also available to children under five years whose parents were accessing adult education classes, these were also held in the demountable units.

The blending of early years care with a secondary school site, surrounded by several local feeder primary schools created a fertile opportunity to work with a wide range of local women through their familiarity of the site and its staff.

2.5 Full service extended school and extended school cluster

Like many other boroughs piloting FSES, Croydon had its share of schools which had a history of engaging with regeneration initiatives, particularly those which were based in areas of deprivation (Cummings and Dyson, 2007). Therefore the identification of schools with potential to be used as successful FSES project bases was a relatively straight forward process. The two sites which were selected had previously displayed an overt and longstanding willingness to expand their work with their communities and both had existing infrastructure to support further development. When DfES announced in 2005 that all schools should provide the core offer of extended services by 2010, however, the local authority was charged with a much more challenging task in terms of drawing out the impacts of either the FSES or ES services as the original initiative took on a new role. The approach that was taken for the ES service rollout aimed at encouraging head teachers to work together in small groups of schools where relationships already existed, either as feeders for a particular secondary school or based upon geographical proximity.

Interestingly, although the borough had Sure Start Children Centres fully operational since 2003, which also offered similar support and provision to that of extended schools, they were not used as a starting point for building the extended school clusters. Their only significant difference was focus on families with children under, rather than over five years old. Instead, schools formed their own clusters to which Children's Centres were assigned, based on geographical location. Added to this, the roll out of the Children's Centres was led by a separate LA development officer which reduced synchronisation of shared services and funding structures for both initiatives.

Despite government constructed ready-made toolkits for schools to use and national support teams to help embed the initiative, (Training and Development Agency ((TDA), 2009), there was a lack of consistency in all aspects of the FSES and ES projects across the borough and beyond. Further still, the lack of commitment from many schools to fund the FSES / ES co-ordinator posts within their organisations, suggested, like other earlier community school initiatives,

> *'around urban community schools, there are deep and strong forces that pull schools back from full engagement with their surrounding communities. (and) It would take a fundamental reordering of the schooling system and of the orientation of teachers and policy makers for things to change'* (Smith, 2014, p.18)

This was a challenge that Cummings, Dyson and Todd (2004) tried to ameliorate, following their evaluations of the pathfinder projects, with their recommendations for dedicated leadership within ES and recognition of the importance of the FSES co-ordinator role.

This varied approach to the FSES / ES services set up, implementation and delivery posed a huge challenge for evaluation and understanding of what impacts the initiative had. Indeed, as the project progressed, it began to share with other previous overseas FSES community programmes, a lack of clearly identified elements with which to measure success.

Summary

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the purpose of the FSES / ES, recognising its role in working towards narrowing the attainment gap for pupils and providing co-ordinated services to the community.

It moves on to draw a geographical and socio-economic background to Croydon and explains why the borough was selected in 2003 to host two pilot full service extended schools. It highlights the location as one of extreme deprivation and pulls into focus the immediate setting of the study, using data on living and health profiles of the local populations.

The influential over-arching local authority plans are summarised and the strategy for children and young people is identified as the mechanism to address the barriers to success and positive outcomes. The practical element of communicating the plan across the local authority to specific localities is described and demonstrates the links between the main service providers and schools and the role of FSES and ES clusters. Demographic details of the immediate community profile, local to the cluster of FSES and ESs, draws attention to the health and living situations and sets the backdrop for the nature of the services offered.

Finally a description of the secondary and primary school grouping provides a factual base which begins to illuminate some of the functions and tensions that existed across the FSES / ES cluster. The FSES at the centre of the cluster is portrayed in fine detail to begin to consider the relationship between the effects of the FSES ethos on the provision for its pupils and its wider influence on the extended services for adults. Funding and physical aspects of the site are recognised to have had significant bearing on the nature and location of services offered, creating variation in provision which in turn is acknowledged to raise difficulties in evaluating its outcomes. It is to evaluation and associated adult and community education, community support programmes and the development of personal identity as related to the FSES initiative that I turn now, to review the literature which informs the study.

Chapter 3: Background to the study

Introduction

This chapter builds on the background and context of the identified FSES study, and provides a framework of literature designed to underpin the key aspects of the research. I begin with a review of the international evaluations of the FSES initiatives and then move towards a more detailed account of the English projects. In relation to their findings, I explore the wider literature on community based adult learning, particularly in association with parental support in order to establish a context within which the findings of this research can be viewed.

3.1 Evaluation

In relative terms England was slower than other Western counterparts to implement the concept of Full Service / New Community Schooling (NCS). Programmes in the USA, Australia and Scotland were all delivering and reviewing interventions by the late 1990's and were therefore at least five years ahead of England in implementing their projects (Dryfoos, 1998; Cummings *et al.,* 2005; Smith, 2014). This suggested that England may have been able to learn from its counterparts in terms of evaluation. Unfortunately, the international projects readily recognised this to be a problematic aspect, as it later became for England too, due to the lack of systematic rigour (Cummings *et al.*, 2011) brought about by difficulties, not least, consistency of measurement scales, definitions, timing and attribution (ibid).

Localised approaches to evaluating the FSES interventions in the USA, Australia, Scotland and England all bore positive outcomes (Dryfoos, 1994; Dryfoos 2000; James *et al.*, 2001; Sammons *et al.,* 2003; Riddell and Tett, 2004; Riele, 2007;

Cummings *et al.,* 2011). Yet, despite this general feeling of positivity, the data was inconclusive on the long term attainment of the fundamental goal of the initiative, which was, to narrow the gap in pupil attainment for those living in areas of disadvantage. There was also a shared lack of evidence of long-term effectiveness and uncertainty that similar change could not be brought about by other methods (Cummings *et al.,* 2011). This was summarised well in Dryfoos' response to the question, do they (FSES) work? *'I wish I could give an unequivocal "yes" to the question. I have to report a strong "maybe"* (Dryfoos, 1998: p.9). This was a sentiment shared by other countries' evaluations of full service provision (Dryfoos, 1994; Sammons *et al.,* 2003; Riddell and Tett, 2004; Te Riele, 2007; Cummings *et al.,* 2011).

England's roll out of the FSES initiative in 2003-4 saw numerous local reviews and three national government-funded evaluations conducted by Cummings *et al.* (2005, 2006, and 2007). These provided an annual review of the first three years of the initiative. Year one reviewed 61 projects all of which were located in Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) areas[6]. In the second year another 45 projects were included, 25 of which were in BIP areas and by the third year 138 schools were involved.

As with other FSES international models, DfES envisioned the UK FSES project would draw together the threads of several policy concerns. The UK initiative aimed to deliver on neighbourhood renewal, national child care strategy, educational attainment and the ECM agenda through multi-agency work (Cummings *et al.,* 2007). Although already complex from the outset, the evaluations took an overall view of all agency

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[6] BIP areas: 34 Areas in the UK with relatively high levels of street crime gained DfES-funded local authority support to improve pupil behaviour and school attendance

and educational input and focused on the schools as delivery units and centralised locations for neighbourhood renewal.

The evaluation(s) aimed to identify:

the activities undertaken by participating schools;

the processes underpinning these activities;

the impacts of activities; and

the outcomes of activities (Cummings et al., 2007)

where,

'A multi-strand approach was adopted over the three years of the initiative. The main components of this were: detailed case studies of 17 projects; a statistical analysis of the National Pupil Database (NPD); a cost benefit analysis of FSES provision in a sample of 10 projects; brief case studies of comparator schools not participating in the FSES initiative; a questionnaire survey of pupils, parents and staff in case study FSESs and their comparators, repeated across two years; and a final questionnaire survey of all FSESs' (ibid, p.2).

Like its international counterparts, the initiative was in motion before the evaluation framework was set up (ibid). This created an evaluative model where, what was reviewed was determined by the activity in train which restricted the choice of a methodological approach to explore its impact.

Unfortunately, evaluation for all aspects of both FSES and ES projects in England were hampered from the outset by their diversity in set up, delivery and demographics.

There were three fundamental problems: firstly, the flexible provision of FSES services designed to meet the individual needs of local populations did by default, vary. Furthermore, the individuality of each setting rendered any findings which did seemed relevant unlikely to be replicated or found in other schools (Cummings *et al.,* 2011).

Secondly, even if a set of measureable data had been identified and collected consistently, trying to group the findings would have been meaningless given the variety of school and community populations where individual needs dictated a bespoke approach and delivery, as no two settings were the same.

Thirdly, in terms of previously evaluated empirical data, there appeared to be little evidence that any impacts from FSES interventions were sustainable nor could the data be guaranteed to be correctly attributed to specific FSES inputs due to the complexity of the provision (Blank *et al.*, 2003; Dryfoos *et al.*, 2005; Cummings *et al.*, 2005, 2006, 2007; Cummings *et al.,* 2011). Indeed, where there had appeared to be evidence that FSES did have a significant impact in specific circumstances, *'it was difficult to claim that they are in any way transformative'* (Cummings *et al*, 2011, p. 92), other than for the individual and:

> *'it is difficult to find evidence that any improvements are sustained, or that they transfer from specific indicators to better life chances overall, or that they could not have been obtained by means other than full service provision*' (ibid, p.92).

The final annual evaluation of the three commissioned reviews by Cummings *et al.* (2007), however, noted in its executive summary, that the initiative was perceived to have had a positive impact on pupils, families and local people. It also identified the FSES approach as being '*commonly associated with improved school performance'* (Cummings *et al.,* 2007. p.3).

Although school performance data did not corroborate the collected perceptions, this did not necessarily mean that they were inaccurate, rather, the empirical evidence was unavailable or that some of the most important benefits were impossible to measure.

Cummings *et al.* (ibid) suggested that, although a good fit, the FSES model worked from a position of negativity, where the focus was centred on filling in gaps in knowledge and socio/ economic opportunity (often identified by 'professionals' rather than community members themselves). This research team later went on to consider an alternative to the deficit model, one based on a more positive rationale, where the extended services were envisaged as a permanent and central part of community schooling, where members of the community went to fulfil their needs, and where education was tailored to life in its broadest sense. They used Henry Morris's Cambridgeshire Village Colleges from the 1920's as an example,

> *'As the community centre of the neighbourhood the village college would provide for the whole man, and abolish the duality of education and ordinary life. It would not only be the training ground of the art of living, but the place in which life is lived. The dismal dispute of vocational and non-vocational education would not arise in it, because education and living would be equated. It would be a visible demonstration in stone of the continuity and never ceasingness of education.'* (Morris, 1924,p. xv)

Certainly, Morris' model was much more empowering, creating the possibility of greater self-satisfaction and introduced the concept of long-term sustainability and permanency to its delivery. For Cummings *et al.* the key was developing a long-term change to the perceptions of schools and their relationships with the communities they served. Indeed, they sought evidence of such change from the FSES, anticipating time

may be a critical factor, *'Though large-scale effects were not yet evident, they are not out of the question in the longer term'* (Cummings *et al.,* 2007, p.3)

Cummings *et al.* (2011) in their follow up to the national evaluations, reiterated that for clearer understanding of the FSES impacts they, *'have to be judged over a timescale adequate to allow those outcomes to emerge'* (2011, p.89).

The longitudinal dimension of my research reflects my agreement with *Cummings et al.'*s view on time needed for outcomes to become apparent and gives voice to the opinions of the adult service users themselves.

Performance data, though keenly sought by government through the evaluations (DCSF, 2008), was not the sole source of evidence. There were plenty of examples of individual and school-wide successes in all of the annual FSES evaluations and in other studies seeking positive impacts of such services (Riddell and Tett, 2004; Cummings *et al.*, 2005, 2006, 2007). These were seen through the use of vignettes, case studies and anecdotes. Cummings *et al.* (2011) continued to seek clarity on the FSES outcomes, long after the initiative had moved on to become ES support. Much of their data was qualitative which they considered needed to be viewed in a wider context, *'Taken individually, such anecdotes were of limited use for evaluative purposes. Taken collectively, however, …… they provided much more robust evidence'* (ibid, p.87).

Looking ahead from the evaluations from Cummings *et al.* (2007), their suggestions for the progression of the FSES concept read to be action orientated. They listed necessary developments to include:

- coherency of policies to create a stable framework

- clear conceptualisations on the nature and purpose of the FSES approach

- a shared and integrated multi-agency and school development plan (Cummings *et al.,* 2007).

There was, unfortunately, little time to progress with these goals before FSES were morphed into ES. The transition was prompted by a string of high profile safe-guarding failures which involved child deaths at the hands of their parents / carers. In turn, this generated the policy document, Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003), and a government commitment to supporting all schools to offer a core set of ES services, similar to those in FSES but which had an additional ECM remit to deliver multi-agency collaboration to ensure as far as 'humanly' possible *'That no child will ever be at risk again of abuse or violence from within their own family'* (Blair, Introduction: Every Child Matters, DfES, 2003)

ES became then, a critical delivery agent of the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda. The ES/ ECM combination was created first and foremost to protect the country's most vulnerable children and improve their life chances, including increased educational attainment, for all children (DfES, 2003). Although ECM and ES were inextricably entwined the government evaluated each element separately.

Reflecting its central purpose of safeguarding and the policy claim that ES would meet the needs of pupils, families and the community, it offered amongst other aspects,

> *'Parenting support including information sessions at key transition points, parenting programmes run with the support of other children's services and family learning sessions to allow children to learn with their parents;'*

'swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialist support services such as speech therapy, child and adolescent mental health services, family support services, intensive behaviour support, and (for young people) sexual health services' (Smith, 2014, no page number given).

The reviews of the ES policy (DCSF, 2007; Ofsted, 2008; Carpenter *et al.*, 2009; Conlon, 2009) were mainly focused on which services were offered, (i.e. attainment of pupils, development of universal services and access to employment), rather than which services were accessed. None of the evaluations set out to understand how the FSES or ES inputs had helped the adults nor what they had achieved in the process of minimising the risk of child abuse.

With such shifting scenery and no lead-in time between initiatives, it was unsurprising the outcomes were hard to capture for the pupils and even less accessible in regard of the adults' outcomes. The evaluations operated from a positive base, seeking in the main to establish progress and outcomes towards the initiative's goals, using all available data (DCSF, 2007; Ofsted, 2008; Carpenter *et al.,* 2009). Given adult support was secondary to pupil outcomes (despite the ECM drivers) it is understandable there was little evidence of data on adult provision and progress (ibid, Cummings *et al.,* 2007; Smith, 2014). Indeed, the specific nature of support for the adults was left for the school to decide what was most needed. Therefore, by associated suggestion, the evaluations had to be local and bespoke to each school.

This 'catch up' evaluative approach raised a question with regard to the government's purpose in creating the ES / ECM agenda. Was the policy combination, as it was presented, about addressing domestic and social concern? Certainly on the front face of the initiative there were ambiguities, for example, despite the rhetoric of desired

long lasting / permanent change, funding for the initiative was available for three years only (Cummings *et al.,* 2007). After this, schools were left to charge families, engage in entrepreneurship and / or raise funds from grants as the initiative was rolled out beyond the financial commitment. Without experience in working in such ways, as funding dwindled, some FSES and ES either scaled down their offer or for some, their practice reverted to its previously traditional provision for pupils only (Cummings *et al.*, 2011) leaving parents once again unsupported.

Indeed, it was not only school staff who were uncertain about the actualisation of the FSES and ES initiative,

> *'Few parents felt they knew about the kinds of additional services offered… (And only) Around a third of parents had used parental support services (most commonly social events and information sessions)'* (Carpenter *et al.,* 2009, pp.3-4)

Given the premise on which ES structure sat, delivery of the ECM agenda was at the very heart of its delivery and underpinned by a policy of practice to safeguard children by supporting their parents. The minimal focus on engagement, input, and outcomes for parents and their children, however, begs the question why closer attention was not given to this aspect of delivery.

Indeed, although differently focused to FSES, the ES project shared similar contributors to the challenges of setting up an evaluation framework. The drive behind FSES was around narrowing the gap in attainment specifically for those living in areas of disadvantage, social concern and recognition of its link to poverty (Morris, 1924, Social Exclusion Unit, 2001, Feinstein, 2003, Feinstein *et.al.,* 2004, Levitas, 2005, Feinstein and Sabates, 2007, Feinstein *et. al.,* 2008; Banerjee, 2016). In contrast, ES/

ECM focused on safeguarding, health, social inclusion and pupil attainment for all, including the disadvantaged. Yet, still the thrust of the evaluations was focused on pupils' progress, unrelated to parental engagement. Included in some FSES / ES provision, however, there was dedicated family support available through programmes such as the Incredible Years[7] and Strengthening Families[8]. These courses may have offered easier opportunities to collect such data, yet, the outcomes from them was never included in the wider FSES / ES evaluations.

3.2 Adult and community education

The inclusion of adult and community members in both the ES and FSES offers reflected the recognition of the significant role adults play in supporting a child's learning and well-being (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; DCSF, 2009b, Heckman, 2011; Park 2016). Indeed, the positive effect of parental involvement with children's learning, pupil achievement and life-long wellbeing is widely documented (Williams *et al.,* 2002; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Feinstein, 2003; Horne and Haggart, 2004; Reynolds, 2006; Scott *et al.,* 2006; Feinstein *et al.,* 2008; Park 2016). Equally, barriers to parental involvement are acknowledged to manifest as poor childhood experiences, low self-confidence and restricted basic skills (Feinstein *et al.,* 2004; Haggart and Spacey, 2006; Feinstein and Sabates, 2007; DCSF, 2009b; Banerjee, 2016). All of which highlight the importance to deliver support not only to pupils but parents as well.

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[7] The Incredible Years® is a series of interlocking, evidence-based programs for parents, children, and teachers, supported by over 30 years of research. The goal is to prevent and treat young children's behaviour problems and promote their social, emotional, and academic competence.

[8] The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) involves elementary school children, 6 to 12 years of age, and their families in 14 family training sessions using family systems and cognitive behavioural approaches to increase resilience and reduce risk factors. It seeks to improve family relationships, parenting skills, and youth's social and life skills.

Concurrent with school-based social and educational issues, there were also specific concerns within adult education. Around 40 years earlier than the FSES initiative, outcomes from the Russell Enquiry (1973) revealed stark racial, class and income disparities between adult learners and non-learners. Despite a wide range of programmes such as 'Return to Learn' and 'Second Chance', aimed at increasing adult participation to address these social inequalities, successive national surveys in the 1990s revealed little change in the distribution and range of adult learners. This signalled that a learning divide, defined by age, qualification, occupation and class had developed (McGivney, 2001). McGivney (1993, 2001) identified under-represented participant groups within adult education, particularly those with what he termed 'depositional barriers'. He recognised that these barriers were for some, related to their attitude towards themselves and learning. He believed they affected their motivation and self-belief, and saw them as more difficult to overcome than situational or institutional restrictions. He also connected these dispositional barriers with influencing family dynamics, especially for those from backgrounds of disadvantage (ibid). McGivney's findings, coupled with fears of declining economic competitiveness drove the government's 'widening participation' initiative to the top of the agenda in all learning sectors, including FSES.

Simultaneously, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) believed that adult / parent engagement with services such as parent support, adult literacy, numeracy and IT would 'raise aspirations' and 'promote social mobility' (DCSF, 2007), suggesting FSES had a role to play in neighbourhood regeneration (Cummings and Dyson, 2007; DCSF, 2009b; 2009c; Ofsted, 2009). Unfortunately, at neither the inception of 'widening participation' or the FSES initiative, was there clear identification of the learner/ participants' backgrounds or what they perceived their needs to be and

what they might derive from the services. Instead, programmes were put together by 'professionals' and offered to the community as a top-down model based on a deficit hypothesis (Cummings *et al.,* 2011). Given the identification of the social divide and the associated target of engaging the parents and community members and the recognised influence parents exert on child development and attainment (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Siegler *et al.,* 2011), it would have been helpful if the profile of the adults who did engage had been captured. Indeed, arguably the profile of the attending adults was critical to understanding how and for whom the initiative created impact. The location and background of the school and the focus of the FSES initiative made clear that the aim of the project was targeted at disadvantaged families.

To identify those experiencing disadvantage, several categories are used in public assessments, such as, income, employment, education, health, crime, housing and living conditions (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2016). These are underpinned by the fact that these measures are usually beyond the control of the individual. In other words, the adults / parents had limited power to change their relative disadvantage along these axes of privilege. Employing these indices indicated many of the women who did engage with the services were recognised not only as disadvantaged, but also as being 'hard to reach', a term used to portray significantly marginalised or vulnerable groups within a community. Being 'hard to reach' can be classified in the following ways:

> *'Minority groups: The traditionally under-represented groups, the marginalised, disadvantaged or socially excluded. This includes service users who fall into well-used categories, often linked to population characteristics, such as minority ethnic groups, travellers or asylum seekers.*

Slipping through the net: The overlooked, 'invisible' or those unable to articulate their needs. This includes those caring for others, those with mental health problems, service users who fall just outside the statutory or usual remit of a provider, or whose needs are apparently not so great as to grant access to a service.

*The service resistant: Those unwilling to engage with service providers, the suspicious, the over targeted or disaffected. This includes families 'known' to agencies such as social services, who are wary of engaging with providers, or others who are distrustful and potentially hostile to service providers, possibly due to a link to drug use, alcohol abuse or criminal behaviour' (*Doherty *et al.,* 2004, p.5*).*

The categories here are not mutually exclusive and many of the women who participated in this study (see a demographic profile in Chapter 6 - quantitative outcomes) sit within one or more of these groups. There is acknowledgement however, that the above categories are somewhat broad-ranging. The following then, adds further clarity to the term 'hard to reach', as it relates to,

*'Communities or sections of population that are not engaged fully in an active participatory citizenship process and fail to access services. They may experience language difficulties, difficulties in accessing information, they may think that service-providers do not care about them, do not listen or even are irrelevant to them' (*Parmez, 2015).

More specifically, groups which are often termed 'hard to reach' including BAME[9] LGBT[10], homeless people; 'hidden populations', i.e. groups of people who do not wish to be found or contacted, such as illegal drug users or gang members; as well as broader segments of the population, e.g., people with disabilities.

Such groups are usually identified and encouraged to engage with services by medical and educational professionals because group members often experience poorer health and lower educational outcomes. These less favourable outcomes can often result in further alienation from the services, making the adults harder to reach still, and often includes others related to them, creating the possibility of generational disadvantage (ibid).

The barriers to engagement are numerous and often complex and the 'hard to reach' communities referred to in this study were mainly those with limited or no work experience, language barriers, little family support, lack of information about education, uncertain legal status or status that prevents access to employment and training, few positive role models, low or non-existent qualifications, qualifications that are not recognised, low literacy and numeracy rates, financial difficulties (ibid). The term 'hard to reach' therefore, does not necessarily suggest 'reluctance to be reached', more so, an 'inability to be reached', usually due to mutually insufficient resources on both the service providers' and the adults' side.

Much of the support the adults accessed through the FSES services was focused on teaching and learning and was delivered, as previously established, through adult education and Family Learning methodology which used an andragogic approach

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[9] BAME: black, Asian and minority ethnics
[10] LGBT: An initialism used since 1990's that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

(adult education) (Horne and Haggart, 2004; Haggart and Spacey, 2006; Cummings *et al.,* 2007). That is, it was anticipated that each learner would progress from beginning as a dependent learner to becoming an independent learner by mastering skills and developing sufficient self-confidence to enable them to become self-directed (Knowles, 1970). Mezirow (1995) describes this process as 'transformative learning' where the adults' self-direction becomes focused on their perspective and the transformation of it. He describes the concept as a 'process of effecting change in a *frame of reference',* where the frame consists of two dimensions, 'habits of mind' and 'point of view', a mixture of cultural assimilation and idiosyncratic early learned influences (Mezirow, 1997). Using self-reflection, Mezirow believes the adults' frames of reference can be transformed to allow them to become 'autonomous' thinkers. That is, the learner is able to utilise their understanding, newly acquired skills and adjusted attitude to reflect on their personal assumptions and engage with others to validate their beliefs through the experiences of others who share the same or similar values (ibid).

Many of the women accessing the FSES services described starting as dependent learners and demonstrated personal progression as Mezirow predicts (1997). The teaching, learning and personal support from staff and their shared journeys with other women, worked to provide evidence for the women that their goals were achievable.

3.3 Community support programme

For many schools, much of the adult education central to the FSES provision was funded through specific grants or private contributions from the adults. Grants often covered basic supplies and volunteers' travel costs and resources. Due to the FSES location used for this study, it was essential to access grants because the large

majority of adults were not eligible to attend government-funded services. The reasons for this varied but typically it was because they lacked the 'right to remain', or their educational starting levels were too low or they failed to meet other income based criteria. Where the women could access funded courses they were frequently delivered as Family Learning, a concept which was associated with and promoted nationally by FSES and ES.

The term 'Family Learning' (FL) relates to an intergenerational model of teaching /learning where two generations work to gain and deliver mutual skill based outcomes. They typically present as a combination of parent / grandparent and child learners. The concept is based on a nurturing approach within a family, where two generations learn from each other. In England there are two types of FL; Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN) and Wider Family Learning (WFL). The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) defines the purpose of FL generally as follows,

> *'FLLN programmes aim to:*
>
> - *Improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of mothers and fathers*
> - *Improve mothers' and fathers' ability to help their children learn*
> - *Improve children's acquisition of literacy, language and numeracy.*
>
> *(While) WFL programmes are those specifically designed to enable adults and children to learn together or those programmes that enable mothers and fathers to learn how to support their children's learning.*
>
> - *Develop the skills or knowledge of both the adult and child participants*

- *Help mothers and fathers to be more active in the support of their children's learning and development and to understand the impact of that support.'* (SFA, 2011, p.4).

Both types of FL programme have commonalities with the FSES/ ES concept, in that they all recognise the importance of intergenerational / parental input on the longer term attainment of the children (Horne and Haggart, 2004; Cummings *et al.,* 2007; Lamb, 2009; Carpentieri, 2012). For the adults, the aim of the above provision was to increase their skill base, leading to raised self-confidence, associated with personal, social, economic and educational progression (Lamb, 2009). Yet, aside from the positive benefits of the skill based elements for the adults, it has been acknowledged there is a balance between the adult's attitudinal approach to parenting and their cognitive abilities (Desforges and Abuchaar, 2003; Heckman, 2011; Siegler, 2011; Park, 2106). That is, for children to flourish, parents need to maximise on opportunities for learning (in the widest sense), and recognise the developments their children make (Hannon *et al.,* 2006; Lamb, 2009) and parents / carers can only do this when their own basic skills are robust enough for them to be self-confident as a parent and a surrogate teacher (Desforges and Abuchaar, 2003; Heckman, 2011; Siegler, 2011; Park, 2106).

For the women in this study, however, they reported that their children were more skilled than themselves which created an uncomfortable atmosphere and a skewed dynamic within the family hierarchy. Equally, in a secondary school setting it was very difficult to engage teenagers to sit with their older relatives, who were usually uncomfortable and often embarrassed, especially if they had more advanced skills than their parents. Consequently the FSES studied here, delivered mostly adult only

classes that were tailored to the needs of the parents rather than the children. Interestingly, the adult centred provision also proved very popular with parents of younger children attending the primary schools in the local cluster, where they were usually offered traditional FL, yet, they also preferred separate classes. The primary schools were also keen for adult-only provision as this relieved them of having to provide a staff member to work with the children, often at times when their staffing was already stretched. Additionally, parent only classes meant the children were not required to miss curriculum time, an aspect of FL which regularly caused tension between providers and which appeared to undermine a key purpose of FL, that is, improved attainment.

Mirroring the FSES school's understanding of the adult needs and echoing the ethos of the mainstream school and its existing community links, there was a desire within the school leadership team to make its FSES provision the heartbeat of its community and offer its local residents as much nurturing as it offered its pupils. To this end, in 2005 parents, local services and local community groups and organisations were consulted through a series of FSES based focus groups with the aim of constructing a 'best fit' service and support offer. The groups were well attended and there was representation from all the key organisations. Their combined input generated responses to the following questions:

What do you see to be the issues facing you / your family / your organisation / service?

What would you like the outcomes to be?

What are the barriers to your preferred outcomes?

What progress has already been made in working towards meeting your preferred outcomes?

Feedback and responses from parents and local organisations provided the immediate foundations and a framework for establishing an action plan for delivery at the FSES and later the ES. Wider, more strategic outcomes were used to link with the cluster development plans, and the LA's delivery plan. The cluster of local primary schools together with the children's centre then pooled their relevant resources to form a more tangible network of services and support.

As the schools within the cluster were all geographically close to the FSES school and therefore also within areas of deprivation, many also had a history of working with a wide range of support initiatives and services for pupils and their families. The primary schools had already established links with each other and all worked with the FSES secondary school during the transition from Key stage 2 to 3, i.e. the change from primary to secondary school. Given the variation of school approaches contained within the cluster, the implementation of the FSES plan and ES roll out therefore differed in its offer to families in terms of practical input, such as work with student social workers, parent support advisors, educational welfare officers, parenting programmes, adult classes and child care arrangements. Working from the premise, however, that families have a significant effect on pupil aspirations and achievement (Brooks *et.al.,* 1996; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Horne and Haggart, 2004; Gorard and See, 2013) parents, pupils and families were the shared focus in determining the shape of the FSES offer.

Taking the lead from the government's education model, which consisted of the five key strands of the Every Child Matters policy (ECM,) the cluster's approach was to

analyse the needs of the whole family and embed them within the FSES and ES development plans. The five key strands were:

be healthy

stay safe

enjoy and achieve

make a positive contribution

achieve economic well-being   (DCSF, 2008).

By using universal targets it was anticipated that activities and support could be co-ordinated across the cluster and data and evaluation would be sufficiently generic to enable commonalities to be identified. The following services were offered, among others, to meet the various strands.

To address '**be healthy**' and **'stay safe**', community members were offered services from a social worker, safer neighbourhood police, baby clinics, fitness classes, courses which covered health issues and running a healthy home. Pupils were engaged with the school curriculum of PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic), mentoring was given to at-risk groups, breakfast and after-school provision was made available from 8am – 6pm, 'healthy schools' awards were sought via the local authority and key projects like the anti-bullying campaigns were run throughout the year. '**Enjoy and achieve**' saw pupils offered a wide range of after school provision, holiday clubs and personal sponsorship for individual activities as appropriate. A variety of adult courses were available to community members, ranging from basic skills, non-accredited learning, single sessions, come and try workshops to unqualified voluntary work, through to year-long, accredited courses at level 1 and

above. The courses included some FL with accreditation and other work based qualifications with work placements incorporated.

The large adult volunteering programme that ran across the whole extended school cluster offered the opportunity for 'making a positive contribution' and often led to employment and the opportunity to '**achieve economic well-being'**; whilst pupils also set up and participated in voluntary work, again, often as part of their curriculum PSHCE studies. There was also strong drive within every secondary school to narrow the gap in pupil attainment through a range of support systems and aspirational projects such as, 'Aim Higher', a programme designed to help able but disadvantaged pupils access good quality higher education (DfES, 2004)

Across the cluster of schools in this study, for practical reasons, the primary schools concentrated on extended offers for pupils, rather than work with parents and adults from the community due to the restrictions of additional space. At most they offered short on-site FL courses, yet, often struggled to find room for a crèche at the same time. Further to this, funding was calculated by the number of pupils per school. Therefore the primary schools were each allocated significantly less than the secondary school, thereby reducing their scope for service provision. As the only school within the cluster with space and funding, it fell to the FSES to offer the main adult provision which all adults within the cluster could access.

From 2007 / 08 onward, approximately 150 - 200 learners accessed one or more of the services (including courses) each term on the main FSES school site. Some were new learners, others were returnees ready to progress to a higher level, whilst others needed to continue at the same level to expand or consolidate their learning. Most of the adult service users were women (approximately 95%) and parents (approximately

94%) but not necessarily of pupils attending the FSES. Their background profiled them as conventionally 'hard to reach' (Adult, Community and Further Education Board, 2010) which should, accordingly, have been reflected in low enrolment to services, yet controversially, again from 2007 onwards, not only were the enrolment numbers good, attendance was on average exceptionally high (80% per class). The reasons for the relatively high uptake and subsequent outcomes were explored during the one to one interviews in my study, particularly in terms of the personal impact on the adults accessing the available services.

In an effort to accommodate all members of the school community, the courses offered were mostly without charge or had a small enrolment fee as a contribution towards the cost of resources. For all non-accredited and non- family learning courses there was no funding available so they had to be delivered either by volunteers or paid for by accessing grant schemes such as community project awards from, for example, the National Lottery, local charities or national banks. Some accredited courses did attract central government FE student funding, yet this was accessed by the service provider which meant there was no cost to the learner but there were cost implications for the extended school namely for publicity, over heads and administration.

All the support offered to the adults on the school FSES site linked with the other cluster schools. For example, if the primary schools offered FL it linked directly with the wider programmes of study offered on the FSES site. All the courses available had clear progression routes, either within the extended school or across the borough into other courses offered by Croydon's adult education service, Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT). The progression routes were crucial for real learning to exist

and equally vital were the opportunities to consolidate learning and experience which linked with the service providers to ensure all the adult needs were met.

All the provision followed a typical adult and community schedule, classes started at 10.00am and were of two hours duration. Afternoon classes commenced at 12.30pm and ran until 2.30pm. The timing was significantly important because it recognised and allowed for primary pupil drop off and collection times. It also acknowledged the need for the safety of pupils on the school sites. By the time adults were entering the school site the pupils were in class, as they were at the end of each adult session; thereby minimising the possibility of pupil / adult interface. This was also important for some of the adults who were parents of pupils on the school site if, for example, they were attending literacy classes. Anecdotal evidence suggests neither adult nor pupil wanted to meet or acknowledge the other or explain their situation to others.

All services were available during term time, while others also bridged the school holidays. Services such as parent support, social work intervention, and pupil holiday schemes were exceptions and were offered to the most vulnerable families. In situations such as the long summer break, where families had been robustly supported during term time, it was illogical to remove all support during a time where the intensity of family life would be at its most challenging both financially (no availability of free school meals) and behaviourally (all siblings together).

Access to the adult provision was via one of two pathways, self or professional referral. Self-referral occurred when local adults or parents of pupils in the school or nursery responded to advertised courses or community support services such as health clinics or parent support. Professional referrals typically came from teachers requesting support for parents of pupils who were displaying difficulties or parents were referred

via other external services such as health workers or family support services. This latter group of referrals would usually be passed to the parent support advisors (PSA) who would make contact with the parents. One to one support would be tailored to the needs of the parents and liaison with other support services would be made by the PSAs. Once practical assistance was in place the PSA's would often later direct the women to classes to raise their skill base and self-confidence. The PSAs all held a NVQ level 2 in parent support, were recruited and lived, locally and shared many experiences with the women referred. The team of PSAs worked across the cluster of schools, which often accounted for the number of adults attending courses on the FSES site, yet, not necessarily with pupils within the school.

The FSES work with adults, involved engagement with a mix of parents – mainly mothers but not necessarily of pupils attending the secondary school and local community members. The aim of the work was to regenerate the community through increased skills and self-confidence. This approach to learning is often referred to as Community Learning, where learning is both focussed on and located within the community, it is described as,

> *'a wide variety of instructional methods and programs that educators use to connect what is being taught in schools to their surrounding communities……… Community-based learning is (also) motivated by the belief that all communities have intrinsic educational assets and resources that educators can use to enhance learning experiences for students'* (Great School Partnerships 2014, p.1).

Although this is a general summary of the term, it clearly highlights its specific focus and it indicates its belief that all learners have a base on which to build, be that

education or life skills. It also shares with FL, a focus on teaching rather than a learning methodology. The core concepts of FL overlap with those of the FSES and ES where parental support and increased skills are recognised to enhance the intergenerational relationships with children to maximise their academic and learning potential. The engagement of the parents relies on them to be motivated through the self-belief that they can tackle challenges and tasks and therefore they need regular positive feedback to encourage persistence (Carpentieri, 2012). In other words the adults' identity has to include, at the very least, belief in their own ability to learn, a concept I turn to within the theoretical framework of this research.

Summary

A key purpose of the FSES / ES initiative was to reduce social disadvantage through pupil and parent support and opportunity. Yet despite this common goal, a bespoke approach was implemented creating variance in addressing and evaluating the FSES project in terms of disadvantage (Dyson and Kerr, 2014). The variation in intervention methodology to tackle the issue also created a missed opportunity to better understand the term, the engagement process and approach in relation to outcomes of 'social disadvantage'.

The multiple approaches were diverse. Reviews of projects associated with FSES, such as the out of school hours activities (OOSH) indicated greater focus was, in some cases, given to the socio-structural inequalities rather than identified families or geographical areas of social concern (Rees *et al.,* 2007; Dyson and Kerr, 2014). Other reviews highlighted a hierarchical approach where professionals believed they were better placed to decide what disadvantaged families needed (Cummings *et al.*, 2010). Conversely, others implemented the approach of openly offering services to

disadvantaged communities and invited them to engage with expertise as required (Dyson and Kerr, 2014).

The question of identifying the most effective approach that FSES could take assumes that tackling disadvantage via community school initiatives is an appropriate stand. Dyson and Kerr (2014) question the certainty of this assumption,

> *'This is, we suggest, not simply a matter of how effective school-based approaches to disadvantage can be, given the deeply ingrained inequalities in the English education system (Schools Analysis and Research Division Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009) and in British society (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010). It is also a more fundamental question of whether disadvantage can be tackled at all without a serious interrogation of the features of schools and society that produce it in the first place'* (p.90).

Dyson and Kerr (ibid) question the role of schools and their potential for contributing to a more equitable society and acknowledge the complex social phenomenon, experimented through the concept and delivery of FSES and ES. They prompt consideration of the combined issues of pupil attainment, social disadvantage and the role of significant adults for pupils, versus the power of schools and education, individual responsibility and public concern (Dryfoos, 1994; Dryfoos, 1998; Price-Robertson, 2011; Dyson and Kerr, 2014; Smith, 2014). They conclude it is possible that the educational changes triggered positive effect for pupils (Dyson and Kerr, 2014) but as highlighted earlier, the method of capturing progress was either ineffective or not sufficiently sustained for it to be recognised.

Equally, it may well be with disadvantage at the centre of this repeated social /attainment concern, that understanding of the term itself is a significant factor. The traditional models of thinking, dating back to the earlier initiatives, used socio-economic factors such as unemployment as a measure of disadvantage (Price-Robertson, 2011). More recently, however, social theorists have explored alternative understandings and generated suggestion that positive engagement in group activity sustains personal development and a sense of being and social networks formed through learning become important sources of support and enrichment. Concepts such as these are recognised as social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995) and are used to better locate and interpret the phenomena of social/ community disadvantage and its association with combative initiatives.

The following chapter provides a theoretical framework for the thesis which embodies social and cultural capital together with the concept of identity, social space and power.

Chapter 4: Theoretical framework

Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical framework for the research; the foundations of which draw on theories from both a sociological and psychological perspective, arguably contentious bases. Psychological theories include the concept of personal identity, a term that I use in this thesis to incorporate a person's unique traits, beliefs and qualities which are later developed through life experiences to form a self-image (Erikson, 1979; Weinreich, 1986). In contrast, sociological and socio-psychological theories purport that a person's identity relates to one's social roles and their interactions therein, within the structures in which they live, and which, collectively, contribute to an individual's constructed understanding of who they are (Tajfel, 1982; Hogg and Terry, 2000). Put simply, I employ a sociological stance to provide a means of examining the structural influences upon the women in this study and a psychological position to interpret the women's personal identity as they describe their sense of change, power and empowerment. Drawing on both disciplines then, creates an analytical framework with opportunities to explore the women's descriptive narratives of their personal development within the structures in which they live, and their access to available resources of social and cultural capital (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Putnam, 1995; Davis, 2014).

I begin this chapter then, by reviewing the coverage of social and cultural capital as described by Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam. I then go on to discuss competing positions of power in relation to social standing which includes a feminist perspective on the theory of public and private spheres. I end the chapter by focusing on the

concepts of personal and social identity, including intersectionality, and consider the extent to which these attributes present in the women learners' narratives.

4.1 The context: social and cultural capital and the 'underclass'

Further to the contextualised background of FSES and community school initiatives I sought to explore the underpinning theoretical policies used at the inception of the FSES. With the initiative's international versions presenting under various guises and titles (Kirner, 1998; James *et al.*, 2001) there appears, in the UK at least, to be emphasis on Putnam's view of the cause and effect of diminishing social capital. This is reinforced by a history of previous community initiatives which shared similar social elements and purpose. Working at the individual or local levels, many previous projects acknowledged the need for enquiry into greater understanding of the wider socio-structural inequalities which generate disadvantage (Smith, 1987; Rees *et al.,* 2007; Dyson and Kerr, 2014).

