

**Colbeck High School: A figurational analysis of relationships, identities
and behavioural norms in male Physical Education**

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Abstract

Physical Education (PE) is the most sex-differentiated and gender stereotyped subject in the school curriculum in England. The long tradition of gendered PE is not reflected in a more contemporary gender-neutral PE curriculum. This disparity is part of a broader theory-practice gap centred on differences between how PE should be and how PE is. Therefore, in this thesis, relationships, identities and behavioural norms in Male PE (MPE) are examined as they are, and not how they should be. A figurational sociological approach is adopted to examine gendered social processes, power relations and masculine embodiment within MPE. The data discussed in the thesis is from a six-month ethnography in Colbeck High School, a religious-affiliated mixed-sex secondary school within the North-East of England. Key findings identified how both enabling and constraining social processes within MPE were configured and subsequently internalised by boys along fairly binary gendered lines. Whilst MPE teachers contributed to this process through using gender slurs, boys' gendered self-restraints were primarily driven by their desire to be part of, and maintain an affiliation with, the dominant 'We' group amongst their peers. In constantly negotiating their identities with the prevailing 'We'-identity, boys appeared to exercise a more flexible and reflexive self-control when restraining or expressing their emotions according to often gendered social circumstances. This conscious behaviour was evident in boys' frequent engagement in banter, a behavioural norm which carried much social significance within MPE. Banter was found to be premised on necessary levels of mutual identification and mutual respect, and to differentiate it from inappropriate comments or verbal bullying, boys had to be socially and emotionally aware of their, and other people's, feelings and intentions. Given this increasingly expected heightened levels of social awareness and emotional sophistication, a case is made to reconfigure academic conceptions of banter from being an immature behaviour to banter as being a sophisticated form of communication. These findings contrast with previous research that tends to overly focus on boys' physical behaviours as influential in their power relations with peers and key markers of their gender identity by illustrating the increasing importance of verbal exchanges as symbolic forms of power. Furthermore, through identifying the levels of consciousness present in boys' behaviour and linking this to their exhibiting of a third nature psyche, critiques of attempts to attach boys' emotional expressions to their innate biological sex or suggestions that boys' aggression signifies regressions to instinctive impulses are provided. Placing these key findings within broader civilizing processes it seems that long-term shifts from physical to more verbally centred power relations has impacted young people at relational, identity and behavioural levels. There appears to be a heightened need for young people to engage in sophisticated forms of communications and emotional self-restraint before entering adult social worlds, and the MPE figuration provides an illustrative example of this.

Abbreviations

CHS	Colbeck High School
DoE	Department of Education
MPE	Male Physical Education
NCPE	National Curriculum for Physical Education
NHS	National Health Service
OfS	Office for Students
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PE	Physical Education
PESS	Physical Education and School Sport
UK	United Kingdom

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Aretha Franklin suggested that behind every great man, there had to be a great woman. I am no great man, but I have though been loved and nurtured by some truly great women, one of whom passed away during the completion of this thesis. Therefore, a monumental thanks must go to my wife, mum, mother-in-law and my lead supervisor, mentor and hopefully life-long friend. To you all, I am forever grateful for your unwavering support, dedication and patience. Further thanks go to my other supervisors for their guidance and my dad, brother, friends, colleagues and wonderful neighbours for keeping me grounded, happy and proud. Final thanks go to York St John University for giving people like me an opportunity, for continuing to believe in the transformative power of education for all, and for supporting me financially with this study.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my beloved Nanna and son who both profoundly impact my life. I would also like to devote this thesis to the great staff and pupils at Colbeck High School (pseudonym). Contacting schools to support this study felt like cold calling from a personal injury claims company. Therefore, Colbeck High School's acceptance of my proposal illustrates their staffs' openness and confidence in their practices. Entering their PE Department was like receiving a daily dose of energy, enthusiasm and entertainment, whilst the team-spirit amongst the staff and collective dedication to bettering young people's lives was inspiring. Finally, I was told a PhD is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration. My only hope is that in reading this thesis my inspiration becomes obvious and my perspiration is plain to see.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Although Physical Education (PE) is commonly taught in Western schools, the curriculum, space, and teaching style differ from other school subjects (Green, 2008). Furthermore, in England, PE is the most sex-differentiated and gender-stereotyped subject in the school curriculum (Flintoff & Scraton, 2005). Despite changes to adopt more mixed sex schooling in English secondary schools (11-16 years), PE lessons are predominantly single-sex, taught by same-sex teachers and involve sport and physical activities that are deemed gender-appropriate. This gendered structure often includes separate male and female PE departments, which can be comprised of teachers who hold differing perceptions regarding desired content, type of approach and style of delivery (Green et al. 2007). Arguably, this is not what is intended in the National Curriculum for Physical Education (NCPE), in which it is suggested that there is no need to separate pupils by sex (DoE, 2018).

The National Curriculum was first introduced in England in 1988. However, PE was a later addition in 1992, partly due to a lack of consensus concerning the nature and purpose of the subject. At this time, there was ongoing academic debate surrounding the types of theoretical and intellectual knowledge that should be taught and how young people can, and should, be educated in-and-through physical activities (Arnold, 1992; Carr, 1997; Reid, 1997). Irrespective of such debates, PE teachers and young people tend to hold differing views, values and attitudes on the nature and purpose of the subject, as they stress enjoyment and a break from academic studies as central features of PE (Green, 2000; Smith & Parr, 2007). There does however appear to be a greater consensus to support claims regarding the moral and physical benefits of PE. For instance, it is stated in the NCPE (DoE, 2013, 1) that, “opportunities to compete in sport and other activities build character and help to embed values such as fairness and respect”. Moreover, PE also aims to ensure that all pupils are “physically active for sustained periods of time”, and it also seeks to encourage

pupils to “lead healthy, active lives” (DoE, 2013, 1). PE teachers and young people often concur with such perceived benefits and aims (Green, 2000; Smith & Parr, 2007).

These aims and the collective viewpoint concerning PE’s positive impact have seemingly driven successive UK governments to invest over £4.5 billion on PE and School Sport (PESS) over the past two decades (Foster, 2015; Foster & Roberts, 2019). However, Green’s (2014) systematic review of European literature found that there is no substantive academic evidence to support the idea that general PE makes a significant positive effect on young people’s moral development or physical health. Data from the 1970 British Cohort study, analysed by Parry (2013, 3), suggests that, “it is possible that current government policy, which focuses on traditional sports, competition and performance, could have negative impacts on children who are already less active outside school”. These findings point to potential gaps between PE policy, theory and practice, whilst supporting the need to examine social processes within PE as they are, and not how they should be.

1.1 Towards a figurational sociological approach

Many scholars researching this topic area have opted to apply theoretical concepts derived from conventional sociological theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault. Therefore, in this section, the core tenets of figurational sociology are introduced in order to briefly outline and explain the conceptual framework that has been adopted in this thesis. The application of figurational sociology is partly inspired by Green’s (2000; 2001; 2002a; 2003; 2008; 2014) seminal works, at times with others (Smith & Green, 2004; Smith & Green, 2005; Smith et al. 2004; Smith et al. 2009), as well as Nielsen et al. (2016; 2018) and Nielsen and Thing’s (2017; 2019) research in this area. These figurational sociologists have consistently sought to study PE as it is, rather than how it ought to be, and in so doing have critically questioned many taken for granted assumptions within this area of social life.

In some respects, the previously cited academic debates concerning the nature and purpose of PE (i.e. Arnold, 1992; Carr, 1997; Reid, 1997) illustrate studies into how PE ought to be, rather than how PE is. A problem with such philosophical endeavours is that they contain mythical components and ideological concerns, both of which are often devoid of lived realities and lacking in scientific empirical evidence (Dunning, 1986). Similarly, in his analysis of policy makers attempts to deliver a renaissance of school sport, Green (2012) highlights the misconstrued idea that the 1950s were a golden age of sport. He argues that this focus fails to recognise decades of empirical data from Sport England, which evidences an increasing diversification and broadening of youth sports and young people's participation in physical activities from the 1960s onwards (Green, 2012). Therefore, to negate philosophical and ideological thinking concerning how PE ought to be, figurational sociologists examine how PE is socially constructed by those directly involved, namely PE teachers and pupils.

This research approach and focus does not negate ideological influences completely, as PE professionals can also be emotionally attached to their subject community (Green, 2006). Likewise, researchers often enter the field with preconceived ideas of what PE is and even sometimes what it should be. The latter is often evident in research that focuses on pedagogical issues that are perceived to need fixing through empirical testing or interventions (Green, 2006). Recognising the value-laden implications of being overly emotionally involved in the subject area or ideologically persuaded within the research field, throughout the research process figurational sociologists strive for blends of involvement and detachment at cognitive, emotional and physical levels (Elias, 1976). One way in which this can be achieved is by striving for a sociological, more specifically figurational, understanding of social processes within PE, and how such social processes and power-relationships are inextricably linked to broader social phenomena.

The development of a more detached sociological understanding can potentially help to abate short-term emotional generalisations, such as those derived from the youth obesity 'crisis' and its adverse health effects. This emotive generalisation aids the government's continued substantive financial investment into PESS, whilst benefitting value-laden interest groups such as the Youth Sport Trust and the Association for Physical Education. PESS policies and value-laden interest groups often propose quick-fix causal solutions, in many instances reiterating common-sense claims that greater volumes of higher quality PE can reduce youth obesity. However, Green (2014) contends that such claims fail to recognise the irreconcilable paradox of high physical activity levels and high rates of youth obesity that are evident in decades of sport and leisure participation trends. Therefore, one of the ways in which figurational sociologists strive to adopt a more emotionally detached approach within the research process, is by understanding human beings, and the social figurations that they form, through long-term ongoing processes of continuity and change (Malcolm & Mansfield, 2013).

Placing current social relations, identities and behavioural norms within long-term social processes of continuity and change is not entirely unique to figurational sociology. However, Elias (1978) bemoaned that many sociologists have retreated to focusing research on social phenomena through a present-day lens. Further lamenting short-termism within sociology, Dunning and Hughes (2013) argue that this trend enables sociologists to focus on endpoints, often leading towards more causal explanations of sociological problems. From a figurational perspective, a vital problem with such an approach is that much present-day centred research often fails to capture the manner in which social issues involve a series of complex interweaving and sometimes conflicting dynamic social processes that are the outcome of unintended long-term processes of social development (Malcolm & Mansfield, 2013).

From a figurational sociological perspective, it is also important to recognise that the outcome of complex social processes cannot be reduced simplistically to the isolated actions of individual people. Much psychological research that examines the relationship between PE and young people's leisure trends often tends to focus on either motivational orientations/climates, attitudinal trends at individual/collective levels, or ego-orientated/self-determined reasons for 'drop-out' (Smith & Green, 2005). In seeking causal correlative links through focusing on young people's rational choices, such research fails to take account of the influence of broader dimensions in young people's lives. From a sociological perspective, it is however important to appreciate that in order "to understand why young people drop out of sport, or change their activity pattern in secondary school, we also have to understand the school culture and the local youth culture today" (Nielsen & Thing, 2017, 5). Smith et al. (2004) acknowledge that such complex social processes are yet to be fully appreciated or understood. However, one way in which figurational sociologists seek to develop a greater understanding of such complex processes is by examining humans 'in the round' as biological, social and historical beings (Elias, 1978). Studying people in the round may mitigate tendencies that are evident in some disciplines to provide monocausal explanations, by better acknowledging that within increasingly complex societies, young people are involved in and must increasingly negotiate broader networks of relationships across different areas of their social lives, including PE (Nielsen & Thing, 2017). Therefore, adopting a figurational conceptual framework might provide a more reality-congruent means to examine PE as a social construct, based on long-term processes of social change and ever-changing complex networks of power-relationships that staff and students must negotiate within modern PE.

1.2 Key contributions to knowledge

Throughout this thesis the term contribution is deliberately used rather than new or original knowledge. This term is preferred by figurational sociologists and is drawn from the work of

Norbert Elias, who argued that academic knowledge is always socially constructed and grounded in the previous contributions of others. Therefore, as Elias argued, the role of the academic is to 'pick up the torch' left by others and pass it on for others to advance it further (Gabriel & Mennell, 2011). For instance, Green (2002b; 2006) attributes much of his work to eminent scholars Ken Roberts and Eric Dunning, who were pioneers in the field of sociology of leisure and sport respectively. In this sense, this thesis intends to add to, complement and test the existing body of knowledge within this research area through theoretical and empirical means.

Arguing for a figurational sociological approach to understanding PE, Green and Smith (2005), Green (2014) and Nielsen and Thing (2017) identify various theoretical gaps that need further consideration. After reviewing much European-based literature concerning the effect of PESS on young people's leisure trends, Green (2014) concludes that there is a need to better understand the dynamic interrelations between various personal, social and environmental processes within young people's lives at relational, identity and behavioural levels, including processes such as social class, gender and family socialisation. More specifically, Smith and Green (2005) stress the need to focus on how relationships with significant others can influence young people's leisure trends. In highlighting the significance that young people place on being part of dominant 'We' groups in PE, Nielsen and Thing (2017) suggest that greater insight is needed to explore how such power-relationships shape young people's identity formation/expression and emotional development within the social context of PE. These figurational sociologists also acknowledge the need to appreciate that PE is a subject that provides relatively unique social networks, social spaces and social practices, in which behavioural norms can differ to those experienced elsewhere in school.

The gaps identified above inform the contribution to theoretical knowledge that this thesis seeks to make. In doing so, this thesis theorises the dynamic social processes and power struggles central

to: (a) relationships between peers, teachers-pupils and significant others; (b) individual, group, gender, and class identities; and (c) verbal and physical behavioural norms within PE. It is contended that the extent that these three areas interrelate has been underappreciated from a figural perspective. Therefore, in the context of MPE at CHS, people are studied in the round and, in doing so, PE is examined as an interdependent part of young people's physically active and social lives. Part of this process involves considering relationships, identities and behavioural norms within MPE along long-term processes of continuity and change, particularly in relation to issues of gender and teacher-pupil relations. However, the central part of this process involves ethnographic methods such as observations, interviews and focus groups, in which the examples of Atkinson (2013), Mansfield (2010), and Matthews (2016) are followed in how they adopted blends of involvement and detachment within the research process.

Through seeking to further examine the theoretical gaps identified above, this thesis aims to make at least three empirical contributions to knowledge. These empirical gaps were identified through reviewing the literature in Chapter Three, within which it became evident that much existing research often presents negative aspects of relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE. This is largely because many sociologists have sought to illustrate power imbalances by adopting theoretical frameworks that conceive power as oppressive. Similarly, within much existing research, empirical findings tend to be homogenous or representative of only one age group of boys, as well as being overly focused on physical aspects of peer relations and behavioural norms within MPE. By adopting a figural approach which conceives power as inherently relational and flux, enabling as well as constraining social processes are examined, whilst fluctuating power balances are appreciated in order to offer a more processual perspective of power relationships within MPE. Through observing MPE lessons across five-year groups and completing focus groups with boys aged 11-14-years, situational variances such as different physical activities and age-based trends

and differences within relationships and behavioural norms in MPE are captured. Central to this focus is the significance of verbal exchanges, such as joking, mocking and ridiculing within social processes and power relationships in MPE.

The final area in which further theoretical and empirical contributions to knowledge are made in this thesis is based upon the argument by Williams and Woodhouse (1996, 212, cited in Smith & Parr, 2007, 37) that young people's views have long been "a neglected dimension of research into [PE] curriculum practice". With the exceptions of Smith and Parr (2007), Smith et al. (2009) and Nielsen and Thing (2017; 2019), whose studies focused on young people aged 15-17 years, figurational sociologists exploring PE have not tended to use focus groups with children. Similarly, only a few figurational sociologists have used observations within studies concerning PE (e.g. Fryndal & Thing, 2019; Skille & Waddington, 2006). In this thesis, MPE lessons are observed to capture the everyday lived realities of staff and pupils and to be able to cross-reference and further test people's views and experiences of MPE. Opinions and experiences of young people aged 11-14 years are sought and age-based trends and differences between these groups are explored. Like Nielsen and Thing (2019), to aid this process vignettes are used during focus groups to initiate conversation and determine boys' interpretations of incidents and behavioural norms. In this manner, further contribution to existing empirical and theoretical knowledge of PE is sought through a figurational perspective, grounding such discussions around the views and experiences of young people within this setting.

1.3 Research questions and researcher's position

At the centre of this thesis is my aim to provide sociological knowledge that is representative of how PE is, rather than what it ought to be, or what it should be able to do. This process involves seeking to better understand the significance of PE for teachers and boys "in the belief that greater

understanding will enhance our capacity to exercise control” over an essential aspect of young people’s educational experiences (Dunning, 1999, 240). Underpinned by a figurational sociological approach, the development of more reality-congruent forms of knowledge may help to contribute towards a more valuable, meaningful and impactful PE experience for those whom the curriculum is intended: young people (Smith & Parr, 2007). Therefore, in this thesis, the following research questions are explored, which are based upon and informed by a critical review of previous research and that are theoretically informed by a figurational sociological approach:

1. How do gendered social constraints and boys’ gendered self-restraints influence boys’ masculine embodiment within MPE?
2. What roles do banter and bullying have in the relationships and identities of those within MPE?
3. How do MPE teachers utilise PE to civilize boys in and through MPE?
4. How do MPE teachers conceptualise teacher-pupil relations within MPE?

As the person collecting, analysing and interpreting data pertaining to these research questions, it is essential to critically reflect on my gendered experiences of PE. Much of my childhood was spent playing sport, which heavily influenced my gender identity and gender performances. I enjoyed PE and found that relationships and behavioural norms in male physical education (MPE) differed in terms of degrees of sociability and physicality in comparison with my experiences in non-MPE lessons. Captaining the school’s football and cricket teams elevated my social status amongst peers and MPE teachers. The degree to which these reflexive accounts were managed in terms of researcher bias is disclosed in Chapter Four. However, it is also necessary to state from the outset that I am not a qualified PE teacher. I am an academic researcher, aiming to provide a figurational analysis of relationships, identities and behavioural norms within MPE at Colbeck High School (CHS - pseudonym), a mixed-sex Catholic school within the North-East of England. Therefore, in examining types of fluid social processes and the power-relationships that are implicit within such

complex interdependent networks, I must stress the importance of involvement and detachment within the research process that provides a basis to critically reflect on both my own prior experiences, whilst also maintaining greater detachment within a scenario/setting in which it would (potentially) be quite easy to become too involved in day-to-day issues.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises 10 chapters and perhaps takes a slightly unconventional format as it persistently engages in theoretical discussions throughout. This involves outlining figurational sociology in Chapter Two, whereby how this theoretical approach has previously been applied to examine social processes and power-relationships in PE is illustrated alongside demonstrating how this conceptual framework will be applied to this thesis. To further outline, explain and justify the choice of figurational sociology as a theoretical framework, in Chapter Three, four alternative theoretical frameworks that have commonly been adopted by sociologists in this topic area are outlined and critiqued. In Chapter Four, engagement in theoretical discussions entails framing figurational sociology in the context of ethnography, not least given some of the previous reservations that have been raised by some authors (Dunning, 1999, Maguire, 1988) regarding their compatibility. In Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight, data concerning the key research themes found are presented and critically examined. Then, in Chapter Nine, a figurational analysis of key findings, which pertain to relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE at CHS is provided. In Chapter 10, a conclusion to this thesis is offered. Having outlined the structure of this thesis and emphasised the way ongoing theoretical discussion and debate will underpin each chapter, further details of the focus and main content within each chapter of this thesis will now be provided.

In Chapter Two, gender relations in sport and PE and teacher-pupil relations are contextualised by framing long-term continuities and changes in people's relationships, identities and behavioural

norms. This process involves outlining Elias's (1939/2012) concepts of civilizing processes and civilized bodies. Through the realms of PE, 'scars' regarding the increasing social control and self-control of bodies, increasing feelings of shame and embarrassment attached to bodies, and gendered civilized bodies are considered. In the second half of this chapter, sensitising research tools that figurational sociologists use to conceptualise relationships, identities and behavioural norms are presented. This includes discussions on concepts such as figuration, 'I-We-They' identities, habitus and third-nature psyche that includes examples of their previous applications to PESS. Finally, how these figurational sensitising research tools, alongside a long-term understanding of social processes, are used within this thesis are detailed.

Whilst Chapter Two mainly details how figurational sociology has been used in previous research, and the manner in which key figurational concepts will be used within this thesis, in Chapter Three, more insight into why this theoretical framework was chosen over others is provided. The key theoretical concepts within each of the four common sociological approaches that have been used to examine this topic area are presented, alongside evidence of their application in previous empirical research. The theoretical concepts that are examined include Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) revised concept of hegemonic masculinity, Anderson's (2009) inclusive masculinity theory, Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice and his concepts of embodiment and habitus and Foucault's (1998) theorising concerning power and knowledge, including his concepts of disciplinary power and discourse. To justify choosing a figurational theoretical framework, a figurationally-informed critique of each of the preceding concepts is conducted. This academic critique is followed by evaluating the previous research methods used by researchers adopting the four main approaches applied, whilst also identifying empirical gaps or topic areas that remain in need of greater exploration or alternative critical inspection.

In Chapter Four, the research methods, study context, research process and processes of researcher reflexivity that were undertaken within this thesis are presented. This is a critical chapter because it presents the inherent social processes by which figurational sociologists argue that knowledge is constructed, whilst also discussing the figurational notion of blends of involvement and detachment within the research process. These balances are critically framed in relation to their compatibility with ethnographic methods, given the traditionally more 'involved' nature of much ethnographic research. The school (CHS) central to this thesis is then introduced in terms of how it was recruited, its key characteristics, its community context and how PE was structured within the school. From here, critical ethical considerations are discussed and the necessary ethical steps that were taken whilst conducting this research project are detailed. Then, the research methods adopted and the research processes undertaken are outlined, and reflections upon these processes are provided. This is followed by reflexive accounts of my engagement in, negotiations of, and reflections upon notions of involvement and detachment throughout the research process. Finally, how data were analysed using a figurational process-orientated approach combined with thematic analysis is discussed.

In Chapter Five, the first chapter to outline the results of this investigation, enabling and constraining gendered social processes within MPE are examined to determine the impact that power-struggles within this social arena can have upon boys' masculine embodiment. In doing so, a range of enabling gendered social processes within MPE, particularly in the form of MPE teaching styles, activity choices and the relatively unique physical and social aspects that impact on the behaviours of boys within this single-sex environment are evaluated. Furthermore, constraining gendered social processes within MPE are critically explored through the gendered and heteronormative language that is often used by MPE teachers and boys to express their thoughts on other people's performances when undertaking specific tasks. Drawing upon examples,

activities, and age-differences where both enabling and constraining activities were present, inter-related and at times blurred, football is presented as somewhat unique in boys' social relations and performances of 'traditional' masculine identities. In the final section of this chapter, the processes through which boys managed gendered social constraints in terms of their emotional self-restraint are examined.

Following the preceding discussion of gendered emotions, in Chapter Six data relating to issues of banter and bullying are outlined and detailed in terms of how such social processes enable or constrain behaviours within MPE. The extent to which banter and bullying behaviours were common, distinctive and blurred are explored, particularly given that banter was observed, mutually acknowledged and discussed as being rife and central to many social relations within MPE. Bullying was seen to be much less prevalent, and therefore findings were mainly derived from researcher enquiry during MPE teacher interviews or in focus groups with boys. From such findings, teachers and boys' views on, and their interpretations of, banter and bullying are presented, particularly in terms of age-based differences between boys and intergenerational differences between teachers and their pupils.

In Chapter Seven, more direct focus on contemporary teacher-pupil relations are focussed on in terms of MPE teachers' attempts to 'civilize' boys. How MPE teachers civilizing attempts were part of broader developmental approaches within CHS are critically explored, alongside the extent that they had subject-specific nuances. Given their role and status, how MPE teachers used their greater power-chances within this figurational network to civilize boys is critically considered. This process involves framing how MPE teachers sought to instil CHS's relationship-based values into boys and the extent to which their civilizing efforts differed depending on the age of boys.

In Chapter Eight, further context to some of the previous findings is offered by focusing more particularly on MPE teachers' perceptions of how and why their teaching approach and relationships with boys had changed over the last decade. MPE teachers' reflections of past and present practices and relations with boys in MPE at CHS involved perceptions of broader changes that have taken place within and beyond MPE. Here, cross-references between MPE teachers' reflections and ethnographic observations are made to ascertain any degrees of difference between emotionally informed nostalgic and fantasy-based realities, and more detached lived and observed realities. From these reflections, the extent that broader socio-cultural changes have influenced changes in MPE teachers' philosophies, practices and relations with boys are critically considered. Central to these reflections are perceived long-term changes in authority-based power-relations between MPE teachers and boys.

Chapter Nine is a more detailed and collective discussion chapter in which a figurational analysis of the relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE at CHS is provided. In this chapter, a long-term processual lens is adopted and the sensitising research tools of figuration, 'I-We-They' identities, habitus and third-nature psyche are utilised to critically analyse some of the key themes that emerge from the preceding four results chapters. Previous critiques of civilizing processes are also discussed, alongside a critical review of figurational sociologists' debates concerning theorising social control and self-restraint.

In the final chapter, Chapter Ten, the research questions that were posed at the outset of this thesis are revisited, whilst a reflexive account of the research process is provided. From these discussions, key contributions to knowledge are outlined and suggestions for future research that could

potentially add further or different insight into this topic area are offered. Current practices in MPE are then critiqued given the conclusive findings within this thesis. In doing so, tentative ideas or suggestions for certain areas in which changes to existing practice could be considered are provided.

Chapter 2 Figurational sociology and PE

In this chapter central themes within figurational sociology are introduced, key concepts used in this thesis are outlined, and how these concepts have been applied in previous research is demonstrated. Civilizing processes are used as a framework to highlight long-term changes in people's behavioural norms, which includes trends towards increasing levels of social control and self-restraint involved in people's increasingly civilized bodies. Central tenets of civilizing processes are also used to illustrate long-term changes in relations between adults and children, and between males and females. These discussions enable a contextualisation of data relating to wider civilizing processes, which have contributed to long-term continuities and changes in teacher-pupil relations and gender relations in sport and PE. As well as adopting a long-term process-orientated approach, the sensitising research tools that figurational sociologists use to conceptualise relationships, identities and behavioural norms are presented. This includes evidencing how such tools have been applied within existing PE-related research. To conclude, how figurational sociology will be applied within this thesis is detailed.

2.1 Civilizing processes and long-term changes in behavioural norms

Elias's (2012) concept of civilizing processes provides a framework from which to examine long-term continuities and changes in how people relate to each other, identify with themselves and others and behave in public settings. Elias (2012) evidences the processes through which a civilizing spurt took place from the Renaissance period in Europe, more particularly in England, France and Germany. By using the concept of 'civilizing' processes, Elias (2012) was describing a complex interweaving of social processes through which people in the secular upper classes gradually came to display greater self-restraint over their emotive drives. Over time, such developments allowed people to increasingly exercise higher degrees of foresight in their actions, whilst trends towards greater self-restraint amongst the upper classes also allowed such groups to display their social prestige over others (Elias, 2012). It should be noted that there have been no human societies

whereby human beings have not been socialised into controlling their biological drives and emotions in some capacity (Elias, 2012). However, Elias (2012) sought to explain why a civilizing spurt took place in these countries of Western Europe in the period between the Middle Ages and the early 20th century. In doing so, Elias's (2012) empirical-theoretical approach enabled him to develop conceptual terms that have become central themes within figurational sociology. These themes have subsequently been used by figurational sociologists to examine key social issues and social processes in PE.

Elias (2012) argued that changes in state-formations were interrelated with changes in people's psyche; a process he described as the relationship between sociogenesis and psychogenesis. During the Middle Ages, a series of elimination battles between different Feudal lords gradually contributed to the rise of absolutist states and the monopolisation of key power resources, such as violence and taxes (Elias, 2012). The increasing centralisation of power resources within emerging nation-states meant that people were increasingly expected to control more violent and affective forms of behaviour. Shifts towards more pacified societies gradually enabled denser networks of people to become interdependent within and between different social groups (Elias, 2012). Within more pacified and interdependent nation-states, competitive struggles increasingly involved degrees of civilized behaviour within court societies. Members of the secular upper classes sought to distance themselves from the members of other social groups, whilst also expressing their national superiority over peers in neighbouring nation-states (Elias, 2012). Such social processes gradually led to changes in social constraints, as courtiers began to internalise more civilized behaviours as an integral aspect of their psyche. This process namely involved courtiers displaying greater self-restraint over their emotions and behaviours (Elias, 2012).

For the most part, this long-term civilizing process involved formalization processes. One-way these processes were evidenced was in long-term transformations in people's conduct and the manners

they displayed in public (Elias, 2012). In more pacified court societies, behavioural refinement and emotional control became increasingly significant as power chances increasingly revolved around acquiring “*symbolic capital, status and prestige*” (Van Krieken, 1998, 88 original emphasis). Guided by etiquette manuals, the way courtiers stood, spoke, ate and danced became a central part of their identity and held great significance in terms of their social positioning (Elias, 2012). Seeking prosperity, power and prestige, people outside of the secular upper classes modelled court etiquette to varying degrees (Elias, 2012). The gradual dispersion of court etiquette to other social groups led to diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties in people’s behavioural norms. Such formalization processes help to explain why court rationality predated much legal rationality in acting as a moderator of people’s behavioural norms.

Whilst neither linear nor smooth, Elias (2012) argued that in overall terms, a long-term civilizing process took place within Europe from the Renaissance period into the 19th century. Elias (2012) argued that this long-term civilizing process involved gradual equalizing trends in power relations between different social groups. This was largely due to the emergence of increasingly complex networks of human interdependencies, as witnessed in social processes such as urbanization and industrialization. Referring to gradual equalizing trends in power relationships as indicative of processes of functional democratization, Elias (2012) also noted that such changes meant that the closer physically and symbolically that members from different social groups became, the more people tried to emulate the socially desired behaviours of those above them within the social hierarchy. Elias (2012) suggested that such trends contributed to diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties in people’s behavioural norms.

As well as stressing formalization processes, Elias (2012) noted that informalizing processes were also an integral part of this long-term civilizing process. Building on the work of Elias, Wouters (1986) identified that from the late 19th century, diminishing levels of formality concerning displays of

manners and emotions in public gradually took place. Less formal social constraints meant that people could experiment more in how they spoke, what they wore and how they expressed their identity in comparison to the more formal court etiquette that had emerged in previous centuries (Elias, 2012). These informalization processes were most prominent during the 1880s, 1920s and 1960s (Wouters, 2007). However, they were often followed by re-formalizing trends, as evidenced in the 1980s (Wouters, 2007). These shifts and trends illustrate the ongoing formalization and informalization processes across this period.

Arguably, informalizing processes involve a more nuanced process of socio-psycho genesis centred on what Elias and Wouters referred to as a highly controlled decontrolling of emotional controls. For instance, Elias (1978, 187) noted that the gradual relaxation of modest bathing costumes for women could only take place “in a society in which a high degree of restraint is taken for granted”. Therefore, the removal of more strict social constraints placed higher demands on peoples’ levels of self-constraint (Elias, 1998). In this sense, whilst behavioural and emotional alternatives increased, so too did heightened expectations of people’s self-discipline. Elias (1998, 207) referred to this process as the “complexity of the civilizing movement of our time”. In relation to this thesis, it is important to appreciate that the occurrence of such long-term formalization and informalization processes have contributed to long-term continuities and changes in behavioural norms. Given such trends, civilizing processes, functional democratization and diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties have become central tenets within figurational sociology (Malcolm & Mansfield, 2013), and are therefore drawn upon throughout the rest of this chapter.

2.2 Civilized bodies, unintended long-term social processes and PE

Elias (2012) considered human bodies as empirical indicators of broader civilizing processes. For instance, Elias (2012) suggested that changes in how people performed universally necessary biological acts, such as defecating, during the Renaissance period were indicative of increasing

concern and gradual trends towards heightened manners. He argued that such developments were part of broader processes of formalization. During the Renaissance period, demonstrating behaviours that were indicative of *more* civilized bodies increasingly became a marker of distinction, prestige and social standing, whilst *less* civilized forms of embodiment carried greater feelings of shame and repugnance than had been the case in the Middle Ages (Shilling, 2012). With increasing importance placed on bodily refinement and bodily performance, came concomitant trends towards greater surveillance and greater external and self-regulation over people's bodies (Shilling, 2012). Therefore, as well as being socially significant, such levels of embodiment contributed to shifts in the psyche of courtiers. For example, members of the nobility and upper secular classes gradually experienced shifts from a warrior personality to a courtier personality, a process Elias (2012) referred to as the courtization of warriors. Whilst informalization processes have involved a relaxation of bodily regulation, many of the bodily customs and manners learned and embodied in contemporary Western societies have footprints in the court societies across Western Europe during the Renaissance. One such example is the often socially desirable embodiment of *courteous* behaviour.

Through the notion of civilized bodies, Elias incorporates biogenesis into his idea of socio-psycho genesis (Atkinson, 2012). In reference to this synergetic process, Elias referred to 'the hinge' in order to denote the relationship between learned and unlearned "knowledge, behaviours, emotions and modalities of embodiment" (Atkinson, 2012, 54). Whilst born with species-specific susceptible hard-wiring, humans' learning of sophisticated communicative systems is inherently social (Elias, 2001). Children undergo an individual civilizing process whereby they learn self-restraint over their human drives and instincts. However, the degrees of such learning are largely determined by socio-cultural expectations at the time (Elias, 2012). One outcome of long-term broader civilizing processes has been that young people now undergo a lengthier and more complex individual civilizing process compared with their distant ancestors (Elias, 2012). This is

because children learn to embody a stock of social knowledge that has been accumulated and passed down over centuries. As such, the customs learned by one generation become repressed into the unconsciousness of later generations, a process Elias referred to as 'sociological inheritance'.

The individual civilizing process of young boys and their development of civilized bodies was considered by Monaghan (2014). Monaghan's ethnography of a college-based 'Health and Youth' pilot initiative in a working-class area of the North-East of England involved 90-minute weekly sessions over a 12-week period. This initiative was directed at 10 boys aged between 14 and 16 years who were deemed by school officials as being 'unruly' and 'at risk of school exclusion' (Monaghan, 2014). Monaghan (2014) problematised the development of moral and physical citizenship through sport and physical activity. He argued that despite intentions to tackle the 'war on obesity', this programme evidenced educators' efforts to instil middle-class notions of civility into working-class boys. This process included promoting social fitness, more so than physical or metabolic fitness. It also included attempts to instil better manners, more respectful behaviour and higher levels of self-restraint amongst these boys (Monaghan, 2014). However, the programme failed in its anti-obesity and civilizing agenda. By highlighting boys' bodies and weight-related topics, a social dynamic emerged whereby cruder forms of bullying regarding 'fatness' occurred. As a result, some boys felt heightened levels of shame and embarrassment regarding their bodies (Monaghan, 2014).

Monaghan's (2014) findings provide several noteworthy considerations for this thesis. These boys' bodies had been defined as less civilized by adult school officials and health workers. Such officials and workers had the authority to intervene in the lives of these boys in order to instil what they considered expected standards of social fitness. Intervention equated to attempts to socially control boys' bodies by instilling discipline through persuasion and punitive measures, such as

convincing them to eat healthier or removing them from the group. The active promotion of greater self-regulation illustrated the power advantages of school officials over pupils and their civilizing capacity, although boys parodying of this initiative also revealed underlying power struggles at play. The internalisation of crude humour and verbal bullying as a determinant of feelings of shame for some of the boys does however illustrate the central role of the body in young people's sense of self.

In PE, body-based shame has also been attributed to young people's exposing of semi-naked or nude bodies whilst changing into kit or showering. Frydendal and Thing (2019) sought to understand why many young people in Denmark have increasingly chosen not to shower after PE during the last few decades. They observed 42 gender integrated PE lessons of 240 pupils and conducted eight focus groups involving 64 pupils aged 15-17 years in one middle-class school. Describing the process of getting changed into PE kit, pupils indicated that exposing their naked bodies evoked fear based on the perceived judgements of others and could induce feelings of shame and embarrassment. Similarly, a fear of showering meant that some students tried less in PE in order to sweat less and not smell for the rest of the day (Frydendal & Thing, 2019). Some boys dealt with such fear or emotional discomfort through humour, a process that Scheff (1988, cited in Frydendal & Thing, 2019) refers to as bypassed shame.

Within the broader school context, Frydendal and Thing's (2019) findings provide pertinent insight into experiences which are relatively unique to the subject of PE. Young people's experiences of PE were partly impacted by their heightened levels of self-consciousness evoked during practices such as communal showering. The levels of potential shame induced by exposing naked bodies are indicative of long-term shifts towards greater taboos attached to public displays of nudity (Elias, 2012). Historically, such perceived social constraints became internalised into people's psyche, heightening their levels of self-restraint. However, over the last half century, Denmark has

experienced informalizing shifts towards a more liberal, open and free-body culture (Frydendal & Thing, 2019). The young people involved in this study are likely to have posted aesthetic body pictures on social media platforms, for example, although this is likely to have been in a selective and controlled manner. In a less stage-managed PE context, these young people held sensitivities concerning nudity in public and went to great lengths to avoid it. Therefore, these findings provide two theoretical insights. They evidence that, whilst individually felt, such emotions experienced are socially triggered and representative of broader figurational social dynamics. Whilst perhaps more speculative, they also possibly illustrate a shift towards degrees of re-formalizing bodily processes.

As indicated in this section, long-term civilizing processes involved the gradual development of civilized bodies, which are biologically, psychologically, socially, culturally and historically situated. Civilized bodies are therefore open, malleable and susceptible to change. This was evidenced in the civilizing spurt that led to more refined, controlled and disciplined bodies in the period between the Middle Ages and the early 20th century. However, as Elias (2012, 377) noted, the civilizing process “always leaves scars”. In the cases presented here, scars were body-informed and shame-induced, illustrating that, as well as being markers of distinction and pride, bodies can also be deemed shameful by oneself or others, induce embarrassment and promote ridicule (Shilling, 2012). Given the emphasis within the NCPE (DoE, 2013) on physical and health development, such issues provide a pertinent reminder of the potential unintended social consequences that can result from intended civilizing agendas and also part-illustrate the significance of the body in young people’s sense of selves and peer-group dynamics.

2.3 Long-term changes in teacher-pupil relations

Alongside peer-relationships, the experiences of pupils in PE are also influenced by interactions with their teachers. Teacher-pupil relations in modern schools are part of, and indicative of, broader adult-child relations that have developed over many centuries. Elias (1998) examined how

adults and children identified with themselves and related to each other on physical, emotional and intellectual levels. Elias (1998) compared children in simpler pre-industrialised agrarian societies and more complex post-industrialised capitalist societies and argued that children's individual civilizing process was "temporarily shorter and less deep-rooted" in simpler societies. For example, Inuit children's play is closely linked to adult tasks such as hunting. Furthermore, at a symbolic and practical level, initiation ceremonies in simpler societies offer children quicker transitions into adulthood (Elias, 1998). In comparison, in more complex societies, children prepare for adulthood in schools and not through direct contact with adult social worlds. Elias (1998) argued that this makes the transition from childhood to adulthood longer and more challenging, a viewpoint also partly informed by findings from a research project that involved interviews with 882 school leavers in the 1960s. Elias found that young people faced difficulties in controlling and monitoring their impulses and feelings when managing adult relations centred on both co-operation and competition (Goodwin & O'Connor, 2015).

Children's individual civilizing processes are partly determined by, and indicative of, broader civilizing processes (Van Krieken, 1998). For instance, the civilizing spurt during the Renaissance period meant that children of the secular upper classes were increasingly expected to embody greater codes of behavioural formality outlined in manners books, such as Erasmus's (1530) *On Civility in Children*. In comparison with Feudal times, greater levels of expected emotional self-restraint created greater emotional distance between children and adults (Elias, 2012). For example, it became increasingly necessary for adults to exercise greater self-awareness and self-restraint when regulating "their immediate responses to children's relatively 'uncivilized' expressions of their impulses and desires" (Elias, 1998, 208). This process contributed to parents, teachers and significant others developing greater mutual identification towards children's needs and, if deemed necessary, adapting their behaviours accordingly.

Further demonstrating changes in adult-child relations, Dolan (2016) examined long-term changes in teacher-pupil relations by analysing teaching manuals, government policies and school inspector reports relating to Irish primary schools. From 1830-1909, teaching manuals explained that “children are less able to control their emotions, so it was considered best to allow children’s emotional outbursts” (Dolan, 2016, 542-543). Similarly, teachers were advised to allow children “cheerful freedom – a moderate indulgence in that joyous fun and glee they so much love” (Dolan, 2016, 542). Further accommodating children’s needs, teachers were warned “not to laugh when a child is hurt, not to taunt or ridicule them...nor triumph over his pupils when they are suffering” and, instead, to adopt “easy, civil, and respectful behaviour” (Dolan, 2016, 542). This process included teachers being warned against counter-productive practices of over-disciplining children, “for children governed in this way are orderly only in presence of the teacher” (Dolan, 2016, 542). These findings offer several theoretical insights from a figurational sociological perspective as they example an expansion in the range of behaviours and emotions that teachers and pupils demonstrated within the school setting. They also illustrate the gradual changing expectations for teachers to recognise children’s specific characters and evidence the need for teachers to adapt their practices accordingly. This process involved the increasing need for teachers to keep their own emotions in check. Likewise, children had to gradually learn to demonstrate greater self-control and self-compulsion in the absence of more immediate teacher-led social constraints. At a broader level, these findings arguably illustrate a shift from formalized towards more informalized teacher-pupil relations. Such evidence of greater mutual identification also arguably demonstrates a shift towards increasing functional democratization in teacher-pupil relations over the 19th century in Ireland.

Entering the 20th century, there have been further examples of trends towards informalization and functional democratization in adult-child relations. For example, the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child* (1959) pronounced children’s right to special protection and their right to

protection from discrimination. Such developments were evident in the renunciation of corporeal punishments such as caning in schools. There was also a concomitant trend towards an increasing questioning of hierarchical authority-based teacher-pupil relations on the grounds of legitimacy and productiveness (Wouters, 2007). This process coincided with a gradual loosening in the barriers of children's automatic respect towards teachers (Wouters, 2007). Across most Western societies, the cumulative effect of such changes has meant that children can expect to experience teacher-pupil relations that are based more on negotiation, dialogue and greater degrees of equality, rather than the threat of physical violence (Van Krieken, 1998). As previously evidenced, this trend has not necessarily loosened children's self-restraints, as feelings of guilt and greater levels of personal responsibility have ensured that children exercise appropriate levels of self-control. It is therefore more accurate to say that teacher-pupil relations have become increasingly based on greater levels of *mutual respect* (Wouters, 2007).

Providing a more contemporary insight into teacher-pupil relations, Smith et al. (2009) conducted 24 focus groups with 153 children aged 15 and 16 years. Their findings revealed that PE teachers provided pupils greater activity choice and adopted a more informal approach in delivery. PE teachers also demonstrated a willingness to accommodate pupils' preferences and met Year 11 pupils' expectations to be consulted during such processes (Smith et al. 2009). This more democratic process was primarily driven by the pupils' age as well as teachers feeling more compelled to meet these young peoples' changing sporting and lifestyle preferences and demands (Smith et al. 2009). However, the power differentials between PE teachers and pupils still favoured the former. For instance, PE teachers would load activity choice options in favour of their deep-seated preference for traditional team games (Smith et al. 2009). Findings such as these question the common stereotypes and media portrayals of PE teachers as authoritarian drill sergeants or bullies (McCullick et al. 2003; Pugsley et al. 1996). Instead, teacher-pupil relations in PE appeared somewhat indicative of broader processes of informalization and functional democratization in

adult-child relations. Therefore, it is important to note that equalizing shifts had taken place between PE teachers and older pupils. As emerging young adults who were more aware of their rights, older pupils seemed to expect more democratic and dialogue-based teacher-pupil relations. Seemingly aware of this, PE teachers mutually identified more with older pupils, perhaps having developed a relationship with them over a period of three or four years. It appeared that the closer physically, emotionally and symbolically that teachers and pupils perceived their relationship to be, the more equal and less formal their relations became.

In regard to this thesis, it is evident that teacher-pupil relations take place within, and are part of, and are indicative of broader civilizing processes. In modern day complex Western societies, teacher-pupil relations are influenced by, and are a central part of, children's individual civilizing processes. In this sense, the individual civilizing process provides a lens to consider what forms of behavioural refinement and emotional self-restraint differentiate children from adults in MPE.

2.4 Long-term changes in gender relations in modern sport

PE is viewed by teachers (Green, 2000) and pupils (Smith & Parr, 2007) as synonymous with sport. Therefore, long-term continuities and changes in relationships, identities and behavioural norms in sport are often representative of those within PE. Modern sport has a gendered history and continues to involve ideological battles between, and sometimes within, the sexes (Liston, 2018). Elias and Dunning (1986) also argued that modern sport's emergence and development was indicative of broader civilizing processes. For instance, modern sports are less violent, more rule-bound and involve greater levels of fair play than pre-modern sports (Elias & Dunning, 1986). However, whilst modern sport generally illustrates a shift from affective to more instrumental forms of violence, many modern sports still continue to involve relatively high levels of violence in comparison with many other facets of social life (Dunning, 1986). This is largely because broader civilizing processes have meant that in increasingly pacified societies, relatively high degrees of

emotional and physical control are socially required and socially rewarded. Therefore, modern sports are one of the few social spheres where mimetic forms of violence can be experienced and celebrated without evoking feelings of shame, embarrassment or repugnance (Elias & Dunning, 1986). Modern sport therefore provides de-routinizing opportunities that offer those involved a quest for excitement (Elias & Dunning, 1986).

The legitimate use of aggression and violence in modern sport has proved particularly significant for males (Dunning, 1999). Throughout much of human history, males have monopolised key power resources through violent means (Dunning, 1999). However, as part of broader civilizing processes, shifts towards technological warfare and labour have de-valued the physical superiority that many male bodies have traditionally enjoyed in comparison with many females (Dunning, 1999). Therefore, modern forms of sport have provided males with opportunities to prove their perceived physical and psychological superiority over females (Matthews, 2016). In doing so, modern sport has enabled males to rearticulate and reiterate male social power (Matthews, 2016). To further understand gender relations in sport, it is necessary to acknowledge modern sport's gendered origins. Modern sport was socially constructed by and for males (Dunning, 1999). Due to a range of complex social processes, few females were involved in sport throughout much of the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries (Hargreaves, 2002). However, the mid-to-late 20th century has witnessed the increasing involvement of women in many previously male preserve sports, such as horse racing (Velija & Flynn, 2010). Despite being challenged at an ideological level, males have continued to monopolise key power resources such as knowledge, organisation and networks within modern sport (Velija & Flynn, 2010). This means that whilst processes of functional democratization between males and females have taken place over the last century, modern sport has evidenced ongoing power struggles including male resistance, gender conflict and continued male advantages over key power resources.

The gendered ideological supremacy that males experienced during the early modern sport period can be explained by gender relations during Victorian Britain. Modern sport emerged in Britain during the 18th and 19th centuries, at a time when science and attitudes towards gender presented males and females as diametrically opposed in biology and psyche (Hargreaves, 2002). For instance, female bodies were considered more moral (Hargreaves, 2002), whilst male bodies were deemed as weapons in need of civilizing (Messner, 2007). These perceptions of gendered civilized bodies are still evident in contemporary sport. For example, despite female entry and success in traditional male preserves such as boxing, females are still often perceived as having 'softer' emotions and less-violent bodies in comparison with males (Thing, 2001). This process has contributed to some females internalising their perceived gendered civilized bodies by experiencing shame when displaying facial markings due to prize fighting (Mierzwinski et al. 2014). These gendered experiences within modern sport and physical activity demonstrate the role of emotions as mediating factors, whilst also illustrating the role of shame as an affective social control mechanism.

Modern sport can also have gendered significance at an identity level. Maguire (1992) argued that modern sport has increasingly become a significant part of people's sense of self through the symbolic significance of emotional experiences that it arouses. Maguire (1992) referred to this process as a quest for exciting significance. For example, females in full-contact sports enjoy "performing the 'female warrior' identity" (Thing, 2001, 285-286). Furthermore, female Mixed Martial Art and Muay Thai athletes 'found themselves' by gaining greater self-confidence in being assertive (Mierzwinski & Phipps, 2015). They also felt a greater sense of self-worth through receiving mutual respect during mixed-sex training (Mierzwinski & Phipps, 2015). These findings suggest that identity formation in and through sport can also involve a quest for self-realisation. This process has gendered significance as many sports embody perceived male values and character, which have been considered one of the last bastions of traditional forms of masculinity (Dunning & Sheard, 1979). Therefore, modern sport has often provided single-sex spaces for the

“inculcation, expressions and perpetuation of masculine habituses, identities, behaviour and ideals” (Dunning & Maguire, 1996, 226).

It is evident that many modern sports have had a gendered and sex-segregated history. The ongoing resistance from males and some females for change has meant that gender relations in sport often remain more unequal than those across other facets of society. In England, modern sport has provided masculine validating experiences for males and enabled symbolic expressions of machismo. Whilst modern sport has provided a function from which males have benefitted in terms of status, power and identity, notions of gendered civilized bodies illustrate shame-induced social control in terms of sports participation. However, of significance for this thesis is that even those males that have not been persuaded by what modern sport offers still often “grow to develop an internalised adjustment to it” (Dunning & Maguire, 1996, 297). This gendered socialisation process can induce feelings of pride and shame amongst boys regarding their ability to display gendered civilized sporting bodies. This may mean that during an impressionable phase of boys’ gender identity formation, they potentially learn what it means to be a socially acceptable boy, based on modern sport’s traditional and stereotypical gender norms. As such, sporting socialisation can influence boys at identity, relational and behavioural levels.

2.5 Long-term changes in gender-relations in PE in the UK

Like modern sport, modern PE emerged during the mid-to-late 19th century and has a gendered history (Dunning & Sheard, 1979). Emerging in British public schools for boys drawn from socially elite families, modern PE aimed to exert greater social control over boys’ unruliness and sexual urges (Dunning & Sheard, 1979). Social control was primarily instilled through a “games ethic” based on virtues of fair play and gentlemanly conduct (Dunning & Sheard, 1979). This process of civilizing boys’ bodies and instilling a ‘manly’ character was deemed to serve a dual purpose. It was considered a necessary response given the perceived feminisation of British society (Mangan, 1983).

It was also considered a significant process in the making of future leaders to serve the Crown and Empire (Mangan, 1983). During these periods, gender relations between males and females were vastly unequal in favour of males in terms of politics, education and public space (Hargreaves, 2002). For instance, the emergence of public schools for middle and upper-class girls in the mid-to-late 19th century involved physical activities that had to take place away from public view (Hargreaves, 2002). Additionally, these behind closed doors activities still involved girls adhering to strict behavioural codes that emphasised traditional notions of femininity (McCrone, 1988).

This gendered schooling and PE process remained consistent until the Second World War. The 1944 Education Act ensured secondary education for 'all' children in England. However, initially, PE for boys and girls was taught mainly by women (Flintoff & Scraton, 2005). These women had been trained in a distinctive 'female tradition' since the late 19th century (Flintoff & Scraton, 2005). Therefore, gymnastics featured prominently and was incorporated through Ling, Educational and Olympic forms (Kirk, 1998). Although, these forms of gymnastics were gendered. When girls did asymmetric bars and the beam, they were expected to be dainty, nimble and flexible (Kirk, 1998). However, when boys performed on the rings and the pommel, they were required to produce strong and powerful performances (Kirk, 1998). By the late-1950s, male teachers had become the majority within the PE profession and advocated a nationalistic-inspired return to sports and the games model (Kirk, 1998). Resultantly, by the end of the 1960s, gymnastics had been pushed to the margins of secondary PE practice (Whitehead & Hendry, 1976). Instead, boys practiced football, rugby and cricket, whilst girls practiced hockey, netball and rounders (Whitehead & Hendry, 1976). Collectively, these trends meant that from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s, PE had become increasingly dominated by more traditional male views on gender.

From the 1970s, second-wave feminism was prominent across Western societies, and included liberal, radical and socialist strands (Flintoff & Scraton, 2005). Progressive policies such as the 1975

Sex Discrimination Act meant that education became more equal between the sexes. Liberal feminists contested the gendered differences in activities, the gendered socialising practices, and the gendered stereotypical attitudes in PE (Flintoff & Scraton, 2005). They also sought gender equality through equal access to facilities and opportunities (Flintoff & Scraton, 2005). Radical feminists believed that patriarchal structures and the promotion of heterosexuality had contributed to girls being socialised into learning female forms of physicality linked to notions of appearance and control, whilst boys learnt male forms of physicality through competition and aggression (Flintoff & Scraton, 2005; Hargreaves, 2002). Socialist feminists focused more holistically on gender relations between and within the sexes. This included examining how different groups of boys were hierarchically ordered (Flintoff & Scraton, 2005). Despite these feminist strands influencing various facets of society, PE remained centred on an established male view (Kirk, 1998), not least as men continued to occupy more head of department positions (Evans & Williams, 1989). This led Hargreaves (2002) to argue that girls have often been expected to play like boys and those that did not become perceived as a problem group in terms of participation and engagement within PE.

The introduction of the national curriculum in 1988 promised greater gender equality. This promise arrived a decade after earlier similar liberal educational principles proclaimed children “regardless of their sex...have the same access to broadly the same good and relevant curriculum” (DES, 1978, 4, cited in Flintoff & Scraton, 2005, 163). More specifically, the introduction of curricula PE in 1992 sought to undermine traditional gender stereotypes by claiming to meet all pupils’ needs and provide equal opportunities for boys and girls to access a broad and balanced curriculum (Green, 2007). Despite these liberal policies, traditional gendered patterns remained (Green, 2007), and PE continued in many respects to be a masculine subject (Kirk, 1998). For example, Waddington et al.’s (1998) survey of 84 PE teachers found that only 17% of Heads of PE departments were women. Although, whilst Sport England’s (2002) *Young People and Sport* large-scale dataset revealed that

boys and girls were participating equally in sport within schools, it was also evident that their participation remained in traditional 'gender-appropriate' sports. Girls were more likely to do dance, aerobics and swimming, whilst boys were more likely to play contact sports such as football and rugby. These notions of 'gender-appropriateness' concurred with PE teachers' views at the time (Waddington et al. 1998).

Approaching the 2010s, gendered differences in PE still appeared to be largely based on perceived notions of gender appropriateness. Questionnaire responses from 1010 young people aged 15-16 years across six secondary schools found that whilst taking part in different 'gender-appropriate' sports and activities, participation rates amongst girls and boys were roughly the same (Smith et al. 2007). There was little gender difference in participation within striking games, racket games, outdoor and adventurous activity, athletics and gymnastics (Smith et al. 2007). However, 80% of boys frequently participated in invasion games compared with 48% of girls (Smith et al. 2007). The same lifestyle activities were participated in by boys and girls at the same rates, but there was 16% variance in gendered participation across different schools (Smith et al. 2007). This variance may highlight the influence that teachers, and their gendered-stereotypical perceptions, or social class, could have on the degrees of gendered provision and participation in PE (Smith et al. 2007).

Whilst gender relations may have changed little, there has been ongoing academic theorising concerning issues of gender in PE. Emerging in the 1990s, post-structural feminism became a prominent means from which academics examined gender in PE and was further popularised from the 2000s onwards. Often drawing on the theorising of Bourdieu and Foucault, post-structural feminists emphasise the pluralities of gender identities and gender relations (Flintoff & Scraton, 2005). Post-structural feminists have also tended to focus on difference and diversity, alongside considering issues of social power relating to language and bodies (Flintoff & Scraton, 2005). Compared with other subjects, bodies become more visible in PE and PE involves social practices

that reinforce normative ideologies of masculinities, femininities and sexuality in terms of difference (Flintoff & Scraton, 2005). For instance, Velija and Kumar (2009) found the experiences of GCSE PE for 16 girls aged 14-16 years were shaped by their embodiment of gender. This gendered process reinforced ideologies about girls' bodies in relation to boys' bodies (Velija & Kumar, 2009). From such experiences, these girls internalised the belief that their bodies were gendered, inferior and diametrically opposed to boys' bodies (Velija & Kumar, 2009).

Over the last century, it is evident that gender relations within PE have remained resistant to change and continue to involve conventional gendered customs and practices. Convention has entailed a continuation of stereotypical views concerning gender appropriateness. Evans et al. (1996, 169) referred to this process as widespread "pedagogic traditionalism". Part of this process involved teachers, who Waddington et al. (1998, 45) claim use "pseudo-educational rationales to support such stereotypical views". Resultantly, PE involves social processes and bodily practices whereby young people either learn traditional forms of gender identities or have their views of masculinity and femininity reinforced or challenged. Research and theorising on gender relations in PE has highlighted gendered differences in content, style and delivery methods, and evidenced gendered forms of social power. Therefore, in regard to this thesis, it is important to examine and appreciate gendered issues of relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE.

2.6 A figurational conceptualisation of relationships

To conceptualise relationships from a figurational perspective, the concepts of interdependence and power are central. Elias (1978, 100) defined sociology as being "concerned with people; its central issues are their interdependencies". Humans are interdependent beings because from birth they are dependent on one another to survive, thrive and reproduce (Dunning & Hughes, 2013). Networks of interdependencies are often function-based as they can be based on human needs or desires, such as food or love (Dunning, 1999). Conceiving humans as inextricably interdependent

has theoretical implications. This is because much sociological theorising has traditionally been centred on structure versus agency debates. These debates distinguish and separate individuals from the societies that they form (Elias, 1978). However, Elias (1978) argued that these debates offer a false dichotomy because they fail to appreciate and recognise that humans are inescapably part of networks of social interdependencies.

