"Social Work is women's work, right?"

Amplifying the voices of male social work students entering into a female majority occupation: applying qualitative methods

David Albert Galley

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Bournemouth University

ABSTRACT

The background to this research study concerns a renewed interest in explaining the dearth of men now engaged in social work training, which has been of concern to social work regulatory bodies. Statistics from the former professional body for social work in England, the General Social Care Council, suggests that 77% of registered social workers in 2010 were female (GSCC, 2010). According to Parker and Ashencaen-Crabtree (2012), which this study seeks to expand upon, a similar disparity is mirrored in the United States of America, where the proportion of male social work graduates in 1960 was 43% decreasing to 15% in 2000. Their work however, does not evaluate why the gender disparity is proportioned in this way.

Social work is not a traditionally male occupation and there is a paucity of research which gives voice to the experiences of male social work students (MSWSs). This timely study seeks to amplify their voice and add to a body of in-depth research where reasons for their limited numbers might be explored; thereby illuminating some reasons for their scarcity.

The research was grounded in qualitative methodology which included over-arching ethnographic principles and methods. Participants in the study comprised thirty-four MSWSs across six universities in the UK. In order to understand their perspectives and experiences, Bourdieusian and Intersectional lenses were used. Theories of gender, power, intersectionality and capital were employed to explain the issues and challenges identified by the study participants.

In addition to promoting the voice of MSWSs, the study presents strategies to encourage a greater gender balance within UK social work qualifying programmes and suggests areas for further research in this field of study. This research therefore contributes to, and updates, the existing literature and narrative concerning men as a minority in social work.

Key findings identify that motivations for MSWS to enter into the profession, centred on three broad factors: familial background; previous life experience; and a change in career. Gay and bi-sexual men can gravitate towards a career in social work as they feel congruent with the profession's ethics and values. There appears a need for increased exploration of 'gender' within the feminised pedagogy of social work. In addition, fully funded fast-track qualifying routes appear more accessible to males than traditional entry routes. What remains however is a lack of perceived status and professionalism inherent in the title 'Worker'.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASYE	Assessed and Supported Year in Employment
BASW	British Association of Social Workers
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
FMO	Female majority occupation
GSCC	General Social Care Council
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer
MSWS(s)	Male social work student(s)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCAS	Polytechnics Central Admissions Service
TCSW	The College of Social Work
Turn-it-in	A computer software package often employed by HEIs as part of their VLE, to enable students to submit their assignments electronically. Its primary purpose is to check for plagiarism.
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
UCAS	University Central Admissions Service
UCCA	Universities Central Council on Admissions

CHAPTER ONE – SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 The context for the study

Social work has been dominated by women, in both academic settings and in practice, having long been considered a non-traditional occupation for males (Christie, 1998). Consequently, concordant with male experiences in other female majority occupations (FMOs), men can find training and practice in social work problematic, in contrast to more positive experiences which their gender perhaps affords them in other professions.

A steep decline in the numbers of UK male social workers has been evident for several decades (Giesler & Beadlescomb, 2015). Further evidenced by a decline in males qualifying from 38% in 1983 to 25% in 1991 (La Valle & Lyons, 1993) to around 13% at the time of writing (HCPC, 2016a). This situation is emulated throughout the western world, where in the United States in 2008, 79% of practitioners were female (Sakamoto et al. 2008), an increase from 63% in 1976 (Kadushin, 1976). In Australia in 2006, 83% of practitioners were female (Healy & Lonne, 2010) an increase from 64% in 1976 (Lewis, 2004).

The General Social Care Council (a former regulator for social work in England) and scholars forecast, that due to men retiring from the profession and the low numbers of males enrolling on social work courses in England, this trend is likely to continue (Furness, 2011; GSCC, 2012b; Hussein et al. 2009).

Female students in higher education represent 56% of all UK students (HESA, 2015). However, in England alone females represent 87% of all social work students (GSCC, 2012a). This is emulated throughout the western world, where in Australia, in 2006 females made up 86% (Healy & Lonne, 2010) and in Canada in 1999, 70-82% (McMaster, 2002). In the US the proportion of male social work graduates was 43% in 1960 decreasing to 15% in 2000 (Schilling et al. 2008).

Indeed, in the UK the proportion of males studying social work has seen a steady decline from 35% in 1980, 25% in 1991 to around 15% early this century (GSCC, 2012b; Lyons et al. 1995; Skills for Care, 2016). Should current trends continue, Schilling et al. (2008: 113) assert that "social work should begin a conversation about the possibility that it may become a profession composed entirely of women".

Having as one of its objectives the promotion of increased gender balance within the profession, the continued and steady decline in males practicing as social workers raised concerns within the former regulator for England the General Social Care Council (GSCC) (Parker & Ashencaen-Crabtree, 2012). Naturally, an increased number of male social workers would rely on an increase in male social work students (MSWSs) enrolled on qualifying

courses. The low numbers of MSWSs and a desire to see an increase has been the subject of scholarly discussion (Ashcroft, 2014; Galley & Parrish, 2014; Moriarty & Murray, 2007; Phillips & Cree, 2014; Schaub, 2017). Policy makers have further expressed disquiet about the numerical gender disparity (Scottish Funding Council, 2016; Woodfield, 2014). The head of the Universities and Admissions Service (UCAS) has called for an increase in the number of males recruited to the caring professions and teaching (Matthews, 2014). Figures for 2017/18 suggests that males represent around 34% of students studying in these areas, indicating that this has not yet been achieved (Universities UK, 2019).

Evidently if the gender ratio of social work is to change, the number of male social work students (MSWSs) enrolled on qualifying programmes will need to increase. There have been few studies which explore MSWS perceptions of social work and their experiences on qualifying courses to inform this area (Crabtree & Parker, 2014; Parker, 2010; Parker & Crabtree, 2012; Schaub, 2015, 2017). This thesis therefore adds to this discourse by presenting findings of a PhD study which explores the main factors which affect the experiences and career decisions of MSWSs on social work qualifying programmes.

Other studies have explored gender issues with social work students (see for example: Christie, 2006; Furness, 2007; Giesler, 2013; Hyde & Deal, 2003; Khunou et al. 2012; Stevens et al. 2010) but have included both male and female participants within their research samples. Giesler and Beadlescomb (2015: 148) contend the "paucity of literature about men's experience in social work limits the scope of awareness about the topic". Therefore, as this study seeks to garner the experience and perceptions of MSWSs, it seems appropriate to focus on these hidden male voices as the research sample for this study. I am however mindful of the observation by Dionisi (2012: 15) that given being "male is associated with power and control within mainstream society, the need to give a group of males a voice, may seem counterintuitive".

In light of the gender imbalance within social work and in relation to this study, thoughts may naturally turn to question if there is a need or a requirement for male practitioners. A brief exploration of this question will add to the context of this current study.

While some authors explore the paucity of male practitioners within social work and the question of increasing their numbers, this tends to be set against pejorative discourses. These range from the potential for child abuse (Christie, 2001a; Scourfield, 2002), to questions about how males rapidly board a 'glass-elevator' into powerful positions, in contrast to the 'glass ceiling' often encountered by females (Cree, 2001; McPhail, 2004; Pease, 2011).

Whether the paucity of male practitioners has a negative impact on social work generally, or on those it serves would benefit from further clarity and enquiry. The possible benefits have

however been discussed by many authors, beginning with Younghusband in her Carnegie Reports of 1947 and 1950. These were framed and expanded upon by Lawrence in 1965 (p.198) who claimed eleven advantages of having male social workers:

> "They have a greater sense of professional commitment in the early stages of their career; they provide essential employment stability in social agencies; they stay in the profession longer; they are not hampered by community attitudes toward professional women; they rely less completely on their work for personal and social satisfaction because they have a family and home of their own; they are more likely to gain recognition of qualified social work in public service circles; they are less likely to accept inadequate employment conditions; they are keener to insist upon independent and equal status with the established professions; they can more easily bridge the gap between government and nongovernment agencies; they take a broader view of individual problems; they are generally more aware of the father's part in family life".

Although Lawrence's comments make some rather dated assumptions which lack depth, they have set a background for more contemporary authors to develop. As a starting point, Pease (2011) posits that men possess a different relationship to caring than women and asserts that male perspectives in and on social work practice does add value. This perspective can also be seen in religion, one example is described by Rosenburger (2014) who asserts that in Jewish law, males and females must be afforded social workers of the same gender.

Pease (2011) encapsulated three primary arguments for increased gender balance within the profession, all of which appear concordant with the profession's ethics, values and codes of practice.

The first and perhaps most obvious of these arguments is the gender diversity argument. A fundamental right evidenced in the core values of social work is to provide choice by "recognising diversity" (BASW, 2014:9). Pease (2011: 411), informed by the works of Christie (2001), Gibbons et al. (2007) and Pringle (1998), identifies the need for gender balance within the profession "to ensure that women's and men's interests as workers and as clients are met". Broader is the contention that social work should be more representative of those communities it serves, where commentators assert the need for a targeted recruitment campaign to counter the present gender imbalance (Mahadevan, 2009; Rogers, 2013).

The case for greater gender diversity and therefore the need to attract increased numbers of male practitioners as summarised by Pease (2011) appears to be strong. The difficulty with this however is that currently when males enter social work, they tend to rapidly rise into positions of power, therefore perpetuating social work as a male dominated, but female majority profession. Schaub (2017) suggests that the male positions of power could be harnessed to assist in broadening perceptions of what are traditionally masculine and feminine

roles, to improve gender equality and promote an increasingly diverse work environment. He suggests this might be achieved by encouraging male practitioners to evaluate their career choices through a lens of gender equality and determine if those choices diminish or increase equality.

Williams (1993) provides a critique for this argument in two ways. Firstly and broadly asserting that true gender diversity in paid employment necessitates addressing the minority of females in male majority occupations. More focused however is the perception that men remain true to their learned forms of masculinity, which neither challenges gender roles effectively, nor breaks down barriers in the gender hierarchy (Williams, 1995).

The second argument, male social workers as role models, suggests that male service users, boys in particular, should have opportunities to interact with male social workers thereby enhancing their engagement with social work practice, which might not be the case with a female social worker (Christie, 1998; Hicks, 2001; Tarrant et al. 2015; Warming, 2005). Arguably this could reflect social work ethics by applying the value of "identifying and developing strengths" (BASW, 2014: 8).

This argument has not been without critique from many writers (Cameron, 2001; Featherstone et al. 2017; Hicks, 2008; Pease, 2007; Tarrant et al. 2015) mainly as it perpetuates stereotypical gender roles. A report by Robb et al. (2015) from the Open University for Action for Children (2015), entitled *'Beyond Male Role Models: gender identities and work with young men'*, goes further. It explored the relationship between young men and support services (along with social workers) suggesting that it is the personal commitment and qualities of a worker, rather than their gender which are most valued. This suggests that young men are content to engage with practitioners regardless of gender and are able to identify with role models with a range of backgrounds and experience, with gender being a less important consideration.

The third argument for increasing the number of male practitioners concerns that of professional status and prestige. In one of her early 'Carnegie Reports' in 1947, Dame Younghusband asserted that attracting men into social work would increase its prestige, ensuring its status was elevated to a profession; a point echoed by Williams (1995). Other authors (Christie, 2001; Harlow, 2004; Lewis, 2004) argue that the female majority in social work reflects the lesser value put on caring roles, resulting in the lack of prestige and status; compared to medicine or law where males are in the majority.

This argument is obviously problematic when taken with regard to gender equality which social work purports to value highly, and may only serve to perpetuate the higher status of males within the profession.

The case for recognising all these arguments is in some measure perhaps enshrined in the global definition of social work, adopted by the International Federation of Social Work (ISFW, 2014) suggesting that:

> "Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing".

Although this definition is broad discounting gender, the majority of service users with whom social work engages are female, indicating something of the gendered nature of practice (Christie, 2001a). By not reflecting diversity and demographics in wider society, including gender, disability, ethnicity and culture could impact negatively on the future credibility of the profession. Where males are concerned, increasing their numbers as practitioners could make the profession more accessible to male service users who may engage with social work prior to their needs becoming critical (Flood, 2014).

1.2 Introducing the research question

The purpose of this research and thesis is to expand and contribute to a growing knowledge and literature in this area. It is set out to understand the motivations and factors affecting males wanting to embark on a career in social work, therefore the substantive question for this research has been identified as:

> *What are the main factors affecting the experiences and career decisions of*
> *male social work students (MSWSs)?*

1.3 Research aims

To answer the research question, the aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of enrolled MSWSs and recent alumni in the UK, identifying existing barriers which may exist for males entering the profession, studying on what might be termed 'feminised' programmes, and what action might be taken to address them.

To achieve this aim, six objectives are set:

- To explore the motivations for MSWSs to enter the profession.
- To examine whether these motivations differ across intersections of diversity.
- To determine the qualities and assets they bring to the profession.
- To determine the intentions of MSWSs, and career choices determined by recent alumni, in respect of practising within the social work profession or an alternative.

- To determine any trends in preference expressed by male students in terms of the subject area of practice placements, and to evaluate if these trends vary by region.
- To determine what changes MSWSs and recent alumni recommend for improving their student experience on qualifying courses.

1.4 The contribution of this study

While significant literature exists which explores the experiences of male social workers in practice (Annison, 2001; Baines et al. 2014; Christie, 2001a; Cree, 1996; Davey, 2002; Gollingham, 2006; Hicks, 2001; Kadushin, 1976; McLean, 2003), the experiences and perceptions of males as social work students is less evident.

There have been four previous UK qualitative studies in this area, three of these consider the perceptions of MSWSs from their authors' home university (Crabtree & Parker, 2014; Cree, 1996; Parker & Crabtree, 2012). These represent important in-roads into this area, conducted as they were at two UK universities, one in Scotland and the other on the south coast of England respectively. However, these have not explored a wider evaluation of the experience of male students within social work education, limiting awareness and understanding of this topic. These previous studies have in the main been descriptive analyses of participants' narratives, and perhaps lack a depth of theoretical analysis.

Their findings suggest that negative attitudes toward males in social work education are perceived as low-level yet widespread. Parker (2010) suggests such attitudes also appear rooted in education concerning the treatment of students in practice placement, which to date has been insufficiently addressed. Indeed, Parker & Crabtree (2012) specifically identify a lack of research concerning the experiences of male students enrolled on qualifying programmes, or evaluation of where changes might be made which could attract a higher number of males to enter the profession.

Schaub's (2017) thesis encompasses a wider range of data from universities in England, which he analyses using a theoretical framework, however, his study centres on progression (or lack of) for males studying social work.

This study seeks to inform a gap in knowledge by using data from all four nations of the UK, and for the first time included male social work students (MSWSs) and recent alumni across all four countries of the UK. This is important because it presents opportunities for greater examination of issues connected with gender across a range of geographical locations within social work education. This may bring to light differing perspectives of being a minority within qualifying programmes. Indeed, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) and Featherstone et al. (2017) argue that geographical location can define and shape masculine identity, which is key

in understanding identities and aspirations. This new analysis may therefore go on to assist in informing the policy debate concerning gender balance within the profession (McPhail, 2008).

The study explores the links between the life experiences of MSWSs and their motivations to pursue a career in social work, with a further aim of examining their experiences as a MSWS and will look at intentions they have for their career. Moreover, this is the first study to address existing conjecture within the literature that links sexual orientation to MSWSs motivations for becoming a social work practitioner, and their perceptions while studying on a qualifying programme. It is proffered that the findings from an in-depth theoretical analysis of these elements could be used to inform recruitment and retention strategies for professional organisations and regulators of UK social work.

This thesis aims to posit a novel theoretical sociological framework with which to analyse the research themes. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1984) theoretical toolkit, it explores how social space, social reproduction and agency is developed by MSWSs and then used differently at the intersections of circumstances and environments which they encounter.

A further aim, perhaps the most important, is to bring to the fore the voices of MSWSs which are seldom heard, in the unusual circumstances of being male in a female majority training and practice environment (Amato, 2017; Baum, 2015). Indeed, the interview process allowed some of the participants to express their perceptions which never before had a platform. It is hoped that by participating in this study opportunities for reflexivity has helped them in managing any issues they may have encountered.

1.5 The motivation of the author

As this study draws on an interpretivist paradigm and its associated qualitative methodology, it is important to recognise and state my background and motivations to conduct this study. My interest in the subject area first began as a minority within a minority. I identify as male, a social work educator and a gay man. Due to my father's violence towards my mother, I was made a ward of court at the age of five, which was my first experience of social work as a service user. My second experience as a service user of social work came later in life. On both occasions I felt that social work was something done to me, not with me, and it became something of an ambition to challenge such practice approaches.