More specifically, community schools have a history of being situated in poorer communities, presenting less favourable academic achievements and utilised by those living in social and economic disadvantage (Cummings *et al.,* 2011). Typically the approach to the social and community issues is via a variety of interventions which place school responses at the centre of them. This background of concern and desire to better understand the social circumstance, the community engagement and activity surrounding the FSES concept, arguably sits within the theory of social capital. In this way, social capital offers an explanation for the under-representation of specific groups, such as those living in areas of disadvantage being active participants in the education system.

Bourdieu and Wacquant define social capital as being,

> '*The sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.'* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.119*).*
>
> *(Social Capital is also) made up of social obligation ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital* (Bourdieu 1986, p. 243).

Bourdieu describes social capital as the combination of current and potential resources associated with access to group memberships. In turn, acceptance into specific groups is through material or symbolic exchange (see footnote), which then offers non-financial exchange to the individuals.

The amount of social capital an individual has is dependent on the number of active networks or connections and the amount of capital (cultural, economic or symbolic[11]) each of the connections has (Bourdieu, 1986). Establishing the social profile of the adults accessing the FSES support was key to ascertain their level of social capital and how in turn it related to the nature of the support they sought. With regard to education, Bourdieu views social networks as a key to opportunity and advantage (Siisiainen, 2000) which by default suggests that strongly connected communities can recompense for economic and cultural poverty (Edwards *et al.,* 2003). Yet, there is plentiful evidence available showing that it is those with financial resources who are also able to buy into school and university networks through qualifications gained

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[11] Symbolic capital refers to resources related to one's status or prestige held within a culture.
Economic capital refers to money, property or other assets.
Cultural capital refers to forms of knowledge, education, social skills and attitude

through private education (Adonis and Pollard, 1997; Park *et al*., 2012). Equally there is a recognised connection between family resources, social networks and cultural capital (ibid; Bourdieu, 1986; Tzanakis, 2011). This would seemingly enforce the notion that networks alone are insufficient and economic well-being also has a critical role, either in absolute terms or relatively with regard to one's community status.

The belief that tackling social disadvantage by increasing social capital is not a new phenomenon (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995). Indeed one of the earliest introductions to social capital is in Hanifan's discussions on rural schools and communities (Hanifan, 1916), thereby immediately linking the concept of social capital with the critical role of the school and education. Bourdieu interprets Hanifan's view of the learners' knowledge (ibid) as cultural capital, which he breaks down into three forms,

> *'The **embodied** state, i.e., in the form of the long lasting dispositions of the mind and body, in the **objectified** state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, dictionaries, instruments, machines etc.)……. and in the **institutionalized** state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee.'* (Bourdieu, 1986, p.47).

For Bourdieu cultural capital is a hypothesis which, among other social aspects, explains the inequality in academic achievement in relation to a student's social background. Such a concept rivals the assumption that a learner's performance and achievement is based upon their innate aptitude or personal traits or the money and / or time invested in them. Instead he proposes that by looking solely at achievement

versus input, the key element of the wider learning environment and the reproductive aspect of education is overlooked and in doing so, the importance of domestic transmission of cultural capital equally remains unacknowledged (Becker, 1964). Given the social focus of the FSES initiative and the longitudinal nature of this study, the framework of cultural capital, specifically the embodied and institutionalized states, will be used when analysing the interview responses to questions about parental / child relationships and any changes therein. The embodied state is inherited through cultural reproduction (Sullivan, 2001), familial bonds, patterns and socialization and work on oneself, with personal cost, often of time (Bourdieu, 1986). It is this concept that the qualitative aspect of this study uses as a base during the analysis of parental views on change to their own identity following engagement with the FSES support services and any subsequent change to their wider relationships. Equally, I look at the data in relation to the institutionalized state which provides a lens of focus for adult service users' achievements and the impact they believe they have made on their identity and relationships.

By separately identifying cultural capital and its distribution across social classes, and the creation of subsets, recognised here as states, Bourdieu manufactures a context within which to study social dynamics in detail. He achieves this through the emergence of the theoretical concepts of fields and habitus, the notions of each which I expand on below (Calhoun, 1993; Tomlinson, 2004; Tzanakis, 2013).

'Fields', for Bourdieu, represent various social and institutional contexts where individuals' capital is altered, dependant on their situation. He believes that change in circumstance, network or environment bring with it a change in habitus, reflecting the confidence, social capital and power experienced by the individual (Gaventa, 2003;

Navarro, 2006). Fields are the areas of practice, the divisions of the social world which Bourdieu identifies as art, religion, law, education and so forth (Navarro, 2006). Reed-Danahay (2004, p.32) describes the field as,

> *'a field of forces, whose necessity is imposed on agents who are engaged in it, and a field of struggles within which agents confront each other, with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces, thus contributing to conserving or transforming its structure.'*

Each field has its own rules, knowledges and requires specific forms of social capital which will determine the level of claim an individual has in each field. Each field also has its own power, which is active both within and between fields and which Bourdieu believes creates the structure for human behaviour (Bourdieu, 1984). I will be analysing the empirical data within the context of the fields of education and home centred, familial and close relations.

Bourdieu posits that the field of education, like all other fields, has a framework of internal power relations which defines, maintains and regulates the behaviour within it (ibid). He sees this regulation as affected by an individual's social class, prior education, upbringing and past choices which collectively form 'habitus', a term he uses

> *'to describe a social property of individuals that orients human behavior without strictly determining it. While habitus encompasses a sense of practical expertise, it is not a conscious expertise; rather, it may be seen as common sense. It is constituted of dispositions that are inculcated, structured, durable, generative, and transposable'* (Bourdieu, 1991, p.12).

Habitus, understood in this way has the potential to lead to a range of actions or indeed inactions, including avoidance of participation, especially for those experiencing low socio-economic status, poor literacy, negative educational experiences and living in areas of deprivation (Tzanakis, 2011, 2013; Rogosic and Baranovic, 2016). Yet, Bourdieu also believes that habitus is a changeable paradigm, for better or worse, and that its state of being is associated with the evolving nature of an individual's own social capital. He sees habitus as an interplay between agency and structure which is outside the control of free will and consciousness and which is created through past and current experiences (Navarro, 2006). Habitus then, for Bourdieu (1986) accounts for an expression of cultural capital through changeable dispositions, habits, skills and ways of being. In this way, habitus presents as a social dynamic, free from economic status, yet, one which still enables access to other social networks. Although the concept is questioned by others for being too vague to be useful in social research (Nash, 1990; Sullivan, 2002), Bourdieu (1984) sees it as an explanation of the inheritance of transmissible cultural practices within families, of which there is much empirical evidence (Schoon and Parsons, 2002; Feinstein *et al.,* 2004; Goldthorpe, 2007; Sullivan, 2007). The qualitative analysis adopts such a perspective. I seek to assess the habitus of each of the interviewees through their own words and reported actions in order to explore their views of the perceived personal changes and other related changes to cultural capital they share with their children. The longitudinal aspect of this study offers opportunity to establish if elements of cultural capital change over time and if so how.

Despite Bourdieu's recognised importance and authority on social and cultural capital (Brubaker, 1985; Swartz, 1997; Weininger, 2000; Smith, 2009) his work is critiqued by Coleman who blends the debate about social context with education, material

resources and other elements of cultural capital. For Coleman social capital contains elements of social structure which enable and support certain human behaviours, either on a private or public level (Coleman, 1988). His theory then treads a path between viewing social action as being conditioned by social structure and independent motivation, driven by self-interest (Tzanakis, 2013). In this way Coleman's theory reflects a resurgence of the debate over the existence of a developing underclass within society, a topic of discussion which in various guises has reverberated since the unemployable 'Residuum' social class of the Victorian era (Macnicol, 2016). Views of cause and effect however, remain unclear; for some it is polarised between laying the responsibility with the individual and a generational culture of poverty, while for others, it is the construct of social structure (Bradshaw and Holmes, 1989; Macnicol, 2016).

In other words Coleman's social capital, although similar to Bourdieu, in the belief that all members of society can gain value from it, differs from him in his focus on agency and the individual (Rogosic and Baranovic, 2016). Coleman sees social capital as an inclusive concept, where Bourdieu, in contrast, sees it as a hierarchical filter in society. Bourdieu sees the dominant culture as maintaining their status with the possession of cultural capital which is more available to the middle and upper classes (Sullivan, 2002). By default, therefore, the lower classes who are likely to have less cultural capital are more likely to struggle to succeed in the education system which brings the risk of educational exclusivity. It is Coleman's more balanced view of the dual input of social and personal influences into an individual's social capital that represents a more comfortable fit with the FSES initiative. Indeed, it reflects the construct of the project; that is, the initiative set out to ameliorate pockets of low levels of cultural capital and to address social structural issues with the associated attempt to improve personal

development for pupils, parents and local community members. This is very much in the vein of Coleman's earlier work on research in schools in the US, with additional focus on detail of the schools' surrounding communities provided by Yongmin (1999) and Sampson *et al.* (1999).

It is Coleman's intermediary concept, however, of a combined social framework, merging social and independent activity with personal motivation that I argue captures the challenge of the FSES aim; to tackle what is identified by some as an underclass (Murray, 1984; Wilson, 1987; Anderson, 1990; Joseph, 1997). The adult/ parent engagement was voluntary, and was associated with the smaller society of the family and, ultimately, the wider society of the community. The concept of FSES provision, although primarily aimed at pupils' attainment hinges on the development of community regeneration. Beginning with the engagement and empowerment of individuals and increased support for families, FSES provision facilitated the opportunity to develop communities (Cummings *et al.*, 2011). Given the structure of the initiative, Coleman's theory on social capital therefore provides an apposite framework.

Coleman, unlike Bourdieu, focusses his work on individuals, small groups and in particular, families. He believes, through the process of childbirth and parenting, that there is an inherent desire for parents to invest in the forthcoming generation who, in return, look after them in their dotage. This intense nurturing relationship builds security and develops a child's empathy and understanding, which in turn expands their potential for economic strength and rewards (Coleman, 1997). The parental / child relationship generates a set of norms and behaviour guides, which are internally known and externally imposed across the family (Edwards *et al.* 2003). The more

recent changes in family structures are arguably contributory to the potential fragmentation of previously available internal family networks and externally assumed norms, which can lead to societal change (Putnam, 1993; Edwards *et al.* 2003). It is Coleman's view on family and individual's relationships and manifestations of changes therein which will guide the direction of focus for the collection of qualitative data.

The contribution of Coleman's work has greatly aided the theoretical axis of the FSES government initiative. In practice, however, the initiative was also politically influenced by Putnam's studies on the immediate impact of the fragmentation of social capital (Smith, 2007) rather than purely theoretical conjecture. Following Murray's identification of the potential development of an underclass (1984), both US and UK governments drafted policy to minimise such outcome. Yet it was Putnam's views on social capital which led to its greater usage within the research and policy arena through his US based work. His studies were a development of his findings from earlier research on Italian political institutions where he reviewed the outcome of the quality of civic life in relation to social capital (Putnam, 1993). Taking the lead from his Italian findings, he used vast amounts of empirical data from the General Social Survey, which recorded concerns, experiences, attitudes and practices of all US residents since 1972 (Putnam, 2000). His work contrasts the data outcomes with the surveys he undertook and concludes that social capital presents as '*connections amongst individuals – social networks and the norm of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them'* (Putnam 2000, p.19).

In this way, Putnam shares with Coleman and Bourdieu the view of social capital as a collective concept with a focus on social integration creating civil communities and societies (O'Brien and Fathaigh, 2005). He agrees with Coleman that the strength of

the family is linked with community contribution and an individual's interconnection with society (Tzanakis, 2013). From the analysis of his studies, however, Putnam's focus is on the disintegration of these networks. His view was initially based on diminishing voter and volunteer engagement during 1990's, and he voiced concern that social cohesion was in rapid decline (Putnam, 2000). Furthermore, he believed *'the national slump in trust and engagement was (is) likely to continue'* (Putnam, 1996, pp. 45-6).

Putnam identifies the causality for these changes as,

- Changes to family structure – where more people lived alone

- Suburban sprawl – where people needed to travel further for work and leisure activities, which left less time for community group activities

- Electronic entertainment – where privatized leisure time was dominated by non-human to human interaction (Smith, 2009).

Putnam's argument and data was robust, and so caught the attention of national leaders, specifically in the US and the UK (Smith, 2007) and suggested that wealth and benefit of social capital lay in the collective trust and recognition of community members (ibid). It was Putnam's thinking on the manifestation of current social attitudes and activities on the theoretical concept of social capital which along with Coleman's conceptions, helped shape the UK FSES model, where support was aimed at communities, their empowerment and regeneration of their local environment.

The influence of Putnam on the UK FSES initiative and educational policy development cannot be ignored (Stevens *et al.*, 2007). Its political impact and implementation of the concept, in both schools and community, will be included in the discussion of the findings in terms of its overall project outcomes.

This combination of factors, the pockets of reduced social and cultural capital coupled with growing mistrust of, and lack of engagement with, national organisations shares similar characteristics to those of a developing 'underclass'. The term relates to an expression used in the 1960's in the USA to describe those without work, or those deemed unemployable and whom set themselves apart from main stream ambitions and life styles (Myrdal, 1963). Decades later, the term became more behaviourally focused and was defined by Wright (1994) as a *'category of social agents who are economically oppressed but not consistently exploited within a given class system'* (1994, p.48). That is, the term became more synonymous with those living in persistent economic poverty and pockets of local deprivation, experiencing a feeling of isolation, and often exhibiting low basic skill levels (Cottingham, 1982; Wilson, 1987; Ricketts and Sawhill, 1988).

The overlap between the concept of an underclass and the needs identified for FSES provision highlight the focus on disadvantage, while the shift in understanding of the term itself, echoes the variance in its interpretation. Indeed, several sociologists and academics have debated the issue of causal factors of the concept of an underclass (ibid, Murray, 1984; Anderson, 1990) while others argue and question its very existence (Rutter and Madge, 1976; Macnicol, 2016).

There is unified agreement that there are many adults, of varying ages and cultures, sharing the profile criteria listed above, whose existence and difficulties are readily socially and politically acknowledged. Arguably their social circumstance negates their inclusion into the standard social class classification due to the absence of employment and income (ONS, 2010), yet their omission from traditional classes, by default, places them within a category of their own.

Social class in the western world is a measure of where a person is in relative terms, compared with others within the same nation, where one is typically judged on one's socio-economic status (Grant, 2001). The exact units of measurement, however, have changed over time, initially being related to ownership of productive resources to more recently also including educational levels (Kuper, 2004). The shifting nature of criteria underpins Bourdieu's argument that the academic discussion of whether an underclass exists, is invariably connected to one's epistemology. As a constructivist study,socio the term 'underclass' will be understood as a social space, owned and occupied by people and therefore shaped by the actions of those within it (Bourdieu, 1987). That is, the nature of the FSES space is anticipated to be better understood through this review and exploration of how and why the it is used, and in doing so will recognise,

> *'The social world can be conceived as a multi-dimensional space that can be constructed empirically by discovering the main factors of differentiation which account for the differences observed in a given social universe, or, in other words, by discovering the 'powers or forms of capital which are or can become efficient'* (Bourdieu, 1987, p.4*)*

With the awareness that the adult users of the FSES services had limited social and cultural capital suggests associated discomfort in their relationship with school and community space, due to related lack of self-confidence and sense of powerlessness. The connection between social and cultural capital and social class is linked to power, the theory of which I turn to now.

4.2 Power and empowerment

Power is seen by Bourdieu as a shifting state, created within the framework of cultural capital (Gaventa, 2003; Navarro, 2006), and awarded legitimacy through the views and actions of others (Giddens, 1976; Navarro, 2006). His work is steeped in detailed sociological analysis of internalised power relations, specifically around self-worth and personal agency within the wider context of social participation. (ibid). His focus lies in establishing how and under what circumstances individuals and groups employ strategies of cultural capital accumulation, in order to maintain or improve their own positions of power (Swartz, 1997).

Indeed, Bourdieu's (1986) concepts of both social and cultural capital can be compared or likened to relative economic wealth or status, where each capital may be invested, lost, distributed or traded within a specific context (Moi, 1991). That is, the value of each capital is relative to the field in which it is being used, for example, skills prized within the home may not be highly regarded in the banking world and therefore may attract less situated power and status.

It is Bourdieu's separation of capital states (Bourdieu, 1996) that enables different social groups opportunity to consider their capital within each state (i.e. embodied, objectified, institutionalised or that which is symbolic of these) and how it manifests in the wider world (Moi, 1991). For each person operating within a specific field then, power, or lack of it, is actualised or, symbolised (Bourdieu, 1986), in at least one of the states. For some, this is seen as an indirect, non-coercive control, managed through cultural capital to exert order and social restraint (Geciene, 2002). It can therefore act as a nebulous, subordinating force, possessed, in direct proportion to symbolised

cultural capital, thereby creating a hierarchy, which in turn, maintains existing class and associated dominance and power (ibid).

Others, such as Maynard (1995) and Moi (1991) however, argue that in contrast to rhetoric and symbolisation, and as a counter to theorisation, the focus on our everyday lives serves as a reminder that,

> *'not everything is sign or text, as any rape survivor, homeless person or starving child will testify. Such people experience 'real' phenomena with 'real' effects, many of which are done to them by individual or institutional 'others' and are outside of their control* (Maynard 1995: 272–3).

Materiality here, demonstrates how inequalities can be produced, especially when related to one's social and cultural capital and our associated social class, and indicates situational power or lack of it can be either a 'real' or perceived experience (Reay, 1998; Skeggs 1997).

Relatedly then, feminists' reaction to Bourdieu's theories are mixed, some strongly support his work (Butler, 1990; Hekman, 1990), while others oppose his views on women's experiences with power (Deveaux, 1994). Academics, such as Hill Collins (1990) and Deveaux (1994) suggest that for women the issue of power is not about population / social regulation or power relations or directing the behaviour of others but instead it is about empowerment, freedom and self-governance. Associated feminist writing suggests additionally, that to establish how and why power dynamics operate for women, their own interpretations need to be at the centre of enquiry, as a reflection of their perceptions and experiences (ibid).

As a generalised description, feminist theory is understood here to be an umbrella term for the movement and ideologies for social and cultural construction in order to establish political and economic equalities for women (Whelehan, 1995; Cole 2000; Echols, 2003). Indeed, the realm of feminist theory is vast, but it is the shared commonality of desired empowerment and / or deliverance of power to women (Sawiki, 1991; Thompson 1997; Smart, 2002; Hains, 2009) that this study focuses on as it analyses the information shared by the women during their interviews. My qualitative data analysis examines the adults' perception of power through the one to one interviews. The questions are used to establish if and where the adults believe they experienced a change in their sense of self-governance, power or empowerment and if there were further changes three years later.

Arguably, one cannot experience holding power without experiencing empowerment. It is a process of becoming more confident, enabling individuals to stand up for their own rights whilst representing key groups (in this case women), in order to develop a wholesome and healthy society (Batiwala, 1997). Often the groups represented through empowerment are the less heard voices, such as those of women and others from poorer communities who strive to increase their confidence and reduce social barriers (ibid) in order to *make choices and take actions on their own behalf with self-confidence, from a position of economic, political and social strength....'* (Batiwala, 1997, p.53).

In other words, empowerment is a process of individual discovery leading to a challenge of and a change to power relations. For individuals and groups experiencing socially restricted access to resources based on socio-economic details, empowerment produces a sense of progression through recognition and resistance to

oppression. It demands questioning one's roles and responsibilities within the world in which they are active and working with others who are alike, to bring about a new social relationship. Empowerment and disempowerment are terms often associated with feminism but equally with any minority group struggling to gain equality of power in a given social situation or environment (Veneklassen and Miller, 2002; Cudd, 2006). Chigudu notes, in the battles for change,

> *"Institutional change is often easier than at the personal level ... most people resist changes to their personal space even when it involves extending their horizons…… Particularly for marginalised groups such as women. What one does within an institutional setting is often different from the compromises made in private lives in order to belong'* (2001, p.54).

Here Chigudu underlines the concept of power as referring to the ability to act. She demonstrates this through highlighting the difference as to how personal confidence and resource, especially for women, manifest within public verses private space, suggesting women are socialised to have different behaviours according to the space they occupy and their level of power within it.

It also suggests that these contrasting environments give choice to the individual players. According to Giddens (1976), the fact that each player can take action in both spaces suggested they have power in both spheres. The ability to take action then is the determinant to having power or empowerment, indeed Chigudu goes on to say,

> *'This (the difference in institutional and private settings) should not be labelled as inconsistency because the ability to recognise power and its uses and to act within one's context for self-preservation is actually 'strength'* (Chigudu, 2001, p.54).

Women then may be more empowered than they feel and only recognise their power within the environs they are confident in. The significance of the field of practice, be that either public or private space, therefore plays a key role in the assumed and actioned power. It is the sphere of operation that the women experience that I focus on now.

4.3 Public and private space

Many researchers (Prokhovnik, 1999a; Chigudu, 2001; Bargetz, 2009; Newman, 2013) have examined the interplay between power and space, including feminists, who have examined the power relations for women based within specific 'fields'. For example, a woman may hold a position of power within the public sphere, yet, may simultaneously live within a patriarchal culture or be subjected to abuse within her private relationships.

Given this study uses data from women only, it is imperative that their relationship with power and location is considered with a view to understanding their motivation for accessing FSES services and what their perceived outcomes of them are.

Gender theory offers a perspective on the dynamic of power within the public and private space. Feminist scholarship and writing focuses on the concept of the dichotomy between the private and public sphere which is strongly debated (Weintraub, 1997; Landes, 1998; Prokhovnik, 1999b; Gal, 2002). The 'private sphere' is considered to be the space for family, intimacy and the domestic, seen to be, the power based domain of women, whilst the 'public sphere' embraces economy and polity, the power domain of men (Weintraub, 1997; Pateman, 1999; Bargetz, 2009). Feminist writer, Pateman (1989) argues that gender based located spheres are not only central to, but are ultimately, the very essence of the feminist movement and

challenge to male dominancy. Yet, Bargetz (2009) makes claim there are significant arguments to discount the concept of gender-dominated space completely. She highlights the unhelpful nature of the polarisation in analysis of differing forms of gender, sex and oppression. Further, she supports Prokhovnik's (1999a) concern that dichotomy creates opposition between two identities resulting in a hierarchical structure which denigrates women and rules out the possibility of any equality in, or heterogeneity of the two spheres. Prokhovnik, (ibid) goes on further to argue that there is a gender neutrality in terms of contribution to citizenship, and that female space need not be liberated from the domestic realm; rather there is a need for the recognition of gender equality of citizenship across both domestic and public realms (ibid). Bargetz (2009) argues too, that belief in the difference in public / private spheres devalues the private by viewing home / private apace as a place of, amongst other things, violence, oppression and deprivation. Other feminists (Haddock Seigfried, 1996; Nye, 2004) refute this suggested negativity and instead view the home as a space, at worst, of conflicting emotions and at least, as one which simultaneously offers recognition and empowerment to women and the work they undertake therein.

In terms of acceptance of the separation of the public and private sphere, Hill Collins (1991) argues a strong case for positivity to emanate from the home / private spheres for women, She highlights the issue that the description of what constitutes the private sphere is limited to middle class, white nuclear families and that such association, for many, might compound negative female imagery. For homes which function as extended families, or have black and / or women of colour or house those from poor backgrounds, the women are unlikely to make immediate social association with the stereotypical middle-class white women. For many in the former groups, they are likely to have their paid work (life in the public sphere) located in areas of employment which

shares much with the domestic sphere, for example, work within a service environment (ibid).

There is clearly then, a range of mixed and conflicting views of what the female space represents, or indeed if such a space exists, and where the power or empowerment associated with such space lies (Erikson, 1964; Bourdieu, 1971; Gavison, 1992). In my view the debate reflects the complexity of individuals, gender differences, social relationships and spaces. It resonates too with Coleman's view of social capital where social structure is external and the individuals' experience within any given context is, he suggests, dependent on the individuals' motivation, driven through choice. Although argument is clear that gender difference exists (Weintraub, 1997; Pateman, 1999; Bargetz, 2009) and gender bias is created by experiences of space (ibid), the individual element of personal identity and expectation appears too strong to homogenise all females into a generalised experience. With belief in the existence of public and private space, I analyse the qualitative data to explore the views and experiences of the women service users through their behaviour and reported expectations to better understand if the dichotomy of space impacts on their sense of power.

Power and empowerment are readily associated with gender studies (Weintraub, 1997; Pateman, 1999; Bargetz, 2009) where both the concept and the women are frequently described as visible, hidden and invisible (Marshall and Andre-Bechely, 2008; Batiwala, 2015). In relation to power, the visible level is reflective of the description of the public sphere (ibid). It is associated with social rules, institutions, and laws which are constructed to either exclude or marginalise women or coerce them into emulating males (Batliwala, 1997). The hidden level of power is the discreet

social process of seeming to be inclusive while manipulating exclusivity for specific groups. That is, invisible power shapes meaning through misrepresented oppressive actions (ibid). The lack of shared equal partnership working between the genders and the reduced opportunity for women to form their own robust groups within the public sphere at a visible level, socially reduces the power women have (ibid). The interview questions set out to establish how the women service users saw themselves in terms of identity within certain public spheres, their connection with the community, public based services and whether their view of themselves and / or their connection with others or the provision had changed over time. In contrast the women were also asked about their experiences in the home and their relationships therein and whether they recognised any changes that they felt were attributable to their FSES attendance and use. In other words, the interviews were based around the individual women, how they saw themselves and how they perceived others to see them as a result of accessing FSES support.

4.4 Personal and social identity and the role of intersectionality

Personal identity has evolved from its philosophical origins presented by philosophers such as Descates and Locke (Thiel, 2011) into its more recent location of socio-psychology, the study of social interactions and their effect on the individual. The work of Erik Erikson, a developmental psychologist (1902 – 1994) influenced its transition through his focused research on identity developed through one's own ego, where, identity is recognised as a way of seeing oneself through personal / social growth and integration into different social groups (Cote and Levine, 2002). Erikson also referred to this as 'the self' (ibid) where beliefs about oneself include personal views on gender, race, religion and sexuality. Hewitt defines it as,

'A sense of self (is) built up over time as the person embarks on and pursues projects or goals which are not thought of as those of community, but of the property of the person. Personal identity thus emphasizes a sense of individual autonomy rather than of communal involvement' (Hewitt, 1998, p. 93).

Similarly, Fearon's (1999) exploration of the general term, 'identity', acknowledges it as a socially and historically constructed concept derived from information learned through interactions with others. With reference to other scholars he uses a collection of summaries to establish a shared sense of the word as a source of action brought to bear by the individual rather than the confines of a place or environment (Berger and Luckmann 1966; White 1992).

It differs from self-esteem, which typically is a self- comparative assessment against others and one's own expectations (Luhtanen and Crocker, 1992). The interactions with others, however, plays a significant role in the development of the concept of self, that is, personal attributes and traits are highlighted when interacting with others (Crisp and Turner, 2010). In other words, one's personal identity, sense of self and self-esteem are separate from, yet related to, interactions with others from various social groups (ibid). For example, the women accessing the FSES had the opportunity to expand their membership to some existing groups, such as those related to their religion or school based connections as well as new groups constructed as part of the FSES initiative. Participation across such groups expanded the range of roles the women accepted, which in turn created new facets of their identity (ibid).

Further, an enhanced view of oneself, the possibility of wider social networks and altered status across a range of groups, is recognised to contribute to better settled and more satisfying relationships (Lewandowski *et al.,* 2010). The women spoke at

length about change in their relationships which they attributed to time spent accessing some of the FSES services. Lewandowski *et al.* (2010) suggest relational improvements may be associated with better and consistent communication of who we are and what our needs are, which in turn promotes understanding and associated satisfaction (ibid). Indeed, having a clearer view of oneself possibly facilitates a reduced sense of threat in situations requiring compromise within a close relationship (ibid).

A clear personal view, however, may be harder to establish in some cultures than others, as some are more tolerant of individualistic behaviour and the concept of self-needs than others. The divide rests between cultures which can vary according to the social environment (Campbell *et al.,* 1996). Some of which promote working from an internal personal monitoring framework of behaviour and response, which is usually more consistent across a variety of situations, and externally imposed expectations of response.

Indeed a person's cultural background can influence personal identity and socially based self-beliefs. Markus and Kitayama (1991) note that those from a same cultural background were more likely to react to interactions in a similar manner to each other, yet not necessarily in the same way as other groups. This suggests that some cultural groups place greater importance on external social aspects of interaction than others, these are referred to as collectivist cultures (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Ip and Bond, 1995; Nisbitt, 2003). Campbell *et al.* (1996) added to this hypothesis with their findings that individuals belonging to such cultures have lower self-esteem in contrast to those from individualistic cultures. This difference in approach also relates to, not only how

the individuals saw themselves but also how they viewed others, both individually and as part of a group (ibid).

The selection of social groups is therefore a resultant combination of personal identity and aspiration for one's future identity (Horst *et al.,* 2007). That is, there is a direct association between a person's identity and their motivation to join in certain groups. In relation to adults engaging with community education services, motivations can also be influenced by social pressures. That is, adult motivation to pursue education can occur for several underlying reasons, often described as intrinsic and extrinsic (Eccles *et al.*, 1997). For example, during the latter part of the 1990's adult education was valued by learners for its own sake, now in more recent times it seems more closely associated with employment prospects (Swain and Hammond, 2011). Aside from the driving force behind adult engagement it has been noted that motivation is affected by one's social and family background, initial educational experiences, and in association, past levels of academic attainment (Pilling, 1990; Govard *et al.*, 1998). For example, one disadvantaged adult in four with low skill levels indicates they would like to improve their skill base, yet only one in 25 is motivated to take action on their desires (LSC, 2008).

Once the selection of social group(s), however, has occurred the individual typically conforms to the expected behaviour of the group in line with their own identity (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000). That is, the individual's outcomes relate equally to the norms of the group and the personal identity factors of the individual (ibid). With time, the personal identities are reflected within the structure of the group, which in turn prompts a review of personal compatibility with the group (Horst *et al.,* 2007) and can bring about movement across social groups. The purpose of the FSES was to assist

individuals to identify appropriate social groups and to maintain membership with them through clarified self-images and desired future identities they shared with others from their communities. Personal identity and cultural backgrounds then hold influence in the choice of social group memberships, which in turn adds further dimension to the individual's sense of self by providing a link, a unity with the community (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). The affiliation with chosen social groups provides a base of self-esteem for one's personal identity (ibid).

Personal identity, in contrast, describes an internally constructed manifestation of understanding of ones-self, developed from one's beliefs derived from experiences of the social world (Erikson, 1979; Fearon, 1999; Noonan, 2003). This therefore, situates both identities as inextricably linked but remaining as two separate identities; the personal and the social. Given this study makes its enquiry of individual adults and their perceptions of themselves as well as their experiences of engagement and development within a social context, both aspects of identity theory must be embraced.

Personal identity consists of ascribed primary aspects of life and secondary elements which are achieved through new experiences and are therefore changeable beliefs (DeCapua and Wintergerst, 2004). It is the changeable nature of one's personal beliefs which impact on social identity (Tajfel, 1982; Hogg and Terry, 2000). The more stable aspects are structures of age, social class, religion, ethnicity, sexuality and gender (ibid), may steer the initial choice of social groups an individual opts to interact with.

Social Identity is a concept introduced by Tajfel and Turner (1979), and defined as "a short-hand term used to describe (i) limited aspects of the concept of self which are (ii) relevant to certain limited aspects of social behaviour. They see social identity as based in a person's chosen or agreed membership to specific societal groups which,

for that person, creates a sense of pride, self-esteem and dignity (1981), different then to personal identity. In seeking clarity between the two identity types, Fearon (1999) again draws on his collection of definitions and descriptions from other social scientists and authors to summarise social identities as self-attributed meanings within the context of others' perspectives. Therefore, he sees social identity as cognitive schemas which provide personal placement in a given social situation with shared understanding and expectation (Wendt 1994). Within this context there is recognition that the FSES adults' perceptions might be influenced by their social status and their social identity. That is, understanding of their social class, ethnicity and language, gender and sexuality were taken into account during the findings analysis. In terms of feminist theory these aspects are recognised as intersectionality.

Crenshaw (1989, 1991), a feminist, coined the expression 'intersectionality', following legal casework on sexual harassment in the work place, associated with racism and feminism. In the widest sense, the term is associated with the theory of how different types of discrimination interact. More specifically, in terms of feminism, it is focused on power structures and their interaction with the lives of females and socially oppressed groups.

Crenshaw, uses the term 'intersectionality' to embrace the relationship between gender, race and ethnicity, and, more recently, it has included sexual orientation. Each dimension has the potential to connect and represent axes of discrimination, and, in this sense, intersectionality manifests as a broader means of understanding social inequality (Hill Collins, 2000) through the recognition of marginalisation and the multiple forms of discrimination for those experiencing such categorisations (Knudsen, 2006). These social inequalities are considered to be bound together and they

intersect with each other to create a number of permutations of perceived and/ or experienced oppression (Hill Collins, 2000).

More recently, the term 'intersectionality' has further developed to include social identity (Cooper, 2016). Intersectionality, therefore, is currently seen as a much broader concept and, as such, has been defined as the study of, "*the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relationships and subject formations*" (McCall, 2005, p.177). This wider definition reflects the understanding that an individual's unique identity can be thought of as a site of internal negotiation which may ultimately reflect a place for inclusion or oppression (Jensen, 2018).

In spite of the acceptance of intersectionality as a corner stone to feminism and its legal and academic recognition, there are criticisms of its usage in the realms of research, where it is utilised as a tool with which to theorise identity and oppression in terms of feminism and inter-racialism. Independently, both Nash (2008) and Davis (2008) raised concern over its open acceptance for several reasons, the key issues being a lack of defined methodology, the excessive focus on black women as intersectional subjects, its vague definition and its lack of empirical validity.

It is also important to acknowledge the significance of the local context. That is, to recognise that while I am listening to the inside / individual voices of the women as they describe their experiences, their lives are situated both within and outside social structures and also within a particular, local, context. It is this essential contextualisation of data in which intersectionality plays its key role. That is, without the contextual background, understanding remains focused solely on the nature of oppression rather than on its manifestation in the women's lives (Hill Collins, 2000; Jordan-Zachery, 2007) as they expressed through their narratives.

As a white, middle-class female, arguably, I will never be able to fully understand the intersectional positions of the interviewed women, however, contextualisation of the data within a framework of social theory and structure, allows the detail of the data to be captured in an alternative way of knowing. Indeed, my 'twilight' role, as a school leader, and representative of the wider, public sphere of education (an outsider role), combined with the opportunity to hear the women's experiences and thoughts (an insider role), created, I contend, a rare opportunity to begin to understand the facets of intersectionality as experienced by the women using FSES services.

For the purposes of this research, therefore, intersectionality of gender, related to ethnicity, culture/ class and language will be embraced as an accepted paradigm from which to view the perceptions of the research subjects.

For some (DeCapua and Wintergerst, 2004) these personal details are viewed as fixed and therefore unchangeable while others such as Borland (2014) see them as a reflection of personal and social belief and structure. For example, the categorisation of old or middle age transposes with the change in average life spans and what constitutes the characteristics of a specific age group at any given time. Similarly, it will be the women's perceptions of their identity and status in relation to their social experience that the impact of their intersectionality will be viewed. The interplay between power and empowerment and the women's personal biographies and identities, including those of intersectionality, are contributory to the individual's understanding and access to social and cultural capital. The interview accounts drew on information located within the adults themselves and it was therefore subjectively related to each person's view of both themselves and the world around them or to put it another way, their personal and their social identity. Yet, although the qualitative

data is drawn from individuals it is presented in collective thematic strands. Equally, there is recognition that each adult individual participant became part of group, which in turn arguably generates a group identity (Tajfel, 1974; 1982) and therefore a new personal identity as a group member (Stryker, 1980; 2007) which promotes relations with and enables access to social capital whilst recognising the importance of the context of a group.

It is the experiences gained from the individual interactions with members of various groups, however, which create a more malleable outlook, enabling the boundaries and group behaviour to provide one with an explanation of their individual world (ibid). More specifically, Tajfel and Turner (1979) identified that the person's behaviour within their chosen group is determined by 'category based processes' or the 'rules and expectations' of the specific social group, rather than the personal attributes which control the 'interpersonal situations'. A person's way of being and how they perceive themselves then, is changeable based on the individual group circumstances in which they find themselves. From the social identity view point, it was this understanding of private knowledge gained, and the changes the adult service users recognised in themselves that was sought through the use of the interviews.

The interview questions set out to establish how the female service users saw themselves in terms of identity and physical space, their connection with the community and public based services. Research questions 2-4 (see section 1.3) set out to explore the women's sense of confidence, power and their awareness of empowerment, at the start of service access through to their current experience. The findings in terms of identity, were considered in the personal context of the learners; mindful, that personal identity describes *"the way individuals and groups define*

themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture" (Deng, 1995. p.1)

Equally, personal identity refers to *"socially distinguishing features that a person takes a special pride in or views as unchangeable but socially consequential"* (Fearon, 1999, p.4). In other words the women's opinions were taken at face value; that is their personal interpretation of their experiences was not challenged although clarity on their reasoning was sought.

Summary

The theoretical framework that I draw on during the analysis includes Bourdieu's theory of social and cultural capital and his concept of the field and one's habitus therein. His view of power, acknowledged as a shifting state within cultural capital, is used to frame understanding of the women's power relations around self-worth and personal empowerment. Equally, I make use of Coleman's theory of the same capital, particularly in relation to family centred findings and his views on parental reflexes, which is also associated with empowerment. I contrast Coleman's view of parental / personal power with Bourdieu's theory of power, located typically within the public sphere and go on to examine the concepts of gender-based spheres through the work of Hill Collins and Pateman. Analysis of the women's individual journeys and voices are understood then within the context of social environment and are further clarified within the framework of Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality and Tajfel and Turner's theory of social and personal identity.

Having established the theoretical construct I turn now to describe the methods and methodology that I used to gather data.

Chapter 5: Methods and methodology

Introduction

This chapter sets out the methods and methodology used to explore the impact of the FSES initiative, from the perspective of adult service users. Acknowledgement is given to the epistemological position, followed by a description of the three staged research design planned to address the research questions. The methodology and choice of research methods are justified for their ability to generate responses to the questions and indicate how they complement the epistemological paradigm and theoretical background. Ethical issues are also reviewed. The chapter goes on to consider the pragmatic issues of how the chosen research strategy addresses the research questions and the development of a three stage design which includes the administration of self-completed questionnaire and the longitudinal, semi-structured interviews. This is followed by a description of the process of data analysis.

As set out earlier in Chapter 1 (section 1.3) the questions investigated were:

> **What were the socio-demographical characteristics of the adults who access extended services provision?** What was the profile of the adult service user in terms of age, level of qualification, marital and living situation, their ethnicity, and support services accessed, voluntary work undertaken, how they travelled to the community centre, car ownership, accommodation type, employment status and civic engagement?
>
> **Motivation and expectation**: What were the adults' motivations to access community support services?
>
> **Experience**: How did adults describe their experiences of the community support services?

Impacts / outcomes: What, for the adults, was the impact of the services on a range of outcomes, i.e. relationships, behaviour, further study, civic engagement, employment, self-care, attitudes, aspirations and the role of parenting?

Plans: What did the adults plan to do next and were their choices related to their experiences of the community support services?

Research methodology

5.1 The nature of the enquiry – the research framework

The research took place within a constructivist epistemology. 'Constructivism', being understood here as the emergence of meaning resulting from human engagement with what are perceived as the realities of the world (Crotty, 1998). Further still, it also embraced women's interpretations of their experiences and their subjective views and therefore utilised an interpretative framework in which to analyse the interview responses. The research used a sequential mixed methods design with use of a quantitative questionnaire to contextualise the research and understand the structure, nature, demographics and characteristics of the participants. This was followed by research findings from qualitative interview data.

As an empirical study, understanding and explanation for social phenomena were sought and meaning was developed from the social situations and interpretations by both the researcher and the researched (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Yet, for some (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993) constructivism lacks scientific rigour, they believe it is too concerned '*with description than prediction, induction rather than deduction*' (ibid). In the case of this study, implementation of a mixed methods approach offered a

research design which was fully compatible with the concept of constructivism and all four elements listed above.

Working with constructivism in the context of social science, and from the theoretical perspective of feminist public and private space, social and cultural capital, identity, power and empowerment, a qualitative approach was taken for the main collection of data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The assumption being that the complexities of social science and educational research are less well understood solely through numerical methods, Qualitative work offers an approach where all events and knowledge, *'are mediated and made real through`- interaction and material practices, through discourse, conversation, writing and narrative'* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p.1).

Indeed, the association between constructivism and qualitative methods is strong, although it is unclear if the methodological approach leads to epistemological choice or vice versa. Crotty (1998, p.9) believes, '*it is the constructivist epistemology that qualitative researchers tend to invoke'*.