Elias (1978) argued that structure versus agency debates adopt a closed person (*homo clausus*) model of human beings. Elias (1978) opposed this model, and instead advocated an open person (*homines aperti*) model of human beings as, he argued, this model can help to better conceive humans' inextricable interdependencies. To help conceptualise an open person model, Elias (1978) adopted the term figuration in order to denote a fluid processual network of mutually orientated and dependent people. Elias preferred figuration to terms such as systems and structures because he contended that these more abstract terms can detach individuals from the structures that they form (Dunning & Hughes, 2013). Therefore, Elias (1978) suggested that the term figuration enables sociologists to avoid speaking and thinking of individuals and society as if they were separate, or different. Given that people's mutual dependencies vary in density, length and visibility, the concept of figuration can be applied to every aspect of human societies (Dunning, 1999). For instance, relationships within and between families can be conceived as a figuration, as can those within and between national governments (Quilley & Loyal, 2005).

Within human figurations, mutual needs and functional interdependencies create asymmetrical power relations (Mennell, 1998). This means that all human relations are underpinned by ever-changing balances of power, rather than zero-sum relationships (Mennell, 1998). This relational conceptualisation of power means that no one person can technically be all powerful or powerless within interdependent relationships, or totally control a figuration (Mennell, 1998). It also means that power is not conceived as a substance, object or property that could be possessed or lost by

certain human beings/groups, and not by others (Dunning & Hughes, 2013). The master-slave relationship is an extreme example that can be used to serve this point. The labour function that slaves provide ensures a degree of interdependence in their relations with their master. However, the master's monopoly of power within this relationship means that they can significantly constrain the behaviours of slaves (Mennell, 1998). As illustrated here, it is more appropriate to conceptualise human beings' actions as being enabled and constrained by the figural dynamics that they are part of and form (Mennell, 1998). This conceptualisation contrasts with more static, one-way and negative conceptualisations of power, as often witnessed in Marxist or feminist research. In its focus on oppressive systems of economics and gender respectively, much Marxist and feminist research can provide reductive and value-laden accounts of power (Dunning & Hughes, 2013). In offering a relational concept of power that is flux and varied, a figural approach to issues of power is arguably more pluralistic.

Figural sociologists have applied the concept of figuration to PE. They have examined the networks of interdependencies that PE teachers form and are part of. They have also examined how these interdependencies effect their relations, practices and behaviours within PE. For instance, Green's (2001) interviews with 35 PE teachers across 17 schools in the North-West of England identified constraints at macro and micro levels. Green (2001, 69) noted how "structurally generated pressures" came from OFSTED officials, head of departments and head teachers. In terms of the latter, one example included PE teachers being encouraged and pressured to facilitate examinable PE at GCSE and A-Level (Green, 2001). Exemplifying a micro pressure, PE teachers recalled incidents where parents requested more GCSE PE places (Green, 2001). It should be noted that some teachers embraced these constraining pressures as it enabled them more professional status, educational worth and possibility of career trajectory (Green, 2001). In this sense, power relations between teachers and significant others can involve both enabling and constraining social processes within PE.

Further revealing how seven PE teachers face macro as well as micro pressures, Smith and Green (2004) studied Special Educational Needs (SEN) in PE. During interviews, PE teachers recalled how their practices were constrained by present, as well as past, established views of a dominant sporting ideology (Smith & Green, 2004). This ideology was espoused by experienced PE teachers and evidenced in the importance placed on winning performances in school sport fixtures (Smith & Green, 2004). Whilst this ideology met the needs of ultra-competitive sporty pupils, PE teachers also expressed how this ideology constrained their ability to meet the needs of pupils with SEN (Smith & Green, 2004). Smith and Green (2004) contend that this double bind is in some respect perpetuated by a NCPE that privileges achievement in sport and team games, which are activities in which SEN pupils may experience more difficulties.

Completing a similar study with 12 PE teachers, Haycock and Smith (2010) reported that PE teachers referenced contradictions in the government's commitment to inclusive education and competitive sport. Believing that these contradictory pressures made pupils' experiences of PE more unequal, PE teachers described feeling trapped in conflict-laden positions (Haycock & Smith, 2010). In response, PE teachers often adopted a reactive and pragmatic approach, rather than a principled and proactive approach (Haycock & Smith, 2010). Their approach involved compromises to overcome tension balances and power conflicts between members from direct and indirect interest groups. Invariably, whilst the NCPE was reported as becoming increasingly constraining over the last two decades, teachers tended to modify their practices to the maximum extent allowable (Haycock & Smith, 2010). These findings illustrate the enabling and constraining social processes on PE teachers' practice. However, they also reveal that as the implementors of the NCPE, PE teachers have some degree of flexibility and autonomy to adopt practices that also meet their lived realities.

In regard to this thesis, these findings are significant as they illustrate that in order to explain the views and practices of PE teachers, it is necessary to examine the figurations in which they have been in, and continue to be, involved in. PE teachers' actions are enabled and constrained by their involvement in complex networks of direct and indirect human interdependencies. Tension balances can result as chains of interdependence become more complex, and conflicting and contradictory agendas emerge. Therefore, PE teachers must try to contend with, accommodate and appease such agendas within the PE figuration in their school. The findings presented in this section also illustrate that PE teachers do not perform entirely from their own will. Instead, they often find that their practices can be enabled and constrained by figurational dynamics. One result of this is that social norms within PE continue to be partly historically produced, whereby sporting ideologies have been passed down from one generation of PE teachers to another. This provides an example of a process that Elias referred to as sociological inheritance. Therefore, normative views within the MPE figuration should be understood as outcomes of ongoing long-term social developments.

2.7 A figurational conceptualisation of identities

The process-orientated approach that is adopted by figurational sociologists extends to their conceptualisation of identities. For instance, Elias (1978, 118) recommended that sociologists "think people in constant motion; being in 'process' rather than simply going 'through a process'". Therefore, figurational sociologists conceive human identities as being in a constant state of flux and change. Conceiving humans themselves as processes is distinguishable from the popular developmental psychological perspectives of identity derived from Freud, Jung or Erikson. Developmental psychologists often offer linear, predetermined and predefined conceptualisations of identity formation that people enter and pass through (Gabriel, 2017). Figurational sociologists also conceptualise human identities as being socially informed. As such, Elias (1991, 37) recommended that sociologists "start from the structure of relations between individuals in order

to understand the 'psyche' of the individual person". In this sense, born into and remaining in figurations throughout their lives, human beings develop their 'I'- identity from understanding 'We'- and 'They'- identities (Elias, 1978). However, Elias (1978) argued very clearly that one cannot understand 'I'- identities without also understanding 'We'- and 'They'- identities. The development of an I- identity is rarely smooth, as people must negotiate tension balances and conflicts between 'I-We-They' identities. Therefore, people's identity formations and negotiations of 'I-We-They' identities are influenced by their relative power-chances within figurations, which involve enabling and constraining social processes.

Evidencing Elias's notion of social identities, Nielsen and Thing (2017) completed a five-year research project in a middle-class, predominantly white, Danish upper-secondary school. Data were generated from 93 narrative essay accounts written by young people aged 15-17 years, with particular focus on how young people detailed their negotiation of 'We-I' relationships in PE, in terms of their sporting identity. Nielsen and Thing (2017) found that teenagers highly valued dominant 'We'- identities and strove to be a part of, recognised by, and established within a dominant 'We' social group. One way for pupils to achieve this was to be part of, and accepted within, the football fraternity (Nielsen & Thing, 2017). Even those not particularly enamoured with the sport were attracted to football as a means of striving to become part of a dominant 'We' group (Nielsen & Thing, 2017). However, findings within this study also illustrated that identities and dominant 'We' groups within the PE figuration are not fixed. As young people grew older, they deemed football to have less identity-related significance, as other activities such as street-style skating were attached more value (Nielsen & Thing, 2017). Although identity-making activities could change with age, Nielsen and Thing (2017) found that striving to feel a sense of belonging and solidarity was a consistent reason for teenagers in their desire to become part of established 'We' social groups. This strive and desire could even override their defining 'I' values or norms, as the desire to not stand out as having a different 'I'- identity helped to strengthen 'We' social bonds

(Nielsen & Thing, 2017). Whilst teenagers gave a clear rationale, navigating the 'We-I' identity and dominant 'We' group was not a simple process. Teenagers reported the stresses in negotiating figurational dynamics and described the fine margins in the types of actions and behaviours that could centralise and marginalise power-relations within their PE figuration.

Nielsen and Thing's (2019) five-year research project also involved focus groups with 120 young people aged 15-17 years. They explored how these young people negotiated a sports culture within the prevailing youth culture. Young people described struggles with combining a sporting and dominant youth identity as they grow older. This was largely driven by conflicts between a healthy and physically active lifestyle and partying and drinking alcohol (Nielsen & Thing, 2019). When aged 11-14 years and in lower secondary school, young people described sport as being the prevailing status symbol and culture. However, in upper secondary school, young people aged 15-17 years entered and had to negotiate several figurations simultaneously (Nielsen & Thing, 2019). Such findings illustrate that in the PE figuration, an 'I'- sporting identity aligned with the dominant 'We'- identity for 11-14 years olds but this 'I'- identity did not transfer to the dominant 'We'- identity in non-PE figurations for 15-17 year olds (Nielsen & Thing, 2019). This complex process evidences how displaying a 'We'- identity can be situational, and both enabling and constraining at the same time. Where tension balances occurred, young sporty people tended to favour being part of the camaraderie within the dominant 'We' group, which was associated with the prevailing youth culture (Nielsen & Thing, 2019). In the context of this study's aim, these findings evidence the detrimental impact that dominant 'We' social groups and identity can have on young people's healthy lifestyles and drop-out rates in sports participation.

The findings from Nielsen and Thing (2017; 2019) studies illustrate the social and complex nature of young people's identity formations and expressions. For these young people, one of the cornerstones in their social lives was belonging to a dominant 'We' group and the solidarity that

came with it. This process meant that young people often had to navigate and negotiate their 'I'-identity in order to align with the prevailing 'We'-identity. The ability of teenagers to do this demonstrates that their identities are not fixed, stable or complete. It also illustrates young people's responsiveness to the changing figurational dynamics that they are part of. As evidenced, dominant 'We'-identities can change and differ within and between figurations, such as those linked to PE and youth culture. In regard to this thesis, it is therefore important to recognise that Nielsen and Thing (2017; 2019) dismiss ideas that young people's identities are self-steered by deep-lying motives. Instead, they suggest that identities are developed, negotiated and navigated in group-based social settings and through social relations. PE seemed to be one figuration that holds symbolic value for many young people in terms of their identity formation and self-realisation.

2.8 A figurational conceptualisation of behavioural norms

As discussed in the first half of this chapter, long-term formalization and informalization processes underpin expected behavioural norms through a process of socio-psycho genesis (Elias, 2012). Through this process, human beings develop a "second nature" that acts as a "blindly functioning apparatus of self-control" (Elias, 1978, 113). Elias referred to this process as habitus formation, and he used the term habitus to denote learned emotional and behavioural dispositions specific to a person (Mennell, 1998). As well as at an individual level, habitus can also operate at a shared level, whereby views, feelings and behavioural norms permeate amongst group members (Mennell, 1998). Similarly, social habitus denotes shared values, attitudes and behaviours within community or national groups of people and can form the script from which a person's individual habitus develops via the process of socio-psycho genesis (Mennell, 1998). For example, "children's learning to speak, to think, to act, takes place in a setting of social interdependencies" (Goudsblom, 1977, 7). Therefore, whilst deeply embedded at a psychological level, people's habitus formation is an inherently social process.

Given their similarities, it is useful to differentiate a figurational conceptualisation of identity and habitus. Human being's identities operate more at a conscious-based reflexive level when compared with their habitus formation. Within figurational social constraints, children can change their identities more fluidly than they can their habitus, which "cannot be simply changed like clothes" (Elias, 1991, 224). This can help to explain why during periods of rapid social transformations some people's attitudes and behaviours can be "psychologically tied to yesterday's social reality" (Elias, 1991, 211). In theorising the nuanced process of socio-psycho genesis that are involved in informalizing processes, Wouters (2011) proposed that human beings have developed a third nature psyche. Whilst a second nature habitus serves to suppress people's first nature instinctive impulses through the conscience, a third nature psyche removes such counter impulses and enables first nature drives and emotions to become more easily accessible in people's consciousness (Wouters, 2011). Wouters (2011) contends that this shift from conscience to consciousness enables greater flexibility and reflexivity in people's self-control mechanisms. For instance, Wouters (1977, 448) suggests that:

Young people's self-control in regard to sexuality has so much increased that they are able to think about expressing or repressing sexual urges or emotions. This heightened consciousness enables them far more than their parents and grandparents both to restrain and to express their impulses and emotions according to circumstance.

Placing this within the context of children's individual civilizing process, Wouters (2007) noted that children's engagement within a formality-informality span involves tension balances between behavioural expectations and behavioural experimentation in various aspects of their day-to-day lives.

Examining young people's socialisation into and through sport and physical activity, Smith and Haycock (2016) applied the concept of habitus. In the UK, during childhood, many children develop sporting habits and predispositions primarily through sporting, supportive and encouraging parents

(Smith & Haycock, 2016). This process of sports socialisation and the construction of a sporting habitus are not always smooth or universal, as such developments are influenced by parents various emotional, financial and cultural resources (Smith & Haycock, 2016). Whilst a child's predisposition to sport and subsequent sporting habitus is to some degrees influenced by social class, PE in schools can serve as a secondary form of sport socialisation (Smith & Haycock, 2016). However, in citing Parry's (2013) use of the 1970 British Cohort Study, Smith and Haycock (2016) question the extent to which PESS influences children's sporting habitus or confronts social inequalities relating to social class and sports participation.

PE teachers also enter their profession with an established habitus, formed primarily through their biography, sporting identities and past experiences of PE (Green, 2002a). This habitus formation "cannot easily be shaken off" (Elias, 1978, cited in Mennell & Goldsblom, 1998, 251). However, PE teachers also develop an individual teaching habitus via what Lawson (1983a, 1983b) describes as a process of occupational socialisation. Such processes often involve a close connection between personal and professional lived realities, as explored in Green's (2002a) interviews with 35 PE teachers. Green (2002a) found that PE teachers' philosophies were shaped by their networks of social relationships in past and present sporting figurations. Whilst PE teachers were not a homogeneous group, there was a shared and social habitus amongst PE teachers primarily revolving around sport (Green, 2002a). There was also shared understandings in PE teachers' views on the nature and purposes of PE and their justificatory ideologies of PE's worth (Green, 2002a).

The deeply embedded sporting habitus amongst PE teachers can partly help to explain the findings of some researchers that PE teachers can be difficult to train or develop (Armour, 2004, cited in Green, 2006). Such difficulties relate, in part, to an unwillingness amongst PE teachers to break their PE habitus, or to modify or change the way they teach (Capel, 2004, cited in Green, 2006). Such issues also contribute to PE teachers, at times, being unreliable in implementing policy

(Curtner-Smith, 1999, cited in Green, 2006). Whilst resistant to change, Green (2002a) did note that PE teachers' philosophies were also informed by wider social processes such as the healthization or academicization of PE, albeit unknowingly at times. In regard to this thesis, such findings demonstrate how the habitus that MPE teachers develop during their childhood can stay with them into their professional work life. This habitus can impact upon their identities and relationships within the MPE figuration, as well as their values, thoughts, practices and philosophies. At a theoretical level, this illustrates that, whilst habitus formation is most intense and impressionable during childhood, it does however also remain open to change during later life.

2.9 Figuration sociology applied to this thesis

Elias (1998, 192) encourages researchers to think processually and conduct diachronic analysis by recommending that they analyse data and present findings as "stills in a movie, as fragments of a process". Elias (1978) also suggested the use of suffixes such as 'ization' to denote the processual nature of social phenomena. He argued that this can help to avoid tendencies when speaking or writing in English to use verbs in order to describe moving objects. To illustrate his point, Elias noted how the expression 'the wind is blowing' also somehow implies that the wind can exist without blowing (Elias, 1978). Heeding Elias's recommendations, in this thesis figuration sociology is applied in three broad ways.

Firstly, a process-orientated approach is adopted to explore and examine long-term continuities and changes in relationships, identities and behavioural norms within the MPE figuration. For instance, as social constructions, teacher-pupil relations can, and should be, considered along long-term processes of continuity and change. This process involves relating teacher-pupil relations within wider social processes regarding adult-child relations, such as ongoing processes of functional democratization and informalization. This requires a more detached understanding of PE as a series of flux social processes rather than adopting a more present-day emotive or value-

laden snapshot of static or fixed states. This approach offers the opportunity to illustrate the social orthodoxies in PE that continue to permeate across different generations of PE teachers and boys, which are part of long-term social processes informing social developments.

Secondly, the concepts of figuration, interdependence and power relations are applied in order to theorise relationships within MPE. From this, networks of human interdependencies and the complex interweaving of enabling and constraining social processes within the MPE figuration are explored. This approach takes the view that teachers and pupils' views and practices cannot, and therefore should not, be considered as free rational behaviours independent of other individuals and groups within PE figurations (Green, 2000). As such, this process involves identifying key power resources in MPE and examining the relative power-chances of different groups within this social setting. As illustrated in Nielsen and Thing's (2019) work, the MPE figuration is also influenced by other overlapping figurations, in which many young people are increasingly involved. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge and consider the figuration networks that boys are part of, as these may influence relationships, identities and behavioural norms within the MPE figuration. It is also necessary to explore enabling and constraining social processes for boys within the MPE figuration. Through completing lesson observations over six months and across all secondary school year groups (11-16 years), attempts are made to capture the complex and 'messy' lived social processes in MPE. This process involves exploring how social processes vary in terms of context and situation, such as variations across ages and in different activities.

Thirdly, 'I-We-They' identities, habitus and third nature psyche are drawn upon in order to theorise people's identities and behavioural norms in MPE. Through a figuration approach, a process-orientated, relational and inherently social conceptualisation of identity and habitus within the MPE figuration is adopted. A process-orientated approach involves considering MPE teachers and boys as being themselves 'in process' in an attempt to provide a more reality congruent and less

static conceptualisation of dynamic human beings. At a collective level, it is these human beings who make up and inform complex and often 'messy' dynamic social processes in MPE. The processual nature of boys' gendered habitus and identity development, including differences across age-groups, are explored. This process involves seeking connections between habitus and identity development in terms of evidencing second and third nature psyches. Further focus is also provided on the gendered significance of enabling and constraining social processes at an 'I'- and 'We'- identity level. This process involves identifying dominant gendered social processes in MPE and exploring how boys negotiate 'We-I' identities and group balances.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, the process-orientated approach that is adopted by figural sociologists was outlined. Furthermore, the manner in which figural theoretical concepts have previously been applied to examine the experiences of pupils, teachers and others within school-based PE was presented. Then, how figural sociology will be used in this thesis was discussed and a framework of key theoretical concepts that will be applied throughout was displayed. In the following chapter, these concepts are adopted in order to critique common sociological theories that have been used to date in order to research relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE.

Chapter 3 Relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE: a sociological theoretical review

In the previous chapter, various key underpinning concepts within figurational sociology and the way such concepts will be tested and applied within this thesis were outlined. In this chapter, four other sociological theories that have previously been used by researchers to examine relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE are critically evaluated. In part, this process requires analysis and critique of empirical sociological research on MPE. To be included in this review, research had to be peer-reviewed and include data taken from formal compulsory secondary MPE lessons. Where numerous research articles were available, priority was given to research concerning English MPE and research spanning over three decades. This further inclusion criterion accommodated the socially constructive nature of PE as well as continuities and changes within the subject since its introduction into the English national curriculum in 1992. Towards the end of the chapter, potential empirical gaps and scope for further research are considered, which part informed the focus of this thesis.

3.1 Hegemonic masculinity and hierarchical relations in MPE

Connell's (2013[1987]) seminal concept of hegemonic masculinity is informed by Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony. Gramsci coined the term cultural hegemony to denote how legitimate forms of power are established and maintained by ruling groups (Connell, 2005). He argued that ruling groups monopolised power through institutional and cultural means, which oppressed people find difficult to challenge or overturn (Connell, 2005). Connell (2005) uses the term hegemonic masculinity to describe the most culturally exalted forms of masculinity within a particular social setting. Traditionally, hegemonic masculinity across Western societies entailed the embodiment of various characteristics (Connell, 2005). Common characteristics included competitiveness, toughness, aggressiveness, bravery and stoicism (Connell, 2005). Males who were unable to embody these masculine ideals represented complicit and subordinate forms of masculinity

(Connell, 2005). Connell (2005) contends that these forms of masculinity are significant as they serve to maintain hegemony in social relations between males, particularly in all-male settings.

Connell (2008) argued that hegemonic masculinity is the normative form of gender identity for boys in secondary MPE. Due to the often single-sex nature of PE and the focus on embodying physical and symbolic force over others, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been widely applied to MPE in British schools. For instance, through his ethnography, Parker (1996) observed and interviewed 19 boys aged 11-13 years in a multi-ethnic, working-class inner-city secondary school in the West Midlands. Parker (1996) suggested that MPE primarily involved three social groups, which he labelled the hard boys, conformists and victims. He found that hard boys embodied traditional masculine ideals, were violent towards victims and held anti-school attitudes. Violence tended to involve physical manoeuvres in which hard boys imitated their wrestling heroes, a practice they considered entertainment rather than a violent interaction (Parker, 1996). Whilst conformist boys did not embody traditional masculine ideals, they accepted hard boys' behaviour towards victims. This meant that victim boys not only failed to embody hegemonic ideals but suffered as a result in MPE. Parker (1996) did however note that such masculine ideals were not taught per se but were nevertheless facets of boys' behaviour and relations in MPE.

As well as being physically confrontational, hard boys insulted victims based primarily on perceived poor performance within MPE (Parker, 1996). Ridicule involved derogatory comments such as 'poof' or 'faggot'. Parker (1996) stressed that these comments were mainly used to de-masculinise peers, rather than boys' directly expressing their attitudes towards homosexuality. Nonetheless, he did accept that such homophobic slurs also worked to regulate boys' expression of sexuality along heteronormative lines. Such hegemonic masculine ideals prevailed and were found to override any notions of ethnic difference or ethnic loyalty (Parker, 1996). However, Parker (1996) suggested that hard boys' anti-intellectual attitudes and hegemonic behaviours conflicted with middle-class

schooling processes. Acting in defiance of such processes, Parker (1996) attributed hard boys' behaviours to their claims of more viable sources of social power. For these boys, alternative forms of power were predominantly verbal and symbolic, but could also be physical. All such forms of power appeared to be enabled within social processes in MPE. As such, Parker (1996) critically questioned the sensitivity of teachers and their awareness towards implicit and explicit masculine ideals that served to create unequal educational conditions for many pupils.

Completing a similar study, Bramham (2003) interviewed and conducted focus groups with 22 boys, aged 15 years, from across four large inner-city multi-ethnic comprehensive schools in the North East of England. Like Parker (1996), Bramham (2003) referred to 'sporty' and 'marginalised' boys. Sporty boys valued games in PE and would show-off and try to always look good (Bramham, 2003). Playing for school teams, these boys were often popular across their school and disrupted non-PE lessons. Contrastingly, marginalised boys tended to be intellectuals and preferred mixed-sex teaching. They held anti-PE attitudes and favoured individualised indoor activities such as trampolining, badminton and volleyball (Bramham, 2003). These activities were infrequently offered in MPE. Resultantly, marginalised boys often did not take PE seriously, which angered competitive sporty boys. This attitudinal difference towards PE served to foster hegemonic behaviours in relations between these two social groups. Annoyed at a perceived 'spoiling' of PE lessons, sporty boys often censored marginalised boys through physical and verbal abuse, which occasionally included racial slurs (Bramham, 2003). Therefore, unlike Parker (1996), Bramham (2003) found ethnic tensions between White and British Pakistani Muslim boys. White boys disliked the perceived anti-sport attitude of Asian boys or their sole preference to cricket. Summarising the relations between sporty and marginalised boys, Brahman (2003) noted that bullying, or the threat of bullying, was never far away.

Across these schools, embodying the notion of hegemonic masculinity within MPE demanded competitiveness, strong leadership and success (Bramham, 2003). As such, some sporty boys indicated that having their performances constantly reviewed by others was exhausting. These environmental pressures had seen sporty boys complain of burnout or decide to quit their role as captain (Bramham, 2003). Furthermore, playing for the school team was not just about winning, but involved gendered expectations of displaying toughness. These expectations were part informed by the collective pride associated with upholding the school's reputation for hardness (Bramham, 2003). Similarly, referring to gym culture, boys also described their bodies as being under a constant masculine gaze, indicating that strength and size were desirable qualities (Bramham, 2003). To avoid this gaze, those boys who were not seeking physical empowerment would escape by producing perpetual sick notes. Bramham's (2003) analysis does not refute core tenets within hegemonic masculinity but adds to that offered by Parker (1996). For instance, his deconstruction of the concept of hegemonic masculinity evidences that solidarity gained through a tough masculinity can be grounded along shared ethnic, racist and sexist lines.

In slight contrast to Parker (1996) and Bramham (2003), Campbell et al. (2018) observed 23 boys and 3 girls aged 16–17 years in PE. These young people had elected PE as an examinable subject in a state secondary school in a working-class area of Scotland. As well as observations, Campbell et al. (2018) also interviewed and conducted a focus group with five boys, with a sample that comprised four White boys and one boy of Asian descent. Using photo elicitation to rate sportsmen, it became evident that these boys perceived visible strength to be a key aspect of 'being a man' (Campbell et al. 2018). This valuable gendered asset was displayed in PE, where some boys would often out-strengthen a peer during play fighting, rough play and arm wrestling (Campbell et al. 2018). Such physical endeavours enabled these boys to measure themselves, and others, along masculine lines and, in doing so, to differentiate and rank stronger from weaker boys. Such processes contributed to a gendered hierarchy in PE (Campbell et al. 2018). However, Campbell et

al. (2018) found that strength was only desired in moderation, with many boys happy to embody a 'not strong, but not weak' disposition. That said, gendered behavioural norms and expectations in PE were such that boys rarely transgressed into activities viewed as feminine for fear of being ostracised or having their identity questioned, stigmatised or destroyed (Campbell et al. 2018).

Offering a different insight to Parker (1996) and Bramham (2003), Campbell et al. (2018) also examined boys' emotional management within PE. Given the physical, competitive and combative nature of PE, boys routinely had to engage in pain management (Campbell et al. 2018). Campbell et al. (2018) found that being able to withstand pain was part of 'doing boy', whilst being witnessed as being overly affected by pain was viewed as a feminine trait. This process of tolerating and suppressing signs of pain was key to boys' masculine identity construction, performance and peer judgement (Campbell et al. 2018). It should be noted that some boys did also value being nice, kind and friendly, and stressed the need to display generosity, softness and empathy. However, the ability of these boys to engage in such behaviours was often predicated on their possession of orthodox masculine traits such as physical strength, sporting competence and alleged sexual conquests with females (Campbell et al. 2018). Therefore, whilst evidencing more diverse gendered attitudes in some respects, many boys still felt constrained in their performance of alternative forms of masculinity (Campbell et al. 2018).

These three British studies provide a sample from a range of boys. Therefore, Tischler and McCaughtry's (2011) American-based research provides one of the few studies that focuses solely on the experiences of subordinate boys in MPE. In two suburban American middle schools, Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) observed, interviewed and completed a focus group with five boys aged 11-13 years. These boys regularly embodied guarded behaviours and felt that they did not 'fit' within MPE. Whilst they enjoyed participating in physical activities outside of school, these boys disliked the content within PE lessons and their teachers' approach (Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011).

They bemoaned how these two aspects of MPE combined to privilege sporty boys over them. For instance, MPE teachers emphasised competitive games, aggression and winning, rather than skills, learning and co-operation, which maintained the pre-existing gendered hierarchy within MPE (Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). In this study, subordinate boys also disliked the teacher-pupil relations and the peer-culture within MPE. For instance, MPE teachers praised and joked with sporty peers, displaying clear signs of favouritism (Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). This discrepancy was further highlighted by MPE teachers ignoring, criticising and openly mocking subordinate boys, or not intervening when they were ridiculed by peers (Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). Consequently, subordinate boys often felt that others viewed them as having the 'wrong' body shape and as being less co-ordinated, fit and able in comparison with more athletically aesthetic bodies (Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). Internalising feelings associated with social exclusion and perceived inadequacy, subordinate boys felt ashamed of their bodies and expressed feeling nervous and uneasy about entering MPE classes.

Tischler and McCaughtry's (2011) insight into the complicity of MPE teachers within such gendered social processes can be further probed by considering the gender identities of MPE teachers and their teacher-training process. Skelton (1993) offers a male's insider perspective of a teacher-training college environment in England. He noted that the formal college culture focused on child-centred practices, co-operation rather than competition and equal gender opportunities (Skelton, 1993). However, he also found that a dominant informal culture served to legitimise and reproduce hegemonic masculinity. For instance, informal behaviours included drinking games, banter and forfeits, which were aimed at embarrassment, shaming and pain. Skelton (1993) argued that these types of social processes were underpinned by conformity to expected behavioural norms amongst, and social control over, trainee PE teachers.

The informal social processes in this teacher training college were gendered as they involved social isolation from other gender forms and a deference to male authority. This contributed to an informal culture at this college, which was underpinned by hegemonic masculine attitudes and performances. For instance, sexist attitudes, physical prowess, competition and aggression were found to be common characteristics of MPE teachers (Skelton, 1993). That is not to say that the college developed these gendered characteristics, but it failed to convince trainees to embody more gender-neutral characteristics within its formal culture. One reason for this may be the embedded nature of such gendered social norms that trainee PE teachers entered the college with. For example, Brown's (1999) life histories of trainee MPE teachers in England found that males often drew upon their own personal background experiences within sporting or masculine environments when developing their teacher identity. As such, their gender identity meant that most MPE teachers were more susceptible to hegemonic masculine teaching identities (Brown, 1999). Whilst arguably unintentional, Brown (1999) argued that this perpetuation of such gender ideals served to reproduce and legitimise hegemonic masculinity and the prevailing gender order in MPE.

Spanning three decades, these studies all locate PE as a strategic site within the development of boys' masculinities. However, findings from these studies suggest that gendered relations, gendered identities and gendered behavioural norms in MPE have consistently tended to involve narrow, rigid and normative masculine ideals. These gender ideals endure, despite findings that suggest that boys' embodiment of hegemonic masculinity is precarious, exclusive and can come with social, physical and emotional costs. Whilst only a few boys achieve hegemonic status, it appears that such ideals still determine boys' peer-relations, performances and behavioural norms. This hegemonic ideal is maintained, protected and reproduced by those involved in MPE, including boys and arguably complicit MPE teachers. The relational consequences of embodying such ideals involve physical dominance and pernicious verbal exchanges, often aimed to de-masculinise others.

Proponents of this theoretical approach argue that, collectively, the gendered social processes and gendered social norms described within these studies illustrate the continued dominance of hegemonic masculinity as a cultural gender ideal for boys in contemporary Western societies. The most recent research in this area implied that masculine ideals were becoming more diverse, even if they were still divided along binary gender lines. Evidence that MPE teachers display unequal practices and foster, condone or perpetuate oppressive gendered behaviours appeared to be partly informed by their own hegemonic masculine identities. This gendered attitude may have also informed their apparent inability to empathise with or accept boys who are different to themselves. However, more research would be needed to support this claim.

3.2 Inclusive masculinity and more vertical relations in MPE

Anderson (2009) developed inclusive masculinity theory in order to reflect what he identified as a gradual shift towards more equal power-relations between males across many Western societies. Comparing British Social Attitudes Surveys from the 1980s to the late 1990s, Anderson (2009) evidenced shifts towards more inclusive attitudes towards homosexuality. This shift closely aligned with the prevailing politics regarding sexuality within these decades. For example, during the 1980s, the outbreak of AIDS witnessed a cultural fear of being perceived as homosexual. Furthermore, legislation such as Section 28 was enacted in 1988, which prohibited the promotion of homosexuality or legitimising homosexuality as a family relationship in schools (Anderson, 2009). By 2003, Section 28 had been repealed and, in 2008, best practice guidelines to combat homophobic bullying in schools had been provided. In stark contrast to Section 28, these guidelines also recommend the teaching of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) history, as well as the use of LGBT role models within schools (Anderson, 2009).

At a theoretical level, Anderson (2009) maintained that these political and attitudinal shifts have broadened socially acceptable gendered behaviours and helped to further legitimise diverse forms of masculinities. He argued that these shifts have better enabled multiple forms of masculinities and sexualities to co-exist in a more vertical rather than hierarchical manner. Seeking to apply and test Anderson's (2009) theory, McCormack (2010) evaluated key findings from ethnographies in three English school sixth-forms. Located just a few miles from each other in the South of England, the demographics of these schools were described as white middle-class, white working-class and a school of mixed social class and mixed ethnicity. This research involved participant observations over a 12-month period, as well as 44 interviews with young males aged 16-18 years, who mostly self-identified as heterosexual, with some openly gay and bisexual students and one openly female-to-male transsexual student.

In this study, McCormack (2010) found that young males were able to be physically tactile and emotionally intimate without fear of being considered homosexual. Heterosexual young males also expressed pro-gay attitudes and maintained friendships with openly gay peers (McCormack, 2010). Whilst masculine boundaries seemed to have been expanded, heteronormativity was still privileged. Heteronormativity was strengthened as only openly gay males were perceived to be gay (McCormack, 2010). A further way heteronormativity has been maintained is through sexuality-based language. McCormack (2010) did not observe any homophobic slurs and many young males described such insults as immature. Homosexual-themed idioms such as 'that's so gay' were however heard and used by openly gay males to bond with heterosexual peers. In doing so, such actions inadvertently maintained notions of heteronormativity (McCormack, 2010). Collectively, McCormack (2010) referred to these subtle social processes as 'heterosexual recuperation', which he argued could implicitly marginalise gay identities

Focusing more specifically on PE, Anderson (2012) completed a three-month ethnography of teaching PE at a white middle-class sixth-form college in the South of England. As well as observations, Anderson (2012) interviewed 17 heterosexual young males aged 16-18 years. Like McCormack's (2010) findings with the same age-group, Anderson (2012) noted that young athletes did not subjugate gay peers, use homophobic discourse or embody hegemonic forms of masculinity. Instead, Anderson (2012) found that PE students' behavioural norms were not significantly different from those of their non-athletic counterparts. Comparable with Campbell et al. (2018) findings with six-formers, the behaviours of PE students also involved emotionally supporting their male friends. These findings somewhat contrast with those of Morrow and Gill (2003), who surveyed 82 PE teachers and 77 students in the state of North Carolina. Focusing their questions on sexuality, Morrow and Gill (2003) found that homophobia was present in PE as well as in the school and sporting community more broadly. Differences in research findings presented here may be due in part to the different research methods used, that is, self-report questionnaires and ethnography. It is however evident that findings from both studies illustrate that relations, attitudes and behaviours in MPE reflect those of the school and community. Therefore, contrasts in these research findings might also relate to the time disparity between the two studies, demographic differences or cultural nuances.

Exploring cohort effects in PE teachers' attitudes towards gender identities and sexualities, White and Hobson (2017) interviewed 17 white heterosexual MPE teachers from six secondary schools in the South of England. Generational differences were found as PE teachers who were socialised into sport during the 1960s and 1970s believed that sexuality was a non-issue and largely irrelevant to them (White & Hobson, 2017). PE teachers who were socialised into sport during the 1980s held more orthodox narrow masculine attitudes and negatively perceived 'softer' gender behaviours and diverse sexualities (White & Hobson, 2017). In contrast, PE teachers who were socialised into sport from the 1990s onwards were more aware of homosexuality, held more inclusive attitudes

towards diverse sexualities, and were more understanding of gay boys. These findings support Brown's (1999) notion that the life histories and sporting socialisation of MPE teachers can strongly influence their perceptions of gender identity and sexuality within their teaching careers.

Despite these cohort variances, all MPE teachers acknowledged that boys today display more caring behaviours and more physical closeness in comparison with previous year groups (White & Hobson, 2017). These findings concur with those of Anderson (2012) and Campbell et al. (2018). In contrast with the arguments of hegemonic masculinity (e.g. Parker, 1996; Bramham, 2003), research conducted from the perspective of inclusive masculinity indicates that boys today were considered by MPE teachers to embody more behaviours that were once commonly perceived as effeminate (White & Hobson, 2017). Furthermore, openly gay boys were now also more accepted as normal amongst their peers (White & Hobson, 2017). In line with the core tenets of Anderson's (2011) inclusive masculinity theory, boys in general were considered as presenting a broader range of gendered behaviours and were more accepting of diverse sexualities (White & Hobson, 2017).

At a collective level, findings from within these studies appear to illustrate core tenets of inclusive masculinity theory. In this sense, these findings contrast in many respects to those found by authors applying the concept of hegemonic masculinity to MPE. Whilst not substantive, as they mainly involve older students, findings presented in this section illustrate the social constructive nature of masculinity and attitudes towards sexuality. Evidence of greater levels of physical affection and emotional intimacy between young males, without sexuality-based connotations, suggests that more diverse masculine behaviours are available in MPE. Findings of cohort effects across generations of MPE teachers and their views on changes in behavioural gendered norms also imply that changes in gender and sexual relations may be taking place in MPE. Masculine behaviours were portrayed as less static and masculine ideals were depicted as becoming less narrow. Whilst more fluid and more situational based masculine behaviours seem to be prevailing, such developments

still appear to be largely constrained by implicit heteronormative presumptions. The extent to which changes in MPE reflect developments in other facets of society therefore warrants further inspection and comparative evidence.

3.3 Bourdieu and masculine embodiment in MPE

Bourdieu examined external social structures and people's subjective experiences. His nuance lies arguably in his attempts to theoretically map relationships between these two components (Jenkins, 2014). To explain his 'theory of practice', Bourdieu (1977) developed the generative formula $[(\text{Habitus}) (\text{Capital})] + \text{Field} = \text{Practice}$. Bourdieu argued that all social practice takes place within social fields. He suggested that these social fields are underpinned by written or implicit social rules that determine the forms of capital available (Jenkins, 2014). Denoting capital as power, Bourdieu identified economic, cultural and social capital as dominant forms of power. Focusing on embodied power, Shilling (2004) added physical capital to the equation. However, Shilling (2004) stressed that the importance of this form of capital is in its exchange value with more dominant forms. Furthermore, it should be noted that forms of capital accrued are not automatically transferable across social fields, as it depends on the forms of capital that are most valued within the respective field (Jenkins, 2014).

Bourdieu argued that people's accrual of capital determines their degrees of autonomy, positioning and influence within a social field (Jenkins, 2014). He contended that, in realising this, people develop 'a feel for the game' and seek to attain the desirable capital in their respective fields (Bourdieu, 1977). People's ability to accrue capital is however largely enabled by their durable set of characteristics, attitudes and tastes. These are components that collectively Bourdieu (1977) referred to as habitus. As noted in Chapter Two, Elias also used the term habitus, as did other leading intellectual thinkers such as Marcel Mauss. However, Bourdieu is arguably the most famed academic in adopting this term. For Bourdieu (1977), people's habituses are partly rational and

partly intuitive responses to objective social conditions. Therefore, spending substantial time in a social field can influence a person's habitus, both knowingly and unknowingly (Jenkins, 2014). At a more collective level, people's development of a 'feel for the game' and acceptance of social rules contributes to prevailing common-sense normality. Referring to this as 'doxa', Bourdieu (1977) suggested that this process contributes to social reproduction and social domination.

Applying central tenets within Bourdieu's theory of practice, Gorely et al. (2003) conducted a large-scale study examining young people's social constructions of body shape and size, gender and involvement in physical activities. Focus groups with 348 young males and females aged 11-14 years, alongside 55 interviews with young people across 15 schools, provided a broad cross-section of British society in terms of social class, race and religion. Using photo elicitation, young people expressed largely homogenous and conventional views concerning masculinity and muscularity, which were largely considered an antithesis of femininity (Gorely et al. 2003). Gender dominated social class, race and religion in respect to young people's identity formation. For instance, male muscularity was associated with action heroes, whose bodies dominate space and can manipulate objects, whilst female muscularity was viewed ambivalently by both boys and girls (Gorely et al. 2003). Some young people felt that it was good for girls to be strong. However, muscular female bodies also drew judgements based on gender appropriateness (Gorely et al. 2003). These findings demonstrate that young people use discursive resources such as degrees of muscularity, sport played and gender-appropriate embodiment to socially construct their feminine and masculine bodies. These findings also correspond with those presented in Chapter Two concerning the gendered history of PE and its legacy (Kirk, 1998; Smith et al. 2007; Waddington et al. 1998). Despite such gendered legacies, by participating in historically perceived 'gender inappropriate' sports, muscular girls often transgressed conventions of stereotypical femininity and actively challenged common perceptions of gendered body shapes and sizes (Gorely et al. 2003). However, strong female bodies were in some cases deemed a threat to hegemonic masculinity (Gorely et al. 2003).

As discussed in Chapter Two, this illustrates the relational aspect of gender identity and the threats to males' social power when females enter and excel in previously male preserves (Hargreaves, 2002; Matthews, 2016; Velija & Flynn, 2010).

Also focusing on gender embodiment in PE, Hill (2015) completed a focus group with, and drew upon over 50 participant-driven photographs of, three Asian boys aged 13 years from the Midlands in England. These research methods enabled Hill (2015) to explore these boys gendered and racialised embodiment and how this interplayed with their peer relations within an MPE environment. Hill (2015) found that there was a strong relationship between masculinity, muscularity, sporting competence and social status within the social field of MPE. Having developed a feel for the game, these Asian boys sought to embody socially desirable masculine bodies by investing in 'bodywork' inside and outside of MPE (Hill, 2015). They hoped to exchange physical capital for social capital in order to protect themselves from peer ridicule, showcase their improved masculine prowess and influence their peer relations (Hill, 2015). In collectively doing so, these boys aspired to strengthen their positioning within MPE (Hill, 2015). Attempts by these boys to position themselves socially within the field of MPE were not however purely attainable by their successful engagement in bodywork due to the fact that boys' bodies were also ranked by a prevailing 'common-sense' normality concerning incompatibilities between Asian bodies and sporting prowess (Hill, 2015). Somewhat conforming to this crude and racist doxa, these boys compared their bodies with those of non-Asian peers. They considered sporting bodies to be white or black, but not Asian (Hill, 2015). This racialised doxa and internalised disposition did not deter these boys from engaging in bodywork. It did however mean that they had to negotiate their ethnic bodies along arguably narrower gender and racialised lines in comparison with their white peers (Hill, 2015). Through engaging in such bodywork and displaying a socially desirable masculine habitus, Hill (2015) suggested that these boys conformed to, and perpetuated, the prevailing doxa regarding masculine and racial normalities.

Whilst Asian boys in Hill's (2015) study sought to empower themselves by accepting the prevailing gender norms in MPE, for some, these gendered bodily expectations led to extreme levels of subject dissatisfaction. Jachyra (2016) conducted ethnographic research that examined dissatisfied boys aged 12-14 years within health and MPE in an all-boy Canadian school. Within this context, PE lessons involved either playing sports or fitness conditioning. Lessons were also centred on winning and delivered in a command style (Jachyra, 2016). These practices fostered an overtly masculine ethos that some boys were fond of, but others developed a severe distaste for (Jachyra, 2016). This differential was largely informed by boys' ability to display maximal efficient sporting bodies. Therefore, those who had developed a severe distaste for these lessons displayed inefficient sporting bodies despite some resorting to extreme dieting (Jachyra, 2016).

At a theoretical level, these findings illustrate that these dissatisfied boys were unable to accrue the necessary levels of physical capital that might potentially be exchanged for social capital within the field of MPE (Jachyra, 2016). Despite engaging in other physical activities such as yoga, these dissatisfied boys believed their bodies to be weak, abnormal and not befitting the subject (Jachyra, 2016). This self-realisation led to subsequent feelings of shame and embarrassment evoked by their perceived inadequate bodies. Such feelings were compounded when peers overlooked them when picking teams or engaged in negative forms of banter towards them (Jachyra, 2016). Banter could turn into verbal taunts and physical bullying when in changing rooms, during transitions, when making perceived wrong choices in games or when teachers were preoccupied (Jachyra, 2016). MPE teachers also humiliated dissatisfied boys by singling them out in front of their peers (Jachyra, 2016). After reflecting upon the way health and PE's hyper-competitive culture positioned them as outsiders, boys resented and disengaged in lessons and developed anti-sport and an anti-jock habitus.

The role of MPE teachers in contributing to boys' dissatisfaction with PE further demonstrates the significance of an authoritative figure within this field. Brown and Evans (2004), Brown (2005), and Brown et al. (2016) apply Bourdieu's (1977) notions of habitus and social reproduction to MPE teachers. Brown et al. (2016) found that MPE teachers entered both their teacher-training courses and the profession of teaching with an established masculine and sporting habitus. This habitus formation proved desirable during recruitment, as existing PE teachers often recruited potential candidates who fitted their own habitus (Brown et al. 2016). Mentors of new MPE teachers were also central to reinforcing masculine pedagogies, which contributed to gendered processes of social reproduction in MPE teaching practices (Brown & Evans, 2004). As such, MPE teachers' masculine sporting habitus embodied their professional teacher habitus via a process that Brown and Evans (2004) refer to as a 'cultural conduit'. At a collective level, these habitus formations and gendered social processes served to reproduce established masculine ideologies and gender relations within MPE. This process of social reproduction informed what Brown (2005) refers to as a cultural economy of gendered practice in MPE.

Findings presented within this section illustrate the corporeal nature of MPE. Subsequently, they also demonstrate the importance of boys' bodies in terms of their habitus formation, their peer relations, and their social positioning within the social field of MPE. In MPE, boys' bodies publicly mattered as their gendered and ethnic identities were perceived by themselves and others to be inscribed on their visualised bodies. Reference to these intersections, and their effects, offered insight into the prevailing common-sense normalities, which could often be discriminatory on the grounds of gender and ethnicity. As such, it seemed that MPE's overly competitive, performance-driven and fitness-based culture was not inclusive, but exclusive in terms of the bodily capital available for boys to accrue. In one sense, these findings offer a more nuanced appreciation of the complex nature of peer-relations, identities and behavioural norms in MPE. Research conducted from this perspective has also enabled the identification of a crude doxa prevailing in MPE, often

aligned with and even at times supported by, MPE teachers' professional identities. These were found to be heavily inscribed by their individual traditional masculine and sporting habitus. Unlike studies underpinned by a hegemonic masculinity framework, there was some evidence of boys resisting or rejecting the rules of the games, although this often came at a social cost in terms of teacher-pupil or peer relations. Therefore, many boys conformed to the prevailing doxa regarding gender, ethnicity and sporting bodies in MPE. At a collective level, research conducted from Bourdieu's theoretical perspective evidences processes of social domination and social reproduction in gendered social practices in MPE. In the context of the gendered history of PE presented in Chapter Two, these findings continue to demonstrate aspects of continuity, rather than change, in the types of practices that take place in MPE.

3.4 Foucault and dominant masculine discourses in MPE

Michel Foucault's theorising of power and knowledge has been used to examine gendered social processes and power-relations in MPE. Foucault (1998) argued that power is diffused and embodied in dominant discourses, prevailing scientific knowledge, and 'regimes of truth'. Here, discourse refers to "an ensemble of more or less regulated, more or less deliberate, more or less finalized ways of doing things" (Foucault, 1998, 463). Foucault (1998) considered power as a major source of social discipline and social conformity. However, he also believed that power was no longer necessarily something solely wielded by people over others. Instead, he argued that since the nineteenth century power had become more pervasive, negotiated and in-flux. For Foucault (1998), more elusive forms of power do not require force or violence. Instead, these forms of power involve a variety of more subtle techniques to instil social discipline. He suggested that such techniques operate through discursive practices often based on definitions of normal, acceptable and deviant social conduct (Foucault, 1998). The effectiveness of these forms of power resides in an opaqueness that enables people to exercise self-discipline without feeling oppressed (Foucault, 1998). Whilst difficult to resist, Foucault (1998) argued that these forms of power are neither fixed

nor all-encompassing, but they do require an awareness of the power dynamics at play before they can be resisted, challenged or dismantled.

Through visual ethnography, Gerdin (2016a; 2016b; 2017a; 2017b; 2017c) applies Foucault's theorising to an all-male secondary school in New Zealand. Kea College adopted a multi-activity sport-based model and on its website celebrated producing healthy, disciplined, competitive, moral and successful boys (Gerdin, 2017a). This model and these discourses went unchallenged for two main reasons. Firstly, PE held outsider academic status within the school and, as such, seemingly received less scrutiny in its practices. Secondly, teachers and most boys enjoyed engaging in fitness, health and sport, with such practices supported by their parents (Gerdin, 2017a). This was evident in the prevailing culture of 'everyone doing it' and 'playing games' (Gerdin, 2016a). This viewpoint offers a slightly different angle from previous studies reviewed thus far. This insight provides a reminder that for many boys, getting fit, being healthy and becoming better at sport offers pleasurable experiences (Gerdin, 2016a). Furthermore, boys derived pleasure from gendered performances and identity expression. However, this tended to be those boys who entered MPE preconditioned in team-sports and with a high skill-level (Gerdin, 2017b). Therefore, MPE seemed to cater more for existing sporty boys rather than aspiring or non-sporty boys. Similarly, examining physical recreation sessions across different Australian schools, Brown and Macdonald (2008) noted that even lessons focused on active lifestyle were heavily linked to sports training and improving performance. Many sporty boys valued this link as they were able to develop their muscular physique, were permitted to be aggressive and competitive, and were applauded for their sporting and masculine prowess (Brown & Macdonald, 2008). However, whilst evidencing pleasurable experiences, both Gerdin (2016b) and Brown and Macdonald (2008) also found examples of displeasure in MPE that could be induced by the sexist and homophobic behaviours of some boys (Brown & Macdonald, 2008). It could also be brought by the exposure of inferior and inadequate bodies of non-sporty boys in enclosed public spaces in MPE (Gerdin, 2017c).

These findings suggest that PE can heighten young people's level of self-consciousness due to common practices such as changing attire in front of peers, which could evoke fear based on the perceived judgements of others and could induce feelings of shame and embarrassment. Collectively, such behaviours and public exposure caused some boys in PE displeasure towards the subject.

Displeasure was also found to be caused by peer relations within Atkinson and Kehler's (2012) ethnographies in MPE across different Canadian schools. Atkinson and Kehler (2012) discovered pernicious aspects of power within changing rooms and other gym zones. In such PE spaces, certain boys faced humiliation and ritual bullying because their bodies did not measure-up to their peers' masculine-based expectations (Atkinson & Kehler, 2012). Considering changing rooms as dangerous spaces, some boys removed themselves from PE classes when given the opportunity (Atkinson & Kehler, 2012). This process of withdrawal, as well as non-sporty boys socialising with like-minded friends during PE lessons, illustrates that pleasure was not either/or in PE, but situational and contextual (Gerdin, 2017a). However, in this respect, it also should be noted that humiliation and bullying of others provided some boys with some form of pleasure (Gerdin, 2017a).

Contributing to these masculine discourses, MPE teachers tended to promote and condone overly masculine behaviours. For instance, Brown and Macdonald (2008) suggested that MPE teachers were heavily implicated in gendered discursive practices within physical recreation sessions. Brown and Macdonald (2008) argued that these teachers failed to facilitate an inclusive educational experience because they failed to engage in adequate levels of ethical work. Also examining ethical work within MPE, Mooney and Hickey (2012) examined the experiences of three female PE teachers in an Australian all-male Catholic school. The female PE teachers were recruited into leadership roles and tasked with addressing an overly macho culture. As such, these females had to manage teachers' professional identities, dominant gendered and sporting discourses, and

power relations within the MPE department. For instance, when completing ethical-work, female staff problematised hypermasculine means of control and order (Mooney & Hickey, 2012). However, at the same time, they questioned their self-work along established notions of effective practices in a masculine culture (Mooney & Hickey, 2012). Therefore, in many cases they accepted rather than challenged the status quo in order to fit in and be accepted within the department.

Findings presented here suggest that within MPE spaces, sporting and masculine discourses were embedded within common multi-activity sport-based models, assessment tasks, behavioural expectations and verbal interactions. At a collective level, this represents what Foucault (1998) referred to as a 'totalizing' culture. Discursive social practices in MPE served to reproduce and shape boys' understanding and experiences of gender and pleasure. However, boys were not merely cultural dupes who embodied dominant discourses. Instead, they illustrated that they were able to reflect upon and problematise gender and power-relations. Pervasive forms of power in MPE proved to be emancipatory for some boys, but oppressive for others, and seemingly rarely transformative. Oppressive practices were not espoused through PE pedagogies per se but resided in a hidden gendered curriculum relating to peer relations and dangerous spaces. Boys' bodies were normalised along sporting, masculine and body dominant discourses, whereby those boys neither sporty nor deemed sufficiently masculine often faced ridicule and exclusion. At a theoretical level, the idea that some boys experienced pleasure from bullying shows that some boys capitalised on being able to regulate dominant gendered discourses over others. It also illustrates that regulatory forms of power can be simultaneously emancipatory and oppressive. More broadly, perhaps the most explicit example of the robustness of dominant masculine discourses and changes to regimes of truth was the lack of ability amongst PE teachers to enact on their reflexive ethical work.

3.5 A critique of sociological theories in relations to MPE

Thus far, four sociological theoretical approaches have been outlined and their application in studies concerning relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE have been demonstrated. A critique of these theories is now offered, which is part-informed by a figurational-lens. This critique is presented in the same order that theories were discussed above.

Hegemonic masculinity

The concept of hegemonic masculinity enables researchers to frame masculinity as socially constructed, plural, relational and hierarchical. However, Whitehead (1999) contends that the emphasis placed on gender neglects other social categories such as class, race and age, which also influence the maintenance of hegemony. In line with such criticisms, Parker's (1996) and Gorely et al.'s (2003) studies did indeed illustrate that gender was the overriding component central to young people's identity formation. It should be noted that Connell's (2013[1987]) seminal theorising did emphasise social class. For instance, she referred to the term 'masculine protest' in reference to understanding working-class males' deep feelings of powerlessness and insecurity. However, the various studies reviewed here that featured working class boys did not find substantive evidence of social class being a strong determinant in their relationships, identities and behavioural norms within MPE. This may be due to the latent aspect of social class in young people's identity formation. Alternatively, perhaps a case could be made that hegemonic masculinity has been applied too often in a reductive manner.

At a theoretical level, a common criticism of hegemonic masculinity has been its structural emphasis and static nature. For instance, Demetriou (2001) suggested that hegemonic masculinity was too rigid and did not adequately equate for resistance or change. Partly accepting this critique, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) attempted to re-frame the concept's relational components. For example, in revising the concept they sought to offer more scope for gender democracy,

dynamism within gender relations and contradictions within gender social processes. This revision appears necessary given the concept's longevity and stress on the social construction of multiple masculinities. As such, this revision also appears timely in order to accommodate significant social changes regarding gender relations and gender identities over the last quarter of a century. However, despite allowing for greater variations in compliance and greater potential for resistance, hegemonic masculinity as a concept still seems unable to help researchers adequately explain people's agency and changes within complex social processes. It seems that this is needed in order to be able to identify social processes involved in the maintenance of hegemony, as well as explaining opportunities for resistance. This may be partly because hegemony is largely a structurally informed theory and therefore often applied in a deterministic manner. For instance, research reviewed here implied that boys or teachers either embodied hegemonic masculinity or not. As such, power was presented in absolute terms as being all powerful, with subordinate boys viewed as being powerless.

This critical discussion can also be critiqued from a figurational sociological perspective. Given the performative nature of hegemonic masculinity, it seems that a more situated understanding that centres on enabling and constraining social processes should be factored into the equation when considering the workings of hegemony. For example, more emphasis could be placed on tension balances within MPE, such as those between teachers and pupils. Connell (2001, 50) appears to acknowledge this to some degree in her reference to how such contradictory desires and logics within forms of hegemonic masculinity "are sources of tension and change in gender patterns". Therefore, a more process-orientated approach, rather than providing static snap shots, may enable such tensions and changes to be better conceptualised.

Such tensions and changes can also be overlooked, given the focus on coercion and oppression within a hegemonic theoretical approach. For instance, a feminist application of hegemonic

masculinity often defines masculinity along negative lines, through the need for males not to be effeminate. As illustrated in the findings of Gerdin (2016), this seems to fail to adequately appreciate the empowering experiences for some boys of masculinity in and through MPE. A figural approach considers complex networks of interdependent power relationships, which are constantly changing in relation differences within people's access to key power resources. A figural approach also considers who is enabled and constrained by such figural dynamics. This more reality-congruent approach recognises more oppressive practices but also issues of motility, mimetic and sociability experienced through gendered relations, gendered behaviours and masculine performances. Therefore, a figural sociological perspective allows researchers to appreciate the ability of boys to experience quests for excitement, as well as their gendered exciting significance, to be understood in and through MPE. These possible enabling social processes within MPE can then be factored alongside more constraining social processes, which combined arguably offers a more rounded portrayal of gendered social processes in MPE.

Inclusive masculinity

Inclusive masculinity theory is radical in that it has been applied to suggest that shifts towards greater gender and sexuality inclusivity have taken place in sport. This is a radical proposition as sport is a social arena that for decades has been depicted as one of the last bastions of hegemonic masculinity and been considered inherently homophobic (Lenskyj, 1991; Plummer, 2006; Pronger, 1999). Findings presented using this theoretical perspective suggested that there has been decreasing levels of homophobia in recent decades. However, the same evidence implies that gender transgressions, more inclusive attitudes and more equal power-relations are still centred on heteronormative norms. Therefore, as Simpson (2014) suggested, it is necessary to critically consider if more implicit forms of heteronormativity are equally as damaging and serve to maintain hierarchical gender relations.