As a MSWS it was strikingly obvious that I was one of a numerical minority in terms of gender. I also appeared to be a minority within a minority in terms of sexual orientation. My interest in this phenomenon was further sparked as an undergraduate through my participation in a pilot study which led to a small-scale study by Parker & Crabtree concerning MSWSs. Their paper

published subsequently was my starting point when applying for their PhD research studentship externally funded by the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

Since that time, I have stepped into the 'glass elevator' experienced by male practitioners and have ultimately been a social work academic for over seven years. Over those years, I have taught cohorts of social work students which mirror the gender balance this study concerns. My roles have spanned from admissions tutor to course leader and I have been curious to discover the motivations of career choice concerning MSWSs.

As one so closely placed within the research, or one who Cooper (2009) defines as 'practice-near', I must acknowledge the opportunity for bias. To reduce this, in this opening chapter I have acknowledged my interest and connection with the research topic and also acknowledge that this 'nearness' will result in inevitable personal change, as no doubt I will be challenged by it (Nash, 2011). Acknowledging how this subjectivity positions me within the research, I reflect on Riessman (1994: 135) who identifies the subjectivity of a researcher as an important factor in ethically and methodologically sound research:

> "We are … humans with emotions, values, social biographies and institutional locations. They shape the problems we choose, the ways we go about studying them, the eyes we bring to observation, and the relationships we have in the field. Locating ourselves in the work, instead of pretending we are not there, helps readers evaluate the situational knowledge we produce".

1.6 Thesis outline

To address the research question, this study employed an interpretivist qualitative methodology to elicit thick description of the perceptions and experiences of MSWSs across the UK. Thirty-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with MSWSs from six universities, red-brick and traditional. Three in England and one each from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The participants recruited were diverse ages (18 – 51) and ethnicities. The study therefore benefits from a wide range of different cultural perspectives, as well as learning what might improve their various experiences while enrolled on qualifying programmes.

Providing a rich sociological analysis of the perceptions and experiences of MSWSs, this thesis comprises eight chapters and begins with this introductory chapter, setting a background to the study. Chapter two contains a review of relevant literature. This ranges from attitudes to men in caring roles, expectations and expressions of masculinity, to the literature concerning men in other female majority occupations (FMOs). It progresses to examine and critique the literature concerning men in social work and goes onto look at the literature concerning social work education in terms of disabled students, LGBTQ students, ethnic minority students and MSWSs. Chapter three discusses sociological theory considered useful

in aiding the understanding of participants' voices, in particular those issues concerning power, and goes onto explore and identify and apply a theoretical framework with which to analyse data. This includes the social theory established by Bourdieu and the feminist theory of intersectionality. Chapter four outlines the methodology and methods used in this study, going on to identify the themes arising from thematic analysis before applying theory. It presents findings concerning social work programmes across the UK along with an analysis of GSCC quantitative data. Chapter five analyses themes emergent from data by applying Bourdieu's analytical toolkit and how the results of this analysis have aided understanding of their motivations. Chapter six analyses these themes by applying an intersectional lens to their experiences. Chapter seven discusses the findings further by applying a theoretical framework constructed of Bourdieusian and intersectional lenses for a deeper understanding of MSWSs motivations, perceptions and experiences. Chapter eight, the final chapter seeks to summarise what has been learned from this study, to posit some recommendations for policy makers in this area and to outline possibilities for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: EXPLORING THE LITERATURE CONCERNING MALES IN FEMALE SPACES

INTRODUCTION

When exploring the main factors affecting the experiences and career decisions of male social work students (MSWSs) and considering some emerging themes from the literature, it appeared helpful to consider several questions: What factors have been identified to date? Are these factors unique to MSWSs? If not, what can be learned about these in other female majority occupations (FMOs)? How do such factors relate to the experiences and career decision of MSWSs? In order to address these questions, a range of literature has been identified for a critical exploration.

Mindful of the call for increased numbers of male social workers to provide greater gender balance within the profession (Ashcroft, 2014; GSCC, 2008; Matthews, 2014), it might be appropriate to explore some wider literature, the context of which concerns the social construct of males, masculinities, and violence, before exploring more specific literature concerning caring and social work practice. While there is a significant body of literature concerning females who pursue traditionally male careers, there is less concentrating on the career motivations for men in non-traditional male occupations, such as, social work (Simpson, 2009). The relatively scant literature dedicated to men in social work, or analysis of their motivations to enter the profession, has implications for this review, not least because of the limited range of literature to draw upon in the last decade.

This study will therefore also draw upon the literature of allied non-traditional occupations, such as, nursing and teaching (Shen-Miller & Smiler, 2015). Such occupations are commonly grouped with social work, as they are also seen as 'women's work', or FMOs (Shen-Miller & Smiler, 2015; Simpson, 2009; Williams, 1993).

This chapter begins by first considering the starting point for the literature review and which themes were identified in a first reading. It moves on to detail the literature search strategy based on a systematic approach concerning these themes. Third, the chapter explores gendered attitudes towards caring, while considering sociobiological perspectives. Here due consideration is given to varying emanations of masculinity in caring, and how problematic they might be. Fourth is an exploration of gender in education and how successful males are in achieving adequate levels of attainment for entry into the professions. Lastly, an examination of males in female majority occupations and social work is provided.

The three distinct types of relevant literature were identified: books, journal articles, and work outside the public domain, such as, dissertations and conference presentations, commonly known as 'grey literature' (Aveyard, 2014; Hart, 2001; Whittaker, 2012).

2.1 Initial background literature

Initially, the bibliography of Parker and Crabtree (2012) paper signposted me to a physical search of texts, journal articles and research papers. From this bibliography, approximately twenty journal papers and an edited compilation were identified. Themes emerging from this initial reading were: gender; masculinities; male hegemony; gender roles and caring; career choice dynamics; isolation; social work students; sexuality; and social work. Following the initial physical search and reading of this literature, an electronic search was undertaken using the rigorous and systematic approach suggested by Aveyard (2014). This included searching for the key themes identified by Williams (1991; 1993; 1995) and Christie (1998; 2001a), which formed the basis for the search terms detailed within this electronic search for literature. The process and results of this are detailed in Table 1 (please see page 264).

2.1.2 Literature search strategy

As the process of the literature review in this study is iterative, from commencement of the studentship I arranged to receive email alerts for an internet Boolean search for literature and publications with the content 'male and student and social worker' via the 'Google Scholar' search engine. Further specifications were that results should be in English to capture a western perspective. These alerts directed me to new resources as they became known to the worldwide web, which was then reviewed on a case by case basis. Although this avenue of enquiry was not really as fruitful as first envisaged, it was useful in confirming that certain texts associated with the study should be consulted and served to keep abreast of research being published in the field.

The search was undertaken electronically, using the university library search mechanisms and criteria as detailed below. Each paper / journal article / book was then reviewed for further relevance to the study. The electronic search employed MySearch, a comprehensive discovery service provided by EBSCO. This allows for integrated simultaneous searching of numerous databases such as, MEDLINE Complete, CINAHL Complete, Academic Search Complete, PsychINFO, SocINDEX. Also, Education Research Complete, Social Sciences Citation Index, Publisher Provided Full Text Searching File, ERIC, OAIster, Supplemental Index, and EThOS. Initial index term searches were conducted using keywords, or a combination of the first four themes with the fifth and sixth themes and then subsequently the first four themes with the seventh:

1. Gender*
2. Masculin*
3. Male hegemon*
4. Sexualit*
5. Social work*
6. Student*
7. Caring

These searches were performed for a period from the beginning of each database (1983 – 2019) and although a collection of international research was identified the majority of results were found to emanate largely from the US and the UK. Results were further refined using inclusion criteria, grouping the search terms 'Masculin*', 'Gender*', 'Male hegemon*', 'Sexualit*' and 'Social work*' and 'Masculin*', 'Gender*', 'Male hegemon*', 'Sexualit*' and 'Student*'. This was further extended to the examination of the bibliographic references of key works most aligned with the current study for further relevant material. Due to the nature of this study and the costs inherent in translation, the exclusion criteria consisted of publications in languages other than English and/or from nations not exhibiting western culture. Abstracts of the de-duplicated results were then assessed for inclusion or exclusion in the following stage of the reviewing process. The full text of articles selected for inclusion from their abstracts were then viewed and assessed to establish core literature.

A further role of the literature review was to ensure that this study did not replicate others, although conducting similar research to previous studies can be validated by updating or critiquing prior findings (Aveyard, 2014).

The iterative nature inherent in the methodology highlighted aspects identified during data collection which necessitated revisiting the literature. For example, it became necessary to discover if similar issues were experienced by men exist in other caring professions. This was then added to the original literature search strategy (as the diagram above illustrates).

What emerged from the search was an emphasis within the literature of exploring the male perspective practicing in a vocation identified as a 'feminised profession', perhaps due to an underlying feminist ideology which supports a 'female majority occupation' (FMO). The paper by Crabtree and Parker (2014) entitled '*Being Male in Female Spaces'* sums-up these issues.

This suggests that gender, and the reaction of feminist perspectives to male hegemony, plays a large part in the gender disparity between the sexes in the caring professions and social work. Feminism may provide the ideological tools to challenge these gendered perceptions and to explore alternative roles (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

The search for the literature identified key authors who discuss issues concerning the phenomenon of male practitioners in social work. Perhaps most prominent of these has been

Alistair Christie (1998; 2001; 2006; 2008), Vivienne Cree (2000; 2001), Stephen Hicks (2001; 2015), Bob Pease (2000; 2007; 2011), and Jason Schaub (2015; 2017).

Emphasising a relative dearth of research concerning male students of social work, nineteen studies exploring the phenomenon of MSWSs were included in this review (Bartoli et al. 2008; Bernard et al. 2011, 2013; Chinell, 2011; Christie & Kruk, 1998; Crabtree & Parker, 2014; Cree, 2000; Furness, 2007; Hyde & Deal, 2003; Khunou et al. 2012; Kulkin et al. 2009; Messinger, 2004; Osteen, 2011; Parker & Crabtree, 2012; Perry & Cree, 2003; Raiz et al. 2007; Schaub, 2017; Taylor, 1994; Warde, 2009). Of these, ten studies were carried out in the United Kingdom, eight in the United States and one in South Africa. All of these studies enquire into the paucity of MSWSs and broadly focus on exploring the phenomena of marginalisation and disadvantage in respect of MSWSs, with some recommendations to address these.

All of the studies took qualitative approaches which focus on narrative enquiry except those by Furness (2007) and Kulkin et al. (2009). Six studies examine the motivations and aspirations of MSWSs to join a profession perceived as a non-traditional occupation for males (Christie & Kruk, 1998; Cree, 2000; Furness, 2007; Osteen, 2011; Taylor, 1994; Warde, 2009). Five studies focus on a broad perception concerning a negative impact that social work pedagogy and training has on 'masculinity' (Crabtree & Parker, 2014; Hyde & Deal, 2003; Khunou et al. 2012; Parker & Crabtree, 2012; Perry & Cree, 2003). Four of whom highlight heterosexism and homophobia experienced by LGBTQ students within the academe (Chinell, 2011; Kulkin, et al. 2009; Messenger 2004; Riaz et al. 2007). Three concern progression issues experienced by MSWSs (Bernard et al. 2011, 2013; Schaub, 2017), and one focuses on the disadvantage experienced by black African students on access to and progression within social work education (Bartoli et al. 2008).

The majority of previous studies employed qualitative methodologies which will also be the case with this current study. However, to foreground the voices of MSWSs this current study will select a sample of male only participants as just three of those previous studies can be identified as comprising solely MSWS participants (Parker & Crabtree, 2012; Schaub, 2017; Warde, 2009). Where previous studies have largely been devoid of the application of theory, this study will identify a novel theoretical framework with which to analyse data and add to the literature concerning MSWSs.

As the role of men cannot be understood in isolation to the role of women (Scambor et al. 2014) discussion of the literature begins with a brief examination of the gendered attitudes to caring.

2.2 Gendered attitudes towards Caring

Due to a relative paucity of literature concerning males in social work, it was important to explore the phenomenon of men engaged in wider caring activities. The traditionally conventional explanation of women as caregivers relies on the essentialist, natural or biological perspective (Coltrane, 1994; Connell, 2000, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This identifies physical and deep-seated psychological differences between men and women which develop from childhood and which reinforce 'traditional' gendered roles (Lorber, 1993). Perhaps as an extension of women's traditional role as wife and mother, females have generally been in the numerical majority of those providing care in the caring professions. Psychological studies suggest the care of others is a fundamental element of the female psyche, reflected in debates about 'nature or nurture' (Baker Miller, 1978; Chodorow, 1978).

Berk (1985) and Cockburn (1991) reflect that there are normative expectations attributed to work being 'gendered'. This arrangement was legitimised centuries ago within theology and law, when marriage and the division of work between a man and a woman were instituted and legitimised, thereby establishing patriarchal society and the gender order (Hall, 1998). West & Zimmerman (1987: 147) make the point that, "doing gender furnishes the interactional scaffolding of social structure, along with a built-in mechanism of social control". Women were seen as homemakers, providing care and nurture; whereas men were seen as women's protectors, suppressors and bread-winners, providing the security for home-life (Roberts, 2013). Such divisions of gendered labour manifest deeply rooted inequality and preserve the gender order (Ely & Padavic, 2007).

Throughout the ages, the duty of care and nurture within most cultures has fallen to females in their traditional reproductive role, and as a natural extension of it (Cancian & Oliker, 2000; Meyer & Storbakken, 2000; Tronto, 1993). As a result, society has embedded - nurture, service, empathy, beauty and sensitivity as female skills (Heilman, 1997; Hochschild, 1983). As a result, paid workers in occupations that embody these skills have become known as 'pink collar workers' (Howe, 1977).

Even countries seen as socially progressive, such as, The Netherlands and Sweden, females still do twenty to 60% more unpaid care work than males (World Bank, 2015). Despite these statistics, it can no longer be assumed that females wish to take up caring roles. Such perspectives neglect the agency inherent in females in contemporary society where women's rights and access into spheres of society previously closed to them slowly open.

Traditionally, West and Zimmerman (1987) posit that gender is accomplished through social interaction and have identified that traditional societal expectations are produced during 'sex role socialisation'. For example, a study by Ruf and Radosevich (2009) found that females

have a greater ability to express emotion, and it is unsurprising that Hochschild (1979; 1983) labelled caregiving as 'emotional labour'. Sociological perspectives suggest that socialisation is key to being a care-giver, determined by social experiences throughout the life course; the recurrent, sanctioned, self-activating elements, deployed by our internalised cognitive frameworks where we are participating actors (Scott, 2008).

For men, this has meant not necessarily providing, but enabling care. A position more conducive to the traditional social construct of their masculine role, evidenced by broader philanthropic efforts (Galley, 2014). By enabling, but not *doing* care, reflects that 'a century ago manliness was seen as less fluid, less amenable' (Roper & Tosh 1991, in Whitehead 2002:15). In traditional gender-roles, women have generally downplayed their caring responsibilities, whereas men tend to valorise any caring efforts they make (Finn, 1998).

The gendering of care provision has meant that both paid and unpaid caregiving has been thought of as unskilled, learned by rote and influenced by cultural values, economic incentives and more recently neo-liberal policy reforms (Clarke, 2004; Harvey, 2005). A view endorsed by comparable studies between the US and some EU countries (Gornick & Meyers, 2004). Such perceptions serve to legitimise gender roles, where employment outside of the care sector, viewed as skilled, continues to reinforce men's identity, patriarchy, status and power, sustaining the undervaluation of unpaid caring work (Rake, 2001; Simpson, 2009).

Buschmeyer (2013) suggests that these factors alone can exclude men from the caring professions. It can be problematic for men entering into this domain, as societal and perhaps personal attitudes can limit and impact their free choice of entering into caring roles (Jacobs, 1989; Williams, 1993). For men, attributes such as, technical ability and physical strength attract the power and authority society can ascribe, thereby ensuring a capability to compete in a man's world (Cameron, 2001; Chusmir, 1990; Simpson, 2009; Williams, 1993). Deviance from these socially constructed norms can result in a questioning their identity and even their sexuality (Lupton, 2000; Mangan, 1994). Perhaps one of the most prominent factors affecting men and their ability to care or express care, is the phenomenon of masculinity.

2.3 Masculinities

As many feminists have pointed out, practical and emotional labour connotes femininity, whereas abstract thinking and freedom are more akin to masculinity (Davies, 1995; Annandale, 1998). The social construct of masculinity, or more correctly masculinities, represents an overarching theme emerging from the literature. Given westernised social conventions concerning traditional gender roles, the phenomenon of masculinity appears to be discordant and therefore potentially a problematic choice for men to work in the caring professions and social work (Heikes, 1991; Simpson, 2009). As there has been a 'sex typing'

of careers which have been assumed socially suitable/acceptable for either men or women (Acker, 1990), an evaluation of masculinities concerning men employed the caring professions is therefore important to this study. Although it is challenging to define masculinity from a social constructionist perspective because the concept is continually under revision, masculinity has traditionally been associated with males.