Either way the connection between qualitative methods and constructivism, both fundamental structures of research design, cannot be ignored (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Equally, in the case of specific theoretical perspectives, such as feminism, where the focus is offering voice to the opinions and perceptions of women (Ezzy, 2002, Cohen *et al.*, 2007), a constructivist and qualitative approach is common (Brannen, 1992; Reinharz, 1992). Despite, however, the seemingly dichotomous relationship between qualitative and quantitative methods, regardless of the overarching epistemology, both techniques can be embraced in a single enquiry. It is the issues being investigated which should drive the methodological choice

(Westmarland, 2001) indicating that when working through the lens of constructivism both qualitative and quantitative methods are equally appropriate (Creswell, 2003; Hesse-Biber, 2010).

This research is also an interpretive piece of work, a term which Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) use to describe the research paradigm constructed from individual experiences within specific social settings,

> *'Interpretive studies assume that people create and associate their own subjective and intersubjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. Interpretive researchers thus attempt to understand phenomena through accessing the meanings participants assign to them' (*Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991, p.1).

Both stages of interviews were carried out within the FSES setting to contextualise the women's responses and their subjective interpretations of the support accessed, thus indicating reliance on the collected opinions as qualitative data. This offered the opportunity to explore some of the possible reasons behind the complex, multifaceted social processes, such as the women's motivation. In doing so, it also facilitated detailed study of the idiosyncratic situation of the FSES whilst accruing information which contributes to the wider understanding of outcomes from community school initiatives, whilst simultaneously prompting further enquiry.

Equally, the very subjectivity of the information given, the reliance on the skill and objectivity of the researcher in developing the interview 'conversation' and analysis of the data, can be challenging. In this way, interpretive research differs from positivist study with its rigor reliant on alternative research criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Lincoln and Gruba, 1985). More

specifically the common set of principles used with interpretivist research is focused on the:

- Hermeneutic circle: an iterative process of moving between interdependent meaning of parts and the whole social phenomenon being analysed.

- Contextualisation: a social and historical background of the setting to understand the current emergent situation

- Interaction: between researcher and participants and the collection and construction of data

- Abstraction and generalisation: relating findings from idiosyncratic settings to general human behaviour

- Dialogical reasoning: awareness of possible contradictions between the research and the findings

- Multiple interpretations: respondents' personal understanding of any given situation or event

- Suspicion: respondents' personal bias or distortion

  (Klein and Myers, 1999, p.72)

Further to these general principles and listed criteria, much like the concept of constructivism, the interpretative approach is subject to further clarity with the addition of quantitative data (Eisenhardt, 1989). With regard to this piece of research the quantitative information provided detail and set the framework for the interviews which in turn shaped a methodological approach and practical research plan.

5.2 Research design

The research design is described as a single case study (Yin, 2000), where the case is a single secondary school with an on-site day nursery (further details about the

school are given in sections 2.4, 3.2 and 3.3). It is based in an area of community regeneration associated with lower academic achievement and the research questions were designed around the problematized case (Yin, 2000). Put another way, the single unit of study sets out to derive inferences from specific units of investigation involving adult service users and their perceptions of the impact of the FSES support (Mills *et al.*, 2010). Like other studies, this case study is 'bounded' (Ragin and Becker 1992; Stake, 2003), and therefore has limitations, the specifics of which I identify later in the limitations of the study in Chapter 9. The boundaries though, are seen as permeable rather than fixed (Mill *et al.,* 2010) and in this case were defined by the open research questions which, by their structure, demanded descriptive responses which in turn helped to establish the content for the variable analysis.

Typically, case studies are used within practice orientated fields, such as education and management (Pring, 2000; Mills *et al.*, 2010), indicating the methodological appropriateness for this project. This research, however, is focused less on exploring processes and work-based practices (Yin, 2014), and more on understanding the perceived outcomes for those engaged with a practice. Characteristically for a case study, the emphasis of this work is particularistic, descriptive and heuristic, offering 'hands on learning' and wider understanding of social phenomena (Merriam, 1988).

In common with other types of research, case studies serve several possible purposes and offer descriptive, explorative, explanatory and/ or evaluative insight into specific phenomena (Yin, 2000; Cohen *et al.,* 2007). As a mixed method study, this enquiry sought explanation by investigating causal relationships through the detailed descriptions of the women's FSES experiences within the contextual framework of community schools and adult education and support. The work takes an instrumental approach (Stake, 2003) where as a single longitudinal study it aimed to gain insights

into the relatively under-explored field of FSES and its impact on adults and their relationships. It is anticipated that the findings can be used to prompt further investigation and to better understand the relationships adults have with the community school phenomenon.

Additionally, the ontological and epistemological stance of the research of the project is in tune with the case study approach and its contribution to knowledge. By virtue of accepting there is a case to be studied, there is an associated acknowledgement that the reality being researched is that of the participants, conjoined with that of the researcher and the epistemological framework therefore is appropriately constructivist (Crotty, 1998).

In summary, this research project bears the key indicators of being a case study, in terms of its ontology, epistemology, purpose, subject base and style of approach. The boundaries of the single location base and the unique focus on a single cohort of adults, combined with the collective wider view of their perceived identity changes, created a single case to be investigated in an explanatory, instrumental manner. It is then, as a case study that this research should be viewed.

A three-stage approach

The research design unfolds as three inter-related stages. The first was designed to contextualise the research and provide a description of the characteristics and circumstances of the cohort. A profile of the individuals was drawn using statistical information of each service user, collected with a quantitative self-completed questionnaire.

The second stage was focused on gathering adults' perceptions of the services and required more personal, subjective information, which was accessed via one to one,

semi-structured interviews. As a 'people' based enquiry, the methods needed to offer flexibility in generating detailed data associated with individual differences (Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

Given this was a small sample, completed in 'isolation', that is, without plans of repeating the study (Tooley with Darby, 1998), the information gathered from the first wave of interviews created a possible risk of insufficiency with associated lack of evidence of findings (Tooley with Darby, 1998; Robson, 2002).Therefore the third stage of the research planned to introduce a longitudinal aspect, to provide gravitas to the initial interview findings (Farrel, 1996; Ruspini, 2000). Re-interviewing the adult service users offered opportunity to either confirm or broaden the initial findings and to explore the longer term impacts of the initiative and outcomes for the individuals. In this way, stage three of the data collection created an element of replication, a feature identified as absent and as a missed opportunity for confirmation and accumulation in previous educational research (Tooley with Darby, 1998). The data collection phases are set out in Table 1, below.

Table 1: The stages of data collection

Data stage	Date completed	Method	Aims & Rationale (purpose in italics)	Final Sample Size
Pre-pilot	May 2011	Draft of 18 item questionnaire administered to friends and colleagues (6)	To gain feedback & comments *To review the presentation, comprehension and general impact of the questionnaire*	6
Pilot	June 2011	Amended draft for 18 item questionnaire administered to previous FSES service users	To check for clarity **To review the questions and ease of completion**	12
1	June 2011	Questionnaire 18 item questionnaire administered to all (200) service users accessing the site over a one week period	To develop a factual descriptive profile of the adult service users. *Required to establish if users are from initiative's target group for FSES support*	175 / 200 *25 adults refused or were unable to complete the questionnaire*
2	July 2011	Interview 1 Semi structured interviews with service users - Approx. 20 / 30 minutes	To understand how the services have impacted on the adult users and the adults' relationships with others, such as their, tutors, peers, children, partners, friends and neighbours *Required to gain insight into the personal views of service users.*	19 (a sub-set of stage 1 – unique identification of participants not possible from stage 1)
3	October 2014	Interview 2 Semi structured interviews with same service users - Approx. 30 / 40 minutes	To understand if adults' views of the impact of the support services changed with time, increased skills, employment, or greater self-confidence. *Required in order to compare personal experiences of adult service users over time*	13 (a sub-set of interviewees from stage 2 – unique identification of participants possible from stage 2)

5.3 Justification of the research design

The funding for the FSES initiative was targeted initially at the most vulnerable children and families in the UK and shaped according to their anticipated needs. Local areas were identified for funding by central government and were based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD, 2010). To determine if the adult service users were 'disadvantaged', similar criteria to that which was used to indicate deprivation by the IMD was employed in this study. The information relied on factual details which could be readily counted and compared, hence the use of quantitative methods (Robson, 2002: Rohrer, 2014). Details were collected via self- completion questionnaires which generated frequency counts from the data sets which in turn drew characteristics of the sample (Pallant, 2001). Extended frequency tables which included two or more variables allowed for cross tabulation and established if there was a relationship between the two selected categorical variables and created an option for further analysis with logistic regression (Tabachnick and Fiddell, 1996; Pallant, 2001).

The qualitative semi-structured interviews were selected as a method which works especially well when investigating the sequenced outcomes of a phenomena, leading from the prospective rather than retrospective stand point (Farral, 1996). With the initial interview having established adult perceptions of their FSES experiences, the second interview allowed the adults to describe and explain the manifestations of those initial experiences and how changes have occurred for them over time.

There are no clear guidelines as to ideal interview lengths or length of time between them. Given the uncertain nature of continuance of funding for the support services beyond February 2015, coupled with the recognition that adult learners from areas of deprivation take longer to progress (Zeigler and Ebert, 1999; Hughes *et al.,* 2016), it

was decided that the second stage of the interview needed to occur by the end of 2014.

In summary then, this research adopted a mixed method approach to be understood within an interpretivist and constructivist paradigm.

5.4 Mixed methods

The epistemological and theoretical perspective informed the choice of mixed methods as the approach for data collection (Ezzy, 2002, Tashakkora and Teddlie, 2003). Other factors determining the selection were the limited resources, which inevitably led to a pragmatic approach to responding to the research questions, and the social context and research environment (Guba, 1990; Oakley, 1999; Brannen, 2004). Equally, for a project with more than one aim, each requiring a different approach within the single research project, mixed methods was an appropriate way forward (Hammersley, 1992; Oakley, 1999; Brannen, 2004; Bryman, 2006).

In practice, both quantitative and qualitative approaches are situated as enquiries which are shaped by theory and values and where the complexities of reality are constructed (Crotty, 1998; Tashakkori & Teddie, 2003; Viadero, 2005). Crotty (1998) suggests that the stance of constructivists potentially allows for all research methods to be considered for use, as they believe all knowledge is constructed and that constructivism recognises there is no absolute objective viewpoint. Brannen (2004), in turn, justifies the dual use of approaches pragmatically, seeing them as tools to deliver on different kinds of truth and validity where qualitative and quantitative data needs to be viewed as complementary (Denzin, 1970).

The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection are considered to overcome the limitations of a single design (Creswell and Plano Clark,

2011). Specifically the dual modes offered opportunity to offset weaknesses created when using single methods alone, each addressing different types of question, whilst simultaneously drawing on the strengths of both. Indeed by using the different types of data it is possible to provide a greater illustration in the analysis of the findings and provide greater explanation to create a more complete, comprehensive account of the FSES. In turn, this facilitated more credible data with which to generate hypothesises within a single project (Bryman, 2011).

The research design can be appropriately labelled and illustrated as a 'mixed methods sequential design as described by Creswell and Plano Clark, as illustrated below.

Sequential design
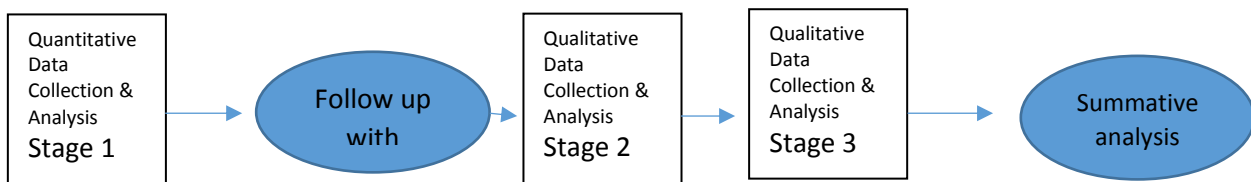
Figure 2 (Adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

This model uses a fixed design where quantitative and qualitative methods are predetermined at the start of the research process, and where procedures are implemented in a linear sequence. This approach made maximum use of the strengths of both methods during the data collection stage and generated separate findings for each method. The quantitative data established a framework in which to better understand the findings from the qualitative outcomes. There were, therefore, limited areas of overlap. Those of which transpired, were focused on the courses taken, engagement of civic activities, live-in partnerships and employment. In terms of the

relative importance of each method, there was no underlying assumption as to which arm of the research would dominate our understanding of the use of FSES. Their contributions were deemed to be appropriate for the research questions.

The dual methods responded sequentially to the different aspects of the research enquiry. The quantitative findings provided the detailed context within which the qualitative information could be understood, essential for appropriate analysis to be made. The quantitative data were gathered using the semi structured questionnaire which generated a profile of the service users via collection and collation of a series of practical facts and personal history. It was acknowledged that the accuracy of the information was based on the assumption that responses reflected understanding of the questions and reliable detail.

The qualitative method, in contrast was opinion based and generated a greater amount and more personal in-depth data than the quantitative research. The detail of the qualitative findings, through face to face interviews, was important because it captured the words of the women, their personal expressions and interpretation of their experiences of the services accessed. The freedom to be heard was significant for this cohort of interviewees, as many were from origins of culturally strong inheritance, several of which had a history where the female voice is often suppressed (Agarwal, 1992; Derne, 1995). Yet, observance was also given to the recognition that voices can be lost too between the power imbalance between the researcher and the researched, something widely acknowledged in feminist research (Millen, 1997; Marshall and Young, 2006). For this reason the interviews were semi-structured and invitation was offered to the women to share their thoughts, mindful that undue pressure to respond to specific questions may have stirred disquiet about their daily lives.

The quantitative and qualitative research elements must also be acknowledged in regard to their internal and external validity (Johnson and Turner, 2003; Onwuebuzie and Burke Johnson, 2006; Venkatesh *et al.,* 2013). That is, mixed methods can provide insights into phenomena not otherwise available through single dimensional research (Venkatesh *et al.,* 2013), however, there are three key aspects critical to its successful implementation. The first, the appropriateness of the approach, the choice of methodical design and implementation must match the research paradigm and questions. Second is the development of a meta-inference, which is the substantive theory and last is the assessment of quality of inferences, otherwise described as validation of the mixed methods selection (Venkatesh *et al.,* 2013). Validity of findings though still rests on several caveats (Onwuebuzie and Burke Johnson, 2006). In this research project the threats were predominantly internal, resultant from external factors affecting the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables (ibid). The aspects of significant influence on internal validity were:

History and implementation effect – Activities and personal identity preceding FSES may have influenced the outcomes for both elements of the mixed methods, as might the presentation of the data collections.

Maturation - with possibly associated attrition of the number of women participating in the final longitudinal section of the study. Although the protracted stages of the data gathering brought opportunity to view the manifestations of the women's experiences, it is also understood to include other life experiences and changes which are difficult to distil from the general findings.

Selection bias – the women self-selected to participate in the interviews suggesting self-confidence and positive experience may have been influencing factors.

Acknowledging these threats to validity prompted actions to minimise possibilities of actualisation and impact, the details of which are included in Chapter 9.

Research methods

5.5 The questionnaire (copy in appendix 1)

The quantitative data was collected using a paper based, self-completion questionnaire containing 18 items. The resulting coded variables were:

age, gender, level of qualification, marital situation, who they lived with, ethnicity, support services accessed, voluntary work undertaken, how they travelled to the site, car ownership, living arrangements, employment and civic activities, such as participation in neighbourhood watch or social clubs.

The framework for the questions was influenced by the format of the standard census question for basic, socio-demographic information. Where possible, usage was made of the wording and layout designed by the National Office for Statistics (ONS) in order to create a factual profile of the service users. The questions were prefaced with an introduction which included a brief explanation of the purpose of the survey, who should complete the questionnaire, how to do so, along with an approximation of how long it should take and a reassurance that all information will be treated as confidential.

The collective purpose of the questions was to draw a 'snapshot' of the service users at the FSES site, with each question making a valuable individual contribution towards building a fuller profile. The questionnaire was divided into four sections, with the first set of questions focused on personal details from the respondent and was entitled, '**About You'**. Setting questions such as these, at the beginning of a questionnaire prompts divided opinion (Oppenheim, 1992; De Vaus, 2002; Fanning, 2005; Cohen *et*

al., 2007). Some believe demography questions should not be at the start of a survey. Indeed, the census, which has 10 pages per set of personal details, places its demographic questions on pages 7 and 9 respectively (ONS, 2011). Contrary to this, I sequenced the questions, firstly requiring factual answers, to option menus through to open responses (Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

The second section was titled '**What do you do at the FSES?**' And enquired about courses taken since September 2009, work participated in, either paid or voluntary and finally, if they attended courses elsewhere. In terms of drawing a profile of the service users these questions sought to indicate where adults saw the need for learning and support, where they were confident to work and if they were sufficiently confident to attend courses in other establishments.

The third section, '**Out and about**' was focused on travel, accommodation arrangements, employment status and other community activities, that is personal information which indicates social levels.

The final section, '**What to do next and how to enter the prize draw'** was a request for adults to volunteer for an interview lasting approximately 30 minutes and instructions on how to enter the prize draw which was advertised at the very base of the front sheet. The intention of the cash prizes of £50, £30 and £10, was to act as an incentive to encourage further research participation, a tactic which is recognised to substantially reduce the non-response rate (Cohen *et al.,* 2007; Wilson *et al.,* 2010). There were no apparent detrimental aspects to offering this incentive, indeed it encouraged greater participation (McColl *et al.,* 2001) and given the sample size was relatively small (approximately 200) it could be justified in assisting a good return. Hoinville and Jowell (1978), however, caution against making incentives appear as

payment rather than a token of thanks, this was avoided by limiting the prizes to three winners. Equally, by placing the information of the draw entry at the very end of the questionnaire it was anticipated it would foster a sense of opportunity as a reward for participation in not only the questionnaire but also the interview (ibid).

With the overall purpose of the questionnaire aimed at drawing a profile of the service users at the FSES site, two main types of questions were used. The first focused on 'attributes', to establish the characteristics of the respondent, these were factual questions such as, age, marital status etc. The second type focused on 'behaviour', where the questions were about what people do or have done, and again they were menu led and therefore closed, although there was an option to add an open response not listed. The use of different types of questions offered the opportunity to develop a sense of conversational sequence with the change in depth of the questions (De Vaus, 2002; Fanning, 2005; Bryman, 2011).

Given the cohort contained many adults who were non-English speakers, the language used in the questions was kept simple and as unambiguous as possible. Additionally the questions aimed to present without order or judgement that there was no 'right' or preferred order (Oppenheim, 1992; Dillman *et al.*, 1993). Additionally, the questionnaire used 'Century Gothic' font, which was chosen for its clarity (British Dyslexia Association, no date given) and legibility, mindful that some of the respondents may not be familiar with characters of the English alphabet.

Pilot questionnaire / adjustments

The questionnaire format was developed through testing and piloting (Converse and Presser, 1986). Initially a pre-pilot questionnaire was administered (Oppenheim, 1992; De Vaus, 2002) to six non-service users for comment and feedback in late May 2011.

Adjustments were made to the question wording, length and placement in response to adults' replies prior to a more formal pilot phase. The amended questionnaires were then administered to 12 previous FSES service users, in early June 2011 (ibid).

Feedback from the pilot phase again indicated a need for simpler language for some of the questions and a preference for the menu style responses. The section on personal details which was located at the end of the pilot questionnaire, caused mild concern for the need and use of these, and for this reason the questions were trimmed and put at the front of the questionnaire. They were newly presented in a simple format, similar to an application form which was much better received. Respondents also indicated they were uncomfortable about declaring the number of people living in their home as this was often not consistent and they were also unsure about including those who were applying for permanent residency. In contrast, the prizes and the concept of a draw was viewed as a good incentive for respondents and the information sheet at the start of the questionnaire was considered helpful. The average completion time was 20 minutes.

Administration of the questionnaire (the main quantitative study)

Prior to distribution, written consent was obtained from the main secondary school head teacher and verbal consent from the service deliverer such as tutors and PSA's. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed.

In order to capture the best 'snap-shot' profile of the service users, every adult accessing support on the school site during an allotted week in May 2011 was given a questionnaire at their point of service access, i.e. in a classroom, consultation room, family room etc. On site questionnaire delivery, with allocated completion time, enabled the adults to seek support from familiar staff if they needed it. For example

learners in literacy classes had access to both their tutor and classroom assistants as well as the questionnaire administrator, who was there to assist those with limited literacy skills. This helped reduce the risk of non-participation, in-completed questionnaires and /or misunderstanding of questions or instructions, (Gillham 2000; 2008). This approach also reduced queries on the returned questionnaire, increased prospects of good returns and raised the standard of form completion. Yet, it was also recognised that this data collection method may cause bias in user response by reducing their sense of anonymity, reflection time and personal choice in terms of participation (ibid).

A repeat distribution of questionnaires was arranged for the following week in an effort to catch anyone who was absent during the initial tranche of data collection. The timing of June was chosen because it sits within the final academic term of the year, and therefore more probably included adults who would have attended for almost a full academic year and would therefore have a clear opinion about the services.

Once completed, the questionnaires were gathered in and a coding entered into the front cover. This procedure enabled the sequence of delivery and completion rate to be traced in order to ensure all adults, accessing all services, had been invited to participate in the data collection. No 'tagging' or tracking of respondents' personal information was undertaken.

Altogether 19 women indicated they would be willing to participate in an interview and these were followed up with a telephone call. Arrangements for the interviews were made for a convenient time and day during the week beginning 11th July 2011. The respondents were also contacted again by phone for the second interview three years later.

5.6 The interviews

It is recognised that most people find talking easier than writing (Gillham, 2000). Given the low levels of literacy of the participants of this project, only limited data could be gained through the questionnaires. Using interview methods therefore enabled better understanding of the experiences and opinions of the women (Aldridge and Levine, 2001). Interviews as a research method involve conversations between the researcher and participants who represent either themselves and/ or the main cohort (Kvale and Brinkmannn, 2009).

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) view the process and use of interviews as pragmatic as well as contextual, linguistic and narrative, where information and knowledge gained is produced in a conversational relationship. Yet it is not a conversation in a casual sense, it is a constructed investigation which seeks to understand values and preferences, attitudes and beliefs (Tuckman, 1972). In turn the data collected contributes towards testing hypotheses or helping create fresh concepts generated from newly accrued information or providing an explanation for phenomena (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

The process then for all interview types has a shared framework which follows a general pattern of thematising / problematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying and lastly, reporting. Following thematising, this piece of research was conducted using semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews

Methodological choice is seen as driven by purpose and use of data (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) and interviewing is one of the most common methods used in small-scale educational research with semi-structured interviews widely recognised as

highly effective (Drever, 1995). The term 'semi-structured interview' refers to the concept of a question-based conversation which covers a wide range of strategies, all of which are counter-posed to both the 'rigidly structured' and the informally 'unstructured' interview (Wengraf, 2001). That is, a 'semi-structured interview' refers to setting up a generalised formation of enquiry to cover specific areas of research while the detail of the interview is worked out during the interchange itself. Specifically, they facilitate the opportunity to ask more open and often complex questions than when using other methods (ibid). The cultural and language mix of the women attending the FSES strongly directed the choice of interview type by the obvious possibility that questions would need to be adjusted for each person's level of language skill and cultural background. Equally the order of questions can be adjusted to the flow of dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee, encouraging co-operation and rapport, with the potential to produce a wide range of answers, including, on occasion, some unexpected ones (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). The typical traditional sequence for a semi-structured interview would be; an introduction, list of topic headings and key questions, a set of associated prompts and closing comments (Robson, 2002). It was also recognised, however, that questions which were focused on the women's FSES experiences may generate conversation that was also useful for the study's aims. Therefore, the ability to deviate from the planned sequence of questions was vital and the generality of the semi-structured format ensured the interviewee had a reasonable degree of flexibility in what and how much was discussed and how it was expressed (Drever, 1995; Longhurst, 2010). Interviews therefore hold potential for providing rich and illuminating material, which can include covering sensitive topics, with the freedom to explore them to the level the respondent feels comfortable (Mishler, 1986; Oppenheim, 1992). In terms of outcome, this

research attempts to understand themes of everyday life seen from the subjects' own perspective, a purpose, very much shared with the semi-structured interview method (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Unsurprisingly with such flexibility of approach, there are mixed views on the usage of semi-structured interviews, especially for small scale projects, chiefly because of the sizeable amount of time required. In a situation of limited resources, the time involved administering the interviews can affect the size of the sample, as there is no economy of scale (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In equal measure the sample size and the lengthy process of transcription must be balanced with the need for sufficient numbers within the sample, such that patterns can be observed (Aldridge and Levine, 2001).

Semi-structured interviews are challenging for the interviewer; they demand aptitude to present questions in an order and format, without bias, that engages the respondent (Aldridge and Levine, 2001; Robson 2002; Sapford, 2011). They must also be aware that lack of interviewee anonymity can cause responses to be swayed by social desirability and wishing to please (ibid). For these reasons the interviewer must foster a relationship of sufficient trust that the interviewee believes the information will be treated in confidence and without judgement (Mishler, 1986). All the interviews at the FSES were conducted by myself which provided consistency in the delivery, order and flexibility. It also created the comfortable and trusting relationship mentioned above, between myself as the interviewer and the women volunteering to be interviewed, as I was a familiar figure to them in the context of the FSES.

Semi-structured enquiries are still a respondent rather than an informant interview (Powney and Watts, 1987). The interviewer leads on directing the topics, the order of the questions, their wording and the focus given to each aspect of the interview

(Robson 2002). Indeed, there is a power differential in semi-structured interviews which is loaded in favour of the interviewer, in that they have the overall control and steer of discussion which only they can manipulate (Kvale and Brinkmannn, 2009). The interviewer is bound then to guard against and be alert to unintentionally leading the steer, content or tone of the conversation through the types of questions used (ibid).

Questions

The semi structured interview framework created space between the interviewer and interviewee to take place, where the women service users did the majority of the talking during the 20-40 minute interview, and where I mainly listened. Obviously I was aware that many of the women were from vulnerable backgrounds, my role of interviewer, then was aimed at generating a sense of ease so our interaction felt as close to a conversation as possible; yet where I was still mainly leading the direction of the topics.

It is noted, however, as outlined in the introduction, as the instigator of the FSES services, I had a predominant role in their design and delivery. Many of the women service users were aware of my leadership position, yet most who recognised me, would also have associated me with administration and consultative activities to review and further develop services for them and other local adults. My role, therefore, did not represent opportunity for advantage on either my side or theirs. Indeed, due to regular reviews and consultations with them to develop on-site services, the women appeared to be comfortable and confident to speak to me during the research interviews, indicating they were aware I had no particular expectations of their responses.

My role, therefore, was a mix of being an insider to the school, leadership and institutionalised public space yet simultaneously, as an outsider to the school, creator of a hybrid space and a representative voice for parents, community and vulnerable others. It is the latter element of my role, as representative, which is arguably most critical to this research. My personal interface with the women, and acting as a representative for both them and the formal institution of education, offered insight into insider, outsider and hybrid perspectives. From this position I recognised there was difference and distance between myself and the women, their cultures, life experiences, social class and even usage of our shared language. Through the reflexive process of the interviews (Davis, 2007, Frame 2014), however, I believe I was able to examine and consciously acknowledge my background and associated assumptions sufficiently enough to draw together snap-shots of the women's described social reality with relative objectivity.

To this end, all the interviews were carried out in familiar surroundings on the school site, often after classes, to minimise disruption and inconvenience for them. My contributions and interjections were either presented to clarify questions or to give examples where the use of longer, or double barrelled, or unwittingly confusing questions had been used (Hoinville and Jowell, 1978). Otherwise, my purpose was to probe for deeper detail and prompt and encourage if the women seemed unsure about their opinions in any way (Sapsford, 2011),

At the start of the interview, the questions were prefaced with a 'thank you for attending', and a request for permission to record our conversation to ensure I had an accurate account of what they said. I also reassured them that there were no wrong answers, it was their opinion and experience that was sought. I conducted all the

interviews myself, which reduced the variance in the wording of the questions to a minimum.

For clarity, where needed I introduced each section of the interview as we moved through the categories. This was then followed by questions relating to the area of focus, designed to explore the women's individual perceptions, delivered in simple, clear, short sentences.

There are clear distinctions between categories of questions used within interviews, typically, they are either focused on facts, behaviour, beliefs or attitudes (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Their presentation as open or closed with fixed or scaled responses influences the replies they elicit (ibid). Indeed, Aldridge and Levine (2001) highlight the importance of the wording of questions, particularly in terms of cultural and language differences when conducting targeted interviews. Ambiguity and lack of contextual understanding can easily occur and affect the outcome and findings (ibid). Each question contained key words relating to the topic being explored, and these were retained in all the questions asked of the women. For the sake of the interviewees for whom English was very limited, questions were asked and often rephrased using synonyms to offer maximum clarity. If further explanation was needed, a closed scaled response was offered as a solution, and indeed these often stimulated additional detail or opinion.

Bergman and Coxon (2005) suggests it is not so much the type of question or the words within the questions which determines the quality of response but the consistency and accuracy with which the questions are asked. They highlight the stimulus / response process that the question / answer arrangement of an interview generates in order to prompt a verbal reaction (ibid). Couched in this scientific manner

it is unsurprising that they prioritise standardisation of questions and interviewing techniques over using certain questions as opportunities for further discussion. Additionally the standardisation of questions cannot be divorced from those asking them, thereby creating a challenge for standardisation. Indeed, interviewers' background and influence, personality and characteristics, coupled with the wording used have been acknowledged to effect interviewee's answers (Mischler, 1986). Furthermore other studies have found that over a third of prepared questions are different to those actually asked and a further fifth of questions changed so much that they are incomparable with the originals (Cannell *et al.*, 1975; Dijkstra *et al.,* 1985; Bregman and Coxon, 2005). Despite the demand for greater scientific rigour that the standardisation of questions would bring, however, there is also argument that people interviewed are not of a standardised nature and therefore the interviewer should be open to all responses and not led solely by their own experiences. Such complex variables demand rigour, coupled with the flexibility to generate interview questions which offer equal opportunities for all interviewees to be properly heard (Aldridge and Levine, 2001).

When replying to open-ended interview questions, respondents often provided wider ranging information, for example, when asked about their motivation for attending the services, most of the women gave information about their children and where they went to school, even though this was not specifically enquired about. They also sometimes made reference to their ethnicity and marital status which was often corroborated by their physical presentation, for example by wearing a wedding band and / or hijab. This information, both verbal and visual, was taken at face value, and, as it was not central to the purpose of the interview questions, it was not further investigated. Moreover, given the focus of this study was about the women's self-

perceptions, where they offered information freely, it was interpreted to be part of their sense of self and a contribution to a general and wider understanding of their social identity. Of course, there is reliance on interviewees to be precise in their accounts, to be factual and where appropriate to offer further explanation. Such visual and verbal clues, however, are not guaranteed to always be accurate and for this reason these details were not included in either the quantitative or qualitative data for analysis.

Prompts

Prompts and probes as indicated, can be very useful in marshalling information which might otherwise be held back, however, there is a point when a prompt can become a lead (Silverman, 2011).For many of the interviewees, English is not their first language, requiring some of the questions to be simplified or examples given. This compounded the possibility leading or 'pervasive contamination' (ibid). Yet, it can be argued that all research is tainted to some extent by the values of the researcher, and the power of the researcher's placement highlights, that value-free research and qualitative studies are not always compatible (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Silverman, 2011).

5.7 Ethical considerations

It is recognised that a '*questionnaire will always be an intrusion into the life of the respondent'* (Cohen *et al.,* 2007, p.317) and as such all efforts were made to make the experience of collecting data on the FSES as easy and pleasurable as possible for the women participants. Engagement with the research, however, should ultimately be the participants' choice, made via informed consent, with guaranteed confidentiality and within ethical boundaries. The design for this piece of research was considered by the Institute of Education ethics committee to be in keeping with the guidelines set out by

the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011). There were no recognised conflicts to '*the application of moral principles which prevent harming or wronging others'* (Sieber, 1993, p.14). Neither were there conflicts of personal interest or personal gain anticipated.

Voluntary informed consent

The purpose and motivation for the questionnaire was given verbally by the FSES worker, i.e., the tutor, the PSA etc., to each group of service users prior to the distribution of the questionnaire booklets. The information sheet at the front of the booklet was also read to the adults. This outlined the purpose of the research, how the information was to be used and who it would be shared with, including where participant feedback would be located. This provided a shared time for questions and practical queries. In addition, each group was allocated an administrator to help those with limited literacy skills, which together with the other information sources, provided the basis on which the adults decided if they wished to participate. Participants also had the right to withdraw at any time from the research activities. Indeed of the 200 questionnaires only 175 of them were completed, with no reason for not wanting to participate given.

For all adults who agreed to contribute to a 20 - 40 minute interview, a written information sheet was provided, again explaining briefly the purpose and use of the information collected. This also offered an opportunity for the adults to withdraw or to ask questions. All interviews were voluntary and adults indicated their interest in being contacted, again by telephone, by ticking a box on the final page of their questionnaire, thereby requiring a positive action from the participant to actively opt in (BERA, 2011).

For the second interview, I attempted to contact the original 19, who had co-operated in the first stage again via their mobile or home telephone using the contact details given on the original questionnaire. Four of the women could not be contacted and two declined the invitation to return, one because she had moved away and the other because she was working and felt too busy, leaving a total of 13 returner interviewees.

Vulnerable adults

With regard to vulnerable adults, many of the service users' first language was not English. Translators for the most frequently spoken languages were therefore on hand to provide a verbal translation of the questionnaire.

All research data was gathered on the school site and questionnaires were completed in rooms where adult classes were held. By using the school site, greater assistance was available to the adults and it offered the security of familiar surroundings and reduced the risk of non-returned questionnaires from off-site completion (McColl *et al.,* 2001). The interviews were also conducted in site-based quiet rooms which facilitated confidential discussion.

Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

Once gained, consent is often conditional to all information being held confidentially and / or anonymously (Jowell 1986). Questionnaire anonymity was made possible through nameless booklets and tear off sheets at the back of the booklet for those willing to be interviewed and / or be placed in the prize draw. Interviewees, however, are rarely offered complete anonymity, more commonly their details are subject to confidentiality (ibid). In the case of this project, participants' entitlement to privacy was upheld with the guarantee that all information would be held in the strictest confidence. That is, their information would not be shared with others nor would there be a

connection between information gained and the identity of the participant (Jowell, 1986). Further still, the names of the interview participants were substituted for pseudonyms so all entries in Chapter 8 have their contributions protected from identification. Information about who would have access to the information was made clear to all adults, both verbally and via the questionnaire booklet and the information sheet for the semi structured interviews. Data was stored in a securely locked cabinet and at the conclusion of the study all data was safely archived, with all links to participants destroyed.

Disclosure

It was made clear to the participant that if during the interviews information was disclosed which was likely to be harmful to either themselves or others, it would be shared with appropriate authorities. This was stated clearly in the pre-interview agreement in writing and was verbally reiterated at the start of the interview.

Validity

Reliability regarding the collection of the internal quantitative and qualitative data (Rose, 1982) was viewed as robust. The questionnaires were piloted twice to screen for ambiguity and complexity. Form completion was executed on the school site which ensured a quiet area for full focus and literacy help was available. Equally the interviews were conducted in a consistent manner, using the same interviewer, location and set questions delivered in a consistent order. The interviews were semi structured and therefore had a level of flexibility in terms of their exact wording which enabled further reliability by offering the opportunity to subtly differentiate the questions in order to provide greater equality of understanding.

Validity is the process of testing the evidence for accuracy of the measurement methods used, the appropriateness of the research design and the extent to which the sample is representative of the population which it aims to represent (Sapsford, 2011). The validity of the internal data (Rose, 1982) generated from both the questionnaire and the interviews, addressed the research questions appropriately. The purpose of the questionnaire was to establish who the service users were and better understand if they were the intended beneficiaries of the FSES initiative. The interviews sought to learn what the adults' experiences and opinions were of themselves and others in relation to the FSES. It has been established, however, that interviews are never neutral, on both sides there is experiential and biographical baggage (Sapsford, 2011). It was anticipated that any associative 'baggage' would be expressed through the interview dialogue, thereby providing a clearer portrait of the service user and possibly a more authentic account of the women's perspectives. Equally by hosting the interviews on the delivery site, it was anticipated the impact of researcher presence might be abated as both the setting and the researcher were known to the women.

Summary

In summary this empirical, constructivist research employed a logistically ordered structure to implement a sequential design model for the mixed method approach it took to carry out this bounded case study. The quantitative and qualitative work drew together a comprehensive account of the women using the FSES services. This chapter describes the iterative nature of the development and format of the questionnaire design and how it was administered to the adult service users and the support available to aid completion. The double phase follow up with the semi-structured interviews is then detailed, including the nature of the questions and how and where they were delivered. The chapter ends with a reflective look at the ethical

considerations addressed before, during and after the data collection. I also highlight aspects of the research, such as, prompts and interviewer influence that need to be considered during the analysis of the findings and mindful of these caveats, the findings will now be presented.

Chapter 6: Findings from the quantitative data

Introduction

The data analysis for this thesis has both a quantitative and a qualitative arm. Firstly, I will begin with the results of the quantitative survey (a semi-structured questionnaire) which preceded the analysis which set out to:

i) **Identify the profile of the adult service user.** The details sought were age, level of qualification, marital situation, who they lived with, their ethnicity, and support services accessed, voluntary work undertaken, how they travelled to the school site, car ownership, living arrangements, employment, and community activities.

ii) **Explore the key inter-relationships** between pairs of variables

iii) **Predict the level of achievement and the focus of the course(s)** in terms of key socio-demographic variables, specifically, marital status, age, number of cars per household and ethnicity.

6.1 Rationale for the analysis strategy and coding

The quantitative data was marshalled into three distinct aspects of analysis, each echoing the purposes outlined above. The first focused on providing a description and profile of the sample, established through the collation of frequencies of the variables generated from the survey questionnaire. The second aspect utilised the frequencies to explore key bivariate relationships and ascertained the extent to which the variables should enter a logistic regression analysis. The aspects which indicated the strongest relationships, namely the area of voluntary work, level of uptake / achievement and

the adults' personal circumstances were then processed to explore the key multiway relationships.

Questionnaire responses were categorised and allotted a code, in this case, the responses were pre-coded or closed with the exception of two open questions which asked for lists of school based courses and of work.

The coding process enables frequency counts, generating a breakdown of numbers within each category within each variable. This worked to establish the relative numbers across different variables (Oppenheim, 1992). The use of cross tabulations of specific categorical variables highlighted the relationship between them. The relative amounts of correlation between the variables was then reviewed using logistic regression (Pallant, 2001).

In terms of responses, the variation within each of the variables was as full as possible to ensure sufficient detail was captured, yet, at the same time, as minimal as possible to reduce overly complex initial analysis. Following the initial frequency counts, each of the variables was then dichotomised allowing for 2x2 cross tabulations to explore the relationship between pairs of categorical variables, and later when using logistic regression to establish key predictors (Pallant, 2001). All analysis methods used an SPSS statistics programme (Version 10, 2001) to process data. Using the original variables generated from the questionnaire, an initial list of coding was applied (see Table 2).

Under the second stage of analysis the cross tabulations based on the original coding list produced a number of sparse or empty cells. To address this issue, categories were typically combined and recoded to produce dichotomies. The resulting binary variables used for the contingency table analysis were as follows (see Table 3):

Table 3: Recoding variables as binary items (codes 0/1) for cross tabular analysis

Variable	Coding 0	Coding 1	Previous coding
Age	18-35 yrs.	36-85 yrs.	18-29 (1), 30-39 (2), 40-49 (3), 50+(4)
Highest level qualification	Up to level 1	Up to level 2	Entry level 1 (E1) (1), E2 (2), E3 (3), Level 1 (4), Level 2 (5), GCSE (6), A' Levels (7), Degree (8), no response (9)
Marital situation	Married	Not married	Married (1), separated (2), single (3), widowed (4)
Living arrangements	Alone	With others	With partner (1), alone (2), with friends (3), with family (4)
Ethnicity	British	Non British	White British (1), White Irish (2), other white (3), White and black Caribbean (4), White and black Asian (5), other mixed heritage (6), Indian (7), Pakistani (8), Bangladeshi (9), other Asian (10), black British Caribbean (11), black British African (12), other black British (13), Chinese (14), other (15)
Services accessed / skills achieved (level of uptake / achievement)	Less than level 1	Level 1 +	Childcare level 1 (1), childcare level 2 (2), introduction to IT (3), ITQ (4), intermediate IT (5), maths (6), reading (7), literature (8), parent support (9), beauty (10), dressmaking (11), parenting (12), cake decoration (13), Over sixty club (14), first aid (15). Service users indicated all services accessed which were then coded individually.
Area of voluntary work with FSES	Not child focused	Child focused	Admin (1), Teacher assistant (2), youth (3), fitness (4), parent support (5), crèche (6), none (7)
Travel to FSES	Not public transport	Public transport	Tram (1), bike (2), car (3), taxi (4), passenger (5), walk (6), scooter (7), bus (8), other (9), no response (10)
Number of cars per household	No car	Has car(s)	0,1,2,3,4 (continuous)
Accommodation type	Alone	Shared	House (1), shared house (2), flat (3), mobile home (4)
Postcode	Not CRO	CR0	CR0 (1), CR7 (2), SE25 (3), SW15 (4), SW17 (5), other (6), no response (7)
Number of additional community activities	0	1+	0, 1, 2, 3 (continuous)
Type of additional community activities	Civic engage-ment	Personal	Worship (1), social (2), fitness (3), community (4), neighbours scheme (5), other (6), no response (7)

During this stage of analysis the cross tabulation of all pairs of variables were considered. Variables which had a 'statistically significant' relationship with the two key outcomes, area of voluntary work and level of uptake / achievement (where

p<0.05), were retained as candidates for logistic regression in the third stage of analysis. Each stage will now be described in greater detail.