Many sociological theories are derived from and revised by substantial empirical evidence. Some scholars are sceptical of the levels of gender and sexuality inclusiveness in modern sports that are purported by Anderson. For instance, they question the theoretical generalisability that Anderson pertains from overly middle-class empirical samples (O'Neill, 2015; Simpson, 2014; Ingram & Waller, 2014). Taking this point and applying a figurational lens, these scholars are questioning to what extent are the empirical foundations of a socio-psycho genesis in terms of shifts in people's attitudes towards diverse forms of masculinities and sexualities applicable across all social classes and domains in sport. Initially accepting this critique, Anderson and McCormack (2018) now detail vast studies across diverse demographics, which also appear to further evidence core tenets within inclusive masculinity theory.

There is a heightened recognition of the role of language and other softer and more symbolic forms of power, such as intimacy, within studies that examine issues of inclusive masculinity. This offers a broader and potentially more nuanced conceptualisation of male peer-relations and their gender identity expression. However, seemingly inspired by Freud, a continued emphasis placed on sexuality as a key power resource in male relations seems too reductive. Such emphasis could contribute to what appears to be a more homogenous view of masculinity. Furthermore, in viewing relations between males in a more vertical manner, tension balances between multiple forms of masculinities seem neglected. Therefore, whilst explicit gender policing through homophobic abuse may have diminished in MPE, it is important to question whether more subtle forms of gender and sexuality regulation are still taking place. Has there been a gradual equalising of power relations between males in MPE or is it perhaps the case that oppressive behaviours have just changed in form? Whilst empirical evidence to support inclusive masculinity theory has grown significantly, Anderson and McCormack (2018) accept that more research would help to further test and, if necessary, modify the theory.

A Bourdieusian approach

Bourdieu's framework arguably places greater emphasis on agency for change in comparison to more statically presented hegemonic forms of masculinity. For instance, findings presented using this theoretical framework evidenced that boys could accrue physical capital, influence their social relations and alter their position within the field. At a theoretical level, this process involved two significant parts. Firstly, it illustrated boys' greater awareness of the social dynamics within their environmental settings. Secondly, it demonstrated boys' greater level of agency to not only develop a feel for the game, but to adapt their attitudes and behaviours accordingly. Theoretically, this appears to avoid merely viewing boys as cultural dupes to their social structures, as has often been implied in hegemonic masculinity theorising.

However, when evaluating the empirical evidence using this theoretical approach, the alleged greater agency of boys was often presented as being suppressed. Whilst degrees of agency were present, doxas within social fields meant that often social reproduction and social domination tended to prevail. Boys frequent behavioural conformity to doxa and processes of social domination appears to deterministically focus on reproduction over change. In this sense, as Hargreaves (2002, 21) noted, "Bourdieu tends to treat people as if they are properties of the system and fails to appreciate how cultural fields, such as sports, contain the capacity for people/women to resist and change social/gender relations". Therefore, whilst not merely passive recipients, it seemed that boys could not actively contribute to changes in gendered social processes in MPE.

This critical evaluation can be considered from a figurational sociological perspective. Despite affording more theoretical focus on agency it seemed that scholars applying Bourdieu's theorising struggled to overcome the dichotomous structure and agency debates that have traditionally affected much sociological research. Perhaps then, offering greater insight into the flux power relations within the MPE figuration from a figurational sociological perspective may better illustrate

the constant tension balances at play, even if the outcomes often demonstrate vast power advantages of certain social groups, and therefore evidence little social change. In drawing reference to the interdependencies between different social groups, such as teachers and pupils, this may go some way to avoiding the presentation of boys' behaviour as being overly determined by social structures.

One way this critique can be further explained is by critically comparing two key concepts within Bourdieu's and Elias's theoretical framework. Whilst the concepts of 'field' and 'figuration' are not dissimilar, it could be argued that the former takes a more abstract form which implies that people enter fields. Contrastingly, Elias (1978) explained that figurations are nothing other than mutually orientated people bonded by interdependencies. Whilst Green (2007) notes that present PE figurations involve legacies from past PE figurations, fundamentally it is interdependent people who form present PE figurations. In slight contrast, Bourdieu's theory of practice focuses on actions, and not necessarily power-dynamics between those people who 'practice'. In this sense, figurational sociologists can offer more relational accounts of individuals, groups and social processes (Depelteau, 2008). Whilst subtle, this figurational consideration ensures that people and not their actions are placed central to understanding relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE.

Bourdieu's corporeal-centred theoretical framework illuminates the body's communicative, social and cultural meaning. Here, comparisons with figurational sociology can again be made. Like Elias, Bourdieu considered bodies as central markers of distinction, prestige and self-identity. Both theorists also used the concept of habitus. Bourdieu's use of habitus focuses on lifestyle, values and dispositions that are generally inscribed on the body (Van Krieken, 1998). Elias (2000, 368) however viewed habitus as an "automatic, blindly functioning apparatus of self-control" (Van Krieken, 1998). Therefore, with its focus on second nature psychological processes, which

inevitably involve the body, Elias's conceptualisation is arguably more rounded than the more social class embodied offering of Bourdieu. It could also be argued that through concepts like quest for exciting significance, as discussed in Chapter Two, figurational sociologists are more able to explore relationships between body-work and emotional-work. For instance, a figurational perspective enables an appreciation of boys' more cathartic-driven motivations and pleasures gleaned from engaging in de-routinised experiences and discovering aspects of self-realisation.

A Foucauldian approach

Foucault's conceptualisation of power radically departs from more structuralist theorising. This is largely because he conceptualises power as diffused rather than concentrated, embodied rather than possessed, and discursive rather than purely coercive. In this sense, power can be presented as not just negative and oppressive but productive, transformative and emancipatory. Whilst Foucault's theorising accommodates resistance, transformation and change, applied research cited earlier in this chapter demonstrated that few boys actively or successfully resisted disciplinary forms of power in MPE. Therefore, the dominant masculine discourses served to (re)produce disciplined and docile boys' bodies within MPE. Despite this, PE teachers and boys were considered as active and reflexive agents who constantly examined their gendered behaviour, and that of others, against dominant gendered discourses. This appeared to go some way to avoiding static conceptualisations of power and illustrating the more agency-based processes involved in fluid power relations in MPE, even if dominant masculine discourses prevailed. Whilst transformative forms of power were not evidenced in empirical research using this theoretical framework, there was evidence of cathartic and pleasurable emotions being conceived as productive forms of power. In this sense, Foucault's conceptualisation of power as omnipresent and both repressive and emancipatory offers more nuanced appreciations of power relations in MPE.

Given these discussions, it is possible to critically compare Foucault's conceptualisation of power with that of Elias. Like Elias, Foucault conceived power as relational, in-flux and never absolute, adopting a more process-orientated approach. However, Foucault's reference to the omnipresent nature of power and powerful institutions, coupled with his emphasis on scientific discourses that construct or determine people's thoughts and practices, arguably risks reifying and de-humanising power. As Goldsblom (1977, 131) notes, "'constraints' allegedly exerted by 'social institutions', are in fact exerted by people". Therefore, from a figurational sociological perspective, 'social forces' should not be construed as detached from individuals' collective actions. Applying this subtle theoretical difference in conceptualising power to the research presented earlier, it is important to note that for Elias (1978) power only features as a structural characteristic of human interdependent relations. In this sense, it could be argued that female PE teachers' self-work cited by Mooney and Hickey (2012) was not impeded by abstract dominant gendered discourses, but evidenced how they internalised social constraints within a gendered PE figuration in an all-boy's school. It seems that Foucault's oppositional positioning of power and resistance differs to Elias's conceptualisation of power. From a figurational perspective, more equal power relations can be conceptualised by considering social processes within figurations that can be enabling or constraining, or both enabling and constraining at the same time (Van Krieken, 1998).

3.6 Empirical gaps and further enquiry needed

In this chapter, four sociological theoretical approaches that have most commonly been applied to empirical studies involving relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE have been outlined. Now, empirical gaps from the research that influenced my focus in this study are presented. From reviewing the articles presented in this chapter, three broad themes that are worthy and in need of further research were identified.

Research applying the concept of hegemonic masculinity tended to emphasise physically orientated masculine ideals such as competition and aggression. Likewise, those applying Bourdieu's theory of embodiment evidenced how the body is central to boys' sense of self, but also their relations and experiences in MPE. In these cases, researchers did refer to slurs or ridicule as standard practices within boys' peer relations and even at times within teacher-pupil relations. However, their significance at a relational, identity and behavioural norm level was often neglected within theoretical analysis. This is somewhat surprising given the oppressive nature of ridicule as a form of behaviour, as well as language becoming widely considered as a symbolic means of power. Therefore, it could be argued that further research is needed to explore the role that verbal exchanges play in power relations within MPE. This would include identifying verbal behavioural norms such as humour, wit, ridicule and slurs, and determining how unique and significant they are to MPE. This would also entail exploring how verbal exchanges differ amongst boys of different ages and to what extent verbal exchanges are gendered or have gendered significance. Likewise, given some of the empirical findings cited in this chapter, the extent that such issues are manifested in teacher-pupil relations seems worthy of greater exploration. Part of this research process would involve gaining the interpretations and experiences of MPE teachers and boys regarding the types of verbal exchanges that take place within MPE. These could then be compared as to whether there are any generational differences at play within such exchanges.

Much research reviewed in this chapter adopted ethnographic methods and in doing so portrayed everyday lived realities. However, portrayals appeared to be based on homogeneous snap shots of social realities, which often presented people as fixed beings. This was despite some research adopting theories based on a more developmental approach, such as Foucault or Anderson. As such, these portrayals seemed to fail to capture how young people develop and change or how they behave differently in situational contexts. Likewise, if MPE teachers held such established sporting and masculine habituses and adopted subsequent masculine pedagogies, how have these

changed over the course of their careers? Equally, how have these been challenged and adapted by broader changes in contemporary schooling and gender relations? To answer these questions, it seems necessary to provide a more process-based approach to boys' developmental differences across year groups as well as teachers past and present lived realities. Such an approach may better capture those people central to the MPE figuration as live open processes under constant change. In doing so, the constant state of flux within the MPE figuration can also be examined. This research process would involve observing behavioural differences as well as differences in relationships between peers and in teacher-pupil relations across different year groups and different social contexts in MPE. As well as observations, interpretations from boys and MPE teachers on these matters should be sought to add greater explanation of any such potential differences. At a collective level, this research approach would help present relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE in a less static manner by instead capturing the live social processes at play.

As illustrated within the previous section, power is conceptualised in slightly nuanced ways across the four sociological theories that have been presented and critiqued within this chapter. However, it could be argued that irrespective of such distinctions, power has often been presented as static or universal. These portrayals often failed to illustrate the fluctuating, nuanced and situational power dynamics at play within MPE. For instance, MPE teachers were presented as authoritative figures, but without necessarily outlining the types of social processes that took place for this to be maintained or the ways in which boys manage such authoritarian teacher-pupil relations. Likewise, dominant gendered social processes were also presented as relatively universal across MPE, but how and why do they differ in different situational contexts and between different year groups was left unanswered.

Therefore, given these seemingly unanswered questions, further research is needed to explore the enabling and constraining social gendered processes within the MPE figuration. This process would

include exploring how power is manifested in relations across MPE, and how these differ across different social aspects of MPE. Part of this research process would involve observations, but also MPE teachers and boys' reflexive notions on power dynamics within the MPE figuration. This could help to illustrate the complex networks of interdependencies involved within the MPE figuration, and the extent to which such power-relationships influence boys' gendered identity performances and emotional expressions.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, four sociological theoretical approaches have been presented and critiqued to provide a rationale for the application of a figurational sociological framework. In reviewing theoretically applied research, empirical gaps that this thesis seeks to partly address were outlined. These linked to verbal exchanges as an essential power resource in MPE, the need to conceive power as inherently relational and flux, and a process-orientated approach that captures situational variances and developmental processes. In the following chapter, a figurational sociological approach to ethnographic research is presented and detailed in the context in which my research took place.

Chapter 4 Research approach and methods

In this chapter, the research process completed within this thesis is detailed. This detailing starts by introducing a figurational sociological approach to conducting research, which is then applied to the context of ethnography. From here, Colbeck High School (CHS - pseudonym) is presented, alongside ethical considerations and the research ethics process. Following this, the research methods adopted and process of using them are outlined. As well detailing the process of data collection, a reflexive account of my role as the researcher within this research process is provided. In the final section of this chapter, the data analysis technique applied is framed and the process deriving key research themes is illustrated.

4.1 Figurational sociology and a social science research approach

Figurational sociologists believe that their approach to social research differs from research approaches which are underpinned by more traditional notions of positivism and interpretivism (Cock, 2018). Their beliefs in this regard are primarily informed by Elias's contention that these traditional notions represent something of a false dichotomy (Van Krieken, 1998). Elias argued that this falseness came from scholars attempts to separate knowledge and ideas, which he was adamant are interdependent (Mennell, 1998). As such, Elias questioned suggestions that researchers could be value-neutral, as Bloyce (2004, 146) explained:

One's ontological position governs one's epistemological considerations, because those who advocate an objective ontological position, for example, will argue that the nature in which we can acquire knowledge can follow the ethos of the natural sciences. Whilst these are important ways of characterising research issues, it is argued that this distorts the research issue from the outset.

Furthermore, challenging Karl Popper's model of falsifiable hypotheses, Elias suggested that notions of 'ultimate truth' were a fallacy as "causes have multiple effects and effects become partial

causes” (Bloyce, 2004, 147). In this sense, Elias believed that philosophical paradigms were insufficient in acknowledging how explanations of human beings, and the societies that they form, are complex and multi-causal, and fail to recognise that humans are inevitably part of social science research. Instead, Elias (2007) proposed ways of understanding human relationships that stressed varying degrees of adequacy, not ultimate truths. In rejecting suggestions that researchers can achieve complete detachment, Elias (2007) argued that human behaviour lies on a scale between near total involvement and near-total detachment. Therefore, instead of adopting what he believed to be judgemental and psychologised terms such as objective and subjective, Elias (2007) emphasised inherent social aspects within knowledge generation by referring to blends of involvement and detachment within the research process. Thus, arguably, acknowledging the combinations of involvement and detachment within the research more accurately reflect realities within social scientists’ situations than traditional concepts of objectivity and subjectivity (Bloyce, 2004).

Elias’s critique of philosophical dualisms underpinning social science research and his proposal to concentrate on blends of involvement and detachment has practical implications for figurational researchers. Elias believed that sociologists should strive to be “both relatively involved and detached” (Maguire, 1988, 190). However, he was aware that this process was complicated. Elias (1987, 15) suggested that:

The problem confronting those who study...human groups is how to keep their two roles as participant and as enquirer clearly and consistently apart and...to establish in their work the undisputed dominance of the latter

The need for researchers to make themselves aware of balances of involvement and detachment and embed practices of self-detachment into their consciousness is part acknowledged by the British Sociological Association’s (BSA, 1996, 1) guidance notes referring to maintaining

professional integrity, which suggests that researchers “should be clear about the limits of their detachment from and involvement in their areas of study” (taken from Perry et al. 2004, 135). However, adopting involvement and detachment as a sensitising research tool involves a more fluid and reflexive approach whereby figurational sociologists seek to recognise their involvement and moderate this accordingly by exercising a “detour-via-detachment” (Mennell, 1998, 207). This process involves the “sociologist-as-participant being able to stand back and become the sociologist-as-observer-and-interpreter” (Maguire, 1998, 190). In this sense, once this social awareness has been appreciated, researchers can exercise greater control over their emotional and value-laden involvement, exercise necessary means of detour behaviour and aim to achieve more realistic conceptions of social nature (Dunning, 1992). Having used this concept as a sensitising tool, Perry et al. (2004, 145) suggested that “thinking in terms of involvement-detachment during discussions was an essential aspect of preserving the integrity of the research project and minimizing potential distortion”. Therefore, one way to conceive this concept is as an axis whereby researchers strive for appropriate blends of involvement alongside detachment, allowing for situational and processual flexibility (Van Krieken, 1998). This more flexible blend approach is less static and fixed than objectivity-subjectivity informed researcher positions as described in the BSA guidelines, and arguably better reflects lived realities of social-scientists research (Waddington, 2000).

As a sensitising research tool, notions of blends of involvement and detachment have been critiqued. Elias’s (1987) stress on researchers’ need to achieve appropriate degrees of self-consciousness and distance themselves for a period from the situation of the moment led Rojek (1986) to question what *appropriate* levels of involvement and detachment are and what *appropriate* periods of time are needed. From this, Rojek (1986) accused Elias and other figurational sociologists of failing to offer or outline detailed, strict, right or wrong guidelines for

researchers when utilising this concept. Whilst accepting some of Rojek's premise concerning vagueness and Elias's insinuations of potential optimal balances available, Bloyce (2004) questioned Rojek's emphasis on figurational sociologists mandating tools necessary for researchers. Bloyce (2004) stressed that attempting to package this concept like interview guides or quantitative measures would be difficult, unrealistic and problematic. In terms of the latter, Bloyce (2004) contended that providing a blueprint may be too reductive, reifying and remove the necessary flexibility needed when articulating messy realities within social science research. Therefore, appropriateness needs to be conceived in a relative and situational manner. For instance, in this thesis it was necessary for me to be highly involved within the research process and then seek ways to distance myself from the object of study to enable a more detached analysis to take place. In this sense, there can be differing levels of involvement and detachment exercised within and across various research studies. However, whilst levels may differ, researchers' reflexivity on their involvement and detachment through the research process should be more consistent as a process. Rojek's critique and Bloyce's responses highlight the complexity and challenges of applying this concept when researching people in situ. However, as Bloyce (2004) noted, the fact that engaging in the concept raises researcher's levels of self-consciousness of their position within the research process in of itself appears to somewhat legitimise its use.

4.2 Ethnography within a figurational sociological approach

Levels of researcher involvement are perhaps most pronounced within ethnography, the approach adopted in this thesis. Ethnography is the systematic study of people in specific social situations and spaces, which involves the extended involvement a researcher (Bryman, 2012). Within this study approach, ethnography does not simply pertain to observing people in their natural settings, but ethnographers attempt to make the unfamiliar familiar by striving to understand people's 'different' lives (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007). In this sense, ethnographers believe that the social

world “requires a research procedure that reflects the distinctiveness of humans as against the natural order” (Bryman, 2012, 13). In adopting such a research procedure, ethnographers seek a more empathetic and deeper understanding of human action based on the subjectivity of human cultural norms, values, symbols and social processes (Bryman, 2012). As such, ethnography tends to be adopted when a study “requires an examination of complex social processes...first-hand behavioural information of certain social processes...when a major goal of the study is to construct a qualitative contextual picture” (Bryman, 2012, 49). The key characteristics described thus far share many tenets with the method of participant observation. Therefore, drawing differentiations from participating observations, Bryman (2012, 431) outlined how ethnographic researchers: 1) are immersed in a social setting for an extended period of time; 2) make regular observations of the behaviour of members of that setting; 3) listens to and engages in conversations; 4) interviews informants on issues that are not directly amenable to observation; 5) collects documents about the group; 6) develops an understanding of the culture of the group and people’s behaviour within the context of that culture; and, 7) writes up a detailed account of that setting. At a collective level, these seven criteria serve to distinguish ethnography from methods such as participant observation.

Despite the focus and aims described above, some academics have been critical of ethnography as a research methodology and problematised ethnographers’ practices. For instance, due to their lack of replicability, generalisability and external validity, common critiques of ethnographic accounts cite concerns regarding levels of reliability within the data collection process (Brewer, 1994). For some, this lack of reliability invalidates this methodology and can enable untruthful depictions (Randall & Phoenix, 2009), which offer unscientific findings that are not generalisable (Hammersley, 1991). Somewhat refuting concerns regarding levels of reliability, Burns (1994) stresses how due to long periods of immersion, data can be continuously compared, matched and tested in relation to scientific categories and social realities, whilst data can also be triangulated by

using different data sources, methods and verification procedures involving multiple researchers. Furthermore, ethnographers are now warned against the perils of 'going native' or 'full immersion' to avoid overly value-laden conceptions of social phenomena, and stress is placed on the need for researcher reflexivity in terms of 'insider-outsider' positions and ethnographers acknowledging their degrees of influence within their fields of study (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007). Further challenging claims concerning ethnography's illegitimacy, ethnographers cite the relative unique focus on ideographic social processes within certain natural settings as a methodological strength (Herbert, 2000). Taking a broader view of such proclamations, these criticisms and rebuttals represent paradigm debates between (neo)positivists and interpretivists or illustrate shifts towards postmodern critiques of traditional research methodologies.

As such, one issue with debates concerning ethnography's legitimacy as a viable research methodology from a figurational perspective is that they are based on false dichotomous notions of objectivity and subjectivity (Elias, 2007). For instance, concerns regarding external validity and generalisability are futile when notions of absolute truths are rejected. Equally, anxieties regarding depth of researcher immersion and degrees of researcher influence can be somewhat aided by a figurational sociological research approach that stresses the need to exercise blends of involvement and detachment. Whilst Elias (1987) believed that to construct scientific knowledge one needed to see the world from a relatively detached position, he also urged his students to conduct studies in areas of interest and in topics with which they already had some connection (Dunning, 1992). Indeed, sympathetic to ethnographic values, Elias (1987, 16) stressed the importance of active participation "to understand the functioning of human groups". However, the process of insider and prior knowledge which leads to deepened appreciations of the objects of study needs to be coupled with researchers heightened self-conscious attempts to strive to be as emotionally removed from their research as practicably possible (Dunning, 1992). This is because

“emotional reactivity” within researchers’ involvement within subjects they study poses significant threats to sociologists developing a “reality-congruent” view of the social world (Waddington, 2000, 4).

Whilst blends of involvement and detachment are not fixed positions, given my approach within this thesis, it is worth considering benefits on being physically and emotionally involved within research processes. Ethnographer and figurational sociologist Michael Atkinson (2013) suggested that insider positions can: 1) heighten the perceptions of those under scrutiny; 2) provide the researcher with knowledge of ‘insider language’ or terminology; 3) enable the researcher to gain higher levels of trust from the sample due to shared habitus, commonalities or understandings; and, 4) enable the researcher to adapt to fluctuating responses and events given a higher level of a prior knowledge. It would seem therefore that all stages of research processes can benefit from insider positioning or knowledge, which are restrained by degrees of detachment. Mansfield (2007) and Matthews (2018) are two other figurational researchers who have offered reflexive accounts on their use of involvement and detachment as a sensitising tool in their ethnographic research. More broadly, Mansfield (2007) used Elias’s (1987) theory of knowledge to critique connections between the political, personal and emotional dimensions of feminist ethnographic research within sport. Mansfield (2007, 126) stressed the need for feminist ethnographers to be able to reflexively critically examine their “own passions and personal interests throughout the research process”. Therefore, in her ethnographies, Mansfield (2007) strove to engage in involved-detachment by constantly seeking to acknowledge her emotional involvement-detachment with topics, theories and methods of research throughout the research process. Similarly, in describing his ethnographic engagement in boxing over 10 years, Matthews (2018, 102) reflected on how he was required to “to repeatedly search out and reflect upon the dynamic and changeable positions” that offered him various subjective positions from which to collect data and examine boxing. Offering a more

nuanced insight into his use of this concept, Matthews (2018) referred to how he critically explored the possibilities and limitations within his embodied research strategies. Amongst other things, Matthews (2018) described that in exercising 'detours via detachment' (Elias, 1978), he was more able to highlight how his relatively involved-embodied position shaped the knowledge that he co-produced during his ethnographic studies. Mansfield (2007) and Matthews's (2018) reflexive accounts illustrate how it is possible to engage in 'detached-involvement' and 'detour-via-detachment' respectively whilst immersed within an ethnographic study. As suggested here, their engagement in blends and balances of involvement and detachment was not fixed, static or universal, but flux and varied. In this sense, they used notions of involvement and detachment as a dialogical device when exploring their positionality in the field and the process of ethnographic-based knowledge construction.

Drawing together some key theoretical points made, in this section it has been argued that adopting a figurational sociological approach enables a departure from traditional ontological and epistemological debates and rejections of static and fixed dichotomous categories such as objective/subjective, quantitative/qualitative and induction/deduction (Maguire, 1988). Instead, a figurational research approach means striving for more sociologically informed understandings of knowledge through engaging in blends of involvement and detachment within the research process and knowledge generation process. Whilst neglects of benefits of researchers' immersed involvement were problematised, how and why exercises in detours via detachment are desirable, beneficial or possible within ethnography were also outlined. The key points made should not be conceived as solving all the problems that come with dichotomous philosophically informed research methodologies. Indeed, as Kilminster (2004) notes, at a theoretical level, a post-philosophical sociology to which Elias proposed still requires advanced levels of intellectual engagement and critique. However, at a researcher level, concepts of involvement and detachment

offer a sensitising research tool that adds further value to ethnographers' insider-outsider positions and researcher reflexivity. For ethnographic purposes, engaging in both concepts enables researchers to be more consciously aware of complexities when studying humans within their social configurations.

In this thesis, all seven of Bryman's (2012) criteria for ethnography were met. Six months were spent in the field over the Spring and Summer school terms. Information regarding CHS's pupil collective profiles and boys' access to, and timetabling of, MPE was ascertained. Detailed observational notes from over 100 hours of lessons were made. Conversations throughout the period involved people on several levels, such as teaching assistants, volunteers and heads of houses. Interviews were completed with MPE teachers and focus groups with boys, who both compiled members from each key social group. In addition to reasons highlighted so far in this section, this research approach was adopted due to its pertinency in this field of study. For instance, research concerning masculinity in British schools includes classic works by Willis (1977), Corrigan (1979) and Mac an Ghaill (1994), which have since been supplemented with studies by Renold (2001), Skelton (2001) and Swain (2001). Furthermore, many of the studies reviewed in Chapter Three adopted ethnographic approaches. Given this thesis's focus, it was necessary to be able to see and immerse myself within the relationships, identities and behavioural norms within MPE at CHS. Amongst other things, this approach enables me to contextualise and triangulate MPE teachers and boys' interpretations of relationships, identities and behavioural norms, offering greater clarity when presenting key research findings.

4.3 Colbeck High School – recruitment and key information

CHS was a religious-affiliated comprehensive secondary school located in the North-East of England. This school was selected as it met my sampling criterion of being a state non fee-paying secondary

school which followed the NCPE and practised single-sex MPE lessons. CHS was not the first school contacted as recruitment proved difficult. Four schools in North Yorkshire were visited, but three politely declined to facilitate the study. One school initially accepted the study proposal but withdrew their interest two months before the proposed start date due to being short-staffed. Therefore, CHS was recruited through a convenience sampling strategy as I previously studied alongside a current MPE teacher, Mr Hatton. Acting as a Gatekeeper, the Head of PE Mr Parker received clearance from the Head of School and then agreed to facilitate my study. Once agreed, a local council's Disclosure and Barring Service form was completed before any research began. In the context of difficulties in recruiting a school, and broader scepticism towards 'outsider' researchers' motives (Atkinson, 2013), CHS's willingness illustrated their confidence as an institution.

CHS was a mixed-sex Catholic secondary school in the North-East of England which had over 1500 pupils aged 11-18 years. From this pupil population, 75% were Catholic and the rest were either classified as of no-religion or identifying with other religious domains. 25% of pupils were eligible for pupil-premiums, whilst 10% had English as a second language. 12% of pupils were identified as belonging to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and 7% had a registered Special Education Need (SEN). Relating these figures to regional figures, the 2011 census data reported that of the region's population, 95% were born in England, 98% spoke English, 70% identified as being Christian and 22% as having no religion. Whilst visibly white in ethnicity, CHS in many respects represented the local area. MPE teachers discussed how CHS's Catholic affiliation meant that their catchment area was broader than most local schools and they recruited from at least seven feeder primary schools. This also meant that MPE teachers perceived that they had a more diverse range of pupil demographics. For instance, much of the 10% of pupils who had English as a second language were perceived by MPE teachers to be Catholic Poles, compared with a regional Polish

demographic of 0.3%. During interview all the MPE teachers expressed pleasure at working with demographically diverse children and labelled CHS as a traditional comprehensive school in that sense. CHS followed standard UK term-dates. Schooldays started just before 9am and ended just after 3pm. CHS uniform was black trouser/skirt, white shirt, tie, optional jumper and blazer, whilst formal codes such as assemblies and pupils addressing teachers as 'Sir' and 'Miss' were adopted.

The CHS website referred to the school as a faith community and stressed how "each individual in it is on a pilgrimage of growth". The website also detailed core values such as "integrity", "mercy", "compassion", "fairness" and "equality", whilst stressing how "curriculum and relationships will be based on these values". CHS's ethos was also visibly promoted across the school via posters, signs and messages on walls. CHS had received a 'good' rating across all components in its most recent OFSTED report. Further details are difficult to provide without breaching anonymity, although given the North-East of England's relative homogeneity, a broad overview of the area CHS was located can be offered. Like many North-East towns, CHS was in a Labour heartland and had previously been an industrial powerhouse. However, it is also worth noting that UKIP had made significant recent political gains in the town. The town had above average unemployment and divorce rates, whilst the region was classed as low (1) in measures the proportion of young people who enter higher education aged 18 or 19 between the years 2009-10 and 2014-15 (Office for Students, 2019). Whilst rugby and boxing were popular in the area, football seemed visibly to be a surrogate religion for many in the Town. Although, during the period of data collection, the nearest professional football team was experiencing a low point in its history. This was something which proved a frequent bone of contention for some staffs as poor weekend results led to many frustrated discussions and visibly depleted morale on Mondays in the staff-office.

The PE department involved six MPE teachers and five female PE teachers, two of whom were trainee teachers completing PGCEs. Staff offices and changing rooms were single-sexed, barring Mr Copeland whose desk was in the female staff office. All lessons observed were single-sexed, taught by same-sex teachers and were double-lessons which lasted over one hour. MPE lessons observed took place in either the main sports hall, small sports hall, outdoor Astroturf pitches, grassed field, gymnasium or swimming pool. During the spring/summer terms, the MPE diet of activities involved over 10 activities and sports, including, football, rugby, badminton, trampoline, gym, swimming, cricket, athletics, orienteering, hockey and adapted games. Teachers referred to each other by their nicknames and cited each other during interviews by such names. Equally, I quickly was referred to as 'Mierz' and I called them by their nicknames. Therefore, for authenticity purposes pseudonym nicknames will be used for MPE teachers from here on in. Parky was Head of PE and had spent 11 years at CHS, whilst Glovers was the most senior staff member in the department and had spent 13 years at CHS. Both were from the North-East and supported professional football teams in the region. Southy had been at CHS for nine years, was the only non-northerner in the staff team and liked hockey. Parky, Glovers and Southy were similar-aged and in their 40s. Hatts was the newest member of staff in his fifth year at CHS, aged in his late twenties and was a rugby player who was originally from Yorkshire. All MPE teachers were asked about the role of social class in relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE. Their responses were similar and generic. More broadly, they referred to themselves proudly as working class and referred to how they liked that CHS was diverse in social class and, in their view, a social leveller in terms of embedding CHS's values and relations within MPE. They did acknowledge basic factors such as boys from precariat or traditional working-class families sometimes were more prone to respond to conflict in an aggressive way or, as McCormack (2010) found, their attitudes on some issues were more pronounced. That said, they all were quick to reiterate how they enjoyed working with boys from all demographics and teaching mixed-demographic groups.

4.4 Ethical considerations and processes

Prior to starting the process of recruiting a school, ethical approval was gained from York St John's University's Research Ethics Committee [See Appendix A]. Whilst ethnographic studies involving children prove increasingly challenging to gain ethical approval (Atkinson, 2013), completing this rigorous process made me ask and answer important questions. Amongst other things, this process involved foreseeing mitigating reasons for not being left alone with a child. In this case, my strategy was to where possible always align myself to a member of staff and remain in open public spaces. In terms of participant recruitment, informed consent forms and information sheets were signed by the Gatekeeper [See Appendix B, Appendix C], parents [See Appendix D], MPE teachers [See Appendix E] and an assent form was signed by boys [See Appendix F]. Given the nature of the topics proposed to be discussed, active parental consent was opted for. Furthermore, participation was voluntary, and no incentives were offered. Lesson observations were not focused on one boy or certain groups of boys but of social dynamics within MPE more broadly. Therefore, no child assent or parental consent was received for this part of the study. However, both parental active consent and boys' assent was required before any boy took part in a focus group. As well as gaining consent, before interviews or focus groups were completed all participants were reminded of the voluntary nature of the study and informed that their responses will remain confidential and be made anonymous. To help ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms are used for all participants and place names. Such due process verified the study's credibility and rigour when trying to recruit a school and attempted to abate any possible belated legal ramifications.

4.5 Data collection – methods and process

As noted in the first section of this chapter, figurational sociologists do not adopt traditional positivist or interpretivist research paradigms and are sceptical of philosophically underpinned research methodologies. Similarly, Elias was critical of "standardised approaches to

method...irrespective of the object of investigation” (Dolan, 2009, 188). Instead, Elias (1986, 20) suggested that "discovery, not the method, legitimises research as scientific". Elias urged sociologists to “adopt methods matched to and appropriate for the relational and dynamic, that is, processual, the character of their subject matter” (Dunning & Hughes, 2013, 149-150). As such, the aim of figurational scholarship is to generate “theoretically-grounded empirical work” (Dunning et al., 1988, 267) through process-orientated methods (Baur & Ernst, 2011). This process involves developing “theoretically sound but sensitive ways of mixing methods in a qualitatively driven way” (Castrén & Ketokivi, 2015, No PN). Therefore, in adopting this approach, data was collected from three types of sources and sought to apply these in a manner which emphasised processual, interdependent and dynamic characteristics within human relationships. Within this section, the core tenets of observations, interviews and focus groups as data collection methods are presented, alongside justification for opting for such methods. This is followed by transparent and reflexive accounts of adopting these methods.

Lesson observations

Given that central to this thesis’s research focus are gendered social processes and how boys embody masculinity, observations were a key research method. However, May (1997, 138) suggests that participant observation is “the most personally demanding and analytically difficult method of social research to undertake”. One reason for this is that it does not just involve watching but requires observing with a purpose. The objective may be to account for certain behaviours, identify implicit rules and traditions within a social environment and to describe the experiences of participants from their own perspectives, and not the researchers (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007). Therefore, the process of undertaking observations involves researchers looking, listening and recording what they see, and from these notes they can interpret what they have seen (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007). In ethnographic terms, such observations take place

over a prolonged period whereby the researcher is immersed in the social environment. This helps reduce 'researcher reactivity' which can be caused by short-observations or snapshots of lived-realities (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007). As such, adopting such skills allows researchers to gather rich descriptions of 'backstage-culture' and possibly discover unspoken truths (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007). Although, to ensure reliability within observations and avoid researcher bias, systematic, consistent and transparent approaches need to be employed (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007). One of the first decisions researchers must make is what role they are going to undertake within the research process. Here, Gold's (1958) four types of observer roles are frequently drawn upon in labelling researcher positions within the field. Gold (1958) highlighted differentiated observer roles as complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer.

The taking of observational notes was agreed from the outset with the Gatekeeper Parky. All lessons observed lasted just over one hour and detailed notes were made from 84 lessons. All teachers, year-groups and top, middle and lower ability-sets were observed, but Year 11s who were 15-16 years old proved difficult to observe as nearly all opted to spend their lesson revising for exams or completing GCSE coursework. Black sport-clothing was purposefully worn to assimilate with staff, but still be differentiable enough not to be deemed as a teacher by boys. Notes were made on a lesson-plan style word document using an iPad, which had a coded screen saver to ensure confidentiality [See Appendix G]. Notetaking became a relatively systematic process whereby lesson itineraries and core practices would be outlined for context purposes, and then notes taken pertaining to relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE. Most notes were recorded in situ or immediately after lessons, with reflective revisions or expansions sometimes made within 24 hours. When the participant observer role in lessons was undertaken, notes tended to be logged that day or occasionally the day after.

Completing lesson observations sensitised me to everyday interactions, relationships and the organisational culture within MPE at CHS. In this respect, as the ethnographer, I was both observer and note-taker, who for the first four months took a peripheral observer participant role. This meant that deliberate attempts were made to remain as elusive as possible to the boys by discreetly observing their MPE lessons. This process involved minimal discussions with boys and non-intrusive physical positioning during MPE lessons. Having minimised potential disruptions to the field, during the last two months a more participant observer role was taken. This slight shift in positioning included me becoming more active in taking roles ranging from setting-up activities or distributing bibs to providing demonstrations or joining in games with staffs. This role change may have influenced 'natural-settings' to some degree, although it did not alter in any meaningful way 'normal proceedings' within MPE lessons. The shift towards this role came due to being asked to help because of staff absences. This more involved observer position enabled getting to know boys on a more personal level before asking them to volunteer for the study.

Interviews

As well as seeking to explore gendered social processes and how boys embody masculinity, this thesis is also interested in gaining the views, perceptions and experiences of those involved within MPE at CHS. Therefore, interviews were considered the best way of doing this for MPE teachers, who at an individual level could express and disclose their thoughts in a confidential manner. Interviews are probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012). This is because they offer an effective means of ascertaining people's attitudes, experiences and knowledge (Flick, 2018). Therefore, it is the interviewer's job to "listen, hear, and understand what interviewees say during the interview and explain their accounts in the ensuing analysis" (Thurston, 2019, 117). Within this process, interviewers need to ensure that they reduce the effects of their

bias within this form of data collection (Gratton & Jones, 2014). One-way bias can be minimised, and increased degrees of reliability, consistency and trustworthiness can be attained is by utilising an interview guide (Bryman, 2012). Bryman (2012) acknowledges three types of interview guides - open, semi-structured and closed-structured. Within interview guides questions can range in type and style. For instance, Kvale (2007) refers to seven types of open-ended questions - introductory, follow-up, specifying, direct, indirect, structuring and interpretation. Alongside these different question types, within semi-structured and open-ended interviews, interviewers can use prompts and probes to gain more detailed answers or encourage participants to personalise their responses (Kvale, 2007).

In this thesis, a semi-structured interview guide [See Appendix H] was used to interview MPE teachers, which allowed me to probe and, if necessary, ask new questions depending on interviewee responses. This semi-structured interview guide contained four sections concerning relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE at CHS. During their free lessons and within the last six weeks of the study, interviews took place with Parky, Glovers, Southy and Hatts. These interviews were conducted in the gymnasium, which proved a useful location near staff offices but secluded enough for the purposes of privacy and minimal disruption. Having received their consent, interviews were recorded via a Dictaphone. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two hours, with the latter being split into two parts. Throughout the interviews, a blend of Kvale's (2007) seven types of questions were used. This process, alongside offering prompts and probes, was made easier having built a rapport with MPE teachers and gained knowledge of the social processes within MPE at CHS over the previous four to five months. The use of the type of interview style also had theoretical advantages, as discussed below.

From a figurational perspective, a semi-structured interview approach offers a “particularly productive data collection method for exploring figurations and the role of people’s interests and values in complex social processes” (Thurston, 2019, 116). As such, questions and probes were driven by figurational themes, such as how MPE teachers perceived their networks of mutual interdependencies and their power relations with others, how they perceived enabling and constraining social processes in MPE, and their perceptions of how they and the MPE figurations had changed over time. In this sense, through seeking MPE teachers’ expressions and explanations of their lived realities of ‘what’ happens, as noted by Baur and Ernst (2011), ‘how’ and ‘why’ probes were used to gain rich descriptions and ascertain perceptions of everyday relationships in MPE at CHS. This approach enabled me to place MPE teachers in two roles, “firstly as narrators of their personal relationships and secondly as informants about the people, relationships and relational settings in their lives” (Castrén & Ketokivi, 2015, No PN). Furthermore, these face-to-face interviews offered greater insights into MPE teachers’ ‘I’ identity and ‘I’ perspectives, whilst “interviewing people about their personal lives is in itself showing an interest in lived interdependences at a particular level” (Castrén & Ketokivi, 2015, No PN).

Whilst being effective on a theoretical level, it was equally important to recognise and acknowledge my role within this knowledge generation process. Thurston (2019) detailed the human element of generating data through semi-structured interviews, which often involves degrees of emotional involvement and detachment. For instance, in researching sexuality, Perry et al. (2004) stressed that Elias’s concept on involvement and detachment provided a salient sensitising tool throughout the semi-structured interview process. Through engaging in emotional involvement, Perry et al. (2004) experienced a double bind in the sense it enabled rapport, trust and familiarity to be established, but also constrained interviews somewhat due to levels of interdependency and power relations developed. Likewise, aware that deviating too far towards involvement within the

interview process can lead “to the distortion of data, data that are, by their very nature, susceptible to misrepresentation” (Perry et al. 2004, 145-146), Perry et al. (2004) recommended that researchers be aware of their emotional involvement and accommodate for it when undertaking data analysis.

Focus groups

To capture the views, perceptions and experiences of boys within MPE at CHS, focus groups were considered the best method available. Focus groups create social contexts where people consider their views of situations, attitudes and behaviour alongside others, usually peers (Flick, 2018). This group element offers potential to delve into complex understandings and contradictions in people’s attitudes and experiences (Flick, 2018). This process is particularly important in researching young people as their views and attitudes may be more flux. However, the voices of young people offer much epistemological value as they are co-creators of knowledge, not merely passive recipients (MacDonald, 2013). In this sense, young people are now often regarded as active in constructing their reality, identity and learning in schools (MacDonald, 2013). Therefore, there are many advantages of completing focus groups, opposed to interviews, with young people. For instance, focus groups may empower young people to engage who otherwise may have been less confident to do so during a one-to-one interview with a relatively unknown adult (Gratton & Jones, 2014). Furthermore, the views and experiences as told by one child can be re-told via a process of ‘collective remembering’ (Kitzinger, 1994), and can be re-phrased, verified or scrutinised by others in the group (Flick, 2014). However, given the grouped nature, focus groups can be a challenging research method to manage. Such challenges can arguably be amplified when young people make up the focus group. To meet such challenges pertaining from group social dynamics, Gratton and Jones (2014) recommend that chairs establish some ground rules from the outset. These can include organising and co-ordinating participants to ensure that participants take turns, only

respond one at a time, avoid side-conversations, feel able to participate, no-one person dominates conversations and do not speak too quickly (Gratton & Jones, 2014).

Given that boys had not completed a focus group before, Gratton & Jones's (2014) advised method of establishing 'ground-rules' from the outset was followed. This process enabled me to explain how focus groups normally run and reiterate their purpose. To aid the focus group process, and after much deliberation, vignettes were created and implemented as discussion aids. Whilst rarely used in the research reviewed in Chapter Three, vignettes have become a central device in a broader 'narrative turn' in research methodologies. Therefore, using short-stories have become increasingly common in educational-based settings (Dowling et al., 2015). Five short vignettes containing of 119-235 words of basic language were created due to my lack of knowledge of boys' reading ability and levels of comprehension [See Appendix I]. To avoid any confusion and for simplicity purposes all stories involved one teacher and no-more than four boys. Whilst largely based on an amalgamation of real incidents, pseudonyms were used and specific events were portrayed as fictional. Core themes within each short story were based on lesson observations, existing research and tended to concern issues relating to the thesis's research questions one and two. Following each story was five-to-seven story-specific questions used to guide discussions within the focus group.

In total, nine focus groups were completed, three each across Years Seven, Eight and Nine, within the last four weeks of the study. Focus groups contained three or four boys from the same class, who were recruited after their respective class teacher had provided information of the study and parental consent forms had been handed out. Whilst there was interest in the study, returned forms were intermittent. Some boys wanted to be involved but continually failed to bring their parents signed consent form, so could not take part. 32 boys took part in focus groups which were

homogenously white, with one black, one Asian (both second and third generation), whilst one boy had Polish as a first language and two boys had SEN (autism and ADHD). Most focus groups took place in the gymnasium, whilst a few occurred in changing rooms. Each focus group involved three or four boys and happened during the start of PE so once completed, boys entered their lesson. Following the same format, each focus group started by me carefully explaining to boys about the study, re-reading their informed assent forms and discussing what a Dictaphone was and its purpose. Boys were asked if they had any questions, the vignette process was explained and then they read the short-story, and then I read it out loud to ensure that they comprehended it. Each focus group completed two vignettes chosen based on their appropriateness and realism to my age-centred observations that informed their creation. Each focus-group lasted between 21 and 36 minutes. The social dynamics within focus groups aided attempts to attain rich meaningful data by revealing boys shared and unique perspectives on relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE.

4.6 Researcher reflexivity – notions of involvement and detachment

Researcher reflexivity is now considered a prerequisite of best practice within qualitative research (Tracey, 2010). In sociological terms, reflexivity refers to “being aware of and trying to take into account one’s own preconceptions, the fragility of one’s conclusions, and the limitations and sources of error that may contaminate all types of evidence” (Roberts, 2012, 115). Having spent six months as a neophyte ethnographer there were lots of reflexive notes and thoughts, many of which are not possible to detail here. Therefore, within this section, examples of my engagement with balances on involvement and detachment throughout the process are detailed. Following Matthews’s (2018) approach, critical reflections on the role of my embodied sporting and gender habitus within the research process are offered. Finally, and more broadly, honest reflections of the data collection process are provided.

Blends of physical, cognitive and emotional involvement and detachment

As noted in section one of this chapter, figurational sociologists seek to recognise and engage in balances of involvement and detachment. Mansfield (2007) suggested that these exist on emotional, cognitive and physical levels, which can often overlap. The following discussion provides instances of my reflexivity across these three domains, starting with physical levels. Within two days of the ethnography, two staff members invited me to join their pre-work fitness session. Whilst momentarily questioning their motives, their invitation was accepted in order to build trust, rapport and gain teachers' respect, as recommended by Atkinson & Hammersley (2007). Despite this initial deliberate physical involvement into teachers' 'back-stage' lived-realities during regular school hours, conscious decisions were made to remove myself from loitering around the office when not observing agreed timetabled lessons. This intentional physical detachment helped avoid boys trying to befriend me or ask questions as if I were a staff member. This helped to maintain my participant as observer stance, whilst also practically removing another body from an already compact office. These periodic physical exclusions also allowed extra notes to be taken or reflections on observational notes to be made. However, there were occasions during break times or between two observed lessons where time was spent in the staff office during relatively quiet periods. These two simple everyday examples illustrate how conscious decisions were made based on reflexively considering my physical role within the research process. In these cases, such a reflexive process enabled me to better understand teachers' world, i.e. how fast paced it was, whilst avoiding intrusion into their professional office space to maintain feasible ethnographer-participant relationships.

Throughout the research process blends of cognitive involvement and detachment were continuously exercised. As an ethnographer there is no 'naked' or 'mind-less' observation as

explanations are required, not mere descriptions (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007). Therefore, cognitive involvement at a theoretical level is an essential part of an ethnographer's and figurational sociologists' toolkit. Adhering to Atkinson and Hammersley's (2007) stress to 'see the world through their eyes' and Elias's (1978) strive to sociologically explain everyday social realities, repeated attempts were made not to accept things at face-value. This process involved regularly questioning and testing theoretical frameworks and comparing 'new' data to previous research findings. Whilst exhausting at times, this process of cognitive involvement via interpretive and reflexive endeavours proved easier than exercising degrees of cognitive detachment. Out of sight was not necessarily out of mind, as exercising cognitive detachment whilst out of the field of study proved challenging. Sometimes 'detached involvement' was sought (Mansfield, 2007) to amend initial notes due to memory recall or after deeper contemplations often made during my one-hour drive home. On other occasions such as the study's embeddedness into my mind it was difficult to detach myself cognitively at a researcher level. Small gaps between lessons observed, half-term, Easter holiday breaks and one-day a week conducting my roles as a lecturer helped cognitive 'detours via detachments' (Elias, 2007) to be taken, whilst also appeasing mental exhaustion or any chances of going native. Whilst in the field of study, managing blends of cognitive involvement and detachment was not smooth, easy or consistent. Therefore, as Elias (2007) suggested, attempts were made to reflexively realise when aspects on either side of the continuum were taking place. Furthermore, exercising 'detours via detachment' and 'secondary re-involvement' (Elias, 2007) took place once all data had been collected during data analysis, when making theoretical contemplations, when engaging in further literature and during the writing-up stage. As illustrated here, by just recognising and seeking to manage, if necessary or possible, balances of cognitive involvement and detachment aided my attempts to see things 'anew' or 'afresh' and try to 'make sense' of and explain relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE at CHS.

Blends of emotional involvement and detachment proved the most pervasive, challenging to recognise and most difficult to exercise degrees of control over. Following recommendations from Parker (1996), reflective thoughts were kept alongside field-notes and conceptual-based contemplations. In one respect, mapping my thought processes and overriding emotions enabled greater consideration and transparency in my decision-making. In another respect undergoing this process of planned emotional involvement proved difficult because it required identifying, reflecting upon and being able to articulate my feelings in a written form. Whilst this form of reflections was new to me, other reasons why this endeavour proved difficult may partly be due to my masculine habitus, as outlined in Chapter One. One emotion easier to recognise was the nostalgia felt upon entering the field as spaces, smells, sounds and sights in PE rekindled moments considered lost from memory. Whilst perhaps laden with fantasy opposed to reality memories, the strength of my seemingly belated 'secondary re-involvement' surprised me. I found myself frequently thinking, and even saying to MPE teachers on occasions, "we were different...things were done differently...that still happens...I remember when we did that...I really liked that...I didn't like it when that happened". It could be argued this quantum-leap back to my childhood in some ways helped me relate to boys' relationships, identities and behavioural norms, particularly when trying to emphasise with their inconsistent behaviours and fluctuating emotions. Yet, mindful that my job as ethnographer was to detail and explain boys' lived realities, and not compare theirs to mine, greater emotional detachment was sought via conscious efforts of emotional 'detached-involvement' (Mansfield, 2007). Even in these few illustrative examples it is possible to see how emotion or politically driven ethnographers can potentially construct value-laden representations and knowledge of whom and what they are examining. Equally, given the nature of some of these retrospective tales, it is also useful to follow Elias's (1998) lead and not cast value-judgements on previous practices through present-day lenses and emotional sensitivities without fully understanding the figurational dynamics in MPE at that time.

Reflexivity of my embodied gendered habitus

When collecting, interpreting and analysing data, ethnographers need to be aware of their roles and influence within the overall research process. Given the single-sex nature of this sporting environment and Matthews's (2018) ethnographic reflections discussed earlier, it seems pertinent to focus attention on the significance of my embodied gendered habitus within the field of study. In 2015, I entered the MPE department in CHS with an established embodied gendered and sporting habitus. This did not change significantly throughout the ethnography, although nuanced life scenarios reminded me of how my masculinity was consistently being (re)constructed throughout the process. This process is perhaps best surmised within the following three examples. During my six-month ethnography, at an emotional level I had proposed to my now wife, we had recently purchased our first home, and had started planning parenthood. At a more cognitive level, regular reading was further developing my understanding of social constructions of masculinity and gender theories. For example, during lunch periods I vividly remember reading Kimmel's (2009) *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*. Finally, at a physical level, partaking in four gym sessions per week over six months made me feel like I had mildly re-captured my athletic body, which had re-kindled my feelings associated towards it.

The fact that my gender and sporting identity was under constant (re)construction during the ethnographic process did not go unnoticed by MPE teachers and boys. As well as being invited to attend pre-work fitness sessions, MPE teachers often welcomed me into office banter involving a range of sport-related topics. For instance, during the ethnographic period, I was playing cricket at a relatively high level, which meant that matches, scores and results of games were accessible online. Taking a keen interest, Southy revelled in reminding me of my failed performances, whilst also appreciating my better performances, which appeared to command some level of his respect. To meet his competitive, sporting, and humour-based needs, Southy also liked to engage MPE

teachers in online football quizzes during lunch times. Having spent much of my youth absorbed in football chronicles, magazines and programmes, my encyclopaedic knowledge earned me the nickname "Statto" by Southy. Some boys also seemingly judged me along gendered grounds. For example, a few boys approached me with comments such as, "Mr Hatton says you're mint at cricket, what bat do you have?", whilst a member of the successful year ten football team asked, "is it true you marked Rooney?". Less informed by MPE teachers' insight, other boys occasionally asked diverse questions such as, "do you know what an RKO (popular wrestling move) is?". Furthermore, a Year 10 Asian boy asked how I looked after my beard, whilst a Year 11 boy noticed my beard had been significantly trimmed and passed comment. On occasions older boys made assumptions about my sporting ability based on my appearance alone. For instance, whilst walking from the swimming pool area to the MPE staff office via a changing room I overheard a Year 11 boy ask Southy, "Sir, who is he", before Southy replied another boy said "is he a [abbreviated name of local professional football team] player?", to which another boy answered "I bet he is".

These cases demonstrate the role of my embodied gendered and sporting habitus within the research process and the need to engage reflexively in notions of involvement and detachment. Thoughts were made on if such types of conversations were predicated on teachers testing my knowledge to see if I fitted into their 'We' group. My involvement in such discussions was reflexively considered along costs and benefits lines based primarily on trust, acceptance, friendliness, paranoia, self-preservation and degrees of neutrality. One example of negotiating the last three considerations was my conscious efforts not to be too opinionated or outspoken on issues related to gender, boys, banter or bullying in attempts not to cloud or strongly influence their thoughts on such topics. Attempting to evade any staffs suspicious or insecurities, they were frequently reminded of the fact I was not a qualified teacher, had never experienced being an MPE teacher and therefore had no authority or desire to make judgements on them or their practices. Instead,

the thesis's focus on interpreting relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE as they are and not how they ought to be was reiterated. Equally, whilst flattering in some respects, boys' visual assessments of my gender and sportiness and subsequent kudos they granted me may have helped me recruit focus group participants, but these may have also influenced some of their interactions with me during focus groups. To minimise this problem, attempts were made not to deliberately self-promote the identity-role they had ascribed to me, whilst the use of vignettes helped externalise more direct gendered dynamics between interviewer and interviewees.

Reflexivity on data collection

Completing ethnographic studies can be mentally and physically taxing (Atkinson, 2017). Making detailed lesson observational notes proved exhausting at times, particularly on days with back-to-back lessons. However, strategic decisions not to take detailed notes of MPE office culture, GCSE PE theory or practical lessons, school sport fixtures or after-school sport clubs made this process of data collection more attainable. As common with neophyte ethnographers (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007), finding appropriate balances between quantity over quality regarding notetaking proved challenging. During this process, regular experiences of self-doubt involved questions relating to if enough notes were being taken, if the right types of notes were being taken or if notes were too descriptive or not descriptive enough. Through both doing and reflecting upon this practice, feasible and what felt like appropriate balances were achieved between context, description, possible initial explanation and my position within the process.

Interviewing MPE teachers was made easier by spending over five months getting to know their habituses, although with degrees of familiarity came banter, and a prior knowledge of previous conversations and examples provided. Cognisant of my role as inquirer and not co-constructor of

their lived realities, and to avoid over informality, full answers were encouraged by me occasionally glancing at the Dictaphone and deliberately asking probes to answers of which prior knowledge was had, but a record of their interpretation was desired. In this sense, a semi-structured format was of benefit and whilst all questions were not necessarily always asked in the same order, interviews flowed with discussion topics. Therefore, in general, there were degrees of consistency across the interviewees in terms of types of questions, amounts of probes used and a basic structure around four sections. Completing interviews caused one potential issue and difficult decision to make. As noted earlier, there were six MPE teachers, one of which was a PGCE trainee teacher. Whilst observing lessons with five full-time MPE teachers, only four interviews were completed, with Mr Copeland being the teacher not interviewed. Compared with other staffs, no sort of relationship was developed with Mr Copeland much beyond a civil 'hi' and 'how you doing?' This may have been in part due to him being situated in the female staff office, only observing his lessons during my first six-weeks where an allusive observer as participant role was being undertaken, or due to him having period's off-work. Undecided whether to approach him for interview, advice was sought from Parky his line manager, who replied, "I honestly don't know mate, but it is worth a try". Knowing interviews were taking place, Mr Copeland never asked about them, and when loosely mentioned them to him, he displayed little interest. After much deliberation, a decision was made not to formally ask him to be interviewed to avoid any awkwardness or anxiety on both of our parts. It later emerged that Mr Copeland left the school months later. Retrospectively, questions concerning if this judgement call was right were considered, as were thoughts on if some meaningful data was missed, but the decision that felt right at the time was made. This example epitomised Bloyce's (2004) reference to the often 'messiness' within qualitative research and perils of ethnographers collecting data within other people's lived realities.

Before starting data collection, the process of focus grouping boys was considered in-depth, and caused some apprehension. This may have been part due to me internalising implicit adult prejudices against involving children directly within the research process or my fear of the unknown in terms of completing focus groups with boys. Ironically, of the three data collection methods, this proved the smoothest in many respects. A group environment seemed to suit younger boys, who were more emotionally expressive and impulsive in responses, whilst older boys tended to use humour, mainly self-deprecation or sarcasm and momentarily delayed their responses. Whilst older boys appeared a little more guarded than their younger peers, their conversations flowed more and were more jovial. Irrespective of age, all boys engaged well with vignettes aimed at evoking thoughts and discussions on certain topics and there were no awkward silences or confused faces. Whilst a rationale for vignettes was to de-personalise responses, as well as citing their perceptions on key themes within the story, without prompts, boys sometimes provided personal experiences or gave examples relating to CHS. Given that vignettes offered a heuristic device, one regret was not being able to complete focus groups with Year 10 boys (14-15 years old). Whilst little time had been spent observing Year 11 boys, many observations of a top-set Year 10 class were made. Most of this class formed a highly successful football team, but unfortunately no boys came forward. This was despite repeated reminders from Southy, who was also their football coach and a form tutor for most of the boys.

In this section, demonstrations of notions of involvement and detachment on physical, cognitive and emotional levels that were central within researcher reflexivity have been provided. As noted in section one of this chapter and evidenced here in some respects, my embodied gendered habitus enabled immersion into other people's lived realities. However, to exercise blends of involvement and detachment required much researcher reflexivity as cognitive detachment was not only needed when seeking to interpret and explain the field, but also when interacting with people in it.