In defining the ideological rules of masculinity which men can be measured against, Kimmel (1990: 100) purports there should be:

> "a) no sissy stuff: avoid all behaviours that even remotely suggest the feminine
> b) be a big wheel: success and status confer masculinity
> c) be a sturdy oak: reliability and dependability are defined as emotional distance and affective distance
> d) give 'em hell: exude an aura of manly aggression, go for it, take risks".

Reductionist views of masculinity such as this, stated as a rigid entity have long since been debunked (Hearn & Morgan, 1990). Indeed, Cree (2001) asserts that Kimmel's definition of masculinity to be quite different to the array of masculinities which inhabit men's real words.

Masculinities can be viewed from a constructivist perspective created by the social interaction between men and women and between males themselves. According to Simpson (2009), masculinity can only be meaningful in reaction to its relationship with femininity. Masculinity can be seen to be dynamic in the way that it can be constructed and reconstructed and shares a similar fluidity with the concept of gender. Buschmeyer (2013) terms this fluidity as 'doing masculinity'. Richardson (2010: 738) suggests that:

> "Men enact masculinity in different ways, depending not only on their social characteristics, but also on the dynamics of the social spaces in which such enactments take place, whether this is a more private or public setting".

Connell (2005) concurs, defining masculinity as a social construct, existing in contrast to femininity, polarising character types assigned to one particular gender. Any cursory study of men in recent western history demonstrates the emergence of a plurality of masculinities (Whitehead, 2002; Pascoe, 2007), which Connell (2005) further identifies within a social hierarchy of power. Connell's contribution is important as it suggests that it is not only women who can be oppressed but also men and their masculinity.

Emanations of masculinity represent challenges for men working in non-traditional or feminised occupations, where they may experience an impact on their gender identity. Lupton (2000) asserts that men working in FMOs fear feminisation or have concerns over their ability to demonstrate empathy and compassion; 'emotional labour'. These are skills ascribed to women and strongly associated with social work, which can create problems for male practitioners (Heikes, 1992; Hochschild, 1979,1983; Wharton, 2012). Christie (1998) believes

that these phenomena have led to speculation that male social workers experience a sense of discord between their personal identity as males in a female majority profession, and in their roles as professional male social workers.

Such concerns centre on a fear of a change in identity. Such changes have been identified variously by Heikes (1991), as 'spoiled identity', by Bradley (1993), as 'damaged masculinity' and by Evans and Frank (2003) as 'spoiled masculinity'. As these terms might suggest, men can experience that their masculinity is under stress. Causes of this stress can result from assumptions or uncertainty concerning their sexual orientation (Evans, 2002; Lupton, 2000; Mangan, 1994; O'Connor, 2015; Simpson, 2004) and/or concerns that they may be sexual predators (Cronin, 2014; Harding et al. 2008; Sikes et al. 2010).

The contrast between working in a FMO and the socially prescribed demonstrations of masculinity can cause stress among males themselves (Lupton, 2006; Williams, 1993). Such dissonance and stress can result in masculine 'role strain'. In this environment both males and females may contend that females have more natural dispositions and abilities for FMOs than men (Cree, 2001; Nentwich et al. 2016; OECD, 2015; Okrainec, 1994). Such insecurities of masculinity are a consequence of a divergence from traditional gender roles enshrined in employment, religion and class (Collinson, 2003).

Kerfoot and Knights (1998) identify such insecurities as a failure in a quest to control. Consequently, successful performance of masculinity can be ascribed to being heterosexual, accomplished, and predictable, in control (Alvesson, 1998; Collinson & Hearn, 1994; Connell, 2000; Hearn, 1994; Knights & McCabe, 2001). Anything less than achieving the traditional characteristics of masculinity can result in anxiety and insecurity. Kimmel (2004) posits that such insecurities can be inflated by the expectations of family members or peers for males to inhabit more traditional male roles. The cumulative effect of anxiety over a lack of masculinity can be a form of self-surveillance, the power inherent in which acts as a driver for males to pursue a more security of identity and control (Kerfoot & Knights, 1993, 1998). Such phenomenon silence men and prevents their sharing of experiences, thereby acting as barriers for them seeking support (Amato, 2017).

Subjugation of masculinity can give rise to differences in its display which Carrigan et al. (1985) identify as, giving rise to 'multiple masculinities'. A product of the construction of masculinity to specific contexts and reactions to various cultural, institutional and geographical situations (Coltrane, 1994; Connell, 2000; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Pease, (2011: 406) suggests however, that "many of the rationales for encouraging more men to enter social work are unlikely to support alternative masculinities that will challenge gender inequalities".

In 2011, Hogan spoke movingly at the first Rape and Justice Conference in Ireland concerning masculinities and how males are damaged by the influence of society in terms of alcohol and violence. Drawing on Connell's (2005) definition of male hegemony and the stereotypes it reproduces, Hogan suggested that masculinity means conforming and performing as men, one endorsing the other, while repudiating behaviour which might be deemed as feminine. These patriarchal masculine practices, he argued, subvert the male ability for love, nurture and care, further damaging the male psyche. Such challenges raise questions about how men contend with feminine aspects of work in the caring sector having those demands. Hogan (1998) calls for raising awareness of how males are socialised using restorative approaches in terms of reflection, group work and media campaigns.

According to Pringle (1995), men working in social welfare have a duty to express their masculinity in such a way that develops anti-oppressive practice and challenges anti-sexist practice. Such a nebulous stance however may lack the strategy to promote change.

2.3.2 Hegemonic masculinity

The concept of 'hegemony' is one derived from Gramsci's analysis of social class and cultural dynamic with which one group claims superiority in social life (Connell, 1987). Connell (2005) developed Gramsci's concept where she identifies a type of masculinity which pervades society and culture, against which, femininity and other emanations of masculinity are defined. Therefore 'hegemonic masculinity', Connell (2005: 77) defines as the apex of gender order:

> "The configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and subordination of women".

Not only does it prescribe gender order, it subordinates men who fail to live up to its ideals, either by choice or as a result of its effects. Indeed, Mauser (2010, in Buschmeyer, 2013) identifies that hegemonic masculinity imposes a hegemonic hierarchy concerning other types of masculinity and devalues them. Devalued masculinities include Gay men (e.g., subordinated masculinities) those on axes, such as, men of ethnicity, ability and class (marginalised masculinities), and those men complicit with the gender hierarchy, who benefit from the subordination of women, or "patriarchal dividend" (Connell, 2005: 82), but do not embody hegemonic masculinity themselves (complicit masculinities) (Elliot, 2015). Connell (2005) speaks of 'protest masculinities' as those who do not fit any hegemonic classification perhaps due to poverty, the inability to read and write for example, and 'pro-feminist masculinity' more of an ideological idea, than a masculine category.

Although Connell's (2005) definition of hegemonic masculinity represents a lived cultural force and experience, positioning white heterosexual males at its apex, it is acknowledged that not

all men practise it (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), indeed some seek to avoid it (Simpson, 2009). Giesler (2013) opines however, that most men benefit from a cultural superiority over women and subjugated men. Hegemonic masculinity is exercised by and attributable to comparatively few (Coles, 2009), but sustained through a complicity of lower social class and white ethnicity (Parker & Crabtree, 2012).

Critiques of Connell's conceptual positioning identify the lack of male agency inherent within its fixed and reductionist definition (Demetriou, 2001; Jefferson, 2002; Petersen, 1998). Although Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity has been critiqued it remains unchallenged as a method of theorising gendered power relations. Indeed, Meuser (2003: 136) states that "its importance lies in being an interpretive pattern for locating oneself in the gender order". It would appear that feminism or subordinated masculinities have had little effect on the continued effects of male hegemony (Connell, 2005).

Although hegemonic masculinity is not lived by a majority of men, it does not come without significant costs for those who do. Such costs include increased violence, high-risk behaviour, poor relationships, neglect of self-care and poor health (Elliot, 2015). Kimmel (2004) identifies that not attaining the hegemonic masculine ideal contributes to an insecurity of masculinity. This suggests that men would benefit from new forms of masculinity, which embraces gender equality. Several authors have identified potential benefits of its revision as, enhanced familial relationships, increased physical and psychological health, increased life expectancy and a reduction in violence (Connell, 2003; Hearn, 2001a; Kimmel, 2010; Messner, 2000; Scambor et al. 2013).

Although there are men who choose not to embody the hegemonic masculine ideal, there are those who are required to balance and display an acceptable form of masculinity in contrast to the masculine 'ideal', particularly in the caring professions (Fletcher, 2003). Accordingly, many men in FMOs seek to maintain a distance from the hegemonic ideal, by resisting associations with heterosexual masculinity and instead draw upon humour and sexual orientation to play with and resist difference, thereby creating increased accord with the feminine. Indeed, Hicks (2001) suggests the mere presence of gay practitioners challenges dominant hegemonic masculinity, setting a context to practice in a way which may prevent its perpetuation and which challenges men's violence. By drawing on these margins, men practise the 'doing' and 'undoing' gender (Butler, 2004; Deutsch, 2007; Pullen & Knights, 2007; Simpson, 2009). Woodhams et al. (2015) suggest that males with less adherence to traditional gender roles may be drawn to, or be more comfortable with working in a FMO.

2.3.3 Gender and identity

According to Connell (2005), defining sex and gender is not unproblematic. Hormonal differences, brain sex and genetic coding can be among the determinants. For the purposes of this thesis however, 'sex' is taken as the biological determinant and 'gender', "as something done or accomplished" (Connell, 2005: 6). Indeed, sex and gender have long been distinguished as the difference between the biologically determined and the socially constructed. Both gender and sex were perceived as fixed. Most people have historically and subjectively acknowledged the existence of two sex categories and two genders; male and female, masculine and feminine (Garfinkel, 1967; Hawkesworth, 1997; Kessler & McKenna, 2000). This view was supported by the medical model emanating from the nineteenth century, suggesting that female personality was determined by their anatomy and reproductive role (Abercrombie et al. 2000), aspects of this argument were endorsed by Kessler and McKenna's (1978) research.

Social work as a profession has long demonstrated a commitment to equality (IFSW, 2004; BASW, 2014; TCSW, 2012) and in particular gender equality (IFSW, 2004; United Nations, 1994). Lorber (1993) asserted that if equality between the sexes is a true goal then perhaps there is no need for gender categories at all. By contrast, such is the development in diversity of gender categories in contemporary society, that even those whose identified gender matches their body are defined as 'cisgender' (Schilt et al. 2009; Thorne et al. 2019).

However, sex category and the performance of that sex category i.e. gender can be subjected to evaluation (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The performance of gender identity is therefore subjective, and in various social arenas is constructed through relations of power (Kerfoot & Knights, 1998).

As part of the discourse concerning gender, Hirschfeld in 1910 identified four types of 'gender ambiguity' (Krafft-Ebing, 1965, cited in Bland & Doan, 1998: 97). Along a continuum, he identified 'sexual intermediaries', representing discontinuity between the elements of what is viewed as gender normative. For example, those with ambiguous sex organs such as, intersexed people; those with secondary sexual characteristics (men with breasts, women without them etc.), those divergent with their sex drive (passive men, masculine women, those who desire the same sex, etc.), and finally, actual gender inversion of emotional characteristics, for example, men who dress, think and live as women (Sullivan, 2003).

Commentators now agree on a biosocial perspective, that we are bodies and minds at one and the same time and therefore gender is a product of both our biology and socialisation (Hoyenga & Hoyenga, 1993). It was Freud who first asserted that human beings are innately bisexual, that gender and sexual orientation are adopted (Connell, 2005). Moreover, roles

such as, 'mother' originally thought of as biological, are actually influenced by social structures (Chodorow 1978 versus Firestone, 1970). Therefore, gender is not simply attributable to individuals but is characteristic of social structures and systems (Risman, 1998). It is a multilevel phenomenon, the practices of which exist independently. Despite this, gender remains a central dimension which determines how social resources are distributed and resultant inequalities experienced (Wharton, 2012). What remains controversial and open to continued debate is to what degree either phenomenon influences the other (*ibid*).

Research has informed the phenomenon of how gender is formed and its links to biological determinism (Villa, 2007), ceasing to explore the differences in gender, but rather, what processes reproduce gender (Buschmeyer, 2013). Anthropological and ethnomethodological research highlights the development of gender through socialisation (Sharpe, 1976), or by masculine power relations which determine domestic roles and forms of sexuality (Lees, 1993). Just as Connell (2005) asserts that masculinity can be lived and expressed in multiple ways, according to Butler (1999), sex or rather gender may be performed depending on the social situation. Gender can therefore be seen as an achieved or attributed status, constructed through psychological, cultural and social conditions and exchanges (Bruni & Gheradi, 2002). Moreover, gender is not just created by actions in a given situation, but interactions and reactions to that situation (Gerson & Peiss, 1985). It is emergent, representing something 'done', and illustrates one of the basic concepts of constructivist gender theory (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Correspondingly, Goffman's (1969; 1976) analysis concerns the presentation of self and gender display, whereby individuals seek alignment with social circumstances and the self, through reflection, anticipating an appropriate expression of demeanour in those circumstances. Butler's (1993) framing of gender as a 'performance' broadly aligns with Goffman's (1976) identification that gender is a 'display'. Indeed, it might be argued that gender is enacted by men and women, whose social abilities are hostage to its production. This refers to the fluidity in construction of gender and how these might be 'acted out' (Moller, 2007). A 'doing' of gender 'involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micro-political activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine' (West & Zimmerman, 1987: 126). It is therefore management of this situational conduct which conforms to normative conceptions deemed appropriate to one's sex and reinforces membership to that sex category.

The blurring of the binary concepts of masculine or feminine and resultant gender ambiguity have been viewed as 'the other' and weak, serving to undermine masculinity as a social construct. Cree (2001) identifies that being gay has traditionally been viewed as weak,

perhaps leading some gay men to present an exaggerated effeminacy, or more latterly to consciously emphasise a more 'macho' persona. Watney (1986) purports that such portrayals and discussions of what gender means can actually reinforce stereotypes, thus inadvertently promoting what it is to be masculine or feminine. Such criticisms from feminist theoretical perspectives led to the emergence of Queer theory and other poststructuralist theory, which seeks freedom from these binary gender positions (Macey, 2000). In contemporary society gender nonconformity has rendered the concept increasingly fluid and adaptable. An example of this concerns those who feel that their physical and psychological sexual characteristics are juxtaposed, i.e., transgendered, who can opt for surgery to align these dispositions. Over fifty known gender identities acknowledges that gender diversity goes far beyond the traditional gender binary, however, there are those who reject any categorisation (Bosson et al. 2019; Thorne et al. 2019).

2.4 Social policy and gender

Moving from sex/gender as a concept, the chapter now turns to examine the arena of social policy where structural influences endeavour to tackle gender inequality by prescribing equality at cultural and social levels. Such policies have been developed by an international political agenda. In 1979 the United Nations (UN) adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), reinforced by the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action on CEDAW (United Nations, 1979; United Nations, 1995).

Gender equality has also been adopted by the European Commission (EC) as a right for all women and men (European Commission, 2011). Throughout Europe the change in men's participation in caring is gradual yet remarkable, particularly when examining childcare and domestic work (European Commission, 2010; Eurostat, 2008). Cancian and Oliker (2000) assert that one way of engraining gender equality is an equal responsibility of providing care between genders and this was recognised by the European Union (EU) in the 1980s.

EC policy has encouraged this by seeking to increase numbers of men involved in childcare and encouraging men to have greater responsibility in caring for their own children (Bauer, 2007; Cameron & Moss, 1999; European Commission Network on Childcare, 1996; Holter et al. 2009; Scambor et al. 2014; Scott et al. 2012). The benefits of this policy may improve the quality of life, health and relationships for men (Holter, 2007). Indeed, since the mid-1980s the availability of a fathers' time engaged in childcare has steadily increased (parallel with a reduction in the increase of household tasks due to modern appliances) (Bianchi et al. 2005).

Further EU policy measures to reconcile employment and family life have also encouraged increased numbers of men to become engaged with early education and nursery provision (Jensen, 1996). New ideals (particularly within the family) of gender egalitarianism continue to

gain ground (Oliker, 2011), promoting the feminist perspective which asks men to take on the full weight of their caring responsibilities (Andrew & Newman, 2012).

UK legislation and social policy also addressed gender inequality in contemporary British society. In 1976 the Equal Pay Act was introduced following the strike action of mainly female workers at the Dagenham Ford plant (Conley, 2014). More recently, the Equality Act 2006, specifically refers to gender as a protected characteristic. Moreover, the Equality Act 2010 sets gender equality as a legal requirement in terms of employment, as well as access to public and private services (Pascall, 2012). By turn, the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 provides for same sex marriages in England and Wales.