Descriptions and findings

6.2 Stage one: frequency analysis and section summary

All 175 completed questionnaires were coded in preparation for being entered into SPSS (2001) to examine the marginal distributions of each variable.

The minimal representation of males (5.7%) offered little in terms of robustness as a variable that might permit sub-group analysis of any gender difference. In view of this limitation it was decided to focus on the women alone, therefore the main analysis is based on 165 responses and, indeed all of the qualitative interviews concentrated solely on the women's voices.

It is worth mentioning, however, that the small sample of men confirmed, and as expected from the literature review, they were much less likely than women to engage with extended school / community education programmes (Fleming, 2008; Niace, 2013). Their minimal data though did create a slim description and at least began a profile of males whom did engage with the FSES services based in the school. Indeed, their minority status made good argument to utilise the opportunity of capturing their details as a starting point to better understand them for future studies. A description of the men is provided later.

Firstly, however, I will turn to the descriptive account of the women who made up the main body of the analysis and draw together their responses to the menu led questions. The majority (92%) of all questionnaires were returned with the open ended

questions either left blank or poorly completed. For this reason the information was considered too limited to provide sufficient detail for inclusion here.

Descriptive and analytical account of the characteristics of the sample of women drawn from stage 1, including commentary and interpretations of findings

Nearly three quarters of the sample (74.6%) were aged between 30 and 49 years old, most of whom tended to be thirty somethings. The remaining sample comprised around 15% who were aged between 18-29 years and a smaller number over 50 years (c.10%), of which one was 85. Erikson (1964) suggested that there are eight life stages of development for women, the seventh of which is focused on generativity versus self-absorption or stagnation, which he believes occurs around 35-55 years and manifests as a time for major life shifts or a time to seek self-purpose. Knowles (1970) recognised this stage in terms of educational possibilities for adults, as andragogy, the art and science of helping adults learn. Conceptually, each learner progresses from being a dependent learner to being an independent learner via a linear process of mastering surety that enables self-direction of their learning, (ibid). Mezirow (1995) built on the work of Knowles to identify 'transformative learning' where self-direction becomes focused on perspective and the transformation. He describes the concept as a 'process of effecting change in a 'frame of reference', where the frame consists of two dimensions, 'habits of mind' and 'point of view', a mixture of cultural assimilation and idiosyncratic early learned influences (Mezirow, 1997). Using critical reflection, the frames of reference can be transformed to allow the learner to become an 'autonomous' thinker, by which Mezirow means, the learner is able to utilise understanding, skills and attitude to reflect on personal assumptions and

engage with others to validate their beliefs through the experiences of others who share universal values (ibid).

Underpinning the concept of a 'right age band' for learning (Erikson, 1964), is the practical reality that the typical age of females having their first child in the UK is 28.1 years (ONS, 2014). This would suggest that women aged between 30-49 years would be more likely to have children attending school, which in turn would liberate them to be able to access community education. Indeed the data from the questionnaire established that more than half of the respondents (57.7%) had children attending the on-site secondary school, whilst the remaining 42.2% either had children attending other settings or for a minority (10.9%), they were not parents of school aged children. The reasons for the women's attendance therefore demanded further clarity and was later explored further during the interviews.

The women respondents were culturally mixed with 63% identifying themselves as Asian, slightly less than half again (24.2%) as Black, 12.1% as British and 0.6% as other. With such a high percentage of the attendees coming from a recognised cultural group, where, from a feminist point of view, the female domain is often within the private sphere (Weintraub,1997); it raises a question of why these women accessed support services in this specific public space. Equally, given the cultural heritage of the majority it was unsurprising that almost three quarters (73.9%) stated they were married and just over a quarter (26.1%), not married and less, unsurprising again, that 86.7%, including those married, said they lived with others, while only 13.3% lived alone.

Car / van ownership or access is one of several indicators which helps to define inequalities in both health and economic status (Carr-Hill and Chambers Dixon, 2005). In drawing a profile of the service users, the female participants were asked to state

the number of cars or vans that they owned or had available for use. The majority (60.6%) of women reported they had between 1 and 2 cars per household, while 39.4% had no car, a contrast to the national picture of 75% of households having access to a car or van and only 25% do not (Department for Transport, 2011). This data supports the assumption that this female cohort may also represent hard to reach adults (Flanagan and Hancock, 2010). Despite over half of the service users having access to a car or van only 26.2% travelled to the school site in a car, either as a driver or as a passenger. Indeed, the majority used either public transport (36.7%) or opted to walk (37.1%). Just over half of respondents (50.9%) lived within the same post code area as the school. A further 18.2% lived either in the next nearest postal location, a maximum of 5 miles away, or in neighbouring postcode areas (30.9%). The proximity of the services may have affected the choice of transport and indeed the decision to engage with the community provision at all. Motivation for accessing the services was further investigated during the interviews.

The FSES offered a range of services such as one to one parent support, housing information and practical help with forms, social meetings for the over 60's as well as accredited courses ranging from pre-entry level through to level 3. Of the females responding, half identified themselves as having a basic level qualification (level 1 accreditation or below, 46.7%) and the other half categorised themselves as having a formal, nationally recognised qualification (level 2 or above - 46.7%); only 6.7% did not respond.

All the women in the sample reported they had accessed at least one of the 'Support Services'. For the purpose of analysis, the services were grouped according to their length of duration, that is, ten weeks or less, between ten weeks and one year and lastly, on a continuous, roll on / roll off access where the support had no specific start

or end date. There was no restriction on how many services the women could access at any one time.

Services of 'ten weeks or less' duration typically included non-accredited courses and leisure classes, for example basic information technology (IT), cake decoration and beauty therapy and workshops offering work-based qualifications, such as first aid and food hygiene certificates. There were no prerequisites to access any of these services. Enrolment was either self-directed by the adult or via referral from other local service providers such as children centres and local adult education providers, often when no other local provider had availability of similar services. Almost thirty percent (29.7%) engaged with this type of short term category of service, of which over half (56.9%) took a basic IT course.

In contrast to shorter term support, the majority of adults (60%) committed to services lasting 'between 10 weeks and 1 year'. These included an Introduction to childcare (level 1), NVQ childcare (level 2), parenting and ITQ (level 2). Adults were often encouraged to apply for these courses as progression routes whilst attending other basic skill classes offered by Extended Services. Entry was also via referral from other services such as NHS, social services, local children centres and / or Job Centre Plus. Of the 60% of women accessing these courses, almost half of them (49%) accessed the introduction to childcare programme (level1), 18% NVQ level 2 childcare, 9% parenting and 1.8% ITQ with the remainder (22.2%) engaging with more basic, non-accredited provision. Given that over half (66% of the 60%) of women whom accessed these slightly longer services chose to focus on aspects of childcare draws a question as to their motivation. Possibly their interest was sparked because they had children at school or because they wanted to work in the childcare industry or because they

were mothers themselves and felt comfortable working within an area they had experience in. The motivation for choosing courses within aspects of childcare was further explored during the interviews.

Equally, many adults (51.5%) used the 'Continuous services' which had no start or end date, that is, adults could access support for as long as they felt they needed it. Typically 'continuous services' included Silver Strands (the over 60's group), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) literacy, numeracy, reading club and parent support. In many ways these also provided a social element as well as increasing skill levels, which might account for the long term access some of the adults took. Just over a quarter of respondents accessing 'continuous services' (27.9%) indicated they opted for basic reading, with slightly less (19.4%) enrolling for general literacy and less again (18.8%) for numeracy support. The literacy, numeracy, ESOL and reading club focused on development of basic skills and were aimed at pre-entry level learners who were either self-referred or sent via other local organisations. The remainder of women (33.9%) accessing this group of services either attended the over 60's group or engaged with one to one parent support.

It is noteworthy that nearly three quarters of the women sampled (74.5%) used between 1 and 2 of the support services on offer, whereas almost a quarter (17%) used 3 or more (6.1%) over the time they had been engaged with the FSES provision. A tiny minority (2.4%) were registered as using none of the support services which suggests they either accessed voluntary work opportunities only or failed to complete this section of the questionnaire.

Only 22.4% of the women were working, and the vast majority (77.6%) were not in paid employment - which created a useful opportunity for them to engage in voluntary

work. This was offered on the school site to primarily aid confidence building but it also offered opportunity to refresh or gain new skills, to provide a platform from which to create a CV. For those whom were work ready, it also provided a chance to gather evidence towards a reference. At the point of data collection, a total of 61.1% of women acknowledged they volunteered on the school site. More than half of them did so within child focused activities (54.5%), only a few undertook work with office based tasks (2.4%) or adult focused activities (4.2%). The popularity of combining work with children might be linked with the fact that many of the women believed their limited work / life experience guided their choice of work place. Over a third (38.9%) of those attending support services did not volunteer to undertake any work while they accessed other support services.

This concludes the descriptive analysis of the women based on univariate data. In contrast to the female service users mentioned above, the males were significantly fewer in number, yet, the limited data available does offer an opportunity to better understand those males who did access the FSES services. Although the male profile was not contrasted with that of the females, they shared some characteristics in common which I will now explore.

Descriptive account of the characteristics of the males

The 10 male participants were from a range of ethnic backgrounds, without any being more significant in number than another. The age spread was between 18 and 70 years, with an equal 50:50 split above and below 50 years of age; the median age was 58.6 years. 80% of the male cohort indicated they were not in paid employment and the remaining 20 % made no indication of their working status, yet, all attended the centre for day time courses in basic reading, basic IT and basic maths skills,

suggesting they were free in the day time. Accreditation for these courses ranged from pre-entry up to level 1 (as described in the introduction). This is in contrast to the personal data on education levels provided, which indicated 4 of the males had a degree, yet, of this 'graduate' group 1 was attending basic maths and 2 basic reading and literacy skills, yet, not ESOL. The reason for the discrepancy is unclear, the questionnaire appears to contain a straight forward question, 'which of these qualifications do you have?' followed by a list of options; so either the question was confusing or perhaps it stirred a sense of expectation or pride in the respondents.

In terms of the males' social circumstances, 5 responded they were married and living with family members, whilst 4 reported to be living alone and 1 did not respond to this question. Most males (8) lived in rented accommodation, two lived in a shared house and the remainder (2) were owner occupiers. 60% of the males did not have a car, of this group, all lived in rented accommodation and all of which undertook basic skills courses at the FSES, supporting Carr-Hill and Chambers Dixon's (2005) and Morgan and Baker's (2006) assertion that car ownership is a useful indicator of social circumstance. Indeed, it is also a measure used in the National Census. Notably, both owner occupiers were also car owners, whereas only 2 of the renters had a car.

The profile of the male cohort then suggests they could represent 'hard to reach' (Flanagan and Hancock, 2010), that is, they fell within one or more social groups which for reasons such as language, culture and/ or social expectation, they were difficult for services to help and support. Although this minority of males attempted to engage with the services, the paucity in number suggests the provision was not a best fit for males, yet, in these data there was no clear explanation as to why not.

Summary

In sum, the description of the sample furnished by the frequency distributions drew a detailed portrait of the service users, with some of their characteristics and choices being more notable than others. The women generated a detailed profile, which suggested they could be described as educationally and, to some extent, socially and culturally disadvantaged. Their median age was 40 yrs., 63% were non-British and from Asian heritage and 77.6% were not in paid employment. 73.9% were married with 86.7% living with family members. 69.1% lived in close proximity to the school site and 39.4% did not have access to a car. 46.7% described their skill level as basic. Of the three differing lengths of courses, the most popular with the women were the accredited 10 week – 1 year duration. 74.1% of the women used 1-2 FSES services over the time they attended the site.

Similarly, the key findings from the male data indicated the majority (80%) were not in paid employment, lived in rented accommodation (80%) and did not own a car (60%). They came from a range of ethnic backgrounds and had a median age of 58.6 yrs. The courses they studied were almost without exception at basic and pre-entry levels, all of which suggests the males could also be described as disadvantaged and /or 'hard to reach' (Doherty *et al*, 2004; Cortis *et al.,* 2009).

Having explored the various characteristics of the service user sample through the descriptive accounts I then set out to identify any significant associations between the variables using 2x2 tables and applying the chi square test for independence (Pallant, 2001). It is to this next stage of analysis I turn to now.

6.3 Stage two: contingency table analysis

The remaining stages of analysis concentrate on the 165 women in the sample. Before any cross tabulations were considered it became necessary to recode all the variables, using the analysis of dichotomies (see Table 3).This was as a result of having relatively sparse data once contingency table analysis commenced. In particular it became evident that some of the cells had an expected count of less than 5, violating a key assumption of the chi square (Pallant, 2001). Obviously re-coding the majority of variables as dichotomies inevitably meant that some of the subtly of the cohort's details were lost. On the other hand no details were omitted, merely re-categorised and therefore all were explored for any evidence of association. In order to ascertain which variables held an important influence upon the key outcomes: level of the services engaged with and the type of voluntary work undertaken, attention focused on those variables which provided any statistical significant association between them and the outcomes of interest alongside any other revealing associations (e.g. car access and marital status). In practice where the probability of an observed chi square was 0.05 or less after applying the continuity correction (reported as $p<0.05$) the variables which indicated such association were tabulated and considered below, including two tables where $p<0.05$ is exceeded, as they are sub substantially interesting.

Summary of findings from cross tabulations showing statistically significant associations.

The personal variables of note were ethnicity, living with others and marital status, all of which seemed improbable as dependent variables in their own right. Indeed, as Mercer (1989) noted there are few studies which use marital status as a selective

motive within educational research (Benham, 1974 being an exception), yet, her own findings indicate strongly that it should not be overlooked. Her empirical work is focused on married, mature women in education (over 25 years) and concludes they were consistently more satisfied than other learners within the same age group, suggesting that being more mature and in a partnership supports women in learning and training, although it is unclear how. Other findings from the same study suggested married women learners appeared to have less financial worries compared to their non-married counterparts. Indeed the 2 x 2 table using data on marital status and access to a car; where vehicle access is used as a measure of socio-economic status, seems to support Mercer's finding. In this study it was seen that of those with access to cars, 84 % were married and the majority of those who were not married had no car access (65.2%) (See Table 4). Widening the status of those married or not, to those living with family members or not, offers a similar picture; of those who had access to cars 93% lived with others, while of those living alone, 66.7% did not (see Table 5).

Table 4: Cross tabulation of car ownership / access and marital status	Married	Not married	Total
Number of cars: No cars			
Count	35	30	65
% within cars	53.8%	46.2%	100%
% within married	29.4%	65.2%	39.4%
% of Total	21.2%	18.2%	39.4%
Number of cars: Has car(s)			
Count	84	16	100
% within cars	84.0%	16.0%	100%
% within married	70.6%	43.8%	60.6%
% of Total	50.9%	9.7%	60.6%
Total Count	119	46	165
% within cars	72.1%	27.9%	100%
% within married	100%	100%	100%
% of Total	72.1%	27.9%	100%
Associated sig level: 0.00			

Table 5: Cross tabulation of cars ownership / access and living situation	Living alone	Living with others	Total
Number of cars: No cars			
Count	14	51	65
% within cars	21.57%	78.5%	100%
% within living situation	66.7%	35.4%	39.4%
% of Total	8.5%	30.9%	39.4%
Number of cars: Has car(s)			
Count	7	93	100
% within cars	7.0%	93.0%	100%
% within living situation	33.3%	64.6%	60.6%
% of Total	4.2%	56.4%	60.6%
Total Count	21	144	165
% within cars	12.7%	87.3%	100%
% within living situation	100%	100%	100%
% of Total	12.7%	87.3%	100%
Associated sig level:0.12			

In terms of ethnicity, it was notable 71.8% of Asians had access to cars compared to 50% of British and 38.1% of Black women. Again if cars are seen as a proxy for socio-

economic status it could be assumed the Asian women had less financial challenge than other ethnic groups. In terms of UK demographics this is a recognised trend (ONS, 2010) where Asians are generally acknowledged to be financially better off than Caribbean or Black Africans. Table 6 reflects this trend and in doing so raises the commonality across the three variables correlated to relative wealth. When married / not married and ethnicity are cross tabulated, these variables show a high percentage of women in the study were both married and Asian (89.3%) compared to British (25%) and black (52.4%) (See Table 7). Given that marriage remains more commonplace in UK for the Asian culture (Census, 2011) this may account for the high percentage of married Asian women.

Table 6: Cross tabulation of ethnic group and car ownership / access	No cars	Has car(s)	Total
Ethnic group: British			
Count	10	10	20
% within Ethnic group	50.0%	50.0%	100%
% within cars	15.4%	10.0%	12.1%
% of Total	6.1%	6.1%	12.1%
Ethnic group: Asian			
Count	29	74	103
% within Ethnic group	28.2%	71.8%	100%
% within cars	44.6%	74.0%	62.4%
% of Total	17.6%	44.8%	62.4%
Ethnic group: Black			
Count	26	69	42
% within Ethnic group	61.9%	38.1%	100%
% within cars	40.0%	16.0%	25.5%
% of Total	15.8%	9.7%	25.5%
Total Count	65	100	165
% within Ethnic group	39.4%	60.6%	100%
% within cars	100%	100%	100%
% of Total	39.4%	60.6%	100%
Associated sig level: 0.00			

Table 7: Cross tabulation of ethnic group and marital status	Married	Not married	Total
Ethnic group: British			
Count	5	15	20
% within Ethnic group	25.0%	75.0%	100%
% within married	4.2%	32.6%	12.1%
% of Total	3.0%	9.1%	12.1%
Ethnic group: Asian			
Count	92	11	103
% within Ethnic group	89.3%	10.7%	100%
% within married	77.3%	23.9%	62.4%
% of Total	55.8%	6.7%	62.4%
Ethnic group: Black			
Count	22	20	42
% within Ethnic group	52.4%	47.6%	100%
% within married	18.5%	43.5%	25.5%
% of Total	13.3%	12.1%	25.5%
Total Count	119	46	165
% within Ethnic group	72.1%	27.9%	100%
% within married	100%	100%	100%
% of Total	72.1%	27.9%	100%
Associated sig level: 0.00			

The data analysis so far has responded to the research question seeking to establish the service users' profile by providing further details of the sample and also a base to begin to understand their circumstances and choices. Based on these findings it appears those who are married or living with family members (a significant number of whom are Asian) have a greater likelihood of being better off financially which appears to support their learning.

In terms of chosen area of voluntary work, across the sample the women were almost equally likely to work in childcare (54.5%) as not (45.5%). Of those that did, the majority (68.9%) were Asian, contrasted with 10% of British and 21.1% of Black women (see Table 8). Given that 89.3% of Asian women were married, that 87.3% of women lived with others (see table 8) and the frequency data (see appendix 2) indicated 57.7% of all women had children attending the school, it could be suggested

that the women chose child focused work because they had experience and confidence in it from their home-life. Indeed, the nature of the work may also have been attractive for its contractual hours which enabled the women to also maintain their role as mother, wife or partner.

This is also supported by the large group of women (especially from the Asian group) who were married and selected child focus courses. A similar observation could be made from the perspective of the large percentage of women who report that they live with others (87.3%, see Table 8).

Table 8: Cross tabulation of ethnic group and area of work	Not child focused	Child focused	Total
Ethnic group: British			
Count	11	9	20
% within Ethnic group	55.0%	45.0%	100%
% within area of work	14.7%	10.0%	12.1%
% of Total	6.7%	5.5%	12.1%
Ethnic group: Asian			
Count	41	62	103
% within Ethnic group	39.8%	60.2%	100%
% within area of work	54.7%	68.9%	62.4%
% of Total	24.8%	37.6%	62.4%
Ethnic group: Black			
Count	23	19	42
% within Ethnic group	52.8%	45.2%	100%
% within area of work	30.7%	21.1%	25.5%
% of Total	13.9%	11.5%	25.5%
Total Count	75	90	165
% within Ethnic group	45.5%	54.5%	100%
% within area of work	100%	100%	100%
% of Total	45.5%	54.5%	100%
Associated sig level: 0.171			

Of the percentage of married females (72%) the majority (62.2%) opted to work with children which contrasted starkly with those not married (27.9%), where 34.8% of them opted not to work with children, (see Table 9).

Table 9: Cross tabulation of area of work and marital status	Married	Not married	Total
Area of work: not child focused			
Count	45	30	75
% within area of work	60.0%	40.0%	100%
% within married	37.8%	65.2%	45.5%
% of Total	27.3%	18.2%	45.5%
Area of work: child focused			
Count	74	16	90
% within area of work	82.2%	17.8%	100%
% within married	62.2%	34.8%	54.5%
% of Total	44.8%	9.7%	54.5%
Total Count	119	46	165
% within area of work	72.1%	27.9%	100%
% within married	100%	100%	100%
% of Total	72.1%	27.9%	100%
Associated sig level: 0.03			

Again, simply considering those who lived with other family members or not, 59% of those chose a child focused course compared to 23.8% of those living alone (see Table 10).

Table 10: Cross tabulation of area of work and living situation	Living alone	Living with others	Total
Area of work: not child focused			
Count	16	59	75
% within area of work	21.3%	78.7%	100%
% within living situ	76.2%	41.0%	45.5%
% of Total	9.7%	35.8%	45.5%
Area of work: child focused			
Count	5	85	90
% within area of work	5.6%	94.4%	100%
% within living situ	23.8%	59.0%	54.5%
% of Total	3.0%	51.5%	54.5%
Total Count	21	144	165
% within area of work	12.7%	87.3%	100%
% within living situ	100%	100%	100%
% of Total	12.7%	87.3%	100%
Associated sig level: 0.05			

The outcomes detailed in table 10 show that amongst women who were married 61.3% worked at / achieved relatively higher educational levels than amongst those who were not married (37%). Of those accessing / achieving level 1 or higher, 81.1% were married compared to 18.9% of unmarried women where the percentage of unmarried women was 27.9% representing an over representation of unmarried women amongst those taking / achieving a lower level course.

Table 11: Cross tabulation of uptake / achievement level and marital status	Married	Not married	Total
Uptake / Achievement level: less than level 1			
Count	46	29	75
% within level	61.3%	38.7%	100%
% within married	38.7%	63.0%	45.5%
% of Total	27.9%	17.6%	45.5%
Uptake / Achievement level: level 1 or higher			
Count	73	17	90
% within level	81.1%	18.9%	100%
% within married	61.3%	37.0%	54.5%
% of Total	44.2%	10.3%	54.5%
Total Count	119	46	165
% within level	72.1%	27.9%	100%
% within married	100%	100%	100%
% of Total	72.1%	27.9%	100%
Associated sig level: 0.08			

Similarly, Table 12 shows amongst the women who undertook courses at level 1 and above, 95.6% lived with others compared to 4.4% who lived alone. Put another way, amongst the women who lived with other family members 59.7% elected courses at level 1 or above compared to 19% of women who lived at alone. Conversely, of those living alone 81% took / achieved below level one whilst only 43% achieved the lower level if living with family members (see table 12).

Table 12: Cross tabulation of uptake/ achievement level and living situation	Living alone	Living with others	Total
Uptake / Achievement level: less than level 1			
Count	17	58	75
% within level	22.7%	77.3%	100%
% within living situ	81.0%	40.3%	45.5%
% of Total	10.3%	35.2%	45.5%
Uptake / Achievement level: level 1 or higher			
Count	4	86	90
% within level	4.4%	95.6%	100%
% within living situ	19.0%	59.7%	54.5%
% of Total	2.4%	52.1%	54.5%
Total Count	21	144	165
% within level	12.7%	87.3%	100%
% within living situ	100%	100%	100%
% of Total	12.7%	87.3%	100%
Associated sig level: 0.01			
Total Count	99	66	165
% within level	60.0%	40.0%	100%
% within time	100%	100%	100%
% of Total	60.0%	40.0%	100%
Associated sig level: 0.00			

For the women in this study the contingency table analysis has highlighted being married or living in partnership, owning or having access to a car and ethnicity are each individually associated with those accessing higher level courses and volunteering within the area of childcare. In order to examine the combined influence of these variables on the probability of achieving higher level courses or not, as well as the probability of enrolling for courses of longer duration, logistic regression analysis were carried out, the results of which follow.

6.4 Stage three: logistic regression

Binary logistic regression was employed as a model to predict the odds of being in one category of each principal outcome. Two variables were treated as outcomes or dependent variables, namely, course/ achievement level and type of voluntary work.

Predictor variables included ethnicity and number of cars (as a proxy for social status). Personal circumstance was captured simply in terms of marital status. The other contender, 'living with family members' was dropped as the categorisation overlapped strongly with marital status.

In all cases binary versions of the variables were used, with 0 being the reference category in each instance. The details are included Table 13 below, (essentially, a selection of variables located in Table 3).

Table 13: Binary variables used in logistic regression analysis

Variable	Code 0	Code 1
Uptake / achievement *(treated as both independent and dependent)*	Less than level 1	Level 1 or higher
Area of work *(treated as both independent and dependent)*	Not child focused	Child focused
Age	18-35 years	36-85 years
Marital status	Married	Not married
Ethnicity *(For this analysis Black and Asian were collapsed into one category)*	British	Not British
Car	No access to car / van	Access to car / van

The regression analysis began by entering all of the predictors simultaneously and examining the equivalent calculation of the multiple correlation coefficient of determination (R^2) (and Cox and Snell R^2 and Nagelkerke R^2; which are broadly equivalent to R^2 values used in multiple regression) (Pallant, 2001) in order to assess how well the predictors perform in predicting the outcomes. The Nagelkerke R^2 calculation is located below in Tables 14 and 15 and shows the adjusted calculation across the range of 0-1 indicating the percentage level of prediction. In both models there is justification for improvement and therefore inclusion of other independent variables; as the null model which contains no predictors can only explain 7.4% and 8.5% of the variation in outcome in each case.

The models were evaluated in terms of a classification table where the observed distribution of the outcome categories was cross tabulated with the predicted distribution. The percentage 'correct' or its' complement of the percentage misclassified, provided another criteria to judge the model performance. The overall criterion of model fit was given by – 2 log likelihood (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). For both modules the predicted distributions of 'correct' items was around 62% and 63% respectively.

Table 14: Logistic regression analysis for odds on 'Uptake /level of achievement' using age, marital status, ethnicity and access to cars

Dependent Variable **Level of uptake / achievement**: (**Less than L1**/ L1 or higher/)	Variables in the equation β	Variables in the equation Exp (β)	Sig.
Independent Variables			
Age (18-35 yrs)	-.116	.890	.725
Married (yes)	-.993	.370	.017
Ethnicity (British)	-.383	.682	.479
Cars (No access to a car / van)	.288	1.334	.405
Constant	.691	1.995	.287

-2 log likelihood = 217.998   Nagelkerke R sq = 0.074 Predicted distribution correct = 61.8

Table 15: Logistic regression analysis for 'voluntary work in childcare' using age, marital status, ethnicity and access to cars

Dependent Variable Area of voluntary **work**: (**Not child focused** / child focused)	Variables in the equation β	Variables in the equation Exp (β)	Sig.
Independent variables			
Age (18-35 yrs)	-013	1.013	.968
Married (yes)	-1.090	.336	.009
Ethnicity (British)	-.175	.840	.748
Cars (No access to a car / van)	.261	1.298	.453
Constant	.475	1.608	.464

-2 log likelihood = 216.577   Nagelkerke R sq = 0.085 Predicted distribution correct = 63.0

Summary of findings from the logistic regression

The main findings from the logistic regression are provided in Tables 14 and 15, specifically they focus on the relative influence of each predictor on the dependent variable. The column 'Exp B', represents the estimated odds ratio of being in the response category; a ratio of 1 or more indicates a greater likelihood of being this, and a ratio of less than 1 indicates less likelihood. From Table 14, the analysis indicated 'marital status' (different from living with family members) was significant as a key predictor for the participants' level of achievement. That is, not being married reduced the odds of achieving level 1 or higher. Similarly, being British reduced the likelihood of achieving at level 1 or higher, although it should be remembered that British ethnicity was only a marginal representation within the total cohort (12 / 165). Older adults aged between 36-85 years were more likely to gain levels less than level 1 than their older counterparts. Having access to a car raises the odds of taking /achieving a level 1 course. Apart from marital status, however, these other influences are broadly indicative. In statistical terms marital status seems to be the only significant predictor when holding all the other variables constant.

For the level of uptake /achievement there was indication that accessing / achieving below level 1 was more likely if the adults were below the age of 35, not married, British and had no access to a car and conversely that accessing /achieving level 1 or higher was more likely if the adults were over 35, married, were non-British and had access to a car.

Table 15 reports the logistic regression analysis for the likelihood of volunteering for childcare work, again marital status appears to be the key predictor. 'Age' suggests that older participants were very slightly less likely not to opt for voluntary work in child

care whilst not being of British ethnicity reduces the odds for child focused work, as does the absence of access to a car.

The findings contained in the logistic regression support the outcomes from the contingency table analysis by showing that the adults engaged at higher levels were typically married, and which also increased the probability that they would volunteer within the area of child care.

General Summary

The quantitative aspect of this research purposefully set out to extract a profile of the FSES service users, an important piece of work which has been recognised to be overlooked especially in relation to community / parent initiatives (Ranson and Rutledge, 2005; Cummings *et al.*, 2006, 2007; DCSF, 2009c). The details of the women strongly indicate that this cohort are typically 'hard to reach', an important aspect to note for full understanding of additional outcomes from the qualitative work.

It is to this work I turn now to explore the reasoning behind why the women chose to access the FSES and what their thoughts and experiences were of them.

Chapter 7: Qualitative data analysis

Introduction

This chapter begins by stating the strategy for the analysis of the qualitative data with an overview of how the information from the interview transcriptions was processed. The details of the development of the analysis framework and data coding are explained in its chronological stages. The final coding structure is laid out in a table at the end of the chapter, as is an abbreviated example of a matrix grid which offered an overall visual aid to the details of what is contained in each interview transcription (a full matrix is available in appendix 4).

7.1 Strategy for analysis

A 'framework approach' was used to analyse the data from the qualitative arm of this project. The approach is recognised as an analytical strategy developed by social policy researchers Ritchie and Lewis during the 1980's (Ritchie *et al.,* 2003). It is a method included in the umbrella term, 'thematic analysis' or 'qualitative content analysis' and was designed to interpret transcribed data by identifying commonalities, ahead of linking relationships within data and harnessing them into themes in preparation for developing an explanatory analysis (ibid). It is most commonly used to analyse interview transcripts when data is to be employed to identify shared outcomes across the whole data set whilst simultaneously retaining details on each individual (ibid). As the questions for the semi-structured interviews were very similar for each interviewee, where there were similar responses I have collated them across the cohort and expressed them in numerical terms, for example 5/19, throughout the analysis.

The focus on interpretation of data identifies the analysis as overtly researcher led and therefore vulnerable to researcher bias, hence the choice of the framework approach. The method of operation demanded a systematic organisation of data which began with verbatim interview transcriptions and gradually, via sifting through each textual account, moved towards elements of the data being grouped to create a more workable summary of responses which addressed the research questions. This methodological approach facilitated a rigorous and detailed exploration and reorganisation of data whilst generating a transparent audit trail of grouping and coding which enabled bias to be identified more easily (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Gale *et al.,* 2013). In total, five stages of analysis were employed; stage 1: deductive a priori coding, stage 2: inductive a posteriori coding, stage 3: initial coding families and sub-categories, stage 4: revised coding families and sub-categories, stage 5: formation of the matrix.

7.2 Stage one: deductive, a priori coding

Moving forward from the interview transcriptions, which took place in two steps following the interviews, the first created possible categories (which helped to develop the second set of interview questions), and the second developed the sub-categories. That is, responses were identified and grouped into themes where there appeared to be dialogues which shared similar subject matter across both stages of collection. The term 'theme' is used here to describe identified strands of commonality which were developed through interrogating the whole of the transcribed dataset (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Deductive coding of the transcriptions generated a priory coding, driven by the content of the research, questionnaire and interview questions (Flick, 2009). The main groups then are referred to as themes and the more detailed groups within

the groups are called categories. The themes reflect clusters of interrelated concepts or specific information generated by the transcriptions, whereas the-categories are seen as foci across the whole dataset, separate to the individual interviews. This process enabled the details across the transcriptions to become more abstract.

The theme-allotted a priori codings, are tabled below (Table 16), the groups are in bold font with the related categories listed beneath them. Some of the groups were pre-populated with categories as they related to the interview questions while others were emergent from the open questions.

Table 16: Showing a priori codings and categories

Courses (level of courses attended) Up to level 1 Level 2+	**Motivation** To get help To improve language / skill base To help their child Qualifications / work For parent support
Reasons for not attending elsewhere. Lack of encouragement **Personal outcomes.** Helps their child now Raised confidence Sense of personal development Qualification / new skill	**Relationship with husband / partner**
Relationship with children	**Relationship with others**
Changes within self Identity Behaviour Attitude/ belief Outlook	**Personal outcomes.** Helps their child now Raised confidence Sense of personal development Qualification / new skill
Feminist issues Cultural Power Respect Opportunity Sexism	**Activities since first interview** More courses More support Seen PSA Worked at the school Worked elsewhere
Current relationship with family / with others Improved Worse Same	**Civic engagement**
Motivation since first interview Culture/ arts Sports Social clubs Aspirations Education Work	**Restricting and enabling factors** Literacy Communication skills Lack of confidence

7.3 Stage two: inductive, a posteriori coding

Other groups were created through inductive codings as the analysis progressed (ibid). For this stage, the process entailed reading of the transcriptions to identify emergent themes that were not assumed or formulated from the research, interview or questionnaire questions. These were allocated a posteriori codings / inductive codings and were, in terms of number, the majority. They are identified in Table 17 below and again the families are presented in bold type with the categories listed beneath.

Table 17: *Showing inductive a posteriori codings*

Motivation	Reasons for not attending elsewhere
Being a volunteer	Felt scared
Location / near by	Too far
Friendly people	Disliked learners
Had a child at the school	Disliked teacher
Liked/ trusted the teacher	Language differences
Small classes	Left out
Low cost	Teacher unfair
Felt safe	Cost
Knew others	Inconvenient
	Lack of encouragement
	Lack of clarity
Personal outcomes	**Realisations**
Happy	Being happy and successful are linked
Felt part of team	Not scared any more
Voluntary work	They can do more
Paid employment	Care about self now
Emotionally closer to children	Gained skills and knowledge
Sense of personal development	Opportunities offered
Made friends	Support offered.
Frustrated	
Relationship with husband/ partner	**Realisations**
Happier	Being happy and successful are linked
Gained approval / respect	Not scared any more
Gained support	They can do more
More demanding	Care about self now
	Gained skills and knowledge
	Opportunities offered
	Support offered
Relationship with others	**Civic engagement**
Approached for advice	Charity
Encourages others, promotes courses	Church
Respected by others	Other classes
	Neighbourhood support
	Politics
Aspirations	**Restricting and enabling factors**
Travel	Opportunity
Money	Support
Leisure	

7.4 Stage three: initial coding families and sub-categories

Having identified the a priori and a posteriori codes I then merged them together using a hybrid approach to gain a clearer picture of the outcomes from across the whole dataset (see Table 17). Each theme / family was given an abbreviated coding for easy identification; in this case numbers were allocated to each family and sub category. That is, sections in the transcriptions were highlighted and given codes, for example, 2:4; the first number (2) related to the family and the second (4) the sub category (see Table 18). In this case, for the example given, the code indicated textual evidence that the interviewee identified the reason for accessing the FSES services was to improve their language or their skill base (see Table 17). The codes referred to substantive items as much as tangible concepts. Codings aim to classify each text in detail in order that a full and specific account of service users' opinions can be drawn.

Table 18: Initial coding families and sub categories

Family	Sub categories	Family	Sub categories
First	*Phase*	*Of*	*Interview*
1.Courses	1.Up to level 1 2.Level 2+	**2.Reason for accessing services**	1. Being a volunteer 2. Location / near by 3.To get help 4.To improve language / skill base 5. Friendly people 6. Had a child at the school 7. To help their child 8. Liked/ trusted the teacher 9. Small classes 10. Low cost 11. Felt safe 12. To gain qualifications / work 13.For parent support 14. Knew others
3.Reasons for not attending elsewhere	1.Felt scared 2.Too far 3.Disliked learners 4.Disliked teacher 5.Language differences 6.Left out 7.Teacher unfair 8.Cost 9.Inconvenient 10.Lack of encouragement 11.Lack of clarity	**4.Personal outcomes**	1.Happy 2.Felt part of team 3.Helps their child now 4 Voluntary work 5.Paid employment 6.Raised confidence 7.Emotionally closer to children 8.Sense of personal development 9.Made friends 10.Qualification / new skills 11.Frustrated
5.Realisations	1.Being happy and successful are linked 2.Not scared any more 3.They can do more 4.Care about self now 5.Gained skills and knowledge 6.Opportunities offered 7.Support offered	**6.Relationship with husband / partner**	1.Happier 2.Gained approval / respect 3.Gained support 4.More demanding

7.Relationship with children	1.Accepts help from mother 2. Mother / child happier 3. Improved child behaviour 4.Closer bonding 5. Greater respect from children	**8.Relationship with others**	1. Approached for advice 2. Encourages others, promotes courses 3. Respected by others
9.Changes within self	1.Identity 2.Behaviour 3.Attitude/ belief 4.Outlook	**10.Raised Feminist issues**	1. Cultural 2. Space 3. Sexism 4. Power 5. Respect 6. Opportunity
Second	*Phase*	*Of*	*Interview*
11.Activities since first interview	1.More courses 2.Seen PSA 3.Worked at the school 4.Worked elsewhere	**12.State of current relationships with family members**	1.Improved 2.Worse 3.Same
13.State of current relationships with others	1.Improved 2.Worse 3.Same	**14.Civic engagement**	1.Culture/ arts 2.Sports 3.Charity 4.Church 5.Social clubs 6.Other classes 7.Neighbourhood support 8.Politics
15.Motivation since first interview	1.For self 2.For others 3.For children 4.Extrinsic	**16.Areas Of development since first interview**	1.Work 2.Knowledge/skills 3.Culture 4.Image / presentation 5.Influence others 6.Priorities
17.Aspirations since first interview	1.Work 2.Travel 3.Money 4.Leisure 5.Education	**18.Restricting and enabling factors of progress**	1.Literacy 2.Communication skills 3.Confidence 4.Opportunity 5.Support

Initially I used 18 family codes, 1-10 related to the first set of interviews and 11-18 to the second round. Across the first round 64 sub-categories were identified and another 34 following round two of interviews; 98 in total. This fine grading of the text based information facilitated segmentation of the interviews and composition of an evidence base for each family and sub category, however, in pragmatic analysis terms the overall number of families and sub codes were too numerous to work with, these were regrouped in the fifth stage.

7.5 Stage four: revised coding families and sub-categories

Working directly from the transcriptions created detailed groupings of family and subcategory codes. 18 family codes, however, were too numerous to work effectively, despite the total number of interviews being quite small. Indeed the very scale of this project lent itself to this manual, methodical revision of categories. A final stage of regrouping was used to collapse some of the shared families together and the subcategories were also reduced even further. The revised structure is seen in Table 19.

7.6 Stage five: formation of the matrix.

In line with Ritchie *et al.'s* thematic approach to qualitative analysis (2013), the textual references from the coding families and sub-codes were entered onto a spreadsheet to create a matrix. It was constructed of rows of transcriptions and columns of coding families. The subcategories which were identified during the interviews were noted under the coding family titles. This reduced data from pages of lengthy dialogue to a summary - a single sheet of coding containing information on each transcription. In spite of this brevity, managing data in this way ensured retention of the individuality of the interviewee's text, along with the potential to derive thick description from the datasets as well as creating a more abstract interpretation from the grouped codings

(Gale *et al.*, 2013).