Moreover, Swain (2006) referred to how the write-up of his ethnography represented 1% of all his notes. In this sense, examples provided in this chapter feel as minimal. However, accounts provided here offer much-needed context, transparency and honesty within the research process, whilst also demonstrating how those being observed interpret the gendered person observing them, something often not discussed in ethnographic studies reviewed in Chapter Three. Engaging in blends of involvement and detachment allowed me to recognise, embrace and nullify my researcher position on a situational basis to ensure necessary levels of rigour throughout the ethnographic process.

4.7 Data analysis – system and process

Qualitative data analysis involves a “process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorising” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, 138). From a figurational sociological approach, the research process involves ‘two-way traffic’ between theory and data as the two are symbiotic (Dunning, 1992). This is because “views such as those expressed...should be treated not as an explanation, but as data to be explained” (Dopson & Waddington, 1996, 546). Similarly, theories are not abstract per se as empirical data and theory develop “hand in hand, in a permeant dialogue with each other” (Van Krieken, 1998, 163). Therefore, following Elias’s lead, figurational sociologists often collect different kinds of data which can be cross-fertilised. Considering this, in this thesis, data from observations, interviews and focus groups was corroborated. This process included examining discrepancies between teacher interview data (‘I’) and pupil focus group data (‘They’) or teacher interview data (‘I’) and observational data (‘Other’). Such processes do not refute qualitative inquiry but serve to illustrate multifaceted dynamics within social worlds, illuminate research questions from different angles and evidences rigour via triangulation within data collection and analysis.

Researchers have various means to analyse qualitative data (Silverman, 2017). In this thesis, thematic analysis was employed as it is a flexible mode of analysis used widely by qualitative researchers. The thematic analysis process involves identifying implicit and explicit patterns and themes within the data (Flick, 2014). Coding is used as a mechanism of identification and theme making, which can be cross-coded and triangulated with fellow researchers (Gratton & Jones, 2014). Due to timings of interviews and focus groups, formal data analysis was completed once all data had been collected and upon leaving the field. All audio files were converted to typed form via verbatim transcription and were placed alongside already typed observation notes. Then Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis was followed as a guideline, which involved:

1. Familiarising myself with the data by re-reading all my transcripts multiple times and inputting data into N-Vivo 11/12
2. Generating initial codes from raw data by searching for MPE teachers and boys' responses and observational notes relating to relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE
3. Searching for themes via grouping initial codes through topical and theoretical similarities and differences from those identified in Chapters Two and Three
4. Reviewing key themes to check consistency and auditability and finalising the positioning of data alongside initial codes and grouped codes
5. Defining and naming themes and coding groups and ensuring that these were sensitive to dominant topics and the applied and tested theoretical framework
6. Writing up the analysis, as demonstrated in the following four chapters

Whilst this process is presented in a linear sequence, it was not experienced in a smooth manner. Data was initially analysed manually via a table on a Microsoft Office Word 2007 document. This process was useful for immersion within in data, but it proved to be far from effective when seeking

to create initial codes and group codes given the range and the amount of data collected. Therefore, all the data was transferred to N-Vivo 11, a qualitative analysis software package, which was used as a more manageable platform to analyse vast data sets, cross-reference nodes and provide a clear audit and induction process. Undertaking this process also helped me more easily to dip in and out of the data. However, during this process an updated N-Vivo 12 system became available. Whilst N-Vivo 11 files could have been converted, the opportunity to re-analyse my data in N-Vivo 12 for consistency purposes was taken. This arduous process ensured rigour when grouping, theming and developing general dimensions. General dimensions largely equated to teacher-pupil relations, boys' relations and banter and bullying [See Appendix K]. As such, the following four chapters represent such themes and are ordered accordingly to my four thesis research questions. The many sub-themes within each general dimension have been merged into four sections within each results chapter. Within each section, data are presented to build a descriptive picture of the topic before then critically evaluating key themes that emerged. This approach was underpinned by corroborating different data sources aimed at capturing relationships, identities and behavioural norms within MPE at CHS. Data presented in the following four chapters is verbatim from original transcripts. However, the repeated regional use of 'you know' and 'like' were excluded from responses to help the flow of the content. Whilst this arguably hinders authenticity, it was felt that this did not detract way from what was being said, but aided clarity in the point being made. Also, as noted earlier, MPE teachers' nicknames are used for authenticity purposes. Moreover, the phrases 'younger boys' refers to boys in Year Seven and Eight (11-12 years), whilst 'older boys' is used to refer to boys in Year Nine, Ten and Eleven (13-16 years). Pseudonyms are used for all boys referred to within the following four chapters.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, theoretical contemplations of figurational sociological approaches to research was provided and applied to the context of ethnography. Key information regarding CHS and the field of study was provided, alongside insight into the rigorous ethical approach undertaken. The three main research methods used were presented and how they were adopted in a systematic manner was detailed. This was followed by open and reflexive accounts of engaging within notions of involvement and detachment, which was intended to provide added transparency to presenting the research process. In the final section, the data analysis approach taken was framed and how this had informed the ordering and sections within the following four results and discussion chapters was described.

Chapter 5 Gendered social processes and boys' masculine embodiment within MPE

In this chapter, the first of my results chapters, the themes of gendered social processes, boys' masculine embodiment and boys' gendered self-restraint in MPE at CHS are critically discussed. Data are drawn from boys' focus groups, lesson observations and MPE teachers' interviews. Findings are presented and analysed by drawing upon the figurational theoretical concepts of enabling and constraining social processes, in an attempt to develop a more reality-congruent understanding of power-struggles surrounding the development of emotional self-restraint amongst boys within this complex network of interdependencies.

5.1 Enabling gendered social processes within MPE

In this section, three key themes that emerged from the data are presented: a) MPE as enabling academic escapism; b) MPE single-sex nature as advantageous for enabling male social bonding opportunities in MPE; and, c) the enabling of competitiveness and physicality in MPE. The first theme to emerge when examining gendered social processes within MPE related to perceptions amongst teachers that MPE offered boys distractions from more academic subjects at school. For instance, within his interview, Glovers made three related points:

There is a lot of kids here who have got issues outside of school and some of them probably come here and it is like a release to them...Let them have a bit of fun, there is a lot of pressure on kids, I wouldn't want to be a kid now honestly...The whole character, you know what I mean? There is more to it than academic success. It's not the fault of the school it is just the environment we are in [Personal Interview 10 July 2015]

The reference to pressure on 'being a kid now' suggests that pressures have changed over time, and PE is now considered a more informal space. These pressures included perceived problematic home life situations as well as the stresses that come with desired and expected high academic

performance. Whilst separate in one sense, these pressures could be interconnected. Blame for these pressures was not attached to individuals per se, but seemingly attributed to part of a broader environmental climate. The two main pillars of this climate most frequently cited by MPE teachers were perceived rises in dysfunctional families and the increasing burden of meeting academic attainment levels. In Glovers's view, the latter overrode important aspects of children's schooling such as character development.

Sympathetic to the pressures many young people were perceived to face, teachers saw MPE as enabling boys to experience escapism through having fun. For instance, Southy emphasised that "in terms of other classroom stuff, I can see why if they are sat there then they [boys] just get bored and don't have an interest" [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]. The process of having fun within MPE involved jovial peer relations. For example, Hatts noted that in MPE "lads can play hard, have a laugh with each other and get a bit of escapism" [Personal Interview 2 June 2015]. Such escapism was regularly observed in MPE lessons. This process was aided by boys routinely taking part in familiar games that are fun by design, such as piggy-in-the-middle, king-of-the-ring and dodgeball. Given their playful nature, most boys embraced such games. For instance, during a focus group conversation relating to dodgeball's franticness, Year Seven Keegan responded: "I like it, I think it is fun" [Focus Group 16 June 2015]. Southy and Hatts's comments appear to imply that most boys dislike routine academic classroom settings and like the more de-routinised MPE environment. Arguably, a more latent implication is that PE is less academic than other school subjects. Such inferences are consistent within the PE subject community. For instance, Green (2000) also found enjoyment central to 35 PE teachers' views on the nature and purpose of PE, whilst fun was often used as a way of demarcating PE as different from other subjects.

Whilst some games in MPE are fun by design, it became abundantly clear in lesson observations that MPE teachers were central to enabling boys to experience academic escapism. For instance,

MPE teachers often opted for games that had been adapted to be more fun, such as Danish Longball instead of quick cricket. They also permitted games like scramble which was a less violent version of folk mob football. Furthermore, relatively mundane activities such as warm-ups were made, or allowed to be, enjoyable. For example, whilst warming-up, several year-nine boys used their hockey stick to mimic the Gangnam-style dance, a popular cultural dance at the time. This delighted many on-looking peers, whilst Southy rejoiced in observing boys' playfulness [Field note 4 March 2015]. Even physically exhausting fitness activities were 'made a laugh'. For instance, during one lesson, Year 10s were grouped into four teams and competed in piggy-back shuttle runs. MPE teachers deliberately paired physically larger boys with much smaller boys to be amusing, whilst some boys cheered as they imitated jockeys whipping their horses [Field note 12 March 2015]. In this sense, warm-ups and fitness activities served social as well as practical purposes. The response from most boys to the playfulness offered in MPE concurs with Smith and Parr's (2007) findings. From a sample of 38 young people aged 15-16 years, Smith and Parr (2007) found that many young people viewed enjoyment and a break from academic studies as central to the nature and purpose of PE. When one considers these findings alongside those of Green's (2000) cited above, clearly MPE teachers and many boys share the same perceptions of the nature and purpose of PE. This process was enabled by MPE teachers who prescribed to fun based teaching methods and, like found by Green (2000), described enjoyment as central to their teaching philosophies.

During interviews, MPE teachers' references to academic escapism referred to pupils as 'boys', which is understandable given their context. However, as illustrated by Hatts's previous comment above, MPE teachers occasionally referred to 'lads', whilst also stressing the importance of the all-male setting in academic escapism. Therefore, part of the escapism process seemed to entail homosocial bonding opportunities for boys in MPE. For instance, Hatts suggested: "I think there is a certain friendship bond that you can build up through sport if you are playing for a certain team" [Personal Interview 2 June 2015]. Another part of the escapism process appeared to link to

perceived differences that were offered within this single-sex setting, in comparison with other areas of schooling. Elaborating further, Hatts noted:

I think when they come to PE, it is more of a natural environment. I think the main thing is just the all-boys bit you know. If all boys are together, they tend to work a lot better than when it is girls and boys mixed. (When asked why, he replied). They get to this age when they start maybe liking girls a bit, I think that affects their confidence in a classroom because they do not want to look stupid. There was a lad the other day, he comes into PE, he is absolutely fine with us, he goes into a mixed class because he has some friends, theatre girls, there and another couple of lad friends, he starts showing off in front of them you know to try and look big and hard [Personal Interview 2 June 2015]

Examining this data alongside that already presented in this section, MPE at CHS entailed much amusement, camaraderie and opportunities for male social bonding. Therefore, most boys appeared to come to MPE expecting to do fun things and socially and emotionally bond with each other, an expectation met by MPE teachers. I use the term 'most boys' based on my observations of few boys being visually disengaged by MPE teachers' enjoyment-based approach. Data here regarding homosocial bonding opportunities mirror those of Gerdin (2016a), who reported in his ethnography upon boys pleasurable embodied experiences in MPE. These aspects of homosocial rituals within boys' peer-relations is often overlooked, particularly given that much research in MPE has tended to focus on the negative aspects that such behaviours can have on peer relations or boys' gender identity expression. The gendered significance of homosocial bonding opportunities was realised by Hatts. This could be because in mixed-sex secondary schools such as CHS, PE is arguably the only subject, time and space where boys are formally in a single-sex environment. Hatts's comments, however, appear to be based on heteronormative assumptions. Hatts implies that without heteronormative pretence, older boys can be themselves and not feel shame in their lack of intellect or feel the need to maintain a male bravado. This perspective adds a broader insight

into gendered social processes to those provided in Chapter Three. For instance, Anderson's (2012) ethnography of PE students aged 17-18 years and Campbell et al.'s (2018) ethnography of young people in elective PE aged 15-16 years both found that heteronormativity was still central to boys' peer relations and gendered behaviours in MPE, despite perceived shifts towards more inclusive masculine attitudes. By comparing heteronormative differences within mixed-sex and single-sex school environments, it is possible to consider the normalisation of such gendered social processes across schools. This is important for context purposes, but also, as Morrow and Gill (2003) noted, is important in emphasising that PE does not sit in isolation of other prevailing attitudes across the school community. Therefore, gendered social processes in MPE should be considered in relation to other school and community gendered social processes.

Continuing to compare MPE to other school subjects, during interviews some MPE teachers expressed that de-routinising experiences and MPE's single-sex environment can have gendered significance for boys. Elaborating on earlier data presented relating to boys' perception of classroom-based academic studies and MPE's enabling of 'lad' behaviour, MPE teachers perceived MPE to be a more 'natural' environment for boys. This perception was due largely to the competitive and physical nature of MPE. For instance, within his interview Southy made three related references to this point:

When it is just boys in the group, they are going to be more competitive. I like to try and make it competitive. I know the Government's say oh well we shouldn't have competitive PE as someone has to be a loser, but research suggests that boys like competitiveness...The nature of the subject as being practical, we try and make it competitive...I think the nature of the competitiveness, it is physical, they are not just sat in the classroom, which certainly helps them get rid of some energy. I know in things like food tech and science they do well and again that is with their hands and

the practical side of stuff, opposed to being theoretical [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]

Aligned to his earlier belief regarding boys' boredom in theoretical-based lessons, Southy seemingly viewed boys as more competitive, practical, and energetic than girls, but also less academic. This type of sex-role theory perspective of boys' psyche and behavioural norms is often espoused by some male studies scholars (Biddulph, 2014; Kindlon & Thompson, 2009; Gray & Farrell, 2018). The same perspective is utilised by psychologists who cite gendered learning differences (Gurian & Henley, 2001). These gendered assumptions often underpin suggestions that boys are disadvantaged in a feminised schooling system (Mulvey, 2010), and support stereotypes that boys are more likely to engage in less academic and more practical subjects like PE. Connell (2008) argues that this boys-as-victims perspective promotes a dichotomised and essentialist view of gender as it naturalises gendered difference in boys' and girls' psychologies, attitudes, social functions and aspirations. As a social constructionist, Connell (2008) maintains that boys and girls learn in a variety of ways and actively engage in constructing gender relations and gender identities. Therefore, she argues that boys are not predominantly passive recipients of their genes. Relating this academic debate back to Southy's views, it is worth noting, as discussed in Chapter Two, that over the last century gender relations within PE have remained resistant to change and continue to involve conventional gendered customs and practices. One reason for such continuity has been linked to what Evans et al. (1996, 169) referred to as widespread "pedagogic traditionalism". This process involves teachers use of "pseudo-educational rationales to support such stereotypical views" (Waddington et al., 1998, 45). In this sense, it could be argued that such teacher-led convention has contributed to the continuation of stereotypical views concerning gender appropriateness.

It seemed that this perspective may have part informed MPE teachers' conscious promotion of competitiveness within MPE lessons. For instance, during a Year Eight bottom ability-set tennis

lesson, boys completed a series of rallies in pairs. Witnessing inadequate levels of application, Glovers adapted the activity by asking winners to move up a court and losers to move down a court. This change made boys more attentive to the activity [Field note 16 April 2015]. Furthermore, in a Year Seven football lesson a team of boys celebrated winning by chanting “losers, losers, losers” at the opposition team, which received no teacher intervention [Field note 17 March 2015]. Whilst competitiveness may be an individual trait, being competitive in MPE is an inherently social process. In MPE, boys are presented with regular scenarios or situations where they can display, celebrate and boast about their sporting prowess. In this sense, MPE provided boys one of the few motility-based opportunities in school to be physically rather than intellectually competitive. As illustrated here, this process was enabled by MPE teachers who generally embraced competition. This empathy was no doubt partly informed by MPE teachers’ competitiveness and, akin to Southy’s earlier proclamation, their wish to meet boys perceived physical and practical needs. It also appeared that this empathetic approach was supported somewhat by most boys’ behaviour, many of whom it seemed had entered CHS with a competitive spirit. Therefore, as noted by Smith and Green (2004), this adopted stance minimised a tension balance by meeting the needs of the ultra-competitive sporty pupils.

The enabling and promotion of competitiveness meant that boys’ physicality was acceptable and often encouraged by MPE teachers within the core elements of MPE lessons. Such trends are demonstrated in the following observation:

Field note 18 March 2015 Year Seven Lesson

One boy with a rugby ball had to run a gauntlet past three boys with tackle bags, whose role was to abrasively stop the boy and pin him down. Smaller boys would often get ‘bulldozed’, a word commonly used during this activity, and Copeland encouraged boys to hit hard and get-up quickly when down. Most boys appeared to embrace the opportunity to be physical, irrespective of their ability or size.

Likewise, in a Year 11 optional American Football lesson a player was 'sacked', meaning tackled to the ground. Witnessing this, some peers rejoiced, whilst others shouted "smash, get down" [Field note 21 April 2015]. Physical attributes could also be expressed within less combative aspects of MPE. For instance, in a Year Eight lesson one boy celebrated scoring a goal by striking a bodybuilder's bicep pose [Field note 28 January 2015]. Irrespective of the activity, most MPE lessons involved boys' bodies being combative as tussling, shoulder barging and tackling were standard practices. The behaviours outlined here illustrate how boys' bodily performances were highly visible in MPE and how boys were able to momentarily and situationally dominate other boys' bodies in a socially pleasant manner. Whilst physicality is mentioned sparingly in previous research, these observations go some way to capturing the degrees of physical contact present in MPE. This level of physicality is unattainable or socially unacceptable in other school environments. Therefore, it could be argued that such opportunities to demonstrate greater physicality offer boys gendered significance in terms of their gendered behaviours and gendered identity expression. This suggestion is supported by Parker (1996), who found in his ethnography of MPE that many boys by the age of 11-13 years highly desired and valued embodying a masculine hero-image. Considering the role of MPE within this process, it is useful to also draw on Velija and Kumar's (2009) findings that the experiences of GCSE PE for 16 girls aged 14-16 years were shaped by their embodiment of gender. This study referred to the processes through which girls internalised the belief that their bodies were gendered, inferior and diametrically opposed to boys' bodies. Applying this key point to data here, it could be argued that MPE involves social processes and bodily practices, through which boys learn traditional forms of masculine identities and gain an understanding of socially rewarding gendered bodies.

As well as being combative, physicality in MPE lessons also involved physical intimacy within and between activities. Boys were frequently observed resting against, hugging or wrestling a peer in an inclusive and collegiate manner. For instance, after helping Hatts put the trampolines away at

the end of the lesson, a group of Year Seven boys wrestled on the mats for a few minutes in a playful and amicable manner [Field note 27 January 2015]. Older boys also imitated wrestling moves, but these were usually rougher, more impulsive and aimed at demonstrating their strength over a peer. For example, whilst waiting to bat in rounders, four boys wrestled. One boy's surprise RKO, a popular move in entertainment-based wrestling, injured a peer who started to cry. The boy apologised profusely, which was accepted by the injured boy and Hatts [Field note 14 May 2015]. At an impressionable age and in search of solid, socially acceptable and distinct gender identities, most boys seemed to embrace gendered role-play, mimetic opportunities to wrestle and the chance to be physically intimate with each other. Again, this level of physical intimacy would not be expected in other school subjects but was enabled in MPE. These findings can be linked to Hatts's previous comments regarding the manner in which the single-sex nature and heteronormative assumptions within MPE enabled boys' behavioural norms to differ to those across other facets of school. Parker (1996) also found that violence within MPE tended to involve physical manoeuvres whereby hard boys imitated their wrestling heroes on victims, in a practice they considered entertainment rather than a violent interaction. In slight contrast, through my observations, this arguably gendered practice was not hierarchical, but based more upon some boys' taste and preference for rough play. In this sense, my findings were more akin to those of Campbell et al. (2018), who found that boys would often seek to out-strengthen a peer during play fighting, rough play and arm wrestling. Therefore, as found by Gorely et al. (2003), muscularity and strength were associated by boys with action heroes, such as professional wrestlers, whose bodies dominate space and can manipulate peers' bodies.

To summarise the key findings within this section, it was found that academic escapism was enabled by MPE teachers' fun-based teaching philosophies, which met boys' expectations of MPE. Single-sex experiences of MPE at CHS were centred on enjoyment, competitiveness and physicality. Collectively, these facets were observed and considered by MPE teachers as enabling boys to

experience de-routinising experiences and male social bonding. These experiences were considered to have gendered significance as MPE was considered by MPE teachers as contrasting to other more boring, mundane and pressurised academic school subjects. This perception part informed their gender-sympathetic teaching approach.

5.2 Gendered social constraints within MPE

Whilst the previous section focused on enabling gendered social processes, in this section four themes relating to gendered social constraints within MPE are discussed. In particular, the following are examined: (a) the regulation of enabling social processes based on MPE teachers' levels of behavioural acceptability; (b) MPE teachers use of gendered slurs as a shaming mechanism to socially control boys' gendered performances; (c) boys' embodiment of heteronormative attitudes and behavioural norms in MPE; and (d) the relative silence concerning explicit sexuality-based interactions within the MPE.

The first theme discussed considers that whilst boys' competitiveness and physicality was enabled and even promoted in MPE, it was not unregulated. MPE teachers would often constrain or remove activities based on their perceptions of acceptable behavioural norms. For instance, during a Year Nine focus group, Alfie explained that "we used to play scramble, we used to hit the door and go 'get in' and be like screaming 'you what!?' (aggressively gesturing) and that's why we don't play it anymore", whilst Charlie added, "Mr South said now we can't do that because it gets too competitive, as in too much" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. This type of incident was occasionally observed. For example, during a Year 11 activity-choice lesson, many boys opted for football. Throughout the match tempers flared and Southy threatened to end the session prematurely. Shortly after, Southy ended the match after adjudging insufficient behavioural change had taken place [Field note 4 April 2015]. Therefore, whilst boys could be physically competitive, this enabled process was predicated on boys moderating their behaviour accordingly. From these examples, it

seems that a large part of this moderating process involved boys being able to manage their emotional expressions when in the heat of the battle. MPE teachers set behavioural and emotional expectations. As illustrated here, MPE teachers were willing to use their position of authority to alter or end the activities to modify or stop boys' failure to meet their standards. Aware of these, boys would mostly modify their behaviour accordingly.

Alongside standard teaching methods to address boys' momentary lapses in behavioural standards, MPE teachers also used more subtle techniques to engage boys in MPE lessons. One frequent and seemingly effective technique was subjecting boys to gendered slurs. For instance, a Year Nine boy complained about a rounders ball being too hard, to which Southy responded, "you big girl" [Field note 6 May 2015]. Similarly, a group of Year Eight boys bemoaned that the teams selected were unfair and were told by Southy to "man-up" [Field note 28 January 2015]. Likewise, in competing against another class, Southy instructed "come on boys, we shall see if Hatton's group have manned up yet" [Field note 20 May 2015]. Often these examples were jest-like and implicit remarks. However, the following observation illustrates how they could be more measured and explicit:

Field note 14 May 2015 Year Seven Lesson

Hatts explained to the class the need to pace their 800meters run and informed them that they will be timed. Copeland's class had already started the same activity. After half a lap a significant gulf emerged between the front and back group, and those faltering started to walk and talk. Hatts became incensed, but initially shouted words of encouragement...Upon eventual completion, Hatts separated the class in two based on his perception of their effort and informed those he deemed not to have tried hard enough to complete the run again, whilst sending the rest of the class to play rounders. Addressing the left-behind group, Hatts referred to their "pitiful attempt", and reminded them that they were "men" and not a "bunch of girls", and therefore should be able to do better. Eager to join in, Copeland added "don't be wimps".

This type of attitude and gendered behavioural expectation was sometimes evident amongst older boys, as illustrated in the following observation:

Field note 19 March 2015 Year 10 Lesson

During a football match William, a tall talented footballer, shouted “Adam get there you fanny”. Adam was a small very thin and skilful footballer but did not like to tackle. William continued to berate every move Adam made. After his team had conceded a goal, William screamed in anguish “it’s about making the right decisions boys”, a comment aimed at Adam. William’s comments went unpunished by the watching Southy and Hatts.

In examining these data, it should be noted that in all of these cases, boys accepted gendered slurs and momentarily changed their behaviour accordingly. In this sense, gendered slurs proved an effective social constraint over boys’ behaviour in MPE. Considering this social process, it seemed that irrespective of their jest-like or more serious delivery, gendered slurs were used to shame boys in order to inspire attitudinal and behavioural change. Whilst these types of comments were not omnipresent, their effectiveness appeared premised on the situational shame induced by such comments being made in front of boys’ peers, or during team-based competitive sports. MPE teachers use of shame to single boys out and momentarily embarrass them in front of their peers was also found in Jachyra’s (2016) ethnography of boys aged 12-14 years, who were dissatisfied with Health and PE. However, Jachyra’s (2016) examples did not match the explicit gendered nature of the slurs reported here. More implicit gendered slurs were however cited in Tischler and McCaughtry’s (2011) portrayals of five subordinate boys aged 11-13 years and their experiences of MPE as well as Hill’s (2015) visual ethnography with three Asian boys aged 13 years. It appeared that explicit gendered slurs presented in the data above tended to be instigated by boys’ expressions of discomfort, discontent or disengagement, which was perceived by them as embodying ‘weak’ bodies. Such perceptions had gendered implications and induced gendered shame for boys because, in such slurs, female bodies were positioned as weaker than males. These

findings are consistent with those of Velija and Kumar (2009) regarding the pressure for boys to embody gender ideals, and how gender-appropriate embodiment in MPE is socially constructed through gendered bodies (Gorely et al. 2003). Therefore, seemingly underpinning the gendered social constraint presented above was a gendered behavioural norm that all boys like MPE and should be competent in MPE. As such, these findings also illustrate the social pressure and power-relationships within such networks of interdependencies for boys to display certain types of attitudes and perform in traditional masculine ways within MPE.

Further evidencing traditional masculine behavioural norms and attitudes within MPE at CHS, during six-months of observations, boys' conversations rarely related directly to sexuality. This observation was put to MPE teachers during interviews, who shared the same observation but struggled to explain why. The following examples are a few rare cases. During summer-term, MPE lessons often ran alongside female PE lessons on the athletics field. During this process boys showed little signs of distraction or made little comment on their neighbouring female counterparts. One exception was when Hatts made light of Year Seven boys' bared chests whilst reversing their shirts by joking, "put it away Jack, stop trying to impress the girls", to which Jack and his peers laughed [Field note 18 March 2015]. A more explicit example of reference to homosexuality was witnessed whilst in a Year 10 lesson. In completing a warm-up a boy sang loudly "Jamie sticks it in my arse, in my arse, in my arse" in an American accent to the tune 'London Bridge is Falling Down' to which some peers laughed, whilst a few others joined in. This chant did not receive teacher intervention [Field note 21 April 2015]. Whilst such explicit form of homophobia was rare, more implicit heteronormative attitudes were occasionally evidenced, as illustrated in my following conversation with Lucas, a Year Seven boy:

Field note 19 May 2015 Year Seven Lesson

Lucas informed me that he couldn't do PE because he had to conserve all his energy for his dress rehearsals for his dance shows. He also disclosed to me that he had been

doing ballet for eight years, and I told him Billy Elliot was one of my favourite films. In reference to his friend's perceptions of his hobby, Lucas casually expressed how "they don't understand it, they just say it is gay". He then pointed to a peer in his class and told me his sister was in the same production and there were only a few boys in it.

To examine such data, it is important to reiterate that few examples of explicit references to sexuality were witnessed in MPE during my ethnography. That said, whilst used and accepted as jest, Hatts's comment and the boys' chant revealed heteronormative attitudes and male bravado in MPE lessons. Furthermore, by the age of 11, Lucas understood and problematised homosexual affiliations attached to certain physical activities and notions of gender deviancy that were underpinned by heterosexual norms. Without more substantive evidence, it is difficult to draw any definitive conclusions from these data. Tentative comparisons can be drawn between the Year 10 song regarding anal sex and Parker's (1996) and McCormack's (2010) suggestion that homosexual-based slurs used by older boys appeared to be based on attempts to momentarily de-masculinise peers, rather than genuine feelings of homophobia. Similarly, Lucas's comment can be cautiously placed alongside Campbell et al.'s (2018) ethnographic findings that older boys' gender transgressive displays came only during certain activities and once they had accrued enough masculine capital not to arouse suspicion concerning their sexuality. As such, when compared with McCormack's (2010) findings, there was no evidence of boys' pro-gay attitudes. Therefore, as a small collective, these data appear contrary to the findings of White and Hobson (2017), who suggested that PE teachers believed that boys nowadays accepted more diverse sexualities than had previously been the case. However, given the relative silence on explicit sexuality-based conversations, perhaps the main consideration to be made is regarding the extent that sexuality was a central feature in boys' peer relations and gender identity, as purported by Anderson (2012) as a central tenet within inclusive masculinity theory.

The key findings within this section revealed that MPE teachers would use their position of authority to momentarily modify boys' behaviour and emotions in line with their expected standards. More broadly, it was found that boys were socially constrained in MPE in gendered and heteronormative ways. In this respect, the primary and seemingly most effective social constraint was the use of gendered slurs to momentarily cajole, embarrass and de-masculinise boys in front of their peers to evoke a shame-induced behavioural response. These crude sexist comments reiterated gendered binaries based on boys being physically and attitudinally different and superior to girls. Therefore, at a gender identity level, such processes of social constraint illustrated the narrowness of masculine expression that was available to boys in order to avoid gender-shaming. However, it seemed that this constriction may have provided a heteronormative 'safe space' for boys to be physically intimate without gender or sexuality suspicion.

5.3 Enabling and constraining gendered social processes in football within MPE

The previous two sections have focused on either enabling or constraining gendered social processes. In this section, football is discussed as a pertinent example of an activity that involved both enabling and constraining gendered social processes. Discussions are presented through the following four themes: (a) football's popularity amongst most boys and how this afforded peer kudos; (b) the way some boys perceived football in MPE as being too serious and too competitive; (c) behavioural and attitudinal changes in football in MPE in comparison with other sports; and (d) football as part of CHS's ethos and the broader community's shared passion.

Football was by far the most popular sport in MPE at CHS. It was also the only sport observed being played during break and lunchtimes, which involved all-boy teams, with both boys and girls observing those playing. MPE teachers noted football's popularity as a desired activity choice in MPE amongst many boys. For instance, Parky reflected that:

Especially during the summer when you are not doing any football, you know it becomes a bit of a joke when the same kid puts his hand-up and says, “are we doing football today?” Right we are not doing football until September, and you get “oh, why not?” [Personal Interview 8 July 2015]

This semi-regularly type of interaction would often be met with pleas and bartering from boys. For example, Copeland informed Year Nine boys that they will be doing a 12 vs 12 game of football. Unable to contain their excitement, many boys chanted “one big game, one big game” as they made their way to the AstroTurf pitches [Field note 18 March 2015]. Boys also acknowledged football’s unrivalled status as the sport of choice. For instance, during a Year Nine focus group, Josh stated, “it’s like everyone wants to play it [football], like all day” [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. Offering a possible explanation for football’s popularity at CHS, Alfie noted that “it’s [football] popular, it’s like all over the news most of the time, everyone like watches it” [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. These desires and requests differed little by age or ability groupings but tended to be more pronounced amongst older boys. It should also be noted that Parky, Glovers, Southy and Copeland also identified football as their number one sport, whilst Hatts considered it his second-choice sport behind rugby league. The obsession with football within MPE was also noted in British ethnographies spanning three decades by Parker (1996), Bramham (2003) and Campbell et al. (2018). Indeed, football mania has also been bemoaned across school life. The infancy from which this perceived problematic passion emerges, and its connotations, was denoted in Renold’s (1997) ethnography concerning gendered practices and playground relations in primary schools. Renold’s (1997) article titled *All they’ve got on their brains is football* describes how football was banned due to the hegemonic relations it fostered.

With popularity came potential peer kudos and gratification gained from being deemed good at football. For instance, during a focus group, Year Nine Max commented that, “they [peers] look up to others who play football” and Alfie added that “yeah like role models” [Focus Group 10 July

2015]. One of the most explicit and common ways that skilled older footballers illustrated their prowess was by nut-megging a peer, which is to place the ball through an advancing opposition player's legs without their consent. Boys and MPE teachers referred to this simply as 'megs'. When asked why megs were so often attempted in MPE lessons, Year Nine Alfie replied: "to show off, showing your dominance in football, showing how good you are, standing out from the crowd" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. When considering being 'megged', Year Nine Tom added that "yeah it is like they have shown you up really" [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. Nut-megging attempts were regularly observed amongst older boys. It seemed that MPE lessons provided opportunities for boys to display their physical skills, which they had usually honed over many years. This data can be linked to Bramham's (2003) ethnographic findings that referred to how sporty boys valued games in MPE as they could show-off and look good in front of their peers. This perhaps also partly explains football's popularity as an activity choice in MPE. These data are also in some ways consistent with those of Hill (2015), whose visual ethnography disclosed the manner in which Asian boys strove to physically develop socially desirable bodies in order to benefit their status within their peer groups. In this sense, football was highly valued at CHS, which enabled skilful footballers to receive much peer kudos and gratification. This finding also concurs with Nielsen and Thing's (2017) narrative accounts provided by young people aged 15-17 years, who recalled how football was central to dominant 'We' groups during lower secondary school (11-14 years).

The zero-sum nature of football does however mean that one player's skill also exposes an opponent's potential lack of, or inferior, skill. Therefore, alongside popularity gains, football also involved instances whereby boys' lack of competence was publicly exposed. This exposure during a highly valued social practice caused occasional confrontation. For instance, during a Year 11 lesson one boy's repeated nut-megging of peers resulted in some opponents deliberately fouling him. Warned by Southy, one boy continued to try to maim the talented footballer. Not adhering to his warning, Southy subsequently sent-off the boy and asked him to leave the lesson [Field note 25

February 2015]. Explaining such processes, during a focus group, Year Nine boys offered insights into why such reactions were more common amongst older boys. Tom referred to how “skill is a big part of football but most skill, as you grow older, if you do skill people think you are being cocky, so they would like tackle him even more”. For older boys, football’s high social value appeared to heighten their feelings of embarrassment about being nutmegged. Their physical reactions to such shaming differed to boys’ previously cited reactions to gender slurs, where through acceptance, boys usually conformed to stereotype. More broadly, linking to the earlier example above in which William accused Adam of “being a fanny” for not tackling [Field note 19 March 2015], it seemed that boys were expected to be both competent at football *and physical*. This level of expected physicality within the football fraternity was something not mentioned within Neilsen and Thing’s (2017a) focus groups with young people aged 15-17 years, who suggested that football carried much social significance amongst dominant ‘We’ groups in MPE during lower secondary school. Whilst explored further within the rest of this chapter, it can be suggested that such findings illustrate the gendered expectation of boys to display competitive attitudes through their physical performances.

The notion of competitive attitudes was conceived on a continuum and, for some boys, the balance had tipped too far in MPE. Despite its popularity, the heightened levels of pride and shame at stake meant that some boys had formed negative attitudes towards football in MPE. For instance, during a Year Nine focus group, Isaac commented that, “football is a bit more competitive because most lads play it”, to which Josh added that “everybody takes it too seriously...I think footy is alright in PE, but I don’t really like playing it because people take it way too far” [Focus Group 1 July 2015].

Reflecting on this discussion, peer Tom surmised that:

Our PE is just too serious about football...Because most people who don’t want to do football will either go in goal and stand at the back and just belt the ball when it comes to them, and then people have a go at them for just kicking the ball and making a

mistake and people expect other people to put 150% in all the time. If you make a mistake you get criticised, like highly. If Sir says we are doing football then they would be like 'yeah', but then people at the back would be like 'oh god'. [Focus Group 1 July 2015]

This level of seriousness seemed linked to competitiveness. For example, Charlie claimed that this was "because they play (football) out of school and that they think that is what they want to do, and they want to be the best" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. Whereas Josh believed that this impinged on how many of his peers regarded themselves, suggesting that "most people think they are good [at football], like really good" [Focus Group 1 July 2015].

For some boys, football in MPE was too serious and this part of their experience had seemingly detracted away from, and impinged upon, boys previously cited expectations of having a laugh in MPE. Despite boys being competent and enjoying playing football during their leisure time, groups of older boys considered football in MPE to be too serious. Tentative possible reasons for such findings are that football in leisure time is voluntary and usually involves boys playing with friends. Such games often take place in less formal settings and may involve more negotiated rules and mutual forms of social etiquette. In contrast, MPE is compulsory and boys do not choose their classmates and often do not choose their teammates. Furthermore, given that MPE lessons involved ability-based classes, this arguably set competency expectations that boys must continually strive to meet or face peer dismay and potential ridicule. One potential issue with this can be related to Gerdin's (2017b) findings that those boys who experienced pleasure tended to be those who entered MPE preconditioned in team-sports and with a high skill-level. This notion can be further linked to the findings of Atkinson & Kehler (2012), Brown & Macdonald (2008) and Jachyra (2016), who argued that some boys liked non-traditional sports and physical activities outside of MPE, but being less competent in traditional team sports, did not like the heightened levels of peer-pressure and peer-criticism they experienced within MPE. Therefore, collectively, it

could be argued that, as Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) suggested, the emphasis within MPE upon competitive games and winning, rather than skills and learning, enabled and maintained the pre-existing gendered hierarchy within MPE. However, offering a slightly nuanced insight to this proposition, data presented above demonstrate that even boys who were competent at football and who played it outside of school disliked it within MPE.

As denoted in boys' reactions to being nut-megged, closely associated with pride, shame and seriousness was heightened levels of aggression in football in comparison with other sports in MPE. This was acknowledged by MPE teachers who often cited reservations concerning boys' temperament in football. For instance, during his interview Southy made two references to this:

Football seems to be awful for kids. You can teach them any sport and they are fine.

As soon as it's football, they can't cope...Football seems to be the worse because some kids think they are brilliant and they always stick the worse kid or the fattest kid in goal and scream at them or have a go at them when they let a goal in. [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]

Similarly, Glovers noted that:

Football seems to bring out the worse in them. I don't know why that is, but it does.

You can have the same kid who is absolutely fantastic but put him on a football field it is like the switch goes off, is overly aggressive, will challenge every decision that is made, and not particularly nice with each other. [Personal Interview 10 July 2015]

Sharing Glovers and Southy's sentiment, during a focus group Year Nine Alfie explained:

Sometimes you can get aggressive in other ones [sports], but it is like really proper aggression in football. Sometimes the competition and popularity can cause fights as well. [In response to what boys' fight over]. It could be over anything it could be over just taking the ball off them or something as simple as that to scoring a goal against them and celebrating. That could really make them, like trigger something. I have had

a few of them who do that in footy on the Astro, like there's loads of people who take the ball off them, they just come in like and don't even go for the ball, they just go for your ankles [Smiles]. It's class I love it me, competition is good, it excites me, but it scares me sometimes as well. [In response to why?]. Lose friends, lose friends over it can't you?

Examining these data as a collective, it seemed that football in MPE aroused stronger and deeper emotions of pride, shame and anger amongst older boys. Whilst situational, this tested and exposed boys' physical ability and emotional self-restraint. In this sense, when compared with other sports, football provided a 'pressure cooker' for boys' relations and behavioural norms. Clearly, as evidenced here, some boys failed the litmus test of self-regulating their temperament along socially acceptable standards. Whilst many boys bemoaned certain aspects of football in MPE, it should be noted how some, such as Alfie, embraced and enjoyed the hyper-competitive social dynamics and socially permitted aggression football in MPE permitted. As noted in other findings, it appeared that football enabled Alfie to embody a hyper-masculine hero-image (Parker, 1996). Football also enabled Alfie to experience pleasure in being authoritative or dominating peers, particularly those whom he neither knew nor liked (Gerdin, 2017b). Both these notions align to Brown and Macdonald's (2008) findings that many sporty boys valued opportunities to be aggressive and competitive and to be applauded for their sporting and masculine prowess. Whilst not inclusive, these examples highlight feelings of self-worth many boys seek from common practices within MPE. One difference worthy of note is that, through my observations, there was evidence of heightened competitiveness and aggression in football in MPE. However, this did not equate to what Bramham (2003) described as sporty boys being angered at non-sporty boys' incompetence and subsequent censure through physical and verbal abuse, which occasionally included racial slurs.

Given the formal and informal emphasis placed on football at CHS, it seems necessary to delve deeper into why football was the most popular sport and held such high social value: a value that was unmatched in other sports in MPE. In order to do so, football's place within boys' lives, CHS and the community more broadly needs to be considered. Despite being self-proclaimed football fanatics, Parky, Southy, Copeland and Glovers were able to problematise boys' relationship with football. For instance, questioning football's uniqueness to boys' behaviours, Parky claimed:

It is the football mentality I suppose you would say. They have done it every year since they were six years old, they can't cope with the winning and the losing and if there is a bit of contact. There was one where there was a bit of a shoulder barge and one got up and pushed the other one and the other one just swung a punch and caught him, so the other threw a punch back and that was it. [Personal Interview 8 July 2015]

Wondering where this type of behaviour is fostered, Glovers posed the question that "a lot of them play football on a weekend don't they, so they bring that into school...do they watch it on the TV and just think challenge the referee or it is somebody else's fault?" [Personal Interview 10 July 2015]. Not originally from the North-East, Southy commented that "as soon as it's football, especially in this town...I think because they [boys] have done it and they don't like people who aren't very good [Personal Interview 15 July 2015].

Examining these data, it is worthwhile adding further context. In reference to Southy's more localised observation, it should be noted that CHS had a strong reputation for football excellence within the region and had experienced success in national competitions. Likewise, football featured daily in everyday discussions across the school. Like many post-industrial working-class regions in England, football was a central part of many people's lives. Indeed, when completing an ethnography of working-class communities in the North-East of England, Nayak (1996) reflected that football was like a surrogate religion. The role of football in many boys' lives and the importance that they placed upon it may also link to findings elsewhere that suggest that football

continues to be a key validator of socially desired masculinity (Brahman, 2003; Campbell et al. 2018; Hill, 2015; Nielsen & Thing, 2017; Parker, 1996). This proposition is interesting given that, within the last decade, Sport England's youth sport trend surveys consistently indicate that more girls play football now than in any other period in recorded history. However, the same surveys still consistently find football as the number one most popular leisure activity undertaken by boys, by some distance. It is therefore more than likely that from infancy many boys at CHS grew-up with football as part of their lives in some way, shape or form.

To summarise the key findings in this section, at a collective level football offered boys relatively unique experiences within MPE. This was largely due to heightened levels of competitiveness, seriousness and aggression commonly experienced in football in comparison with other sports in MPE. These complex social dynamics and interdependent power-relationships can both enable and constrain boys' actions when playing football within MPE and, in doing so, seemingly impact their sense of self-worth, peer-relations and at times their ability to express socially desirable forms of gender identity. The social significance of football at an identity level was intensified due to the sport's popularity amongst many boys within MPE, its status across CHS, and its central role within community social life more broadly.

5.4 Boys' emotional self-restraints and gendered behavioural norms

So far in this chapter, enabling and constraining gendered social processes within MPE have been focused on. In this last section, how boys internalised these social processes as part of their emotional self-restraint and gendered behavioural norms is discussed. These discussions are presented through the following four themes: (a) boys' frequent reference to the interplay between frustration, anger and aggression; (b) MPE teachers' and boys' explanations of gendered behaviours and gendered emotions on social and biological grounds; (c) boys' suppression of

emotions deemed feminine; and (d) tension balances and the 'messiness' of boys trying to manage and display gendered emotions and gendered behavioural norms.

The first issue to consider is boys' awareness of their emotional expressions. In referencing emotions, boys most frequently referred to a link between frustration, anger, and aggression. For instance, during a Year Nine focus group, Alfie confessed, "I have terrible anger me though, bad, my dad has anger problems", to which Max interrupted with "so does mine", and Alfie continued, "When I get angry, I shake and start crying and that, it shows my passion and that", from which Charlie added, "I am always aggressive, if I do a little thing wrong like I don't put enough power into the ball I would just go mental, or just like smack the stick of the floor", and then Max further referred to how "you can use your anger to well [pause], I was going to say hurt other people there, but [laughs] to look after yourself, but then there is that aggression that can come out of you when you can hurt someone for no reason at all" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. Within this same discussion, Charlie reasoned that "it's [aggression] a male thing", to which Alfie replied "girls aren't that bothered. To be fair, girls don't really like it because it is not really a girl thing is it", to which Charlie responded, "they [girls] have like less aggression" and added how "there was a fight the other day in school, and they [female peers] were saying 'how do you start a fight?'" , laughing, Alfie retorted "you swing don't you" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. As data presented here suggest, these boys aged 13-14 years had developed an understanding of certain behaviours and emotional expressions along gendered binary terms. Part of this process seemingly enabled these boys to rationalise their aggressive behaviours as being gendered by design. For instance, Alfie and Max's comments suggested that having witnessed male aggression with their family, they have grown up to consider it as a male-dominant emotion. Aggression therefore appeared to be portrayed by Alfie and Charlie as a socially acceptable emotion, within reason, for boys to express their feelings, as it demonstrated their commitment, frustration or pride. Boys' impressions had been partly informed by their previous gendered experiences within CHS and visual observations concerning sex

differences in children's aggressiveness. These boys' positive outlook on the expression of such behaviours concur with frequently cited findings in research that was reviewed in Chapter Three, which suggested that boys understood, displayed and even glorified the expression of 'harder' masculine emotions (Bramham, 2003; Parker, 1996). Conceiving gendered behaviours along binary lines, these expressions were viewed in contrast to females perceived more 'softer' emotions.

To explain these perceived gendered emotions and gendered behavioural displays, MPE teachers and boys referred to both biological and sociological reasons, and their perceptions of connections between the two. For instance, Southy referred to how "you get like the 13 and 14-year-olds and their hormones are changing" [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]. Similarly, Year Nine Alfie explained that "as soon as puberty kicks in...Hormones! Hormones send people crazy [said in a funny voice]" [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. Whilst Parky reasoned:

You would say the older ones, yeah that could be the testosterone, you can have kids who lose it emotionally, whether it is testosterone, or it is just emotional frustration and they just lose it. Yeah I mean, testosterone, like saving face, lads who think they might be a bit tough around school might not be very good at PE [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

Adding further insight into the social scenarios that may evoke tension balances between testosterone and masculine performances, Hatts suggested:

It could kick off big time just because if someone scores a goal or something like that, because of something that happens previously a kid could be wanting to snap somebody else, going in for a proper mental tackle. It's the same in rugby, it was like "oh, I am going to dump so and so on his head" and again it is just, a lot of it is bravado and trying to act the big man, but most of them deep down you could tell were nice people really, they would not really wanna hurt anyone [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

Examining these data, both MPE teachers and boys used hormones, more specifically testosterone, to explain aggressive responses to feelings of frustration or anger. These emotions seemingly became exposed when boys' masculine identity is brought into question or they feel it necessary to display a socially desired gendered identity. In this sense, it should be noted that hyper-aggressiveness was not part of boys' everyday behaviours, as such incidents were not observed as being exhibited daily. Instead, boys' propensity to be aggressive was situational and contextual, such as in games of football and when in a pressured group dynamic. This difference illustrates the performative element of boys' use of aggression, which problematises biological essentialist perceptions that appear to devolve some responsibility of boys' aggression on the grounds of innateness. An overly biologically and sex-differentiated informed perception on this matter appears to risk homogenising boys' aggressiveness. This means that boys that are not deemed to be 'naturally' aggressive can have their masculinity questioned. Instead, adopting a more sociological explanation based on gendered embodiment, as illustrated by Velija and Kumar (2009), appears to provide a less reductive conception of such complex processes.

Whilst anger and violence were biologically and sociologically explained along gendered lines, so too were boys' perceptions and demonstrations of 'softer' emotions such as crying. Throughout my observations, there were daily examples of boys' stoicism when it came to masking pain or being upset. For instance, when completing the register, a Year Eight boy referred to being "smacked in the head with a hockey stick". Recalling this incident, another boy commented, "yes, you cried", to which the boy sharply responded "I didn't cry" [Field note 4 March 2015]. The reaction of crying when maimed was interpreted as showing weakness. This interpretation contrasted with Alfie's previously cited suggestion that crying when angered showed passion. Likewise, crying when upset also carried gendered implications. For example, during a Year Seven focus group, David explained that, "it's crying, and it is quite embarrassing when you're all around your friends and the lads and you start crying because then the lads think that you are a girl and all that" [Focus Group 1 July

2015]. Aged 11, David had developed a clear binary between emotions based upon gendered behavioural norms and gendered social expectations. Whilst much research reviewed in Chapter Three referred to gender embodiment, it rarely factored boys' emotional self-restraint to this process. The few exceptions, in this instance, were Nielsen and Thing (2017) and Campbell et al. (2018), who suggested that older boys held more significant connections between emotions and gender identity and, accordingly, their emotional management tended to be based more on stoicism. The data here suggest that the process of emotion and identity was happening by the time these boys entered secondary school. This notion is now further explored.

Gendered behavioural norms and gendered social expectations in terms of boys' gendered emotional self-restraints were problematised by Year Seven and Year Eight boys whilst discussing vignette scenarios during focus groups. For instance, Year Seven Chris suggested that "because he cried in front of them, that has probably driven them and given them a goal" [Focus Group 16 June 2015]. Sharing similar thoughts, Year Seven Mason claimed that, "because if you show it [being upset] then it is just giving them something else to pick on" [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. Also referring to an intention to avoid being picked upon, Year Eight Frankie argued that, "if they know you are upset, they will just keep on doing it again. If you don't show like emotion, they would stop maybe, and they might pick on someone else" [Focus Group 11 June 2015]. Crying or what boys referred to simply as 'showing emotion' had gendered and sexuality-based implications. For example, Year Seven Adam claimed that, "he [fictional character] shouldn't have cried because he should have held it in, and then they will think that he is a puff and stuff and really soft" [Focus Group 16 June 2015]. Resultantly, boys discussed managing their emotions. As such, Year Eight Steven reasoned that, "it is giving them something to laugh at and you have to hold it in to be strong" [Focus Group 23 June 2015]. This approach may have been self-driven but could also be socialised via significant others. For instance, Year Eight Alex revealed that, "me dad and me mam say if someone says stuff about anyone and calls you and stuff don't show that it gets to you or they keep doing it" [Focus

Group 11 June 2015]. Data presented here were representative of young boys focus group responses, with little alternative considerations or views offered. Younger boys seemed to be much more emotionally reflective in comparison to their older peers. By the age of 11 and 12 years, these boys understood that crying when physically hurt or emotionally upset would be perceived as a weak effeminate response, which could carry gendered slurs and negative connotations regarding their sexual identity. To avoid these social costs, boys referred to the need to be stoic for self-preservation purposes and to manage their status within male peer groups. As such, stoicism was neither desired nor sought, but appeared to be a pragmatic response to lived experiences or informed by parental advice. At a collective level, such comments illustrate how by the age of 11 these boys had already internalised gendered social constraints in relation to what were perceived as socially acceptable gendered emotional self-restraints. As suggested earlier, this level of insight and pupil perception was rarely offered or discussed in previous research reviewed in Chapter Three.

Despite being acutely aware of socially appropriate gendered emotions, boys' management of gendered emotional self-restraints was neither a simple nor smooth process. Referring to being picked on, during a Year Seven focus group, David explained that, "your anger builds up each time and like you can't hold it in and one day they will eventually say something that nasty that you will go at them", to which Mason added that, "you either have a go at them or have a go at yourself and it's like you have to do something", interrupting, David claimed that, "you hold it in and it is like a big clot of anger, which holds in and then you burst", and Mason finished David's point by describing that, "like a balloon, you can only blow it up so much and then it has to burst" [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. Referring to the same emotional process, Southy recalled:

In previous year groups two lads that I thought were mates have had a fight on the AstroTurf and me and Parky have literally had to have our arms around them. Graeme [boy] had ADHD and had sessions for anger management and walked-off, came inside,

sat down and just burst into tears. That was his release, he just could not cope with how to deal with anger and we have had a few kids that are like that, they would rather walk-off and you learn right don't go chasing them, let them walk-off, they will come back but some of them know that if they walk-off they can't cause any more damage, they are not going to snap and Graeme would just burst into tears. [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]

Aware of this, Southy had seemingly learned to enable boys to avoid potentially de-masculinising themselves by permitting them to leave to cry in private. Whilst not daily, such incidents were occasionally observed, one of which is described below:

Field note 23 April 2015 Year 10 Lesson

One team opted to call themselves 'Willy's wimps', in reference to their captain. Popular amongst his peers, William was tall and part of the CHS's successful football team. Ten minutes into the lesson Mr Vince, the Deputy Head of School and Head of Behaviour and Well-Being, entered the sports hall and removed William. At this, William looked perplexed and worried. Ten minutes later William returned looking distressed. A few peers asked William what had happened, to which he muttered "I don't know, I haven't done anything wrong". Next to bat, William became too upset and refused, despite encouragement from some of his peers. After some time, William stepped up to bat, aggressively smashed the ball and sprinted off to evade the flying tennis ball aimed at him. Whilst seeming to momentarily release his frustration, his underlying distress still lingered. As William was fielding, Mr South took the opportunity to ask him what had happened. In trying to explain, William became choked, held back tears and stood with his hands on his hips and simply shrugged his shoulders. Mr Vince re-entered and removed another male. This made William more distressed to the point that he removed himself to the back of the sports hall, wiped

tears from his face, turned his back to his peers and used the cricket nets bundled up as a punch bag to express his feelings.

Data here suggest that anger was the primary emotion espoused by peer group dynamics and social pressures within MPE. It appeared that for boys such as William, managing anger involved a tension balance between internal and external conflict. This conflict involved internalising gendered social constraints by continuously striving to exercise socially desirable gendered emotional self-restraints. As noted, boys described not being able to fully discuss or express their feelings or perceived insecurities. Therefore, they tended to externalise such frustration in a swift, aggressive and seemingly socially acceptable manner. The idea that boys feel it more socially acceptable to be aggressive to others than disclosing how they feel to others in a more verbal, and arguably civil, manner was referred to by Navarre (2011) as the absurdity within modern masculinity.

The key findings within this section revealed that boys' emotional self-restraint in MPE appeared to be heavily informed by their internalisation of gendered social processes and expected gendered behavioural norms. These processes were again based on clear and traditional gender lines, where boys embodied more gendered emotions due to perceived levels of social acceptability. As developing and maturing young people, boys' emotional management did not seem to be a smooth or simple process. Instead, boys' emotional self-restraint appeared to be a complex and 'messy' process. When examining data within this section along the lines of gendered social constraints, boys' emotional expressions seem less absurd and more pragmatic. Furthermore, viewing boys' gendered emotional self-restraints arguably offers a more sociological conceptualisation of gendered behaviours when compared with more biologically centred sex-role theory perspectives or psycho-analytic conceptions.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, four sections were presented whereby figurational concept of enabling and constraining social processes were applied to MPE at CHS. Through a fun-based environment and ethos, MPE and MPE teachers appeared to enable boys to experience academic escapism and offered boys homosocial bonding opportunities. However, it seemed that such enabling experiences were also predicated along constraining gendered social processes in terms of socially acceptable behaviours and emotional expressions in MPE. These were often based along binary gendered lines in which many boys had internalised as part of their gendered emotional self-restraint. However, it should be noted that there were differences found across age groups and within different social contexts. The need for gendered emotional self-restraint appeared heightened for older boys and when in gender-defining or highly pressurised competitive situations. In further considering boys behavioural norms and peer relations, the following chapter focuses on banter and bullying within MPE at CHS.

Chapter 6 Banter and bullying within MPE

In the previous chapter, enabling and constraining gendered social processes, and how these related to boys' emotional self-restraint, were examined. In this chapter, data is largely drawn on from boys' focus groups and MPE teachers' interviews to discuss their perspectives of banter and bullying. Throughout this chapter, banter is taken to mean a playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks that includes behaviours such as joking, ridiculing and mocking (Nichols, 2018). In contrast, bullying is taken to mean a repeated and intentional behaviour aimed at hurting someone physically or emotionally, a definition taken from the Department of Education (GOV.UK, 2019). Findings are presented under the theoretical theme of behavioural norms. Consideration is given to the extent that such behaviours were interrelated and differed intergenerationally. It should also be noted that in Chapter Three, banter and bullying were two topic areas identified as being underexplored. Therefore, the ability to compare my data to previous research is relatively limited.

6.1 Banter as a behavioural norm within MPE

In this first section, banter as a behavioural norm within MPE is discussed through the following three key themes: (a) banter as a central behavioural norm that is gendered and heightened in MPE; (b) banter as a critical part of MPE teachers' fun-based philosophy and social relations with boys; and (c) banter as an effective power resource and desirable life skill. In terms of the former, it was abundantly clear from my observations that banter was an everyday behavioural norm within MPE. Furthermore, the word banter was heard daily across CHS. Referring to the rife nature of banter in MPE, Glovers commented, "it's par for the course isn't it like" [Personal Interview 10 July 2015]. MPE teachers 'bantered' through frequently ridiculing and mocking each other. For instance, in the staff office, photos of teachers had been defaced or commented on. Further illustrating this dynamic, Hatts suggested that, "a lot of us in PE are very banterful...I would say we do like rip each other" [Personal Interview 2 June 2015]. This point was made to me by Parky during my first week

at CHS, perhaps to warn or prepare me for my time in MPE at CHS. Seemingly attributing this behaviour to sporty individuals, Parky also claimed that, "I know teachers who have banter who aren't PE teachers, but they are sporting, they have a sporting background" [Personal Interview 8 July 2015]. This data suggests that, as head of subject, Parky embraced a banter culture in MPE and claimed that it enabled a group camaraderie amongst staff unrivalled in other subject areas. It seemed that banter amongst staff was inclusive in the sense that all staff engaged in it to some degree. This mutual understanding and shared use of banter amongst MPE teachers appeared to have normalised and legitimised its use. The idea that PE teachers like to engage in banter more so than their non-PE peers due to their sporting biographies resonates somewhat with the types of informal culture within a PE teacher training college that were described by Skelton (1993). In this study, Skelton (1993) depicted banter aimed at embarrassment and shaming, which he attributed to legitimising and reproducing hegemonic masculinity. Data from CHS implied that MPE teachers perceived their peer banter positively and socially acceptable behaviour, even when in front of boys. In some respect, this self-proclaimed behavioural norm also aligns to a 'buffoon' stereotype depicted of MPE teachers within movies (McCullick et al. 2003).