Despite such measures to support gender equality, it could be argued that some has had limited effect. Equal pay for women remains contentious, as examples abound of women's pay not being equal to their male counterparts in similar employment (Alksnis et al. 2008; Blau, 2016; Bradford, 2018; Furnham & Wilson, 2011; Malkin, 2016; Revesz, 2016).

As social policy becomes further embedded, society appears to question traditionally held gendered work roles (Holter, 2009). Even the vertical hierarchies of power within organisations dominated by men may now be questioned (Collinson & Hearn, 2014). Although gender equality has yet to be accomplished, some argue that encouraging increasing participation of males into female majority professions could result in greater gender equality (Schaub, 2017; Simpson, 2009).

2.5 Gender and Higher Education

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the number of females studying in higher education at all levels exceeds their male counterparts (OECD, 2012). The only exception to this concerns females studying at doctoral level, however, even this is changing in their favour (Vincent-Lancrin, 2008). OECD (2015). Statistics suggest that between ages 24-35, 35% of males attained a higher education degree compared with 46% of females. Similarly, in the United States, 43% of all bachelor's degrees attained in 2009-2010 were awarded to males, where females demonstrate higher educational attainment in all degrees awarded (Aud et al. 2012: Evers et al. 2006).

This is also a concern in the UK, as in 2016/17, 57.5% of students in higher education were female (Universities UK, 2018: 6), with females representing 63% of those students studying the social sciences in 2017/18 (HESA, 2019a). Disagreement however continues on how to resolve the gap in HE attainment and participation rates between genders (Hillman & Robinson, 2016). Not only are there more females in UK higher education but their attainment

is generally higher, being more likely to achieve upper second or first-class degrees (HESA, 2019b).

Research suggests that females achieve much better results over a range of higher education subjects (Francis et al. 2002; Leman & Mann, 1999; Naderi et al. 2008; Sheard, 2009; Thompson & Bekhradnia, 2009). When the results of first-class degrees are examined on their own however, the percentage of males being awarded a 'first' remains higher than that of females (HESA, 2019b; Woodfield & Earl-Novell, 2006). Schaub (2017) notes this as surprising and inconsistent with otherwise lower male educational attainment. One explanation may be the higher concentration of males within courses demonstrating a higher proportion of 'firsts' in rational/technical areas such engineering and applied sciences (Kamphorst et al. 2015; Leman & Mann, 1999; Woodfield & Earl-Novell, 2006). Other explanations include a gendered way of writing, where males exhibit a 'bolder' style (Smith, 2004), which can sometimes gain them higher grades (Francis et al. 2002).

Notwithstanding these anomalies, male educational achievement from primary school through to higher education remains lower than their female counterparts (Hillman & Robinson, 2016; OECD, 2015). Machin and McNally (2005) assert that since 1969 male students have increasingly trailed their female counterparts in educational attainment at GCSE (or 11+) (see also Burgess et al. 2004; Connolly, 2006; Featherstone, 2015; Younger et al. 2005), with male grades consistently lower since the 1980s (Alloway & Gilbert, 1997).

A range of commentators assert that academic attainment for many younger males is no longer 'cool' and is a reaction to a perceived feminisation of academic success. Hegemonic masculinity is more likely to be valorised and attract a higher status with their peers by demonstrating a prowess in sport and/or success in cross-gender relationships (Alder et al. 1992; Archer et al. 2005; Epstein, 1998; Francis 1999, 2000; Francis et al. 2009; Jackson, 2006; Martino, 1999; Renold, 2010; Younger & Warrington, 2005). Attitudes which view educational attainment as a low priority with male students, also pervade higher education (Dempster, 2007, 2009; Jackson & Dempster, 2009).

The disengagement of males from education compared to their female counterparts affects their attendance (Cotton et al. 2016; Woodfield & Thomas, 2012), completing less study hours (Cotton et al. 2016) and an increased likelihood of withdrawal when difficulties arise (Edgar, 2015). The picture appears even less favourable where males are enrolled on courses with a higher proportion of females. Evaluation of associated research findings by Severiens and ten Dam (2012) suggest that the highest proportions of males leaving programmes are where females make up more than 75% of the cohort, but not for females in male dominated cohorts (Johnes & McNabb, 2004; McGivney, 2003). The reasons males withdraw also appear to be

different to their female counterparts. Here issues centre on difficulties balancing work and education while studying, and lack of perceived career status following graduation.

In any event, the pervading lack of educational attainment in males potentially represents a significant shift in the place and status of men within contemporary society. This is concurrent with a seeming rise in 'moral panic' which has produced such titles as *The End of Men: and the Rise of Women* (Rosin, 2012). Aspects of a 'crisis of modern man' in society is closely aligned with undermining the traditional male 'provider' role (McLean, 2001; Scourfield, 2006a). This may result in males becoming structurally unemployed and, due to advances in modern science, becoming optional in regard to human procreation. Shifts in contemporary societal attitudes towards males call into question their domestic and employment roles, widening opportunities in areas which have traditionally been associated with females.

2.6 Gender-majority occupations

In contrast however, there is an increasing tendency for women to enter previously male dominated professions (Cross & Bagilhole, 2002; Kanter, 1977; Simpson, 1997, 2000). Indeed, an in-depth review of GPs by the Centre for Workforce Intelligence (2013) reports that since 2011 numbers of UK GPs qualifying are increasingly female and predicted to be the majority GP workforce by 2030. This trend however, is not as evident for men and there is little research, with a few exceptions concerning why males enter into 'women's work' (see for example; Lupton, 2000, 2006; Sargent, 2001; Williams, 1993).

As discussed previously, roles and occupations have been traditionally ascribed to one gender or the other, due to their stereotypically assigned gendered elements (Reskin & Roos, 1990). Acker (1990) notes that gender identity in employment is continually reinforced and reproduced and employed traditionally in the 'construction' of men and masculinity, i.e. higher wages which in turn bring greater power, resources and status. Organisations who persist with rigid gendered employment patterns, may however, be subject to increased scrutiny (Morgan, 2008; Scambor et al. 2014). Conceptual 'gendered roles' in the labour market are no longer fixed and change with the demands of the market.

Hakim (2000) posits that females and males are moving towards gender atypical areas within work. However, Hakim's work has been critiqued, particularly by feminists in her development of Preference Theory (see for example, Crompton & Harris, 1998; Gash; Ginn et al. 1996; James, 2008; Vitali et al. 2009; Walters, 2005). Shifts in attitudes concerning work roles, represents challenges to male hegemony which inevitably means a shift in male attitudes (Hearn & Pringle, 2006). Such factors have converged in recent decades which make participation in caring, or a career in traditionally FMOs increasingly viable or desirable for men. Moving into atypical areas of work reflects a contemporary change in cultural and

societal attitudes, progressive in breaking-down traditional gender roles (Galley, 2014). Despite the shift in attitudes towards gender roles, changes in attitudes have not kept pace with the two devalued arenas of care (paid and unpaid) in terms of appropriate status or remuneration (England et al. 2002; Oliker, 2011; Andrew & Newman, 2012).

Until recently some FMOs have required only middle ranking academic qualifications or training, i.e. nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social care and social work. Atypical gender roles in the caring professions have traditionally necessitated special qualifiers such as, 'female doctor' or 'male nurse' (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Low pay and status, coupled with possible familial and peer disapproval, can be barriers preventing significant numbers of men entering into FMOs, particularly in the field of care (Simpson, 2009). This perhaps begs the question, why would men seek careers in FMOs?

The decline and insecurity of traditional 'working-class' male-dominated spheres of employment, particularly manufacturing, are due in part to globalisation and technological advances (Alcock et al. 2003). This contributes to men considering service employment historically done by women, which a few generations ago might have been inconceivable. Shortages of personnel in professions such as, teaching (at primary level), nursing and social work, are seen as increasingly viable occupations for males (Simpson, 2009; Williams, 1991).

Bradley (1993) identifies three factors which lead men to enter into FMOs: takeover, invasion and infiltration. The rare occurrence of male 'takeover' of a FMO concerns major technological advances, such as, mechanisation, where men can be seen as more suitable. This is however rare, as such advances are unlikely to garner higher pay or status. 'Invasion' occurs where men do not displace women completely, opting instead to occupy higher status specialisms, such as, mental health or forensic work, where opportunities for promotion or leadership positions abound.

Infiltration can occur due to unemployment elsewhere, or an informed choice of men to enter a FMO due to discontent in more gender congruent careers. Bradley's concept of 'infiltration' resonates with Williams and Villemez (1993) stated dynamic of being 'seekers' where men actively choose to enter FMOs. Williams and Villemez (ibid) further identify 'finders' who sought other work but 'settled' for a non-traditional occupation (Simpson 2004, 2005). Settlers, unlike seekers/finders tend to remain in the frontline rather than seek promotion, therefore prioritising intrinsic reward over the extrinsic, denying more careerist strategies which would favour removal into management positions.

For 'seekers', the challenge to counter the incongruence between a FMO and their sense of self/identity as 'masculine' can trigger other strategies (Lupton, 2000; McLean, 2003; McDowell, 2008; Morgan, 1992; Simpson, 2004, 2009). For example, they may actively seek

'invasion' into a specialist area (Christie, 2008; Lupton, 2006; Simpson, 2009; Williams, 1993), reformulate their role to accentuate its masculine aspects (Cross & Bagihole, 2002), distance themselves from female colleagues to maintain a masculine presentation of self (Evans & Frank, 2003), or seek promotion into management (Christie, 1998; Williams, 1995).

Such strategies speak to the 'hero' or 'man-of-action' discourse more fitting with hegemonic masculinity (Christie, 2001a). For example, by choosing to specialise in child protection, or working in emergency medicine, either in an ambulance or an Accident and Emergency department; which require urgent and controlled responses. Crosthwaite (2009) identifies that traditional male roles in the caring sector have historically been associated with garnering respect for expressions of masculinity. These have included highly qualified roles such as, clinical specialist, consultant, general practitioner (GP) which centre on technical-rational thinking. Conversely, they may be more manual in nature, such as, hospital porter and patient transport driver.

The physicality of males working in FMOs can be a perceived benefit, but also a barrier. A range of literature highlights concerns over men's physical touch in FMOs. The manual aspect of care work can sometimes involve heavier work where males can employ their physicality, or physical strength as their emanation of masculinity (Dahle, 2005; Evans, 2004). Heikes (1991) likens this to taking a 'he-man' role, where male nurses are called upon to undertake heavy lifting and moving. This disposition which can also be used in a protector role (particularly toward female nurses) to deal with physically threatening patients. A disposition also brought to bear in various specialisms such as, mental health to deal with unpredictable and dangerous patients (Milligan, 2001).

The potential for sexual abuse where males work in a caring role and sometimes use intimate touch, has drawn on the inherent discourse of risk (Evans, 2002; Harding et al. 2008). Men's fears can often be heightened by the negative reactions of children, patients and service users in caring spaces (Nentwich et al. 2013; Shen-Miller et al. 2011). Here again males perform 'gender identity work' displaying an appropriate and often overt masculinity, to stem fears of being a 'dangerous sexuality' (Christie, 2008; Jones, 2007; Shen-Miller et al. 2011; Skelton, 2003; Sumsion, 1999; Williams, 1995).

In the US, O'Lynn (2013) identifies that women have authored much of the text concerning nursing over the last hundred years. A media used to foreground women's interests in the face of a patriarchal society, and to inspire increasing numbers of women to practice the feminised profession. O'Lynn (2013) asserts that this has denied men gender-appropriate nursing role models. Moreover, multiple studies have identified that male nursing students have raised concerns over the paucity of male role models (e.g., Okrainec, 1994; Streubert, 1994; Kelly et

al. 1996; Stott, 2007). However, as nursing is a FMO, it may be that these role models are less accepted as such, representing as they do a subjugated masculinity (Buschmeyer, 2013).

According to a study by Lewis (2004) exploring the caring professions, both social class and gender have a direct bearing on the career paths and choices of men and women in social work, where women favour practice and men favour management. McLean (2003) also identifies that while in a minority, the majority of white men in social work represent its management, far exceeding males from ethnic minority groups who are better represented in less qualified care sector roles.

2.6.2 Male student experiences in female majority occupation training

Those males who study to enter FMOs can focus on 'gender work' to assist with a certain degree of assimilation into these professions. For example, those studying teaching can draw upon the 'new man' discourse, adopting a more sensitive, egalitarian and family orientated approach. This can aid success in studying alongside females, gaining qualifications and ultimately working in a FMO environment (Montecinos & Nielsen, 2004).

Males in FMO training can present flexible masculinities, perhaps performing 'feminisms', and increased feminine characteristics (Bagihole & Cross, 2006; Christie, 2006; Cross & Bagihole, 2002; Evans & Frank, 2003; McDowell, 2015; Montecinos & Nielsen, 2004). Here they are seen to accept negative stereotypes of feminine 'mothering', masculine 'discipline' and the flamboyance associated with being gay. Or performing a deliberate, heightened masculinity to counter concerns over "dangerous sexualities", such as, being a sexual predator or being gay (Foster & Newman, 2005; Hansen & Mulholland, 2005; Weaver-Hightower, 2011: 109).

Adopting such polarised positions of the 'new man' or a 'heightened masculinity' can be regarded as a deliberate choice and those in which males can be more comfortable (Schaub, 2017). This mirrors Simpson's (2009) assertion of otherness or 'other' that males can create in such circumstance to ensure success in FMO environments.

There is a body of literature which identifies progression issues concerning male nursing students and discusses the factors associated with their attrition (Anionwu et al. 2005; Muldoon & Reilly 2003; Mulholland et al. 2008; Pryjmachuk et al. 2008; Robertson et al. 2010; Stott, 2004, 2007). Progression issues have also been identified in programmes where males train to be primary school teachers (Cunningham & Watson, 2002; Drudy et al. 2005; Mills et al. 2004; Szwed, 2010). These studies identify a questioning of motivations to enter into FMO professions, where concerns over sexual orientation or abuse were evident, and as a result male student's reported feeling isolated and excluded.

Those who continue into practice however, are more likely than their female counterparts to ascend the hierarchy (Floge & Merrill, 1989; Bradley, 1993), which perhaps demonstrates the trade-off or compensatory gendered practices between working in a feminised FMO and restoring men to a dominating position (Alvesson, 1998).

2.7 Males in Social Work

Much of the literature concerning males in social work addresses working with men as service users and how they engage with social work (Huebner et al. 2008; Bellamy, 2009). The discourse centres on the abuse of women and children, absentee fathers and domestic violence (Berger et al. 2009; Brown et al. 2009; Gillingham, 2006; Holt, 2003; Parent et al. 2007; Scourfield, 2006a; Smith & Randall, 2007; Strega et al. 2008), and inevitably less discussion of domestic violence perpetrated by women (Tsui et al. 2010).

A growing literature is evident concerning social work with men as service users who display different sexual orientations (Bywater & Jones, 2007; Cosis-Brown, 1997; Dunk-West & Hafford-Letchfield, 2012; Fannin & Fenge, 2008). Cosis-Brown and Cocker (2011) identify that research in this area has historically been scarce, but nonetheless asserts that traditional social work theories and methods can be adapted to different groups.

The influence of men working in social work was first discussed in the literature by Dame Eileen Younghusband (1902-1981). Her post-war review and subsequent reports acknowledged the influence inherent in gender arguing that men and their perspective would increase the level of professionalism. She endorsed the concept of the 'professional association' as a vehicle for developing social work as a respected occupation,

In 1975 Walton's classic study posited that men are usually found in settings which require a measure of management but reflects on the traditional paradigmatic dilemma between care and control in social work (Day, 1979). Parker and Doel (2013) identify ironically, that such patriarchal structures impact by controlling the lives and social position of women, in a profession informed and motivated by feminist emancipation.

Younghusband's and Walton's assertions appear to mirror many contemporary commentators of social work who broadly assert that aspects of hegemonic masculinity such as, rationality, technical expertise and emotional distance are fundamental aspects of social work practice as a rational-technical project (Christie, 1998; Orme, 2009; Perry & Cree, 2003; Pringle, 1995). Figueria-McDonough et al. (2001) reflect that although contemporary social work education supports feminist perspectives, it assists in reproducing gendered stratifications into the profession. Pease (2011) identifies such structures as masculine hegemony re-asserting itself. Given the perception that social work is an extension of the traditional roles of women as

carers and mothers (Kadushin, 1976), this represents a juxtaposition. Bowl (1985: 18) identifies however that men, particularly in social work do not wish to, or want to aspire to this 'ideal' hegemonic masculinity.