Table 19: Revised coding families and sub categories

Family	Sub categories	Family	Sub categories
1. Courses	1.Up to level 1 2.Above level 1	**2. Motivation**	**Attending /not attending** 1 Personal 2.Location 3.Skills /information 4.Environment 5.Money 6.Family 7.Extrinsic factors
3. Outcomes	1.Identity 2.Behaviour 3.Attitude / belief 4.Work /employment 5.Knowledge/skills 6.Cultural change 7.Image / presentation 8.Relationship change 9.Social change 10.Family changes	**4. Aspirations / achievements**	1.Work 2.Travel 3.Money 4.Leisure 5.Education 6.Image 7.Family / relationships
5.Restricting and enabling factors of progress	1.Literacy 2.Communication skills 3.Confidence 4.Opportunity 5.Support 6.Personal circumstance	**6. Raised Feminist issues**	1.Cultural 2.Space 3.Sexism 4.Power 5.Respect 6.Opportunity
7. Activities since first interview	1.More courses 2.Seen PSA 3.Worked at the school 4.Worked elsewhere 5. Social / leisure	**8 Relationships**	1.Improved 2.Worse 3.Same
9. Civic engagement	1.Culture/ arts 2.Sports 3.Charity 4.Church 5.Social clubs 6.Other classes 7.Neighbourhood support 8.Politics		

In terms of analysis, the use of the matrix offered an inclusive approach for use of both inductive and deductive data as the framework method is not associated with a specific theoretical approach. It also created a visual edit indicating which coding families were the most diverse in response and where patterns emerged from the subcategory data, including where information was missing or contradictory. This clear audit trail stretching from the original transcripts through to coded findings made identification of illustrative text easy to locate and review for sufficiency of thematic depth (ibid).

Table 20 below contains a reduced form of the matrix using four transcriptions (the full matrix is available in appendix 4). For example, reading across the row for transcription 1, there was outcome evidence that participant 1 attended the site because she liked the FSES environment (code 2.4) and she was motivated to earn money. Her communication skills and opportunity were her original restricting factors. She described the impact of her experience of the FSES to have contributed to seeing herself differently, and listed a change in skill base, assimilation into another culture, and changes to her family relationships. A similar description can be derived from subsequent rows (transcription summaries).

Table 20: Sample transcription / coding matrix using initial families and sub codes

TRANSCRIPTION	COURSE	MOTIVATION	FACTORS OF PROGRESS	OUTCOMES
1	2	1,2,4,5	2,4	1,5,6,7,10
2	2	1,4,6	1.2,4,5,6	2,3,6,7,10
3	1	2,4,5	1,2	1,5,6,8
4	1	1,4,5,6	4.5	1,5,8,9

Reading down the columns it is evident that apart from the binary coded course levels the interviewees were fairly detailed in their responses, with some of the responses being shared by several of the adults. For example, approximately 40 % identified with sub-code 4 for motivation for attending the provision, where feeling comfortable and the service environment was influential. Although it is useful to use the matrix to identify a trend such as this, it must also be noted that the sample size of interviewees was relatively small and could in no respect be assumed to reflect a distilled voice of any specific group or groups on a wider level.

Summary

The qualitative analysis used a framework approach which generated hybrid lists of family and subcategory themes (from a priori to a posteriori codes) which captured in detail the responses from the interviewees. Yet, there was recognition that there were too many of them to be analytically efficient, therefore they were reduced in number, resulting in a more generalised categorisation, although the more finely grouped transcriptions quotes were maintained. The codings were then collated onto a matrix which offered a systematic analysis framework for viewing the detail of the transcriptions within the context of the coding families as well as vice versa. There was a risk that in reducing the data down to such brevity, the analysis might become process rather than outcome driven, however, the matrix was used as a tool to establish patterns, generate an overview of the interview responses and to act as a reference point for direct quotes from interviewees. It is textual responses and the findings within them that I turn to now.

Chapter 8: Findings from qualitative data

Introduction

Following on from the quantitative data analysis in which a detailed profile of the adults accessing FSES services was presented, this empirical chapter is organised under four sections. Section. 8.1 explores the motivations the women leaners cited for joining the FSES services, both initially, and then again, retrospectively, three years later. I explore relations between the adults' experiences of the FSES support, their manifestations in outcomes and how these in turn related to the adults' original motivations and future plans. Section 8.2 looks at how the services helped develop the learners' confidence and sense of belief, and how this, in turn, helped create higher levels of social and cultural capital through development of social networks and relations. In Section 8.3 I review how changes in their social and personal identity related to a growing sense of personal power and empowerment, and how this manifested through relationships, future aspirations of employment, civic engagement and education. In section 8.4 I adopt a feminist concept of private and public space to enquire what the women attributed their progression and changes to and what they believed to be the most influential and challenging factors. The chapter ends with a summary of the process the women employed in order to interact with and access the FSES services. I use their accounts to understand their personal developments in relation to their home-life and FSES environment, their sense of power and shift in identity.

To create a clearer context for the voices of the women whose personal insights, opinions and observations have generated the body of qualitative data, I provide an overview of their demographic details using fictitious names (see Table 21).

Table 21: Demographic details of the interviewees at first interview

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity	Level of first course	Marital status	Has children	Work
Susan	Over 35	British	Entry	Divorced	Secondary	Voluntary
Neta	Over 35	Indian	Entry	Married	Primary	None
Millie	Over 35	Caribbean	Entry	Married	Secondary	Voluntary
Tracy	Under 35	British	Entry	Cohabiting	Secondary	None
Mina	Under 35	Pakistani	Pre-entry	Widowed	Primary & Secondary	None
Roshan	Over 35	Indian	Pre-entry	Married	Secondary	None
Tina	Over 35	African	Pre-entry	Divorced	Secondary	None
Tanesha	Over 35	Caribbean	Entry	Married	Primary & secondary	None
Leigh	Under 35	British	Pre-entry	Divorced	Primary & Secondary	None
Hema	Under 35	Indian	Pre-entry	Married	Primary & Secondary	None
Suri	Over 35	Indian	Pre-entry	Married	Secondary	None
Shamla	Under 35	Indian	Pre-entry	Married	Primary	None
Kuti	Under 35	Indian	Pre-entry	Married	Primary & Secondary	None
Veena	Over 35	Indian	Entry	Married	Primary & Secondary	None
Shanti	Under 35	Indian	Entry	Married	Secondary	None
Bibi	Over 35	Indian	Pre-entry	Married	Secondary	None
Janice	Under 35	British	Pre-entry	Divorced	Primary & Secondary	Voluntary
Jemilla	Under 35	Moroccan	Entry	Married	Primary	Voluntary
Lisa	Under 35	British	Pre-entry	Single	Pre-school	None

8.1 Access and motivation

The quantitative analysis in Chapter 6, demonstrates that the women service users' profile shared a number of features associated with indicators of deprivation / social disadvantage. Many of them were also categorised as 'hard to reach', a term which, as established in chapter 3, incorporates adults who are recognised by support services as being vulnerable or in greater need than most of the population and they are often difficult to engage (Whitnell, 2004; Flanagan and Hancock, 2010). Members of these groups are less likely to join adult programmes, therefore the action of engagement with external organisations such as FSES was atypical (Harris and Goodall, 2008; Boag-Munroe and Evangelou, 2012). This prompted questions about what motivated these particular women to participate in the FSES initiative, what were their thoughts as they entered the programme and what did they anticipate they could or would derive from the experience?

As explained in Chapter 2 the main purpose of the FSES project was to tackle social and educational challenge with a focus to narrow the gap in attainment for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. One of the strands of pupil support which was anticipated to assist in the transformation, was the creation of better skilled parents, that is, parents with improved basic skills (particularly in literacy and numeracy) and confidence to help their children in core curriculum subjects. In many FSES this was delivered as FL while in others it took the shape of more traditional adult community education. The site used in this study employed a combination of both delivery methods. In either case, a common assumption was that the parents would be motivated to attend basic skills classes so they could offer their children more effective support and to help their children's progress, leading to higher levels of attainment. This was only true, however, for a minority of the adults in this study (3/19), the majority

were engaged and motivated for other reasons which I set out below. In fact, it seems there is a balance of motivations, extrinsic ones, such as financial reward and intrinsic ones, such as increasing self-esteem, needed for adults to fully engage with school based community services on this single site. One of the most important and enabling factors for the learners in this study was having the provision close to home and this reason was cited by almost a third of those interviewed, with some adamant that without the proximity they would not have attended at all:

> *NB – So can you remember why you came here to do these courses?*
>
> *Suri – Because it is near my home. I am living near from here. Only one bus, it's easy for me.*
>
> *NB – So it was just because we are quite local?*
>
> *Suri – Yes. Near to my home.*
>
> *NB – And if we hadn't been local, would you have gone somewhere else for your class?*
>
> *Suri – No, wouldn't go. No classes.*
>
> *NB – No? You would have just stayed at home?*
>
> *Suri – Yes, I like this classes, not others. If not this then I am staying home.*

For others it was about the convenience of the location in terms of particular aspects of their daily business. The service user questionnaire highlighted the number of participants whose family were without a car and therefore for several women the ease of access to the school site via public transport was also an important factor, mainly for reasons of domestic responsibility.

The strength of sway the location bears on deciding if local adults will access services indicates a balance of how the services are valued against the effort required to attend. Although the interviews elicited more specific reasons for the women to engage with and be motivated by what they wanted from the services - the practical issue of access to the school site remains significant and raises the question of why the nearness of

provision is so influential and whether the location is associated with other factors such as familiarity with the setting, recognition of the on-site staff and the women's perceptions of the support offered. In other words the women's feelings of self-confidence, comfort and security. Boecke (2009), in his study of social capital and youth, also noted similar need for proximity which he referred to as 'static social capital'. He describes the young people to have limited social capital which manifests in them being risk averse and in possession of: strong static networks, small radius of protective trust, immediate reciprocity, restricted life view, restricted sense of belonging.

In many ways the women in this study shared seemingly static social capital and a significant proportion of them had low self-confidence. The concept of static social capital therefore, goes some way in providing an explanation for the women's hesitation and resistance to less locally based services and support. The women's refusal to consider services further afield were perhaps a display of their lack of confidence of public transportation or lack of confidence in their use of public transport. Regardless of their concerns, they used the proximity of the services as a self-reasoned argument to legitimatise a resistance to engage elsewhere.

When proximity was available, almost 60% of interviewees acknowledged that they initially needed to be guided to the services by another party, such as a neighbour or friend who had knowledge and experience of the services or a professional whom they had an existing relationship with, such as a teacher or a more formal contact, for example a social worker.

In the following extract Hema describes how she came to access support through being called to the school regarding a child protection concern involving domestic

violence. Her level of literacy was extremely low and it was a trigger for arguments between her and her husband within the home which would often escalate into physical violence from her husband towards her. The on-site services enabled the mother to gain immediate access to the support services which she continued to use for several years during which time she gained qualifications and work experience. Despite the services being available prior to her meeting, Hema had never attempted to engage with them even though her lack of skills was the source of regular conflict within the family home. Services were advertised widely and in a variety of formats, yet her comments here suggest she had never attempted to join a class, raising the possibility that many adults need an additional motivation to access what they need:

NB – So how did you hear about us?

Hema – Oh one day I come in here and I were talking to Mr C, (the head teacher) His name is Mr C, right?

NB – Yes.

Hema– The headmaster and another teacher because I had a problem with my children. I sat down and were talking to them and I tell them to their face, where I come from in this country and I don't know for to read or write. I used to get problem at home because I couldn't find a job because for I couldn't fill a form and things like that. So my husband used to always quarrel for me and tell me off, so then they told me they have an adult class here and yes they can fit me in.

Other interviewees also indicated that varying extrinsic factors in the form of neighbourly advice, support from PSA's and contact with other parents already accessing services motivated them to seek support from the on-site services. Yet, the need for support does not seem to end at the point of introduction but appears to extend into a continued need for encouragement by all service support staff including teachers. 15/19 initial interviewees reported that a critical aspect of attending the community provision is determined by the warmth of reception and the encouragement given to participate in all aspects, from classes to voluntary work. For example, Janice

indicated to the PSA she was interested in joining a parenting group but was too frightened to enter the classroom:

Janice – I had an hour to wait around and she (PSA) said, "Let's go in," I said, "I can't walk in there" and she said, "Yes you can". I was sitting down thinking this is rude but then you made us welcome and said, "do you want to come back next week?" When I came out of there the PSA spoke to me and told me exactly what it was, err bit like it wasn't planned, it was just something new. I just walked into your class, it was the best thing I done. One of the best things I've done, one of the best things I've learned in life to do now.

NB - What have you learned?

Janice– To take the opportunity and don't be afraid.

NB – What were you afraid of?

Janice – Well, not afraid, well yeah. Well, just not sure if it was for me. Be truthful my spelling and all that ain't that good and so like that I was unsure.

Clearly for Janice she not only required support to get over the initial introduction but she also lacked confidence in her longer term academic abilities within the classroom environment. This was a repeated theme throughout the interviews. For example, Lisa also needed continued emotional support to maintain her course attendance as she lacked self-confidence which stemmed from a feeling of being different to the majority of attendees both in age and culture:

NB – So you wanted to come here or you were made to come here?

Lisa – Well, sort of a bit of both. When I started I didn't like the class because they was all older than me and I was the only white person in the class and they all talked their language which I couldn't understand.

NB – But that changed?

Lisa – Yeah, the teacher was really nice and she kept calling me and she really helped me to do the work and she made it fun, the classes was good fun. Also the support worker (PSA) was really good because she kept coming round and getting me to class.

Both Janice and Lisa required help to overcome their fears of feeling 'different' to the other attendees and received support focused on general encouragement which was sufficient to maintain their attendance. Indeed, it would seem that the relationship

between the general support staff, such as teachers, crèche workers, classroom volunteers and the women learners played a critical role in their continued engagement and none more so than role of PSA who provided personalised one to one support. Of the adults interviewed, more than half, (15/19) were initially directed to the PSA, indicating that their child's behaviour was the instigating factor for the professional referral. Following parental / family support, the women were then introduced to the range of other support services. Around half of the interviewees (10/19), described this process as providing them with a sense of trust between themselves and the services via the PSAs:

Leigh - I feel completely comfortable talking with the PSA, to speak before like, I used to speak to my mum but sometimes there are certain things you don't want to go to your mum for and I never felt confidence in talking to other people. I used to feel comfortable talking to a particular doctor but she's left so….. It's like every time I was getting close to somebody and being comfortable with them, they would leave sort of thing. But the PSA's been there for a long time and I've found a lot of trust in her and confidence…… With the course, I couldn't say too much as yet, because I've only just started that but when I was doing the literacy I was quite supported. When I was with the teacher, if I was struggling, she would help so I found I built my confidence in asking her for help. With the PSA, I can see a different side sort of things, she brought me out of the shyness I had, which I can now see myself. She's made me see I'm worth more than what I wasn't, so I can see those sort of things now. Before I didn't see all that. I used to think bad of myself and things like that.

NB – That really is enormous as an outcome. Did you think that was what you were going to get when you started having a conversation with the PSA?

Leigh – No, no.

NB – What did you think might come out of that?

Leigh– I didn't know how I'd take to her because I'm very, very unsure with people because I can't trust people. You know sometimes when you see someone you think, nah, I can't trust that sort of person but when I had sort of her I could see that and she was very supportive. I really recommend her to anyone.

Leigh's comments show her reliance on the PSA and echo recognition of the basic skill gaps many of the other women identified as being a major reason for being fearful of engaging with the FSES services. The PSA is seen here to have the critical role of

gate keeper, reassuring and calming the women before passing them onto the support they needed to increase their skills. The manifestation of trust between Leigh and her PSA is clearly based on the belief that she would be understood by the PSA, presumably because all the PSA's were recruited from similar socio-economic and cultural backgrounds to the women accessing services (as described in Chapter 3). Unsurprisingly, around three quarters of the women (15/19) seemingly were only able to successfully migrate to wider support once a level of trust between themselves and the PSA had been established.

For the remaining women it was equally important to have the support of their partners, other adult learners and in-class volunteers to ensure their continued attendance and engagement:

Millie - It is very easy to come and the people are very nice…… My husband talks to her (support staff) and says she is very good, he's very impressed…… Very important. I need people, when I am sometimes upset, unhappy, I need to talk. It's very helpful for support, very helpful to the other ladies.

Convenience of the physical location, guidance and support, in various formats, were therefore *enablers* for the attendance of the women within this study. Their overwhelming *motivational purpose* for attending, however, initially was the desire to gain and develop basic skills either by developing their current abilities or, by the second interview, initiate learning in a new field, such as child care or volunteering. The women were therefore aware of their knowledge and skill gaps, and were motivated to reduce them. This was contrary to the government expectations associated with programmes such as FL and the SS initiative (Carpentieri, 2012; NIACE, 2013). This project found the majority of women / mothers did not primarily engage to help their children learn but to improve their own basic skills. Indeed, only a few of the women specifically mentioned they attended the services for the benefit

for their children compared to those who expressed more personal or even self-centred reasons – as the three separate extracts below illustrate:

Hema – Probably because I didn't get those things when I were little so I really want to learn, that's why. I think if I get my licence in this country but then everything is confusing and you have to know everything to get a job and read well.

Leigh – Yes, because I never even got my GCSEs because I was pulled out of school when I was only 15 so I didn't get to do any of my GCSEs because of basically violence at school and for my dealing with it. So basically I ended up getting dragged out of school so it was something I could never really do. I suppose because of my ex-husband, he put me down so much really I've got a lot to thank him for now because I've absolutely gone out and got the help for what I'd like to do and achieved that.

Janice – Yeah, it is for me. Because when my kids get, well, when I have to go out to work and I need to, well, I don't mind going to work, got no problem with that. I would prefer to work around kids. I'm not very good at spelling and secretary is not really me but I like working with the kids. I don't mind messy play, I don't mind talking to the kids, interacting with kids. I don't mind screaming and shouting, I just love it. That's what I'm looking into doing, I'm just looking to work in school or I'm thinking at the moment about getting into fostering, in about 10 years' time.

The women here, and indeed the majority of the interviewees wanted to increase their skill base to address previously missed learning opportunities. With a focus on unmet learning needs it is unsurprising that few of the women felt sufficiently confident at the start of their learning to immediately commit to signing up to qualifications, something that was offered on most of the 60 hour courses. For many, their interaction with the FSES was a more personal journey, driven by desire to increase their self-confidence through skill development rather than gaining qualifications within a specific subject or field. Although just over half of the women (10/19) did acknowledge the association between gaining skills and securing employment, once they were enrolled on courses and offered the opportunity to remain in the same learning environment whilst completing qualifications and assessments, they readily accepted them (of the women interviewed only two did not gain accreditation and approximately half gained

178

qualifications). For more than half of the women (15/19), their increased confidence and skill base created opportunities to take ownership of their own learning, chance to take greater control of their daily lives, and raised the possibility for their identity to change (further detail in section 8.3). The following two exchanges illustrate the changes and impact of the women's acquired skills:

NB – Which (source of support) do you find most effective?

Tanesha – Both, both. Mainly the PSA as well because, well like I think I can talk to the PSA a bit more, well, more openly. With the other lady (a parent support worker from a local authority service) *she's just there to do her job, do you understand what I'm saying? She is there to do her job but the PSA, I can talk more open to her, tell her all my problems, what I'm going through and what I'm not going through.*

NB – It's important to be honest. If you need and want help, the only way to get what you need is to be honest.

Tanesha – Yes, definitely, well, I'm coming from a very sour background, very sour background and I've come a long way. I pat myself on the head and tell myself, well done. I've come from a bad background, drugs and prison. Do you know my lifestyle what I used to live, what I chose to live for myself? Do you know what I mean? And now look, I'm married long time and got a bag load of kids. It ain't perfect but I never thought that'd be me.

NB – And they are very lovely children.

Tanesha – Lovely, yeah they are lovely, they're gorgeous, I wouldn't give them up for the whole world.

NB – But you might enjoy them even more if you could set up some boundaries and routines?

Tanesha – Yes, I have to have another try.

Jemilla – The teacher worked in both schools and she told me, come here. I wanted to do my learning with her, so came here. I came to this country 2003 with my husband, we are from Morocco and my English was very low. When I had my daughter I wanted to learn better English. It is better here, more space and the proper crèche, not like this at primary.

NB – And how did you come to choose to do childcare?

Jemilla – I wanted to be a teacher assistant and my qualification allows you to work as a classroom assistant but when I finish, I like working in the nursery and on the course we learned a lot about child development through play and activities and I

wanted to be able to organise my own, not just do things the teacher wanted to me to do.

NB – And you are still working here?

Jemilla – Yes, I shared some teaching with others here on an introduction to childcare course. I was really scared to do it but every week we had the resources given to us and a plan for the class, we just had to decide how we would share it.

In sum, the adults required regular emotional reinforcement to be sufficiently confident to use the services and they continued to need nurturing and reassurance throughout their skill development. Further still, the positive response to the nearness of the provision and knowledge of the buildings and staff, created a sense of security, belonging and entitlement to access the services. This need for familiarity and acknowledgement suggests the women sought signs of legitimacy for their attendance and a sense of ownership of the support they accessed.

As highlighted above, the overriding initial reason the women gave was to use FSES services for their own personal development (16/19), mainly through the achievement of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. 13/19 of the women interviewed also attended courses in childcare. The main motivations cited in the interviews were to gain new skills which was followed closely by a desire to improve work and employment prospects. Few women were motivated by money or by benefits for the family, including helping their children with homework or other extra-curricular activities. The lack of attachment (3/19) to these reasons contradicts many other studies in areas such as family literacy (Clark, 2007; Swain *et al.*, 2009; Swain *et al.*, 2015) that have typically found a key motivation for parents to access support is to be able to help their children with their homework (Carpentieri, 2012; NIACE, 2013).

Interestingly the order of priority given to these motivations changed with time, except for the need for personal development which remained the key reason for attendance at both time points. At their second interview, three years on, the women identified

their continued use of the services was governed by, again in descending order of importance, to gain employment / improve work prospects, to earn money and to benefit the family. The shift from recognising and focusing on the gaps in their personal needs, to the women valuing themselves sufficiently to believe they could have a place within the workforce and be helpful to family members through contribution to the family budget or helping their children with extra-curricular activities is significant. It also indicates a change in their aspirations and personal identity (I will explore this later in section 8.3). The change over time also suggests that offering sustained support to parents may relate to an increased possibility of parental support for their children in the longer term (Close, 2001). Of course it has to be acknowledged that many of the women may have experienced several motivations which overlapped, and it is therefore assumed that their responses to the question about their motivation prompted the identification of the most meaningful or dominant factor for them at that particular moment in time.

The motivations to access the FSES services were therefore similar to other community initiatives such as SS which were also targeted at disadvantaged localities, aimed to engage similar age groups of mainly mothers with similar overall goals (DCSF 2009b). Yet, the users here differed: FSES users were almost exclusively from the hard to reach, low / no qualifications category whereas 66% of SS parents had GCSEs or higher levels of achievement (ibid). For SS, childcare was the most heavily used type of service, and did not necessarily engage parents. For the sample used in this study, learning about childcare and family support, in line with literacy classes were the most accessed and studied fields, with full parental engagement. The FSES parental connection was supported and maintained from the point of referral onwards by PSAs. Although this is a relatively small, single case study without a comparative

element, I maintain that the qualitative data support the notion that the success of engaging and maintaining its hard to reach parents, is in large part due to the referral from trusted relationships, either professionals or personal friends with the addition of the continued support of the PSAs.

Once engaged, the actions of the women in association with the FSES support can be seen to be helped by a variety of factors. The key environmental aspects of the provision on the school site which appear to enable adults to engage with the FSES are:

- *easy access to provision within an area where they are known and feel familiar with*

- *warm reception, encouragement, peer support and friendliness with help at the point of entry and throughout the women's engagement*

- *sense of belonging and legitimacy to access services*

- *belief they are making progress towards narrowing their self-acknowledged skill gap*

- *feeling physically and emotionally safe and operating inside a safe environment.*

8.2 The development of social and cultural capital and habitus

The inclusion of adult education / family learning within the concept of the FSES was centred on the shared understanding that

> *'The link between parents' educational background and their children's education is a recurrent theme in research on social stratification. In most western countries, education is strongly related to status and tends to create a self-perpetuating connection between diplomas and wealth (Boudon 1974;*

Kohn 1977; Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Shavit and Blossfeld 1993)' von

Otter and Stenberg (2014, p.996).

By offering support and opportunities to parents and members of the local community to develop basic and practical skills, it was anticipated, much in line with Bourdieu's (1986) and Coleman's (1988) theories of social capital that the outcomes from the initiative would make a positive contribution to neighbourhood renewal and to pupils' standards of attainment (Reynolds, 2006; Scott *et al.*, 2006 and Feinstein *et al.,* 2008; DCSF, 2009b; Smith, 2014). The aim was, therefore, to develop the parents' skills in order that they could help themselves, their community and their children, although as already identified, contrary to Coleman's philosophy, this was not the motivation for the majority of engaging adults. Most of the women (16/19) were focused on learning for their own needs and believed their general skills did improve as a result of the provision, as illustrated in the two examples below:

NB – So how have the classes affected you? Have they made any impact on your life?

Hema– Yeah, a lot. Thank the Lord because yes, because before I just go somewhere and I don't know for to read and write and understanding what was said. I don't know, but now, "yes, now I understand." I can go somewhere and say "yes I know what this means, I can pronounce it", but before, no.

NB – So it's helped you because know you can understand the world around you?

Hema – And it helped my life too because if I didn't understand some word then I ask them, instead of ask some stranger, I ask my teacher, so they help me a lot.

NB - And has it affected any other parts of your life?

Hema – I'm more confident, yes.

For Tracy, specifically, her skill grew in child care and development:

NB – And in terms of you, you've identified you feel more confident and obviously you now have your qualification and your work experience and some friendships. Do you think there's anything else you have gained from your courses over and above that?

Tracy – A lot of knowledge, the way we were taught, which I didn't appreciate at the time. Until I got here I thought she (the teacher) hadn't done it the right way, I felt I'd done all the hard work myself but now I know a lot. Probably a lot of things that if I went into childcare I'd actually know what I'm doing.

NB – I'm sure you would.

Tracy – I would feel more confident in thinking that I know that shouldn't be like that or that sort of thing.

The women here had identified gaps in their abilities and reflectively acknowledged their achievements in making positive progress to address them. Indeed, many women, as Bourdieu has argued (1984), gained much more than an increased skill set. Tracy, above, realised that she had not only absorbed new knowledge but also possessed ownership of her learning which provided her with greater cultural capital and an anticipated sense of empowerment for future work scenarios.

Although the great majority of the women were not engaged in FSES support through a specific desire to help their children all the women interviewed did report that they had shared their learning experiences with them in a variety of ways. This is an important by-product from women's learning and support. Below Janice describes how this manifested for one of her children. Janice was originally referred by teachers to the PSA regarding her son's poor school attendance, and she was later directed to basic literacy and parenting courses. In the following extract she describes how she has changed the language she uses with her children and how she tries to think before speaking. Her conversation here outlines her daughter's changed reaction to receiving the wrong phone for her Christmas gift:

Janice – It's certain words that I come out with, certain words I use and they're like, their face is like where did you get that from? Where did you get that idea from? They know when I have been to school, I come home Tuesday night and I talk about my course. The children don't ask me how my course is, I wish they did because I ask them every day about school, every day, how was your school, lunch, friends, every day any nice things? They never actually ask me, I don't know I just start chatting and just start telling them and then start doing stuff through the week like. Just talking and

saying things and I know they know I get it from school. I suppose it's what a parent has to do.

NB – Do you think they look at you and think mum is more in charge now or not? Do you think they think mum is more fun now or a wiser person now?

Janice – I think they think all those things and I'll tell you what I've been doing, I've been thinking before saying things. I've been doing it with my daughter and she has been different as a result. Like that incident about the Christmas day like what I told you, that when I took the phone and said forget about the phone, you didn't have it 5 minutes ago, go back to how you was thinking and feeling before you saw it was the wrong one and then she was fine. If that had been last Christmas she would have been crying, screaming, shouting and I'd have been shouting back give me all your toys, you're not having them. We would have got in an awful argument and that would have affected the other kids and would have spoilt the mood of the holiday. It would have affected all of us in the end but lucky enough she gave me the phone and I said, right now take your time and come down when you think you are ready. Even my bigger one noticed it and she said what happened there and I said I got the wrong phone but I've spoke to her about it and you know what, I think it was your course, gave me the chance to think before speaking. I think it has been really good because I always apologise to my kids when I think I'm wrong. I'm trying to teach them if you make mistakes it's ok and I'm trying to show them I'm being a bigger person and apologising and you can see the frustration in their face when they try it. Hopefully, though in time it will teach them to go out and do what I've done. Like, right, I've made a mistake but I can have some time out and can face it while you are away maybe at your dad's. So going with this, I am also trying to think before I speak so I won't need to apologise so much.

Janice's learning experience helped her to reflect on how to be more effective in managing her daughter's disappointment. Much like Tracy, the learning experienced by the parent is described in terms of internalisation and application of the knowledge to a new situation. Here Janice demonstrates the transformation in her cultural capital as a consequence of her learning which has manifested through a more sophisticated use of language... With raised confidence from her learning she reports to attempt a new approach in a tense social situation where she realises she has raised her level of competence. The passage illustrates her awareness of her ability to influence the outcome and change her daughters' usual pattern of response which, in turn, creates the possibility her daughter may also follow her mother's modelled approach to similarly expand her own cultural capital.

Mina was also referred to the PSA, this time for housing advice, following the risk of eviction for unpaid bills which had accumulated following the sudden death of her husband. Once her financial crisis was resolved the PSA enrolled her in basic numeracy, which she was more comfortable to refer to as 'maths' and English speaking classes from which, she describes how she developed skills she was able to pass to her daughter:

NB - So in terms of what you have drawn from FSES, well obviously you have maths skills and lots of information about courses but did it offer you other things too apart from teaching and qualifications? Did you find friendships, confidence, did you find things you didn't expect at first?

Mina – Yes, I get confidence, you know. Fully confident, yes I can do it and things. Teachers, people here they appreciate to me, they say well done. You know, you can do anything, that's why I got confidence you know? People encouraged me and I developed.

NB – so that sounds really useful for you. Do you think that it was useful at all for your children? Do you think your children have changed in any way now you are more confident?

Mina – Actually children learn, teachers teach them and I am dragon mummy, I have to, even if I don't know anything. I think in my children's journey they know more than me, I learn each day, I learn then I teach my children.

NB – You teach your children more now?

Mina – Yes.

NB – So is the dragon mummy a better mummy than the one before? What kind of mummy were you before?

Mina – Before I was useless.

NB – Really, did you feel like a useless mummy?

Mina – I couldn't teach anything. For my big daughter, she just learned from school and I just say, please just learn from school and I prepare to send to school, you know. I say I was an uneducated mummy.

NB – OK.

Mina – Very uneducated mummy, can't teach this country's syllabus you know. I have to open my eyes, open my brain, open my ears everything, listen to teachers and whatever in order to learn. That way, don't listen to me because could be my wrong way and then I come here and then I say, oh I can do it and then you see, I can do, teach my children. You know my little daughter is really hard to learn. She's in a very

good school though but she is a child all the time, all playtime all her life. And when she come to year 2, her Daddy passed away and could be she is missing Dad. She won't listen to school lessons you know. Now when she come to year 6 she comes to this school and I learn maths and English and I teach her, you know. She get it, she get it. Very hard way but she pass her tests.

These interview extracts exemplified that the women had an in-built desire to nurture their children by sharing their knowledge with them once they were sufficiently confident of their own grasp of the information required to be of assistance. Many of the women described how they shared their homework time with their children, where they would model good practice and swap assistance with spellings, reading and worksheets. Coleman (1988) argues this type of family centred social activity is inherent in all parents following the act of childbirth (Edwards *et al.*, 2003). Indeed it offers an explanation for the women's actions but not for the lack of initial motivational purpose. I find that Bourdieu's (1986) counter stance to Coleman's theory, with his explanation of the changeable level of social capital dependent on the context or 'fields' in which the women find themselves, offers greater logic and is evidentially supported here. In other words within the context of a large community organisation such as the school, the women's social and cultural capital is insufficient to believe they have enough skills to engage with programmes aimed at passing on information to their children. Once, however, the women are in a different context, for example their home, their interpretation of their increased skills and knowledge are judged differently, changing their social capital paradigm, which enables them to feel confident and sufficiently empowered (Bourdieu, 1984) to assist their children.

The outcomes which followed the parents' acquisition of skills and interactions with their children was unanimously reported to change the nature of the relationship between parent and child. Although the input for the women was skill and knowledge based, the impact was overwhelmingly focussed on the untaught aspect of developing

a better understanding of the parental role on the adult side and greater respect rather than improved academic abilities on the children's part, as exemplified in the two extracts below with two different parents:

Tracy – Yeah, I'm more understanding I think with his homework and that now I understand the pressure and deadlines and getting the time to do it and making sure it's done and that. Yeah, I think where it's more fresh in my mind, the coursework I just done. I'll say things like, do your homework this way, you might find it easier. And, take notes, first do a rough copy then order and neaten it and things like that.

NB – So do you think he's made progress as a consequence of what you've done? Or do you think he would have made that progress anyway?

Tracy – I think he would have made progress, I think he has more, err, it's hard to explain it, he's more… Well, it was nice when I was doing my coursework and he was doing his homework, so he could see it's not just Mum nagging him, 'got to do your homework'. It's more a case, well Mum's sitting at the table doing her homework, he can see that it's not just all about poor him, it's not just him that gets so much coursework, actually other people do it too. It's part of life so get on with it.

NB – And apart from parents' evening are there any other ways it's changed your relationship with the school?

Tina – Yes because home, home, everywhere, like I said I don't believe my English speaking and many things I don't believe myself but now I am confident.

NB – So it's changed not just your relationship with the school but everyone, it's changed who you are? You're not the same person anymore?

Tina – No.

NB – So has it changed your relationship with your children?

Tina – Err, it's changed a lot because before I'm a very tough Mum, very hard on the children but I learn to calm down, to talk to my children. Now I be with them, tell them what is right, what is wrong, not just get angry. And I really appreciate that I learned a lot.

NB – Do you think your daughter has changed in her attitude to you, does she see you differently?

Tina – For our relationship I say she's changed a lot, yeah, she changed a lot for coming here and me too, I changed a lot.

NB – Can you tell me how she has changed?

Tina – Because before we don't sit down and talk for any more than 15 minutes but now we have family we go out together and we go to the restaurant or I tell her as she

comes to cook the food for me. She can do this, I can do that, was maybe I clear the table now we have family. It's important and it's from coming here I know it's important to be with the family. Because before I was there but I don't know my daughter much. I was blaming the Dad, I would say he took her from me but it was me don't know how to handle her. Coming here I learn a lot. I learn to be with my family and learn to be with people outside and I learn to be with group and I learn for myself too. I'm really pleased with that.

As these quotations show, the women gained more than their anticipated skill development, in particular, most of the women (15/19) also experienced a change in self-control with the associated shift in power within the home. Indeed, the relationships within the family went beyond those with their children with whom they were sharing their knowledge and experiences and went on to affect their husbands and partners. For more than half of the women (11/19) not only did they feel they had gained greater respect from the family at large but also, in some cases a change in status, which saw the male partners share much more freely with them than before. According to the women, the men's (or partners') altered opinions were based on observations of the women's differences in behaviour rather than on personal experience of the women's skill increase as the two quotes below show:

NB – And had that changed Joe's opinion of you, is he more respectful of you?

Tracy– In a way, yes, because he has seen me doing all the coursework and he's been like, I've got to work tomorrow in 7 hours and I'm still in my pyjamas. He's seen me do a lot of work, especially towards the end with all the questions that have come into me and that. He was really supportive while I was doing the course, really clearing up so I could get on with the things and occupy my son it. He's probably more changed because I'm changed – you know the reaction off me.

And again from another interviewee, Roshan:

NB – And has that made a difference to your relationship with your husband?

Roshan – Yes, he loves me more, loves me more. I am every Tuesday and Friday work, he is shopping, not before, he not shopping, now shopping and I am working. It is good for the children, mum and dad the same. My husband don't like it, like me at home, stay here, not for outside going, for working or learning. For shopping, for

working my husband is ok if I working or learning. Before he said, home, stay here. I have cooking not go out.

NB – So he does jobs at home he didn't used to do. He helps with shopping, anything else, does he help with cooking? Or he helps sometimes to clean the house?

Roshan – Yes, sometimes, cooking helping, not cleaning.

NB – Ok, he helps to cook, did he always help to do that?

Roshan – Not, used to do that, no.

NB – Did he cook for you before, a long time ago or a short time ago?

Roshan – Short time, maybe 3, 4 years.

NB – Ok, just really since you began your courses here. And things have changed about how things happen in your house?

Roshan– Yes, yes, everything changing in my house.

These two extracts indicate the significance of the women's shifts to their habitus as a result to a change in their cultural capital, a link which is readily acknowledged by others (DiMaggio, 1979; Reay, 1995; Horvat and James, 2011; Gaddis, 2012). The manifestation of the women's altered self-image impacted on their relationships with their children and other adult members within the field of the home. For Bourdieu (1986) habitus is recognised as gradually changeable, dependent upon its context and it is concurrent with change to one's cultural capital. Here we see the shift in the women's longstanding beliefs create an altered habitus.

Coleman (1988), however, identifies the individual, their activities and motivations and their innate parental sense of nurture as significant contributors to the development of one's social capital. This offers an explanation for the impact of the women's input on the household members. It also challenges the concept of the cyclical trap of cultural deprivation, where working-class members are chronically excluded from sharing middle class social capital. From both Coleman's and Bourdieu's approaches, there is

concurrence that changes in how one sees oneself within a family /community can occur with change to one's skill set and associated self-confidence.

Seeking to understand immigrant mothers and their transformation of habitus, Jo's work (2013) focused on how the development of habitus occurs. He concludes, that when people change the fields they operate in, their habitus although dislocated, continues to function with slow change from its old and familiar form into the new (Bourdieu, 1977). In Jo's observation of this phenomenon in his work, he proposes the transition was typically facilitated by a 'cultural mentor', that is a person who acted as both bridge and gatekeeper to the new fields, much in the same way the PSA's in this project are seen. The shift in habitus, associated with the developments in cultural capital through interaction with others at a personal level, appears to enable the opportunity for greater social mobility for the women.

Without progressive social mobility, some working-class families are seen by some researchers as holding differences in attitudes towards learning and life values (Feinstein, 1998) and associated lack of encouragement of intellectual development of offspring (Douglas, 1964). Collectively these researchers describe aspects of cultural deprivation that stem from cultural inheritance played out within the home through parental and familial interactions. Yet, these very interviewees, who share the label of being working-class adults, who are typically reluctant to engage with services and education, demonstrate here that once they have embraced the notion of addressing what they perceive as inadequacies in themselves, and are exposed to new and challenging fields with transitional support, they become agentic in their ability to create new relational connections that alter their habitus and cultural and social capital.

External to the family connections are those which are made inside the classroom, within the context of the school, including staff, friends and neighbours. The results from the first interview saw fewer than half (8/19) of the women involved in civic pastimes such as, sports, neighbourhood activities, charity work and attendance at church. By the second round of interviews, three years later, 12/13 of the women interviewed participated in civic activities. For around half, the focus of their engagement was dominantly within their neighbourhood (7/13) and for almost a third, within the field of cultural interests such as music, library usage and theatre (5/13), indicating a clear rise in their cultural capital.

This change in civic engagement I contend was driven by several different factors, including increased knowledge, a raised level of confidence and a shift in habitus. The smallest area of change in the women's behaviour was in church attendance, social club participation and political involvement. Given the large proportion of women from ethnic minorities with strongly religious association this was unsurprising as several of the women already attended a place of worship. Possibly the cultural backgrounds of the women may also explain the limited political involvement which could have been restricted due to their overseas status thereby negating their ability to participate in voting. While for others, the political language used by parties to encourage votes was too sophisticated for their understanding. The most common form of civic engagement was via neutral activities such as sport, health and well-being, such as leisure time spent with friends, and wider social activities such as going to the cinema. Once engaged themselves, the women often moved to sharing the experiences with their immediate family. Indeed, by the second round of interviews the number of women who had reportedly expanded their civic roles and social networks to include their neighbours and friends had more than doubled to 7/13. Their motivation was to share

their own progression and social connections to help and inspire others, as is illustrated in these two exchanges with two different women:

NB – And in a wider way, did you going out to work have any impact on any of your friends or neighbours?