Exploring the notion that banter is more prevalent or heightened in MPE, during focus groups, several boys also expressed how banter was rife in MPE. For instance, Year Nine Charlie claimed that "in PE it is like sport banter" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. Whilst not explicit, there seemed to be subtle suggestions that banter within MPE was gendered. For example, Hatts noted:

In PE, because most of the time it is single sex, the lads will have banter about the performance as well. I don't think they would take the mickey out of someone for not being able to read well. Whereas, in PE if someone can't pass a ball straight there is a different kind of mentality [Personal Interview 2 June 2015]

Banter amongst boys was not however reserved purely to sport performance, as 'lads' bantered each other on a wide range of topics. For instance, when asked what topics were central in boys' bantering, Parky explained, "...anything, looks, how good there are at something, who you talk to, who their friends are, any sort of kink, their kit their bag, their cloths" [Personal Interview 8 July 2015]. This type of randomness was regularly observed. For example, during a few Year 10 lessons one boy would semi-regularly be reminded of his perceived attractive mother by his peers singing her name to the tune of KC & The Sunshine Band song 'Give it Up'. These data suggest that whilst seemingly random and diverse, banter was common in that it was largely based on visible differences. Therefore, it could be argued that such forms of banter are enabled due to MPE's heightened levels of sociality and visibility of boys' bodily performances in comparison to other school subjects. Furthermore, MPE teachers seemingly legitimised the use of such forms of banter through engaging in it in front of boys and accepting it as 'par for the course'. In one sense, such verbal exchanges differ from the physical intimate acts such as wrestling that were depicted as central to homosocial bonding rituals within Chapter Five and within previous literature (Bramham, 2003; Campbell et al. 2018; Parker, 1996). In another sense, these findings are not perhaps surprising when considered alongside those of Smith and Parr (2007). Through focus groups, Smith and Parr (2007) found that many young people aged 15-16 years believed one key aspect of the nature and purpose of PE was to allow boys to be social and have a laugh with peers. Whilst this study did not detail what 'have a laugh' entailed, it can be presumed that this may have included verbal rituals like those presented above. In relation to findings presented in Chapter Five, such rituals add further insight into enabling social processes in MPE. That said, throughout this chapter examples are also provided that also add further insight into constraining social processes.

Given that MPE teachers engaged in banter, as did boys in their peer relations, it was not surprising that banter regularly featured within teacher-pupil relations within MPE. This dynamic was evident

in teachers' interview responses to being asked if they had a favourite year group for teaching and why. For instance, Hatts responded:

I love teaching Year Nine lads because I think that you get quite a bit of entertainment out of them, you can have a bit of banter with them. Year Sevens you can't have much banter because they don't really understand what is going on to be honest. Whereas Year Nines, they are growing up a bit and they understand what good craic is and they can kind of bounce off each other and you can get a good group dynamic through that [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

Offering a similar appraisal of age-based differences, Parky commented that "my Year 10 GCSE class, the banter is brilliant. I would say more banter with the older ones, and the younger ones more silly jokey behaviour, so where they are not the butt of it" [Personal Interview 8 July 2015]. Older boys were seemingly aware that MPE teachers enabled and engaged in banter, often with them. For example, Year Nine Max suggested that, "if like there is a fun teacher like Mr South, he will just go along with the banter" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. Examining these data, it seemed that Parky and Hatts received emotional gratification by engaging in banter with older boys. Whilst the content of banter was not disclosed here, it did appear that it was MPE teachers who often initiated and dictated banter in their social relations with older boys. That said, banter within these relations was largely depicted as reciprocal, as most older boys seemed to embrace MPE teachers enabling of and engagement in banter. The perception of banter in teacher-pupil relations portrayed here appears to contrast to that presented in literature reviewed in Chapter Three. For example, Atkinson and Kehler (2012), Jachyra (2016) and Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) cited examples of MPE teachers mocking and ridiculing subordinate or non-sporty boys in a negative sense. One potential reason for this difference could be the age of the boys involved. The idea that banter is more prominent amongst older boys and MPE teachers implies that a level of shared understanding and mutual respect is needed for banter to be reciprocal. Similarly, this idea also insinuates that

some forms of banter require a certain level of maturity to be reciprocal and deemed in a positive light. This proposition is now explored further.

The perceived age-based difference in teachers' banter with boys was also regularly observed. For instance, at the end of a Year Seven swimming lesson, Copeland handed out boys' towels accompanied by a few comments about their quality or colour of the towel, such as commenting to one boy that he should "ask your grandma if she wants her curtain back", to which several boys laughed [Field note 12 February 2015]. Further examples included MPE teachers making registers more amusing by adapting younger boys' names in a comedic fashion. For example, a boy called William was referred to by Copeland as will.i.am after the American rapper. Equally, one boy was labelled Slim Shady after bleaching his hair blonde. In both cases those boys directly involved smiled, whilst others laughed [Field note 12 February 2015]. In slight contrast, below is a relatively common example of a verbal interaction between MPE teachers and older boys:

Field note 26 February 2015 Year 10 lesson

A boy not doing the lesson because of a broken a toe encouraged a peer completing a full lap by shouting, "Keep going Ginge". The boy did not react, but Copeland said, "that is a bit harsh, isn't it?" The boys replied with, "he's used to it". Five minutes later, Copeland encouraged a different boy by shouting "Come on hobbit, hobbits have to run too you know". The small rotund boy offered a smile and carried on running.

There appeared to be a clear difference in the type of banter used between MPE teachers and boys depending on boys' age. As also denoted in Parky's previous quote, banter with younger boys tended to be initiated by MPE teachers and based on silly jokes, quips around prescribed nicknames or funny incidents. Whilst these types of banter were also evidenced in MPE teachers' social relations with older boys, here banter was more likely to be personal and more underpinned by

mocking or ridiculing. It should be noted that this type of banter was often two-way and appeared to be largely visibly accepted by boys. This is an important point to make because in isolation the banter depicted here between MPE teachers and older boys could be easily construed by a neutral onlooker as harsh. Equally, Copeland's reference to a boy's height and weight appears at face value to be crude and unprofessional. However, most boys appeared to accept banter as a social norm and therefore laugh at it or directly engage in banter themselves. This is not to make a judgement as to whether such comments are necessary or appropriate, but it is to provide context as to how they were received. One reason for older boys' reception to such comments could be due to the social and emotional bonds between MPE teachers and boys that have been developed over three years. This suggestion would match that denoted in Hatts and Parky's previous comments regarding the amicable, fond and jokey relations they experience with older boys.

Whilst enjoying banter with boys on a personal and emotional level, MPE teachers also had a vested interest in using banter with some boys. During interviews, MPE teachers made several references to banter being a useful teaching aid. For instance, Glovers suggested:

I think one of the best skills that you can have as a teacher is humour because it can get you out of any amount of situations that you can have with kids...you can get yourself out of a lot of problems by having a smile and a laugh [Personal Interview 10 July 2015].

Offering a specific example of the perceived effectiveness of banter to momentarily alter a boy's behaviour, Parky reflected:

A common one I do with the younger ones if they're lining up, there might be 60 kids there, and if one is not being quiet and I am in a good mood, I would go, "hey and pick his name out, you bleeding? bleeding ugly", and straight away, that's a little bit of a

laugh, and it brings all the others in. Right listen up, as opposed to just sanctioning them or I have told you to be quiet, you are still not being quiet, it's like confrontational. A bit of banter, a bit of craic, you get what you want, it has been a bit funny, all the other kids think it is funny. That is a bit of relationship building [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

Similarly, regarding banter as a relationship builder, Southy disclosed that "it is one of my favourite weapons because it gets other kids onside if you are taking the mickey out of a kid that you know can take it". Banter could also be used to remind boys of the teacher-pupil relationship. For example, Parky reflected:

Sometimes it can be, 'hey, there you go, keep your mouth shut', but I think they also respect that type of thing. The kids that you deal with they respect that and maybe they are used to it, maybe who they knock around with you know, that type of banter or that type of approach to things. I think that does help; quick wit helps you a lot. You can diffuse a situation just like that [clicks his fingers] [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

Qualifying his comment, Parky referred to how a Year 10 boy shouted out in a GCSE PE theory lesson, "Sir, did you do that Strictly Come Dancing Show? That's right gay, are you gay Sir", to which Parky reported swiftly replying, "You what? I am not gay, but my boyfriend is", much to the apparent amusement of the class and the boy's momentary embarrassment [Personal Interview 8 July 2015]. However, in reference to quick wit, Glovers also noted, "they are not clever enough to come back, but you do get the odd one who is, and you think jeez he is clever" [Personal Interview 10 July 2015]. To my knowledge, insights into this type of teaching approach in MPE are rare. MPE teachers' perceptions in this respect illustrate that whilst MPE teachers used forms of banter to socially and emotionally bond with boys, they also used banter for reasons of self-interest. These interests appeared to primarily entail using banter in order to build relationships with boys based on the latter's compliance with behavioural standards in MPE. MPE teachers appeared to deem

this teaching approach accessible as it matched their personality, so it took little training or extensive planning. This teaching approach was perceived as effective as it was considered to diffuse conflict-ridden social situations or poor behaviour in a more subtle and less directly confrontational manner. The effectiveness of this teaching approach was also thought to be predicated on its greater relatability with boys in comparison with more traditional disciplinary approaches. Therefore, this teacher approach was largely based on the assumption that MPE teachers and boys have a shared understanding of banter, which can better enable mutual respect between the two social groups, whilst also ensuring teachers subtly maintain their authority.

MPE teachers were not the only ones who considered banter to be a useful social tool in their relations with others. From my observations, it was evident that at times some older boys used banter in order to diffuse social situations or detract from conflicts with peers. For instance, in a Year 11 lesson the largest framed boy by some distance regularly referred to himself during a football match as a “Fat Messi” in reference to the world-class male footballer Lionel Messi [Field note 12 May 2015]. MPE teachers were also aware of some older boys using such tactics. For example, Hatts reflected:

So, William [a Year 11 boy], for example, is absolutely horrific at sports, hates sports, when he was here in Year Seven, he was the biggest geek I have ever seen. I thought oh he is going to be absolute bait here for all these lot. And then he kind of, because he didn't care, because he was good at French for example, he kind of took the mickey out of himself and people would say what is the answer for this William, and he would torture them for not knowing the answer. And they would be like oh yeah I am a bit stupid, there's my weakness, he's got his strength, but also, he has his weakness like in PE [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

It was clear that some older boys were able to self-reflect on their deficiencies and ascertain how these may be construed by their peers in verbal exchanges. Seemingly, attempting to beat peers to a potential comment, these boys engaged in self-deprecated banter. Therefore, as well as being socially aware, this process seems to require boys to be emotionally stable enough to consciously engage in this form of banter as a means of self-preservation. The humility and funniness in this form of banter appeared effective in raising laughs from peers and even compensating for physical incompetence within MPE. This observation has rarely been disclosed in previous research and offers a different take on Hill's (2015) depiction of three Asian boys striving to accrue physical capital that might be exchanged for social capital. Here, banter seemed to hold equal social value amongst boys, but did not involve any bodywork. In one sense, humour and humility afforded boys social capital, or at least detracted attention away from bodywork needed to gain peer appreciation and social status in MPE. It could also be argued that boys' engagement in this form of banter, and its reception, diffuses somewhat oppressive relations between sporty and non-sporty boys (Bramham, 2003; Parker, 2003). Therefore, in comparison, banter appeared more accessible, amicable and based on greater levels of shared understanding. Some boys use of this tactic does however resonate with a finding with Frydendal and Thing's (2019) study, whereby some boys dealt with fear or emotional discomfort in PE through humour. Whilst here the term self-deprecation is used, Scheff (1988, cited in Frydendal & Thing, 2019) refers to this process as bypassed shame, which illustrates the potential emotional process underpinning such behaviour.

The previous interview response cited above from Hatts prompted a further discussion around the role of banter within young people's development. From this, Hatts claimed that:

I think the more you are exposed to it the more you understand it. Kids need to know the social barriers between themselves, and that's a good thing that sport can do for you. I have got a Year Eight who cannot take banter at all, non-whatsoever, or sorry couldn't take banter at all until recently and he has started to improve slightly. It is all about character I think, and personally I would say that I am a strong character in the sense that I can give it and I can take it, banter. I just think it makes you stronger as a person. Don't take yourself 100% seriously all the time, then you tend to have a bit more of a laid-back approach to life [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

Hatts perceived banter to be somewhat of an essential life skill that boys should develop. Under the premise of character, Hatts suggested that understanding banter and being able to give and receive it is beneficial to boys' peer relations and personal development. In this portrayal, banter is considered a developmental process of socialisation, which could be acquired as a skill through repetition. Although different from more sport-related skills such as throwing a free-throw, banter's inherently relational nature means that it requires heightened social awareness and high levels of emotional self-restraint, humility and self-discipline. With little previous literature to draw upon in this respect, this idea is explored further in the last section of this chapter.

Within this section, key findings pertain to banter been observed and perceived by those involved in as being rife within MPE. As such, banter was part of MPE teachers' peer relations, boys' peer relations and teacher-pupil relations. As central authoritative figures within MPE, MPE teachers enabled banter to foster and prosper. At times, this may have been due to it being a key part of their behavioural norms, which they attributed mostly to their sporting biography. On other occasions, this was a more strategic part of MPE teachers' broader fun-based teaching approach. Conceptualising forms of banter as interrelated with relative levels of maturity, MPE teachers weaponised banter in their relations with older boys. This effective social tool was also realised and

used by some older boys by way of self-deprecation. Collectively, MPE teachers and older boys' engagement in such forms of banter added weight to preliminary contentions that banter is largely premised on a shared understanding of humour and mutual respect for those involved. If there is merit in such claims, then one could also argue that banter in this manner represents a sophisticated form of communication in comparison with its more commonplace label of immaturity.

6.2 MPE teachers' perspectives on bullying

Whilst banter was a common behavioural norm within MPE, explicit forms of bullying were not. However, the word bullying was heard weekly in general usage across CHS. The topic was also brought up by MPE teachers and probed during interviews. Therefore, in this section, MPE teachers' perspective on bullying are discussed by examining key sources of knowledge that aided MPE teachers understanding of bullying, behavioural norms in changing rooms and managing bullying, and the lack of reporting of instances of bullying.

MPE teachers' knowledge and beliefs concerning bullying tended to be informed by their lived experiences of dealing with cases, related training courses and topic-specific assemblies regarding the issue. For instance, Southy noted that, "the standard school line is that it won't be tolerated" [Personal Interview 15 July 2015], whilst Parky referred to how it featured in "the staff handbook" [Personal Interview 8 July 2015]. Furthermore, Hatts reflected that:

When you are in your NQT [Newly Qualified Teacher] year, and even on your PGCE [Post Graduate Certificate in Education], you do something regarding bullying, and what constitutes bullying and how you would deal with a certain situation. And as part of our ongoing CPD [Continual Professional Development], we have to do child protection things and you look out for signs of how somebody may be acting if they

perceive that they are being bullied. It is something that gets taught in citizenship, so every form all together, 'right this is bullying'. We have had whole-year assemblies on people from external companies about cyber bullying and the problems with being online, and how to report bullying [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

MPE teachers were expected to know what bullying was through training and school policy documentation. They were also expected to be able to deal with cases through adopting a zero-tolerance approach. This school stance is part of CHS's legal requirement and social responsibility to raise awareness of what bullying is and its effects. For instance, The GOV.UK website states that by law, "all state (not private) schools must have a behaviour policy in place that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils". Moreover, the website also states that, whilst decided by the school, "all teachers, pupils and parents must be told what it is". Like many schools in England, CHS also took part in the Anti-Bullying Alliance's 'Anti-bullying Week' campaign in November.

Parky, Glovers, Southy and Hatts openly expressed views on what constituted bullying, its prevalence in MPE and most common types of bullying. Whilst explaining how the ability-set system minimised performance-based bullying in MPE, Hatts referred more broadly to verbal bullying:

I think a put down is more malicious in my view. If you put somebody down, that to me would be bullying. If you are talking about the absolute negatives about somebody in front of your friends and making them feel like an idiot [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

Reflecting on his experiences and views, Southy claimed:

I have never had much of it, but I am not going to say we don't have bullying, and it is usually the weaker kids who get picked on. I think bullying as a level is the same, I think the types of bullying is different. I think in the olden days Year 11s might pick up a Year Seven and give them a once over in the toilets. Now it is more social media and verbal stuff [Personal Interview 15 July 2015].

Sharing similar sentiments, Hatts noted:

They [boys] would never go around physically just attacking one person. They do boisterous things, for example bacon backing, which is where they slap somebody as hard as they can on their back. But most of the time that would be with their mates, it wouldn't be just one person who would get the brunt of that and not giving anything back. I would hope anyway that kids would stop that from happening. The stronger characters wouldn't just stand-by and let that happen. I think our kids would probably stand up for the person who was getting battered and stand-up for the mates, even if that person was a loner, their [peer] group would step in [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

The idea that bullying rarely occurred within MPE at CHS somewhat differs from Bramham's (2003) ethnographic portrayals, which suggested that bullying, or the threat of bullying, was never far away in MPE. In relation to the GOV.UK definition, Hatts and Southy did not refer to repetitious acts, but both referred to intention and both recognised emotional harm as a form of bullying. Hatts differentiated intentional and unwanted physical harm from more mutually accepted overzealous physical behaviours. However, to a more neutral authoritative figure seeking zero tolerance, such differentiations may not be clear. Whilst not elaborating on what leads to weaker children being bullied, Southy's perception here highlighted the significant power imbalances at play within bullying incidents. Southy's broader views on changes in the types of bullying suggests that bullying has become pervasive, subtle and verbal, which arguably make defining, intervening

in and eradicating bullying incidents more challenging. Again, this perception of the more common types of bullying contrast somewhat to more explicit violent forms or explicit verbal forms such as homophobic comments described by Parker (1996). Furthermore, Hatts's belief in boys' moral codes align to findings by White and Hobson (2017), whereby PE teachers believed that boys today display more caring behaviours in comparison to previous year groups.

Whilst MPE teachers generally held confidence in boys' moral codes in relation to intentional bullying, some boys were deemed more prone to peer conflict than others. For instance, Southy explained that:

In my Year Nine classes it seems to be the SEN kids going at each other, so whether they are not sure of the social boundaries, whether it is for emotions that they are on the SEN register, whether it is behaviour, they seem to go at each other. There is a group of five or six of them, they are all on the SEN register for different things, mostly emotionally and behaviourally. With the Year Eights, it seems to be the SEN kids like Adrian are being targeted, but it only seems to be Adrian. Adrian is clever and he is very good at chess and I think the others just see that as being a bit of a geek and that is why they pick on him [Personal Interview 15 July 2015].

In one sense, Southy's comment here appears to somewhat contradict his previous suggestion that "I have never had much of it [bullying]". In another sense, his observation here demonstrates the relational, behavioural and emotional processes within bullying. Therefore, boys deficient in the necessary levels of behavioural refinement and emotional self-restraint may be more susceptible to bullying as either perpetrator or victim. At a psychological level, this theory is supported in the authoritative literature concerning bullying amongst young people (Olweus, 2013; Rigby, 2007; Smith, 2014). However, from a more detached sociological perspective, it is also necessary to consider broader changes in terms of shifts towards Inclusive Education. The formation of the

Alliance for Inclusive Education in 1990 was pivotal in this change alongside the United Nations' (2009) Article 24. Article 24 states, "the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity". Over the last three decades, many secondary schools in England have become demographically more diverse in terms of disability, nationality and ethnicity. This means that between the ages of 11-16 years, young people are increasingly expected to relate to and behave accordingly with peers from across various social groups. Boys' behaviour in this respect could arguably be tested or exposed more so within MPE, given its unique levels of sociality, physicality and competitiveness, something that Southy failed to acknowledge. Tension balances between inclusive education and PE were also highlighted by Smith and Green (2004). During interviews, Smith and Green (2004) noted how PE teachers expressed challenges with combining the schools dominant sporting ideology with meeting the needs of pupils with SEN. Likewise, Haycock and Smith (2010) found that PE teachers referred to this double bind in terms of the NCPE's commitment to competitive sport in PE and inclusive education.

MPE teachers most frequent discussion points surrounding bullying centred on changing rooms, their provision and behavioural norms within them. At CHS, MPE teachers were rarely present for the duration of boys' getting changed, but often entered to encourage boys to get changed quicker, to discipline them about unacceptable noise levels or to take the register and discuss the lesson's aims. Reflecting upon this process, Parky noted that, "I think in an ideal world we would have a staff member in each changing room" [Personal Interview 8 July 2015]. However, citing the loss of PE technicians and the quick turnaround between afternoon lessons, Parky also reflected that, "it would be foolish of me to say 'yeah there needs to be somebody in here and there is no excuse'". Although, he did accept that:

If there is a teacher in there you are going to get very few issues if any. If the teacher isn't, there is an opportunity for stuff to go on, and it does go on. I would be a liar if I thought that there is not stuff that goes on, bullying, little things that go on that we miss because we are not sitting in there. It has happened, pulling their pants down in front of everyone, that type of thing [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

Occasional incidents as described here were sometimes observed. For instance, as I made my way to the swimming area via the changing rooms during a Year Eight lesson, Parky shouted, "stop slapping each other's backs, I do not want any more of this silly behaviour because some of you take it too far" [Field note 12 February 2015]. A further contention of MPE teachers' presence was described by Southy:

Some kids are like, 'Sir, are you allowed to stand, and watch us' and you are like 'sometimes some of you need it you can't be trusted to get changed on your own'. There is just an awful lot of trust, but unfortunately some kids will [pause]. That's the time we tend to get most issues, but I don't know what there is that we could do about it. [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]

This data appears to resonate with the pragmatic dilemmas MPE teachers faced or behavioural norms within changing rooms described within previous ethnographic literature (Atkinson & Kehler, 2012; Jachyra, 2016). However, in contrast to previous research, common behaviours within changing rooms were not portrayed as being as pernicious or abusive, but silly and ritualistic. Whilst they changed into and out of PE kit, the exposure of boys naked or semi-naked bodies before and after MPE lessons instigated behaviour aimed at embarrassing peers or fostered overzealous physical intimacy. Opportunities for such behaviours may be relatively unique to MPE as changing rooms may be the only time boys see their peers' partially nude bodies. The fact that this unique social process took place under relatively little adult supervision appeared to some boys an opportune time to embrace in playful, overzealous or domineering behaviours. Frydendal and

Thing's (2019) observations of and focus groups with young people aged 15-17 years found that naked bodies evoked fear based on others perceived judgements, so much so that some students tried less in PE in order to sweat less and not smell for the rest of the day.

MPE teachers expressed frustrations at boys' perceived unwillingness to report bullying. MPE teachers cited reasons for this reluctance did not pertain to a lack of boys' understanding of what constituted bullying but involved more social factors associated with reporting of incidents. For instance, Hatts claimed:

They all know how to report it, but it is just whether they do. And I don't know if they think that if they do report it, then they will lose face around school. But then at the same time, if they don't report it then, then they are going to be putting themselves into [pause]. It is Catch-22 isn't it, putting themselves into a predicament [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

This predicament was also cited by Parky:

We want to know what's gone on. Then there is like they don't want to sprag. However, there is always someone, you get your little snitches [grins]. There is always a few who will come, and you need them, otherwise kids will get away with a lot of stuff. I don't know why kids don't. I don't know why they build it up. Maybe it is because they don't think anything will be done about it. But yeah, very rarely do they reach out for help and the way they get help is usually when they have done something, the aftermath. Then you think if only you had come and seen us, and you find out that there is a lot of stuff that has gone on [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

Referring to a specific incident involving an older boy, Southy stated:

I will be like, well Josh did not tell us at the time, so it is very hard to then deal with it afterwards. You need him to come and tell me, but that takes a lot of bottle, to come out of the changing room and say, 'Sir, this has just happened'. Because, then you are going to walk straight back in and say, 'right you out', and they are going to know instinctively [that the incident has been reported] [Personal Interview 15 July 2015].

This type of MPE teacher response was observed, as illustrated below:

Field note 23 April 2015 Year Seven Lesson

As the boys start their full lap of their warm-up Neil came out late, which was unlike him. Hatts told him to catch up with the rest of the class, but Neil disclosed to Hatts that Doug had been picking on him. After completing their lap, Hatts asked Doug, 'why have you been slapping Neil's legs?' Bemused, Doug shrugged his shoulders to which Hatts replied 'Neil wouldn't make it up, would he?' and warned Doug to not do it again, a warning Doug seemed to accept.

This data suggests that being bullied, or feeling bullied, provided boys with a social dilemma based on experiencing psychological and emotional damage. Boys wished to make it stop, were aware of the ability to report it to a teacher, but feared peers' perceptions and responses. This fear resonates with Nielsen and Thing's (2019) finding that teenagers aged 15-17 years stressed the importance on belonging to, or at least being able to identify with, a dominant 'We' group. The strength of this striving was found to outweigh their rational responses or value-based preferences (Nielsen & Thing, 2019). In this sense, the Catch-22 to which Hatts refers to could be boys striving to be part of the dominant 'We' group by trying to negotiate their peer group social dynamics along socially acceptable lines. As with Nielsen and Thing's (2019) findings, boys here were seemingly willing to engage in self-sacrifice and social injustice to maintain part of or avoid perceived reputational damage from the dominant 'We' peer group. This process was described as leading to stoicism, to some degree. More broadly, this process appeared representative of Kimmel's (2009) notion of

'guy code' which, amongst other things, is centred on a culture of silence. One further reason for not reporting bullying was MPE teachers' immediate response, which was evidenced by Hatts abrupt and direct reaction. This reaction was despite his interview reference to boys' Catch-22 predicament. Whilst illustrating his distaste with what could have been bullying behaviour, this approach may have served a momentary positive change, but in the long-term been counterproductive. Therefore, this may contribute to the perceived 'bottle' that boys need to report an incident in the knowledge of MPE teachers' immediate response, as denoted by Southy.

Key findings within this section offer insight into MPE teachers' perceptions of how bullying is socially constructed within MPE. They also provide an awareness of MPE teachers' experiences of dealing with bullying. MPE teachers recognised bullying as a social and moral issue, and they were confident that they, and boys, knew what bullying was. However, in displaying this knowledge, they never cited specific sources or cross-referenced CHS's anti-bullying policy. Instead, mirroring findings by Green (2000), PE teachers' views, attitudes and values on this matter tended to be based from their lived experiences and pragmatic approaches. MPE teachers believed that bullying was rare within MPE at CHS, but they cited verbal and unwanted overzealous physical behaviours as the most common types of such rare occurrences. They also were clear that changing rooms proved to be the most prominent spaces where rare cases would occur. These key findings offer a different perspective to much existing research, which rarely focused directly on the process of bullying, but instead referred to the prevalence and outcomes of it. Likewise, previous literature did not consider MPE teachers' perspectives on bullying. Therefore, the insight offered in this section appears somewhat novel.

6.3 Boys' perspectives on bullying

Whilst the previous section focused predominantly on MPE teachers' perspectives of bullying, in this section greater focus is given to boys' perspectives on bullying. Discussions are presented through four key themes: (a) boys' understanding of bullying and its detrimental effects; (b) the main reasons young people get bullied and bully; (c) changing room culture in MPE; and (d) boys' explanations for the lack of reporting bullying. It should be noted that data drawn upon within this section were primarily taken from focus groups. During each focus group, boys were presented with two short vignettes concerning a scenario regarding peer-relations that could be construed as either banter or bullying within MPE.

Like MPE teachers, during focus groups boys were confident that they understood what constituted bullying. Unlike MPE teachers, central to boys' definition of bullying were notions of repetition. For instance, Year Eight James claimed that, "if it is a one-off incident then like no, but if it keeps happening like every time, they play dodgeball then it's bullying" [Focus Group 23 June 2015]. Similarly, Year Seven Owen noted that, "it is meant to be a joke, but when it goes on for as long as this it is bullying" [Focus Group 9 June 2015]. In terms of determining intention, Year Nine Josh argued that, "well they probably did because like they are in secondary, they should know" [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. As illustrated here, James and Owen felt able to clearly distinguish between one-off potentially more banter-like comments from bullying, whilst Josh seemed to believe that by the age of 11 boys should be aware of their behaviour in terms of meaning, intention and acceptability, and how it may be received by others.

As well as being able to clearly constitute what bullying entailed, boys were also apt in describing its detrimental effects. During focus groups, younger boys appeared more able and willing to openly discuss feelings, be it theirs or those of other people. Sometimes this involved emotive

descriptions. For instance, Year Seven Ethan believed that bullying was “like cancer” [Focus Group 1 July 2015], whilst in referring to its severity boys frequently explained to me how bullying can lead to suicide or being arrested. As noted here, boys were often conscious of the psychological damage bullying inflicts. Furthermore, boys often displayed empathy towards the victim in narratives. For example, Year Seven Mason suggested that, “he is probably going to end up believing it himself, he is going to lose loads of confidence, he will think that he can’t do stuff” [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. Similarly, when referring to a perceived bullying incident, Year Seven Isaac believed that, “it can affect him mentally because it can put off his concentration, and like low self-esteem” [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. These younger boys displayed empathy by relating social relations to people’s feelings and their sense of self-worth. Depictions such as these add to those provided by Nielsen and Thing (2019) by offering insights into the perceived emotional and identity-based effects of boys’ not feeling part of a dominant ‘We’ group. This effect may be experienced even if only temporarily feeling detached from the dominant group during such incidents. Furthermore, whilst 15-17-year olds described this process in Nielsen and Thing’s (2019) work, it seems that this reasoning and experiential feelings were active for these boys at 11 years of age.

During focus groups, boys tended to cite two main reasons for why some boys get bullied and why some boys bully. Boys suggested that perceived differences were central to some boys being victims of bullying. For instance, Year Nine Josh commented that, “people just do it because of anything that is different” [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. Difference was most often described by visual cues. For example, Year Nine Charlie noted that, “it is like physical so you can see, so you can easily take the mick out of people” [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. Referring to a specific case, Year Seven Mason recalled that, “on non-uniform day, I had my sleeves rolled up and people were saying ‘why have you got your sleeves rolled up like a girl?’” [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. Older boys tended to

discuss more performance-based reasons. For instance, Year Nine Alfie suggested that, “it is usually a person who is smaller than them”, whereas peer Max claimed that, “it’s like a person who isn’t good at any sports at all”, whilst offering a final difference, Charlie reflected that, “people who are overweight get picked on a lot” [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. Here, references to bullying referred implicitly to verbal forms, some of which had gendered undertones based on comparative observations from the social norm. Again, these data further illustrate boys’ acute social awareness of what visually and symbolically constitutes ‘We’ and ‘They’ groups, and the need to distance or differentiate themselves from the latter. It could be argued that the emphasis placed on physical difference of any description is significant within MPE because PE is arguably the most prominent school subject where young people’s bodies are centralised, visualised, ranked and judged at individual, peer and teacher levels.

As with MPE teachers, boys discussed changing rooms as spaces where bullying was more likely to occur in comparison with other PE spaces. For instance, Year Seven Luke recalled that, “people like make fun of me in changing rooms but, yeah no, it does annoy me, but I don’t take it seriously” [Focus Group 16 June 2015]. Furthermore, Year Seven Ethan suggested that, “they could get hand towels and whip each other with towels”, whilst peer David recounted that, “people often hit each other with ties” [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. Similar accounts were provided by older boys. For example, Year Nine Alfie remembered that, “we have had people who have lost their trousers and they have been in the showers, or like they have lost their shoes and they have been hid” [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. These examples evidence how behavioural norms within changing rooms can differ to other spaces within MPE and are unique across the school. These examples also illustrate the heightened potential for sociality and overzealous physical intimacy within changing rooms as boys explore their semi-naked bodies against those of others. As well as being enclosed and largely unsupervised spaces in terms of adult presence, these confined areas often included masses of

stuff such as school bags, PE kit and paper towels, to name but a few things. As such, limited space with congested items seemingly provided hazards during the changing process. Albeit anecdotal, recollections of 'tie-whipping', 'bacon slicing' and 'nipple-twisting' were common practices within my changing room experiences as a child, which perhaps evidences the longevity of such rituals.

When discussing a vignette, boys were asked their thoughts on the role of the fictional Mr Sharp in a changing room incident. Boys were consistent with Year Seven Owen's belief that Mr Sharp "should be monitoring them more" [Focus Group 9 June 2015]. This was because, as Year Eight Frankie stressed, "there is a lot of people in a changing room" [Focus Group 11 June 2015]. Furthermore, Year Nine Max claimed that, "you wouldn't want to do it [targeting a peer] with a teacher around you" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. This point can also lead to questions regarding bystanders in the absence of adult authority figures. On this note, Year Seven Luke suggested that, "I think Joe [fictional character] should have stood up for him more, he should have said something", whilst peer Adam stated that, "the people who weren't doing anything were also bad because they were supposed to go and help him" [Focus Group 16 June 2015]. Problematising these moral positions, Year Seven Ben wondered if "maybe they didn't help because their friends were pointing and laughing at him", to which peer Henry added, "because they might have felt embarrassed themselves" [Focus Group 9 June 2015]. Likewise, Year Nine Tom reflected that, "it is easier to join in than help him" [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. A similar rationality was offered by Year Eight James who surmised, "it sounds like Kyle and his friends are the popular ones, they don't want to stand up and say like shut up now because like they would just start picking on them" [Focus Group 23 June 2015]. Similarly, Year Nine Josh proclaimed that a failure to intervene was "probably in case they got bullied" [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. Boys' reflections and interpretations of these narrative scenarios revealed the practicalities of having up to 30 boys in a confined space before and after every MPE lesson. Because of such lived experiences, the consensus amongst boys was that MPE

teachers should by duty and level of responsibility have some presence within the changing room. Boys here believed that this would impact behavioural norms and decrease the potential for bullying. In the absence of MPE teachers, boys reasoned that bystanders should act upon their moral duties, but they also problematised such stances based on self-preservation from being bullied and preservation of their 'We' group status. This moral dilemma is reminiscent of Hatts's Catch-22 scenario, and again is based on boys' perceptions of needing to negotiate 'We' and 'They' social group dynamics. Like the internal and external conflict cited in boys gendered emotions in Chapter Five, bystanders were presented with a 'lose-lose' situation. Intervening was considered as potentially jeopardising their status within the dominant 'We' peer group, whilst absconding moral duties would cause feelings of guilt and shame. Positioning themselves in the role of bystander, boys considered the former approach most likely and granted themselves diminished responsibility through beliefs that MPE teachers were neglecting their duties. Therefore, self-preservation of the 'We' group affiliation remained the first and foremost priority, whilst boys could also reason morally that they did not directly cause the issue.

Boys also offered insights into possible reasons why people bully and how to react to being bullied. For instance, Year Eight Callum suggested that people bullied for "the attention" [Focus Group 11 June 2015], whilst fellow Year Eights James added to "look hard" and to "get a laugh" and peer Matt believed that it was "to show off" [Focus Group 23 June 2015]. Furthermore, Year Eight Alex reasoned that, "for his [fictional character] popularity, to make him look like he is not scared to say it out loud" [Focus Group 11 June 2015]. These boys' reasons relate to their sense of self and its display, which appeared to be based on the social benefits and social meanings attached to such behaviours. Within deviant behaviours, risk-taking, such as not being scared to say a derogatory comment out loud, was also linked to boys' perceived popularity. Therefore, boys' negotiation of

'We' and 'They' group social dynamics may have underpinned connotations and repercussions at an identity-level.

Boys' perceptions of viable responses to bullying included standing your ground, but most often referred to ignoring such incidents. For example, Year Eight Matt suggested that one of the fictional victims within a vignette should have, "stuck up for himself" [Focus Group 23 June 2015]. Suggesting how this should be done, Year Nine Max recommended to get physical and "start shouting at them and stuff" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. Whilst citing three response dilemmas, Year Eight James commented:

You wanna say something back but it is best to ignore them, because if Mr Sharp does find out and you have not said anything back, then you have done the right thing. But sometimes you feel like you should be saying something back because it's like sort of get a bit of dignity back, I guess. [Focus Group 23 June 2015]

Offering another response dilemma, Year Nine Alfie described how, "if you are someone who snaps, they would think that you are an easy target because they know that you could say like three words and they would just go off it" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. As such, ignoring any instances of bullying was deemed the most effective solution, with boys identifying three main ways to ignore bullying. One way to ignore a bully was to create and maintain physical distance, as Year Nine Alfie reckoned that, "the easiest thing to do is just stay away from each other and there will be no more conflict" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. If this was not possible, as often the case in MPE, Year Nine Max suggested to "go along with it and laugh at them as well" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. This approach was deemed important because, as Year Nine Liam reflected, "I think he [fictional victim] has done the best thing by not showing it because if he started crying or something, they would take it a bit further" [Focus Group 23 June 2015]. These data illustrate the detrimental effects of dealing with bullying as boys had reasoned that the most effective strategies involved being physically or

verbally confrontational, or alternatively being stoic and suppressing any feelings of frustration, anger or sadness. By the age of 12 and 13 years, boys were able to problematise these social situations and reason how best to deal with them and ascertain what emotional requirements were needed. The various permeations outlined above mainly signify how boys sought to distance themselves physically and emotionally from the immediacy of the peer conflict and power struggle. However, this process requires a high level of emotional self-restraint and foresight during a temporary time of high levels of emotional stress.

An option rarely proposed for dealing with bullying was reporting such incidents to teachers. This approach was not considered viable despite Year Seven Isaac realising that, “bullying won’t change unless something is done about it” [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. However, a significant reason for not reporting bullying was due to the perceived reputational damage. For example, Year Nine Oliver commented that, “some people don’t like to grass because people like to call them sprag. [When asked what this word means]. It is like people who tell on people, like people who grass on people” [Focus Group 23 June 2015]. Describing the social implications of being labelled a sprag, Year Seven Owen denoted that, “nobody would talk to them” [Focus Group 9 June 2015], whilst Year Eight Alex believed that, “they [sprags] eventually have not a lot of friends” [Focus Group 9 June 2015]. As well as social repercussions, Year Seven Ethan elaborated that, “it is always awkward to tell the teacher because if the teacher goes up to them, there is like a 50 out of 50 chance that they are going to go back and bullying you even more” [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. Offering a lived experience of such a scenario, Year 7 Mason recalled how:

I went to Ruth [female support worker] and she got someone to speak to him and then they said we have had a complaint from the student saying that you had been bullying Jacob, but erm, and then he would stop, but then straight away other people just came

up to me and said, why have you been telling other people this? [Focus Group 1 July 2015]

These responses were delivered in a stating the obvious manner. As also recognised by MPE teachers, such as Southy's bottle comment, the stigma of being labelled a sprag was such that boys opted for alternative solutions, such as physical distancing or stoicism. Some boys problematised doing what they knew was the official and guided response. In placing their knowledge of the certified process with their knowledge of the prevailing social dynamics, boys opted for stoicism and identity-based reasoning and logic based on preserving their status within dominant 'We' peer groups.

The four themes discussed in this section provide insights into boys' perspective on bullying within MPE. Through engaging in vignette scenarios, boys dissected and problematised various aspects within potential bullying social processes. Revealing in-depth knowledge of this topic, boys understanding of bullying social processes was often not too dissimilar to that of MPE teachers. However, these child-centred interpretations offered nuanced appreciations. For instance, central to boys' rationalising of bullying was their negotiation of perceived 'We' and 'They' groups as well as their perceived need to engage in emotional self-restraint and foresight. For example, boys lived realities involved momentarily fight or flight scenarios. These scenarios were most often responded to by exercising emotional detachment from the immediacy of the situation and forecasting future consequences of their actions. As with MPE teachers' perspectives, these insights are somewhat novel as few studies reviewed in Chapter Three directly asked boys to offer their perspective on bullying social processes within MPE. Instead, boys just reported being bullied and blamed MPE teachers for their lack of intervention (Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011).

6.4 Differentiating between banter and bullying: age-based and intergenerational differences

So far in this chapter, discussions have centred on how banter and bullying were socially constructed by boys and MPE teachers within MPE. In this final section, age-based and intergenerational differences between such social constructions are problematised. The problematising of social constructions are presented in the following three themes: a) defining banter and bullying as separate entities; b) examining the attempts by MPE teachers as well as boys problematising of distinguishing banter from bullying; and, c) analysing inter-generational variances when differentiating between instances of banter and bullying.

At times, MPE teachers and boys discussed banter and verbal bullying interchangeably. They also occasionally problematised differentiating between the two. For instance, despite confidently defining bullying, Parky bemoaned that:

I think if someone gave us a definition of banter that would make it easy. I think it is good when used properly, as in both sides. Whether it is individuals or groups that are giving as good as they are getting, it is not in a malicious way, that's banter. As soon as it is one-way, as soon as it is malicious as in, we are not having a bit of craic [long pause]. I might not know what it is [banter], but I know what bullying is [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

Boys provided similar responses. For example, Year Nine Charlie simply answered that, "banter is just taking the piss" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. Elaborating further, Year Nine Alfie believed that:

Banter is having a laugh. It can be good, and it can be bad, it has its sides. Sometimes banter can go too far. Like someone calls me ginger, something like that. Something daft like that, I would just have a laugh with them. But, if it was like constant, adding things in onto it, it gets too much, and you say 'oh away?? It's old now'. It's like an

expiry date. You have the certain amount of banter for a certain week and it just stops.

[Focus Group 10 July 2015]

Similarly, Year Nine Max expressed that, “you’ve got to mention it every, I don’t know four of five lessons, to have a laugh, then you don’t say it for the next week. Otherwise, the guy who you are having banter with will just take it as personal” [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. Examining these data, Parky was clear on the relational aspects of both banter and bullying and drew differences between the two on the grounds of incidents being socially appropriate and mutual. In theory, this differentiation was clear, but in practice less so. Some banter can have a pernicious side and negative intent. Therefore, given its provocative nature, this type of banter may be difficult for the boys involved and MPE teachers witnessing it to agree on levels of social acceptability. Furthermore, Alfie drew reference to banter’s dual purpose, but disclosed how more socially acceptable banter, such as having a laugh, can be received differently when part of a repetitive and more targeted series of comments. To reach a mutual understanding of banter’s appropriateness, there seemed to be a certain relatively sophisticated criteria in terms of determining intention and factoring in repetition. From an MPE teacher’s perspective, these criteria may be difficult to administer as they may not be privy to boys’ interactions between MPE lessons or they may not be aware of friendships and their social dynamics. Even if MPE teachers only focus on verbal exchanges within MPE lessons, this would require high levels of social memory to identify and recall repeated exchanges across several groups involving over 100 boys in total. Therefore, it seemed that MPE teachers were largely reliant on boys’ moral judgements, self-management and disclosure. However, as discussed in previous sections, these options were compromised by complicated social and psychological processes, largely pertaining to perceived ‘We’ and ‘They’ group social dynamics.

Determining banter from bullying involved a third dimension, referred to mainly by boys as ‘chewing’. Having never heard this expression used in this context before, Year Nine Oliver

explained that chewing is when “you are getting on their nerves and you are trying to aggravate them and stuff”, to which his peer Liam likewise responded that chewing is “to try to wind them up and stuff and get them annoyed”, whilst Hugo added to “try and get a reaction” [Focus Group 23 June 2015]. One-way in which older boys defined chewing was to compare it with banter or bullying. For instance, Year Nine Hugo claimed that, “banter is just a laugh and chewing is really seriously getting on their nerves” [Focus Group 23 June 2015]. Whilst referring to this process, Year Nine Max suggested:

You are saying it [banter] at the right time rather than the wrong time. Because, if he is doing it all the time, then they keep on going along with it, then that is being chewy.

If they just said it once, that might be just a bit of banter. [Focus Group 10 July 2015]

Providing an evaluative comment regarding chewing, Year Eight James argued that “it’s actually halfway between bullying and banter. You are chewing, and it goes on too long, so you are bullying someone, so you chew them but you just sort of like keep making comments, but you mean to annoy them” [Focus Group 23 June 2015]. These data suggest that chewing tended to be a term used and discussed by older boys and appeared to add a further complexity to 11-16-year-old boys sophisticated communication styles. These findings suggested that ‘chewing’ differed from banter in terms of its origins of purpose, i.e. to aggravate and embarrass, and its intent, i.e. to annoy and receive a certain reaction. In some respects, the reaction sought was a test of boys’ ability to exercise emotional self-restraint when antagonised by a peer. However, it should be noted that when such behaviour was observed, it tended to be negotiated on a situational basis and often seemed to involve mind-games based on a battle of wills or a test of temperament. Given its more deliberate, less amicable and targeted nature, it is perhaps not surprising that some boys drew comparisons between chewing and bullying. In this sense, chewing illustrated a further complexity within older boys’ peer-relations which, arguably, make differentiating between banter and bullying more challenging for those involved to identify or intervene in.

In terms of the potential to intervene in such behaviours, MPE teachers also referred to the challenges of differentiating and policing between banter and bullying. Most vocal in this respect was Hatts, who stressed that:

You can tell from facial expressions and the way that they react sometimes. They will put a big front on, but you can tell that they are not really that bothered about it. You can tell, I think, when it gets malicious or if it gets to a point where it's getting a bit too far, they will just go quiet. You can see in their face that they are upset. I can just read peoples' body language and facial expressions. To me facial expressions mean a lot, you can see if somebody is actually genuinely upset or worried about what the consequences are going to be in terms of after this lesson. Say for example, in the changing room somebody says, 'oh you divvy or whatever, I hate you' and are quite aggressive towards them. If that person's face is still laughing, and then the other person laughs, then you can kind of see that they are only joking there. Whereas if the other person looks worried and there is no backing down from both teams, then that is when I would see that as bullying and that is when I would step in [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

Initially sharing similar thoughts, Southy problematised this viewpoint:

I think as soon as a kid it is aimed at doesn't see the funny side of it then it is bullying, as long as they are happy with it. But then I guess then maybe we can't see what is happening because they may be smiling on their face but then seething on the inside. It is all through experience I guess, in knowing what you can do and what you can't [Personal Interview 15 July 2015].

Both Hatts and Southy believed themselves to be accomplished readers of boys' body language and considered that they had developed the intuition needed to differentiate banter from bullying. Hatts's stress on facial expressions to recognise how comments are received is problematic when considered alongside previously cited findings that boys often deal with being bullied by largely suppressing outward facing emotional expressions of frustration or sadness. This apparent dilemma was recognised and problematised by Southy, whose comment also revealed that MPE teachers' approach to such issues is often based on their lived experience and pragmatism, and not necessarily evidence or policy-based practice.

Through engaging in vignette scenarios, boys also often problematised the interpretive differences of banter and bullying for those involved. For instance, Year Eight Matt noted that, "for the people who do laugh at him it is banter", to which James interrupted, "they would say it is banter, but Billy won't take it as banter" [Focus Group 23 June 2015]. Furthermore, Year Seven Luke explained:

Kyle [fictional character] and his friends might not see it as bullying but might just see it as a joke, but then Sam might see it as bullying. I think that the boys that made fun of him, I don't think that was right. But then they might have not known that it was going to affect him in that way. [Focus Group 16 June 2015]

Whilst Luke believed that some boys failed to realise that they were crossing lines between banter, chewing and bullying, other boys implied such transgressions were more intentional. For example, Year Nine Tom bemoaned that, "for some people, it is just in their nature to go around and just cross the line" [Focus Group 1 July 2015]. In engaging in these narratives, boys offered numerous caveats to their initial responses and often sought extra knowledge outside of the story, such as did they used to be friends? They sought such knowledge in their attempts to make more informed conclusions over the appropriateness of behaviours or when trying to determine people's intentions. This process reiterates the complexity involved within verbal exchanges between boys.

It also signifies how much of the interpretive element appeared to be based on situational social circumstances and levels of established emotional and social bonds between those involved. As such, adjudging such differentials from a more involved position, and not detached as in this exercise, required high levels of social and emotional awareness of the situation, intention and feelings of others.

Seemingly aware of this complexity, MPE teachers described the manner in which they actively sought to educate and reinforce clear lines between banter and bullying. As such, Parky recalled:

I said, me having a bit of banter with you is saying 'oh well we got beat by you or you beat us etc'. That is banter. But, as soon as I start being nasty and not about football, and getting personal, then that is bullying. I was trying to define it to them. Kids I think don't know sometimes what bullying is and they will call it banter. I think at other times when they really know it is bullying, they are just being nasty and they will try and hide behind the term banter. It has been 'oh well I was only having a bit of craic, it was only banter' and I said 'what was he saying to you?', he said nothing. What did you say to him? La la la. There you go, that ain't banter, you have just had a go at him for a number of things and you have tried to label it something acceptable and it ain't [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

Whilst useful and apparently necessary given previous discussions, it seems that this type of guidance and clarity on differentiating between banter, bullying and chewing is regularly needed given the breadth and complexity of social nuances involved. For instance, whilst Parker's use of an example is pertinent in some respects, on its own, it could be too reductive or simplistic given the previously cited complexity, breadth and diversity of banter and verbal bullying evident in MPE. Therefore, deducing differentiations between banter and bullying to one or two either-or examples

would seem to fail to acknowledge the relational, emotional and behavioural sophistications and nuances at play.

A further consideration within this process is that those involved in defining, interpreting and intervening in banter or verbal bullying are often from different generations. Inter-generational differences between MPE teachers and some boys' interpretations of banter and bullying were semi-regularly observed. Referring to a specific example, Southy confessed:

There are some throw away comments I have said to other kids, I have been asked by the Senior Leadership Team to apologise because they [boys] have taken it seriously. It was a throw away comment like, "oh sit down or I am going to kick you outside", and he took it serious and he said "Sir you made me scared". And I was like, "blinking heck Philip, do you think I would really give you a kicking?" I just thought it was a throw away comment from me, banter, and all that. He was only in Year Eight at the time, it was earlier this year and I didn't teach him last year. Our relationship has got better, but I am wary of how I speak to him now and what I say [Personal Interview 15 July 2015].

Similarly, one interaction was observed whereby in situ Copeland had to clarify that his banter had been received as such by the boy also involved:

Field note 27 January 2015 Year 10 Lesson

Mr Copeland asked pupils to enter the swimming pool in fours. The first group entered in a five, with one male entering a lot later than the rest. Mr Copeland quickly shouted, "Tomasz, just because you are Polish doesn't mean you can do that". The rest of the class laughed out-loud. Except from his initial embarrassment of misconstruing Copeland's instruction, Tomasz did not look like he was affected by the comment.

Several minutes later, Copeland asked Tomasz how many lengths he was on and he apologised for the comment, but qualified with 'you know I was only joking don't you?'

Tomasz half-smiled and replied, 'yes Sir'.

The complexity and potential issues with banter between two people in different social groups was sometimes referred to by boys in focus groups. For instance, Year Nine Alfie disclosed that:

I remember someone ages ago, they said something to a teacher as well. They were having fun and they said something back and the teacher didn't like it. Because the teacher had riled him up to have banter back, but the teacher has not taken it as banter, so they gave him [the boy] a sanction or detention. [Focus Group 10 July 2015]

Reflecting on this scenario, Charlie commented that, "it gets personal something like that" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. These examples illustrate the potential subtle and fine lines between banter and verbal bullying or in this case banter and an inappropriate comment. As demonstrated in Southy's confession, a flippant or jest-like comment between MPE teachers or boys can be misguided if adequate levels of social and emotional bonds have not been established between those involved. Likewise, as illustrated in Copeland's comment, quips or gags need to be carefully considered to ensure that they are socially acceptable and do not cause unintended offense or be interpreted as inappropriate or even xenophobic. Part of this process seemingly involves MPE teachers ascertaining boys' levels of emotional, social and intellectual sophistication before engaging in banter. Equally, given the reaction of the teacher who took offense to a boy's comment, it appears that boys must also engage in a similar process of mutual identification before engaging in banter with MPE teachers. This judgement is also predicated on broader social expectations of appropriate teacher-pupil relations.

Findings from within the three themes discussed within this section offer novel insights. To my knowledge, no previous studies have recognised inter-generational differences between boys and MPE teachers' views on banter and bullying. These findings revealed that it was sometimes difficult for those involved to differentiate between banter and verbal bullying. Adding further complexity to this process was boys' use of chewing. Chewing seemed to involve elements of both banter and bullying as it often involved amicably mocking someone, but also included intentionally trying to momentarily emotionally harm someone. As such, the many similar characteristics between banter, verbal bullying and chewing meant that clear lines between the three were occasionally blurred. One differentiating factor was the level of mutuality involved within the verbal exchange, which could differ in interpretation depending on the friendship group or teachers involved. Whilst seeking to further educate boys on complexities within human relations and use of language, MPE teachers were occasionally part of misconceived or inappropriate banter. This evidenced the levels of mutual identification needed and social, emotional and cognitive sophistication required to engage in banter without being considered by others as a bully.

6.5 Conclusion

In this Chapter, four sections that discussed the social constructions of banter and bullying within MPE were presented. MPE teachers and boys held similar views on banter and bullying, which illustrated the nuances and complexities within both behaviours, especially with the third dimension of chewing adding further intricacy. Banter was omnipresent within MPE and was used by both MPE teachers and most boys. This behavioural norm was mainly used for homosocial bonding purposes. However, banter was also used by MPE teachers to maintain social control over boys and was used by some boys to avoid peer ridicule. MPE teachers and boys were confident that they knew what bullying was and suggested that it rarely took place within MPE. When bullying did occur, MPE teachers appeared to draw upon their lived experiences and a pragmatic approach to

dealing with it rather than adopting an evidence-based approach. Both boys and MPE teachers recognised issues with boys' failure to report instances of bullying based upon their interpretations and negotiations with prevailing 'We' and 'They' social groups. Whilst MPE teachers and boys shared similar views on what constituted bullying and banter, there was evidence of intergenerational differences in interpreting friendly banter from an inappropriate comment. Some findings within this chapter evidence the intricacies within teacher-pupil relations. In the following chapter a further nuance within this relationship is exemplified.

Chapter 7 MPE teachers attempts to civilize boys in and through MPE

In Chapters Five and Six, gender relations, boys' masculine embodiment and behavioural norms in MPE were critically explored. In this chapter, the processes through which MPE teachers attempted to civilize boys in and through MPE are examined. Here, the word 'civilize' is taken from Elias's (2012) usage to denote increases in behavioural refinement and emotional self-restraint in a descriptive manner and not a moral or judgemental way. Data are primarily drawn from interviews with MPE teachers and from observations to explore key themes relating to the age-specific civilizing focus of MPE teachers as well as perceptions of MPE teachers as male role models. Given that MPE took place within a school, the following section provides necessary context by detailing the role of CHS's ethos.

7.1 CHS's ethos within MPE

In this first section, MPE teachers attempts to civilize boys in and through MPE is discussed through the following three themes: (a) the embedding of CHS's relationship-based values within MPE; (b) MPE teachers perceived transformative effect on boys level of empathy and mutual identification; and, (c) MPE teachers' mutual identification of tension balances between competitiveness and civilized restraints within MPE. Discussing the first of these themes, MPE teachers were asked during interviews if and how they sought to develop boys' morals and character, as outlined in the NCPE (2013). They were also asked if and how they sought to embed CHS's broader school values as outlined in Chapter Four. In their responses, MPE teachers were confident that they develop morals and character and embed CHS's core values. For instance, Southy claimed that, "obviously being PE, you promote sort of team spirit, morality, accepting others, accepting strengths and weaknesses" [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]. Likewise, Parky responded that, "we talk about playing by the rules, helping each other out from a team point of view, working together" [Personal

Interview 8 July 2015]. MPE teachers' proclamations were somewhat evidenced by frequent observations of them encouraging boys to be more co-operative:

Field note 10 March 2015 Year Seven Lesson

Hatts asked Year Sevens to create four equal teams in numbers and ability. This task caused boys to dispute which peer should be in which team. Disagreements took place concerning the equableness of ability between the four teams on the grounds of fairness. Hatts used boys' inability to form four teams without quarrel as an opportunity to explain that this process was part of their learning and involved their need to be co-operative with peers.

Everyday team-based activities in MPE required degrees of social cohesion and co-operation amongst boys, perhaps more so than in other more individualistic classroom-based lessons. This is not to suggest that such practices only take place in PE lessons, although the use of competitive team-based performative activities in MPE mean that they are arguably more frequent, intensified and normalised than in non-PE lessons. Therefore, CHS's relationship-based values were seemingly tested within MPE. Whilst CHS's core values were centred on self-discovery and self-transformation, these were heavily grounded in and inscribed through relationships with others. Here, Parky, Southy and Hatts considered that they were able to contribute to the instilling of CHS's core values. This teacher confidence has also been found to be evident in research. For instance, in interviewing 20 PE teachers, Mason (1995) found that many believed that by doing PE children developed self-confidence, self-esteem, self-discipline, sportsmanship and co-operation skills. However, rather than merely facilitating boys' development through games as denoted by Mason (1995), Parky, Southy and Hatts seemed to place more value on their relationships with boys when exemplifying their civilizing impact. This notion is now explored further.