Contributors to the literature such as, Christie (1998; 2006) and Cree (2001) have provided a focus on male qualified practitioners in the UK. For example, Christie (2006) posits that female conceptions of male practitioners are on one hand 'hero's' as 'macho 'protectors and on another, as 'gentlemen' displaying a softer, more empathetic persona. Christie (2006) identifies these binary opposites of masculinity to explain why some men are attracted to social work. This conceptualises the paradox of a women's view of their male counterparts, either as the 'heroic man of action' and 'protector' of female colleagues in the face of hostile service users, or by contrast as a 'gentleman' which insinuates characteristics of reflexivity and perhaps effeminacy. While identifying these two binary opposites, they do not necessarily preclude other or multiple masculinities which male practitioners may present.

What appears to be missing from the social work discourse concerning males and hegemony is a conceptual framework for theorising men, for example, male practitioners who wish to reflectively and consciously avoid these classifications or be complicit with them (Buschmeyer, 2013).

Moreover, there is no evidence that the 'heroic man of action' might be more likely to identify as heterosexual. Assuming otherwise may be problematic, as Parker & Ashencaen Crabtree (2012) assert that deviation from hegemonic masculinity represents a 'subordinated' form of masculinity, subject to oppression by more dominant forms. This has relevance in a profession where homophobia is active (Perry & Cree, 2003), where a study by Black et al. (1998) found that MSWSs were more likely to exhibit homophobia than female counterparts. Homophobia in a social work education setting is a theme which other authors have discussed, and which is further explored below (see section 2.8.4).

Commentators identify that male practitioners can experience a 'glass elevator' of rapid promotion and advancement, in contrast to the 'glass ceiling' that female practitioners can experience (Christie, 2001a; Simpson, 2009). The glass ceiling/escalator phenomenon has been subject to extensive discourse within the social work profession (Curtis et al. 2010; Gibelman & Schervish, 1993; Lyons et al. 1995; McPhail, 2004; Williams, 1992) and within the academe (DiPalma & Topper, 2001; Sakamoto et al. 2008). Promotion of men into managerial positions was somewhat unintentionally encouraged by the Younghusband Report of 1959 but is less evident in primary school teaching and nursing (Shen-Miller & Smiler, 2015). A study by Taylor (1994) suggests that that there was a greater interest in advancement by

MSWSs than their female counterparts, but they were no more likely to apply for promotion than the female participants of the study.

More recently, qualitative research by Kullberg (2012) in Sweden suggests a proportional decrease of male practitioners of social work in senior management. The reasons cited for this trend are threefold. Firstly, the emergence of the 'new man', where family and actual content of work increasingly takes precedence over status and income. Secondly, managerial working conditions are seen to have been eroded and are therefore less attractive, and third is an increasing desire to develop a specialism using horizontal career progression pathways.

2.7.2 Motivations to enter the profession

Scholars have debated the varying motivations for entry into the profession (see for example: Christie, 2006; Christie & Kruk, 1998; Furness, 2007; Parker & Merrylees, 2002; Pease, 2011; Stevens, 2010; Wilson & McCrystal, 2007). A few of these make links between males and their motivations, but few based these on the responses of solely male participants. Christie's (2006) study asked female participants why men might be motivated to enter the profession, attributing them to be similar to their own altruistic motives. Furness (2007) found no significant difference in the motivations of male or females in her study. Stevens et al. (2010) identify that male and female participants cited career stability and opportunities for promotion as the most significant motivator for males. In addition, a South African study involving both male and female participants, suggest that the bursary attached to studying social work is slightly more attractive to male than female students (Khnou et al. 2012). It appears then there is a gap in the established literature which solely explores the motivations of MSWSs to pursue a career in social work. If there is a desire to know what motivates males to enter into social work, then, as with this study, it might be preferable to principally ask those who identify as male.

2.7.3 The problem with men in social work

Feminist perspectives in social work are perceived, with some cause, to have perpetuated a low-lying negative view of men in regard to child protection and gender; some preferring to avoid working with men altogether (Scourfield, 2001a). In other research, social workers themselves identify that "pejorative discourses of client masculinity are in fact dominant in childcare teams" (Scourfield & Coffey, 2002: 323). Indeed, the concepts of male hegemony and patriarchy appear to have become synonymous with risk and abuse of children (Scourfield, 2001b; Scourfield & Coffey, 2002).

Furedi (2013), commenting on the *Operation Yew Tree* case, describes a moral crusade in an age of mistrust, which brings into sharp relief the analysis by Perry and Cree (2003) of society's construction of men as 'dangerous' to children. This reflects the feminist discourse of gendered

power relations, where those with a penis are viewed with the capacity to rape and abuse (Woodhull, 1988). Such narratives serve to maintain a view of men as incorrigible and as potential violent abusers of children and women (Scourfield & Coffey, 2002; McLean, 2003; Gillingham, 2006).

In social work practice, Scourfield (2001b) suggests that men contribute very little to the wellbeing of their families, where Lloyd & Degenhardt (1996) explain that within a family subject to social work intervention, men can be perceived to be remote, hostile, and fearful or avoidant of any caring intimacy. A significant proportion of the profession's time is spent in dealing with the consequences of men's violence against women and children, and significantly less time working with men as service users (Christie, 2001). Munro (1998) asserts that men tend to be ignored or discounted because they are often absent from the 'situation' upon any social work intervention.

Research concerning males and masculinities in social work can induce controversy, where themes can represent a questioning of masculinity and motivations (Christie, 1998; Pease, 2011). Authors have discussed the links between gender, stereotypes, masculinities, child protection work and their perceptions within social work. This has fuelled conjecture concerning the role of men in social work and discussions over their paucity as practitioners (see for example: Cree, 1996, 2001; Christie, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2006; Parker & Ashencaen-Crabtree, 2012; Geisler, 2013; Gillingham, 2006; Harlow, 2002; Hicks, 2008; Holley & Steiner, 2005; McLean, 2003; McPhail, 2004, 2008; Moriarty & Murray, 2007; Perry & Cree, 2003; Scourfield, 2001a, 2003; Taylor, 1994; Walton, 1975).

Cree (1996) reflecting on her social work practice, describes a journey from purposefully distancing herself professionally from men, to a position of challenging and supporting them. Indeed, feminist perspectives concerning gender in social work have also sought to raise the importance of liberation of males as well as females, emphasising diversity and presenting a challenge to masculine hegemony seeking to subjugate subordinate males (Dominelli, 2002). Hicks (2008), as an openly gay male social worker, identifies issues around sexual orientation which might impact on practice and sweep away traditional barriers of men being a threat.

2.8 Students of Social work

In 2003 social work became a profession with a protected title and the requirement of degree level education. As discussed earlier, more young females succeed in university than in any previous decade (McDowell, 2008), perhaps as a consequence of the drive for gender equality in education since the 1970's (Weiner, 2010). Traditional gender equality strategies have rightly focused on women as the oppressed gender, with men less of a priority (Scambor et

al. 2014). This is set against a backdrop where the educational attainment of male students generally is decreasing, presenting a barrier to university admission.

Social work education has long been identified as a feminised area of higher education and practice (Bourdieu, 1998; Lyons, 1999; Murray, 2007). Parker and Crabtree (2012) recognise a 'feminised pedagogy' to be in play. For Francis and Skelton (2005), this simply eludes to the number of females in education and the effect they have on the culture of education. For others, it is a structured teaching practice which seeks to draw out students into a 'safe space' created by the teacher (Burke et al. 2017).

The object is to deconstruct the power inherent in the role of teacher, into an environment of 'play', where cognitive and creative skills, together with socio-emotional and moral competences are foregrounded (Burke et al. 2013). Others contend that this creates an atmosphere which is 'soft' and anti-intellectual, which shapes students into passive objects, lacking confidence and requiring support (Timmerman, 2011).

Power in varying forms appears to be a recurring theme in the literature concerning minority social work students, interacting with their peers and learning environments. The explored experiences of ethnic minority students, of disabled students, or lesbian gay bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) students and in some cases, male students, presents a somewhat mixed view, with negatives focused upon. Students' experiences are surprising, given social work's commitment to uphold diversity, anti-discrimination, social justice ethics and values.

2.8.2 Ethnic minority students

As in other arenas, the different and sometimes negative experiences of ethnic minority students in social work have been of concern for some time in England (Hussein et al. 2008; Moriarty et al. 2009). Progression rates of ethnic minority students suggests that Caribbean, black African and Pakistani students are more likely to fail than their white colleagues both academically and in practice placement (Bernard et al. 2014; Hussein et al. 2006, 2008, 2009). This phenomenon appears to be mirrored in further studies of other ethnic minority student group's e.g. South Asian women and Native Americans (De Souza, 1991; Penkeith, 2000; Weaver, 2000; Bartoli et al. 2008; Mariarty et al. 2009; Dillon, 2011).

There have been reports that university lecturers assume ethnic minority students to be experts in their culture, or conversely that their culture is devalued, their values coming into conflict with student peers from different ethnic groups (Bernard et al. 2014; Furness, 2003; Penketh, 2000). A study of ethnic minority students by Bernard et al. (2014), identifies the differences between some ethnic minority values and the western social work theoretical

frameworks which are based on Eurocentric traditions and values (Penketh, 2000). This serves to reinforce the debate on whose culture has more capital. Ultimately the UK view that western perspectives are superior to all others, can often result in a perception of deficit in ethnic minority personal, cultural and in some cases professional experiences (Mizra, 2009). This can result in feelings of further social exclusion and marginalisation (Yasso, 2005), which can promote segregation of ethnic minority students within the learning environment and a hesitation to contribute their values and experience (Bernard et al. 2014).

2.8.3 Disabled students

Evidence suggests that disabled students are under-represented on social work courses (Baron et al. 1996; Crawshaw, 2002; Wray et al. 2005). Data indicate that even considering a wide range of variables, disabled students are less likely to be succeed on qualifying programmes than their student peers (Hussein et al. 2008; 2009). Those who choose to disclose a disability report negative experiences within the student body, sometimes resulting in feelings of marginalisation (Galvin, 2003). They may experience negative impacts concerning learning opportunities compared to non-disabled students. Such feelings serve to silence their voices (Bernard et al. 2014). Conversely, students may choose not to declare a disability which cannot be seen e.g. mental health issues, HIV etc. for fear of stigma, prejudice and negative attitudes (Grant, 2002; Stanley et al. 2011). Such attitudes can create obstacles to effective learning and impact on students' individual rights (Coriale et al. 2012).

Legislation and social policy however (e.g. SENDA 2001, the Equality Act 2010, etc.), does provide safeguards for protected groups (Bernard et al. 2014), although arguably these have yet to imbed into the broader social conscious. Evidence suggests however, that UK social work programmes have become more pro-active in addressing such barriers (Stanley et al. 2011).

2.8.4 LGBTQ Students & Gender Stereotypes

LGBTQ students who are also ethnic minority or disabled can be seen to be multiply marginalised (Bernard et al. 2014). However, contemporary studies identify that the sole issue of direct and indirect homophobia among social work students remains a challenging issue (Bernard et al. 2014; Burgess et al. 1997; Chinell, 2011; Gates, 2010; Holley & Steiner, 2005: Messinger, 2004; Satterly, 2007; Trotter & Gilchrist, 1996; Trotter et al. 2006, 2008; Valentine et al. 2009; Van den Bergh & Crisp, 2004).

In the US, a study at a rural southern university asserts that 84% of social work students displayed homophobic attitudes (Kulkin et al. 2009). In Canada, Chinell (2011) evaluates a low-lying homophobia in students in the context of a pervasive white, able-bodied,

heteronormativity. According to Hylton (2005), it may be that in these circumstances LGBTQ students are less inclined to 'come out' where pejorative attitudes prevail and where there is a general avoidance of exploring sexual orientation in social work programmes. Conflict between personal values of faith and religion and those of LGBTQ diversity and professional social work values has also been identified (Melville-Wiseman, 2013). A systematic literature review of thirty-one empirical articles by Chonody and Smith (2013) however suggests that generally, social work students were found to have a positive attitude toward sexual orientation diversity.

Social work education studies identify that issues of sexual orientation and identity may not be given a platform (Melville-Wiseman, 2013), as heteronormativity pervades the learning environment (Aymer & Patni, 2011; Jeyasingham, 2012; Morgan, 2012; Bernard et al. 2014). At best, McPhail (2008) posits the social work curriculum generally ignores analysis of gender in favour of a 'person-in-environment' perspective. This 'gender neutral' stance may in fact miss important gendered implications. This arguably reinforces the assertion of Figueria-McDonough et al. (2001), that contemporary social work education assists in reproducing stereotypical gendered stratifications, leading to the marginalisation of LGBTQ students (Martinez, 2011). This links with the narrative of Christie and Hicks (2001a) in terms of practice, which raises important questions of student's contemporary perceptions in terms of this study.

Some authors recommend frameworks and strategies for social work education to address pejorative attitudes toward a diversity of minority groups and sexual orientation (Kulkin et al. 2009; Chinell, 2011; Chonody & Smith, 2013; Bernard et al. 2014). Studies show these may be influenced by prevailing social attitudes in differing geographical locations (Kulkin et al. 2009; Chinell, 2011).

Wiles (2010) explores the development of students' personal and professional identities in light of policy changes in social work education since 2005. Her study took a poststructuralist approach to identity and discourse, based upon seven semi-structured interviews. The findings suggest that participants viewed professional registration as an integral part of their academic and professional development to becoming qualified. These findings emulate the views of other commentators (for example, Christie, 2001 and Younghusband, 1947) concerning the desire for the 'professionalisation' of social work, which Perry and Cree (2003) recommend may improve the public image of social work. However, the registration of social work students is currently not a requirement or an option.

2.9 Male students of social work

Generally, there is a limited body of literature concerning the perspectives and experiences of student males entering the profession (Lloyd & Degenhardt, 1996; Perry & Cree, 2003; Moriaty & Murray, 2007). However, targeted research into poor MSWS progression or drop-out does exist and has recently been updated (Hussein, Moriarty & Manthorpe, 2005, 2009; Hussein, Moriarty, Manthorpe & Huxley, 2006; Hussein et al. 2008; Moriarty et al. 2009; Parker, 2010; Furness, 2011; Schaub, 2015, 2017). A number of authors have identified even taking into account variables such as, educational attainment, disability and ethnicity, males demonstrate poorer progression rates than female social work students (Hussein, Moriarty & Manthorpe, 2005, 2009; Hussein, Moriarty & Huxley, 2006; Hussein et al. 2008; Moriarty et al. 2009; Schaub, 2017).

Difficulties with progression can be grouped into four broad categories (Schaub, 2015). Deferral - where a student suspends their studies intending to return. Failure - due to poor academic performance, or concerns over safety to practice. Referral - where a student has failed to pass an element of the programme and lastly, complete withdrawal from the programme of study. Parker (2010) makes the link with referral and failure due to placement disruption. His research highlighted power issues between the student and the agency or management ethos for practice learning - the practice teacher's qualifications, role and intent and/or specific events impacting on the students' sense of powerlessness. Furness (2011) confirms the frequency of failure due to placement issues is greater in males.

Studies in the UK coalescing around MSWS perceptions of the profession rather than progression or drop-out remain relatively scarce. Existing published research exploring the experiences of MSWSs has been conducted with very small samples, generally at a single university. Lloyd and Degenhardt (1996) also identify that social work, having developed its own feminist standpoint, may result in a tendency by MSWSs being defensive in regard to being research participants from the outset.

Within the academic environment, Giesler (2013) asserts that MSWSs occupy a privileged position, as lecturers will recognise males as a minority and will favour them, a benefit of heightened visibility (Heikes, 1992). This endorses Williams' (1995: 72) view that:

"Men are generally protected from discrimination and harassment by powerful faculty members, either male or female, who want to see more men succeed in their professions".

Conversely within the student body there is evidence that MSWSs can experience 'gendered teasing', jokingly attributed the labels of being gay or child abuser (Weaver-Hightower, 2011).

A survey of male and female social work students (Hyde & Deal, 2003: 200) identifies power dynamics between female peers viewing MSWSs as "symbols of oppression". Females in the study favoured a supportive learning environment to explore their emotions, contrasting with the male desire for rational discussion and debate. Lloyd and Degenhardt (1996) observe that male academics are more proactive in terms of research, where female colleagues are more inclined to undertake experiential practice-based learning. This gender difference in approach is highlighted by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), suggesting this phenomenon reflects the gender of university personnel delivering qualifying programmes. Compared to the natural sciences, social studies teaching staff are older, with a higher ratio of women to men (HESA, 2018).