Tanesha – Well, as you know me and my best friend who lives just round the corner from me, we came to see you to see if she could do some volunteering or something like that because she's like me got a strong criminal record but she's alright now and wants to try for some work but ain't sure what she's good at.

NB – Yes, I remember, you brought her along because you knew we have a volunteer programme here. Was it the PSA that told you about it?

Tanesha – Yes, the PSA asked me if I wanted to do it but it wasn't for me. I had too much going on at the time.

NB – So did your friend think about volunteering because of you going out to work or because you told her about the volunteering and she thought she'd like to apply?

Tanesha – Well, it was me getting the Argos job, she thought she'd like to join me but her reading and writing ain't all that plus she has the record so she thought she'd do some voluntary work first and that's when I thought of the school.

NB – Perhaps you inspired her to think about work?

Tanesha – Well, a bit, like when I told her how much I was getting and what a laugh we had she thought she could try it but she also had some mental health issues on and off so I think she might find it harder but she will get something.

And again but in a slightly different role:

NB – And what about how your friends, wider family, neighbours, how do they see you?

Neta – They are asking me, "What happens at the school?" They ask me about their children. "What should they do?" My husband is always telling them, ask me what to do. My husband always encouraging but now my sister in law and mother in law and friends they see me different, stronger. They more impressed. Now they ask what I think, they are asking me, "How do they do this, do that." Before not asking.

It seems likely that the self-confidence in these two women rose to a level where they felt able to act as a conduit for others to access the networks that had been offered to themselves. In fact 15/19 of the women interviewed in the first round stated that their experiences of the FSES services had made them more self-assured and by the second interview all of the women in the sample said they were more confident to

varying degrees. For the women above, their deeper engagement with their neighbours and friends, is described by Coleman, as treading a path between taking social action within their social structure and independent motivation, driven by self-interest (Tzanakis, 2013). As a result, their actions enabled them to simultaneously increase their own social capital by creating a new set of contacts within their local neighbourhood and generate a stronger community through several potential new social groups.

A few of the more self-confident women also immediately created a form of social hierarchy where, for a short time at least, they were the gate keeper and activist for the community support that had empowered them. These new roles elevated the women's cultural capital and confidence in how they operated both within the home and the community. The next three extracts highlight a shared lift in self- confidence which prompts a change to their relationships with others and so creates a shift in power balance:

Suri – Friends is asking me, can you help me find job, any job cleaning like you? They want job and money, it is important. And they are asking me questions if husbands is ill, can I tell them about health problems. They know I am hospital, talking doctors, in scanners, medicines, everything, me everything in hospitals, they are asking help for their family, children, like that.

NB – Gosh, and what do you say?

Suri – I am not doctor but telling them go doctor, find out if problem and get antibiotics.

NB – So they see you almost as an expert? Someone who knows about health matters? Do you feel like that?

Suri – (laughs) sometime they asking and I know answer but I always telling, go to your GP. Go A&E.

NB – Do they ask you for any other type of help or advice?

Suri – Asking me going GP with them and filling the forms and sign up for schools and, and, like that.

NB – So they see you in their community as someone who has information, someone who knows more than them on some things?

Suri – Yes.

Suri's help and advice is seen here as sought after, the members of the community approach her as her experience is shared knowledge. In the following extract Roshan explains how she advises others based on her own positive and empowered experiences outside the home. Here she refers to her interactions with neighbours,

NB – And what about talking to others in your community, friends and neighbours. Do you chat with them?

Roshan – My neighbour, not working, stay at home. I am telling, why you stay here, work is better, very enjoying and time goes fast, make you more confident and have money. I have money, it is helpful and when my husband has no money I give to him or to house, telling her, now my mind is free, I am talking, telling her, coming outside my house, it is free, you can relax.

Here Shamla describes how her FSES experiences have manifested change in her role within the family and home,

Shamla – Yes. Err, like this what happened, five years ago, two years ago my husband in charge, doing everything now is like equal. Both in charge.

NB – Wow that's a very big shift, big change.

Shamla – Yes, my husband is more for speaking but after two years I in charge, both same, both can speak, children talking both mum and dad. Before just dad, me not understand, now can.

NB – Do you think they respect you more now you can talk with them in English?

Shamla – Yes more respect, before only dad but now I can tell them do this, do that, I can argue and I am in charge.

Suri finds herself in the role of consultant and advisor for friends and neighbours, she jokes that she is not the doctor, yet, they consult her prior to attending their GP or A&E. The kudos this privileged status allows Suri to recognise that she is seen as having greater knowledge than others around her, which reflects her enhanced cultural capital, and in turn offers her a sense of empowerment and power to act as gatekeeper

to the advice requested. That is, as Bourdieu describes, the specific field (of friends and neighbours) which offers a framework of internal power relations which regulates her behaviour within it. Her elevated status also, if sustained, may subtly reshape her identity and re-frame her habitus (Jo, 2013).

This complex intertwining of capitals, identity, habitus and power is further evidenced by Roshan in her description of a conversation where she advises neighbours to step outside the exclusive role of housewife and to gain employment and become liberated with the ability to pay for items when others cannot. Again, the shift in confidence and change of identity prompts the emergence of a leadership role where the sense of power activates empowerment of others.

Equally, the dialogue from Shamla which focuses on the change in role between parents, outlines a shift in status for the mother within the home. She asserts she and her husband have a more equal amount of respect from their children now that she is able to speak in English. In this scenario Shamla's new skill enabled her to expand her social capital by more fully connecting with her own family and the associated rise in respect suggests she could go on to be empowered to take more of a lead role in her children's parenting.

In all three cases the women not only created wider social networks for themselves and potentially for others, but they also highlight their new or newly changed roles which empowered them to help others, using their newly expanded confidence. This in turn manifests as a sense of power and empowerment generated by their attainment in developing a wider skill base, respect from others, elevated status and paid employment. Their feeling of empowerment leads them to have aspirations of increasing their skills and knowledge, greater usage of their leisure time and

progression at work. During these cultural capital transitions and social network developments, the women's social status and sense of social class, and relatedly, their identity, changed in response to their new experiences as did their sense of power and empowerment. It is the combination of these outcomes I turn to now.

8.3 Identity, power and empowerment

Both sets of interviews enabled the women to share details of their lives subsequent to accessing FSES services, during which they outlined changes in their perceptions of themselves, their habitus, cultural and social capital. In line with Bourdieu's theory that these personal ways of being are changeable, through intra-reliance on each other, the women drew evidence of such change via wider social and organisational bodies, such as exam boards, schools and places of employment. In other words the women were processing and recalibrating their social and cultural capital by reviewing their social integration and potential performance through internal synthesising and negotiation. This process is similar to the formation and change of identity (Matthys, 2013), that is change from who the women thought they were and who they thought they might become. Matthys argues that the concept of social and cultural capital and identity is complementary, and allows social capital / identity to be utilised to similar ends as social / cultural capital (ibid) in certain situations. That is, when an individual has limited social capital and few networks available to them, combined with limited cultural capital, they can use their merits and strengths recognised by themselves and others to gain confidence, for example they might rely on their sense of humour or intuitive artistic abilities.

In the thesis I use the term identity as a shorthand for how the women in the study understood and described their position in the social world, based on their life experiences and outcomes relating to the courses. Empirical data was gathered

197

through the semi-structured interviews to establish their identity. That is, it was the women's words which expressed their understanding of their lives that were the subject of analysis. As mentioned previously in section 5.6, I made no attempt to read the visible markers presented by some of the women during interview as an expression of their identity; I did not take them as confirmation of my assumptions, and I did not ask the women to formally categorise their identities, particularly their ethnic identities. I understood from the women's descriptions that they recognised that there had been (often profound) changes in their behaviours, practices, outlooks and beliefs and I took this as confirmation that their personal identities had changed.

For the service users at FSES, the first round of interviews showed over half of the women (11/19) believed their personal identity had changed as a result of accessing support. This shift was noted either by themselves or others:

NB – So is there anything else you think has changed? For example, has it raised your confidence, made you a little bit braver to do things do you think?

Janice – I don't know how to explain that because if I'm boasting myself if I speak highly about myself, but that's how I feel. I don't know why but for years people have got something about me, they seen total difference in me. The two who I am talking about who've helped me get through my life and they've kept me going and they love it now because they have got another lady coming to school now, where I come here Tuesday afternoon, she comes in my place. She's got, it's a bit difficult, well they laugh because I say everything they say to me and just before Christmas they was like whoa that was like you 5 years ago, you wouldn't let no one in, you wouldn't have it, you wouldn't listen.

So that's it, it's nice to hear I've actually took on board, look how far you've come now and now I'm teaching someone else. They mean it in a nice way and they say it time and again and every time she points it out to me, I'm like, oh yeah but again, I don't, I think yeah you're right but I just don't see it in myself, I don't.

NB – Well sometimes it so hard to see change, things can move so slowly it's not always obvious how much of a distance you've come.

Janice - Yeah, I hadn't noticed it. My kids notice it and my two friends have noticed it.

The fact Janice did not recognise the change in herself without the illumination from others raises the possibility that other women in the cohort also underwent unrecognised change. Indeed, by the second interview all of the women (13/13) reported changes in their attitudes and beliefs, yet, the number recording change in how they saw themselves fell to 7/13. This might be explained by the fact that attitudes and beliefs are elements of identity (Rousseau, 2006) and their opinions may have reflected the fact the women felt in transition. That is, they may have seen themselves engaged in an active process, constantly evolving as a reaction to their experiences where the women may recognise their changes as an iterative process.

The factional changes in the women's beliefs and attitudes can be seen as acknowledgements of potential identity changes. 15/19 women in the first interview cited evidence of newly gained skills, qualification and acquired practical abilities, certificates and altered social capital, that is, processes which lead to alter self-beliefs. Below Hema notes how the change in her behaviour helped her psychologically to remove herself from a recognised lower peer group of non-readers (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) where she had previously felt she belonged. With new skills, and hindsight she judged she was no longer similar to other members of that group:

Hema – Yeah, because I'm not so rude like before. Like before when I didn't understand for to read and write I used to have this kinda, well, my say, understanding. Because when you don't know for to read and write you are very ignorant to understand certain things.

NB – Like what?

Hema – Like I would ask people things and they would just point to some writing but I can't read it. And when I want to go places or do things for not knowing to read, I have to ask everyone and they are rude sometimes, they don't want for to help me.

NB – How did that make you feel?

Hema – I feel frustrated and angry, angry at the rude people.

NB – Have some of those feelings got less since you can read?

Hema – Yes, it's gone because I'm not so ignorant like before, I'm not somebody who don't know for how to read and write. They be very ignorant those people and the ones rude to you as well.

Hema's acknowledgement that she had gained new skills, altered her personal identity through a change in her attitude and beliefs towards herself and relatedly, to others. Her identity, as theorised by Tajfel (1974) was shaped by her personal and cultural expectations of herself and others (Stryker, 2000; Gilcrest *et al.,* 2010). That is, her shift in cultural capital derived from her newly acquired abilities, changed her position within her social groups. In this case, Hema experienced a lack of cohesion with her original social group and sought instead to join another. Typically, when a person's identity is incompatible with a group's profile, they will leave the group and seek one that reflects their own identity (Brewer, 1991) and where they feel they belong. This is because behaviour is determined by group rules and expectations rather than the expectations of an individual (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) hence, Hema opted to leave and join other groups rather than work at changing the original group from within.

For many of the women (14/19) at the first interview and all (13/13) at the second interview there was recognition that since accessing FSES support personal changes had manifested an increased influence over others. The areas of the greatest influence fell into three categories: their children, their spouses / life partners and friends and neighbours from the local community. In relation to their children, the women gaining credibility, respect and greater stature within the family were common themes as Shamla evidences below:

NB – What has changed, what is different?

Shamla – Different is daughter and son sometimes letters from school, sometimes forms. After two years not fill up or writing or not signing but now this is every time I do everything, Surname, First name, address, everything I fill up, sign it and gone. It's so good and children very pleased with me. They tell, mummy you have got so clever now.

NB – So that's excellent and it sounds like it's changed your interaction with your children?

Shamla – Yes, it has.

NB – How does that make you feel?

Shamla – Good, very good. Yeah.

NB – And has that impacted on your children? How do you think your children feel towards you regarding your new skills?

Shamla – They are telling me they are impressed. They sometimes telling me Mummy is good, little, little English more. Me and husband and my two children no always talking my language, children to children not speak my language, they are speaking English. Son and daughter no Tamil.

NB – No Tamil, at all?

Shamla – No Tamil, English my children, son and daughter speaking and my husband and me Tamil. My two children no speaking Tamil, not writing, everything no.

NB – But they can understand what you are saying?

Shamla – Yes, they can understand but no speaking.

NB – And now you can talk to them and understand them better?

Shamla – Yes, yes, children, two children speaking, what happened, err two years ago not understand now understand. Sometimes even English words fighting!

NB – You mean you can even argue in English?

Shamla – Yes, what happened, sometime listening them argue, now I can argue.

Shamla is seen here to have gained respect from her children by learning a new language which in turn empowered her to talk on the same level as the children and thereby take a more dominant role in their parenting. Her new identity impacted on Shamla's habitus, that is, by learning the language used within the social setting of the home she was able to share more with her children which in turn altered their relationship, her status within the family and offered her a voice.

Similarly, for the women who had spouses or long-term partners, they described how their refashioned identities impacted on their behaviour and beliefs and in turn their one to one relationship. For example, Roshan explained that the acquisition of basic

and language skills enabled her to believe she had risen to have equal standing with her husband within the family. She believed in turn, this enabled her behaviour to influence his behaviour towards her, which resulted in him being less argumentative.

Interestingly the area where the women felt they were more widely influential was with friends and neighbours; that is, other women in circumstances similar to those they experienced themselves, and which in their eyes, they had overcome. Their move from feeling like being the outsider, that is, as the one lacking skills, compared to their how they saw themselves after they gained skills and qualifications, reshaped their identity and elevated their self-confidence. This change made them feel empowered and enabled them to empower other women. In other words the women who were already engaged with FSES presented as non-judgemental and experienced allies for the otherwise marginalised friends and neighbours in the local community. Susan came to the services as a non-reader and began classes with FSES. It was here she began to see her potential ability and confidence grow, encouraging her to volunteer to help others. Below she summarises how her role in helping others developed:

Susan – Why I started it all was I used to be a PALS (Parent As Learner Support) helper and then we got offered a place here and because they done all different classes and my marriage broke down and I had a little girl I thought it was about time I stood up to my role. I needed to learn how to read properly, how to write so I could help her. As years have gone on I have progressed, I've got more confident so now I can go and share that with other people, you know. If they want to learn, I say come and do this, this is how I started.

Susan highlights the concept of solidarity with other subordinated women within her local community and she reacts to this by supporting the other women so they can share her experience of increased self-belief and associated sense of empowerment. She recognises her new sense of self has evolved through skill progression, which brought a change in her identity. Susan describes below how she has transformed

through learning and volunteering from being someone who was shy to a becoming, amongst other things, a contributor at a monthly professionals' meeting (Youth Early Support Panel, which worked towards supporting troubled teenagers and their families):

Susan – Yeah, because, how can I put it, years ago I'd never ever of even dreamed of going to different workshops or sort of going to the YES (Youth Early Support Panel) panel and having a say. I wouldn't have done it. I know I wouldn't have done it.

NB – So did it feel different? Just thinking about the two learning situations. The learning situation at the beginning when you were, as we said, like a blank sheet ready to be formed. Did it feel different then to when you were going to the YES panel?

Susan – Absolutely

NB – Can you tell me what the difference was?

Susan – Well, when I first started I was shy. I went into myself, you know because there wasn't a lot I could do. But over the years, doing what I'm doing, it's made me more confident in myself so I can go out and share what I've learnt. But when I first started I couldn't have done that. I couldn't have helped anybody.

Susan's altered social identity has clearly made significant change to her outlook and beliefs which have manifested as a significant turnabout of her self-confidence both on a personal and social level (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). She not only expresses greater security about herself generally but she is also prepared to place herself in a recognised situation of personal discomfort. Addressing a room full of professionals can be daunting with others of equal standing, let alone for someone who has struggled with basic skills and poor literacy; such circumstances are recognised to create a medium for social anxiety caused by the fear of being judged (Rapee and Heimberg, 1997, Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Susan recognised her ability to overcome her social anxiety and to empathise with and support the other women at the start of their learning journey. Within psychology there is recognition that women are inspired by other women as role models they can identify within terms of their race, gender and

demographic background (Lockwood, 2006). In Susan's case her empathy and understanding of the position of the women around her inspires her to offer assistance, thereby creating a two way support for the women.

Susan also made an interesting comment about the need for her own skills and confidence to develop before she believed she could help others, even though it might be assumed she would still have been empathetic to the other women before her own personal changes in habitus and identity occurred. This raises the question about when is one's confidence sufficient to change one's identity so that there is belief one can help others? Possibly it is the convergence of the separate elements of skills, confidence and connection with others that is the catalyst to change. Education and occupation are recognised to be key foundations of social status (Hollingshead, 1975). Susan's increased skill base, her working role and ability to relate to the other women and gain feedback from them, gave her an enhanced sense of respect and self-esteem. In other words the transformation from seeing oneself as needing support, to being the one giving support occurs when the individual has an empowering belief that they have something to give, the evidence of which is gained from the acknowledgement of others.

The new found sense of empowerment derived from the changes in identity was seen to generate aspirations for the women. At the point of the first interview, the most common aspiration was to increase their skills through education (16/19), although this tailed off by the next time the women were questioned (8/13). By the second interview slightly more women said they wanted to gain paid employment (10/19 vs 8/13). This shift indicates they had gained not only skills but their self-confidence and elements of their identity had changed, they saw themselves employable, where previously they had not. Below Hema demonstrates her confidence in her ability to

secure a job once she had learned to read. With the realisation of this new opportunity she quickly progresses her thoughts to talk about her ambition for her preferred work:

NB – And now you can read life should be different for you, don't you think?

Hema – I am going to get a job, I already fill the application form and my teacher check it for me. She helped me a little bit. And I got a bike, you see me didn't you Miss, when I was riding here, I put it by the nursery, locked up. That's my bike so I can get places quicker.

NB – What sort of job have you applied for?

Hema – Sainsbury, on the checkout. I can read good enough for that, it's ok for now but I want my own salon.

NB – Is that your ambition? You want to have a salon?

Hema – Yes Miss, I can do the hair and the makeup, you remember I did a course here too, it was easy for me, I know it all.

Like others of the women, Hema listed work and further skill development as their immediate next steps to follow the FSES support, yet, at the point of the second interview they reported they aspired to more socially centred outcomes. Hema went on to highlight the important role her increased confidence and self-esteem had in helping to repair a strained relationship with her father. At the time of the interview her second husband had just died, yet, the focus of her conversation was how she would be regarded by her father now she was a reader:

NB – That sounds like a good idea, especially after you have finished all the things you have to do with the funeral arrangements and the house, I'm sure you will be very ready for a rest.

Hema – Yes, I want to go back and see my dad. I haven't been home for since I came here 13 years ago. I want to show my dad I can read and write, he will be proud of me. I will take all me books and show him and my certificates, about how I come to class.

NB – I'm sure he'll be very pleased. Do you keep in regular contact with him?

Hema – No Miss, I never really speak to him but he will be pleased with me reading and writing. I did tell him that me husband passed and I say I was coming to see him. He does know, he knows I am coming but I ain't booked the flights yet.

NB – So it's a bit of a new start? A fresh start with your dad?

Hema – A bit of one yes, when I was a child he never really looked at me, he was busy with me brothers and I just was at the side. He was pleased when me marry and he can be free of me, not so much to bother about. When me first husband die and I marry again then come to UK, then we never really speak. Now he can be proud of me and I can go back and see him and have a holiday.

NB – What's made you want to reconnect with your family?

Hema – I know they can be proud of me now. And also, I can afford to fly there, my husband never pay for me to go home before.

NB – And was it because you thought your father wasn't proud of you that you didn't keep in touch?

Hema – Well, now I can read and I have me house and live in the UK and can travel, yes, they will be mighty proud of me.

NB – It sounds like you feel proud of yourself too.

Hema – I do Miss, I work hard and pray every day and now I can be proud. It all come nice for me.

The change in Hema's identity and associated sense of empowerment from mastering basic literacy enabled her to believe her father's attitude towards her would be similarly altered in regard to the respect he would have for her. Other women also invested their new sense of empowerment into developing their cultural capital by aspiring to go to the theatre, like Susan, or on holiday like Tanesha, Mina, Neta and Bibi and other general leisure activities as suggested by Susan, Hema and Janice. This sense of empowerment gave the women opportunities to choose, not just to fulfil their desires, but to also make choices for others. These circumstances of change in social /cultural capital and self-perception is legitimised through external evidential actions and views, which is described by Bourdieu (1984) as agency and power (Gaventa, 2003; Navarro, 2006).

The women moved from feeling and perhaps, even more importantly, being, empowered to having the power in a range of different circumstances, that is, across the family, within their communities and most significantly within the detail of their own

lives. Identity and power work together and are mutually supportive. Identity is recognised as an effect of power, as an understanding of one's place in society that guides and shapes what one does, thinks and feels which in turn generates power, a capacity to act upon the world (Sindic, *et al.*, 2015). As I have demonstrated, the women using the FSES services experienced a sense of changed identity which in turn led them to engaging more effectively with the social world. There were three areas where they experienced power related to change. Firstly, in the way they handled social situations, including how they changed the way they dressed, their approach to their overall physical appearance and how they spent their leisure time. Veena's comment below, on her appearance, illustrates her engagement and use of her social power as Sindic *et al.,* (2015) perceives it, that is, as the ability to achieve goals even if other people oppose them. Here Veena describes being able to make choices, to do more of as she wishes and recognises that in certain parts of the world she is less free to make choices but in the UK she feels she is fully liberated:

Veena - Yaa, we are like modern family, I cut hair, wearing lipstick, Western clothes, like that. My husband he is still in Denmark, only I am here with children so he can't say no. My family are not happy, my brother not talk to us, he thinks it is very bad, I say he is bad making his wife stay at home. But it is like this in my country and everyone is same. When I am in my country I am also like this but in UK I can be free.

Secondly, the manifestation of the women's power gave them a voice not just for themselves but also other members of their family, an issue identified by Hill Collins (1990) and Deveaux (1994) as the freedom of choice brought about by empowerment. The combination of new skills, increased confidence and altered identity culminated in reflecting Bourdieu's concept of power, which he sees as internalised energy

specifically around self-worth and personal agency within the wider context of social participation (Gaventa, 2003; Navarro, 2006). Shamla gives a good example of this when she talks about her understanding of schooling for her children, her initial expectations and later realisation and engagement with her power of choice:

NB – ……..When you look at life and you think about things, do you think the same as you used to or do you think of some things differently? For example, do you see education the same way as you used to?

Shamla– No things are different way and after five years ago nearly, this school, two children I know only one school. Now 5 or 6 school my daughter found out, not only one school, many schools choose from.

NB – Before you thought there was only one secondary school, what in this area?

Shamla – Yes. I live close here and my husband and me, no talking, no looking just choose this school. It's near my house.

NB – Did you come to look at it first before your daughter came here?

Shamla – No just choosing because near to my home.

NB – So tell me what changed?

Shamla – My daughter finish GCSE needs A levels so my husband and me looking all around try to get best one, means best result, everyone say good school.

NB – So you had a good look around but before you just chose the nearest and didn't check if it was good or not?

Shamla– No.

NB – And what about your son, he's at university, did you look at lots of those or just the nearest one?

Shamla– No, for university, look all around then after that we choose one.

NB - So what made you change your approach?

Shamla – At first education little bit important also my husband and me not know we can choose. After coming to here, classes, ladies telling me about schools, which is best one, where is, like that. I am telling my husband we go like this and looking. That what happened.

NB – So do you think you see education differently?

Shamla– My children, daughter and son very clever but I didn't know it, they can get different chances different schools. It's good.

Shamla shared her experience of learning and understanding of not only the wealth of educational opportunities and choice available in the UK but also their significance in realising wider possibilities for her children and her power of choice in relation to them. In other words her usage of her social power generated social and cultural capital for her children and their future. Similarly, as I reported earlier in this section, the women shared several situations where they were placed in positions of social power within their community, where friends and neighbours came and asked them for help and advice. In such circumstances, of course, the women have both power to choose if they help or not, and if so, they have power within their actions.

Thirdly, and most significantly, the women's changed identity and sense of empowerment created a space for them to be powerful within their home and direct the dynamics of the family. Three of the women shared stories of abusive partners and their power to step away from them and move on with their lives. Others highlighted their greater influence within the family which grew stronger with time (11/19 at first interview and 10/13 by the second interview). The concept of the power dynamic changing in an unchanged physical environment echoes Bourdieu's belief that all societies are built on some form of power (Gaventa, 2003) and that it is the identity of the individuals which is the catalyst of change, as societies are only meaningful through the identity of those within them (Sindic *et al.*, 2015). Taking the view that families can be classified as mini societies, an example of such a change was included in Janice's second interview where she demonstrated she had gained power enough to determine who she included in her family:

NB – So your confidence has increased, has that made any difference to your personal life, your relationships?

Janice – Can I be truthful?

NB – Of course.

Janice– I ain't with my kids' dad, we split up years ago and I ain't been with anyone for a long time but about a year ago I met this man what was really keen on me and he was really nice. I started to see him regular and we got on really well. Then he wants to move in and have a baby with me and before I'd have said yes. I love kids and I loved him but you know what, I just knew it wasn't right and I said no. Before I don't think I could have said no but I just knew I didn't want to look after another man and I didn't want no more babies. How weird is that, but I felt strong about it.

NB – Are you still seeing him at all?

Janice– No, I mean if I see him around I'll say "hi" but no, I told him, "It's not for me." Whenever I thought about all that extra work I'd have to do, I just said "no". I have enough to think about and look after without anymore. So yes, I am more confident but not sure it's a good thing, if that makes sense?

Here Janice recognises her opinion as a new, valid and positive change within her domestic world, yet her question at the end of this quote indicates a lack of confidence over the possibility that others may judge her action of rejection critically. Although Janice has managed to find her voice, she has not been able to shake off the belief that society expects her to submit to male preferences. In other words she has managed to find courage and strength through her new identity to have power within the home but has doubts about her power in the public domain.

The notion of personal change then is seen here to be possible, in both the short and longer term and appears to be influential to others within the same social framework. Some argue that social differences such as limited literacy and language skills, lack of income and employment and those from non-indigenous backgrounds, as described above, creates a social underclass (Giddens, 1973; Murray, 1984; Anderson, 1990). Characteristics of such a class include a lack of motivation or ability to change their social trajectories, manifested through and inability to engage with community based organisations (Murray, 1984; Wilson, 1987; Spybey, 1997). Yet, it is clear from the women interviewed that engagement and change can occur in locations and settings where the women feel safe and are sufficiently empowered to do so.

The home, and the society within and around it, can be seen then as the location of potential change for the women. It is a base where existing connections with others can support individual women to internalise new skills and manifest changed identities as a result. The significance of the location of change draws a question on the difference of public and private space for women in relation to their self-perceptions and self-confidence. In the next section I examine the women's interviews to better understand their relationships with both spaces and the role that the FSES played in both.

8.4 Private and public and the possibility of hybrid spaces

The 'private sphere' is a concept developed by feminists following on from Habermas' theory of a 'public sphere', detailed in his book *Structural Transformation of the Private Sphere* (1962) where he seeks to bring understanding on the development and maintenance of a capitalist society. Habermas' theory describes a public domain where discussion and decision take place. In later times feminist philosophy built on this and drew the contrast of the private sphere, identifying it as the space for family, intimacy and the domestic (Weintraub, 1997; Pateman, 1999; Bargetz, 2009). The private space is viewed as the power base for women, while the 'public sphere' embraces economy and polity and is the power domain of men (ibid). This dichotomy between the public and private space is strongly debated by feminists. Some like Pateman (1989), argue that the concept is critically central to that of feminist theory while others, such as Prokhovnik (1999a) and Bargetz (2009) contest with equal conviction the existence of the idea and go further to raise concern that the notion of gender based fields creates opposition between two identities resulting in a hierarchical social structure which maligns the qualities of women and limits the

possibility of any equality across the two spheres. More specifically, Bargetz (2009) argues too, that the belief of the existence of female space, where there is acknowledgement that women do not have equality in both spheres, devalues the women's voice. Equally, when home, the female domain, is seen as the more common place for domestic abuse, violence, oppression and deprivation it also devalues the space and the women in it. Her belief suggests that the concept of space is only as binary as that which is entertained within it. From my standpoint, whilst I acknowledge the women's many examples of both positive and negative outcomes in both domains, it was the women's experiences in the hybrid space of the FSES (Moje *et al.*, 2014) which enabled them to act with greater confidence in both spheres (I explore the idea of a hybrid space more fully later in the chapter). That said, the negative events and treatments handed to women, ranging from the extreme violence undergone by Hema, to the physical safety but powerlessness suffered by others such as Bibi, were typically carried out within the home. The following extracts offer clear examples of these domestic experiences.

Here Hema describes her abuse as inequality:

NB – Do you think your opinion on equality for both girls and boys has changed?

Hema – Yes for my girls, I want everything for them, not like when I was little and it was for my bothers. But you know even when the law is equal, in the home it isn't. Even the police couldn't stop me husband from giving a beating, only when the beating was so hard I had to go to hospital, then they came and talked. That's all.

NB – Yes, it's true, most domestic abuse is still carried out by men. Do you tell the girls to do things different to you?

Hema – I tell them be strong. But they can walk away for they can read and write. When I can't read I can't go, can't get job, can't get money, I'm on a spouse visa. There's nothing but my girls, they can read and do good study and they have UK education and learning, so they will be strong, not like me.

Hema identifies her poor literacy skills to be the result of the lack of equality in educational opportunities and therefore it became the impediment to her escape from her husband's beatings. She acknowledges the law does not protect women within their homes and therefore when reviewing her daughters' future safety, her assessment is based on their ability to 'walk away', rather than for them to expect respectful equality within the home from either their partners or social structures such as the law.

The lack of expectation of respect is echoed by Bibi. Like many of the women in the study (just over half), she comes from a Muslim background. Her description of her home-life shows how her intersectionality manifests as a clear divide between the genders within the household. At the point of her second interview Bibi was in recovery from cancer and trying to regain her health along with caring for her immediate family, that is, her spouse and three children as well as her mother who had advanced dementia:

Bibi – Well, things around me are different, I do get more help with Mum so as long as I'm here with her and quiet, so I don't disturb her it's better and I can do little things like the cooking, washing up, like that so things are little bit different. But not so much a change in routine, it's all just quieter.

NB – How does that make you feel?

Bibi – More calmer, less stressed so that is good. You know a bit more in charge, more happier inside even though always listening for Mum, still it is more relaxed.

NB – That's good and presumably helpful for your husband if he has also been poorly.

Bibi – Yes. He need quiet and to rest and I can help, getting food, keeping Mum happy, getting everything ready.

NB – Did you do that before, or this a change?

Bibi – No I did do before but had my daughters, they always helping me, very good girls. Now I must do on my own, or with my husband.

NB – Do you do more things together now then?

Bibi – He can help me little bit but most, it is me to help him.

NB – How does that make you feel?

Bibi – It is alright, I not mind, it is my duty, so it is ok.

Both the quotes above create an image of women experiencing a lack of power or sense of empowerment within their home and who accept their inequality and subservient positions. These quotes represent similar stories and views of over half the women in the study (12/19) at the point of their first interview. Indeed, others, from across a mixture of backgrounds, cite their home as a place where they have felt invisible, depressed, unsafe and disrespected. It would appear that the women had given their power to others within the home. While this creates a deferential position for them, arguably the decision to accept the situation indicates a choice, albeit a limited one or one where the options to staying seemed worse. Therefore, I suggest it was a lack of self-confidence which stopped them asserting themselves and raising their expectation for personal respect, which in turn facilitated the opportunity for imbalance of equitability within the home. Although the women's acceptance might be seen as a choice, their description of entwined lack of skills, self-belief and knowledge of viable alternatives reduced the women to a level of degradation and acceptance.

In different ways to the private sphere, the public sphere offers its own hostilities which also re-enforces the women's low self-esteem and expectation, by excluding them in a variety of ways. Janice said she felt observed by others, 'on the sly' suggesting perhaps she believed others had more power than herself when they observed her without permission within the public sphere. She attributed the school's decision to offer her employment as the result of being considered to be good in the role which was she volunteering for. Yet, she felt surprised, flattered and grateful, suggesting she may also have felt a sense of being undeserving and unworthy:

NB – How did that make you feel?

Janice – Well pleased. I never thought anyone would just offer me something like that. And to be truthful with you, I probably wouldn't have got it if I had to apply for it because of my writing. I would have looked not very good but because of my experience and working so often in the nursery to cover absence they knew what I was like. They knew I could do a good job and that's why they offered me the place. I was well pleased. I was really flattered, it was like they had been looking at me on the sly and could see I was good. I always try my best and it was like they could see that in me. I was, I really was, I was flattered.

Later in her second interview Janice described herself as feeling anonymous when in the public sphere, that is, she felt easily overlooked and lacked a sense of belonging. Other women echoed this sentiment as a lack of a welcoming space within the public domain and expressed it through a belief that they had to earn their position in the public sphere. Indeed, as shown earlier, women like Susan demonstrate Tajfel and Turner's (1979) theory of social identity well. Due to increased skills, experience and group expectation she had become more comfortable at work related meetings such as the YES panel, yet, she still struggled with other aspects of the public sphere. Below she expresses how she viewed herself as not fitting in. When asked about new social experiences and the possibility of interacting with others from more middle-class backgrounds and engaging in more middle-class activities, some of the women described worries of feeling inferior or inadequate:

NB – So they would be really exciting experiences?

Susan – Oh I don't know. I don't think I'm ready. I maybe like sort of gone a long way but I don't think I've gone that far. No, no, no, I don't know.

NB – What would make you think it wasn't quite right for you?

Susan– I don't think I'd feel comfortable.

NB – Ok, Because?

Susan – Erm, it's something I don't think I'd like to do. You know, you get all these…. You know the people and the things. You know because I've never done it. And yes, I probably think they are probably snobby and I don't belong in the sort of circle. I think that's why I wouldn't want to go, does that make sense?

Even for the few women who managed to secure a place of employment, that is work within the public realm, some continued to experience exclusion through a lack of voice. Mina is from Pakistan and shortly after coming to the UK with her husband and three daughters, her husband died. Left to fend for the family she found factory work sorting recycled clothing. In response to my question on whether accessing FSES services had affected her outlook in any way she went on to describe how her confidence was sufficiently raised that she was able to challenge her manager over a health and safety issue, yet, believed her voice was not heard:

Mina - …………I don't want to injure myself or others, if a piece of hanger come out, piece of wood, you know? Even for me, if I walk this way, could be I scratch myself, need stitches, you know.

NB – Yes, I understand, you are standing up for your rights.

Mina – Yes, my rights as employee.

NB – You are challenging people when you feel they are doing things wrong, and you didn't do that before?

Mina – No, never. I just do what they tell.

NB – That's incredible.

Mina – I know, amazing. I know it is wrong and I say stop it. I don't want to do anything, if I break my leg, are you paying my insurance? Am I right or not?

NB – Yes, you are right, I just think it's really brave. It's incredible.

Mina – Well, it's not good because I just start work and then I raise my voice to supervisor, I understand I did wrong, I raised my voice to supervisor but in right way, not a wrong way. If they take me to court, I would snap. I would say, this right way, the supervisor put me in hazard. I look after my health and safety because if not careful, who will look after my children? And supervisors talk rules and regulation but it not just one way.

The last few lines of the above extract indicates Mina's sense of injustice at what appeared to be unilateral implementation of rules and regulations. Employment law and work regulations contribute to the public sphere and their dominance over

conductivity within the work place is, on one hand, presented to ensure the well-being of employees and is used therefore to curtail unauthorised activity. Although, as Mina suggests here, the same rules are manipulated to the benefit of senior management and risk her own well-being. Her description of events indicates she feels that despite safeguarding herself and the company, the rules wield greater power than her needs and concerns, to the extent she even suggests there may be legal action.

Mina's focus on the health and safety issue is interesting to note too. She begins by raising concern that the situation would require her to seek medical treatment, then moves to talk about the insurance for the company and ultimately she talks about who will look after her daughters. The order of her conversation, beginning with health, may reflect what she imagines the public expectations of her to be as an employee and that she believes safety is a priority. It is interesting that she quickly links her thoughts of her safety and well-being to the protection of her children, as though her children are the reason she must maintain good health.

Mina's account of her conflict within the workplace highlights the tension of balancing the domestic caring role of mother with the rules and regulations within the public space in order to gain employment and a foothold within the public sphere. Many of the women (13/19) acknowledged during their interviews that access to the public space of employment was through an improved skill base, or put another way, a lack of work place skills excluded them from securing employment and acceptance within the public sphere. Mina identified that her barrier, like many others accessing the FSES services, was a lack of basic skills:

Mina – Yes, my writing is not good, not good enough (to gain employment).

Others though recognised they needed more formal qualifications,

NB – And can you remind me of the reason you wanted to do your course?

Tracy – I wanted a job. I tried so hard and for so long to get a job. I was so wanting to get out to the working world and I thought I'm going to need a qualification. I left school with nothing. I've been a stay at home mum for 4 years, I've got no experience or qualifications, what can I go into? With all this job searching it struck me – childcare! I thought, I can do that.

Here Tracy has been rejected several times from the 'working world', highlighting to her, that to gain a foothold within the public sphere she needed qualifications. Indeed the ONS: Qualification and Labour Market report (2014) recorded data from the 2011 census indicating the employment rate for those aged 25-64 years, with no qualification was 48.5%, whilst those with a maximum of one qualification (level 1) was almost double at 80.7%. Of equal concern for Tracy, and other women, in the same ONS report, was the difference between male and female employment rates (males 80.8% and females 70.4%) with the maximum difference belonging to those without qualifications. Given many of the women service users shared these qualification profiles it provides a convincing explanation for their difficulty in accessing employment.

With the public sphere of work being so challenging for women to access (Hill Collins, 1991; Pateman, 1999), it is unsurprising so many bridge the domestic / public divide by using work which has domestic origins as a base for their employment (Hill Collins, 1991). As seen above, Tracy drew on her private sphere experience of parenting to help her move into childcare and many others similarly described work within the service and care industries. In this way it has been argued (ibid) that there is a blurring of the dual sphere dichotomy, with feminists such as Bargetz (2009) and Prokhovnik (1999) arguing that there is in fact, no true divide between the spaces. In contrast to the idea of the spheres blending into one, I argue that there is a third possibility of a

hybrid space within the public space. I suggest there are many areas within the public sphere, as already demonstrated, where women are alienated and excluded, yet, there are spaces where they can use their experience and confidence gained from the private sphere as a stepping stone to employment. The hybrid space also offers a safe space for the women to gain self-confidence and skills which shifts their equitability in relationships within the home (Calabrese Barton and Tan, 2009). I will return to this suggestion for further discussion later in the chapter.

Theoretical beliefs aside, many of the women interviewed described a desire to secure paid employment and to do so drew on experience and skills from their home lives. As Tracy indicates, the familiarity of the work brought a sense of self-confidence with its possibilities of paid work and improved social status. This sentiment was shared by others too and raised the women's overall confidence within public spaces, yet, despite the positive feelings, the women also described a work situation which was much less favourable than most men experience. The ONS reported in 2014 (using 2011 census data), that 41% of women aged between 16-64yrs worked part-time as opposed to 11% of the male work-force of the same age, and that a much higher proportion of women were in low paid jobs, with women making up 82% of the caring and leisure services and 77% of administration and secretarial posts, all of which are generally recognised to be poorly paid. This contrast between what some of the women experienced in public sphere work and their raised self-esteem seems perplexing, yet, the women also reported being better valued by family members in the private sphere of their home as a result of securing paid employment.

During the first interview around two thirds of the women (13/19) reported that their family relations had improved subsequent to accessing the support services and by the second interview this had increased to over three quarters of the women (10/13).

Many specifically indicated that gaining paid employment, seemingly regardless of the type of work, had been a key factor in gaining respect from their family, especially from their spouse / partner. Below Tanesha gives a good example of the impact of gaining employment in sales, subsequent to imprisonment, on both her self-esteem and relatedly, her relationship with her husband and children:

NB – And what about the other way around, do you think any of your work experiences influenced or impacted on your home life?

Tanesha – Well, having the responsibility of getting there on time and that was good for me and the kids because it did help make like a routine. Not a very good one because we still never had time for breakfast and that, but just by needing to be somewhere by a certain time was helpful. It got us out of bed, at least.

NB – Yes, I can see that would help bring structure, and what about the work itself, was there anything from that experience that made any impact on the home?

Tanesha – Well, the money, obviously but do you mean like, working as a team and doing all the stuff the professional way?