Parky, Glovers, Southy and Hatts felt that through their relations with boys within MPE they could transform boys' attitudes and behavioural norms over time. For instance, Parky stressed empathy

and respect as musts, and noted how he gets boys to consider “the way you think you should be talking to somebody, and how would you like it? And getting them to think about the consequences of what they are doing” [Personal Interview 8 July 2015]. The instilling of such messages often took place in a small group setting. However, in some cases, MPE teachers had to be more direct in their assessment and correction of boys’ behaviour towards each other. For example, referring to an incredibly talented Year 10 football team, Glovers recollected their tendency to be “horrible with each other”. Elaborating further, he cited how he needed to remind them, “you are now in a school environment, you behave in a certain way” [Personal Interview 10 July 2015]. The ‘way’ to which Glovers referred was seemingly based on CHS’s relationship-based values. Exemplifying the perceived transformative effect of instilling such values, recalling one boy, Southy claimed that, “he was a nightmare in Years Seven, Eight and Nine, but a likeable person. There was something there to save and work with, he wasn’t malicious, he was just naughty, but in Year 11 he was a prefect” [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]. Historically, a school prefect was a pupil who had legitimate authority to discipline peers and often did so through harsh means (Dunning & Sheard, 1979). However, at CHS, a prefect referred to an honourable position as a student leader. It was clear that MPE teachers attempted to instil, or re-instil, civilizing habits of empathy and foresight into boys when acting and relating with others within MPE. This was evident in Parky’s quest to get boys to consider ‘how would you like it?’. In posing this question, Parky was seemingly trying to empower boys to move away from a ‘Me’ and ‘Mine’ approach in their relationships with others and move towards a mutual identification approach that empathises with peers’ ‘We’ and ‘They’ perspectives. This transformation requires boys to exercise foresight and display emotional sophistication to be able to understand and appreciate peers’ feelings, needs and wishes, alongside their own desires and intentions. The degrees to which boys had to exhibit such levels of empathy were somewhat set by CHS’s relationship-based values. MPE teachers respected, agreed with and sought to instil CHS core values, believing in their transformative capacities. Therefore, they often used these values as a barometer to judge boys’ conduct, relations with others and display of embodied values. From this,

MPE teachers perceived their role to be mentors and disciplinarians if needed. Their focus appeared to be on moulding or reminding boys of the necessary emotional self-restraints and behavioural norms expected at CHS. In this sense, it should be noted that MPE teachers did not perceive boys as blank slates and often held much hope and aspiration in boys civilizing capacity. The roles and aspirations of MPE teachers in this respect were also noted by Mason (1995, 3), who found that PE teachers expressed how “we try to teach them a little bit more about themselves, about others, the social aspects of PE, about the rights and wrongs of the way they regard other people”.

CHS’s relationship-based values and boys’ morals were frequently tested and exposed within heightened competitive situations espoused within MPE. Tension balances between boys’ desire to be fair, honest and competitive were regularly observed, as denoted in the following observation:

Field note 4 March 2015 Year Eight Lesson

Glovers sent James for a punishment lap for taking a short-cut under the tennis net during the warm-up. Later in the lesson, James contested who won his rally with Richie.

Glovers reminded him of the need to be honest and play fairly.

During sporting contests within MPE, boys were often posed with moral dilemmas and, as such, sometimes displayed paradoxes in their moral behaviour. For instance, younger boys were semi-regularly observed protesting perceived injustices on the grounds of fairness, only for moments later to observe them manipulating rules or blatantly cheating to try to win a game. Referring to the tension balance between being competitive and displaying civilized behaviours and embodying CHS’s relationship based values, Southy described two Year 10 boys’ “winning-at-all-cost mentality” and declared that, “I have got no problem with people not liking losing, especially if they are top-set, because I don’t want them to just accept it, as long as they are gracious in it” [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]. Competitiveness appeared to be partly based on parameters of fairness, which in MPE were often set and guided by the established rules of the game or activity. The

breaching of rules appeared to be used as a template for re-civilizing boys' momentary ill-advised conduct, which in this case was administered using a punishment lap that aimed to re-establish behavioural expectations. However, in concurrence with findings in Chapter Five, boys were enabled and encouraged to be competitive, but this was not however an unregulated process. Instead, there seemed to be an unwritten social contract that involved boys being competitive, whilst still maintaining expected behavioural standards and embodying CHS's relationship-based values. When boys failed to overcome this tension balance, MPE teachers tended to take a diplomatic approach instead of scolding or shaming boys. Furthermore, MPE teachers did not seek to suppress boys' competitiveness, only manage it better if necessary, to enable boys to find the 'right' balance.

The heightened testing and visibility of boys' civilized self-restraints, behaviours and relations exposed in sport meant that personal and professional pride was often at stake. Reflecting upon this, Hatts suggested that:

If you look at the other schools when they play a game of footy, how many other schools have players sent-off for unethical play, or for shouting back at the referee, or stuff like that. Whereas, I think a lot of our kids have got that knowledge and have got morals not to do that because they have been, not just brought up with it in PE, but they have been brought up with it across the school [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

This perceived superior civilized behaviour in sporting fixtures was not by luck or chance. Boys were seemingly aware and reminded of how their actions can implicate others in terms of CHS's reputational damage. For instance, Parky stressed that:

We have got good staff who for the most part put a lot of time and effort in, really care about the success of how the school is portrayed for fixtures. So, from a behavioural point of view, you do look at students as being ambassadors for the school. I see that as being hugely important, you're representing the school, you're

representing the community, you're representing us and that is a big thing with the Catholic thing. It is about community, so the students are always told about that it's who they represent [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

Sporting fixtures were not observed in this study but were described here as involving temporary 80 or 90-minute relations involving arguably heightened competitive team-based scenarios. In this sense, sporting fixtures exposed boys civilized conduct and ability to manage tension balances between competitiveness and CHS's relationship-based values. When compared with games within MPE lessons, boys' behaviour in this respect was portrayed as carrying much social significance in terms of CHS's pride, reputation and potential shame. As such, MPE teachers appeared to compensate for this by being extra vigilant in ensuring that boys knew that more was at stake than just the result of the game, with CHS's image resting momentarily on their ambassadorial shoulders. Such findings differ to those described in Bramham's (2003) ethnographic study in which playing for the school team was not just about winning but involved gendered expectations of displaying toughness. These expectations were part informed by the collective pride associated with upholding the school's reputation for hardness (Bramham, 2003).

From the key findings within this section, it was apparent that MPE teachers considered MPE a site for developing boys morally. Here, Parky, Glovers, Southy and Hatts's civilizing attempts often involved minimising the distance and tension balances between boys' 'I' values and CHS's 'We' values by moulding the former by promoting the latter. These teachers were aware of boys' malleability but considered that it was through their relations with boys, and boys' peer relations, that boys could embody more civilized behaviours or re-formalize their momentary lapses in socially expected behavioural conduct. Cognisant that MPE involves heightened emotional arousal and encourages competitiveness, MPE teachers mutually identified with the tension balances through diplomatic means in their efforts to enable boys to manage such conflicts better. Blatant

cheating was observed as a moral breach too far, whilst preserving CHS's reputation carried much social significance.

7.2 MPE teachers age-specific 'civilizing focus'

Whilst the previous section examined data relating to MPE teachers civilizing attempts of boys in general, in this section data are presented concerning age-based differences in MPE teachers civilizing attempts in relation to the formalizing of younger boys' punctuality and manners, the instilling of a sporting mentality and the preparedness of older boys for adulthood. Parky, Glovers, Southy and Hatts civilizing attempts were observed to be targeted and varied depending upon boys' age or temperament. Hatts and Southy considered that younger boys were more impressionable, and therefore a 'good age' for attitudinal, emotional and behavioural development. For instance, Hatts noted that, "I love Year Sevens because when they come up you can kind of mould them into how you want them to be" [Personal Interview 2 June 2015]. Similarly, Southy outlined Year Sevens high levels of enthusiasm and suggested that, "if you just keep at them eventually they will be nice kids" [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]. Hatts and Southy seemingly recognised their position of authority and influence over boys' psyche and behaviour. Furthermore, Southy realised that civilizing boys is neither a quick nor simple process. The expressiveness in which Hatts and Southy spoke on this topic intimated that they felt emotionally involved in this process and empowered by their civilizing attempts. This response may also have been informed by their professional identity and perceived duty and responsibility as a teacher. Southy's appraisal of boys' messy development trends resonates with key findings from Monaghan's (2014) ethnography of boys aged 14-16 years completing a health initiative in the North-East of England. In this study, boys' maturity levels were highlighted as not linear but often involving zig-zag patterns of development.

Aware of the malleability of younger boys, in Year Seven MPE teachers sought to instil punctuality in terms of their kit and time management. For every MPE lesson, boys were expected to bring

indoor, outdoor and swimming kit to cover all eventualities of lesson-type. Boys failure to meet such demands were dealt with punitively. For instance, Parky gave break-time detentions to several Year Eight boys for forgetting their swimming trunks and towels more than once [Lesson observation 5-5-15]. Boys sometimes appeared to have reasonable excuses for this perceived misdemeanour, but little flexibility was given. Aware of this strict stance, Parky explained that:

We are very strict with the kit, because if you are going to have a problem, then the kit is the first place that it will show. If they are going to be a bother, the chances are that they have turned up without their kit. We use the kit, and a breaking of that rule, as a reason to discipline them before they end up doing something else more serious [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

Similarly, MPE teachers often set boys time-limits, usually five minutes, to get changed to maximise their physically active time in lessons. Again, boys' failure to meet such time constraints and expectations could incur disciplinary action. For instance, during a Year Seven class, Hatts gave five boys a break-time detention for poor punctuality [Lesson observation 11-3-15]. The emphasis placed on kit and time management was reminiscent of a militaristic approach and served to evidence the orderliness of much school-life. As within the military, boys' non-compliance or inability to meet expected standards of punctuality was considered indicative of their poor attitude that would later translate into behavioural issues. It should be noted that the clarity and rigidity of these expectations set by MPE teachers, supported by threats of punitive punishments, seemed to be an effective mechanism to instil obedience and conformity, given that boys were only occasionally observed forgetting items of kit or not being ready for registers.

As well as punctuality, MPE teachers attempted to instil or remind younger boys of their manners. For instance, Hatts reminded a few Year Seven boys to say 'Sir' after answering a question. Ten minutes later, some boys were talking whilst he was giving instructions, so he sent them for a

punishment lap for their apparent disrespect towards him [Lesson observation 5-3-15]. Bemoaning a perceived waning of boys' manners over the years, Glovers' recalled that:

It used to be they [boys] would always have to address you as Sir or Miss every time they talked to you. Manners were a lot more then, you would hand out equipment, they would come and get the equipment and every kid would come and say, 'thank you Sir'. Whereas now, it's like [gestures 'they turn their head away'] [Personal Interview 10 July 2015].

Boys' inability to quickly address their manners angered teachers and MPE teachers were occasionally observed shouting at perceived impolite boys. Cases of poor manners were often exemplified to the rest of the group, and even sometimes involved whole-class punishments. Despite Glovers views on this issue, through my observations, boys often met MPE teachers' expectations of manners towards them. Openly poor manners that failed to acknowledge MPE teachers' professional status seemed to insult MPE teachers at a professional identity level. Somewhat ironically, MPE teachers never considered their occasional shouting, screaming or crude banter towards a boy as displaying poor manners. This apparent double standard may be explained by the differential power imbalances at play and expected behavioural norms. For example, teachers occasionally shouting at kids is a long-lasting well-established trait within the profession.

Further examining such data, it could be suggested that the use of punitive punishments to re-formalise boys' momentary slips into informal behaviour provided MPE teachers with an effective and legitimate power resource to maintain, or (re)establish, social control over boys. Likewise, the use of punitive punishments may also have been due to MPE teachers' upbringing and rejection of more informal conduct. When bemoaning perceived diminishing standards of manners towards them, MPE teachers often used the commonly cited quote 'manners cost nothing'. Bewildered, it appeared that MPE teachers struggled to mutually identify with boys who failed to respond to them in a polite manner. Therefore, a more befitting commonly used quote not used by MPE teachers

but representing the issue at hand is 'respect your elders'. The seeming insult to their professional identity and MPE teachers' inability to mutually identify with poor manners part explain why boys were more likely to face punitive punishments for displaying poor punctuality and poor manners towards teachers in comparison to those boys who were overly competitive and aggressive towards their peers.

As well as re-formalizing behavioural norms, MPE teachers also attempted to instil in boys a sporting mentality. Expressing what this involved and its importance, Hatts reflected that:

The thing is we don't care if you fail, at least you are trying and at least you are giving it a go, and that's the main thing. I tell my groups that no matter what you do as long as you put 100% effort in, this is what I have been brought up to do, as long as you put 100% effort in nobody can ask for anything more can they and that's what makes you successful to me. Whereas I think if they are putting in the effort that they should be, I think that will make them a decent person. It is that discipline of or well we have just lost the ball, it is that mentality of we have lost the ball, now let's get it back. I think that is the mentality that they need to take into school, so I will try and put that into PE [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

Hatts displayed a non-discriminant attitude towards boys of differing levels of athletic and sporting ability and lesser ability than him. This contrasts to findings within Tischler and McCaughtry's (2011) study, which found that MPE teachers praised and joked with sporty peers, displayed clear signs of favouritism, whilst they ignored or openly mocked subordinate boys. Instead, Hatts seemingly placed importance on boys displaying full commitment and exercising high levels of self-discipline in their physical endeavours in MPE. As with MPE teachers' expectations regarding punctuality, boys adjudged as displaying poor attitudes or insufficient levels of effort could also face reprimands.

Whereas MPE teachers civilizing attempts with younger boys focused more on punctuality, manners and self-discipline, for older boys they tended to focus on preparing them for perceived imminent adulthood. For instance, Hatts noted that:

Year 10s and 11s, again there is a good dynamic because you can kind of get them to be young adults, and getting them used to being around adults and behaving a bit more like adults, and I think that's what I like about them. When they get a bit older you have got to try and get them acting like adults, so they get used to if they go to a team outside of a school they know how to react to certain situations [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

Hatts derived pleasure in his differing relations with older boys and his role in trying to refine their behaviour to adult-level expectations. When instilling habitual emotional responses that lend themselves to, and are required within, adult social worlds, Hatts provided a lengthy example which was difficult to take parts from to make the point. Therefore, his main points are paraphrased below.

I had a Year 11 group who I did extra-curricular fitness training with. I would join in gym exercises and show them how it's done and how to train hard. They were a good bunch of lads, a funny group who all wanted to work hard. However, one boy Justin could not handle the banter at all. Boys would wind him up about his body statue, or something, and he would just flip, start swearing, and threatening to knock them out. I told him that all he had to do was stop biting and taking their bait, but he couldn't control his emotions. I knew that he wanted to join the Navy, so I had regular chats with him about his temper and appropriate responses to such jesting. I also warned him about how his reactions would be dealt with toughly in the Navy, but he was initially adamant that he could physically support his aggressive responses and threats. After much time, he learned how to stop snapping and not show that these types of comments were getting to him [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

This evidences how MPE teachers, like Hatts, actively sought to aid older boys' preparedness for adulthood, particularly those boys like Justin who struggled to control their temper.

Examining such data further, banter towards Justin was somewhat legitimised by Hatts's lack of intervention in this respect, further illustrating the normalising of this type of behaviour. However, what was not considered socially acceptable was Justin's response to such banter. Indeed, Justin's use of adult-like language, such as swearing, and his desire to symbolically stand his ground with threats of physical violence were considered by Hatts as inappropriate and problematic. They were considered to overstep CHS's behavioural conduct, whilst not being conducive to Justin's future attempts to compete and co-operate within the Navy. Whilst Hatts' thought that Justin's continual displays of masculine bravado or hyper-masculine responses to being antagonised may result in physical repercussions, it should also be noted that in many non-military professional workplaces such behaviours would also be socially unacceptable and could evoke a written formal warning or worse. Therefore, looking at Hatts's civilizing attempt more broadly, it is possible to draw comparison with the large-scale *Lost Workers Project* that Elias was part of in the 1970s. In this project, from the sample of 882 young people, it was found that many were rarely prepared for and experienced shock when struggling to adapt to role's, responsibilities and relations in the adult workforce (Goodwin & O'Connor, 2015). Like his peers, having developed close social bonds with these boys over several years, Hatts took a genuine interest in boys' past and present lives and felt emotionally invested in their futures.

The key findings outlined in this section illustrate that whilst MPE teachers civilizing attempts could differ in how they were implemented, a general pattern of civilizing focus was apparent. This involved instilling or re-calibrating punctuality, manners and a sporting mentality, which in many respects involved high levels of emotional self-restraint. There were however differences in the

underlying aims and purposes of this common focus. For younger boys, the civilizing focus appeared to be based on MPE teachers (re)exercising social control over the class and re-formalizing momentary slips in boys' behaviours. For older boys, the civilizing focus tended to be grounded in adult preparedness. This contrast meant that, arguably, one focus was implicitly designed to (re)establish and maintain authority-based teacher-pupil relations, whilst the other was aimed at reducing gaps between older boys' attitudes and behaviours and those of adults. These subtle age-based differences in teacher-pupil relations were identified in Chapter Three as an empirical gap within previous literature, which tended to provide more static portrayals of boys and MPE teachers as a homogenous group in terms of age. In presenting these findings within this section, the live and often messy developmental processes within teacher-pupil relations in MPE have been evidenced.

7.3 Informalized teacher-pupil relations as civilizing enablers

In the previous section, MPE teachers' attempts to re-formalize boys' momentary slips in behaviours were discussed. In this section, data are presented concerning how MP teachers used informal aspects of their relations with boys to enable their civilizing attempts. Data are presented through the following three themes: a) in relation to perceptions amongst MPE teachers that they had different relations with boys in comparison to their non-PE peers; b) that they had different personalities in comparison to their non-PE peers; and, c) that their personality and more informal relations with boys fostered productive working relationships.

Parky, Glovers, Southy and Hatts expressed how they had very good relations with boys. They also believed that their relations with boys differed to those of their non-PE peers. Making a broader reference to teaching, Glovers stressed that "85% is your relationship with the kids, the other 15% is what you do with it" [Personal Interview 10 July 2015]. Referring to PE's key characteristics, Hatts noted that:

I think we have got a bit more flexibility in the sense that we can set groups of kids off on tasks and go and talk to a group of kids. Don't forget we have got that 10 minutes before and after the lesson where we have to be in the changing room supervising, so you can either sit there and play on your iPad or you can sit there and talk to people. I think I tend to most of the time try and engage with people and talk to them, ask them different stuff [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

Further citing relationships built through PE, during his interview, Southy suggested that extra-curricular activities enabled the forging of informal relations and close social bonds with boys. He also cited that he did not think opportunities such as these were available in subjects like Maths. Ending this point, Southy claimed that, "in PE you get to see the different personalities, I can imagine in some lessons you don't get to know the kids very well" [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]. Re-visiting this point within his reflections, Southy added, "being in a classroom is almost like a novelty for me, it is not something I do day in day out. In my routine I'm not trapped in a classroom all day" [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]. It was clear that MPE teachers recognised that relationships were central to productive teaching. Therefore, compared with other more routinised classroom-based social dynamics, MPE teachers appeared to consciously embrace the heightened levels of sociality available within MPE to develop personal relationships with boys. The structural advantages and process-based opportunities available within MPE to which Hatts referred were also noted by Parker (1996) in his ethnography of MPE. Parker (1996) identified waiting times before entering the MPE department, changing rooms and a spacious environment as three aspects of PE that enabled informal relations to prosper. It seemed that MPE teachers enjoyed 'getting to know kids' through extra-curricular activities. This was also evident in photos posted on walls from international excursions, such as Ski-Trips, whereby pictures of evening social gatherings further indicated informal teacher-pupil relations. Linking to the findings in Chapter Five concerning academic escapism, there was a collective perception amongst MPE

teachers that MPE lessons were liberating in comparison to more confined academic lessons. However, this perception needs to be premised on the fact that, as Southy confessed, MPE teachers rarely experience classroom lessons and subsequent social dynamics. It is therefore perhaps better to consider *degrees* of differences between levels of informality available in MPE and classroom-based lessons to avoid stereotypical assumptions.

As well as considering MPE's heightened sociality as enabling informality, MPE teachers also proclaimed that they could forge close social bonds with boys due to their perceived different personalities in comparison with their non-PE peers. Difference in this respect was often based around humour. For instance, Hatts claimed:

They always say that PE teachers have got a sense of humour. If you asked a kid, PE teachers are almost seen as normal people. It is almost that other teachers are robots and sit in the classroom and teach. Whereas, PE teachers, we are more human, a lot of us play sports, also we just act normal. It is not that formal rules and routine like, do that, do that, do that, and do that [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

Also breaking MPE teachers' behavioural norms away from formality, Southy believed that:

PE teachers have that personality where they are more sarcastic sometimes and you give it and take it a bit. Whereas other teachers have the pressure of academic rigour where they have got to teach a certain concept in assessments [Personal Interview 15 July 2015].

Seemingly concurring with Southy's depiction of PE teachers, Glovers suggested that, "most PE teachers are like big kids anyway" [Personal Interview 10 July 2015]. These data can be linked to those presented within Chapters Five and Six. In Chapter Five, findings suggested that MPE teachers embodied an anti-intellectual identity and often situated themselves as opposites to more academic teachers. This observation was also noted by Green (2008) who explained that due to

PE's marginal status within schools, PE teachers are often considered themselves as outsiders within the teaching community. As such, Southy's sentiments seem to concur with Green's (2000) articulation of how PE teachers stress physical, rather than the theoretical, as being central to their beliefs on the nature and purposes of PE. This may partly explain MPE teachers' perceptions of difference between themselves and non-PE peers. However, the more explicit reason given resonates with MPE teachers' use of banter as part of their behavioural norms and teaching repertoire. Hatts and Southy seemingly attach immaturity, sarcasm and humour to normality, a self-characterisation that is consistent with long-standing media portrayals of MPE teachers (McCullick et al. 2003). But again, it should be noted that Hatts' referral to robotic non-PE teachers may have been a stereotypical characterisation based on little observational evidence. However, Hatts and Southy did consider that their different teaching approach was more appealing to boys and could be used to forge close and effective teacher-pupil relations. This notion is now explored further.

Data from focus groups with boys supported MPE teachers' self-characterisation and expressions of difference from other teachers in terms of personality. For instance, Year Nine Charlie claimed that, "if like there is a fun teacher like Mr South, he will just go along with the banter", to which Alfie added, "he called me Ginger him, I swear down". Entering the discussion, Max suggested that, "you won't expect a teacher to say something like that...[despite his comment, when probed Max replied], well you just think that they [teacher] are a cool guy and just go along with it". Reflecting upon this suggestion, Alfie deliberated, "I have always thought this, people like Mr Hatton and Mr South and Mr Dawson, the new Maths teacher, they have fun, they have banter, and I would think that if every teacher had banter students would enjoy more lessons, I reckon get better grades". Unsure of this bold claim, Max questioned, "It depends though", to which Charlie added "You have to have your fun moments and you have to have the serious times. If they have too much fun it can get out of control" [Focus Group 10 July 2015]. Whilst somewhat validating MPE teachers'

previously cited perceptions, such data also illustrate that these Year Nine boys held clear behavioural expectations of common teacher conduct. Therefore, despite being aware of MPE teachers' difference, Max was still surprised by the level of informality Southy displayed. His reference to 'cool' perhaps illustrates how these boys mutually identified with opportunities to be informal in their relations with MPE teachers. However, the extent that this coolness was desirable for boys and productive for MPE teachers was somewhat problematised within Alfie's thought experiment. Whilst initially deemed an effective teaching style, boys acknowledged that some degrees of formality and seriousness are necessary to aid their learning. It appeared that their perceptions here would have been largely informed by their engagement in more formal school processes within classroom-based lessons.

In their relations with boys, MPE teachers embodied several of their beliefs outlined in this section. Namely, relationships are key to civilizing boys, sociality should be embraced within MPE and informal relations with boys can prove effective. As such, MPE teachers often initiated and engaged in informal conversations with boys. Referring to and exemplifying this process, Hatts claimed that:

If you speak to them as an individual, then they seem to have a lot more respect for you. In my Year Nine class, I have got a kid who is not necessarily the best at PE but to get him engaged I will talk to him. He goes fishing so I will talk to him about fishing, so I will be like "oh have you been fishing this week Chris", and I think it makes them feel comfortable coming into the area [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

This type of informal dialogue was also driven by more pragmatic motives. This cause was evident in Parky, Southy and Hatts's references to the need to find 'a hook' to 'get boys on-side', which was needed more so with unruly boys. For instance, Southy commented that:

Whether it is because I am a PE teacher, they haven't messed around as much, but then you hear reports of, "he is a little sod in lessons", but I know he is fine in PE. We had a meeting yesterday, there was like 10 Year Sevens on the board and they are like

a target group. Four of them I have in top set for PE. Two are in the other half of the year, and they are top set and they don't cause me any problems, but they are causing problems around school [Personal Interview 15 July 2015].

Further evidencing this perceived relational and behavioural difference, Parky expressed that:

My current year 10 boys GCSE class, I love them, good characters, some kids who would be around school struggling with a few issues, but it is for the first time ever we have kept the football team together, and they get on with each other, they have been there through tough emotional times on the football pitch, and they all get on well. I find it fantastic, the lads, proper lads' lads, but you have good discussions, and yeah, I think they are great [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

Whilst boys questioned the role of banter as an effective teaching tool, here comments by Hatts, Southy and Parky imply that MPE teachers deliberate attempts to form close social bonds with boys through informal relations often served productive purposes. This suggestion should not be considered in denial of the structural significance of MPE's single-sex informal environment, as well as some boys' preference for a sporting culture. Furthermore, it is not to deny that reasons explaining Southy's observation are no doubt multi-causal. However, such informal dialogues *could* infer productive teacher-pupil relations in terms of boys' conforming to behavioural expectations within MPE. For greater context, it is also necessary to note that 'hook' based informal chats often took place outside of more formal instruction-based dialogue within MPE lessons. However, as Hatts noted, these types of informal chats were observed as being held indiscriminately with boys of differing ability and who held varied preferences towards sport. As mentioned earlier, this inclusive approach differs to more exclusive approaches portrayed in the levels of teacher favouritism cited in previous research (Atkinson & Kehler, 2012; Brown & Macdonald, 2008; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). Whilst MPE teachers at CHS realised the productive effects of

such chats, it is also necessary to note that MPE teachers' instigation and engagement in such dialogue was also based on their interests and care for boys' lives.

Key findings discussed within this section illustrate that MPE teachers were involved in more informal relations with boys within MPE in comparison with other subjects within the school. Both parties believed that these more informal relations involved degrees of uniqueness in comparison with the relations that boys experienced with non-PE teachers across CHS. Heightened informality and degrees of difference in teacher-pupil relations within MPE were reasoned as being enabled by more flexible, sociable and less academic social processes within MPE, alongside MPE teachers' sportier and banter-based personality when compared with most non-PE teachers. This level of mutuality was considered by MPE teachers as enabling boys' heightened enjoyment, whilst also socially controlling boys in line with MPE teachers' behavioural expectations. In this sense, the development of closer social and emotional bonds between MPE teachers and unruly boys better enabled civilizing attempts to be made that could potentially be productive.

7.4 MPE teachers as perceived gendered role models

In the previous section, key findings related to the more informal relations that MPE teachers were able to develop with boys and the potential importance of such relationships in part enabling their attempts to mould the boys' behaviours in particular ways. In this section, the extent that MPE teachers were considered as positive male role models is presented through the following three key themes: (a) MPE teachers' perceptions of the detrimental effects a lack of a male role model has for boys; (b) commonly held views of MPE teachers as male role models; and, (c) MPE teachers shared masculine and sporting identities with many boys.

The topic of positive male adult role models for boys was semi-regularly discussed in both the whole-school and in the PE staff rooms. Discussions tended to focus on a perceived lack of positive male adult role models within contemporary British society. This perceived deficit was often cited as possible explanations for boys' misbehaviour. On this topic, MPE teachers displayed a consensus. For instance, Glovers claimed that:

Without a doubt, I think a lot of the issues with particular kids it comes from probably, this is only my opinion, but the absence of a male, a positive male role model. A lot comes out of that, there is no doubt about it [Personal Interview 10 July 2015].

Similarly, Southy suggested that:

I think it [poor behaviour] has to do with a lot of the kids don't have a male role model. I think a lot of them, the problems we get in school is [lack of] boundaries at home [Personal Interview 15 July 2015].

Whilst these types of conversations were often based on anecdotes, were devoid of detail, and lacked academic rigour, they were gendered all the same. Glovers and Southy displayed empathy and sensitivity in their discussions on this topic. They were also seemingly aware that this topic was contentious, which was evident in Glovers's careful wording on his opinion on this matter. Nevertheless, Glovers and Southy both stressed the gendered significance of boys' behavioural issues, which they generally attributed to a dysfunctional home life. In taking this stance, both appear to suggest that males are best placed to set and maintain boundaries in terms of boys' behaviour. This gendered, stereotypical and arguably sexist viewpoint is largely supported by those within the male studies community. For example, Gray and Farrell (2018) identify a crisis of fathering and boys growing up with a less-involved father as one of four issues in their global 'boy crisis' thesis. As cited in Chapter Five, Connell's (2008) critique of notions of gendered learning differences appears equally apt here. This 'boys-as-victims' perspective of a lack of positive male

role models promotes a dichotomised and essentialist view of gender which naturalises gendered difference in boys' and girls' psychology, attitudes, social functions and aspirations (Connell, 2008).

Despite issues with dichotomising males and females on this topic, MPE teachers were often considered by non-PE peers as male role models. MPE teachers had seemingly internalised these perceptions. For instance, Glovers suggested that:

I think as a PE teacher you are a role model, aren't you? And how you behave and that if you have those values yourself. I think the kids definitely look up to you, it's the sport thing isn't it? I don't know why, it's in our society, you are definitely a role model. When I did my PGCE, I remember some of the other trainees [non-PE], we used to car-share in, they used to say, "oh Glovers you have it so easy, you do sport so they like you anyway, you're good at sport, you're a man so they look up to you" [Personal Interview 10 July 2015].

Being good at sport and a man was assumed as beneficial in MPE teachers' relations with boys on the basis that boys admired their sporting identity. This type of perception was occasionally observed in the staff room. Colleagues from across CHS would approach MPE teachers with concerns regarding a certain boy's attitude or behaviour and would ask MPE teachers if they could 'have a word with him' or 'try and get him to open up'. Whilst somewhat anecdotal, these examples further support MPE teachers' previous claims of their ability to better relate with boys than their non-PE peers. However, within these examples, it seems reasonable to presume that the boys in question were those who were perceived as troublesome within CHS. The prevailing perception presented here appears to be based on MPE teachers sharing the same sex, MPE teachers sporting and athletic competence and boys' ability to mutually identify with MPE teachers' degrees of difference in their personalities when compared with non-PE teachers. Within this viewpoint, there appears to be an implicit assumption that being sporty is a male thing or more likely to involve males. Questioning the gendered significance of this premise it is possible to suggest that the same-

sex aspect may be redundant. What may well be the case is that MPE teachers are better placed to mutually identify with boys because they have developed social and emotional bonds with them through heightened levels of sociality within MPE and their informal relations with boys. The fact that PE at CHS was single-sex may have contributed to or overstated the same-sex significance.

Perceptions of MPE teachers as male role models were often based on the idea that boys 'looked up to them'. Exemplifying this viewpoint, Hatts noted that:

I think they [boys] can look at you as a role model, and be like yeah, he is doing that, I wanna be like him. They can see you as an adult and kind of copy you as an adult and be like alright I can do what Sir's doing. I can watch what he is doing and try and imitate that. Say if I was playing a sport, not just playing a sport, but behaviour around and about and that, you know just being happy [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

The idea of boys modelling their sporting behaviour within MPE lessons on that of their MPE teachers was semi-regularly observed. For instance, boys were often observed admiring, attempting to imitate or compete against MPE teachers' sporting behaviours, as exemplified below:

Field note 25 February 2015 Year Eight Lesson

In demonstrating a forehand smash, Year Eights marvelled at Glovers's ability to repeatedly propel a shuttle cock against the sports hall wall. Upon completion of his demonstration, Glovers nonchalantly caught the shuttle cock on the back of the racket head and turned to the class and many boys applauded in appreciation. Glovers bowed down to acknowledge his applause.

Whilst MPE teachers' physical demonstrations are a staple of the occupation, boys often sought such displays:

Field note 28 April 2015 Year Seven Lesson

In demonstrating different station-tasks within a fitness circuit, Hatts performed a variety of press-ups. Captivated, some boys requested Hatts perform a one-handed or clap press-up. Hatt's duly obliged and a few males said 'wow'. Moments later several Year Sevens tried to mimic Hatts but couldn't and drew laughter from observing peers.

These data illustrate that a positive disposition and an embodied sporting identity were assumed and observed to be characteristics that boys could mutually identify with. Aware that their demonstrations were being closely inspected and judged, MPE teachers often joked 'no pressure then' or would repeat a demonstration until they were satisfied with its quality. These boys' requests for physical displays could also have been driven by a desire to catch Hatts out, display an imperfection or embarrass him. Adversely, there were elements of showmanship in MPE teachers' knowledge that they could aptly perform such tasks, which offered them emotional gratification and an opportunity to illustrate their physical superiority in comparison with boys. These assumptions do not seem to factor in unimpressed boys not clapping or not demanding physical acts or the fact that some boys dislike sport and physical activity. Instead, they position boys as a homogenous group who *should* like sport. If there was gendered significance within this teacher-pupil role modelling process, the fact that much of this was based around strength does suggest that elements of traditional forms of masculinity may have been at play. Some boys admired and even idolised Hatts for his physical and sporting prowess. More broadly, MPE teachers embraced and received boys' applause warmly. In one respect their physical and sporting prowess made MPE teachers more relatable to boys in terms of preference and aspiration, whilst visually illustrated their potentially shared masculine identity. In another respect, athleticism also served to highlight the physical difference between Parky, Glovers, Southy, Hatts and the boys. These demonstrations also provided MPE teachers kudos from those boys who respected such athletic talent, which MPE teachers could use to maintain their social control over boys.

A further uniqueness of PE is teachers' ability and sometimes desire to physically take part in lessons, as exemplified below:

Field note 19 March 2015 Year 10 Lesson

Two classes were merged, and a series of football matches were set-up. Southy officiated, whilst Hatts took part. During a game I overhear an opposition player say to a peer, "have you seen how fast Hatton is?" Later, another boy shouts, "well in Hatton! He could play for [names local professional team], centre back, what a Ledge"

All four MPE teachers believed that their individual sporting and masculine identity helped in their relations with some boys. For instance, Glovers claimed that:

A lot of PE teachers because of the environment that they have grown up in you know being part of the sports team, they can build those relationships with the kids and that's why I have a good relationship with them. Whereas someone who is more academic is maybe not able to do that [Personal Interview 10 July 2015].

MPE lessons seemingly offered MPE teachers the opportunity to be surrogate male sport stars within single-sex MPE. The use of an abbreviated word for 'legend' indicated the kudos that some boys attached to people who excel in male-dominated sports. Whilst these types of boys' reactions were relatively common, they could be differentiated depending on boys' ages and the sport being played. As illustrated in Chapter Five, it is perhaps no surprise that such kudos was afforded within football given its high social value within MPE. Younger boys were more likely to stand, admire and occasionally pass comment, whilst older boys enjoyed competing alongside or against MPE teachers. This differentiation concurs with earlier references to boys' experimenting in their behaviours to seek adult-like experiences or norms. PE is relatively unique in the fact that it allows young people to physically compete against teachers. Glovers believed that his sporting identity had contributed to his sociable and confident nature, which he positioned as being central to his professional teaching

identity. Glovers also believed that both these factors enabled his perceived positive relations with boys.

Elaborating on earlier discussions, all four MPE teachers used their role model status amongst some boys to try and modify boys' behaviour in a mentor-like manner. Hatts offered a lengthy example which was difficult to take parts from, so the main points are paraphrased here:

These kids were going around swearing. I would pull them up on that and just try to be a role model to them. I talk as I talk, working class and common. I wouldn't try and be different and I think kids would relate to that. I've had things happen in my life that they have had happen in their lives. I would talk to them about it, and different things that they had done. The establishment always try to instil middle class values into working class people. These boys don't want patronising or told you must do this and that. You need to relate to them before you can start changing their attitudes and behaviours. For example, a couple of years ago we had a real challenging group of Year 11 boys. They all thought that they were pretty hard. I came in and said right come on then we will do some MMA and some boxing. This got them engaged in something that they were interested in and enabled me to build a relationship so I could talk to them about something outside of the lesson [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

Part of Hatts's ability to act as a role model or mentor was premised on his shared sporting, masculine and, in this case, seemingly social class identity. His reference to working class boys' rejection of attempts to instil middle class values is a theme that Monaghan (2014) found in his ethnographic study, also incidentally completed in the North-East of England. Furthermore, Parker (1996) discussed the manner in which hard boys' anti-intellectual attitudes and hegemonic behaviours conflicted with middle-class schooling processes. Acting in defiance of such processes, Parker (1996) attributed hard boys' behaviours to their claims of more viable sources of social

power to them. As a self-proclaimed role model, Hatts's portrayal was indicative of MPE teachers more mentor-like relations based on mutual identification and their discussions of dealing with boys' momentary unruly or crass behaviour. These depictions illustrated Hatts's diplomatic, empathetic and flexible approach to civilizing boys who may not initially have wished to be engaged by an adult authority figure (Connell, 2013; Willis, 1977).

The key findings outlined within this section illustrate that Parky, Glovers, Southy and Hatts's sporting and masculine, and possibly social class identity, meant that they were deemed by their non-PE teacher peers as male role models. These views of MPE teachers contrast to ethnographic findings in literature reviewed in Chapter Three that revealed MPE teachers often embodied hegemonic masculinity (Brown, 1999; Skelton, 1993) and modelled behaviours that many would perceive as negative, such as blaming, shaming and ridiculing some boys based on their lack of sporting ability or perceived indifference (Brown & Macdonald, 2008; Jachyra, 2016; Tischler & McCaughy, 2011). MPE teachers at CHS did not necessarily strive for this ascribed status but were aware of its affiliation as well as many boys broader liking of male sport stars. Glovers and Southy accepted the responsibility that this status offered them partly because of their views concerning the deleterious effects of an absence of positive adult male role models in some boys' lives.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, four sections are presented that discussed MPE teachers attempts to civilize boys in and through MPE. MPE teachers sought to embed CHS's relationship-based values within MPE, whilst also seeking to civilize boys by instilling punctuality, a sporting mentality, adult-like emotional self-restraints and adult-expected degrees of foresight. Whilst MPE teachers civilizing focus may have differed depending on boys' age, MPE teachers believed that their informal and close social bonds with boys enabled their civilizing capacity over boys. MPE teachers also considered that such close social bonds were also enabled due to their sporting and masculine

identities. Perhaps the most contentious part of this presumption was the idea that MPE teachers were positive male role models, who had an important role in engaging certain boys within the broader school process. Given the recurring theme within these results chapters of teacher-pupil relations, the following, and last, results chapter provides a broader insight into teacher-pupil relations within MPE at CHS.

Chapter 8 Teacher-pupil relations within MPE

In the previous chapter, MPE teachers' civilizing attempts and the extent that they were partly premised on their more informal relations with boys in comparison to non-PE teachers were discussed. In this chapter, the last of my results chapters, this premise is explored in more detail by critically examining MPE teachers' perceptions of teacher-pupil relations within MPE at CHS. The topic of social control is still present, but more emphasis is now placed on perceived equalizing trends in power relations between MPE teachers and boys. These are placed within a 10-year context and involve changes in MPE teachers' degrees of mutual identification with boys over this period. Data are presented through the following four key themes: (a) how teacher-pupil relations have changed within MPE; (b) equalising trends in teacher-pupil relations in MPE at CHS; (c) shifts towards greater levels of mutual identification within teacher-pupil relations; and (d) broader influences on teacher-pupil's relations within MPE.

8.1 MPE teachers' relationships with boys in changing times

In discussing this first theme, perceived issues within teacher-pupil relations, and how MPE teachers perceived that these had changed over the last decade, are explored. Data are presented to examine the belief amongst MPE teachers that boys' levels of obedience have diminished both within MPE and more broadly across CHS. In doing so, the belief amongst MPE teachers that methods for dealing with disobedience have changed over time as well as the belief amongst MPE teachers that previous teaching methods were effective are also presented.

Parky, Glovers and Southy believed that teacher-pupil relations in MPE had changed over the last decade. For instance, Parky commented that, "teaching has changed loads, it was more formal, yeah definitely, it was more like teacher says you do" [Personal Interview 8 July 2015]. Providing an illustration, Parky confessed that:

We used to scream. If they were doing the 1500 meters, we would shout, “you are all doing the 1500 meters, and you are not allowed to walk”. It doesn’t matter, big kid and the 1500 meters is like a marathon to him, it was very much like you will do it, and if they didn’t, they do it again the next lesson, and you do it until you do it. Nobody died [laughs], they got around, they did it, it worked [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

Whilst denoting a bygone teaching method, MPE teachers were quick to note the effectiveness of such methods in terms of instilling obedience. For example, Parky reflected that:

I think the old school way worked to an extent and I think from a discipline point of view they knew you were in charge. Discipline in the department was good, very few issues, when there was an issue it was a big issue because there was no wriggle room [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

This perceived reduction in levels of disobedience, and the methods used to instil it, were central to MPE teachers’ views of the changes that had taken place in their relations with boys. Depictions of an ‘old school’ way fits decades of media portrayals of MPE teachers as insensitive drill sergeants (McCullick et al., 2003; Whitehead & Hendry, 1976). Whilst this method was normalised within MPE and deemed productive by MPE teachers, the use of the term ‘old school’ suggests that social attitudes of teacher behaviour towards children have also changed.

The phrase ‘old school’ was used regularly by MPE teachers during their interviews, whilst their recollections of ‘old school’ teaching methods usually involved Suggy. Suggy had been the previous Head of PE when most of the current staff started their teaching careers at CHS and had held the Head role for over a decade before his retirement. Parky described Suggy as “very old school” [Personal Interview 8 July 2015], whilst Glovers labelled him “an old schoolteacher” [Personal Interview 10 July 2015]. Further depicting Suggy’s old school methods, Southy recalled that:

He used to make a point of tearing into one pupil in Year Seven in the first week and give him a dressing down in front of the other boys to make sure they knew where he stood with disobedience. He would find a reason just to scream at one kid, rightly or wrongly, but everybody then knew what the boundary was and then he would reinforce that. Kids knew exactly where they stood every time [Personal Interview 15 July 2015].

Sharing similar memories of Suggy's approach, Glovers qualified that, "they [boys] had a lot of respect for him [Suggy], but there was that fear element" [Personal Interview 10 July 2015]. Suggy embodied and modelled the old school way and, as their line manager, expected others to adopt the same approach to disciplining children. For instance, Southy claimed that, "he was very much I am doing this. This is what I expect from my staff. It was a very, very tight ship" [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]. Offering an illustration, Southy recalled how Suggy had advised him to "not smile at a Year 7 until at least Christmas" [Personal Interview 15 July 2015]. In describing Suggy's influence over them and MPE at CHS more broadly, Parky suggested that:

If I had started 20 years ago with him, it wouldn't have been any different. However, if I had joined a different school with maybe younger, or somebody who is more up to date with the times or willing to change, I might have noticed 13 years ago that it was less 'old school' [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

It is also necessary to note that these MPE teachers also described Suggy as a charismatic leader, admired his steadfast approach and respected his legacy. For instance, his infamous quotes hung on staff notice-boards and he still attended staff social events. However, upon reflection, Southy and Parky considered Suggy's approach dated. In this sense, it seemed that Suggy's legacy was both enabling and constraining for these MPE teachers. As the Head of PE, Head of CHS's Teachers' Union and at least two decades older than other PE teachers in the department, Suggy had cemented his status and authority to be able to successfully constrain the behaviours of MPE

teachers and boys in MPE. From another viewpoint, it may however be considered that Suggy had also enabled Parky, Glovers and Southy's teaching approach. As new to teaching, they not only accepted but embraced old school methods. Therefore, for inexperienced teachers striving to demonstrate a professional teacher identity, establish formal teacher-pupil relationships and be viewed favourably amongst experienced staff, embodying old school methods may have proved a way of doing this. In examining these data more broadly and as a series of dynamic social processes, MPE teachers' reflections suggest that teacher-pupil relations in MPE at CHS were based on authoritarianism. Whereby, the MPE teachers' role, authority and social control over boys was abundantly clear. Seemingly, clarity was often made clear and control was reinforced through physical intimidation and verbal aggression. These methods were non-discriminatory in one sense, as any boy could be on the receiving end, but appeared to involve little desire or attempt to meet boys' individual needs. Despite this apparent teaching behavioural norm, Glovers implied that many boys respected a forthright approach that was clear and consistent. This perhaps illustrates boys' attitudes towards adult authority at that time. This notion is considered further throughout the rest of this chapter.

The key findings presented within this theme suggest that a shift had taken place away from MPE teachers using verbally aggressive and intimidating tactics as a means of maintaining social control over boys. MPE teachers perceived that this shift had contributed to changes in teacher-pupil relations and led to a possible decline in levels of obedience within MPE at CHS. As well as instilling obedience, the old school teaching approach seemingly separated teachers and pupils clearly in terms of identities, roles, status and behaviour. MPE teachers' characterisation of old school methods denotes changes in current approaches, whilst also providing context for how perceptions of current teacher-pupil relations may be informed by past relations.

8.2 Perceived equalizing trends in teacher-pupil relations within MPE

In the previous section, 'old-school' teacher-pupil relations within MPE were presented and portrayed as being based on authoritarian and vastly unequal power relations. In this section, the process of change is further explored by detailing MPE teachers' perceptions of authority and obedience in current teacher-pupil relations. Data are discussed through the following three themes: a) in relation to the perceived blurring of previously clear authority lines in teacher-pupil relations; b) boys increasing lack of fear of physical or verbally aggressive teaching methods; and, c) the processes through which older boys seek to negotiate activities or their roles within MPE.

MPE teachers were consistent in suggesting that teacher-pupil relations had changed and had become more contested. For instance, Glovers reflected that:

Probably the biggest change I have seen is in terms of pupil-teacher relationship. Like when I first started it was very clear, I am the teacher you are the student. Whereas now I do not know whether it is better or worse, but now it is a bit more diluted. Before the guidelines were very clear, I am the teacher, I am in charge. Whereas now sometimes kids maybe get a little bit confused and they step over the line a little bit, just generally how they talk to teachers, I mean the kids are still good [Personal Interview 10 July 2015].

Not simply blaming boys or suggesting that only they had changed, Glovers elaborated that:

Teachers are a lot more kind of relaxed with the kids. I think nowadays the teacher will shout over the top of the class. Whereas before, the teacher would talk [clicks his fingers] and the pupil would listen, you only had to say it once. Whereas now I don't know if they get used to chatting with their mates. I think maybe we tolerate it a bit more. Whereas before you would say right go and get changed. I am more flexible now than how I used to be. I am a bit more relaxed about things and let things go now that I wouldn't have let go before. [When I asked why, Glovers replied]. I think kids need

consistency, if everybody's got the same approach it is more easier [Personal Interview 10 July 2015].

Offering comparisons with previous teaching methods, Southy similarly noted that:

I say laid back attitude, we are not as in their faces like that. Everyone will be if they need to be, but there isn't that approach. I don't know whether we tolerate things more and whether we raise our tolerance levels and just take a little more, which again is going to the old, "give them an inch and take a mile sort of thing". I probably have changed, but I think it is more the whole school thing. Our standards of behaviour have dropped. I don't know if we have more of a focus on, [short pause], our academic results are generally going up [Personal Interview 15 July 2015].

These data appear to contrast to that within the previous section. Glovers and Southy's perceptions were that MPE teachers now adopt a more relaxed, tolerable and flexible approach in their relations with boys. It seemed that they perceived that this shift had caused discrepancies in behavioural expectations. Discrepancies appeared to be manifested in a blurring of lines of acceptable behaviour and a diminishing of once clear authority lines within teacher-pupil relations within MPE. This portrayed shift over the last decade was explained as being partly due to perceived attitudinal and behavioural changes in Glovers and Southy's relations with boys. These self-proclaimed changes illustrate that MPE teachers themselves are not fixed in their mind-set or practices but are adaptive and susceptible to change in different educational climates. The latter was depicted as being the main influence of such change, a contention that resonates with Green's (2000; 2001; 2002a) findings. Through over 30 interviews, Green (2000; 2001; 2002a) found that PE teachers considered that their practices were becoming increasingly constrained by several environmental factors such as schools' prioritising of core academic subjects and heightened parental involvement in their child's schooling. The latter point is revisited in the last section of this chapter but has relevance to the following discussion.

When recollecting old school ways, Parky, Glovers, and Southy noted that previous teaching methods such as screaming were no longer as useful when instilling obedience in boys. This shift was coupled with a perception that boys were more able to refuse to engage in MPE lessons.

Linking both perceived changes, Southy claimed that:

Some of them are like I am not going to do it, I don't want to do it. You can just scream and shout as much as you like, but there is nothing you can do. Kids know that I can do very little. I can do a lot of talking, you can make them think about the consequences, but again there is very little that I can actually do and some kids know that. Kids seem to know their rights these days. Obviously, you had the cane and everything. I have never been a part of a system where we have had that, but I think the short sharp shock of something like that, I would love to see something like that brought back in, just to see the impact that it had. Kids just don't seem to be scared of anything anymore, kids aren't frightened of anything [Personal Interview 15 July 2015].

To perhaps contextualise these perceptions, there were examples of boys contesting MPE teachers' decisions or trying to manipulate the lesson. The following observation denotes a two-minute interaction between Southy and a small group of boys:

Field note 15 March 2015 Year 10 Lesson

Southy instructed the class to do a warm-up lap. Before starting, a group of boys asked, 'what are we doing today?', to which Southy did not respond. A few boys therefore repeated the question. At this stage bystanders took an interest in the dialogue and awaited Southy's response. Again, initially Southy chose not to respond, but sensing some boys' apprehension he informed the class that they will be doing fitness then a bit of football. Witnessing their despondent body language and groans, Southy felt it necessary to justify his unpopular decision by stating boys' fitness needs. This appeased a few boys, but not others. Some boys complained and asked if they can

“just do a game”. Southy sharply responded with “No!”. Undeterred, one boy added that, “Mr Hatton allows us to start with a game”. Southy did not verbally respond this time but his increasingly frustrated body-language seemed enough to convince those seeking change to conform to his initial request and complete the warm-up.

Exploring the social dynamics within the example above, this challenging of Southy’s authority had made him feel relatively disempowered. Aggrieved that boys would not comply with his initial instruction, Southy appeared momentarily fearful of being publicly undermined by these few challenging boys. The boy's decision to stop from changing the course of the lesson once Southy adopted a sterner disposition seems to add some credence to Glovers’s earlier suggestion concerning blurred lines when relaxing formal strict social codes. By adopting his controlled diplomatic approach, Southy was however able to symbolically display his professional status by socially controlling boys without screaming or intimidating tactics. This observational insight sheds some light on potential tension balances within teacher-pupil relations. However, it should also be noted that in over 100 hours of MPE lessons, MPE teachers still managed to control boys’ behaviour, maintain social order and very few boys tried to abstain from activities MPE teachers’ instructions. Examples such as that presented above were occasional, but the way that boys challenged and sought to change the course of the MPE lesson varied and differed depending on boys’ age. The fact that this type of incident happened in a Year 10 group is not coincidental, as it tended to be older boys who were more willing to try to test MPE teachers’ line of authority. This notion is further explored in the following discussion.

MPE teachers’ depictions of disobedience and a challenging of their authority tended to involve older boys. For instance, Parky explained that:

Their [older boys] behaviour changes anyway, and they think that they can get away with a bit more. They feel that they are adults now and they can deal with certain things. The younger ones are certainly more intimidated by the teacher. Once they get

older, they are as big as the teacher, if not bigger sometimes. And I think they feel more secure in their environment, they feel that they may be able to behave a bit differently, just a few of them [Parky offered a wry smile] [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

Offering a similar reasoning, youngest teacher Hatts explained that:

It is just challenging authority as if to say 'who are you talking to and all that', putting a big bravado on to try and look clever in front of their mates. When really, I tell them if they are down in PE if they start getting clever like that then we just tell them, 'who do you think you are?' [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

As depicted here, older boys were observed as being more willing to challenge MPE teachers' authority openly and intentionally or seek more significant roles or recognition within MPE lessons. From my observations, this behaviour seemed to be inspired by the latter rationale, rather than a disregard or disrespect towards their MPE teacher. It appeared that in approaching school-leaving age and potentially engaging in more adult-like behaviours outside of school, older boys engaged in more behavioural experimentation when dealing with MPE teachers. Parky and Hatts reasoned that these older boys were aware of the hierarchical social order, but more likely to push boundaries of acceptable teacher-pupil conduct to impress others. This reasoning resonates with key findings within previous chapters regarding older boys' open displays of a perceived socially desirable masculine identity. Seemingly aware of older boys' more challenging behaviours and relations, the response of Parky and Hatts are worth noting. Whilst effective old school methods such as screaming were rarely observed and used, Parky still considered that because he was older this held symbolic significance in his ability to socially control younger boys. When physical disparities diminished, Hatts' described using more shame-based verbal means to re-establish his distinct teachers' status, role and adult-identity within MPE. This was done by confronting boys'

false sense of courage and bravado, which served to publicly de-masculinise said boys, jeopardising their possible original intentions.

Key findings within this section demonstrate that to some extent it seemed that equalizing shifts within MPE teachers' relations with boys at CHS had taken place. MPE teachers at CHS believed that equalizing shifts had primarily taken place due to their more relaxed, tolerable and flexible approach in their relations with boys. Such trends were facilitated by the increasing ability of older boys to experiment in their behaviours towards MPE teachers within formal situations. However, these findings also revealed that whilst different teaching methods were discussed and observed, the outcome of tension balances were often the same, as boys tended to follow the original instruction. The fact that MPE teachers seemingly maintained their social control over boys, whilst expressing feelings of disempowerment could partly be explained by MPE teachers' perceptions being process-orientated and relationally based. In other words, MPE teachers' perceptions were potentially centred on nostalgic notions of what once was and has been lost. Therefore, it is perhaps necessary to reiterate that despite potential shifts towards *more* equalizing trends, MPE teachers still held greater power chances in their relations with boys.

8.3 Towards greater levels of mutual identification between teachers and pupils within MPE

In the previous section, perceived equalizing trends within teacher-pupil relations within MPE at CHS were presented and problematised. Further exploring this notion, in this section, the manner in which discrepancies between perceptions and lived realities may partly be explained by shifts towards MPE teachers' greater mutual identification with boys' needs. Data are presented in relation to the more flexible approach adopted by MPE teachers in their efforts to meet boys' learning or behavioural needs, MPE teachers use of more subtle and manipulative means of social control and MPE teachers' self-reflexive transformation in their teaching approach.

As the youngest and least experienced teacher, Hatts's views on perceived changes in teaching approaches and teacher-pupil relations in MPE at CHS are worth noting. For instance, Hatts suggested that:

I think nowadays, number one, teachers are taught to cater for different learning styles to make it enjoyable for everyone, at university. Whereas, back in the day, I think it was more like, they would teach them, or just do this, this and this, and copy what everyone else does. Now you have a lot of young teachers coming in who maybe haven't had that experience or had not being told how to discipline people like the old school do. Like getting everyone stood in line not talking, not breathing whatever, and they have been taught a completely different way to what we have. We got taught everyone is inclusive, and at the end of the day, you can treat everyone the same, but not everyone will react well to that. You have got some kids who are naughty who will not react well to you telling them to shut up and telling them to be in silence [Personal Interview 2 June 2015].

Hatts started at CHS after Suggy had left and CHS was his first full-time teaching position. Hatts's recognition of generational differences in teachers' approaches was evident in his use of 'We' and 'They' descriptors. Hatts's descriptions appear to encapsulate what he perceives as a shift from a one-size fits all teaching approach towards a more democratic approach. Linked to previous discussions, Hatts's reference to different disciplinary styles also illustrates a shift from an authoritarian zero-tolerance equality-based approach towards a more flexible equitable approach. As depicted by Hatts, central to an equitable approach is MPE teachers' greater appreciation of the learning and behavioural needs of children at an individual level.

Seemingly substantiating Hatts's key point, Parky also reflected upon changes in his own teaching approach. For instance, Parky declared that:

I try not to shout very much, I used to shout a lot more. Now I kind of think that I have lost it a bit there if I have started shouting. I have evolved, and I am sure other teachers have, where they realise that 'I have got to dampen the situation down because if I don't I am going to lose face anyway'. The way I have adapted is a sort of more of a pastoral approach, which is a bit more caring but takes loads more time. You learn and think right, you try and push and prod them in the right direction and try and show them the right way. A lot more time-outs, just go and have five minutes and then let them calm down. I think it is a sensible approach and it has helped them. It helps from an inclusion point of view keeping them kids. Nowadays, it is more of a pastoral touchy feely. I suppose more of a sensitive approach and I do see that the way it was done before [old school] was harsh because it was not differentiating, it wasn't fair. This way I think it is a better way of treating the kids and self-esteem, and all that, but it doesn't assert any of the authority. It shows your sensitive side, and then the kids can play on it a bit more [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

Parky's more considerate approach was observed several times, one of which is presented below:

Field note 4 March 2015 Year 11 Lesson

A boy was told to work on his GCSE theory work because Southy did not want him in the lesson due to the boys' poor attitude in his last PE lesson. After receiving this instruction, the boy entered the MPE staff room to remonstrate with Parky and refused to do any theory work. Parky attempted to re-frame the punishment by suggesting that the boy might want to take the opportunity to catch-up with peers. This had an adverse effect as the boy proclaimed the injustice that some of his peers were as far behind as he was, and they were still allowed to take part in the lesson. Parky listened, emphasised and calmly explained the reasoning behind his removal from the lesson. The boy seemed momentarily appeased and eventually sat down to complete his theory work. This process delayed the start of the lesson.