Cree (2001), citing Taylor's (1994) research, indicates an initial attraction to the profession for MSWSs concerns perceived favourable treatment due to their gender. Males perceived greater opportunities exist for rapid career progression into managerial roles, gaining the associated kudos and salary attributed to 'management'. Ethnic minority MSWSs in Warde's (2009) US study offer alternative insights, suggesting their motivations were attributable to three different aspects; positive contact with a social worker (usually as a user of such services), a desire to contribute to their communities, and lastly to satisfy their own altruistic values. These participants also reflected that their contribution could bring an alternative male perspective.

In Scotland, Cree (1996) conducted a study of social work students' perceptions, in which the male participants viewed themselves as different from other men, i.e. possessing increased feminine traits. Further studies (Furness; 2011; Parker & Crabtree 2014) explore the perceptions of being male in female environments and the paradox of being in a position of privilege on the one hand and marginalised on the other. Geisler (2013) reveals that although some MSWSs do claim and enact hegemonic masculinity, it is from a basis of negotiation from their subordinated status of being male.

In evaluating the decline in male UK applicants to social work education, one of Perry and Cree's (2003: 362) key findings was "positive action must be taken to upgrade the social work profession". However, Cree et al. (2009: 899) later posit that:

> "It seems likely that the shift from a diploma level qualification to Honours degree in the UK, whilst meeting social work's professionalism agenda, may have also raised the bar for entry to the profession too high for some students".

Given lower educational attainment for males generally, this may have a further impact on calls for increased gender balance within the profession.

While important, these small-scale studies highlight the benefit of a wider, national sample; an aim of this current study. Reflecting renewed interest in the gender balance within social work, with calls to make it increasingly representative by increasing the number of males in social work (Ashcroft, 2014; Matthews, 2014), this current study may provide further insights in how this issue might be approached.

Serendipitously (in a way) I can reflect on some of the literature on masculinities, as while on this research journey and beginning to write the literature review, I was victim of an assault. Following this incident, I had need of domiciliary care, which not only affected me physically but also my sense of self, and my own particular masculinity. My feeling of relative helplessness, alien from my usual independence, resonates with Bowl's (2001) analysis of the contradictory experiences of men, usually competent in their personal care, and subsequent impact on the role of 'breadwinner'. My usual mastery of my own domestic sphere was compromised and further impacted by feelings of subjugation, not as Bowl (ibid) asserts by being subject to personal and intimate care by females. On the contrary, I preferred their attentions, because as a gay man I felt my masculinity remained intact and they presented no threat. The threat to my masculinity I felt from male carers, and what I perceived might be their view of my physical disabilities and at times, my exposed physicality. The result of an interesting interplay of my own masculinity and sexuality, which perhaps demonstrates a plurality of masculinities as situational or context specific. As Hanlon (2012: 88) argues:

> "Understanding how men engage in social practices at the intersection of complex and dynamic multiple identities and material social locations is key to perceiving the operation of power in practice".

SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed the literature concerning the issues faced by men working in FMOs, in social work and the known literature concerning the experiences perceptions and motivators of MSWSs. It began by identifying the initial reading of some key studies concerning men's experiences on social work programmes, and then described how the more systematic literature search was conducted using online resources.

There was a brief discussion of the literature regarding masculinities and hegemonic masculinity and how this might impact men in FMOs. The discussion then turned to gendered attitudes toward caring and how social policy impacts on those attitudes. The literature concerning gender and higher education has been briefly explored which identifies that the lower attainment of male students presents a barrier to accessing higher education, and therefore social work, in contrast to the greater educational attainment of females. Due to a relative paucity of literature directly concerning MSWSs, the literature concerning male in

FMOs, such as, nursing and teaching has been discussed in terms of the barriers and issues that males training for those professions encounter.

The literature concerning men in social work and MSWSs has been discussed. The key authors and contributors in this area have been identified as Christie, Pease, Pringle, Cree, Hicks and Schaub. Even with the range of studies and commentary contributed by these scholars, there remains some gaps in our knowledge of the perceptions, experiences and motivations of MSWSs. What is not currently known is whether these factors differ across the whole of the UK, or in different social work qualifying programmes.

The literature review has highlighted is that this study can contribute to the existing knowledge, by conducting the study across all four nations of the UK. It will add to the literature concerning perceptions, experiences and motivations from solely MSWSs participants, and also investigate any preferences in fields of practice and whether these vary by UK region.

To provide a basis for context and evaluation of these perceptions and experiences, the following chapter explores sociological theory including those of power and gender. From this exploration, theory will be selected to apply to the data, to analyse the findings of this study.

CHAPTER THREE - SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF GENDER, CAPITAL AND INTERSECTIONALITY

INTRODUCTION

Chapter two provided a critical analysis of literature including that concerning the motivations of males to qualify as social workers. Unsurprisingly, social work academics have been at the forefront of authors researching into this area, and much of the literature discusses methodology in terms of emphasising the construction or correct approach of using various research methods. By interpreting qualitative narratives, they have identified themes and presented findings, which largely provide a commentary of varying degrees of similarity or contrast, occasionally illustrating their argument with statistical evidence derived from quantitative data (for example, Perry & Cree, 2003; Parker & Crabtree, 2012; Crabtree & Parker, 2014). With social work education on the cusp of significant changes in terms of delivery, with apprenticeships coming on stream and the change of regulator in England, this study may provide a timely update of suitable depth than previous studies, before those significant changes take hold.

Although these studies and accounts are valuable and are widely referenced, there has been a tendency to neglect the role of theory in extracting depth of meaning from the empirical data and underlying discourse (Murphy, 2013). Layder (1998: 10) asserts that:

"If social research is about the systematic gathering of evidence and data, then theorizing represents the attempt to order this information into some kind of explanatory framework".

Studies such as, Fairtlough et al. (2013) and Giesler (2013) begin to identify and link appropriate theory in their work. It appears however, that application of a theoretical framework in much of the previous research have been opportunities perhaps overlooked. Best (2003) advises a lack of theoretical application prevents comprehension beyond uncomplicated description, which could otherwise traverse into new understanding.

For this study, locating a suitable theoretical framework with which to interpret data has been a journey of post data collection learning and a process of elimination. Indeed, the iterative nature of going back to the data and writing chapters of this thesis proved most useful as an exercise. It allowed me to review themes, further develop my understanding of theory and to think critically about locating a theoretical framework, a vehicle for deeper understanding of what the study participants were communicating.

The research question of this study asks, 'what are the main factors affecting the experiences and career decisions of male social work students (MSWSs)?' Previous studies concerning students enrolled on qualifying programmes are naturally situated in 'education' and 'social

work'. Making sense of participants' experiences in their social worlds, the subject of this study suggests the application of social theory most appropriate.

Broadly, social theories attempt to analyse the effect of and impact between the individual's agency and the social structures in which they live and operate, where an individual's agency is directly affected or constrained by social constructs. Social theory draws on a wide range of disciplines; but not exclusively, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and psychology. Best (2003: 6) states that "social theory is concerned with going beyond uncomplicated description", and it encompasses ideas concerned with:

"Explaining social behaviour, about power and social structure, gender and ethnicity, modernity and civilisation, revolutions and utopias" (Harrington, 2005: 1).

Considering the range of themes and concepts emerging from the study data, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a comprehensive treatise on social theory. The chapter therefore provides a broad over-view of appropriate theory including, Foucault on power, Bourdieu, and Intersectionality. This body of theory links clearly with the themes emergent from the study and considers how theoretical principles drawn from these could be applied to develop a theoretical framework for making sense of the research themes. This constitutes development of existing theory, enabling new insights into this area.

3.1 Exploring a theoretical framework

It is not the intention to locate a theoretical framework based on the work of any one theorist, as Foucault and Deleuze (1980: 208) observe, "social theory should be approached as a toolkit to be used selectively". Development of theory also often stems from locating background concepts which provide initial guidance and direction, perhaps drawn and adopted from existing work in the area. Theoretical principles will therefore be deployed/applied which have most resonance to the themes identified.

Thematic analysis of the data, together with the findings of previous studies and the literature concerning males practicing in social work and allied care professions, confirms that the concepts of education, power, gender, feminism, masculinity and violence, social class, exclusion and isolation continue to be prominent factors in their experience. One overriding and prominent concept, however, continues to link all of these; they are all manifestations of power played out in a range of arena.

Before looking objectively at the various emanations of this concept, it is important to recognise that subjectively the participants of this study have unavoidably been further exposed to this factor due to the researcher/participant relationship, despite being mindful of the approaches outlined by Farrimond (2013) in her text *Doing Ethical Research*.

There have been a few eminent social theorists traditionally interested in the relationship between education and other factors. Seminal intellectuals, such as, Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, John Dewey and Paulo Freire, have influenced and informed the work of more contemporary theorists in this area, and amongst these are; Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. In particular, the central concept of Marx's work, that of power and how it plays out between individuals, institutions and cultures is a thread that runs throughout the work of these contemporary theorists.

Power operates in neo-liberal, western, globalised societies, and in societies generally where structural systems of hierarchy exist. Whether this is government and its agencies, elected or imposed, globalised private companies maintaining the status-quo of the rich over the poor, social structures, or powerful individuals, on a daily basis "people are pushed about by forces outside of their control" (Best, 2003: 11). Foucault's and Bourdieu's intellectual insight into the concept of power is perhaps the cause of an increase in their visibility in contemporary research concerning education and social work (Murphy, 2013).

Previous MSWS research by Cree (2000) and Parker (2010), confirms that power is an overriding and prevalent theme, however, within social theory it proves difficult to define. It is understood differently within a range of theoretical perspectives and subject to numerous debates. Before exploring various theoretical approaches to the subject of power, Fook (2002: 47) warns of the dangers of imposing a reductionist view:

> "People do not easily fit into powerful or powerless groupings … Some people may experience the very same experience as empowering and others as disempowering. Sometimes what is empowering for some might actually detract from the empowerment of others".

Educational institutions moreover, are ideal environments in which various mechanisms for producing, promoting and perpetuating this interplay of power are evident at various social, cultural and structural levels, thereby ensuring its irreducibility.

3.2 Power and Foucault

According to the French philosopher, Michel Foucault (1926 – 1984), "all social relations are relations of power" (cited by MacKenzie, 1999: 84). Koskela (2003) adds that power in late modernity has become more fluid, dispersed and omnipresent. Indeed, Foucault was an exponent of the effects of power within institutions and education, with his discourses relevant to social work and social work education.

Patton (1998: 71) states, "the ways in which power creates subjects, may also become systems of domination". Indeed, power can be both productive and repressive, experienced and exercised at the micro level within society, beyond just agency and structure (Foucault,

1980). This also provides opportunities for those subject to feminist ideological social work intervention, to resist marginalisation and subjugation (Bryson, 1999).

In his early work, Foucault identified that structures and discourses have historically produced known truths. For example, females bore children and therefore females should provide nurture and care. In his work *The Birth of a Clinic* (Foucault, 1973), he illustrates how a medical environment provides the regulated space where medical knowledge is acquired, assimilated and reproduced through teaching. Foucault claimed that this approach identifies something natural like childbirth. Therefore, not only did he highlight the interplay between structure and discourse, but also how knowledge can be unquestioningly reproduced.

Part of this is the perception of language as knowledge, which to some extent mirrors Foucault's view of discourse. Building a subjectivity that sexuality is both liberating and constraining, and also as "the name that can be given to an historical construct" (1990:105). By extension such language develops historical moral and sexual hierarchies, against which individuals have traditionally categorised themselves. For example:

> "Heterosexual, marital, monogamous, reproductive, and non-commercial, is contrasted with… homosexual, unmarried, promiscuous, non-procreative, or commercial" (Rubin, 1984: 280-1).

The focus of Foucault's work shifted from discourse to institutions, such as, prisons, hospitals and educational establishments. Here he analysed the interplay between power and knowledge over an individual's agency, "as subjects who were controlled, even - and perhaps especially - by themselves" (Allan, 2013: 24). By identifying this phenomenon, Foucault dispels the myth that individuals have greater freedom than ever before, where they are in fact subject to increasing social control. Foucault asserts that this control is tolerated by society because it is hidden in mainstream discourse. This provided impetus to devise a series of constructs concerning knowledge and power, which he proposes as a useful "box of tools" (Foucault, 1977: 138) to deepen understanding of control and constraint of individuals.

Foucault's first tool demonstrates awareness that institutions (of education and particularly prisons) practice 'the rather shameful art of surveillance', a technique for the discipline, regulation and normalisation of individuals (Foucault, 1977: 172).

In prisons, drawing on the work of Bentham, Foucault found utility in his 'panopticon' design, where cells are positioned in a circle around a central control tower. Whether surveillance is active at that particular time or not, the effectiveness of Bentham's design and the fear that this can engender, is singularly adequate to ensure power and control.

In education, panoptic principles are apparent in the semi-circular arrangements of physical learning environments such as, lecture theatres. This arrangement is designed to facilitate a lack of collaboration between students, where the educator is the centre of power and attention, perhaps challenged by students' feigned conformity (when actually their attention is focused on Facebook) and not always conducive to group work suitable for the social work curriculum.

Secondly, using 'surveillance' principles for normalising judgements is an important tool within teaching and education to standardise and homogenise. A standard is set to justify correction and coercion (Foucault, 1977). Apparent in the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) systems used within educational institutions, the construction of a disciplinary discourse begins before accessing any on-line systems; with students agreeing an 'Acceptable Use Policy'. Moreover, the student requirement to access their VLEs for timetables, assignments, attendance, etc. employs systems which structure a regime of control by logging their access, encouraging behaviour and attainment that are broadly hegemonically accepted. Lyon (2003: 13) asserts this "highlights the classifying drive of contemporary surveillance", ensuring students conform within the parameters of 'normalisation' (Selwyn, 2011). Such techniques are used to identify the potential radicalisation of students in line with the 'Prevent' agenda (HM Government, 2011).

Foucault's third and final tool to make sense of surveillance, ritually combines his concepts of hierarchical surveillance with normalising judgements, into an "economy of visibility into the exercise of power" (Foucault, 1977: 187).

There is a long tradition within education that control is maintained through the physical presence of an educator observing students' practice and academic output (Hall, 2003). Within social work education, this is most evident in the practice placement setting. Here, students are assigned a practice supervisor, a practice educator and an academic tutor, which might represent Foucault's 'hierarchy of surveillance'.

A key principle following the observation of practice is supervision. This core pedagogic process is used as a method of developing students' reflective skills, to improve practice. They are judged against occupational standards whilst also being judged on their academic submissions and attainment. It ensures that each student is a 'case', subject to being "described, judged, measured, compared with others in his very individuality" (Foucault, 1977: 191).

Indeed, practice placement provides environments where the students are themselves encouraged to use principles of self-surveillance, part of which is to reflect upon their practice and to monitor their own behaviour. Foucault asserts however, exercising this power is not

necessarily repressive or negative, in "reality it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (Foucault, 1977: 194). He argues that a positive effect of power ensures individuals regulate their own behaviour through technologies of the self, which is perhaps one of the aims of the student/placement experience. Foucault (2003: 146) highlights this juxtaposition thus:

> "Technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, and objectivising of the subject…technologies of the self, which permits individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations … and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality".

This perhaps runs alongside the concept of 'governmentality' developed by Foucault, also applicable to social work education. His assertion is that a modern state comprising its institutions and discourse, actually reduces rather than creates individual freedoms. Governmentality, therefore, ensures that each individual has limited agency within a totality:

> "I don't think that we should consider the 'modern state' as an entity which was developed above individuals, ignoring what they are … but on the contrary as a very sophisticated structure, in which individuals can be integrated, under one condition: that this individuality would be shaped in a new form, and submitted to a set of very specific patterns" (Foucault, 1982: 214).

Foucault's view, however, somewhat denies agency, certainly it does not promote it. Rather than empowering individuals to take action it creates a "fleshless passive body" (Hughes, 2005: 84). This runs contrary to the ethics of social work, and it was ethics that Foucault discussed in his later work, perhaps revising his prior assertions. His development of a framework for a 'genealogy of ethics' in his later volumes examines sexuality focusing on:

> "The forms of relations with the self, on the methods and techniques by which he works them out, on the exercises by which he makes himself an object to be known, and on the practices that enable him to transform his own mode of being" (Foucault, 1985: 30).

Although Foucault neglects to outline how this transformation could be undertaken in practice (Smart, 1998), it is logical to assert that the application of ethics and the promotion of agency is a way of resisting the subjugation of power. Concepts enshrined in practice, in terms of applying social work ethics and values, reflection and promoting empowerment. Drawing on Nietzsche, Foucault (2003) identified that powerful individuals had the 'will to power' imposing their sense of what is right, just and truthful. As Veyne (1997: 231) remarks, "the self is the new strategic possibility".

For Foucault (1985) ethical practice is constructed of four dimensions, which inevitably overlap and are inextricably linked. These are clearly evident in social work teaching and practice:

1.	Determination of the ethical substance. Foucault (1985: 26) identifies this as "this or that part of oneself as prime material of his moral conduct". For social work students this involves contrasting one's personal ethics and professional ethics to reflect on their congruence or otherwise.