NB – Yes.

Tanesha – Very much so, very much so. Definitely gave me confidence and showed me I can do a responsible job and it helped me when I was telling off the kids, like I'd say to them about doing good and that so they can get good jobs. They know I was in prison and about the drugs and all that but now they can see I'm alright. And I like the comradery of working with the others, like it was a good laugh. Not when you had to be all professional to the customer but like in the stockroom and that there was banter and it was good laugh.

NB – It sounds very positive, really good for you in lots of ways. Did you going out to work change anything about your relationship with your husband?

Tanesha – Well, he was happier I was working and getting out of bed like he has to (laughs), we was more like team, doing the work together. And I think he liked the routine, for what there was of it. He is better at that than I am, he is much more for discipline, do you know what I mean. He says it and the kids do it.

NB – And did that change how you were together or not really?

Tanesha – Not really, he was still him and me, me but I was more confident to say to him what I wanted him to do.

Tanesha, like many other women that were interviewed, recognises an increase in her self-confidence and self-esteem through gaining paid employment. She attributed this

to being given a responsible job which in turn created a need for and adjustment of responsibility for the family routines. In turn, the acceptance of responsibility and related increased self-esteem enabled Tanesha to grow in confidence and self-esteem, sufficient to be comfortable to ask her spouse for the help she needed. In other words she was sufficiently empowered to raise her expectations of her spouse in relation to assisting her and meeting her needs. For other women, they interpreted similar change within their household as gaining greater investment and regard from their partners. Below are two different examples of how the relational changes were manifested for interviewees. Veena associated her increased relationship equity with a balance of trust, while Roshan attributed her relational change and greater parity to the fact her work profile more closely mirrored her husband's. Here Veena describes the bond with her husband:

NB –So your husband is happy for you to work, has this changed anything in your relationship? For example, the way you talk to each other, or things you do with the children?

Veena – Now we are more same, he is trusting me. He lives Denmark and I am here because he trust me be a good wife and mother, no problem. When he is in UK, I say to him take the children to school and he do that, he like do that. I can drive but I tell him no, your children, you drive, be proud. He is proud, he very happy to be daddy and the children they are pleased for this. Most of the time he is in Denmark but when he comes home he is happy and happy I can have job. He is proud of me and the kids. He tells his friends, get your wife to go to classes, talk to my wife she can say how you can do it, no problem.

Roshan goes on to outline the new commonalities she shares with her husband:

NB – And in your house, who is boss? Is your husband in charge or are you in charge? Or are you both in charge?

Roshan– My husband is more in charge and me little bit in charge.

NB – OK, and two years ago your husband was a very more in charge than you, two years ago?

Roshan– Yes, before husband more in charge, now me more in charge, more equal, yeah, you understand?

NB – Ok, that's interesting, how do you know you are more equal, what differences can you see that tells you, you are more equal?

Roshan – More equal, my husband work, I also work and children are so happy. More improve me, more and more improving.

NB – What else have you been doing to improve?

Roshan – Other things, I am not driving now, that later. Now I am study theory (driving theory).

NB – Ok, wow, so you studying the theory and you are starting to learn to drive.

Roshan – Yes, yes. Learning and doing courses, at home it is very hard for me, so busy at home but keep studying. But things change, before I do everything but now my children cooking, help me they study, I can study we are sharing work, house work, like that. Now we are all very happy, before, two years, three years before, I am very sad, no working, no learning, no friends. Now I have developed, developed, developed.

The three examples above, exemplify women who have elevated their self-esteem sufficiently, through a range of different experiences, to create a different set of expectations to their partner. In line with Tajfel and Turner's (1979) theory of social identity, for Roshan, and many others in the study, as discussed in Section 8.2, the shift in personal beliefs influenced their status and sense of empowerment, not only within their family but for friends and other community members also. Indeed, the change in their self-belief and esteem, whether skill or employment based, appears to be a positive cyclical catalyst to the women's changed attitude and approach to striving for greater parity with their partners and spouses. That is, similar to feeling empowered, a raised self-esteem positively affected the women's outlook which in turn gained respect from others including those located within the public space, which led to a further enhanced self-confidence in interacting within the public sphere.

Tanesha focused on the effects of her employment which she saw as an influence on the family's timekeeping and domestic engagement with routine and structure, something she associated with the public sphere of work. In contrast then to the women transferring their domestic skills from the home and private sphere into their

experience of the workplace, as described earlier; here we see the structures and routines of the public space absorbed into the private sphere. This two way blending of spaces seemingly coincides with the views of Weintruab (1997), Cole (2000) and Hill Collins (1990) who suggest that either there is no public / private space divide or it is permeable and versatile. Indeed, it may be argued that differentiated space does not exist and that the public sphere also dominates the structures within the private sphere.

The feminist concept of intersectionality introduced in Chapter 4 is viewed as a tool to theorise identity and oppression in terms of inter-racialism and class and power (Crenshaw, 1991). In addition, it is also useful in providing both the recognition and an understanding of the restrictions faced by the women interviewed for this research, and the constraints for the majority whom are ethnic minorities with low levels of skills and social and cultural capital. For many of the women, their distinct cultural environment restricts their position within the public sphere, exposes them to criticism from both men and other women and perpetuates the potential male dominance of the public domain.

It has been established that the FSES services were located within the public space of the school community, yet, at the same time, they were in an environment akin to the concept of the private sphere, that is, a familiar, non-threatening domain for women users. I argue that the exclusivity and the social structures of oppression were replaced by inclusivity and support, within a context of the professional public sphere of school. The FSES provision therefore offered a non-binary, hybrid of public and private space located within a wider public sphere. The FSES space blended the safety and reassurance of the sense of private and familiar with the structure and

opportunity of the public arena, where the women could use their confidence and knowledge from the private sphere to begin their steps into the public sphere. This enabled the women to engage with learning, qualifications and access to employment whilst maintaining focus on their needs for support and increased confidence within a public setting.

Neta presents as a mix of attributes including some which can be socially disadvantageous, for example, she is of minority ethnicity and has limited language skills and social and cultural capital; yet, she goes on to outline the changes in her and her family's lifestyle since accessing the FSES services which, she ascribes to regular support when participating in the services:

NB – Has that (attending FSES services) had any effect on your life? Has it made changes? Are you the same person you were two years ago?

Neta – No, no. I am very changed. I am confident, I can work, earn money, go to places. I am very different. Before I much more at home. I come from Germany and only little bit German speaking and children are very little so I not working. Working with others from my community, it help give me confidence. Planning activities, learning nutrition, learning development. I know what is important and how to do everything, so I have changed. Before at home children too much eating crisps, sugar, now I say no drink this, not that. I am giving healthy food. Before my children asking me for something, now they are asking their Dad.

NB – So it's had a change on your relationship with your children?

Neta – Yes. Before I don't know but now I know, health, development, psychology, everything. Now they little bit scared of me because I say, not like this, I know. It should be like that. My son he says to me Mum, you can do these things, you know everything?

NB – Are they pleased, do you think they are pleased?

Neta – Yes, very pleased. Impressed. My son say to me, you are going to Ms B. Do you know her? She is assistant head-teacher. You are going to talk to her, have interview. I said yes. He is very shocked. He said, you can just talk to her? I tell him, she is my line manager, we are always talking, every day when I am in crèche, always.

NB – Did he think you would be too shy?

Neta – Yes. Before I am like that, but now no. You are friendly, it's OK. Now I can talk everyone.

Neta recognises her level of confidence has grown as a result of her FSES experience to the extent she believes she can talk to 'everyone'. She identifies her development of language and knowledge of child nutrition to come from support within the FSES and recognises that she takes her knowledge home to create a new relationship with family members. Equally she takes her learning from the hybrid space into the public sphere as she engages with paid employment, which in turn feeds into her confidence within her private space of home which in turn helps to allow her identity to evolve and change.

In terms of altered personal beliefs as an outcome of FSES services, some of the women described their changes as slow. The first set of interviews showed the majority (15/19) regarded their self-beliefs and attitude as changed, whereas three years later all of the same women recognised a change in their self-belief. Tanesha articulates her experience of this process:

NB – Hmm, I'm sure you are right. So you have had a few changes over the last couple of years, do you think how you see the world is different in any way or not really? Has your view on life changed at all or not really?

Tanesha – That's a hard question. I mean it probably has but it's so slow in the change you don't realise it, does that make sense? Well I am happy to go out to work now but wasn't before, so that's a change.

NB – True, and does that mean you see yourself differently, or does it mean that you see the world differently, or your husband differently?

Tanesha – Well, I can see for him, he sees me different when I work to when I don't which I didn't know about him before. So maybe I can see him differently. And perhaps I see the world of work different to what I did. I was scared of it before, scared to try and get a job because I thought no-one is going take on an ex-con but they did and I was popular with the boss and my work mates so it was good. Yeah, I didn't think I'd get the chance but I did so now I do know there's positives and I can do it and I ain't who I used to be. That's what I told them at the interview, that was the old me, that ain't been me for a long time.

Again the enmeshed strands of confidence, belief, identity, power and habitus are highlighted here by Tanesha. Not only does she realise her attitude to work has changed, she sees others react to her changed approach, which in turn feeds her confidence to embrace her new beliefs about herself which enables her identity to significantly change from the 'old me' (mentioned above). Yet she sees this as a slow process where for her the change is almost imperceptible until she recognises it through her husband's awareness. The speed and subtlety of the changes she describes can arguably be said to alter her habitus and possibly transgress elements of intersectionality such as her perception of class and social group membership.

This combination of increased confidence and self-esteem in association with an expanded skill base generated from the safe and supportive environment of the hybrid space provided the FSES, appears to have created a harmonious mix of elements conducive to the women's shift in identity. That is, the aspects of disadvantage and the polarisation of space seem proportionately lessened with the women's increased use of the FSES. Below Roshan summarises the outcomes of the combination of factors as globally positive:

NB – Ok, that's good. So two years ago, when I spoke to you three years ago you were in one place, now, are you in the same place or moved? Do you look the same as you did three years ago?

Roshan – Oh, no, no.

NB – How are you different?

Roshan – Before I have no English, can't speak but now I have English, I am confident, I can speak English. I am very happy now, now everything is better.

NB – What do you mean everything?

Roshan – My mind is different now, my mind is here for a year and is happy, money is no problem and my children better for money, we do things, days out, like that or clothes or books, use money. I am enjoying for being here, crèche work, children have fun and adults enjoy making, talking or anything. With parents make relationship, good morning, how are you, how is baby, like this, it is good. Good for us and good for them.

The interpretation and the existence of female space and the women within it has been shown here to be complex and contentious (Erikson, 1964; Bourdieu, 1971: Gavison, 1992; Weintraub, 1997; Pateman, 1999; Bargetz, 2009). With the focus on individuals and their experiences, the quotations from the interviews show each woman's opinions on space vary, depending on their experiences, circumstances, personal identity and expectations.

Space, on one hand, is demonstrated as a dichotomy of public and private with an overarching dominance from the male sphere, which is seen here to generate isolation, invisibility and abuse in various forms. Acceptance of women into the male space is shown to be accessible via qualifications and structures connected to disadvantage. Yet acceptance and equality can only be achieved if women believe they have equal rights to share in both spheres equally. The significant number of the women interviewees from an Asian and African culture raised the possible issue of their intersectionality obstructing the expectation of equality. The continuance of deep rooted cultural societies, some of which include female compliance through expectation, is shown in some of the earlier quotes to perpetuate the gender divide which the women evidence through accepting a lack of voice, lack of inclusion and feeling unworthy of certain roles.

In equal measure, with the majority of poorly paid employees and low status workers being women engaged in domestic based activities, it appears that some women accept the male sphere dominance. Simultaneously they accept and absorb the rules and structures from the public domain into their own domestic sphere.

Yet it has also been shown that when women are welcomed into a FSES hybrid space without the constraints of intersectionality, (that is, their gender, social class and / or

ethnicity) to gain and expand their skills and relatedly, the possibility of employment, their confidence and self-esteem increases. In turn, family members also responded to the women's shift in identity creating a positive feedback cycle of respect which later extended to respect from other members of their communities.

The women at the FSES demonstrated their openness to learning through a process of interaction with others. The connections began through friendship, bonding, shared motivation and later resulted in them constructing an open community for themselves and other community members which was separate from but nestled within the wider social community. This micro community, like others, shared a general set of expectations which have been identified as,

> *'Understanding what matters, what the enterprise of the community is, and how it gives rise to a perspective on the world*

> *Being able (and allowed) to engage productively with others in the community*

> *Using appropriately, the repertoire of resources that the community has accumulated through its history of learning'.* (Wenger, 2009, p.2)

In line with this view of communities, the women accessing FSES services constructed their own sense of identity through the relationships both within the immediate setting and in terms of the wider social context (Fearon, 1999). The emergence of a 'community of practice' demands negotiation of identity and cultural meaning from and for the individuals (Wenger, 2009). Each FSES user conceptually then, went through a process of making meaning for themselves, within both the immediate and external context of the social world. Through analysis and reflection, each woman also acknowledged their competencies and experience, from which, they were able to distil

a clearer sense of identity and purpose for themselves (Erikson, 1979; Fearon, 1999; Noonam, 2003). Working from a space of personal clarity, the women were able then to identify their commonalities which allowed them to build a shared sense of purpose and collectively develop a new learning and social community (Wenger, 2009).

The contributions from the women service users combined to create a skill and locality base from which they could generate a locus of power. By having better clarity of who they were and what their shared outcomes were, they could collectively identify their needs and areas of required support (Erikson, 1979; Fearon, 1999; Noonam, 2003). In turn this lead to the women's empowerment through the development of a new identity generated via their newly formed community.

Summary

This chapter set out to critically investigate the contents of the two sets of interviews with women FSES service users. Specifically it sought to uncover their motivations, expectations and perceived outcomes from the support, and to identify any changes in their attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and identities through changes in their social and cultural capital.

Ahead of identifying the motivation for the women's engagement with FSES services, it was noted that the majority of the women came to the services as a result of a referral from a professional, such as a teacher, social or health worker. Others came as a result of encouragement from friends already using the services, and only a minority came of their own volition. Once connected with the FSES services there were certain factors which had a strong influence on their continued use of them. These were:

- easy access to provision within an area where they are known

- warm reception, encouragement, peer support and friendliness with help at the point of entry and throughout the women's engagement

- sense of belonging and legitimacy to access services

- belief they are making progress towards narrowing their self-acknowledged skill gap

- Feeling physically and emotionally safe and operating inside a safe environment.

Once engaged, there was clear indication that the main motivation for the women was personal growth and development, through increased skills/ knowledge, social confidence and integration. This reflected the women's initial low level of social and cultural capital associated with a lack of self-esteem.

The self-acceptance of the belief that the women could achieve their goals, created new possibilities and new identities; for some they were self-acknowledged and for others they were seen by teachers, friends and partners and then relayed to the women.

The shift in identity generated confidence to move to and create new social groups within the FSES services and their communities, in another way this can be seen as adjustment to their social standing and use of social space and social class through expanded social capital. It also increased the women's sense of power and empowerment leading the women to believe they could be helpful to other women occupying roles they believe they had experience of. Equally, for many, their status within the home changed as they engaged with learning new skills. Their family members began to view them differently and more respectfully, thereby creating a positive feedback cycle resulting in a sense of empowerment for the women and improved relationships with their children and partners.

Surprisingly, the women, despite most of them being mothers of children of primary and secondary school age, were not primarily motivated by desire to assist with their children's home or school work. Yet, they found themselves inspiring and gaining respect within the family as they shared their role as learner with their children and their new skills and confidence with the family. They became influential within the family, and over time were also empowered to help and guide friends and neighbours. This in turn further secured changes to their personal identity and affected the women's aspirations.

The changes in the women's identity was also considered to benefit their cultural capital, roles within the family and the FSES community. Specifically it raised their civic engagement and in turn their social capital, with networks and knowledge identified as increased through connections with schools, church, leisure activities and employment. Some of the women recognised that their personal changes brought opportunities for them to move into different social groups. In other words, the change in identity and self-esteem brought the power of choice, the power to take action both within the home and within social situations.

Many women, by the second interview, were also keen for their outcomes to manifest as paid employment, enabling them to assist with the family budget, thereby increasing economic capital and provide extra activities for children. Although securing a job was a key reason for engagement, it did not exceed personal development as the main motivation.

The women considered their acceptance into the workplace to be via academic qualification, developing more effective ways of delivering verbal and written communication and social connection. Their understanding of these requirements

emanated from their experience of what they perceived as rejection into the public sphere based on reasons of intersectionality (gender, race, culture) and the dichotomy of public and private space, where they describe gender bias. Indeed, many of the women interviewed described their entry into the perceived male dominated public sphere through service-based jobs. Whilst working within the male dominated sphere they absorbed the rules and expectations of the public world and brought them into the private domain of women and home. These manifested as routines to comply with social expectation, including adjustment of time scales and expectation of activities such as completion of homework. For the women, the merging of the two spaces through paid employment impacted on them positively in the domestic domain. By helping with financial provision, they gained elevated family status, greater respect both inside and outside the family and raised self-esteem.

Once referred and engaged with the FSES, many of the women acknowledged outcomes which are quite different to their original motivations. That is, empowerment, social and cultural capital and changed identity and a sense of elevated status were seen as resultant from their experience of their access to and use of the FSES hybrid of private / public space. It is this use of space, shift in personal identity and the relationships with family members that I will discuss in the following chapter as I return to my research questions to establish what I believe to be the legacy of the FSES services from the female users' point of view.

Chapter 9: Discussion

Introduction

This concluding chapter begins with a review of the aim of this research (9.1), the overall purpose of the FSES initiative and a response to the original research questions. It continues in 9.2, to summarise and discuss the theoretical background of its content, identifying the specific theories as social and cultural capital, identity, power and empowerment and public and private space. An overview of the methodology and methods employed to gather data is addressed and associated limitations of the study are also included. In 9.3 a precis of the findings is provided as summary of the work which forms the foundation for the discussion that follows. 9.4 reflects on the key aspects of this study, as listed above, and considers how they impacted on the adults accessing the FSES support and their relationship to the overall purpose of the initiative. Finally, in 9.5, I reflect on the findings of this work and raise related questions and suggested areas for further future research.

9.1 The research aim, the FSES initiative and its related social concern

The aim of this research was to analyse the short and longer term outcomes of the FSES initiative as presented by the women who accessed the support provided in the context of a single school site situated in South London. Specifically, the work looked at the impact on familial and social relationships with regard to personal development and wider community engagement.

The FSES initiative was a policy construct designed for social change, delivered through a politically driven approach to tackling identified links between social disadvantage and poor educational attainment (Mortimore & Whitty, 2000; Dyson *et al.,* 2002; Levacic & Woods, 2002). The FSES / ES initiatives grew out of wider

government concern in 1997, when the then Labour government acknowledged that poverty and associated social issues appeared to have become localised and were creating pockets of highly disadvantaged areas (Howarth *et al.*, 1998). These issues were not solely found in Britain. At the same time, administrations in the United States, Australia, and Scotland were all delivering similar community based programmes in the early 1990's (Dryfoos, 1998; Cummings *et al.,* 2005; Smith, 2014). It seemed that within Western Europe there were shared anxieties concerning poverty, disadvantage and disengagement. The UK government's approach to tackling this was to create a similar model to that used in the United States, which used health and social care and educational support, offered as a 'one stop shop' in schools in the most challenging areas. Their purpose was to set up pupil and parent school based services aimed at positively impacting on recognised pockets of social deprivation and low educational attainment and to contribute to the renewal of disadvantaged areas and their communities (Dyson *et al.*, 2002; Cummings *et al.*, 2004).

Specifically, the expected outcome from the FSES was a reduction in the existing variance in pupil-based academic achievement at GSCE level. This outcome was a key measure of success (greater number of 5 GCSE's at A*-C grade, including maths and English) when comparing pupils generally, and specifically in this case for those from areas of disadvantage to those from more affluent backgrounds (Cummings *et al.,* 2007; DCSF, 2009a). This ostensibly was the driver for the initiative, although this was not a new concern. Historically UK schooling has oscillated between focus on the academic curriculum and a more holistic community based education which has been documented from as early as 1924 (Morris, 1924). Given school-based education is politically shaped, it begs the question of government motivation. Were the FSES / ES projects just another visitation to a long-standing curricular debate or were they

addressing a fresh problem? If, indeed this was a new problem it lacked clarity as the history of the FSES / ES development is somewhat confused. Initially concern was raised in 1997 by government regarding a growing number of groups and whole communities which lacked opportunities and expectations due to social fragmentation and economic poverty (Crowther and Shaw, 2011). By 2003 FSES were introduced with a focus on raising academic achievement and social capital (Cummings *et al.*, 2004) yet by 2006, the initiative morphed into ES with the aim of providing joint services to address a national safe-guarding issue. Purpose aside, with each change in the government's focus, the key stakeholders continued to be pupils, adults from the local community / parents, school staff and LAs and for each, the changes impacted differently. Furthermore, each geographical location displayed variance of need, dependent on locality issues which in addition to the policy changes created difficulties in evaluating the impact of the provision. The transient nature of the provision and the associated challenge of evaluation draws doubt to the rationale, commitment and belief the government had in their own policies. That is, given the long standing concern for such pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and the number of related initiatives that failed to improve outcomes long term, neither the evaluation structure nor the duration of input was sufficient to properly assess the FSES impact.

A brief reflection on the purposes of the policy changes indicates that despite its aim to safe-guard children via the ECM and the ES initiatives, statistics from the NSPPC indicate otherwise. 2013/14 data shows 67 children died at the hands of their parents / carers, an increase of 9 on the previous year, and between 2009 – 2014, there was a 228% increase in the number of NSPPC reported cases of neglect, 176% increase in physical abuse and 150% rise in emotional abuse in the UK (Jutte *et al.,* 2015).

Equally, narrowing the attainment gap for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds failed to make significant and / or attributable change in qualification results (Cummings *et al.*, 2011). Additionally, In relation to the initial concern of social breakdown and targeted community changes, of those noted, none appeared to be sustainable (ibid). Yet, although government focus and policy kept changing, the central issue of social fragmentation and the key stakeholders remained consistent. It is this core concern in relation to the FSES initiative and a desire to investigate its longer term social impact involving the adult service users which is the focus on this study and which guided the formulation of the research questions.

The questions set out to explore the social outcomes of the provision for the adults rather than review the FSES outcomes on educational achievements or ES impact on safe guarding for the pupils. The specific purpose of this piece of work was to:

- *Better understand the wider impact of FSES on social outcomes via adults accessing services*

- *Add to the already existing body of knowledge on education initiatives' in relation to development of local communities*

- *Gain further insight into working with disadvantaged communities*

- *Understand the longer term impact of FSES on identity and relationships*

- *Provide a wider explanation of women's engagement with community services*

- *Create new discussions on the possibility that FSES create a hybrid space in relation to the feminist concept of private space and public spheres*

9.2 Summary of the theoretical background and methodology.

The questions and purpose of this research are underpinned by a framework constructed from several strands of social theory located within the spheres of social and cultural capital from Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam. The interpretations of findings are reviewed within the context of Bourdieu's and Coleman's philosophical views. Relatedly, the understanding of the social situation and concern that generated the FSES initiative, among other government actions, is recognised through Putnam's concern with social fragmentation. I draw on Bourdieu's theories of to explore power as represented within both theoretical domains of social and cultural capital along with Tajfel's related concept of social identity. I contend that the women's interaction with FSES facilitates identity change within themselves which has ramifications within their families, affecting their close relationships both inside and external to the family. The significance of these changes, I argue, impacts on the women's habitus and their potential for developing stronger communities through local neighbourhood support and friendships. In acknowledgement of the high proportion of women accessing the services I also employ Crenshaw's (1989) theory of intersectionality to understand how the women perceive themselves within the wider feminist concept of public and private space (Arendt, 1958; Crenshaw, 1991; Bargetz, 2009) to review the role of FSES provision across both domains. I assert that the social position of many of the women, as a result of their intersectionality, reduces their belief and opportunities to access and maintain tenure within the public sphere. I argue their experience of support from the FSES allows them to share their knowledge and female experience of the private space, which when coupled with nurture and new skills, creates a hybrid of the public and private spheres. In turn the experience which was generated via the hybrid space promotes a shift in their close relationships which arguably impacts on community.

The methodology used to address the research questions employed a constructivist approach, working from a base of accepted understanding that the empirical data gathered was generated by the cohort's similar / shared understanding of the questions and the social world around them. The longitudinal aspect of the study offered the women an opportunity to have time for reflection, absorption and assimilation of their learning and social experiences. Following the support and social inputs from the FSES, they could make deeper sense from the outcomes they identified. The research is presented as a single case study using a mixed methods model based on the Creswell & Plano Clark's explanatory sequential design, (2011) where the social profile of the service users provided a clear context in which to analyse the empirical data collected through the method of semi structured interviews.

9.3 Analysis and summary of the main findings

Main findings

The cohort of women were from recognised areas of disadvantage and were acknowledged as hard to reach.

The women's engagement was recognised to be positively influenced by the PSAs.

Being married created a greater likelihood that the women would achieve higher level qualifications.

The women's motivation to attend was initially for personal development, only as their skills and self-confidence increased did they attempt to support their children's learning.

The women described and reported a change in identity which manifested positive changes to their self-confidence, skill base and their relationships with their spouses / partners and their children.

The women's social and cultural capital was significantly increased as was their civic commitment.

The FSES presented as hybrid space offering opportunity to the women users to transgress from the private into the public sphere

Data was analysed in a sequential manner beginning with the quantitative survey. This involved three stages of analysis; first a profile of the cohort was drawn through the collation of frequencies which were then used for the second stage which focused on, and explored, bivariate relationships between pairs of items (variables) from the survey. The third stage proceeded to identify the key variables to enter into a logistic regression analysis to explore the more significant multiway relationships.

The analysis of the qualitative data, generated through interviews, was also conducted through a series of stages, using thematic analysis. The research questions were categorised into a priori themes and the responses from the women were grouped accordingly. Inductive coding produced a range of a posteriori categories that had arisen through the interview conversations. All the categories with both a priori and a posteriori coding were then collated into coding families and sub-categories, refined and then plotted on a matrix of coding family / categories and responses from individual interviewees.

The findings from the quantitative analysis establish that the sample of FSES users were largely disadvantaged and from minority ethnic groups found in the vicinity of the school. It is the descriptive frequencies, however, which tell the main story of the nature of the sample by drawing a useful 'backdrop' in readiness for the richer qualitative analysis which goes on to explore the characteristics and motivation of selected users. In addition to the cohort's profile, the quantitative analysis also indicates that 'being married' or 'living with other family members' is a key to understanding the nature and level of course take up.

The qualitative analysis goes on then to embellish with detail the women's motivation to attend the services. The majority of the women were referred into the provision by

professionals such as teachers, health visitors and so forth, or were introduced through friends already using the support. In many cases the women used the help of the PSA's to maintain their attendance, often with greater reliance at the start of their connection with the FSES, tailing off as they began to feel more secure. Additionally, they appeared to seek a sense of security from local surroundings and staff who were familiar to them, which in turn gave them a feeling of belonging, legitimacy and entitlement to the services offered.

The principal reason the women gave for using FSES services was personal development, which they gained through increased basic skills and higher qualifications. Contrary to other studies within similar realms, such as family literacy (Clark, 2007; Swain *et al*., 2009; Swain *et al*., 2015), very few women said they attended to assist with their child's homework, but once engaged most of them not only described helping their children more with their studies but also taking a much stronger parenting role. Outcomes also revealed that women in the study whom engaged with courses at higher levels were more likely to be married / living with family members and more likely to volunteer to work within the field of childcare.

The women's development was synonymous with changes to their roles, confidence, self-esteem, relationships and identity. The changes saw the women become empowered, broaden their civic engagement, and experience a sense of elevated social status and go on to widen their social and cultural capital. Equally they gained respect and experienced elevated status within their families which for many encouraged them to help others and seek paid employment.

Although the women described their personal outcomes from the FSES in positive terms, both as developments at home and those within the public space, they also gave examples of feeling excluded from aspects of the public sphere, for example from

certain social groups, social settings and places of employment. Taken as a group, the experiences of feeling socially excluded suggests a social class for whom there is no comfortable space for engagement within the public sphere. Yet, they acknowledged that their experience of the FSES, itself an organised public service located within a public environment, was a place where they had a stronger voice and better access to the wider public domain. It is this mix of access and use of public and private space and experiences that promotes the concept of the hybrid nature of the FSES. That is, the public sphere of the FSES operated as a space to promote the women's' private space, personal development, sense of empowerment and improve their social and cultural capital.

The most appropriate methodology and analysis approach was chosen to maximise the specifics of this work, however, as with every research project, there are limitations which need to be acknowledged and minimised as much as possible. I turn now to outline the limitations met by this project.

9.4 Limitations of the research and possible generalisations.

The restricted resources behind this research dictated that this would be a small scale project which created limitations regarding access to a large quantity of data which is therefore reflected in the breadth of the emergent findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the key focus for the researcher is to generate rich qualitative data which can then be supported by robust quantitative information (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The implementation of a mixed methods approach (Bryman, 2006) enabled a substantive set of data to be collected, The longitudinal dimension to this work further enhanced the information available for analysis (Cohen *et al.,* 2006) which helped ameliorate issues of sufficiency.

Equally, as a single study, there was recognition that replication for verification of findings is unlikely as the FSES initiative is no longer active. With regard to the findings being verified this is met through thoroughness of execution and thoughtful planning (Cohen *et al*, 2006) which Tooley and Darby (1998) state are missing from many stand-alone research projects. Additionally, the profile of the cohort is a critical aspect to provide understanding of who was producing the data, a detail which is easily overlooked.

With regard to the information sought from the women, the questions were focused on the women's actions and outcomes, their relationships, motivation and areas of development along with enquiry into their civic engagement at the second stage interviews. This was the result of developing a clearer theoretical framework which emerged after the first stage of interviews as it became clearer what the women wanted to talk about and what was significant for them. Although both interview stages correlated with each other the delayed theoretical clarity limited the breadth of the questions posed.

As the majority of women in the study originated from countries with a strong cultural inheritance, where for some, the female voice can often be suppressed (Agarwal, 1992; Derne, 1995), it was therefore important to capture the words of the women, their personal expression and interpretation of their experiences of the services accessed. Whilst it is acknowledged that the main qualitative sample was self-selected and opportunistic as the women volunteered to be interviewed, it can be argued that only the more confident came forward, and as already established, confidence is related to accrued social and cultural capital. This suggests that the interviews perhaps were skewed towards those with existing positive experiences when operating in the formal public sphere. This observation, plus the fact that the ethnic heritage of the

cohort was unbalanced, with the majority from India and Africa, which was therefore not representative of the UK national population, makes it harder for the findings to resonate with others' findings from the same field of study, although this was never an intended outcome.

The cultural mix of the FSES service cohort additionally created challenge because of their limited language and literacy skills which in turn influenced the number of open ended questions used in the survey. By minimising these questions the opportunity to link the questionnaire design more closely to the interview questions was reduced. In addition, given the voluntary nature of recruitment into the qualitative arm of the study, an opportunity was lost to link quantitative and qualitative data at an individual level. Ideally the mixed method structure of this study would have used data from both fields to inform and support the other (Onwuegbuzie, *et al.,* 2003). Instead, the data was used discreetly and the opportunity to gain better insight into the women's views was curtailed to what was shared through the interviews. Enquiry into their motivations to attend, their expectations and initial experiences would have been useful to include in the survey to corroborate, or challenge, what was said face to face.

With the limitations acknowledged and presented as a framework within which the findings and further discussion can be considered, I proceed now to a summary of the key findings and the wider discussion which they have presented for me.

9.5 Discussion

The assimilation of the findings brought, for me, the realisation that the FSES environment served as a hybrid arena within the feminist concept of public and private space, offering increased access to both spheres and therefore acting as a conduit.

Following the earlier acknowledgment, in Chapter 4, of the theory of the polarised positioning of the social production of space and the interpretation that spaces are gender dominated spheres (Landes, 1998; Pomeroy, 2004; Alcoff, 2005), I turn now to discuss the women's interaction with both spheres in the widest sense and the FSES space in particular.

There has been a long-standing, broad-ranging discussion on the concept of public space, what it represents and how humans interact with it (Arendt, 1958; Habermas, 1962; Lefevbre, 1991: Bourdieu, 1993). Despite differences of opinion, however, there are shared acknowledgements particularly in regard to its role as base for communication, power and political control. Indeed, the public sphere is seen as the collective space for politics, that is, as a second existence beyond one's personal life and beyond personal need. For some it is a place where, through speech and communication with others, there is capacity to act in unison for the benefit of public purpose (Arendt, 1958; Habermas, 1962; Lefevbre, 1991: Bourdieu, 1993). Also, where the joint and agreed actions of those using the public space, both own and create power (Arendt, 1958).

For Habermas, the actions of the state are created from democratic beliefs and attitudes manifested through rational, critical discourse conducted in public spaces, through groups and the likes of literary societies. The suggestion that public policy and opinion are representative or democratic are questionable if their formation and delivery rests with those members of society who have time, knowledge, language skills and the gift of self-expression, leaving the likelihood of exclusion for all but the most educated and influential (Fraser, 1990). Similarly incredible, would be to assume that the formation of public space is representative of collective free speech, which offers equality to all contributors.

Public space among other concepts, is identified as a macro-field; possible places for power to exist (Bourdieu, 1993). Each person / agent entering a new field strives for the power within it and their position is ultimately determined by other players in the field through an evaluation of their interaction with the unwritten rules, their habitus and their level of capital (Bourdieu, 1993). That is, one's level of power is created and maintained through the collective space, support and action of others.

Although often referred to as physical locations, public spaces are indeed a social product, a construct based on values and meanings held by social groups which in turn impact on theirs and others' perceptions and practices (Lefevre, 1991). They are arguably the geographical and / or theoretical location for the creation of power, generated by a consensus of communication and interaction with and within a specific social location. Power therefore not only shapes the public realm but also maintains it. That is, the public space serves as a resource for thought and action and is a means of control and domination (ibid), which is achieved through methods of communication and social networks (Arendt, 1958; Habermas, 1962; Lefevbre, 1991: Bourdieu, 1993).

There is consensus of an historic and current recognition that women do not have equal access to the social milieu of the public sphere (Habermas, 1962; Fraser, 1990; Higgins, 1999; Hyde, 2005). Women (from socially disadvantaged backgrounds) are underrepresented within the key public sector roles, such as politics and the church (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995; Women Public Sector Leaders Index 2014), and across the board in senior leadership positions in the workplace (Hyde, 2005). Within the public space this disparity between gender representations is reasoned to be the result of gender expectations and norms (Women in the City Report, 2014) and 'perceptions of capability, capacity and credibility' (Bismark *et al.*, 2015). Feminist literature refutes this explanation and provides a contrast concept to the public sphere, that is, the

private space; a concept which receives a spectrum of responses. Some feminists embrace the theory of a domestic space as the base for intimacy and nurture (Haddock Seigfried, 1996; Weintraub, 1997; Pateman, 1999), while others object to the idea and believe it to be defamatory to women (Prokhovnik, 1999). Others reject the notion completely and think the argument is illusionary and that no such division of space exists (Bargetz, 2009). Indeed, although the argument of gender divided space is strong there is also broad recognition that limited inclusion into the public sphere of politics, senior level of employment and educational achievement is also extended to those from other disadvantaged communities, such as minority ethnics (Hirsch, 2007; Equal Treatment Bench Book, 2013; Jerrim, 2104; Macmillan, 2017). Reasoning for this group's exclusion is again, seemingly grounded in social expectations and perceived lack of the individual's capability (ibid). In summary then, there is recognised exclusion of specific social groups from the most effective assemblies with social and political steer. Arguably, if there is agreement such exclusion exists for those with resources and abilities, it stands to reason the sense of exclusion described by the women using the FSES services is very real given their economic poverty and lack of social and cultural capital.

More widely, if it is the case that the home and family in the private sphere generate socially accepted gender difference (Arendt, 1958), then the products of that space arguably cannot hold the same levels of self-value in the public sphere. Equally private activity, participation and sense of social value between the sexes, when in the public space must, for many, also be unequal.

Feminists such as Hill Collins describe a combination of such personal and social filtering factors as intersectionality, (Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins, 2013), that is, '*Intersectional thinking suggests that race, class, gender, nation, sexuality, ethnicity,*

age, and other forms of social hierarchy, structure one another' (Hill Collins, 2013, p. xvi). She sees intersectionality related to domination through public sphere exclusions from certain activities, vocal contribution and lack of recognition in differing settings (ibid). Indeed, as the findings showed the women in the study shared similar profile details either due to language and / or literacy barriers, there was indication the women in the study were also vulnerable to outcomes related to Intersectionality. In turn, this made the women non-contenders for inclusion within the public space and the power therein.

The qualitative findings suggest a key factor in explaining this atypical recruitment lies with the role of the PSA. I have already provided, in Chapter 7, a descriptive account of their role in facilitating the women's connection with the services and support offered. Their significant input in both engaging and maintaining the women's involvement with the services seems to serve, at least in part, to explain the FSES's success in this regard. Similarly, Jo's (2013) qualitative / interview study of 51 Asian immigrant mothers, based in South Korea, sought to explain the mother's observed shift in habitus as they engaged in an educational, integration project. Jo concluded that transition and integration of the immigrant mothers was made possible through the facilitation of 'cultural mentors'. In his case they tended to be teachers, or at least staff involved with the institution associated with the mothers' new situation. In both Jo's study and this one, the women were referred for support by professionals whom they both knew and whom had recognised status within the immediate field. The cultural mentors acted then, as both bridges across social and cultural capital divides and gatekeepers to the support networks that assist to develop habitus, a similar role to that of the FSES PSA's.

Jo's use of the term 'habitus' is congruent with that which informs this research, that is, it is related to a range of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that reflect internalised social structures (Bourdieu, 1971, 1984, 1990, 1993; King, 2000: Jo, 2013). Jo's work (2013) focused on how the development of habitus occurs. He and others (e.g. Lareau and Calarco, 2012) believe that when adults access and operate in new fields, although their habitus becomes dislocated, they continue to function but with slow change from its old and familiar form into the new (Bourdieu, 1971; Jo, 2013). It is the connection between a changing habitus and the creation of a new field that I believe enabled relationship changes for the women, both with themselves and others.

The understanding of the term 'field' used here, works within Bourdieu's theoretical framework of fields. It refers to the FSES space as a public space / setting and the field in which women / agents and their social status were positioned (Bourdieu, 1993). Other women / agents within the FSES field collectively and socially evaluated the newly joined women and supported them to a position within the FSES field (ibid). That is, each woman accessing the FSES services identified their personal need and space, via their identity and role within the FSES. Their position and outcome was supported and shaped by others within the same field. It is this supported social and cultural re-positioning which afforded the individual a revised level of cultural and social capital.

The FSES site was an amalgamation of both public and private spheres which helped develop each woman's cultural and social capital as summarised and illustrated in Figure 3 below. Its foundation is seated in the domestic realm and utilises the women's existing skills base and areas of confidence generated within the private sphere. The hybrid field of the FSES enables personal and academic growth and opportunities for embedding and developing skills and experience which were further supported

through the practical and emotional assistance provided by the PSAs. It also offered access to the public arena, through nationally recognised accreditations, qualifications, interface with professionals, voluntary work experience and paid employment, albeit through domestic orientated skills and experience.