It was clear that Parky had gradually begun to mutually identify more with boys and had changed his behaviours and relations towards boys accordingly. His perceived behavioural change appeared to represent a shift towards a more considerate and flexible approach. In his new approach, it seemed that Parky had learned to exercise greater levels of emotional restraint when angered by a boy and now adopted softer emotions by way of empathy. In this case, empathy involved greater self-awareness and appreciation of children's individual needs as well as a willingness to engage in alternative disciplinary methods. In one sense, Parky made no reference to an incident or specific time that had made him change his approach and he did not suggest that he had been instructed to change his approach by someone. Therefore, it could be considered that Parky's change in his teaching approach was gradual, organic and relatively self-driven. However, it could be argued that his change was in line with his awareness of changing teacher-pupil dynamics more broadly. For instance, Parky's dual process of self-realisation and self-transformation seemed to be driven by self-interest and self-preservation. Parky's invested interest and need to adopt this new approach was calculated on this desire to maintain a respectable teacher identity by 'not losing face', as he described it. Through embodying greater self-control and using time-outs, Parky seemingly removed the immediacy of his momentary power-struggle with a boy. This more measured approach – drawing upon alternative power resources – appeared to enable him to also embody social control over the situation and exert his position of legitimate authority. Therefore, in this case, through greater mutual identification and the use of diplomatic reasoning, the boy conformed to the initial request even if his views on the situation had not changed.

Also reflecting upon a self-realisation and self-transformation in this respect, Southy claimed that:

I understand now not to scream and shout at kids. I think as long as kids [short pause], there are other ways of doing it as opposed to just screaming at the kids. In the end you have got to look back and think did the kids do what I wanted them to do in the first place, right the process of getting there is perhaps immaterial. As long as you can

make it so the kid thinks that he has made the choice, but in the end you have got them doing what you wanted them to do originally, the job is done. It is finding whatever tactic and strategy to get into their head to do something. Whether it is the 800 meters and the trick with the athletics, right we are doing 800 meters, “awwww”, and ‘no you are doing 800 meters and that’s it’. Or the other is, right you tell them they are doing the 1500 meters, and they don’t like it, and then you say ok I will be nice, we will do the 800 meters instead and they will be like “yyesss”. When really at the start of the lesson, you wanted to do the 800 meters really. It is working out, getting inside every kids’ head, what makes them tick, and having 20 different methods. If you have 20 kids, they will all be different, some of them will respond to praise, some will respond to a kick up the backside to motivate them, some you might have to perhaps give a reward, some you might have to threaten with a sanction and probably try and work a kid out and the kid might be in a different mood for the next day at the PE lesson. It could also be just the time of day, if they have just had lunch, they tend to be hyper and for me it is trying to work out what makes each kid tick [Personal Interview 15 July 2015].

Such tactics were observed daily, particularly with older boys. Whilst nuanced in manner, more considerate and flexible teaching approaches and subtle social control strategies were described and observed as having their desired effect of maintaining social order and ensuring boys engaged in MPE teachers’ instructions. This approach was deemed necessary to combat some older boys increasing willingness to question the legitimacy of teachers’ authority. Having realised that old school means were no longer socially acceptable or as effective, Southy now adopted more implicit and softer methods, such as reverse psychology. Whereas in the earlier example Parky mutually identified with the boy on an emotional level, in adapting his teaching approach in such a way, Southy appeared to mutually identify with boys on a more psychological level. In adopting more subtle manipulative teaching strategies, Southy had taken a less rigid and principled stance on his

legitimate authority, and become more flexible, diverse and pragmatic in his approach. This approach involved him loading negotiations to stack in his favour that could accommodate the fluctuating needs and motivations of numerous boys.

The interrelated key findings within this section evidence changes in teacher-pupil relations through MPE teachers' adoption of greater levels of mutual identification for boys' needs or motivations. The perceived need amongst MPE teachers to adapt their practices may partly explain their previously cited feelings of disempowerment. More broadly, the key findings here also seem to portray the level of complexity within contemporary power-relationships between the two social groups. In keeping with findings within the previous chapter concerning younger boys more malleable nature, it should be noted that the nuanced complexities displayed within this section tended to involve MPE teachers' relationships with older boys. Such complexities and the felt need amongst MPE teachers to adapt their teaching approaches did not feature in previous portrayals of teacher-pupil relations in MPE in research reviewed in Chapter Three. In previous studies, MPE teachers were portrayed as authoritarian figures who held almost complete control over boys (Atkinson & Kehler, 2012; Jachyra, 2016; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). Whereas key findings here suggest that over the last decade, Parky and Southy had engaged in processes of self-realisation and self-transformation to adopt more flexible and subtle ways of dealing with boys. These self-proclaimed transformations revealed a shift from embodying traditional characteristics of MPE teachers, such as manliness, aggression and stoicism (Sherlock, 1987; Sikes, 1988) to adopting more sensitive, inclusive and equity-based approach to dealing with boys.

8.4 Broader influences on teacher-pupil relations in MPE

In the previous section, Parky and Southy's self-realisations and perceived self-transformations in their behaviours towards and relations with boys were presented. Whilst some key reasons were outlined, in this section further possible reasons for such changes are detailed, linked in particular

to the perceived increasing levels of parental involvement in boys' schooling as well as the perceived unintended effects of changes in CHS's disciplinary policies underpinning teacher-pupil relations within MPE.

Parky, Glovers, Southy and Hatts all referred to outside influences that they considered constrained teacher-pupil relations within MPE at CHS. One of the main constraints that they frequently mentioned were parents and their perceived greater interest in their child's schooling. They associated this shift as representative of what they considered to be greater involvement by parents in everyday school processes. To discuss this social constraint, it is necessary to frame parental involvement in MPE at CHS through general examples observed. In terms of official teacher-parent communication, parent evenings took place once a term. However, dialogue between MPE teachers and parents was observed to be much more regular. For instance, MPE teachers would phone parents to verify a suspicious-looking sick note or to discuss their child's uncharacteristic attitude or complaint. Furthermore, occasionally parents contacted MPE teachers during lunchtimes citing concerns over their child's behaviour at home and sought reassurance or advice. MPE teachers would also speak to parents in and around school sporting fixtures, school field trips or at school awards evenings. The semi-frequent and myriad forms of communications Parky, Glovers, Southy and Hatts had with boys' parents meant that they gathered much insight into boys' home life or behaviours outside of MPE. This enabled greater mutual identification with the boys but also enabled teachers to draw upon this knowledge in order to explain or challenge certain boys' behaviours. Such was the apparent normalisation of teacher-parent communication, MPE teachers rarely remonstrated about interfering parents or being constrained by parental wishes. Indeed, such behaviours had become normalised to the extent that parents who did not fully engage in their child's schooling aroused suspicion and carried subsequent negative connotations.

A further reason that parents contacted CHS was to report concern that their child was being bullied or to complain about a member of staff's competency or behaviour towards their child. Such communications were rare, but one such incident is described below:

Field note 7 May 2015 Year Eight Lesson

Working in two groups, one team repeatedly waited for and were let down by Chris, who didn't want to take part in the activity. Although warned several times, Chris continued not to run properly or apply himself to the activity. After a short whilst Glovers lost his patience and instructed Chris to sit out. The temporary exclusion turned out to be for the rest of the lesson, a period of over 30 minutes. At the end of the lesson Glovers had strong words with Chris about his behaviour and told him to bring his academic planner to the staff office once he was changed. As I left the office, Chris passed me on his way to see Glovers and embodied a sulking expression. On my return to the office, Parky and Hatts asked, "Did you hear that?" I hadn't, so they informed me that when receiving his 'sanction', Chris was cheeky to Glovers who, in their words, "lost it and screamed at him".

Whilst rare, this incident is worthy of further context and critical consideration. Over the previous weeks, Glovers had been observed displaying patience at Chris's consistent disruptiveness as well as his failed attempts to get Chris engaged within lessons through more diplomatic means. It later emerged that Chris had an attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) and had told his mum about the way Glovers had spoken to him. Dismayed and disagreeing with Glovers' behaviour in this instance, Chris's mum phoned CHS to complain. Not aware of the outcome of the complaint, it was observed that Glovers did not scream at Chris after this complaint, whilst Chris's level of engagement changed and his relationship with Glovers proved more productive following the incident. This complaint offers one example of parental constraints over MPE teachers' practices. Whilst it is perhaps not surprising that an emotionally involved parent would complain after hearing her distressed son recall this type of incident, it should also be noted that Parky and Hatts's

reference of the incident suggested that they too felt it was out of the ordinary and perhaps beyond levels of behavioural acceptability in present-day teacher-pupil relations. Both teachers identified Glovers as the most 'old school' teacher left at CHS. Irrespective of differing viewpoints regarding the level of appropriateness, this process demonstrated the manner in which MPE teachers' attitudes and behaviour towards boys were constrained somewhat by parental and peer expectations, which are largely derived from and representative of broader social developments in adult-child relations and subsequent expected behavioural norms.

As well as being constrained by parental expectations of appropriate ways to discipline their sons, MPE teachers also had to follow CHS's disciplinary procedures. The procedure in place during the ethnography was relatively new, and deemed problematic by Parky, Glovers and Southy. Most dismayed was Head of PE, Parky, who bemoaned that:

So you can imagine what they [boys] think they can get away with if they are getting a written sanction for certain things. Kids can swear in teachers' faces and you sometimes see that kid in the next lesson and you ask yourself, have I passed that on to the right person? Why are they still in their normal lessons? I don't think there will be anything above and beyond that happens and then they lose respect for me and then I have lost them for the rest of the year. Because, then they go, 'Ah you can't...' You have fell out with them because you have given them a rollicking and nothing really happened to them. They are back in front of you the next week and they think, "there you go you have played your trump card and what are you going to do now?" [referring to its effects, Parky added]. They dampen down the punishments on everyone else, so you quickly top out, there is nowhere to go. So, I think a lot of the time you feel helpless. The kid gets away with it as we have a very weak sanction. Therefore, it doesn't impact on future behaviour as much so you are going around in a circle [Personal Interview 8 July 2015].

As noted here, Parky criticised the sanction system, which included categorising and recording types of misbehaviour on levels to determine appropriate means of disciplinary action. MPE teachers reported how beyond essential classroom management, this system meant that boys' misdemeanours in MPE were dealt with by a Form Tutor, Head of House, or the Head of Behaviour and Well-being depending on the level of severity. Bemoaning a perceived dilution of punishments, Parky referred to the fact that such measures had meant that some boys now intentionally misbehaved in order to be removed from MPE lessons. Perceived levels of behavioural acceptability had to be managed alongside implementing CHS's whole-school disciplinary policy. Parky, Glovers and Southy all problematised the externalising of disciplinary punishments away from MPE and were dismayed by its disempowering effects on their relations with unruly boys. This perceived ineffective disciplinary system was further strained when an increasing number of unruly pupils entered CHS after experiencing their school being closed due to poor standards and CHS's stance on keeping repeat offenders in school. Whilst no doubt unintentional, adding further layers to the disciplinary system had not only reduced these teachers' capacity to socially control their relations with unruly boys but had also meant that disruptive boys sought to manipulate the system based on their cost-benefit reasoning. Parky's description of the process and the deleterious effect he perceived that it could potentially have on his authority over boys appeared to illustrate a lack of more automatic respect from some boys towards him. Therefore, Parky seemed to have reasoned that he needed to preserve his authority-based relations with boys because, if undermined, it could be 'lost' for some time. This sense of insecurity implies that authority-based relations were either superficial, fragile or without foundation. Despite the concerns of the teachers, it should be noted that this may be a further case of Parky feeling disempowered, particularly when observations suggested that this was not necessarily the case.

The key findings discussed within this section offer two detailed examples of the increasingly diverse and complex social dynamics within teacher-pupil relations within MPE at CHS. The many previous ethnographies reviewed in Chapter Three focused almost entirely on face-to-face relationships when examining social dynamics within MPE. The two cases presented here illustrate the manner in which more opaque social constraints can influence more explicit teacher-pupil relations within MPE. Whilst relatively unique in structure and social processes across CHS, MPE was not impervious to 'external' influences from within and outside the school.

8.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, four themes were presented that largely related to MPE teachers' perceptions of teacher-pupil relations within MPE at CHS. In placing their perceptions within the context of the last decade, MPE teachers were adamant that changes had taken place regarding the levels of boys' obedience and their behaviours towards them. However, comparing these perceptions to my lesson observations, the extent to which self-proclaimed equalising trends between MPE teachers and boys had taken place was questionable. What was perhaps more evident was MPE teachers changes in their teaching approaches, which had seen them shift from old school methods towards methods centred on greater levels of mutual identification with boys' emotional needs and motivations. This approach predominantly entailed MPE teachers opting for more diplomatic, empathetic, shrewd and subtle approaches to maintaining social control over boys. Whilst this approach was partly driven by MPE teachers' self-realisation and self-transformation, it was evident that these were driven by more opaque social constraints over MPE teachers' conduct.

Chapter 9 A figural analysis of relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE at CHS

In this penultimate chapter of my thesis, figural concepts discussed in earlier chapters are drawn upon to analyse the key findings from Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight. This analysis will be applied in chronological order of the previous four results chapters. However, given their relatedness, Chapters Seven and Eight are combined for analytical purposes. This chapter will then finish with a critical review of the application of figural sociology to the thesis.

9.1 Revisiting key figural theoretical concepts that apply to MPE in CHS

In this section, three core research sensitising tools used by figural sociologists to analyse relationships, identities and behavioural norms are briefly re-introduced. Part of this process involves offering a basic application of these concepts to MPE at CHS. This provides a theoretical platform and context for my more detailed analysis in the rest of this chapter.

When conceptualising MPE at CHS, the figuration is used because it is a term that highlights a network of interdependent human beings which are based on mutual needs and functions provided (Elias, 1978). These needs and functions between people create power relations within the figuration that they form (Elias, 1978). This captures Elias's view of power as existing in the relations between people and therefore power is rarely equal and never static (Elias, 1978). Interdependence was an important part of the MPE figuration at CHS, which was primarily made up of boys across five-year groups and five MPE teachers. Within MPE lessons, the social learning dynamic meant that boys were dependent on MPE teachers to organise the lesson, teach them and minimise disruption. Likewise, teachers were dependent on boys to display obedience, engage and co-operate with each other. The nature of interdependence in this figuration shows how through their adult status and professional authority, MPE teachers held power advantages over boys, but

the boys were not powerless. Power relations were not fixed but fluctuated depending on the teacher, age of boys or activity. Furthermore, these power relations were also partly impacted by more indirect interdependencies, such as a head teacher and parents, to name but a few. Therefore, people's behaviour within MPE were enabled and constrained by the networks of interdependencies and prevailing social processes.

Closely aligned to people's behavioural norms are their identity expression. Elias (1978) contended that people's identities are inherently socially informed. Therefore, Elias (1978) viewed people's identities relationally along 'I-We-They' lines as humans develop their sense of self in relation to others. In this sense, people's identities are part influenced by networks of interdependencies, power relations and enabling and constraining social processes within their most embedded figurations. However, 'I-We-They' identities are not pre-set or fixed. Because human being's identity formation operates at a more conscious reflexive level, they are susceptible to change over time or when people enter new figurations. Due to the nature of MPE at CHS being single-sex and the ages of boys involved, gender was a prevailing aspect of identity formation and expression within the MPE figuration. This observation is in keeping with findings from UK-based ethnographic research across three decades (Bramham, 2003; Campbell et al., 2018; Parker, 1996). Whilst a select few boys competed in CHS's sporting fixtures, MPE was the only formal space where all boys practiced sport. This is not surprising as for decades sport in England has been associated with the development, display and perpetuation of traditional masculine ideals for boys (Dunning & Maguire, 1996). As such, the most desirable 'I' identity for most boys in MPE was often a traditional masculine and sporty one. Expressing this identity conformed to the prevailing 'We'- identity, although this was not fixed or all-encompassing but contrasted depending on boys' age and activity. Equally, this 'We'- identity was not in direct opposition to a prevailing 'They'- boy identity but was seemingly configured against girls as a collective.

Boys' gender identity, and their expression of it, partly influenced behavioural norms within the MPE figuration at CHS. Behavioural norms were also informed by networks of interdependencies, power relations and enabling and constraining social processes within the MPE figuration. As noted in Chapter Two, one way to conceptualise behaviour within MPE is to apply the term habitus. Elias (1978, 113) used the term habitus to denote the process in which humans develop a "second nature" that acts as a "blindly functioning apparatus of self-control". In this sense, habitus is a learned emotional and behavioural disposition that lies primarily within people's unconscious minds. As such, habitus operates at an individual level, but it can also feature at a shared level (Mennell, 1998). Shared habitus refers to common views, feelings and behavioural norms that permeate among group members (Mennell, 1998). More broadly, social habitus signifies shared values, attitudes and behaviours within a community or national groups of people (Mennell, 1998). As with identity, whilst a psychological process, habitus formation and expression are an inherently social process. Within the MPE figuration at CHS, MPE teachers and boys' behavioural norms were informed by their individual habitus formation. Individual behaviours were often in line with prevailing socially expected behavioural norms within the MPE figuration. As with identity, prevailing behavioural norms within single-sex MPE lessons were often gendered. Therefore, MPE teachers and boys learned emotional and behavioural gendered dispositions were frequently displayed. It was difficult to ascertain the exact role MPE played in boys' gendered habitus formations because such dispositions become deeply engrained in boys' unconsciousness from infancy. However, given that childhood is an impressionable stage of habitus formation (Elias, 1978), MPE at CHS did little to challenge or change boys existing gendered attitudes or gendered behaviours. Indeed, as explored shortly, it could be argued that many social practices within MPE confirmed and perpetuated boys established individual gendered habitus, which were often based on binary and traditional conceptions of gender.

In this section, three key theoretical concepts within figurational sociology were presented and how their application can aid an analysis of relationships, identities and behavioural norms within MPE at CHS was displayed. In the following section, this discussion is expanded through discussing the gendered social processes in MPE.

9.2 A figurational analysis of gendered social processes and boys' masculine embodiment within MPE

In Chapter Five, the topics of gendered social processes, boys' masculine embodiment and boys' gendered self-restraint in MPE were critically explored. This exploration derived four key research themes: a) enabling social processes within MPE; b) constraining social processes within MPE; c) football as an example of both enabling and constraining social processes within MPE; and, d) boys' internalisation of gendered social constraints as part of their gendered emotional self-restraints. As evident here, the figurational sociological concept of enabling and constraining social processes was used as a framework to structure and present these findings. However, several other key theoretical concepts are now drawn upon to complete a broader analysis.

Three key findings within the theme of enabling social processes were that MPE was considered by MPE teachers as enabling boys' academic escapism, providing boys homosocial bonding opportunities and permitting boys to be competitive and physical against each other. MPE teachers suggested that these three facets were enabled by MPE's single-sex environment that was centred on enjoyment, competitiveness and physicality. Sympathetic to these needs, MPE teachers adopted fun-based teaching philosophies and promoted, and even socially rewarded, boys for being competitive and physical. These three findings within this research theme can be analysed from a figurational perspective by drawing on notions of quest for excitement and quest for exciting

significance. Elias and Dunning (1986) identified that an unintended outcome of long-term civilizing processes and more pacified public spheres was a shift towards a more mundane and routinised social life. As such, in comparison to previous eras, behaviours and emotions have become increasingly predictable and stable. Therefore, Elias and Dunning (1986) contended that sport was one aspect of public life that offered people a legitimate means of quest for pleasurable excitement. They largely based this premise on two key points. Firstly, many sports symbolic resemblance to war offers those involved mimetic, motility and sociality experiences that are rarely available as a collective in other public spheres. Secondly, many modern sports are configured to be unpredictable and entertaining in terms of ebbs and flows, both of which arouse tension balances within those involved. Whilst excepting the core premise of Elias and Dunning's (1986) notion of a quest for excitement, Maguire (1992) questioned whether this concept encapsulated all of sport's key offerings. Adapting this original term, Maguire (1992) proposed the notion of a quest for exciting significance. Maguire (1992) primarily based his adaptation on a greater focus on sport's relative uniqueness to arouse numerous emotions, which hold significance for people at an identity level. For instance, he contended that through emotional and embodied experiences within sport, people can gain a greater sense of self-empowerment, self-confidence and self-worth (Maguire, 1992). Maguire (1992) maintained that collectively these experiences contribute to broadening people's self-realisation. Both figurationally informed notions re-introduced here can be applied to the context of MPE at CHS.

When considered within the broader school dynamic at CHS, MPE teachers' contention that MPE offered boys academic escapism appeared centred on providing boys de-routinising experiences. It also seems plausible to suggest that MPE teachers' perceptions were largely based on MPE offering boys heightened levels of mimetic, motility and sociality experiences. They based these ideas on their discernments about what they considered more boring and mundane classroom-

based lessons boys experienced within other school subjects. In this sense, MPE teachers construed MPE to be a practical opposed to a theoretical subject. This was also observed to be the case. However, one issue with MPE teachers' position in this respect is that it presumes that the social norm is that young people prefer practical over theoretical subjects. This assumption may have been driven by MPE teachers' anti-intellectual identities, which has been found to be a shared habitus across the PE teacher community (Green, 2003). This MPE teacher 'We'-identity may have also partly informed their dismay at what MPE teachers perceived as the intellectual pressures that young people are increasingly exposed to within more core academic subjects. Therefore, MPE teachers considered that MPE offered boys' much-needed forms of pleasurable excitement from more routinised school experiences.

At this point, a key theoretical question to consider is to what extent can boys' quest for excitement in MPE be attributable with boys' quest for exciting significance in terms of gender. It was observed daily that through engaging in various physical activities, MPE lessons impacted some boys in terms of self-realisation. The extent that this impact was positive or negative can be ascertained within the rest of this chapter. However, MPE provided the only formal platform where boys could take part in homosocial bonding rituals and be physically competitive and aggressive against each other, opposed to intellectually competitive. Therefore, it was observed that at an impressionable age and in search of solid, socially acceptable and distinct gender identities, most boys embraced such gender defining opportunities. In this sense, it could be argued that these relatively unique embodied gendered experiences impacted on boys' self-realisation of what it is to be a boy in the 21st century in the North-East of England. From this, one could suggest that MPE offered many boys a gendered quest for exciting significance, although before such a proposition is confirmed, further critique is needed.

It could be argued that MPE provided boys' pleasurable excitement through performing what many of them had conceptualised as the most socially acceptable form of masculinity. The extent of this gendered significance is difficult to fully ascertain without greater insight into boys' broader gendered life. However, whilst MPE only constitutes around two hours of boys' school week, eminent scholars continue to stress its importance in defining and forging boys' conceptions of masculinity (Connell, 2008). Irrespective of the extent, the gendered significance of MPE purported by MPE teachers can be problematised. For instance, MPE teachers often rationalised their preservation of MPE's uniqueness on the grounds of what they perceived to be boys' inherent gendered needs. One potential issue with this stance was that MPE teachers' views and practices could be largely attributed to their gender identity, which was often based on their binary and traditional conceptions of masculinity. Embodying these notions of masculinity, MPE teachers seemingly adopted "pseudo-educational rationales to support such stereotypical views" (Waddington et al., 1998, 45). As such, this stance seemingly positions boys as practically minded, anti-academic and more aggressive than girls. This carries gendered identity connotations for those boys not meeting these perceived inherent needs, whilst fails to acknowledge that many females gain a gendered self-realisation from being assertive (Mierzwinski & Phipps, 2015). This issue is further evidenced within the following discussions concerning gendered social processes within the MPE figuration.

Two key findings within the theme of constraining social processes were that MPE teachers often used gendered slurs to socially control boys' gendered performances and boys embodied heteronormative attitudes and behavioural norms in MPE. MPE teachers used gendered slurs to cajole, embarrass and momentarily de-masculinise boys in front of their peers. These slurs were aimed at evoking a behavioural response that re-aligned boys' practices with expected gendered behavioural norms. Whilst aimed at correcting boys' perceived momentary lapses in desired

behaviour, these crude sexist comments explicitly reiterated gendered binaries based on boys being physically and attitudinally different and superior to girls. Again, MPE teachers use of such gendered slurs seems to have been related to their masculine habitus. As already noted, this habitus included deeply embedded binary and traditional gendered beliefs. MPE teachers use of gendered slurs also impacted upon boys' conceptions of gender and subsequent identity expression in this regard. For instance, the use and effectiveness of gendered slurs illustrated the narrowness of masculine expression available to boys. Although perhaps one unintended social outcome of such a gendered social constraint was that it seemingly provided a heteronormative safe space for boys to be physically intimate without gender or sexuality suspicion. This finding can be added to those cited above concerning the perceived gendered significance of homosocial bonding opportunities within the MPE figuration. However, the key findings within this theme can also be analysed by drawing upon figurational notions of civilized bodies and shame as an effective means of social control, two notions now briefly re-introduced.

Elias (2012) contended that broader civilizing processes have had a profound effect on human's behaviour and how they engage with their bodies. Indeed, he suggested that through performance human bodies offer empirical indicators of broader civilizing processes (Elias, 2012). Acting as a barometer, Elias (2012) contended that what he referred to as 'civilized bodies' have increasingly become key markers of distinction, prestige and social standing within many realms of social life. As such, from the Renaissance period across Western Europe, bodily performances have become more refined but also increasingly regulated and disciplined (Elias, 2012). Elias (2012) suggested that initially regulation primarily involved external surveillance mechanisms, although in more modern societies bodily regulation has become increasingly internalised in terms of self-discipline. Therefore, the notion of civilizing young people's bodies as part of their individual civilizing process is a central part of young people's socialisation process. However, as illustrated in Chapter Two, the

civilizing of young people's bodies has often been a gendered process. This is arguably most evident in sport and PE, whereby bodies are separated in terms of biological sex and physical activities often differ along the grounds of gender appropriateness (Dunning, 1999; Kirk, 1998). In this sense, single-sex PE in England in some ways illustrates the legacy of Victorian attitudes towards gender, which positioned boys' and girls' bodies as diametrically opposed in terms of biology and psyche (Hargreaves, 2002). Indeed, the aims of early forms of modern PE were primarily focused on curbing boys unruly and uncouth urges and instilling 'manly' character virtues to underpin gentlemanly conduct (Dunning & Sheard, 1979). Whilst this last point is critically analysed further in a later section, the notion of civilized bodies and how this process is gendered can be applied to the key findings within this theme.

One-way civilized bodies can be applied to MPE at CHS is by comparing the means of regulating and disciplining boys' bodies with those used during the infancy of modern PE. During the late 19th century, boys' bodies were largely regulated in PE through external measures such as the threat of corporeal punishments or the effective prefect and fagging system (Dunning & Sheard, 1979). This system was set-up by headteachers and essentially permitted prefect boys to socially control fag boys. Whilst prefects often ruled by brute force, this system was deemed successful in maintaining social order within what were often by contemporary standards unruly and violent PE lessons (Dunning & Sheard, 1979). With such methods and systems no longer available, it seemed that MPE teachers used more subtle verbal means to correct boys' momentary lapses in meeting necessary behavioural or attitudinal standards. This change of tact can be analysed along gendered lines and in terms of gendered civilized bodies. The fact that slurs were gendered and seemingly instigated by what were perceived by MPE teachers as gender-inappropriate behaviours appears significant. In all observed cases, boys internalised gendered slurs by momentarily correcting their behaviour to the desired standard. Albeit perhaps temporarily, this behavioural reform suggested that this

method of social control was effective in meeting MPE teachers' short-term aims. This effectiveness seemed predicated on the shame gendered slurs induced on boys at an 'I' gender identity level. As such, briefly embarrassed in front of their peers, the boys in question swiftly conformed to the prevailing 'We'- masculine identity within the MPE figuration. Whilst situational and irregular, the more long-term impact of such a shame mechanism may have been significant in terms of boys' gender identity. This proposition is based upon eminent scholars' proclamations that MPE involves gender defining social practices, alongside my previously cited analysis that MPE at CHS offered boys a gendered quest for self-realisation. This idea also demonstrates that whilst gendered civilized bodies in sport often serve to disadvantage females in terms of gender relations (Velija & Flynn, 2010), they can also provide gender identity-based shortcomings for boys not embodying socially desirable masculine bodies.

Furthermore, MPE teachers use of gendered slurs can be placed within long-term civilizing processes. How this choice of tactic is indicative of long-term changes in teacher-pupil relations is critically analysed in a later section. For now, it is worth stressing how the use of this tactic illustrates the role of emotions as mediating factors within MPE. At a theoretical level, this seems to add weight to Maguire's (1992) notion of quest for exciting significance. In this case, the use of gendered slurs evidenced the role of shame as an affective social control mechanism in social relations in contemporary modern societies. Therefore, whilst in MPE, boys were offered the chance to receive pride and distinction for their sporting bodies. Although, as Elias (2012, 377) noted, the civilizing process "always leaves scars". At CHS, it was clear that in MPE boys' bodies could be considered shameful by oneself or others. This shame mechanism involved an induced embarrassment due to MPE teacher ridicule, which was often based on notions of desirable gendered civilized bodies. When considered as such, these findings also reveal the significance of

the body in young people's self-realisation and in young people's peer-group dynamics, both of which can leave young people with emotional scars.

For boys in MPE at CHS, one sport that could evoke pride as well as leaving emotional scars was football as it involved both enabling and constraining gendered social processes. For instance, football was by far the most popular sport in MPE and at CHS more broadly. As such, being considered good at football offered boys much peer kudos. However, in comparison with other sports in MPE, with popularity seemingly came heightened degrees of competitiveness, seriousness and aggressiveness. Therefore, football was found to be one of the most physical sports practiced at CHS and could also sometimes leave physical scars. Given this, even some boys who liked football, were competent at football and played for football teams outside of school, displayed apprehension and held reservations about football in MPE at CHS. These characteristics, experiences and feelings were particularly evident among older boys. Therefore, at a collective level, boys' attitudes, behaviours and social relations within football were perceived by those involved to differ to those exhibited in other sports. Observed as such, in MPE lessons football was all-consuming, offering boys de-routinising experiences. For instance, football provided boys much emotional arousal through heightened levels of mimetic, motility and sociality experiences. Furthermore, due to its popularity and status within MPE and CHS, football carried much social significance for boys at an identity level. It could therefore be argued that football provided boys with a gendered quest for exciting significance in the sense that it involved gendered self-realizations for boys. From the observations discussed in the previous chapters, football clearly provided boys with masculine validating experiences and enabled them to express symbolic machismo. Some boys revelled in these social dynamics and gained a sense of gendered self-worth by performing the socially desirable form of masculinity and receiving mutual respect from their peers. This was not the case for boys who were not able to embody such desirable forms of

masculinity and this meant they were shamed for not being able to have the physical skills to perform their masculinity. In this sense, as an activity in MPE, football involved both enabling and constraining gendered social processes.

MPE teachers and boys recognised that behavioural norms in football in MPE at CHS differed to those witnessed in other sports. The MPE teachers conceived this as being temperament led. The heightened social significance of football for boys and its physical and aggressive nature tested boys' levels of emotional self-restraint and exposed their expressions of gendered emotions. In these contexts, some boys struggled to embody socially expected levels of emotional self-restraint and let their frustration or competitiveness be expressed in ways that went against their otherwise socially acceptable behaviour. Whilst these types of incidents may well have been momentary lapses in boys' self-restraints, it is worth considering if such emotional expression were sometimes driven by identity-based calculations. It is possible that boys were aware of both acceptable behavioural standards, but they were also aware of the opportunity to express and develop their gendered identity. Therefore, such breaches of behavioural standards may not be a temporary regression to instinctive impulses but may have involved a calculation that such behaviour may be valued by their peers, thus further validating their masculine identity and social status. This suggestion is in line with Nielsen and Thing's (2017) research which discusses how teenagers strive to feel a sense of belonging and solidarity with the dominant 'We' peer group to the extent to which this could override their defining 'I' values or norms. Football's seemingly unique status and value at MPE can partly be attributable to its role in CHS's proud history and contemporary success. It was also part of the broader community's shared passion and had strong connotations with masculine identity. For many boys, football was a constant part of social life within this region. As such, even boys not enamoured with football grew "to develop an internalised adjustment to it" (Dunning & Maguire, 1996, 297). Seemingly featuring at individual, shared and social habitus levels,

football bridged home, community, school life and MPE. This may offer one explanation for tension balances between some boys socially acceptable behaviour and emotional self-restraints. For instance, it seemed that many boys entered CHS with a gendered and football habitus, as did the MPE teachers. These two forms of habitual behaviours were enabled and promoted within compulsory MPE lessons, which induced heightened levels of pride and shame. Therefore, it appeared what was at stake for boys during football in MPE was more than the result of the game, but their sense of gendered self-realisation and gendered self-worth. These findings illustrate football's role, status and significance for boys at a social, relational, identity and *emotional* level in MPE.

It was clear from the data discussed in Chapter Five that boys appeared to internalise the prevailing gendered social constraints within MPE in terms of their emotional self-restraint and behavioural norms. Emotional self-restraints were often configured along binary and traditional gendered lines. For instance, boys seemingly normalised their expressions of the interplay between frustration, anger and aggression. It appeared that boys suppressed behaviours and emotions deemed feminine, such as crying due to being upset or injured. Explaining such gendered emotional expressions, MPE teachers and boys sometimes referred to innate biological differences between the sexes. This shared understanding led MPE teachers to display empathy when boys momentarily expressed heightened aspects of their gendered emotions by not socially reprimanding them and removing them from the public gaze. Here, MPE teachers' mutual identification with the boys can be contrasted to the previously discussed shaming mechanisms, such as gendered slurs. However, this more sympathetic approach arguably legitimised and perpetuated boys' open aggressiveness. As well as biological-based explanations, MPE teachers and boys also cited more sociological reasons for such restraints. For example, boys were acutely aware of the gendered identity-based connotations and subsequent social implications attached to their emotional expressions.

Therefore, in some respects, their emotional expressions appeared to be part informed by pragmatic responses to the gendered social constraints. To analyse these key findings in this last theme, the interrelated figurational concepts of individual civilizing process, the hinge and third nature psyche can be drawn upon.

Elias (2012) contended that broader civilizing processes are experienced at an individual level. A central part of the individual civilizing process involves human beings learning self-restraint over their human drives, instincts and emotions. In contemporary societies, much of this learning process takes place during childhood (Elias, 2001). Although, the degrees of self-restraint required to embody socially acceptable behaviour is largely determined by the prevailing socio-cultural expectations (Van Krieken, 1998). One outcome of long-term broader civilizing processes has been that young people now undergo a lengthier and more complex individual civilizing process compared with their distant ancestors (Elias, 2012). This is because the process of children exhibiting socially acceptable behaviour and emotions involves them learning increasing levels of behavioural refinements and heightened degrees of emotional self-restraint through embodying a stock of social knowledge that has been accumulated and passed down over centuries. Elias referred to this process as 'sociological inheritance'. Conceptually bridging the biological, psychological and social dimensions within the individual civilizing process, Elias (2001) adopted the term the hinge. Elias referred to 'the hinge' in order to denote the relationship between learned and unlearned "knowledge, behaviours, emotions and modalities of embodiment" (Atkinson, 2012, 54). Elias (2001) noted humans relative unique biological hard wiring that enables them to learn sophisticated communicative systems, which has enabled humans to pass on knowledge within and between generations of people. However, he stressed the inherently social aspect of much learning processes (Elias, 2001). At a psychological level, one example of this is habitus formation, whereby people learn emotional and behavioural dispositions at an unconscious level. In many respects, the

bio-socio-psycho process described above represents much of the socialisation process people undergo. Although, seeking to explain the psychological effects of long-term shifts towards informalizing processes within broader civilizing processes, Wouters (2011) proposed the notion that human beings have developed what he referred to as a third nature psyche. Whilst a second nature habitus serves to suppress people's first nature instinctive impulses through the conscience, a third nature psyche removes such counter impulses and enables first nature drives and emotions to become more easily accessible in people's consciousness (Wouters, 2011). Wouters (2011) contends that this shift from conscience to consciousness enables more flexibility and reflexivity in people's self-control mechanisms. As illustrated here, the individual civilizing process, the hinge and third nature psyche are interrelated concepts, all of which can be used to analyse the key findings presented above.

Boys entered MPE at CHS with an understanding of binary gendered emotions and gendered behavioural norms and seemingly the social consequences of failing to display them. However, the single-sex and physically competitive nature of MPE, alongside the emotional tension balances it involved and the social significance attached to it, meant that MPE arguably requires boys to engage more intensely with their gendered emotional self-restraints. Whilst boys entered the MPE figuration with an established gendered habitus, social practices and social relations within MPE did little to challenge these. If anything, embodying traditional notions of masculinity such as aggressiveness and stoicism was rewarded by like-minded peers and MPE teachers, who shared similar masculine habituses. Therefore, the range of gendered emotional self-restraints and expressions displayed by boys within MPE were slight and configured along binary gendered lines. Here, the concept of a gendered habitus may help to understand the underpinning gendered social constraints and boys' negotiations between 'I-We-They' masculine identities within the MPE figuration. Positioned in opposition to weaker and inferior girls (They), boys' engagement in the

'We-I' masculine identities often derived in their ability to show competence and aggression in historically masculine sports such as football, whilst suppressing any emotions deemed feminine. Habitus may also offer a useful concept to explain MPE teachers and boys' attribution of aggression to innate features of males' hardwiring. For instance, because gender becomes significant in humans from birth, during infancy gendered dispositions become deeply engrained parts of people's psyche. Therefore, the fact this habitus formation takes place before long-lasting human memory is formed may partly explain the emphasis given to biologically informed explanations for boys' emotional expression.

The key findings within this theme demonstrated why overly biologically based explanations, or excuses given, for boys' expressions of gendered behaviours are problematic. This explanation seems to fail to consider that when put under due stress or having their gender identity questioned, many boys opted against or seemingly were unable to embody gendered emotional expressions such as anger. This explanation also diminishes the role of more sociological influences that were reported by boys and MPE teachers, such as boys performing to their gender stereotype to preserve their gender identity or social status within their peer group. Given these critiques, what seems a more plausible explanation is that all these boys were undergoing their individual civilizing process, but due to their often-nuanced gendered childhood socialisation, some boys may not have mastered necessary degrees of emotional self-restraints expected within a school environment. Alternatively, another explanation could in some ways relate to Wouters (2011) concept of a third nature psyche. In adopting Wouter's concept, the boys' expressions of aggression in fight or flight situations are not momentary regressions to their first-nature instinctive behaviour. Rather, they can be understood as more calculated conscious behaviour in the knowledge that their behaviour could impact on their gendered identity and they do not want to risk being negatively perceived by others or the fear of being shamed. Such an analysis may explain the situatedness of boys'

aggression and emotional outbursts i.e. being more common in football where the stakes of not conforming are higher. These two theoretical stances offer more sociological explanations of boys gendered emotional expressions as it was clear that as developing and maturing young people, boys' emotional management did not seem to be a smooth or simple process. Instead, boys' emotional (gendered) self-restraint appeared to be a complex and messy process.

9.3 A figural analysis of banter and bullying within MPE

In Chapter Six, how banter and bullying were socially constructed in MPE at CHS was critically explored. This exploration derived three main key research themes: a) banter as being omnipresent within social relations within MPE; b) MPE teacher and boys' sharing many similarities in their perspectives of bullying; and, c) issues concerning differentiating banter from inappropriate behaviour or verbal bullying. In this section, a figural analysis of banter and bullying is provided alongside a critical analysis of potential blurred lines between the two behaviours.

Banter was observed across all social relations within MPE at CHS. Banter seemed to align to MPE teachers' fun-based teaching philosophy and boys' expectations of experiencing heightened levels of sociality when entering MPE. As well as suggesting that banter was more likely in MPE, MPE teachers and boys also attributed banter to a sporting biography and subsequent sporting mentality. Whilst banter was most often deemed and observed to be an amicable and informal bonding ritual, it was also found to serve other purposes. For instance, MPE teachers used banter as a teaching strategy to engage with or discipline boys. Furthermore, some older boys used banter as a form of self-deprecation, which they used in a pre-emptive manner to deter or avoid peer ridicule. From these key findings, it was clear that banter was a part of MPE teachers and many older boys' individual habitus formations. As such, banter formed a shared habitus between MPE teachers and boys and their use of it contributed to what seemed like a broader social habitus

across the MPE figuration. Whilst banter was evident across CHS in general, both social groups linked banter to a sporting and masculine habitus, which informed their attribution of banter being more likely to feature in MPE than in other school subjects. Therefore, it seemed that MPE's single-sex nature, focus on sport and heightened level of sociality enabled banter to prosper as part of the social habitus. The single-sex nature of MPE was deemed relevant in banter's rife nature. Whilst perceived as gendered in the way banter was adopted and the types of banter, it would be necessary to have comparable ethnographic findings on banter in social relations within female PE to further determine banter's gendered nature. However, what the data from this study does highlight is that it was clear that MPE teachers certainly considered banter as a homosocial bonding ritual. This analysis aligns to research that relates banter to 'lad culture' and 'laddism', which suggests that banter is predominantly an exclusive masculine endeavour (Nichols, 2018). As such, it could be claimed that older boys' engagement in banter also involved them performing to the dominant form of masculinity for boys in 21st century Britain.

Banter also played an important part in teacher-pupil relations. Given its shared and heightened status within the MPE figuration, MPE teachers considered that banter played a crucial role in their forging of close social bonds with boys. These bonds were part of MPE teachers' claims that they had more informalized relations with boys compared with their non-PE peers. Therefore, in comparison with their non-PE peers, MPE teachers contended that they were more able to relate to the boys. In seemingly bridging traditional lines within teacher-pupil relations, MPE teachers used banter to socially control boys or re-establish a momentary challenge to their authority. In this way, MPE teachers were able to re-establish clear lines of authority, a process that displays the constant power struggles present within teacher-pupil relations and which can also be considered along broader changes in teacher-pupil relations. To analyse this, it is necessary to apply two figurational sociological concepts. Namely, diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties in

behavioural norms and processes of functional democratization within adult-child relations. The civilizing process to which Elias (2012) referred was largely represented by people's increasing levels of behavioural refinement and heightened levels of emotional self-restraint. These attributes were used for prestige to differentiate between social groups (Van Krieken, 1998). However, a further central part of broader civilizing processes was the increasing interdependence between groups (Elias, 2012). Shifts towards increasing networks of interdependencies included people from different social groups. These groups had previously been physically, symbolically and often behaviourally detached. Elias (2012) contended that the greater exposure and assimilation of people from different social groups gradually contributed to diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties of behavioural norms across societies. The diminishing contrasts of behavioural norms served, in part, to forge more equal power relations between members from different social groups, a process Elias (2012) referred to as functional democratization. These two interrelated concepts are also used in the following section as a theoretical lens to consider the increasing role of banter within contemporary social relations and why banter is an effective power resource.

The shared habitus between older boys and MPE teachers meant that banter was used frequently and it was representative of a shift towards diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties of behavioural norms, as well as being indicative of broader shifts towards more informalized relations between teachers and pupils. For instance, MPE teachers permitting of boys' banter is perhaps a legacy of late-19th century teaching manuals whereby teachers were encouraged to allow children "cheerful freedom – a moderate indulgence in that joyous fun and glee they so much love" (Dolan, 2016, 542). One key aspect that may have contributed to this possible shift are changes in the power resources available for teachers more broadly across Western societies. Van Krieken (1998) noted that teachers permitted and effective use of corporeal punishments within the 19th and early-20th centuries. He then detailed shifts towards less violent, autocratic and command style

teaching approaches from the mid-to-late 20th century onwards (Van Krieken, 1998). It could be argued that MPE teachers use of banter as a means of social control may be partially attributable to long-term shifts towards teacher-pupil relations based more on negotiation, dialogue and greater degrees of equality (Van Krieken, 1998). In this sense, banter was observed as being an effective means of social control. As part of their habitus, MPE teachers found using banter natural and considered it more effective than more traditional and authoritative teaching methods. This premise seemed to be predicated on necessary degrees of mutual identification and mutual respect between the two social groups. Due to its relational communication style, banter's effectiveness seemed to be also predicated on emotional sophistication. To use banter effectively it requires a social and emotional awareness of other people and how they will react to your 'banter'. For instance, boys must learn how to respond to banter, how to interpret banter, how it is intended and how it supports other forms of communication. Furthermore, boys had to be able to emotionally withstand more directive and personal banter concerning their body, mannerisms or perceived physical capacity. In this sense, far from being a childish and immature behaviour, banter represents a sophisticated form of communication and the consequences for getting it wrong might be severe. This understanding of banter as being developmental would also explain why older boys tended to engage in it much more than their younger peers. This theme is further explored within the following discussion of key findings relating to the theme of bullying.

Whilst banter was a common behavioural norm within MPE, explicit forms of bullying were not. MPE teachers and boys recognised bullying as a social and moral issue and both were confident that they knew what it constituted. Although, inconsistencies were evident in differentiating between banter, inappropriate comments and verbal bullying. This was partly contributed by 'chewing', a third behavioural norm identified by boys. Sharing similar characteristics to banter and verbal bullying, chewing was considered to involve deliberately irritating someone to evoke an

emotional and behavioural response or to impress peers. The fact that chewing could also be persistent meant that it seemingly blurred the lines when seeking to differentiate between banter and bullying. This blurring was also sometimes evident in interpretations of banter between MPE teachers and boys in terms of appropriateness. Therefore, as well as being deemed an effective social bonding agent, in such cases, banter was also considered divisive.

Whilst rare, both MPE teachers and boys believed that if bullying did occur it would most likely be verbal or involve unwanted overzealous physical behaviours. Both these types of bullying were deemed by both social groups as being most likely to take place within changing rooms. This was largely explained by the lack of adult presence, congested space and boys' exposure of their semi-naked bodies. The latter reason can be linked to the broader explanation that perceived difference was the main reason bullying occurred. When it did occur MPE teachers bemoaned boys' lack of reporting. Despite acknowledging the detrimental effects of bullying, boys offered several other strategies for dealing with it. These tended to be based on distancing themselves from the situation either physically or emotionally. Analysing these key findings, it was clear that MPE teachers and boys socially constructed bullying largely from their own experiences. In-line with CHS's zero-tolerance stance, MPE teachers seemingly expected boys to exercise necessary levels of emotional self-restraint and foresight during emotionally volatile and physical social situations. MPE teachers proactive and zero tolerance approach offers a stark contrast to Dunning and Sheard's (1979, 53) reference that, "bullying was the order of the day in the late eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century public schools". During this period, the levels of physical violence that took place in MPE were brutal by modern behavioural expectations. However, such behaviours were, at the time, considered by many teachers and parents as an important aspect of character development for instilling "manliness" amongst male pupils (Dunning & Sheard, 1979). This illustrates how broader civilizing processes have affected behavioural norms and shifts towards increasingly pacified social

relations within schools and how behavioural norms and expectations have changed, which has consequences for pupils and teachers alike.

Boys' views on bullying were often like those of MPE teachers and they shared the need for a zero-tolerance approach, although they often implied that this was not realistic. This was partly because of the difficulties in determining the degrees of mutuality within verbal exchanges. Interpreting such interactions could differ depending on the friendship group or teachers involved. Therefore, perceived lines of acceptability were not necessarily fixed but appeared negotiated on a contextual and situational basis. Whilst often seeking to further educate boys on complexities within human relations and language use, MPE teachers were occasionally part of misconceived or inappropriate banter. This illustrates the high levels of social, emotional and cognitive sophistication required to engage in banter without being considered by others as a bully. In these cases, necessary levels of sophistication were inherently socially informed as they were premised on a shared understanding of levels of social acceptability and mutual respect for the feelings of others. However, bullying has become pervasive, subtle and more verbally based, which arguably make defining, intervening in and eradicating bullying incidents more challenging. Whilst somewhat speculative, given that long-term civilizing processes have led to less physically violent opportunities for boys to exercise power over peers, it may be that chewing and banter offered boys a more symbolic and socially acceptable means to wrestle power from each other and negotiate power struggles within the MPE figuration. Therefore, one perhaps unintended social consequence of such broader civilizing trends is that in more complex contemporary societies young people are now engaged in more nuanced social relations, which are influenced by young people's increasing engagement in broader and more diverse figurations (Nielsen & Thing, 2017). This may cause a challenge for teachers of another generation to be able to mutually identify with pupils' behavioural needs, preferences and support. This ability is arguably made even harder given the previously cited levels of stoicism boys self-

reported. Collectively, the social significance of verbal exchanges alongside young people's ability to display emotional self-restraint illuminates the increasing complexities within contemporary social relations.

Another main reason why boys believed bullying was likely to occur within MPE and CHS more broadly was because they understood bullying as most often being based on perceived difference. Difference was significant for boys going through an impressionable stage of their identity formation and expression. During this intensified period of self-realisation boys reasoned that the lack of bullying incidents being reported was more due to boys' management of 'I-We-They' identities among their peer group. To avoid being labelled a sprag, a term that carried much reputational damage at an 'I'- level, boys sought alternative means of dealing with bullying. For older boys, it seemed that one of the cornerstones in their social lives was belonging to a dominant 'We' group and the solidarity that came with it. Therefore, they often described making pragmatic decisions, and not necessarily moral decisions, based upon self-preservation, social rewards and gendered socially expected behavioural norms. These boys had seemingly rationalised this approach as the best way to maintain their 'I'- image and did not detract too far away from the dominant 'We'- image.

9.4 A figurational analysis of teacher-pupil relations within MPE

In Chapters Seven and Eight, teacher-pupil relations at CHS were critically explored with a specific focus on MPE teachers influence over, and social control of, boys within MPE. The central themes within these chapters were MPE teachers attempts to civilize boys in and through MPE, which took place within perceived changes in teacher-pupil relations within MPE at CHS over the last decade. MPE teachers discussed how they thought of MPE as a site for developing boys morally and they made conscious efforts to embed CHS's relationship-based values within MPE. MPE teachers also

believed that they could positively influence boys' level of empathy and mutual identification through MPE. This developmental process was not contrary to boys' competitive habits but nurtured through diplomatic means and was often age dependent. Younger boys were drilled in punctuality, manners and developing a sporting mentality, whereas the development of older boys tended to focus on them exhibiting a sporting mentality and displaying adult-expectations of emotional self-restraint to prepare them for their post-school life. MPE teachers' confidence in their ability to develop boys in these areas was premised on their perception that, compared with other subjects, they had more informal relations with boys within MPE. This was closely related to their beliefs that they had different personalities compared with many non-PE teachers because their own sporty identity and associated behaviours such as banter enabled them to relate and mutually identify with boys. Through the development of close social and emotional bonds, MPE teachers felt able to help the boys develop positive behaviours. This was related to how MPE teachers thought they could provide a positive role model for many boys.

In analysing these findings, it is important to note how MPE teachers used their positions of authority to re-formalize boys' momentarily lapses in meeting necessary behavioural standards. One example of this was the enforcing that boys displayed manners towards MPE teachers. This process is not new and is a staple of school life, perhaps most evident in pupils use of 'thank you Sir' or 'please Miss'. Indeed, as Elias (2012) noted, the use of manners as a social control mechanism between members from different social groups can be traced back to the heightening of such demands during the Renaissance period across Western Europe, as witnessed in manners books such as Erasmus's (1530) *On Civility in Children*. Social control was further exercised through developing boys' level of punctuality to meet MPE teachers' expectations. Whilst expectations of manners and punctuality were no doubt similar across CHS, MPE teachers attempts to instil a sporting mentality into boys is arguably unique to MPE. Irrespective of boys' inclinations towards

sport, MPE teachers expected their full engagement and maximum effort in physical activities. This process involved MPE teachers rewarding boys for playing through pain or being physically sick through overexertion. In one sense, this form of self-discipline could be attributed to a gendered individual civilizing process through what Shilling (2012) referred to as males' sacrificial bodies based on an unquestioned conformity to work ethic and self-sacrifice. In another sense, MPE teachers' expectations of older boys to display such a mentality may have been linked to its fit with a desirable adult self-discipline. This is to suggest that adult life involves taking part in practices that are not chosen or desired but either essential or expected.

Boys' ability to exercise necessary levels of self-discipline and emotional self-restraint over their more instinctive first-nature desires was arguably tested due to MPE's relatively unique structural characteristics and the focus of many social practices within it. However, through involving nuanced relationships, identities and behavioural norms, MPE teachers attempted to use sport as a social platform and a vehicle to exemplify civilizing expectations, re-civilize lapses in boys' behavioural norms or promote greater levels of mutual identification with others. A central part of this process involved boys internalising and embodying CHS's 'We' based values at an 'I'- identity level. In this respect, boys' individual civilizing process was perhaps most tested within highly competitive situations. Here, MPE teachers did not ask boys to modify their competitiveness per se. Instead, they expected boys to learn how to "restrain and to express their impulses and emotions according to circumstance" (Wouters, 1977, 448). Some boys' competitiveness in MPE might have been in part a response to the pride and prestige MPE teachers placed on CHS's sporting teams exhibiting exemplary standards of emotional self-restraint. In placing such emphasis on boys' embodiment of CHS's relationship-based values within MPE, MPE teachers were also meeting the curriculum aims to "embed values such as fairness and respect" (NCPE, 2013, 1).

Whilst MPE teachers used sport as a social platform to civilize boys, their civilizing attempts were primarily made through their relations and interactions with boys and not by boys simply 'doing' or merely competing in PE (Mason, 1995). Their effectiveness in this respect was perceived to be largely based on their informalized teacher-pupil relations. These types of relations were mostly accepted and embraced by both social groups within the MPE figuration. Within these relations, MPE teachers' masculine, sporty and banter-based habitus was received as being authentic and popular among some boys. The erosion of formal boundaries within traditional teacher-pupil relations appeared to hold some value in MPE teachers civilizing attempts, something these teachers were aware of and used where they deemed necessary. These findings also demonstrate how the habitus that MPE teachers develop during their childhood stays with them into their professional work life. This habitus can impact upon their identities and relationships within the MPE figuration, as well as their values, thoughts and practices. However, arguably, the most contentious aspect within MPE teachers perceived ability to civilize boys was the commonly proposed idea that MPE teachers were positive male role models for boys by being male, being sporty and being a good laugh. These perceived important traits and such a befriending mechanism were premised on all boys liking sport or banter. They were seemed to imply that all boys feel like they can better relate to or be more likely to listen to adult males compared with adult females. These notions appear too reductive on the grounds of gendered significance and appear to neglect other desirable and more gender-neutral qualities. Whilst perhaps influential in some cases, the idea that not having a positive male, or female, adult role model is strongly correlated to boys' ill-discipline or poor behaviour seems to fail to appreciate the complex and often contradictory social processes involved in young people's individual civilizing process which is neither unilinear or smooth (Monaghan, 2014). Therefore, a strive for a positive association may overlook many boys who frequently misbehave who have a positive male adult role model or may ignore the fact that some boys gendered sexist behaviours may be influenced by male adult role models who portray some gendered sexist behaviours, as denoted in MPE teachers use of gendered slurs as an active

social constraint for the maintenance of traditional forms of masculine ideals and heteronormativity. As such, without greater detail of boys' perceptions, their family dynamics and female and non-PE teacher-based comparisons, it is difficult to accurately stipulate the extent that this perceived role model status had gendered significance in the civilizing of boys.

Whilst MPE teachers felt confident in their ability to civilize boys, they did so through what they perceived to be changing teacher-pupil relations within MPE at CHS. Often reflecting on a 10-year period, MPE teachers considered that teacher-pupil relations had changed in terms of boys diminishing levels of obedience and their increasing willingness to challenge their authority. This was partly attributed by more relaxed, tolerable and flexible approaches in MPE teachers' relations with boys. As such, MPE teachers considered that equalizing trends had occurred in their social control over boys. This perception was partly premised on MPE teachers reference to their greater levels of mutual identification with boys' individual emotional and psychological needs. MPE teachers' engagement in such mutual identification was inspired by their wish to maintain social control over boys. However, to do so, they described how they had changed their teaching approach. Aware that verbally aggressive and intimidating tactics were no longer available methods, MPE teachers had transformed to adopt more sensitive, inclusive and equity-based approaches to socially controlling boys. Whilst different, this method seemingly proved equally as effective and was deemed to be necessary given the broader social constraints influencing teacher-pupil relations in MPE, such as increasing levels of parental involvement and changes in CHS's disciplinary system.

In examining these key findings, it was clear that MPE teachers' practices were enabled and constrained within the MPE figuration, past and present. Whilst MPE teachers' status gave them legitimate authority to hold vast power advantages over boys, it seemed that MPE teachers'

relations with boys were becoming more influenced by increasing networks of interdependencies. These networks were explicit at a local level but were also implicit in terms of prevailing social norms concerning changes in adult-child relations. In reference to the former, MPE teachers had to somewhat ensure that their behaviours towards boys were in line with parents' levels of social acceptability. This social constraint was coupled with their need to negotiate a changing school disciplinary system, which meant that for more serious misbehaviours or disobedience the disciplinary measures were taken away from the PE department. These are examples of tension balances that emerge when chains of interdependence become more complex and cause conflicting and contradictory agendas. Therefore, MPE teachers contended with, accommodated and appeased such agendas within the MPE figuration by modifying their behaviours and relations with boys. These complexities were presented as being contemporary and fewer social constraints were disclosed when recalling previous teacher-pupil relations. This is not to say that in a previous era tension balances were not present, but it is to make the point that the denser and lengthier networks of interdependencies become the more complex and uncontrollable they become (Elias, 1978), as may have been the case here.

Arguably, the main social constraint influencing MPE teachers' relations with boys was the changes in teacher-pupil relations over the last decade within MPE at CHS. In adopting a process-orientated approach it was clear that what were described as 'old school teaching methods' were effective in creating and maintaining formal boundaries between MPE teachers and boys in terms of role, status, identity and behaviour. Methods such as screaming and being distant were also deemed to be effective means of social control. The use of such means could possibly be one unintended social outcome of the eventual banishment of corporeal punishment in UK State schools in 1986, alongside broader shifts towards physically violent-free education (Wouters, 2007). However, the common use of screaming was acknowledged by MPE teachers as being no longer socially

acceptable or as effective given perceived changes in some boys' responses to direct confrontation. In this respect, MPE teachers' perceptions appear indicative of broader social taboos concerning adults use of strict disciplinary measures and direct control over children (Van Krieken, 1998). These perceptions also seem to imply that equalizing trends have taken place within teacher-pupil relations, which represents broader informalization processes whereby in authority-based relations strict codes of manners and displays of rank lose "some of their rigidity and stiffness" (Wouters, 2006, 502). Despite expressing the effectiveness of previous methods and feeling uneasy about such changes, MPE teachers' described shifts towards more inclusive, equitable and closer teacher-pupil relations.