2.	The mode of subjection. This involves the individual and how they find ways to operate within a set of ethical rules. Students and practitioners are required to work within the ethical values and standards of the regulator.

3.	Self-practice or ethical work. Essential for social work students and practitioners is the ability to reflect on practice to transform their learning, practice and therefore themselves.

4.	The Telos. This concept considers how individuals might be continuously challenged by using critical reflection which builds on self-reflection and practice as part of a journey of self-mastery to an effective reflective practitioner.

Although Foucault outlines these dimensions of ethical practice, he omits to provide much detail. What he does offer are approaches to reflexive writing. He asserts the aim is transparency, therefore promoting self-reflection but also open to others' constructive critique; "to show one's self, make oneself seen, make one's face to appear before another" (Foucault, 1997: 243). Through this writing process the subject becomes the object. He places equal value on learning from reading "one cannot draw everything from one's own funds… as a guide or example, the help of others is necessary", mirroring approaches which run through social work education and into practice (Foucault, 1997: 236).

Schön (1983) makes the distinction between reflection on action, open as Foucault (1997) suggests to objective critique, and reflection in action. Rolfe and Gardner (2006) further identify two definitions of reflection in action; an ontological definition with the focus on self-awareness and changing one's views – a way of being, and an epistemological definition focusing on the improvement of practice.

Foucault's work on ethics also identified the concept of 'transgression' as a form of transformation. As a construct, transgression has been associated with marginalised or oppressed groups, not least because it asserts recognition of exclusion. Foucault views ethics as subversive, not in a pejorative way, but by being creative, almost playful. Drawing on Kant's critique of limits, Foucault outlines that transgression crosses certain limits and it is only by doing so that an individual can find moments of freedom or otherness in life. By transgressing limits, one is both weakened and affirmed. Boyne (1990) suggests that in the otherness that lies ahead, individuals can shape their own identities by subverting those norms which

otherwise perpetuate their marginalisation. Although MSWSs are not excluded or marginalised in the way described, they do transgress traditional gender boundaries. An example of Foucault's transgression as transformation is through emphasising all genders having a stake in social work practice.

Critique of Foucault's work include that of his panoptical discourse, particularly on the topic of resistance to control, where there is a paucity of discussion by Foucault (Hope, 2013). For example, being socialised into a culture of observation, students can take knowledge and expertise to exert power themselves, bringing it to bear against their observers. Moreover, surveillance is not limited to students. The practice of newly qualified social workers is closely observed during their first Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), with ongoing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sanctioned and endorsed by social work regulators.

More adept at using a full range of technology than perhaps those in positions of educational authority, students might easily circumvent systems designed to encourage conformity to normativity. Moreover, social media provides platforms for students' voices to share their individual experiences and perhaps take collective action. For example, an electronic deputation to a lecturer or programme leader might be used to voice issues concerning their learning experience. Websites, such as, 'the student room' provide opportunities for a wider reach, potentially exposing academic staff to global scrutiny.

Further critique of Foucault's work identifies that he largely ignores the influence of the mass-media, an omission which may have altered his view on society and surveillance, but is subsequently informed by Mathiesen (1997: 230), who reflects on a viewer society and his concept of the 'synopticon' – the many observing the few, which "directs and controls or disciplines our consciousness". Although still censored to some degree, examples such as twenty-four-hour rolling news and the cult of celebrity have a direct influence on individuals' perceptions. Foucault later warns that we should "question what is given to us as necessary to think and do" (Burchell, 1996: 32).

One example of gender in the media and perhaps pertinent to this study was the reporting of 'Operation Yew tree'. This inquiry, focused on male celebrities accused of using their charitable and philanthropic efforts, as a vehicle to disguise their covert personal sexual gratification. It could be argued that instances, such as these, further direct, control and discipline society's consciousness into embedding traditional gender roles.

Such perspectives maintain that males operating in caring environments and professions should be viewed with the utmost suspicion. Within this Westwood (2002: 13) acknowledges the power of the media, which she terms as the "messages and signs" which inform populist

views of social work. This has been extensively discussed within social work literature concerning men's violence and perceptions of men as predatory (Crabtree & Parker, 2014; Pringle, 1995 & 2001; Scourfield & Coffey, 2002).

Panopticism and the synopticon are concepts which aid understanding of contemporary power relations, explaining why people are surveillance tolerant. Surveillance also acts as entertainment. Television programmes such as, 'Big Brother', 'I'm a Celebrity Get Me out of Here', generate "a new savvy, even blasé attitude to surveillance, which sees its potential entertainment value" (Bell, 2009: 209).

Critiques of Foucault, such as those proposed by Rorty, Dreyfus, Rabinow and Andersen, agree that although Foucault's work adds value, it constitutes a model rather than a social theory (Allan, 2013). Aspects of his work might be determined as flawed, particularly in his development of panopticism. There are however concepts within his work, for example, governmentality, institutional power and surveillance that may have value as analytical tools for this study. Curiously, despite his wide-ranging discourse on the subject of power, it was always Foucault's intent "to show people that they are freer than they feel" (cited in Martin et al. 1988: 10-11). This can perhaps be found in the creativity and empowerment of reflexivity.

3.3 Bourdieu – capital, habitus, fields

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930 – 2002) is regarded as perhaps the most eminent social theorist of the late twentieth century, who draws on the work of grand narrative theorists such as, Marx, Weber and Durkheim. Bourdieu's social theory is gaining momentum in social work and educational research. His conceptions of habitus, field, capital, and doxa are all central to the idea of difference, and essential to understanding his intention of breaking the dualism of structure-agency.

The application of Bourdieu's work to social work is comparatively recent (Garrett, 2007a, 2007b; Huppatz, 2009). Bourdieu focuses on the impact of neo-liberal policy on social work practice, demonstrating preoccupation with liberation, social justice and human rights, all central tenets of social work practice (see Bourdieu et al. 2002). Bourdieu's intellectual contribution centres on how individuals act and react in different arena. This has particular resonance with the International Federation of Social Work's definition that social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments (IFSW, 2014).

Bourdieu's work introduces the concept of doxa, this relates to our primary experience of the social world, which, he asserts, is an adherence to and acceptance of what is considered as self-evident, as it structures the real world and the perceived world. This formative work also defines Habitus (1958, 1962, and 1965), but his reputation is primarily built upon the sociology

of culture and what he terms cultural fields and the overarching field of power (Macey, 2000). Bourdieu provides a conceptual toolkit with which to analyse social phenomena and here I outline these concepts and how these might be applied to the study.

3.3.2 Capital

For Bourdieu (1986) the resource of power in the social world can be attributed to varying forms of capital. Bourdieu perceives capital in a certain hierarchy; economic, social, cultural and symbolic. These, he notes, do not stand alone but interconnect. As will be discussed, these are all relevant to understanding how the personal and educational journey of MSWSs have been shaped.

Economic capital concerns resources in terms of cash and assets. This builds upon the argument by Marx that economic capital is key in determining life chances and exercising power. The 'exchange' inherent within male motivated neo-liberal economics has some impact on the motivations of social work students generally. Some fee-paying students do consider this trade-off where the average working life in social work practice currently averages around seven years (Curtis et al. 2010).

Increasing educational fees and relatively low qualifying salaries could be seen as a barrier for MSWSs, with economic masculine perspectives questioning social work as a viable career (Lupton, 2006; Pullen & Simpson, 2009; Williams, 1995). Alternative post-graduate routes of 'Step-Up to Social Work' and 'Frontline', where a living wage and fees are paid, might explain why there is a slight increase in the ratio of male to female students in those routes (MacAlister et al. 2012).

Bourdieu uses symbolic capital as an analogy of economic capital, described as assets but in a rather different way, beyond a kind of reductionism to economic values. It pertains to the individual, rather than the group setting of social structures which attribute social capital. It goes further than Weber's analysis of status; more than an emanation of social class into the realms of reputation, recognition, prestige and honour (Fowler, 1997). Social work can lay claim to symbolic power in and of itself, and that operationalising congruence between personal and professional social work values and ethics could attribute symbolic capital to the individual social worker. Conversely for MSWSs, perceptions of their symbolic power are perhaps diminished due to their status as a student and their gender. Qualifying into one of the professions may socially attribute symbolic capital, but perhaps is again diminished upon realisation that the profession is social work and the practitioner male. Historically within social work, however, perceptions due to the combination of professionalism and male gender was thought to bring an increase in symbolic capital to the profession (see Younghusband, 1947).

The issue of social capital and MSWSs can be viewed as equally complex. Bourdieu identifies social capital as the active connection of relationships, group memberships and networks of mutual support and understanding, trust and influence, which enables cooperative action (Cohen & Prusak, 2001). Indeed, within this study, there is an exploration of the family backgrounds of MSWSs, their social capital and their grounding in values and ethics. As Bourdieu (1986: 24) asserts:

> "Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition".

For students and social workers, social capital goes to the very heart of networking and the professions. MSWSs could situate themselves as standing both inside and outside of this emanation of social capital. In certain social situations where the subject of occupation arose, some MSWSs could be subject to pejorative undertones, resulting in a reluctance in disclosing their status as students of social work. Here they might be judged and be required to justify their career choice. Indeed, it may be more useful to regard all forms of capital in close proximity to gender, perhaps a significant oversight by Bourdieu. McCall (1992) endorses the view that that gender is an important form of capital, an area further developed by Huppatz (2009). Akin to this is emotional capital, which in the caring professions such as social work, can be seen as a key requirement for practice. Another example of capital overlooked by Bourdieu but developed by Reay (2004a).

In the HEI setting, MSWSs may be empowered by the relative uniqueness of their gender, perceiving it as an advantage. From outside the security of other MSWSs, particularly by their female counterparts, they may be instinctively regarded as lacking in empathy and exercising undue power or influence because of their gender. Drawing on Marxist theory, Bourdieu asserts that that the constraints of power also emerge from social class, class relationships and gender. He stated that "sexual properties are as inseparable from class properties as the yellowness of a lemon is from its acidity" (Bourdieu, 2000: 107).

Here Bourdieu indicates that social class and gender intersect, which suggests such factors are culturally and symbolically created and determined through an interplay of agency and structure. This is perpetuated by dominant male hegemony and used to stratify the class system and the value of cultural capital.

Cultural capital is attributed to providing the foundations for forms of knowledge, education and advantage throughout life. Gaddis (2012) identifies that habitus has an important mediating role to play in the relationship between cultural capital and academic outcomes, an area which is under-researched. Duckworth (2014) identifies that it perpetuates a flow of

wealth and power, which is somewhat echoed by Bourdieu (1987: 4) in linking cultural and educational capital:

> "The very close relationship linking cultural practices (or the corresponding opinions) to educational capital (measured by qualifications) and secondly, to social origin (measured by father's occupation)".

Cultural capital is determined initially by social origin, developed by "total, early, imperceptible learning, and performed within the family from the earliest days of life" (Bourdieu, 1984: 66). Bourdieu (1986) identifies three subtypes: institutional, objectified and embodied.

- Institutional capital stems from institutional recognition, i.e. academic qualifications when in the labour market allows for comparison and therefore determining worth. However, although social work is a degree-level profession and valued within the health and social care sector, the market value for anyone providing emotional labour relatively low.

- Objectified capital concerns physical objects, which might be valued in terms of economics or their appreciation from a basis of formative cultural capital, for example, a fine work of art.

- Embodied capital is a combination of characteristics passively inherited over time and consciously acquired through socialisation.

Such definitions of capital can be applied to understand themes derived from the data, against wider socio-economic, political and historical contextual backgrounds (Goodson & Sykes, 2001). Cultural capital is intrinsically linked to and informs the processes of fields and habitus. This for MSWSs may represent something hugely variable as they move in and through different fields, where their cultural capital is attributed differently.

Although Bourdieu's reputation is primarily built upon the sociology of culture and what he terms 'cultural fields', his formative work introduces the concept of 'Habitus' (1958, 1962, and 1965) (Macey, 2000). Cultural fields and habitus were defined by Bourdieu as a means of moving beyond a subjectivist and objectivist split. Bourdieu writes that "of all the oppositions that artificially divide social science, the most fundamental, the most ruinous, is the one set up between subjectivism and objectivism" (Bourdieu, 1990: 25). He discards the duality of agency and structure as independent of each other and argues that practice is equally the medium and result of operating within a structure.

However, Bourdieu asserts that objectivism and subjectivism remain useful notions, each pointing to the limitations of the other. From a subjectivist perspective, objectivist maps of a culture such as, rules, laws and systems edit out individual agency. Objectivist perspectives

suggest that agency is regulated by cultural concepts. Bourdieu however suggests that agency has the greatest impact, as we have the ability to control our own actions and make choices, but from what is available within a cultural context (Webb et al. 2002).

3.3.3 Habitus

Habitus concerns our unconscious understanding of rules and values of our cultural history, which are durable and transferrable from situation to situation (Webb et al. 2002). The habitus acknowledges that individuals come from different economic and social backgrounds and the types and amounts of capital they bring from these mould students' lives.

Bourdieu asserts that a combination of economic, symbolic, social and cultural capital comprises our habitus. Reay (2004b: 434) comments that, "a person's individual history is constitutive of habitus, but also is the whole collective history of a family and class to which they belong". These influences are powerful and deeply engrained and therefore somewhat repetitive. Bourdieu explains this, employing the concept of 'doxa' which he describes as "that which is taken for granted" (Bourdieu, 1997: 166). Here within discourses identified by Foucault, the concept of hegemony is also important and active.

This illustrates how individuals can be located in wider society reflecting their positioning in terms of family, education and work, the influences of class and capital acquired and how a totality of these factors influence the formation of an individual's habitus.

The interplay of these elements is akin to structural constructivist theory, which emphasises the duality of agency and the effects of social structures. Bourdieu (1987: 10) comments that:

> "Any theory of the social universe must include representations that agents have of the social world and, more precisely, the contribution they make to the construction of the vision of that world, and consequently, to the very construction of the world".

Fields and 'habitus' were developed by Bourdieu as a means of moving beyond a subjectivist and objectivist split, the influence of habitus becomes almost sub-conscious (Bourdieu, 1990). Those from different social backgrounds and class have different habitus, and can therefore have divergent values, ethics, perceptions, and aspirations (Duckworth, 2014). Although Bourdieu views the field of education disparagingly, it holds the potential to provide students with equal opportunities enabling a step-up from their existing habitus, while also bringing to bear its own power dynamics. Students enrolled at HEI level can accumulate the potential symbolic and cultural capital of gaining a degree level qualification and then social work, by entering into a profession. However, social work along with professions such as, nursing and occupational therapy have been historically and currently connected with relatively low status

and poor pay compared with perceived 'higher-grade' professions in the public service (MacAlister et al. 2012).

Access to symbolic capital, as Bourdieu points out, can be very much dependent on the opportunities and advantages that habitus can afford, with most success arising usually from those with middle-class backgrounds. The influence of habitus can be evident in the motivations of MSWSs to qualify in social work. Reay and Ball (1998) clearly illustrate the divide using the terms 'insiders', or 'outsiders', with middle-class insiders benefitting from symbolic power and outsiders subject to the symbolic violence of the education system.

Drawing heavily on the concept of 'false-consciousness' outlined by Marx, Bourdieu & Passeron (1977: 4) define 'symbolic violence' as:

> "Power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations".

This is an acceptance of a domination that imposes its own meanings. It might be argued however that Bourdieu places too much emphasis on the influence of family history as a primary contributor to the habitus. Certainly, this might not be the case if one were adopted. Reay et al. (2005: 435) are however optimistic about how habitus can evolve:

> "Habitus can be transformed through a process that either raises or lowers an individual's expectations. Implicit in the concept is the possibility of a social trajectory that enables conditions of living that are very different from initial ones".

According to Best (2003: 204), "the interplay of habitus and field, equals practice". Although Bourdieu himself refused to give a definition of practice, it can be viewed as located within the struggles, exclusions, inclusions and classifications of that occur during the melee between habitus, field and the processes of social life (Rawolle & Lingard, 2013).

Bourdieu (1996: 213) notes the link between habitus and social field in that, "social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and minds, in fields and habitus, outside and inside of agents".