Figure 3. Showing the reciprocal nature of change with FSES as the conduit.
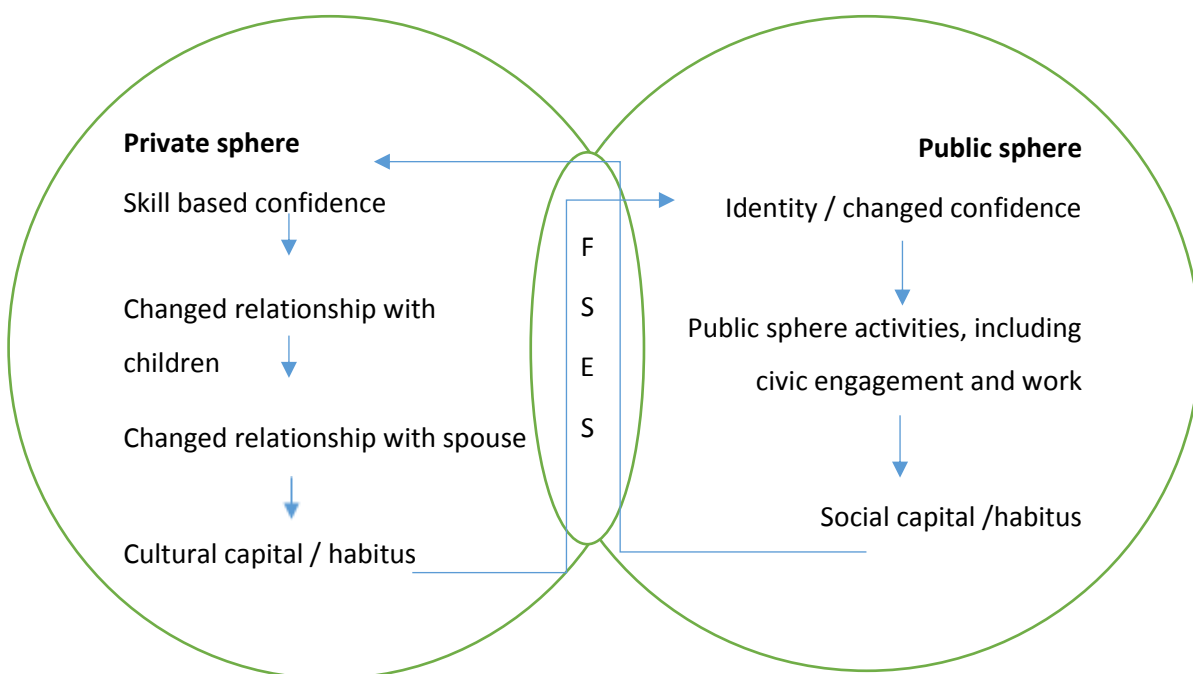
Viewing the FSES provision as a hybrid space, I suggest, begins to explain why the women in this study were offered the opportunity to develop their habitus and identity. For them, the space facilitated engagement with, commitment to and acceptance of, the public domain, something they reported had previously been challenging to do. The concept of a hybrid space is not new and indeed within the realm of human geography is well discussed in relation to private lives and interaction with public spaces via use of, for example, mobiles phones, street living and the creation of

shopping malls (Mitchell, 1995; Nissen, 2008; Gehl and Matan, 2009). It is also recognised within the study of education, representing learning in a supportive environment where the learners' existing knowledge, experience and social and cultural capital is merged with more traditional learning settings (Moje *et al.*, 2004; Calabrese Barton and Tan, 2009). In a study on youth engagement / disengagement with science, it was noted that cultural and social practices contributed to the pupils understanding of and their relationship to the subject matter (Rahm, 2008). By utilising the pupils' experiences and their identities with the topic information, new ways of knowing were identified (ibid) making the pupils collaborators and experts within the discipline (Calabrese Barton and Tan, 2009). Equally, the acceptance and validity of the pupils' contributions provided opportunity for the learners to experience authentic authority (ibid). I suggest the women experienced the FSES in much the same way, making the hybrid location a safe, reassuring and non-critical environment where they could value their existing knowledge and begin to build on it. In this way, the FSES educational support complemented the learning foundations of the majority of users in its offer of progression, ranging from domestic and basic skills to national awards (units of work towards externally moderated and nationally recognised qualifications) and from little or no exposure in the workplace to being fully integrated within it.

The process of change, for the women in this project, began within the hybrid space of the FSES and was born from shared time and learning experience with other likeminded women from similar social and cultural backgrounds. In the FSES arena the women's self-perceptions were seen to transform through a growing skill base and internal FSES support, which manifested as increased self-confidence. Their new self-beliefs then transgressed from the FSES into their private sphere and impacted significantly on their private relationships, offering the women a sense of

empowerment and a change in their personal identity. Return to the FSES space with their revised cultural capital facilitated a changed sense of social capital enabling new relationships within the public sphere, which in turn re-entered with them to the private sphere. This further embedded the women's developing social and cultural capital and relatedly, their identity. In this way the women could move fluidly across both spheres through the medium of the FSES structure and in doing so they created an alternative gender-centric access to the public sphere on their own terms (Woolf, 1938; Fraser, 1990; Mitchell, 1995).

The process of the individual's development was unique but there were commonalities which were expressed through the face-to-face interviews. Repeatedly there was description of how the women, after gaining skills and confidence in the FSES went on to share time and homework with their children which allowed them to display their growing knowledge and skills. It would appear that the additional positive re-enforcement in the private sphere, of the women's developing skills gave them confidence in themselves, while sharing knowledge manifested as respect and encouragement from their children (Horne and Haggart, 2004; Haggart and Spacey, 2006; Feinstein and Sabates, 2007). The women reported that these new activities promoted conversations between them and their children and overall better behaviour or better management of their children's behaviour.

The women also reported associated changes in their relationship with their spouses and partners, and many saw this a direct consequence to the changed relationship with their children. Many of the women described partners having greater respect for them and some husbands referred others to the women for advice and guidance. This directly impacted on the women's civic participation, including uptake of voluntary work and subsequent access to wider social capital. In my opinion, the women's new

experiences of the public arena fed back into the women's private realm and their standing within it, thereby creating a positive re-enforcement cycle for themselves and in their role of parent. In this way the women from recognised marginalised groups who accessed the FSES, created a social space in which they acted with, and felt they had, legitimacy and value.

Hence, the women transitioned from being unemployed and inexperienced to possessing a work record, albeit, for many, on a voluntary level, training, experience and a personalised reference for future job applications and confidence in their experience and abilities. Indeed, by the second set of interviews three years later, the majority of the women had moved on from voluntary work to paid employment. In other words the majority of these hard to reach women, once they had been referred and supported, transformed from being domestically centred and inward facing to making contribution to the public sphere and outward looking.

Summary

The qualitative findings show that the women's investment in the FSES was, for the majority, initially motivated to raise their own skill base rather than help their children with school work and related activities, which was an early assumption of the initiative (DCFS 2007). Interestingly, once the women could see a change in their skills and trajectory, often ahead of assessed outcome, the women described a new sense of self-belief. This translated quickly into changes within the private sphere and the parent / child and later spousal relationships therein.

The catalyst for change then, was the shift in personal identity and relatedly, the women's habitus, which, in this case developed, incrementally over the course of three years. According to the qualitative data the changes were based on the gradual

development of self-belief, generated both by themselves and others such as the PSA's and other women using the FSES services. Solidarity and belonging to a cohesive community group, having a collective voice and most importantly, reciprocity also contributed to the women's progress. Indeed, for many of the women the sense of reciprocity was new. Reportedly the women had not previously felt valued by other adults, presumably in part because they did not believe they had anything to offer and did not value themselves. The development of their basic skills and the utilisation of their existing skill base as a part contribution towards a professional work based qualification transformed their outlook and relationship with the public sphere. It is the comfortable exposure and acceptance into the public arena and the possibility of movement between the two spheres which enabled the women to see themselves as players or agents within the meta-fields of both the public and private realms, somewhere, they reported, they previously believed impossible.

The personal developments of the women appeared to be significantly enhanced by the role of mentor / PSA. They provided a link between the recognised gaps in service providers reaching their targeted and most vulnerable groups, and adults within the community who could potentially benefit from access to wider services (Feiler, 2009; McDonald, 2010; Bonevski, 2014). The PSA's purpose was to offer positive support to the socially marginalised adults. This was achieved through working flexibly, respecting the individual, and working in partnership with organisations. Similar approaches are recognised to engage 'the hard to reach' (Department of Health Inequalities, 2008; Flanagan and Hancock, 2010). In this way support was offered by 'professionals', who the women knew or were familiar with and, others who they recognised as similar to themselves and therefore posed less threat and were therefore more readily accepted by those with low self-confidence,

It is the nature of the FSES provision, as a site for transition that I believe generated a unique opportunity for the women. With previously restricted access to the public sphere, the women collectively developed a profile of and presented as, a minority group. Mitchell (1995) labels space for such groups of 'under-represented' as 'anarchic' public space. He describes how minorities carve a space within the public arena, and create social groups in order that they become part of the legitimate public sphere. In a similar vein Fraser (1990) acknowledges that public space restricts access to women and other marginalised groups and in doing so enables the existence of a male dominated public sphere, operating at the expense of others (ibid). Like Mitchell (1995), Fraser believes the exclusions promote marginalised groups to forge an underclass of the public which is the creation of a cohesive alternative to the majority group, located within the public realm. The women's experience of the FSES model of provision appears to resonate with both Mitchell's and Fraser's theory and in this way present as an alternative, difficult to reach and therefore often overlooked public group.

As stated in Chapter 1, community education projects, such as the FSES initiative and community schools stretch as far back as the 18th century from whence their popularity has waxed and waned. Their existence has been driven by need at both local and national levels. Typically the main motivation for the initiatives is rooted in addressing social issues through school based education with the main focus targeted at the pupils. In many respects the model of the FSES echoes this pattern, that is, the development of a project that acknowledges the need, primarily for social change, within recognised disadvantaged communities but nevertheless overlooks the role played by the adults within it.

I have acknowledged and accepted the conceptual spatial divide between public and private space. I recognise it to be gender dominated and underpinned by power / oppression. It is accessed through the accumulation of social and cultural capital which I believe is restricted for women, especially those experiencing disadvantage and excludes the 'hard to reach'.

I assert that the FSES design, a neighbourhood based community initiative, representing the public space, bridged traditional recruitment challenges of the hard to reach through its community based approach and use of mentors / PSA's.

The findings from this piece of work have begun to unpick some of the almost accidental and overlooked outcomes for the adults involved. I argue I have identified outcomes from this FSES model which could assist disadvantaged groups and communities and therefore this is an important piece of work to contribute to the wider base of knowledge. To explain the research uses more fully, I will now review my research questions and discuss its contributions.

9.6 Review of the research questions

The main focus of this study is the Full Service Extended Schools initiative, driven by government and implemented by local authorities. Specifically I have explored the engagement, experiences and longitudinal outcomes for the adult service users who accessed one FSES school site offering such support. The provision was based in Croydon; an area of significant deprivation, where the services were intended for the most vulnerable members of the immediate community. I sought firstly to establish a profile of the adults by adopting a quantitative approach, followed by two sets of interviews to address the questions listed earlier in chapter 1. Here I review those questions and provide a summary response of the detail within this thesis.

What were the socio-demographical characteristics of the adults who access extended services provision? What was the social profile of the adult service user?

165 of the 175 FSES users were women, the greater majority were parents but not necessarily of children attending the FSES / school site. Nearly three quarters of the sample were aged between 30 and 49 years old, most of whom tended to be thirty somethings. The majority of the women were non British and just under half were without access to a motorised vehicle. Just over half of the women either had no educational qualifications or achievements at a basic level or below. Almost all the women were not in employment, paid or otherwise. With regard to these details the women can be termed social minorities which in conjunction with their limited basic skills (less than level 1) means that they can also be categorised as disadvantaged and in association, 'hard to reach' (Doherty *et al.*, 2004; Cortis, 2009).

Almost three quarters of the women were married and / or living with family members. The quantitative analysis indicated that this was a significant and positive key predictor for the level of achievement for the women engaging with accredited courses. These domestic arrangements increased the odds of those accessing the FSES achieving nationally recognised awards at level 1 or higher.

Motivation and expectation: What were the adults' motivations to access community support services?

The findings from the qualitative data identified a contradictory set of motivations to those supposed by government and service providers at the inception of the FSES initiative. The expectation was that the women, most of whom were mothers, would voluntarily attend the offered support in order that they would then help their children with their learning (Horne and Haggart, 2004; Haggart and Spacey, 2006). The

information gathered from the women was in fact quite the opposite. They reported that they were initially motivated primarily to gain skills for themselves.

Their initial introduction to the services was typically through referral from a professional to the PSAs where there was either concern regarding their child or anxieties around other social issues, Following dialogue with the PSA the women would typically become FSES attenders where many of the women's motivations shifted focus to developing their skills and confidence.

Three years (39 months) later, the second interview phase was conducted with a smaller sample of the women who interviewed previously (13/19) in order to re-evaluate their reasoning and motivation for attending the FSES. The majority had significantly changed their opinions for using the services and, in retrospect, reported their continued engagement was still primarily for personal development, yet was now underpinned by the positive personal outcomes, including greater social status and improved relationships with their children, partners and other community members.

Most of the women (10/13) had at this stage gained paid employment and their FSES attendance was then motivated by a desire to gain higher level qualification rather than accreditation in basic skills.

Experience: How do adults describe their experiences of the community support services?

The women identified their need for assistance in accessing the FSES provision in order to overcome their anxieties and practical problems. They saw geographical proximity to the FSES services as critical to their usage and acceptance therein. The uptake of the support was usually associated with personally knowing those making

the referral, knowing the location of the site on which the provision was offered, and its convenience in terms of travel and class times.

The physical appearance of the support / learning space was appreciated in terms of its synchronicity with the women's cultural experience, enabling them to feel comfortable within the environment. That is, the environs were not seen as challenging to the women's sense of identity.

The uptake of the services and support impacted on the women's social and cultural capital, and the women gave strong evidence that in both realms they believed they had made significant gains. Specifically, the majority of women who attended basic skills classes increased their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). This was produced through improved basic literacy, numeracy and IT as well as developing their parenting skills through child care studies and work experience based in the FSES community crèche and nursery. Social networks (Bourdieu, 1986) were developed through the comradery between the women throughout their learning journeys, not just as classroom colleagues but also as team mates during their voluntary work across the school, nursery and crèche sites (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2000). Further social networks were created through support available from their colleagues, teachers, the PSA and professionals within the work settings they accessed, although the durability of these are unknown. At the point of the second interview the majority of women had, or were currently seeking further paid employment. This offered them a point of reference and a structure for their CV's for future possible employment, leading in turn to further social capital.

The women acknowledged their overall FSES experiences were shaped by enabling or constraining factors. The ease of service access was a key element to their

engagement, not just proximity of the services, as mentioned earlier but also a lack of filters for exclusion. For example, LA provision requires proof of right to remain, access to social benefits, address, age, national insurance numbers and so forth - in contrast the FSES took all adults who were either referred or requested to attend. Given the typical reasons for referral and the profile of the users, the FSES attempted to minimise the need for disclosure of financial status and / or the achievement of threshold ability levels in spoken or literacy skills at the point of application. This open door policy allowed women who were unable to access programmes such as FL, for the aforementioned reasons, to step onto the learning pathway.

The women also saw their relationship with the tutor as another significant enabling factor. During their interviews many commented that for full engagement they needed to like and respect the teacher which was often reliant on a sense of reciprocal regard. The women described their experiences which lead to FSES engagement to include feeling welcome, encouraged, befriended, belonging, safe and most of all, recognised as an individual and given time as they needed it. Several of the women contrasted this with their experiences of adult education where they felt lost in a mass of learners and where they felt no time could be given to them on a personal level. Although the tutors facilitated learner progress, it is arguable that the environment and support were the critical factors rather than the tutors per se.

The single most significant experience and change, however, was the women's increased confidence, beginning with external confidence placed in them by teachers, PSA's and other support staff. The women throughout the initial phase of interviews spoke of the importance of other people believing and investing time and skills in them and trusting them within the voluntary work placements. In turn the women's own self-

confidence rose and when they were interviewed in the second stage the women identified barriers to their own progress had been lack of self-confidence, their own continuation of past histories, and their lack of skills which fed into their overall poor levels of confidence and shortage of lack of positive support.

Impacts / outcomes: What was the impact of the services on a range of social outcomes, i.e. On relationships, behaviour, attitudes and the role of parenting?

The summary of the women's sense of progress and development offered them a greater notion of personal power in their lives. They described a more balanced and respectful relationship with their children and latterly, with their spouses or partners. The relationship changes in turn, gave them a sense of personal recognition and acknowledgement within specific realms of their lives such as family and friends. Equally, as their cultural capital increased so did their social confidence, empowering several of the women to recruit others to the FSES or to give advice on questions on or relating to the FSES.

Over the 3 years between the interviews, the rise in the women's cultural and social capital and relative sense of increased power, shifted the women's habitus and personal identity. They no longer saw themselves 'as a nobody' (Janice, Chapter 8) but instead, as individuals with a critical and useful place within their family and the wider society.

Many of the women interviewed had not yet achieved their target qualifications or accreditations. The fact that they recognised their own progression towards their desired outcomes, however, indicated to them that their goals were achievable, something prior to the FSES experience they had not really believed possible. This

shift in personal beliefs began and maintained the women's metamorphosis into more confident individuals both within the home and in the wider social environment.

In relation to parenting, the majority of the women with children reported their learning had impacted hugely on their relationship as a mother / carer. They stated they felt more self-assured and confident to make decisions and to set limits and hold fast to the boundaries they had created. They described how they were empowered to help their children with homework and how they modelled the kind of behaviour they wanted from their children, respectful conversations and focus on achievement with the understanding that personal responsibility, skill based confidence and focus is required for progress to be attained.

They were also reportedly happier. The women described feeling pleased with their progress, and some were even surprised by their own development. Their improved outlook can be assumed to relate to their improved relationships both with family members and friends. It may also have contributed to the positive experiences some of the women described in the work settings.

Plans: What did the adults plan to do next and were their choices related to their experiences of the community support services?

At the second stage of interviews the women listed their three main aspirations as being:

- *Gain paid employment*
- *Continue to gain further education skills*
- *Travel and expand their enjoyment of their leisure time including their home-life*

Without exception all the women acknowledged their future plans were related to the experiences they had gained from accessing the FSES.

The FSES services had not set out to be a conduit to employment, this was a secondary outcome which followed on the back of providing work experience in a voluntary capacity. The longer term manifestation of the placement experiences was having access to a work reference and confidence to enter into the public sphere of employment. Similarly, the women's desire to extend their education still further related, to their experience at the FSES, and wanting to increase their chances of employability.

Some of the women also had plans for their children. They spoke about their ambitions for higher education and future employment, for their daughters as well as their sons. They acknowledged what they accepted for themselves as women they did not want for their daughters and planned to encourage a changed trajectory for them.

Conclusion

To summarise the findings in one paragraph, the quantitative data in this study provided a profile of the women in this study which confirmed they were from disadvantaged groups. As such, the women were socially lacking and therefore their own needs had to be met before they could meet the needs of their children. Their experience of the FSES developed their cultural and social capital which was enabled through the manifestation of personal support which, in turn, raised their self-confidence and sense of personal identity across all spheres. The impact and hybrid nature of the FSES experience changed the nature of their private and public relationships and parenting styles, facilitating the women to create more equitable respect from their children and other family and community members. In turn their

experiences, increased skill base and heightened self-confidence led towards community regeneration where the women were more ambitious for themselves and their family and made greater civic commitment. It was also notable from the quantitative findings that the women who generally achieved higher levels of academic success were married or supported by a partner.

The responses to the research questions highlight new information and the contribution to current knowledge that has been identified through the course of this research. The following section lists the nature of these contributions to research.

9.7 Contributions to the field and confirmation of other research findings

This research has produced some new findings which contribute to existing knowledge on school/ community initiatives from the point of view of community members and parents' experience. The focus of this work is embedded in the FSES project aiming to understand how the community support for parents and other community members manifested for the individuals, their family and community relationships, specifically for socially marginalised groups including women. Other findings, although not new, confirm the work of other researchers and add further evidence to already existing theories used within this field.

There are very few longitudinal studies of community school work and fewer still which focus on the associated parental outcomes, even for projects such as family learning (Cara and Brooks, 2012). Evaluative studies, however, are available for FL (ibid) which, although is not the main focus of this study, share similarities with the support programmes within the FSES provision. They overlap in content and delivery and also identify three levels of outcomes as, societal, individual and educational (Horne and Haggart, 2004; Haggart and Spacey, 2006; Cara and Brooks, 2012). It is, however,

the context of the FSES initiative and focus on the parental / community support that I argue, makes this work unique.

New information:

From the position of the FSES findings, I have generated a new perspective on such community school projects, that is, I have suggested a shift in focus from the school being the agent of change to the parents playing the central role, with the school primarily supporting the parents, educationally and socially whilst the school acts as the conduit and location for change. Furthermore the detailed profile of the women accessing the FSES support provision is unique, and to my knowledge no other study of the FSES evaluation has covered this aspect. The quantitative data indicates clearly that the women were from the 'hard to reach' community. The qualitative interviews, in turn, produced other new information which I will outline now.

- **Motivation**: The assumption that the women attended the support services was to help their children with their academic studies was not so.

The majority of the women in the study made clear reference to the fact that their attendance at the FSES centre was for self-development, not because they wished to assist their children with their school work as assumed by policy and initiative designers. Few had belief or ability in their own skill base to help anyone. On reflection it transpired that primarily the women attended to enhance their own skill base and raise their own self-confidence.

- **Hybrid space**: The concept that the FSES base acted as a hybrid space between private and public spheres is argued.

Given the majority of service users were women, their activities were viewed within the feminist framework of public and private spheres. I argue the FSES was placed

conceptually between the two spaces and acted as a hybrid sphere which I believe is a new conceptual view of the nature of the FSES provision.

 The FSES space is best described as a zone for personal transition, where women come and transpose their domestic sphere skills into work based qualifications and experiences and where their access into the public male dominated sphere is eased. Simultaneously, the experiences gained within the FSES hybrid sphere were then seen to be taken back into the women's private sphere which in turn enabled further pursuits in the public sphere for the women.

- **Identity**: the women changed their identity through increased cultural and social capital which in turn developed their habitus.

A personal referral for a specific issue was, for most of the women, their introduction to accessing the FSES provision. The women reported acknowledging a sense of positive and welcoming input and support which they later described led to the development of a progressive relationship between them and the FSES staff. The expansion of their skill base created new cultural capital and the learning and work environments developed their social networks. This combination of increased capital gave rise to changed habitus and raised self-confidence.

Some refute the possibility that habitus is changeable (King, 2000; Adkins, 2003), yet for the women in this study they clearly expressed a change in beliefs and behaviours, and an associated shift in their identity - who they were, that is, how they saw themselves to be in the present and the future and how others perceived them. The change in social status and identity created opportunity for the women to access new operational fields which I believe allowed the creation of a newly shaped habitus.

Confirmation of previous findings

Other information that was generated from the analysis confirmed and underpinned other researchers' previous findings. More specifically, although not widely investigated, researchers (Benham, 1974; Rosetti and Tanda, 2000) also found that women who had a live-in partner / family member or spouse achieved higher levels academically in comparison to single women.

The minority and socially disadvantaged groups engaged with the FSES community based services and a strategy of successful inclusion of the 'hard to reach' had been employed. The support was preceded by a referral, by someone the women knew within either a personal or professional capacity. The women then had support prefaced with PSA input, who addressed the nature of the cause of the referral prior to attending basic skills classes. Jo's theory (2013) outlines a similar process utilising cultural mentors to assist in changing the habitus of parents.

The dominant outcomes from the adult support services as detailed by the women were very similar to those identified by other researchers of other comparable adult samples, such as, findings from the study of the wider benefits of FL (e.g. Balatti and Falk, 2002; Feinstein *et al.,* 2003, Feinstein and Hammond, 2004, Horne and Haggart, 2004; Haggart and Spacey, 2006; BIS, 2011: Cara and Brooks, 2012). A general summary of these outcomes were that participation in the programme led to:

- *higher involvement in pre-school and school activities*

- *greater self-confidence*

- *greater self-reported capabilities*

- *improved options for finding work*

- *progression to further learning* (Cara and Brooks, 2012, pp 9-10)

The combination of the new and shared findings and the responses elicited from the research questions create fresh veins of thought and prompt the draft of a new hypothesis and suggestions for further research to which I turn now.

9.8 Emergence of a new hypothesis

Recalling that the inception of the initiative was driven by concern for the development of countrywide pockets of spatial poverty and associated social issues (Howarth, 1998), there was concurrent recognition of the importance of the role and

> *access to social capital, (have) in determining the life-chances of individuals,*
> *they (will) have an equally powerful impact on social exclusion and equity*
> (OECD, 2001, p6),

Within the context of community regeneration, the role social capital played in the design of the FSES was therefore significant. It was influenced by the work of Putnam (1995) whom highlighted the fragmentation of societal cohesion through the breakdown of community bonds as a result of isolating lifestyles. He argued that working away from home and engaging in single person leisure pursuits such as watching TV and playing video games reduced the connectedness across families and communities (ibid). Indeed, the OECD study on the Well Being of Nations (2001) summarised their findings on the impact of social capital and showed positive benefits for health, well-being, parenting and economic activity.

With evidence of the positive connection between life-chances and social capital (Feinstein *et al.,* 2004; Cummings *et al.,* 2007; Feinstein and Sabates, 2007) it is understandable why the FSES model included academic and social support for the adult service users / parents, yet, it begs the question why was it so quickly reduced to, at best, FL in many schools, as it transitioned into ES in 2006? With the recognised

positive impact that FSES has on family relations and parenting (ibid, OECD, 2001), its reduction or removal are even more perplexing given that the very orientation of ES was motivated by child protection. Why did that happen? Why was the work towards increasing social capital abandoned and not pursued and expanded? Possibly it reflected the struggle some schools had to make a link with their more vulnerable parents which therefore made change more challenging (DCSF, 2010).

Indeed, with the notion that increasing social capital could potentially bolster community regeneration (which was a key purpose of the FSES agenda) raises the question: Was the initiative's discontinuance resultant from a failure on the schools' part? Was it because they could not engage and deliver to the hard to reach, or was it that schools saw lack of reasoning to engage communities or a mix of both? In fact, for many schools there was tension between delivering the National Standards agenda (their core business) and addressing issues manifested from community disadvantage (ibid; Cummings and Dyson, 2007). Given the lack of framework to measure stakeholder progress (Cummings *et al.,* 2005) there was reluctance for some schools to invest heavily into community provision because there was no certainty that it would yield positive outcomes by which they could be measured, for example, through examination results and Ofsted inspections.

Furthermore, the schools were given little guidance or support in managing this relatively new dimension of education, either at a local or national level (Cassen and Kingdon, 2007: Cummings and Dyson, 2007). Indeed, on evaluation of the FSES project, three years after its inception, there was recommendation from the researchers for future national policy to be more directive in this manner (Cummings and Dyson, 2007). Additionally, neither was there any real systemic change within the wider scope of education, with respect to schools; the curriculum remained mostly the

same, teacher training continued much as before and pupil assessments for attainment made negligible movement towards the development of stronger cultural and /or social capital. In turn, adult and community education and support, which might be argued in this context to be the lynch pin of social change, was reduced as the ES project emerged, with its adjusted gaze more focused on pupils rather than adults and on examination results rather than social networks.

It is acknowledged that measuring social capital is problematic (OECD, 2001; Stone, 2001; Cummings and Dyson, 2007; Claridge, 2017). It cannot be measured directly but rather through its manifestations and determinants (Claridge, 2017). Despite the nebulous nature of social capital, its impacts on individual and community well-being are recognised to be of social significance (Putnam, 1995; OECD, 2001; Stone, 2001; Cummings and Dyson, 2007; Boecke, 2009; Claridge, 2017). There is argument then to invest in its production in equal measure to developing skills for economic generation. Indeed, a focus on the generation of economic outcome, rather than social cohesion alone, was highlighted in 2001 by the OECD (p6) where they predict a lack of either one,

> *'can worsen the job prospects of people with limited education, who are also often the least well off in our societies. Some analysts speak of the emergence of an "underclass" in developed countries, a group that is the mainstream of society and has little chance of re-entering it, both because of a lack of human capital (ability to generate economy) and, arguably, the "right" sort of social capital'.*

Certainly the findings from this research indicate there are pockets of people, without social resources and who lack the skills to change their trajectory away from

unemployment and poverty. There is reason then to consider the existence of social class that cannot fit within the existing class classification, which currently requires at least, a point of employment. Although the possibility of a developing underclass is denied by some (Rutter and Madge, 1976; Macnicol, 2016), there does appear to be a social group or a collective which exhibit intersectional oppression due to their ethnicity, gender, race and limited social and cultural capital. The possibility of such a development through changes in social activity and family / community structure raises a question with regard to the women in this study. Had the adults that accessed the FSES in this study been previously socially overlooked? Were they part of a bigger social group in society? Certainly the outcomes the women reported for both themselves and their family members reflected those described as benefits of increased social capital (ibid). It also appeared from the transcriptions that what had been missing, in their opinion, was an extended opportunity to enter the social field of the public sphere.

Indeed, the government's targeting of specific communities for delivery of FSES intervention coupled with the development of the PAT strategy arguably indicates the acknowledgement of an underclass. This recognition of need related to the country's skill base and economy, and reflected wider social concerns. Similar global anxieties were considered to be a growing issue (Putnam, 1996, 2000) which in turn raised the possibility of a potential growth of an underclass in the UK.

As schools had been the base for FSES interventions in the US and Australia and because they share commonalities with many UK communities, it is unsurprising the UK FSES also used schools as their delivery base. What became apparent, however, from the evaluations that followed the first few years of the FSES roll out was the underestimation of the scale of the task – which was widely agreed, was not

something that schools could absorb along with their core business or indeed tackle alone (Cassen and Kingdon, 2007: Cummings *et al.*, 2007; Cummings and Dyson, 2007). Clearly, for changes in family / school /community outcomes there needs to be change in action and approach (ibid), yet, as already stated, there was no evidence of systemic change to the schools' or the teachers' remit. Neither was there any extra capacity across education or expansions in other support services such as health and social care which were recommended as support partners for FSES delivery. In fact, whilst education methodology, delivery and structure clung to its past, the families, children and adults it was working with were evolving apace.

There needs to be recognition that families are changing shape and structure. Statistics show an annual increase of 15.2% in lone parents in 2017 (ONS, 2017), a 9% drop in married families since 1996, a steady rise in the number of same sex parents with children (ibid) and more trans-gender parents than ever before. The fastest growing trend in family style is cohabiting / blended families (ibid) with over 10% of such families with stepchildren (Parent Connection, 2017).

Children without families is also an increasing trend. There is a year on year increase in the number of children looked after by the social care system, a trend that has continued to escalate over the last 9 years (DoE, 2017). Additionally there are more unaccompanied refugees and more migrants without local language skills. In 2014 and 2015 there was a 54% and 67% annual increase, respectively for minors without family members (Refugee Council, 2017).

There is also growing change within the adult populations, and in the UK, for instance the number of adults with only functional level literacy or below is growing (Wright, 2016). England is among the worst performing countries in the OECD as regards to their

levels of basic skills, with roughly one in 20 adults found to have the literacy and numeracy levels of a five-year-old, 5 million adults lack basic literacy and numeracy while a further 12.6 million lack basic digital skills such as composing emails and completing online job applications (ibid).

This concerning tableau of the late 1990's and beyond, contributed to the introduction of the FSES, yet, despite its associated long term investment in building communities, raising basic skills levels of the disadvantaged, there has been little change in this regard. Given the current situation and the findings from this research there is suggestion that the FSES initiative offered more than was originally thought or intended, which creates the opportunity for the emergence of a new hypothesis.

Hypothesis: there is a growing social underclass formed from disadvantaged groups which is alienated from contributing to the wider society.

(As indicated in the abstract, the term 'underclass' is used here to describe a strata of adults in UK society, which in my opinion, is overlooked, under-valued and under-supported. Similar to, and often inclusive of, those termed 'hard to reach' (as described in Chapter 3, 3.2). For those within the underclass, a two-way engagement with key institutions and social support networks is critical for social capital yet hard to achieve. To meet the needs of those described within an underclass would require institutional change demanding long-term input and funding, and a **permanent** commitment to providing a systemic change to the current education ethos, teacher training and curriculum delivery, which embraces supporting the primary carers within the family.

9.9 Suggestions for future research

As the hypothesis suggests there is need to expand the knowledge-base of the interaction between the issue of disadvantage, parental involvement and long-term manifestations of community school initiatives. For a fresh perspective on work within this field though, systemic change is required within the construct of education and pedagogy. Controls could be piloted across alternative education provision, a destination for some of the most disadvantaged pupils. Such provision offers the possibility of flexibility for delivery and specific training for staff to work with parents and pupils to explore in greater detail the outcomes of increased social and cultural capital in an educational /public sphere setting.

Tracking the pupils in conjunction with their primary carer during and after such input in a longitudinal study, would be extremely useful in helping to understand the difference between the strength of family bonds and individual development of social and cultural capital on long term educational, social and familial outcomes. A minimum of three generations would begin to show trends not previously explored, although data from studies such as Next Steps (UCL Institute of Education) could be used to compare the findings.

The use of a pupil referral unit (PRU) as a pilot location would almost certainly ensure the support would be targeted at those from disadvantaged backgrounds, an essential variable to be identified for any future research within this field. Lack of clarity in this regard skews the analysis of any immediate findings and causes greater confusion still for longitudinal, generational studies.

There would also be value in looking at the other end of the educational process to include day nurseries within further studies. Families at risk of disadvantage are

already identified by social care and health teams and are provided with funding for their children at age 2 to access day care. A significant element of the day care is focused on communication skills, a fore runner to reading skills (Hart and Risley, 2003; Diamond *et al.*, 2007; Early intervention Foundation, 2015); without which development of language skills are limited, creating a literacy gap that grows with the child (Hart and Risley, 2003). A national study to establish how well prepared the staff are to engage the hard to reach, how they address issues of disadvantage, how they track interventions and outcomes, and interpret child-based activities would contribute to their long-term manifestations of input. Longitudinal studies would help clarify if some of the latter pupil centred differences for children from disadvantaged backgrounds can be alleviated at an earlier point and if work with the parents, whilst they are likely to go on to produce other offspring, is a more timely intervention than later.

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Appendix 1

Getting To Know You Better – Matching Our Extended Services More Closely to You

A Questionnaire for You to Complete (2011)

To improve our services for you we need to know more about you.

Please help by telling us about yourself and your family.

You could **win** One of three cash prizes: £50, £30 & £10

What is the purpose of this questionnaire?

Extended Services have been running at the ████████ ████████ School from 2006, since then our services have changed a lot. We would like to find out about the people who use our services so we can offer even better provision.

Who is this questionnaire for?

All the people who use the Extended Services at the ████████ ████████ School, including learners on taught courses, voluntary workers, and adults attending support and community groups.

Completing the form

Please answer all the questions either by ticking or filling in the appropriate boxes provided. If you need help please tell the person who handed you this form. The questionnaire should take about 10-15 minutes to fill out, thank you for that time.

We would also like to carry out some 45 minute interview with people like you who use the services; if you would like to take part in the interviews please tick the box on final page.

Confidentiality

All the information that you provide in this questionnaire will remain completely in the strictest confidence.

Once all the information has been collected we will let you know via our termly newsletter what we have learned and the possible changes we might make.

About you

A. **Your personal details**

1. Are you   Male ☐   Female ☐   Please tick (✔)

2. What is your age in years?   ……………

3. Which of these qualifications do you have? Please tick (✔) all that apply

Entry level 1	☐	Entry level 2	☐
Entry level 3	☐	Level 1	☐
Level 2	☐	GCSEs /'O'Levels	☐
'A' Levels	☐	First degree (BA/BSc)	☐

B. **Details of your family & relatives**

1. How would you describe yourself? Please tick (✔)

Married ☐   Separated ☐   Single ☐

Widowed ☐

2. How would you describe your living arrangements?

Living with a partner ☐   living alone ☐

Living with friends ☐   Living with family members ☐

3. Do you have children at the ██████████████ School?

Yes ☐   No ☐

C. What is your ethnic group? Tick (✓) one box only

1. **White**

British ☐

Irish ☐

Any other White background ☐

2. **Mixed**

White & Black Caribbean ☐

White & Black Asian ☐

Any other Mixed background ☐

3. **Asian or Asian British**

Indian ☐

Pakistani ☐

Bangladeshi ☐

White & Black African ☐

Any other Asian background ☐

4. **Black or Black British**

Caribbean ☐

African ☐

Any other British background ☐

5. **Chinese or other ethnic group**

Chinese ☐

Any other ☐

What do you do?

D. **Your interests & activities**:

1. Please list all the courses you have attended since September 2009 at the
███████████████ school

Name of the courses attended	Month
Eg. Reading club	*Sept*

2. Please list any work (paid or voluntary) you have done at the ██████████
█████████ school

Work done at the school	Month / Year
Eg. Crèche work	*Sept 2009 – June 2010*

3. Do you attend courses in other places?

Yes ☐   No ☐

E. **Your Journey**

1. How do you usually travel to the school? Please tick (✔) the box / boxes that applies to you

Tram ▣   Bicycle ▣

Driving a car or van ▣   Taxi ▣

Passenger in a car or van ▣   On foot ▣

Motorcycle, scooter, moped ▣   Bus ▣

Other ▣

2. How many cars or vans are owned or available for use in your household? Please tick (✔)

None ▣   One ▣   Two ▣   Three ▣   Four ▣

F. **Where you live and your neighbourhood**

1. What type of accommodation do you live in?

Whole house ▣   Shared house ▣

Flat, maisonette, apartment ▣   Caravan ▣

2. Does your household own or rent your accommodation?

Own ▣   Rent ▣

3. What is your postcode? …………………………………………

G. What else do you do?

1. Are you in any kind of paid employment?

Yes ▢   No ▢

2. In addition to attending the ███████████ school, do you regularly go to any of the following places? Please tick (✓)all that apply:

Place of worship eg Mosque   ▢

Social clubs / groups eg walking / bingo group   ▢

Gym eg Lanfranc's fitness suite, Cannon's   ▢

Local community activities eg playgroups, stay & play ▢

Housing related groups eg neighbourhood watch   ▢

Other (please state)……………………..………………… ▢

What to Do Next & How to Enter the Prize Draw

We are keen to interview adults who use services at the █████████████ school. If you would be willing to talk to us for about 45 minutes please indicate below:

I am willing to be contacted again - Please tick (✔)

Yes ◼   No ◼

Name ……………………………………………….………………

Telephone number ……………………………………………

How to enter the prize draw:

Complete this final page.

Remove this last page from the questionnaire.

Leave this sheet and your completed questionnaire with the person who gave it to you.

You will automatically be entered for the prize draw by returning this questionnaire.

Please enter your details below:

Name …………………………………………………………….

Telephone number ……………………………………………,

Thank you for filling in this questionnaire

Appendix 2

Themes for semi structured Interview Questions - Interview 1

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me and talk about your experience here at the school. We should only take about 30 – 40 minutes but there's no set time limit, I'd just like to listen to your opinions on what you have experienced here. I will ask you some questions and there's right or wrong answers, just your thoughts. If you get stuck I'll ask you the questions in a different way.

So I can give you my full attention I'd like to record our conversation, is that ok with you? (Consent form)

Why do you come here to the FSES?

- What support services and programmes do you access and why?
- Why do you come to here rather than attend elsewhere?
- How do you select which services to use? Do you perceive specific programmes to be more beneficial than others?
- What do you perceive as successful outcomes and what do you think contributes to success?
- What do you perceive to be the barriers to outcomes?

What do you think the outcomes of accessing services are?

- What are your perceptions of the effects of the programmes for yourself, your family and their community? Are the outcomes associated with the type of support service accessed?
- What do you consider to be the benefits of the FSES programmes they engage with?
- Do you perceive the outcomes to affect their family or children's progress, if so in what ways?

What will you do next?

- How do you see yourself now?
- What do you plan to do next, why?

Thank you - We've come to the end of my questions, is there anything else you wanted to add or say?

Appendix 3

Questions for follow-up interview – Interview 2

Introduction: The last time I interviewed you about your use of the support services here at the FSES, I asked you about the outcomes and the affects you thought they had on you and others around you. Today, almost 2 years later, I'd like to hear what has happened since then.

Like last time I would like to record our conversation, is that ok with you? (Consent form)

Impact on accessing services

Can you remind me which services you have accessed? Any over the last 2 years, if so which ones? (What made stay / you return here and why did you choose those? Were the reasons different to your initial motivation, how? Why? Was there any difference coming back, did it feel any different to your first time, how, why?)

Had you planned to do this after your first interview?

Do you think your experience at the FSES had any impact on your view of courses / accessing support? On your view of learning and self-development?

Impact on your personal life

Over the last 2 years, has your experience at the FSES had any impact on you? (reading, writing, training? How, why? How does that make you feel? Push for examples of impact)

And for your family members (children, husband), do you think they have experienced any changes as a result of changes in you? (how, why?, examples)

And for friends and neighbours in your Community?

And in terms of civic engagement, has there been any change? For example, have you done anything such as join your local library, church, other groups for example neighbourhood watch or keep fit clubs etc?

Were you in paid employment when you came to the FSES at first? Have you been employed since then? Are you currently in paid employment or do you work as a volunteer? (What job do you have? Does it relate to the services you accessed here? Did the services you accessed here contribute to gaining employment in any way? Do you have further plans regarding your employment?)

Impact on outlook

Do you have any personal plans for the future? (What are they? Will you need to use the services of the FSES to achieve these? How do you think they might impact on your family?)

Do you have plans for your family? (What are they? How do you think you can help them achieve them? What will be the benefits of your ideas?)

Since your last interview, have your opinions changed in any way? Do you see your role of mother, wife, employee differently to previously? (how, why, examples) Are there any changes to how you see women in society? (how, why, examples) Have your experiences changed your political view? (how, why, examples).