Contemporary teacher-pupil relations within MPE were portrayed by teachers as being more democratic compared with previous periods at CHS. This was perhaps most evident in MPE teachers' greater engagement in mutually identifying with boys' needs and preferences. This differed to some earlier examples of teachers' greater mutual identification of boys' needs identified in Dolan's (2016) analysis of largely 19th century teaching manuals. Here, teaching manuals referred to children as a collective and they sought to enlighten teachers to children's different emotional expressions, preferences and responses compared with adults (Dolan, 2016). One possible reason for this difference may be the broader demographical changes to school populations over the last three decades, witnessed through the UK government's more inclusive education agenda. As such, teachers and school officials are now by law, morally and socially, expected to cater for children's individual needs. In one respect, as Mennell (1998) noted, a central aspect of any equalizing trend between two different social groups is the gradual shift towards greater mutual identification with each other. However, whilst MPE teachers adopted more diplomatic means based on care, consideration and guidance, the outcome of resolving power struggles remained the same as those when using old school methods, namely boys accepted the

course of action and engaged in lessons. Therefore, in one sense, this illustrated that MPE teachers still held vast power advantages over boys despite having to adopt more protracted mutually identifiable methods. Whilst the outcome may have remained consistent, these findings also serve to demonstrate that power resources in any one figuration are fluid and potentially multiple power resources can be used in a figuration such as MPE over time.

Tension balances and power conflicts between MPE teachers and boys tended to involve older boys. In analysing key findings in this respect, it could be considered that trend may be attributable to three overlapping reasons. Firstly, as boys grew older, boys may have begun to perceive a decline in their social, psychological and sometimes physical distance between themselves and teachers. Secondly, older boys may have sought greater independence over their actions, whilst engaging in more adult-like scepticism towards their authority relations. Thirdly, in fully comprehending social dynamics within the MPE figuration, older boys could have been more willing to engage in risk-taking behaviours, such as male bravado, for social rewards. Placing these possible factors within a process-orientated lens, older boys appeared to exhibit changing views on their identities, relationships and behaviours as they started relating more to adult norms in these respects. In this sense, their challenging behaviour perhaps should not be considered as unlearned elementary urges, nor had they become deeply embedded in boys' habitus formations i.e. they were situational and contextual. What seems more plausible reasoning is that older boys' behaviour illustrated reflexivity in their self-control mechanisms, whereby they could express their impulses and emotions according to circumstance (Wouters, 1977). Following this logic, this may have largely informed boys' more contested teacher-pupil relations with a male authority figure, whereby challenging MPE teachers was a further means by which some boys tried to embody 'We-I' masculine identities. Irrespectively, at a more theoretical level, teacher-pupil dynamics and behaviours by older boys emphasise that young people's individual civilizing process should not be

considered as linear and smooth, but should be conceived as more of a zig-zag pattern which involves experimental and testing behaviours (Monaghan, 2014). Whilst other tension balances no doubt existed, the portrayals of power struggles between MPE teachers and boys within this section offers much needed insight into often overly simplified portrayals of what are complex, messy and often nuanced teacher-pupil relations within the MPE figuration.

9.5 Applying a figural sociological approach to MPE at CHS: a critical review

So far, in this chapter figural sociological theoretical concepts have been applied to analyse key findings within the key themes found within the previous four results chapters. This analysis has involved drawing upon at least seven different concepts, which were often interrelated. In this last section, broader critiques of central tenets within figural sociology that were drawn upon within this thesis are engaged in. This thesis primarily utilises the concepts of figurations, 'I-We-They' identities and habitus as sensitising research tools to examine relationships, identities and behavioural norms within MPE. However, much of this thesis was also underpinned by Elias's (2012) theory of civilizing processes. From this broad piece of work and subsequent theorising, notions of civilized bodies, the individual civilizing process, diminishing contrasts and increasingly varieties, functional democratization, informalization processes and quest for excitement were largely derived. Collectively, these terms were used to critically consider long-term continuities and changes in how people relate with each other, identify with themselves and others and behave when in MPE, with specific focus placed on gender relations and adult-child relations. However, Elias's (2012) theory of civilizing processes and subsequent notions of informalization processes have been critiqued on numerous grounds. Much of these critiques are now somewhat dated and have been strongly rebutted. Although, figural sociologists themselves have critiqued some of the core tenets within civilizing processes. Therefore, the following discussion briefly engages in

the range of critiques from outside and within the figurational community and then illustrates the relevance of these to this thesis.

Historians, anthropologists and sociologists have criticised Elias's approach and questioned his findings and subsequent theorising. The most common criticisms are based on perceptions that the civilising process is a modified progress theory that is evolutionary (Curtis, 1986), monolithic (Tester, 1989), unilineal (Collins, 2005), Eurocentric (Collins, 2005), elitist (Lasch, 1985) and celebrates Western triumphalism (Armstrong, 1998). From such criticisms have also emerged reservations concerning the suitability of civilizing processes as a theoretical framework from which to study human development. Here, Elias has been accused of providing an assortment of descriptive generalisations opposed to a genuine theory that can be applied and tested (Goody, 2002; Horne & Jary, 1985; Rojek, 1986). It is fair to say that Elias (2012) provided a more optimistic view of human development in comparison with modern scepticism. For example, in an interview in 1974, Elias quoted that, "I don't share the pessimism which is today à la mode" (Fontaine, 1978, 249), although his view here was not ideologically based but informed by his more detached overview of pain-staking empirical findings over several centuries. From this, Elias (2012) proposed that between the Renaissance and 19th century in France, England and Germany civilizing processes had taken form in a directional manner, which were not smooth or always linear. Furthermore, Elias was also "a hard-headed realist" (Curry et al. 2006, 121) who as a German Jew fled his native Germany only to see his mother perish in Auschwitz. All too aware of the fragility of processes of civilisation, Elias (1996) discussed regressions that took place when studying de-civilizing processes in 20th century Germany, which demonstrates his non-evolutionary view. Instead, it is perhaps more accurate to say that Elias (2012) conceived social development as being more multilinear across different nations. From such analysis, Elias (2012) used the term 'civilizing' in a descriptive

sense and not in a moral sense. Given such often misguided or inadequate criticisms, it is perhaps better to focus on critiques that have taken place within the figurational community of scholars.

The interrelatedness between civilizing processes and informalizing processes and their ability to theoretically explain changes in social constraints and types of self-restraints during social developments within the late-20th and early-21st centuries have been critically discussed by several Dutch scholars. Scholars such as Brinkgreve and Korzec (1976, 29, cited in Wouters & Mennell, 2015) referred to civilizing processes as “the theory of increasing self-control”, but realised that applying it in such way led to an irrefutable theory because self-control was too ambiguous as it included repression as well as mastery (Wouters & Mennell, 2015). Adding theoretical weight to concerns regarding self-control as the single criterion for civilizing processes, Wouters (1977) drew reference to shifts towards informalization processes that had taken place. Here, social constraints enabled more reflexive and flexible manners, which Wouters (1977) argued impacted on the type of self-control people exercised. In this sense, Wouters (1977) stresses that Elias did not use the terms ‘increases’ or ‘decreases’ when referring to self-control but opted for ‘increasingly differentiated’ self-restraints. In exploring differentiated forms of self-restraints within informalization processes, Wouters (1998, 139) proposes the term a third-nature psyche to refer to “a level of consciousness and calculation in which all types of constraints and possibilities are taken into account”. This type of psyche can be differentiated from second nature, which refers to “highly automatic functioning of conscience and self-regulation” (Wouters, 1998, 139). Wouters (1998) contends that a third nature psyche involves seemingly natural engagement of processing pulls and pushes of both first and second nature impulses and restraints alongside a more calculated assessment of the dangers and chances within a social situation. It is here where the relevancy of these debates needs to be contextualised within the approach taken and findings within this chapter.

Two simple ways to refute some outdated and well rebutted criticisms of civilizing processes is to one draw attention to the fact that Elias's (2012) magnum opus was voted by the International Sociological Association as being the seventh most influential sociology books of the 20th century (ISA, 1998). Equally, Pinker's (2011) exhaustive data on levels of violence over the last 1000 years across human history appears in many respects to empirically support some of Elias's core propositions. However, perhaps a more adequate means of refuting such claims is to illustrate in brief the usefulness and applicability of notions derived from the central theory of civilizing processes. In reference to the key findings within this thesis, it seems clear that teacher-pupil relations represented long-term shifts in adult-child relations that were sympathetic of the twin gradual processes of functional democratization and informalization between the two social groups. Likewise, apparent shifts away from violent and physical means of displaying masculine ideals towards more symbolic and emotional-informed means, i.e. being stoic, appear indicative of broader civilizing processes, which have in this case impacted on gender relations in terms of boys' peer-group behaviours. Furthermore, the seemingly increasing significance placed on boys' bodies and its gendered performance and the role of shame as a key means of gendered social control in this respect aligns to previous applications that illustrate notions of gendered civilized bodies (Mierzwinski et al. 2014; Velija & Hughes, 2019). However, whilst this thesis proports to offer a theoretically broad and sophisticated approach, the most ambitious part of such approach is undoubtedly my attempt to apply Wouters's (1998) concept of third nature psyche. To my knowledge, this concept is not widely known, accepted or applied within the figurational sociological community, meaning critiques are difficult to draw upon. The few examples whereby it was applied within this chapter appear to suggest that it has empirical support and shows potential for a deeper psychological engagement and subsequent greater explanation of boys' situational behaviours. However, it appears much more empirical engagement is needed to greater test how this concept differentiates from gendered habitus and gendered 'I-We-They' identities when trying to explain boys' masculine embodiment and behavioural norms within MPE.

9.6 Conclusion

In this penultimate chapter of this thesis, a figurational sociological approach was applied to relationships, identities and behavioural norms within MPE at CHS. Several figurational sociological theoretical concepts were applied to analyse key findings from key themes within each of the previous four results chapters. This process offered a relational account of relationships, identities and behavioural norms within MPE compared with other school subjects at CHS. It also involved a process-orientated approach whereby key findings were placed more broadly within long-term continuities and changes within gender relations and adult-child relations. This application of a figurational sociological approach offers a useful link to the following Conclusion Chapter whereby, among other things, a case is made pertaining to figurational sociology's versatility and worth as a theoretical framework to explore, explain and analyse relationships, identities and behavioural norms within MPE.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, the research problem, research questions and theoretical framework are revisited. The purpose of this is to demonstrate how the empirical findings and subsequent theoretical analysis highlight the key contributions to knowledge that this thesis offers. In the last section, reflections are offered on further research and considerations on the practical implications based on the findings of this thesis.

10.1 The research problem, theoretical framework and research approach

At the start of this thesis the 'theory-practice' gap between academic philosophers and PE teachers and young people's views on the nature and purpose of PE was presented. Furthermore, the 'ideology-evidence' gap between long-standing taken for granted assumptions and substantive research evidence as to what PE was also identified. It was argued that these gaps relate to differences between what PE should do and how PE is in practice. There is then a need to appreciate better how PE is socially constructed by those directly involved, the need of which is underpinned by successive UK governments continuing pledge of substantial financial investments into PESS under the premise that this subject helps young people develop physically and morally (NCPE, 2013). The critique of taken for granted assumptions concerning PESS's efficacy and subsequent policy aims was not meant to detract away from the importance of developing young people physically and morally. For instance, the physical development of young people has been considered a growing issue because 30% of children and young people aged 2-15 years in England are overweight or obese, whilst 32% undertake less than 30 minutes of physical activity a day (Health Survey for England, 2018; Sport England, 2018). Moreover, a more holistic understanding of PE emphasises its potential role in the development of young people. These concerns are raised by growing evidence of the challenges faced by young people, for example 14% of young people aged 11-16 years have a mental disorder and 40% reported being bullied at least once per week

(National Health Service, 2018; Young Men's Christian Association, 2018). In this thesis the case was made that in order to illustrate the contemporary significance of PE, research needed to take place within a school setting to explore how PE is experienced.

The research questions addressed within this thesis were underpinned by a figurational sociological approach. This theoretical framework emphasises more reality-congruent forms of knowledge which aim to contribute to a broader stock of social knowledge. A key aspect of this knowledge generation process is the process of involvement and detachment, requiring the researcher to ensure that they are not too overly emotionally involved within the research topic. Instead, blends of involvement and detachment at cognitive, emotional and physical levels throughout the research process were managed. For example, one method adopted to avoid being too involved within short-term present-day snapshots of social reality was to place findings within long-term processes of continuity and change. This helped capture how social issues and social relations involved a series of complex interweaving and sometimes conflicting dynamic social processes that were the outcome of unintended long-term processes of development, and not merely autonomous decisions made by teachers for example. Consequently, there was a move away from studying people as isolated individuals who act towards studying people as biological, social and historical beings. Adopting this approach can provide a less reductive and more pluralistic appreciation of complex interweaving social processes and networks of interdependencies that people must negotiate within their everyday lives can be attained.

Through applying figurational sociology and the empirical gaps identified, the thesis was guided by the following four research questions:

1. How do gendered social constraints and boys' gendered self-restraints influence boys' masculine embodiment within MPE?

2. What roles do banter and bullying have in the relationships and identities of those within MPE?
3. How do MPE teachers utilise PE to civilize boys in and through MPE?
4. How do MPE teachers conceptualise teacher-pupil relations within MPE?

These questions were answered by drawing on empirical data collected through ethnographic methods adopted over a six-month period within Colbeck High School (CHS), a mixed-sex Catholic school within the North-East of England. Data were derived from 84 MPE lesson observations across five-year groups of boys aged 11-16 years, nine focus groups with boys aged 11-14 years and four semi-structured interviews with MPE teachers.

10.2 Key empirical findings relating to research questions

It was clear that MPE differed to other school subjects in terms of the levels of sociality, physicality and competitiveness. Furthermore, the relatively unique single-sex nature of MPE also meant gender relations within MPE differed from those in mixed-sexed settings across CHS. Many boys were both enabled and constrained by gendered social processes within MPE. For instance, heightened levels of sociality and physical intimacy offered many boys de-routinising experiences and male social bonding opportunities. However, heightened levels of physically informed competitiveness and aggression constrained boys gendered identity expression and behavioural norms along narrow forms of masculinity. Gendered social constraints were based on assumptions of how boys should behave within certain social situations. For example, MPE teachers often used explicit gendered slurs to shame boys into changing their attitude or behaviours. Through internalising these gendered social constraints many boys felt comfortable displaying frustration, anger and sadness through verbal or physical aggression, whilst feeling less able to cry when in pain or upset for fear of being labelled feminine. These gendered self-restraints were not universally applied and tended to be heightened with older boys, which was best evidenced in football where

boys' relations, identities and behavioural norms became more intensified along binary conceptions of traditional masculinity. However, outside of formal competitive situations, within more informal friendship groups boys felt more confident to display a broader range of emotions such as empathy and sensitivity without fears of an attached gendered significance.

With heightened levels of sociality, the role of banter was observed to be omnipresent in everyday relations within MPE. Banter was central to perceived more informal relations within MPE and mainly featured as part of social bonding rituals. Furthermore, banter also featured in boys' relations with MPE teachers, which was cited as a main difference in perceptions that teacher-pupil relations in MPE contrasted to those in other subjects. Whilst eroding formal teacher-pupil boundaries, through adopting banter in their teaching approach MPE teachers found banter to be an effective power resource for socially controlling boys. Moreover, some older boys also used banter as a means of social control through engaging in self-deprecation or quick wit to compensate for their self-prescribed lack of athletic ability. Therefore, in general, banter was deemed as a positive aspect of social relations, although MPE teachers and boys cited occasional occurrences of misused or misguided banter. As such, the role of verbal bullying was critically explored. Explicit forms of bullying were hardly ever witnessed within MPE lessons and MPE teachers and boys were consistent in their definitions and interpretations of bullying. This is not to suggest that bullying did not exist as MPE teachers and boys cited occasional bullying incidents within changing rooms. From this, a lack of adult supervision in changing rooms was considered as enabling boys to experiment with their and other boys semi-naked bodies through overzealous physical behaviours, which could blur boundaries of behavioural acceptability. In instances where bullying did occur, MPE teachers and boys cited boys lack of reporting of bullying as an issue, whilst boys problematised MPE teachers' intervention to stop bullying, which collectively produced a culture of silence.

Aware that informal behaviours enabled within MPE may lead to crude or misjudged banter or incidents of bullying, MPE teachers attempted to civilize boys in and through MPE. This process was part of MPE teachers' broader aims to mould or re-calibrating boys' values in line with CHS's relationship-based values. Such values were illuminated and tested in MPE due to heightened levels of physical competitiveness and many boys strive for one-upmanship. Mutually identifying with moral dilemmas posed within sport and such social tension balances, MPE teachers tended to adopt a diplomatic and mentor-like approach. This approach was administered through deliberate informal teacher-pupil relations, which were deemed productive despite possibilities that informal social settings may enable informal actions which could lead to more deviant behaviours. Therefore, MPE involved regular interchanges between formal and informal social processes, whereby boys had to swiftly shift from displaying appropriate manners towards MPE teachers, whilst perhaps moments later being engaged in banter with them. As such, MPE teachers considered that their sociable approach facilitated closer emotional bonds with boys over weeks, months and years, which helped developed boys morally. It is this finding, alongside broader generalisations, that seemingly contributed to a perception that MPE teachers were much needed positive male role models for some boys.

The perception of MPE teachers being influential figures within many boys' lives was common despite a prevailing view that teacher-pupil relations in MPE at CHS had changed over the last decade. Experienced MPE teachers were adamant that boys now displayed diminishing levels of obedience and disliked authoritarian styles of teaching. Such changes were deemed indicative of perceived broader shifts in adult-child relations and were explained through an absence of an authoritative previous Head of Department and new school disciplinary policies. These changes had contributed to a perceived move away from what were considered as old school methods based on intimidating means of instilling strict discipline. As such, MPE teachers described changing their

teaching methods to fit more desired informal relations with boys and better meet boys' individual needs and desires. This shift from authoritarian to more democratic teacher-pupil relations had left MPE teachers feeling disempowered at times. However, such feelings were analysed as being relative to their past experiences, which perhaps blurred the fact that they still held significant power advantages over boys that enabled them to maintain social control over their classes. This was largely because through mutually identifying more with each individual boy, MPE teachers had developed effective informal and subtle strategies to maintain their power advantage and social control over boys.

10.3 A theoretical analysis of key findings relating to research questions

Through conceptualising boys as open vessels it was demonstrated that many boys entered the MPE figuration with binary conceptions of gendered emotions and gendered behaviours. However, MPE's single-sex nature and prevailing gendered social processes within the MPE figuration did little to challenge boys' gendered habitus. In fact, in many instances, common social practices in MPE socially rewarded boys gendered emotional displays and gendered behavioural norms and were policed through behaviours not aligned to masculinity. A central feature was boys, particularly older boys, strive to ensure that their 'I'- identity aligned to the dominant 'We' group's prevailing values and behavioural norms. From this, boys' engagement in self-preservation and self-promotion behaviours left little room for boys to happily explore or be able to engage with 'They'- or 'Other'- identities or emotional expressions within the MPE figuration. In reference to the latter expression, central to boys' negotiation of 'We-I' identity balances were their displays of gendered emotions. This complex psycho-socio-emotional process seemed to involve more than boys' engagement in their second nature conscience based on learned behaviours. Instead, it appeared that on numerous occasions boys displayed a third nature psyche that enabled them to be more reflexive in their self-control mechanisms. In this respect, self-control involved a greater

consciousness to be able to *both* restrain *and* express their impulses and emotions according to social circumstances.

The interplay between boys' management of 'I-We-They' identities and possible display of a third nature psyche was perhaps most evident in the social and interpretive processes involved in banter and bullying. Banter was a part of many boys, particularly older boys, and MPE teachers' habitus. It was fostered, enabled and socially rewarded within the MPE figuration. The banter displayed often involved relatively high levels of shared understanding and mutual respect in order to be accepted and received as banter. Therefore, being able to successfully engage in banter often appeared to involve high levels of social awareness and emotional sophistication, something some boys and some MPE teachers occasionally struggled to manage and caused offence by misreading the social situation. In one respect, the findings within this thesis may indicate a decline in bullying through more interdependent networks, greater levels of mutual identification and heightened awareness of the social unacceptability of bullying. Alternatively, key findings perhaps illustrate the increasing pervasive nature of contemporary forms of bullying whereby boundaries between some forms of banter and verbal bullying become increasingly blurred. Difficulties in differentiating between these two forms of behaviour was compounded by boys' unwillingness to report incidents of bullying and their stoic reactions to being bullied. From boys' interpretations, it seemed that social processes involving bullying were underpinned by boys' constant negotiation with 'I-We-They' identities and their strivings to be part of the dominant 'We' group. In this sense, boys could use their behaviour and momentary oppression of others to portray a certain socially desirable 'I'-image, such as masculine bravado or risk-taking, to become affiliated with or evidence their association with a dominant 'We' peer group. Whereas reporting the incidents and risking the reputation of being a sprag was reasoned as being too costly at an 'I'-identity level. From this, boys problematised intervening in bullying incidents by weighing up moral obligations over social costs

in terms of others' perceptions of their 'I'- identity, with self-preservation of the latter superseding acting on the former.

Trying to mediate such thought processes, MPE teachers sought to civilize boys through instilling relationship based 'We' values. However, whilst part of this process involved re-formalizing boys momentarily behavioural lapses, MPE teachers considered that their social control over boys was best maintained and most effective through often relatively informalized relations. As such, social processes within the MPE figuration often involved formal and informal exchanges and expectations, sometimes almost interchangeably. Due to this, it seemed that a critical part of boys' displaying CHS's relationship-based values within the MPE figuration involved them being socially aware and emotionally able to engage with what Wouters (2008) referred to as the formality-informality span. Far from being a simple process, this aspect of the individual civilizing process entailed boys finding socially appropriate balances between behavioural expectations and behavioural experimentation, which can be challenging in MPE given the varied activities and competitive situations boys frequently find themselves in. Boys engagement within this span arguably became more challenging the older they got as their ability to engage in formal and informal behaviours in their relations with peers and adults heightened in terms of expectation. Therefore, it seemed that part of MPE teachers civilizing attempts involved raising older boys' levels of consciousness to a point where boys can more reflexively manage their self-control mechanisms and arguably display a third-nature psyche.

The civilizing attempts of MPE teachers offered one insight into teacher-pupil relations in MPE at CHS and demonstrated flux tension balances with regards to social control. Through examining such power relations as processual, complex and flux, contemporary teacher-pupil relations within MPE at CHS appeared to be informed by *past* as well as the present MPE figuration. This was evidenced somewhat in the inter-generational transmissions of attitudes across generations of

MPE teachers and may have been linked to occasional inter-generational differences in attitudes towards, and the social constructions of, banter and bullying within the MPE figuration. However, more broadly, depictions of shifts towards more informalized relations and some of the shared habituses of MPE teachers and many boys seemed indicative of long-term shifts towards diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties within behavioural norms between adults and children (Van Krieken, 1998). Furthermore, the perceived functional democratization between MPE teachers and boys was largely premised on the social unacceptability and ineffectiveness of intimidating and fear-based teaching practices. MPE teachers had adapted to engage in greater levels of mutual identification with boys to maintain their power advantage. MPE teachers' ability to adapt their practices, social control mechanism and attitudes according to changing figurational dynamics portrayed them as being open and malleable processes themselves who over the last decade had constantly undergone processes of self-realisation and self-transformation.

10.4 Key contributions to knowledge

By immersing myself into the MPE culture at CHS for six months, it was possible to recognise, analyse and present common and dominant social processes within MPE at CHS. Adopting ethnographic methods enabled a deep delve into complex and sometimes contradictory social processes. This approach offers a critical insight as such social processes are sometimes unaccounted for, presented statically or overly reliant on perception. In adopting this approach, existing empirical knowledge taken from ethnographies concerning secondary MPE within the UK over the last three decades was tested, cross-referenced and added to. For instance, Campbell et al. (2018) also found stoicism central to older boys gendered identity formation and part of their negotiation of peer relations, whilst Parker (1996) also noted the informality available within MPE and how this can contribute to power imbalances within male peer groups. However, these studies adopted concepts of inclusive masculinity and hegemonic masculinity, respectively. Whereas a figurational sociological approach underpinned by a relational and processual lens was adopted in

this thesis. Therefore, through applying several figurational concepts, the rest of this section illustrates how adopting this theoretically sophisticated approach enabled several key contributions to knowledge to be made at empirical, theoretical and broader sociological levels.

The literature reviewed in Chapter Three focused on oppressive gendered social processes in MPE by adopting theoretical lenses that lend themselves to highlighting power hierarchies and the plight of marginal social groups. Through adopting a figurational sociological approach, a more pluralistic conception of power is offered that evidenced how gendered social processes in MPE were enabling as well as constraining. This more rounded perspective also demonstrated how some practices could be simultaneously enabling and constraining. One such example was boys' engagement in banter, which could be used as a social bonding ritual or a useful self-preservation or self-promotion mechanism. Through taking banter seriously as a behavioural norm and evidencing its complex social, psychological and emotional processes a more detailed insight into what have previously been described as silly and immature 'incidents' of ridicule, mocking and joking within MPE is provided. A similar contention can be made in reference to this thesis's illustration of the complex social, psychological and emotional processes involved within bullying in MPE, which adds greater depth to previous literature that primarily focuses on the prevalence and psychological effects of bullying. Whilst such oppressive behaviours were considered, an equal focus on empowering practices provided a more rounded conception of everyday realities within MPE. For instance, MPE teachers have been largely negatively portrayed in previous literature with reference to inappropriate and biased behaviours such as favouritism. Whereas through observing MPE teachers in the round, it was possible to capture and represent their social and emotional investment in boys' general development, as well as their engagement in power struggles with certain boys which threatened their authority status and ability to socially control the class. The complex social, psychological and emotional processes involved within such practices offers further depth to previous portrayals of MPE teachers' relations with boys that depict the former as

authoritarian dictators who rarely mutually identify with boys. Likewise, the openness and malleability of MPE teachers to change their practices and display greater levels of mutual identification with boys offers a different conception from more simplified notions of social reproduction as denoted in Brown's (2005) notion of a cultural economy of gendered practice in MPE.

These key empirical contributions to knowledge were underpinned through a theoretically sophisticated adoption of figurational sociology that was part informed by other key works (Frydendal & Thing, 2019; Green, 2000; 2001; 2002a, Monaghan, 2014; Smith & Green, 2004; Smith & Haycock, 2016; Nielsen & Thing, 2017; 2019, Wouters, 1998; 2006; 2009; 2011). Whilst tentatively proposed, my conception of boys' behaviour and emotional expressions as being largely based upon their *conscious* understanding of gendered social norms and expectations offers a further critical consideration to Nielsen and Thing (2017) seminal theorising concerning young people's engagement in 'We-I' identities within and across different figurations, which called for more appreciation of the relationship between emotions and identity. My suggestion that many boys consciously displayed socially acceptable masculine emotions whilst becoming masters in suppressing any emotions that could be deemed feminine appeared to evidence a flexibility and reflexivity over their self-control mechanisms that enabled them to both restrain and express their impulses and emotions according to circumstance. Pursuing this line of theorising, it is proposed that boys possible displays of a third nature psyche may have involved a quest for exciting gendered significance, whereby their engagement in gendered behavioural expectations, behavioural experimentation and symbolic emotional experiences within MPE seemingly offered them a quest for self-realisation, self-confidence, self-worth and a sense of belonging by feeling part of the dominant 'We' group. This contention needs further empirical testing.

The MPE figuration at CHS was part of a broader school figuration at CHS, which was part of a broader community figuration and so forth. Therefore, whilst data in this thesis was taken from a post-industrial town in the North-East of England, some of the research themes may offer a microcosm into broader sociological trends and issues. For instance, the gendered socialisation of boys appears to offer a pertinent example. The heightened sociality, competitiveness, aggressiveness and gendered significance of social processes within the MPE figuration compared with other school subjects illuminated the complexity and messiness of boys' individual civilizing process. Boys' moral and psychological development in and through the MPE figuration was not smooth or linear but often followed inconsistent and zig-zag patterns, which were heavily underpinned by their understanding and embodiment of gender. For example, some boys embraced the social, physical and aggressive aspects of MPE, whilst others found the constant need to display a sporting mentality and the seriousness involved in sports like football indifferent. Equally, how boys related to each other, identified with themselves and others and behaved within the MPE figuration differed across different age groups and within various social situations. From this, many older boys' possible engagement in a third nature psyche involving emotionally sophisticated and consciousness-based behaviours in competitive all-male social situations offers a different perception compared with those that depict such boys' behaviour as being innate, natural or uncontrollable regressions to their more first-nature instincts.

Further contextualising these suggestions, data in this thesis illustrated that in increasing complex contemporary Western societies young people are part of, and are having to navigate and negotiate, more physical, viral and even virtual figurations. These different figurations can sometimes be inter-related or closely connected but often contained various nuanced similarities and differences. This means that young people's friendships groups and peer group dynamics are becoming increasingly complex and are often underpinned by various flux notions of 'I-We-They' identities and strivings to be part of 'We' groups. In this sense, young people's individual civilizing

process is arguably becoming more intensified in terms of their levels of emotional sophistication and their ability to reflexively self-control their emotion restraints and expressions according to an increasing number of social circumstances before entering adulthood and increasing complex and diverse workplaces. As exemplified in boys' social construction of banter and verbal bullying, it could be argued that long-term civilizing shifts from physical to more verbally-centred power relations has heightened the significance at a relational, identity and behavioural level for young people to engage in sophisticated forms of communication and be socially and emotionally aware of their and other people's feelings and intentions when doing so. Moreover, the fact that physical attributes were often central to banter's focus and cruder forms of banter that could be linked to verbal bullying illustrates the growing importance of the body as a marker of pride and shame and the increasing role of verbal means to exert power over and away from others.

10.5 Future research and potential practical implications

A key finding within this thesis was contrasts in relationships, identities and behavioural norms between younger and older boys in MPE. This could not be further evidenced through the perceptions and self-described experiences of Year 10 and Year 11 boys. This knowledge could have also substantiated the key theoretical claim made in this thesis that older boys' behaviours may have been evidence of a third nature psyche, as part of their broader individual civilizing process. Therefore, more research is needed to gain interpretative and experiential insights from older boys in order to greater determine the extent that they manage their gendered emotions in line with social situations and with future adult expectations in mind. Maintaining a rounded view of boys' behaviour, this inquiry should critically consider pleasurable experiences and the senses of self-worth older boys gain from being stoic or dominating others verbally. Part of this process should involve critically exploring the role of banter within relations in MPE.

Secondly, given its everyday usage and the social significance attached to it in MPE, more empirical studies are needed to critically explore banter's role at relational and identity levels. This should include further critically considering gendered dimensions and differences within young people's use of banter and how this differs with age. Moreover, whilst social class was not found to be as significant as gender in relationships, identities and behavioural norms in MPE, more research is needed to explore if nuances in social class and banter usage are apparent. This specific line of critical inquiry would test broader iconic findings concerning the relationship between social class and masculinity. For instance, Willis (1977) and Corrigan (1979) illustrated that as working-class boys grew older and started to embody adult-like behaviours outside of school, they increasingly began to challenge, resist or reject formalities within school. In these studies, these boys tended to do this by being overly aggressive and swearing. Therefore, it seems worth critically exploring if in some cases banter could be indicative of these previously cited working-class protest masculinities or be used as a form of what Scheff (1988, cited in Frydendal & Thing, 2019) referred to as bypassed shame. This line of inquiry will question if working-class boys derive alternative forms of symbolic power or even perceived self-preservation in academically focused schools through using banter, which is a more socially acceptable but also socially valued form of communication amongst young people's peer groups. This is not to suggest that banter is a solely working-class behavioural norm, but it is to consider critically exploring if some form of banter have social class-based emphasis.

Thirdly, further insight should be gained into the extent that quick wit and being deemed 'good' at banter by peers and significant others can be used as an illustration of prestige, intellect, temperament or even maturity. More broadly, greater insight is needed into boys' development of their social awareness and problematising of the formality-informality span during childhood and into their teenage years. This span is never outlined explicitly per se, but pervades within teacher-pupil and peer relations, as well as more broadly across school culture. Therefore, a key part of examining this process would involve considering how boys manage situational nuances within this

span and react to contradictions with others' engagement with it, i.e. teacher misinterpretations of intent in banter. Research of this nature would provide empirical data that could offer further insight into and test the proficiency of third nature psyche as a conceptual tool to understand and explain banter as a behavioural social norm.

Fourthly, more research focusing on the notion of MPE teachers as positive male role models is needed. As denoted by MPE teachers, this is a live and contentious topic, which warrants it worthy of further critical inquiry. In one sense, perceptions that MPE teachers are positive male role models by being male, sporty and approachable illustrates prevailing gender stereotypes concerning boys' psyche and gendered differences in their needs and desires, which emphasises how gender relations have shifted but not equalized. However, in another sense, data gathered here suggesting that the productiveness of teacher-pupil relations within MPE was more based on informality, trust and respect illustrates characteristics that need not be exclusive to MPE teachers. Therefore, further data could be used to question the extent that perceptions of MPE teachers as male role models is based on long-standing binary gendered stereotypes and convenient gendered structures within sport. Whilst such contentions are by no means new, recent debates concerning toxic versus positive masculinity, as witnessed in the hotly disputed Gillette Razor commercial advert, illustrate the need for such enquiry, but also demonstrate the need to do so from a more emotionally detached researcher position.

In terms of practical implications, figurational sociologists strive to provide empirically grounded and theoretically informed reality-congruent forms of knowledge that others can use to reflect upon, challenge, test or implement for change. This position on the use of sociologically produced knowledge has received some criticism based on its misperceptions it espouses a value-neutral position (Rojek, 1986), particularly during a period where sociologists are increasingly considered

and expected to perform the role of public intellectual or social activist. Therefore, below are tentative thoughts on how the key findings in this thesis may be used and what this may look like.

Behavioural norms with MPE were found to differ considerably to those within other subject areas across CHS on numerous levels such as physical competitiveness and aggressiveness, verbal and physical intimacy, and levels between formality and informality. Whilst many boys embraced these de-routinising opportunities, others found them all-encompassing. Given this, it may be that a broad and general school anti-bullying policies or CHS's more implicit relationship-based values appear not to cater for potential acts of bullying within PE. MPE's heightened sociality and boys' occasional engagement in unique confined spaces with little adult supervision and semi-naked peer bodies in some respects expose or even strengthen boys desire to be part of 'We' groups. This was evidenced in the culture of silence surrounding reporting bullying and lack of intervention when witnessing bullying. Therefore, a PE department could develop a behavioural code of conduct based on the bespoke aspects within PE figurations. Given the informality within PE and young people's desire for more democratic relations, this could be developed by staff and pupils together by more informal creative means and be presented in an accessible and flexible manner as a 'pact'.

This 'pact' could include topics such as informal spaces, behaviour within certain sports (i.e. football) and a reminder about the 'spirit' of game-playing, appropriate uses of banter and how this differs to bullying, a better and more considerate reporting system for bullying, and highlight mutual expectations in teacher-pupil relations. This 'pact' need not be a thou shall not, but a more collegiate value-led position statement from a school's PE department. As Green (2000) and Smith and Parr (2007) found, PE teachers and young people stress enjoyment and a break from academic studies as central features of the nature and purpose of PE. If this is to remain so, then behavioural norms within PE, which are often synonymous with those in sport, need to be constantly scrutinised

in terms of inclusivity and equitable practices. As much is recognised by Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson's (2017, 16-17) *Duty of Care in Sport Review*, which states:

NGBs and clubs have a responsibility to stamp out discriminatory behaviours, practices and cultures. Sporting organisations, schools and club teams should adopt zero tolerance for athletes, parents, fans, coaches and support staff who engage in discriminatory language and behaviour. It is crucial to understand the damage language and words can do to a person. In sport there are various levels of 'banter' which can go from mild to harsh, but for clarity it is not on the same scale as bullying. Banter is something that most teams engage in; bullying is not. Banter is a form of gentle ribbing by friends, colleagues and teammates; it is episodic (i.e. irregular), never intended to cause harm and, importantly, reciprocal. Bullying, by contrast, is subtly relentless, intentionally wounding and one directional. Banter can never be used as an excuse for bullying behaviour and it is important to recognise that for some, banter is a route into bullying. Therefore boundaries need to be set and upheld. While there is greater understanding of this than previously, the system is far from perfect.

This thesis illustrates that young people's relationships, identities and behavioural norms involve increasing complex social processes and that young people must constantly negotiate and navigate within and between increasingly diverse figurations. This process involves an intensification and sophistication of young people's behavioural and emotional self-restraints and social awareness, which reflects the relationship between sociogenesis and psychogenesis, and further analysis of this needed.

Chapter 11 References

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Appendices

Appendix A – Ethics Approval Form

Mark Mierzwinski
Lecturer & Part Time PhD Student
Faculty of Health & Life Sciences

Nathalie Noret
Chair of Faculty of Health & Life
Sciences Research Ethics
Committee
Direct Line 876311
E-mail: n.noret@yorksj.ac.uk

1st August, 2014

Dear Mark,

RE: Bullying in physical education: a figurational perspective

REF: MM/01/08/2014/01

The research ethics committee has approved, without reservation, the above research ethics submission of 28th April, 2014.

Yours sincerely



Appendix B – Gatekeeper Letter



Mark Mierzwinski
 Faculty of Health and Life Sciences
 Lord Mayor's Walk, YORK YO31 7EX
 Tel: (01904) 876459
 Home: 01845597108
 Mobile: 07889084361
m.mierzwinski@yorksj.ac.uk

Dear Adam (pseudonym),

As the Head of PE at Colbeck High School, I am writing to you to provide an outline of my proposed research which explores interactions and behaviours within male Physical Education (PE). During school young males go through different physical, psychological and emotional stages of development, but not always at the same time. These stages of development can affect, and be demonstrated through, young males' interactions and behaviours with peers and teachers. These stages are visible in PE, a subject that also provides young males a unique environment in comparison to other classroom-based lessons. Other variables that can affect young males' interactions and behaviours in PE include the space (i.e. changing rooms, sports hall, gymnasium, swimming pool and fields), the activity (i.e. team games, fitness activities and individual skill tasks) and their perceptions of the teacher. It is these variables, as well as others such as demographics, which interest me when considering interactions and behaviours within male PE.

PE is a subject that provides young males the opportunity to compete in sport and other activities in which builds character and helps to embed values such as fairness and respect (NCPE, 2014). Because of this some young males value PE and positively change their behaviour, whereas other young males continue their poor behaviour or indeed worsen their behaviour in PE. It is interactions that are considered inappropriate or unacceptable and behaviour that is considered poor by teachers and pupils, and how these may differ, that interests me. To date, research into this area has been reliant on self-report questionnaires which are exploratory and do not include observations or explanations from those present i.e. young males and teachers. Therefore, my proposed research aims to observe PE lessons, interview PE teachers and complete a series of focus groups with young males. A more detailed report of my proposed study is provided in the information sheet.

This proposed study is part of my PhD thesis and has received ethical approval from York St John University. All attempts will be made to ensure that the school and all the individuals involved remain anonymous, for example pseudonyms will be used. I have the necessary DBS certificate. I feel it necessary to state that I am not a qualified PE teacher and I have not worked in a secondary school before; therefore, I do not wish to make judgements regarding your school, staff or pupils. Due to the study's sociological focus I wish to provide a realist account of what types of interactions and behaviours are present in male PE and how these are interpreted by teachers and young males. This approach differs to conventional questionnaire-led research and meets the suggested school requirements of continued reflection, engagement with and development of school's behavioural policy or anti-bullying campaigns.

Having thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your PE department last term I would welcome the opportunity to complete my research in your school.

Kind regards

Mark Mierzwinski

01904876459

m.mierzwinski@yorksj.ac.uk



Appendix C – Gatekeeper Information Sheet

Gatekeeper Information Sheet

Prior to starting a research project, it is necessary to be open and clear regarding the practicalities involved in the proposed study. The aim of this sheet is to provide a more detailed account of my proposed research.

Proposed start date: Tuesday 20th January 2015

Proposed end date: Thursday 16th July 2015

There are three phases of my proposed study. Phase 1 involves observing PE classes. Below is a timetable for my proposed class observations during spring term.

Day	Period	Year group	5 Jan – 13 Feb	23 Feb – 27 Mar
Tuesday	1 & 2	7x	Gym/Tramp	Football
	8 & 9	10x	Water Polo	TBC
Wednesday	1 & 2	9x	Pool	Outdoor
	3 & 4	8x	Football	Rugby
	8 & 9	11u	TBC	TBC
Thursday	3 & 4	7x	Pool	Out
	6 & 7	10u		
	8 & 9	8x	Pool	Fitness

My aim is to be as discreet as possible during this phase in order not to disrupt or distract the teachers or pupils. This process will most likely involve me situating myself on the periphery of lessons and making occasional notes on an iPad.

Phase 2 involves interviewing male PE teachers. Interviews will be completed towards the latter part of the summer term and will involve a semi-structured approach where questions will be related to teachers' views and experiences of male pupils' interactions and behaviours in PE. Only one interview per teacher is necessary and all interviews will be voluntary.

Phase 3 involves focus groups with young males. The aim is to complete the focus groups towards the end of the summer term. This will involve focus groups per year group with 4-6 young males. Focus groups will be centred on a series of hypothetical scenarios and short stories, and young males will be asked to discuss these scenarios in order to gain their interpretations of the events. Focus groups will not last longer than 30 minutes.

Please note that these are only proposed phases and given the qualitative nature of the study changes can be made to suit the requirements or demands of the school or the PE department.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require any further information.

Mark Mierzwinski

01904876459

m.mierzwinski@yorksi.ac.uk



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Appendix D – Parent Consent Form

Mark Mierzwinski
Lecturer in Sport Development and Education
Faculty of Health and Life Sciences
York St. John University
Lord Mayors Walk
York, YO31 7EX

Dear Parent,

I am writing to request your child's participation in a research project led by Mark Mierzwinski. Since January, Mark has spent three days a week in the male PE department at Colbeck High School. His research explores how young males interact with each other and behave in PE classes. As part of this research, Mark has completed lesson observations and interviews with staff in the PE department. These interviews have provided teachers' perspectives on certain interactions and behaviours of young males and now Mark hopes to complete a series of focus groups with young males to get their perspectives on certain scenarios in PE classes.

Mark aims to complete focus groups at the start of a PE lesson. Each focus group should last a maximum of 30 minutes and will contain four or five young males, who will be randomly selected from each year group. The focus groups will be led by Mark, whom the pupils have got to know, and will be based around pupils' interpretation of scenarios in PE classes. Once finished, Mark and the pupils will re-join the rest of the class.

This research is part of Mark's PhD project and his study has received the full support of the Research Ethics Committee at York St John University. The results from the observations and interview responses from staff and pupils will be recorded (*audio and visual*) and reported using pseudonyms so the identity of the school, its teachers and its pupils will remain confidential. The data collected will be stored on a password protected computer and related forms will be stored in a secure filing cabinet at York St John University, for a period of 5 years. The data will only be accessible to Mark and his two supervisors, so the teaching staff at the school will not have access to any of your child's responses.

Your child's participation in this research project is voluntary and he is free to withdraw at any time without prejudice. To help us to complete the research I request your child's assistance. He can provide his assent by agreeing to take part, but as a minor we are required to have your consent. If you are willing to give consent for your child to participate in the research, please sign and return this letter (*Place it in your child's planner*). I greatly appreciate your assistance with this project, and I wish to thank you at this point for taking the time to help.

For informal enquiries about the project please email m.mierzwinski@yorks.ac.uk. For any formal details or information about your child's rights as a participant, you may email Nathalie Noret, Chair of the Research Ethics Committee n.noret@yorks.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Parker

Please sign below **if you wish your child to participate** in the research described above.

I have read and understand the above information and **do consent** to my child participating in this research project.

Print Name: Date:

Signature:

Appendix E – Teacher Consent Form

Teacher Consent Form**What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose of this study is to explore how boys interact and behave in PE and how these are interpreted by boys and teachers.

What does the study involve?

The study involves lesson observations, pupil focus groups and interviews with MPE teachers. I would you to interview you as part of this process.

Interviews can take place at a time and place that is convenient to you and may last for up to one hour.

During the interview I will ask questions based around four themes. These are; your background in teaching PE, the school and PE culture at CHS, your approach to teaching PE, and your experiences of teaching young males.

Do I have to take part?

No, taking part in this study is voluntary.

It is your choice to do this project—you do not have to.

It is okay if you decide that you do not want to be in the project.

If you choose to participate, you can stop at any time.

You don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to answer.

Your answers

This is not a test with right or wrong answers.

I am interested in your opinions and experiences.

I will keep your answers confidential, unless an incident is reported that I feel the school need to know about.

Contact information?

My name is Mark Mierzwinski and I work at York St John University.

Tel: 01904 876459

Email: m.mierzwinski@yorksja.ac.uk (If you have any questions ask now or call or email me)

If agree to be in the project

I have either read the consent form

I understand that I have been asked to be in a project about male PE

I have been asked if I have any questions about the project and these questions have been answered

I have been given a copy of this form

I agree to be part of this project

Name (please print): _____

Signature of Teachers: _____ Date: _____

Interviewer signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix F – Child Assent Form

Assent Form**What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose of this study is to explore how boys interact in PE and how boys interpret these interactions.

What does the study involve?

The study involves discussions between me, you and a small group of boys in your class. Each discussion will take place in the changing room or the fitness suite at the beginning of your lesson.

During this discussion you will be asked to read a short story.

I will then ask the group some questions about the story.

Then I may ask you some other questions about PE.

Do I have to take part?

Your parents said it was ok, but I also need to ask you.

It is your choice to do this project—you do not have to.

It is ok if you decide that you do not want to be in the project.

If you choose to participate, you can stop at any time.

You don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to answer.

Your answers

This is not a test with right or wrong answers.

I am interested in your opinions and experiences.

I will keep your answers, unless an incident is reported that I feel the school need to know about.

Contact information?

My name is Mark Mierzwinski and I work at York St John University.

Tel: 01904 876459

Email: m.mierzwinski@yorks.ac.uk (If you have any questions ask now or call or email me)

If you agree to be in the project

I have either read or had this assent form read to me

I understand that I have been asked to be in a project about how boys interact in PE

I have been asked if I have any questions about the project and these questions have been answered

I agree to be part of this project

Name (please print): _____

Signature of child: _____ Date: _____

Interviewer signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix G – Observational notes from lessons

Date	Lesson	Activity	Location
14/4/15	1+2	100m	Top field
Year Group	Teacher	No. pupils	Weather conditions
7x	Mr Hatton	17	7c 5mph wind
Full notes			
<p>The boys do a few laps of the track to warm up. They are then asked to complete stretches in small groups. When completing the lap the boys become disjointed and form several small groups. This is usually decided on the pace a group runs, but may provide an indication of friendship groups. The boys generally like the brief warm up period as it often involves them being able to run together away from the teacher where they can talk, laugh and joke with each other openly.</p> <p>Mr Hatton explains to them how they will be doing the 100m sprint, i.e. where the lanes are and start and finish line.</p> <p>The boys then complete a series of short running tasks where Mr Hatton does a demonstration.</p> <p>This includes running 10m with straight legs, on their heels, on their toes, with their heads looking side-wards. After these short sprints Mr Hatton challenges the boys to come up with what they feel is the most effective running technique. The boys then practice this in pairs. They then practice the starting position. Mr Hatton provides a series of easy to remember tips. The boys then complete 2 x 100m sprints.</p> <p>I set them off in 5s. Mr Hatton records their times at the finish line.</p> <p>The group is of similar ability but there are two boys in particular who struggle, but this is not picked up by their peers. Little social comparison of ability is made. There are social comparisons of those who are trying to be the fastest. This usually translates in a competitive manner.</p>			
Theoretical considerations		Reflexive stance	
<p>The running component of the warm up is viewed as fun for the younger boys as they get the chance to talk to each other whilst running, often away from the teacher gaze.</p> <p>In this group little social comparison is made in terms of performance, except from those who are deemed exceptional fast.</p> <p>Unlike the younger boys, the older boys are not as keen to warm-up and they do it because they know they have to.</p> <p>The older boys generally draw more social comparisons on various levels, but competency is one of the main ones.</p> <p>Is this due to the secondary schooling system and the value placed on being competitive, or is it more closely related to identity and the boys realising what it takes to become a man.</p>		<p>I stay on the periphery for most of the lesson. I occasionally 'Start' or 'Time' groups on their sprints.</p> <p>Even by year 7 boys are viewing their bodies and others along performance related and, in this case, movement efficiencies.</p> <p>Some of the boys seem fascinated by <u>Hatts's</u> passion for sprinting but also, in their eyes, how fast he can sprint.</p>	

Appendix H – MPE teacher interview guide

1. Sign consent form – explain confidentiality
2. Explain about the interview guide
3. Explain about the recording and how some of these issues may have already been discussed informally.

First section – A bit about your background in teaching PE

Can you tell me how long you have been teaching PE?

How long have you been at CHS?

Where did you teach before CHS?

How did that/those school(s) differ from CHS?

Second section – school culture

Do you think the Religious culture/presence within the school impacts on PE? If so how?

Do you think the catchment area for this school has a bearing on the types of pupils you get and their behaviour?

As a form tutor or head of house or teacher in another discipline do you think young males behave differently in PE compared with their other lessons? If so why?

Third section – Their approach to teaching PE

Do you think as a PE teacher you adopt a different approach from other teachers at the school who do not teach PE? If so how? Topic areas – discipline. Examples of current approaches

Has your approach to teaching changed over the years? If so how?

Has your approach to dealing with issues with young males changed over the years? If so how?

Do you have a preference for teaching a particular year group/ability group? If so why?

Forth section - Their experiences of teaching young males

From your observations and experiences do you think males act differently in an all-male environment compared with a mixed environment? If so why do you think they do?

What do you see as the most challenging aspects of teaching young males in PE?

Have you had many experiences of young males not getting on in PE? If so, why do you think this has been the case?

Have you had many experiences of young males being overly aggressive or violent in PE? If so what were they doing? How did you deal with them?

What are your thoughts on young males when they banter each other? Where does this happen? What types of things do they joke about / mock each other about?

Have you had many cases of bullying in PE? If so what were the scenarios and how were these dealt with?

When bullying does take place what do you think is the root cause of it?

Appendix I – Focus group vignettes

Year 7 or Year 8 focus groups – Vignette 1

"Right boys, we are all indoors" Mr Sharp tells his year 8 class.

The boys rush and shove their way into the changing rooms, but Billy gets changed in a separate room. Billy has autism.

Mr Sharp tells the class "we are having one big game of dodgeball"

The boys clap and laugh with excitement, but Billy is less happy.

Whilst he often enjoys PE, Billy is not as fast and not as co-ordinated as most of his class.

Two teams are selected. Billy is one of the last picks.

Billy hides behind some of his teammates.

James, a team captain, can throw the ball very hard.

Seeing Billy stood still and not looking, James hurls the ball towards Billy.

The ball strikes Billy in the face and knocks his glasses off.

Billy stumbles slightly and starts to cry.

Half of the class did not see the incident, but some boys did.

Some boys laugh and point at Billy and some boys stand still and don't say anything.

James says sorry to Billy and asks him if he is ok.

Mr Sharp comes over and Billy leaves with his tutor.

Why do you think Billy gets changed in a separate room?

Is it fair that Billy is one of the last picks?

How do you think Billy feels about playing dodgeball and being picked near the end?

Should Billy be playing dodgeball? Should the class be playing dodgeball?

What do you think about the way some of the boys reacted to Billy getting hit?

Could Mr Sharp have done anything differently?

Year 7 or Year 8 focus groups – Vignette 2

"Right boys, I want class A and B to get changed in the big changing room" says Mr Sharp.

In the changing room Kyle shouts "Sam, why do you always sit so close to Joe? Do you fancy him or something?"

Kyle's friends laugh and one says "I bet Sam likes boys more than girls"

Kyle then asks "Sam, are you gay?" The boys continue to laugh at Sam.

By this point Sam gets upset and he doesn't understand why Kyle picks on him.

Last week Kyle laughed at Sam's hairstyle, the week before he accused Sam of throwing like a girl.

Sam jogs out of the changing room crying and tells Mr Sharp about Kyle and his friends.

Do you think Kyle and his friends are joking with Sam?

Why do you think Sam gets so upset?

Why do you think Sam's friend don't stick up for him or tell Mr Sharp?

Is it fair that every week Kyle makes a negative comment to Sam?

What should Mr Sharp do about Kyle and his friends?

Year 8 or Year 9 focus groups – Vignette 3

Connor, a short but large framed boy in year 9, crouches down at the starting line with five classmates.

100 meters away, Mr Sharp is at the finish line and screams "ON YOUR MARKS...GET SET...GO!!!

The rest of the class clap and shout words of encouragement.

During the first 10 metres Connor is close to his opponents, but everyone soon accelerates away from him.

As he nears the finish-line Connor's face is red and he is out of breath. He is supported by some of the class running along the track urging him on. However, Connor notices four boys mocking his running style.

Past the finish line, Connor collapses to the floor exhausted. Two boys approach Connor and help him up and walk back to the changing room with him.

Connor hears someone laughing about how his thighs rub together when he walks. It was Todd. Todd is tall, fast and strong, and is captain of the school rugby team.

Connor is not surprised it is Todd because Todd is always making fun about his weight.

Whilst he doesn't show it, Connor's upset because in year 7 he used to be friends with Todd and he can't understand why Todd keeps picking on him.

How do you think Connor feels when he sees boys doing impressions of his running style?

Do you think the boys doing impressions of Connor are deliberately trying to upset him?

Do you think the boys doing impressions of Connor realise how this makes him feel?

Could Mr Sharp have done anything about the situation?

What should Connor do?

Why do you think Connor's two friends decided not to say anything to Todd or Mr Sharp?

Year 9 focus groups – Vignette 4

In an optional PE lessons the Y10 boys pick football. They beg Mr Sharp for one big game. Mr Sharp picks two captains. One captain picks his friends, whilst Peter chooses to pick boys who have personal rivalries with the opposition.

The game starts and both teams shout and scream "get stuck in to 'em".

The ball deflects into the centre circle and Jamie goes flying into a 50/50 tackle. Mr Sharp claps the players and teammates applaud the tackle and joke about who won it. Peter laughs and says "That's why I picked Jamie. He may not be skilful, but I knew he wouldn't back out of his tackles".

Peter's team concede a goal, so he screams at Chris "Why did back out? Stop ~~fooooo~~ out of tackles! Don't be a wimp!".

Chris, a small skilful player, doesn't respond to Peter's question or criticism.

Noticing Peter criticise Chris, some of the opposition start winding Chris up. Every time he loses a tackle or loses possession he is met with cheers and calls of "he's bottling it lads" "he hasn't got the balls". Chris repeatedly responds with "shout up man" and "give it a rest will ~~ya~~". For the rest of the game Chris is mocked by opponents and even some of his teammates join in.

The final whistle goes and Chris walks to changing room wishing football had not been selected as an option.

Why do you think Peter wanted players who had rivalries with the opposition?

Why was Peter so angry at Chris?

Was what Peter said to Chris fair?

Why do you think the opposition and his own teammates started winding Chris up?

Could Chris have responded differently to people winding him up?

Could Mr Sharp have done anything about the situation?

Year 9 focus groups – Vignette 4

"What's up with you?" Mr Sharp asks Mark

"I have a bad back" Mark replies

"You're always injured you" Says Jake

"No I am not" Responds Mark

"You are...if it's not your glass back, you're whinging about a broken finger nail or ~~summat~~" Jake jokes

Mark snaps back with "Give up Jake, you're doing my head in. You always say that."

"What's up sick note, have a hit a nerve? I hope it is not one in your back" Jake sarcastically comments

"You don't understand I, you just don't" Mark pleads

Bluntly, Jake responds with "I tell you what I don't understand is that you just pick and choose PE when you want. Why don't you just man up and get on with it?"

"Man-up???" Mark questions

"Yeh...man up...you are a right sissy, just get on with it. We all play with the odd knock, it's part of the game, but we just carry on like real men". Jake argues.

"Just because I am injured does that mean that I am not a real man?" Mark adds.

"~~Exc~~, it does for me, even when you do play you always wince and show pain when you get hit with a ball. What's up with you?" Jake snaps back

"Ok boys, enough is enough, just leave it." Mr Sharp

Should Mark try harder to take part in PE?

Why is Jake accusing Mark of not being a real man?

Why does Mark get upset when Jake accuses him of being a sissy?

Is Jake trying to wind Mark up or do you think he is really annoyed at him?

Should Mr Sharp have said something earlier or dealt with it differently?

Appendix J – N-Vivo example

Chapter 6 - Banter and bullying in MPE		0	0
MPE teachers and young males' views on banter in MPE		26	65
MPE teachers and young males' views on bullying in MPE		19	98
Chapter 7 & 8 - Power-relations between MPE teachers and young males in		0	0
'Old school' teaching philosophies and the embodiment of traditional m		6	13
Figurational constraints in relations between MPE teachers and young m		4	12
Informal relations between MPE teachers and young males		16	25
MPE teachers as role models for young males		12	15
MPE teachers attempts to civilize young males		34	64
MPE teachers' perceptions of equalizing trends in their relations with yo		10	20
MPE teachers' perceptions of their 'modern' teaching practices and chall		6	18
Chapter 8 - Conclusion		0	0