3.3.4 Fields

The factors which impact upon the career decisions and direction of MSWSs, can be viewed through the lens of the 'field'. Fields are arenas where human action competes in a contest of capital distribution, changed by shifts in internal policy and practices and externally where they converge with other fields (Webb et al. 2002). Indeed, a field may also have a specific, unique capital. Huppatz (2009: 50) defines fields as "semi-autonomous networks of social relations that follow rules and regularities that are not directly explicit". The rationale central to

Bourdieu's social theorising concerning fields is identifying characteristics that allow for the description of the connection between agents, while situating the grouping of agents relative to one another. Bourdieu and Wacquant (2002: 76) identify that:

> "The field of power is a field of forces defined by the structure of the existing balance of forces between forms of power, or between different species of capital. It is also simultaneously a field of struggles for power among the holders of different forms of power. It is a space of play and competition in which social agents and institutions, which all possess the determinate quantity of specific capital sufficient to occupy the dominant positions within their respective fields confront one another in strategies aimed at preserving or transforming this balance of forces".

Bourdieu often adopted the term 'the game' for fields where this contest and interchange of capital produces a temporary dominance, not always by fair means. Those holding power within these fields also create their prevailing hegemonic culture.

The transformation of a field does not happen homogenously, rather sub-parts of that field may react more quickly to change. This can cause trauma within a field, while determining which part truly embodies the 'doxa' of the field and its core values and discourses (Webb et al. 2002). In view of these aspects, some initial fields which pertain to the analysis of the study can be identified.

According to Duckworth (2014: 27), "recognition of the changing face of the field in which learners are located is vital for reflexivity and also for exploring resistance and challenges within these sites of symbolic power".

3.3.4.1 The field of family

For Bourdieu, although family is not homogenous and differs in meaning depending on what constitutes its field, it is central to social capital. For functionalists it provides a central structure for ensuring continued social order. Perhaps most importantly for the purposes of this study are the effects of family on primary socialisation and personality stabilization outlined by Parsons (1956; in Giddens & Sutton, 2013).

What constitutes family can have a direct bearing on the amount of capital it possesses. The social class of the patriarch and/or matriarch, their occupation and income, level of education and wider support structure of extended family and friends, all have a direct bearing on formative development. Moreover, this is also shaped by the agency of experience, choice and identity.

The cultural capital of more advantaged, middle-class social work students may enable wider access to books, theatre, etcetera, which holds educational attainment as natural, and where this capital can be transferred into success. This may be very different from the barriers

encountered by those lacking cultural capital with perhaps more chaotic backgrounds. Despite the education policy of the last Labour government to encourage widening participation from under-represented social groups, including low-income families and those with disabilities, "higher education, for the most part, has continued to orientate around and reflect the privileged in society" (Wright, 2017: 5). This suggests that social work students from less advantaged backgrounds are required to apply themselves more to attain similar results to those of advantaged backgrounds. Indeed, Bourdieu's work has had a particular impact on the themes of inclusion and inequality in the field of education (Murphy & Costa, 2016).

3.3.4.2 The field of education

Bourdieu (1968) asserts that within education as a field, the function of an HEI is not primarily education or even to transmit information, but to legitimise and reproduce societal and cultural values. Bourdieu "locates the education system as the most important player in the unequal distribution of cultural and linguistic capital" (Duckworth, 2014: 30). Such inequalities are maintained through the curriculum, legitimising the values and language of the dominant cultural hegemony, using the education system to reproduce its middle-class discourse (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu and Passeron (1964 / 1979: 76) propose a solution, that:

> "A truly rational pedagogy, this is, one based on sociology of cultural inequalities, would, no doubt, help to reduce inequalities in education and culture, but it would not be able to become a reality unless all the conditions for a true democratization of the recruitment of teachers and students were fulfilled, the first of which would be the setting up of a truly rational pedagogy".

HEIs are arenas where cultural capital and a feel for the game, perhaps through knowledge of the literature and the arts, can give rise to unequal access and advantages within the field. As Bourdieu asserts, a student from a dominant class "encounters a world of which it is a product, like it is a 'fish in water'; it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 127). Conversely this can negatively impact on other classes of student and could result in student drop-out. The symbolic power inherent within the field of cultural capital therefore gives rise to different opportunities and advantage within education. As a result, "even when social class is not overt and articulated in people's decoding of the social world, it is still there as part of the implicit, taken-for-granted understandings they bring to others" (Reay, 1997: 227).

Even though class and male hegemony can be of influence in education generally, the disparity between male and female educational attainment widens annually in favour of females (HESA, 2018c). Within social work education it can be seen that the numerical majority of female students exert influence; where MSWSs are required to adjust their playing of the 'game', which is not automatically weighted in their favour. This perhaps embodies a

concern about being male in female spaces, that they can be singled out for different treatment by academics and their female counterparts alike.

Here, the impact of social categorisations come to the fore, as do political and economic factors. Empirical evidence suggests that it has been the policy of some HEIs to attract male undergraduate students into social work programmes with a 'golden hello'.

Learning and teaching can be described as a subjective experience, where as a student, one is subject to the prejudices, ideologies and values of the teacher and what the education system determines as symbolically and culturally valuable. These structures determine whether the capitals students possess are valuable or not. However, applying Bourdieu's theory determines what he terms a praxeological approach which argues against methodological monism, suggesting instead that the opposites of subjectivity and objectivity are "tied together through actual social practices, wherein objective social relations are produced and reproduced within particular situations" (Layder, 2006: 194).

3.3.4.3 The field of practice placement

As discussed earlier in terms of Foucault and the utility of panopticism, the structural also concerns itself with macro concepts of wielding power, for example, where social work students are subject to a prescribed curriculum and close scrutiny on practice placement. Here students gain hands-on experience but also adopt institutionalised patterns of language and behaviour, enabling them to qualify and become agents of the State. This is not to say that where a structural hierarchy exists it is oppressive, however it does have that potential. Students are required to conform to this prescribed process or not succeed.

There may be other pressures for MSWSs while learning in practice. Certainly Cree (2000) describes her unease and initial dislike of male colleagues, resulting in her reticence to work with and alongside them. In Parker's (2010) study, participants identified pejorative undertones adopted by female colleagues and educators. As Bourdieu (1998) asserts, fields are not autonomous and exert pressure on others.

Cultural pressures such as, the media cannot fail to have an impact on MSWSs and practitioners of social work, where they are perhaps looked upon with some underlying even unconscious suspicion. A questioning of their motivations to what has, in society traditionally been seen as the remit of females, where the majority perpetrators of sexual offences are male.

This may have a significant impact in practice placement. For example, those working within a domestic and sexual violence situation may find themselves disempowered by the actions of a male member of that family, while trying to work with others within the family unit.

Research demonstrates that males remain in the majority of those perpetrating such violence (Hester, 2013). Clearly, MSWSs meet additional pressures beyond those of their female counterparts, who might benefit from increased capital in this field of operation.

While discussing Bourdieu's conceptual tools above and applying them to certain areas of social work education and practice, his theory appears to provide robust concepts for the data analysis for this study. I am aware that Bourdieu draws upon, or comprises wittingly or not, aspects from much of the other theory outlined in this chapter.

According to Costa and Murphy (2016), the conceptual tools which Bourdieu has developed are suitably flexible to be as valuable at the beginning of the research process as they are if introduced at a later stage. They argue that applying Bourdieu subsequently to a study can provide a broader lens than may otherwise be the case.

Bourdieu's contribution can be seen to have far wider application in and relevance to social work, promoting as it does a more penetrating 'sociological eye' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 251). This, together with Bourdieu's promotion of the key skill of refection, may enable practitioners to reflect on their own habitus and location within a profession currently subject to significant change (Garrett, 2005).

While recognising the scale of Bourdieu's potential for further application to social work, in addition to the critique already offered, Garrett (2007b) examines the accessibility of his work. Here he identifies that his style of prose can be challenging, inaccessible and sometimes seemingly insurmountable; a critique not lost on the author of this study. There is also a risk, translated as it is from Bourdieu's native French, that some of the nuances within key contextual factors are lost.

Connell et al. (1982) take issue with his arguments concerning the mechanisms of reproduction through education, suggesting that they are too static, whereas an emphasis on practice as opposed to structure offers opportunities for change. Fowler (1997 & 2001) discusses similar concerns, identifying that habitus is presented as a static going on to suggest that reflection has indeed the capacity to overcome in the influences of one's habitus.

3.4 Intersectionality

In defining his body of theory, Bourdieu enables location of differing social influences in a range of social arenas. His conceptual toolkit is useful to analyse and explore the multi-dimensional complexities of human experience emanating from the data. Mindful however of the critique in regard to the static nature of Bourdieu's concept of habitus and indeed his treatment of gender as neutral, the concept of intersectionality may add depth to the analysis of this study.

An overarching aim for intersectional analysis identifies and examines the intersections of varying structures of power and how individuals are positioned in different categories such as, race, class, gender, etc. (Phoenix, 2011; Phoenix & Pattynama, 2006).

Winker and Degele (2011: 54) define intersectionality "as a system of interactions between inequality-creating social structures (i.e. of power relations), symbolic representations and identity constructions that are context-specific, topic-orientated and inextricably linked to social praxis". Hill-Collins and Bilge (2016: 2) provide a more detailed explanation:

> "Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analysing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor… When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organisation of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other".

Intersectional approaches have often been employed within marginalised groups to make sense of multiple intersecting sources of oppression (Denis, 2008). It is rooted in feminism and black activism and has clear links with post-colonial and queer research (Collins, 1990; Valdes, 1997; Bunjun, 2010; Van Herk et al. 2011; Anthias, 2012; Hankivsky, 2014).

Intersectionality as a term is widely acknowledged as being coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw and was originally intended as a framework to identify and treat interdependent inequalities. Such approaches can be theorised as a characteristic of the social world in general, and intersectional analysis can be applied to a range of social phenomena, not only in terms of specifically marginalised groups (McCall 2005; Yuval-Davis 2006a). Yuval-Davis (2011) contends that it also treats forms of stratification across all members of society, in context with social systems and structures of power. Intersectionality has been used to explore the interconnections and interdependence between social constructs of identity such as, gender, social class, (dis)ability, age, ethnicity, race, racism, homophobia and sexuality, which can be subject to change in terms of time and place (Yuval-Davis, 2006a; Valentine, 2007; Shields, 2008; Roth, 2013). It has long been recognised that intersectionality has developed into an analytic tool for theorising oppression and identity to deconstruct power and expose privilege (Bubar et al. 2016; Nash, 2008).

It has become a "fast travelling theory" in identifying the interdependence or interconnections between social constructs of identity or stratifications (e.g., sexual orientation, race, etc.), which interact to form qualitatively different meanings in different contexts (Knapp, 2005: 251). Perhaps why more recently intersectionality has seen a surge in being one of the most eminent

feminist concepts. Its growth has subsequently led to it being identified as a 'field of studies', rather than a concept (Cho et al. 2013).

3.4.2 Intersecting phenomena

In discussing the core principles of intersectionality, Cooper (2015) outlines that different aspects of one's identity interact and that they should be considered concurrently. Traditionally intersectionality has been used to analyse such dispositions as race, class, gender and disability. Cooper (ibid) identifies that neither can aspects of identity be observed in isolation, as to do so would not present a holistic impression or an awareness of unique social positioning in time and place. Hankivisky and Cromier (2009) assert that the focus of intersectionality is the dynamic of the intersections and their effects.

It can provide different meanings from those understood from a single perspective or identity (Warner, 2008: 454). Moreover, Warner (2008: 455) outlines that identities need to be understood within "a social structural context" where identities are formed and by environments which endorse, embolden or suppress them. Mattis et al. (2008) go further suggesting that the salience of one's identity to a given environment may influence the projection of an appropriate aspect of one's identity for that environment. Due to the ethnographic methods employed in this study, participants are geographically located which may have an effect. For example, there are regional differences in the choice of practice placement (see Chapter 7, section 7.8 for a more comprehensive analysis).

That is not to suggest that a multiplication approach is promoted, i.e., race + class + gender, but how they might interact and co-produce in different fields and social scenarios (Hancock, 2007). Indeed, Anthais and Yuval-Davis (1983: 62-63) warn that:

> "Race, gender, and class cannot be tagged onto each other mechanically for, as concrete social relations, they are enmeshed in each other and the particular intersections involved produce specific effects".

Christensen and Jensen (2012) identify that one method of ensuring this non-additivity is to focus critically on everyday experiences.

3.4.3 Multi-level analysis

Winker and Degele (2011) identify an approach which employs a multi-level approach to analyse interactions of categories, linking broader systems and structures. They identify that a macro, mezzo and micro analysis is effective and identifies how different emanations of power are experienced and/or reproduced. Brah and Phoenix (2004: 76) envision intersectionality as:

"Signifying the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axes of differentiation…economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential…intersect in historically specific contexts. The concept emphasizes that different dimensions of social life cannot be separated out into discrete and pure strands".

Therefore, intersectional analysis becomes one of the lenses through which the social context of an individual can be explored. This resonates somewhat with Thompson's established PCS model (2007) (one applied extensively both in social work education and practice), which helps to explain the effects on an individual from personal, cultural and structural discrimination (please see Appendix L).

The Brah and Phoenix's (ibid) definition of intersectionality however does not focus on positions in regard to oppression or discrimination but uses intersectionality as an outcome of differentiation while practising social relations. They suggest that social relations happen simultaneously for both the dominant and the sub-dominant. This has resonance for the present study in terms of MSWS in the field of education; being subject to a feminised pedagogy and their interactions with their female colleagues.

3.4.4 Intersectionality and power

Intersectionality has become central in exploring the complex relationship between identity and power (McCall, 2005; Davis, 2008; Nash, 2008; Ratna, 2013). Cho et al. (2013) identify that power is an inseparable factor of intersectionality where analysing interacting categories of identity will uncover the operation of power: for example, being subject to power; power over others; or power exercised in groups. Exploration of this depth can produce meaningful information, not of who is most oppressed, but the intersecting processes of power which help to better understand the roots of social issues. As Hill-Collins and Bilge (2016) suggest, power relations are built not on a single axis of dominance, but on multiple axes. Cho et al. (2013: 795) clarify by stating:

"What makes an analysis intersectional …is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power. This framing – conceiving of categories, not as distinct, but as always permeated by other categories, fluid and changing, always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power – emphasises what intersectionality does rather than what intersectionality is".

In terms of the application of intersectionality, arguably there are few who have commented on how intersectionality can be critically applied. A view supported by Valentine (2007) who suggests its application lies in untangling how social categories are lived and experienced. She provides a useful lens to view social intersections which resonates with Butler's (1990) concept of 'performativity'.

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When applying intersectionality, the importance of social constructs, systems and structures cannot be predetermined. This determination must be the result of analysis (Hankivisky, 2014). How MSWS perform and adapt their identities in different fields and social arenas has the potential to be quite marked.

Valentine asserts that individuals see themselves differently, in different social arenas - what Bourdieu identifies as fields. In this context the researcher should also consider the impact of their own social position, power and role when developing an intersectional approach (Hankivisky, 2014). The criticality that reflexivity brings to the self can also empower.

Roth (2013) asserts that intersectionality is not intended to create an overarching theory but has merit in its ability to be context-bound and practical. Its approach has the ability to support social justice by challenging social policies and institutions which maintain practices supporting the traditions of privilege and dominance (Andersen & Collins, 2004). In terms of MSWS it might well be proffered that privilege and oppression can be experienced concurrently.

Hicks (2015) highlights the debate in social work concerning how gender relates to other dispositions such as, race, sexual orientation, disability, age or social class. It is the intersections of these dispositions which are evaluated within this thesis. Such approaches not only allow for a nuanced understanding of how gender works in particular situations, not just by applying perceived homogenous characteristics of gender, but an understanding of how other dispositions intersect with gender in various situations. West & Zimmerman (1987: 126) assert that "doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micro-political activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures''. More recently, Choo and Ferree (2010) identified that experiences of oppression cannot be divided due to gender or race, but rather are simultaneous and coexist (Brewer 1993; Espiritu 2000; Glenn 2002).

3.5 Constructing the theoretical framework for analysis

This chapter has explored how critical social theory and theorists have made sense of the themes drawn out of previous research which this study contributes to and updates. These themes identified an overarching predominance of 'power' and comprised the concepts of 'education', 'gender', 'feminism', 'masculinity' and 'violence', 'social class', 'exclusion' and 'isolation', which can be seen to be impacted by gender and the predominance of hegemonic masculinities (for example, see: Christie, 1998, 2006; Crabtree & Parker, 2014; Cree, 2000; McLean, 2003; McPhail, 2008; Parker & Crabtree, 2012; Scourfield, 2001).

A theoretical framework to analyse these phenomena will provide a depth of understanding to the themes established from data within this thesis, the literature pertaining to males in the caring professions and MSWSs. In developing such a framework, as a member of a profession which clearly links the importance of theory to practice, I am mindful of the assertion of Grenfell and James (1998: 155) that:

> "Practice and theorizing are not regarded as separate activities, displaced in time and place during the research process, but mutually generative of the ways and means of collecting data, analysing it and developing expectations which lead to an understanding of the object being investigated".

Bourdieu's conceptual toolkit, however, does not offer the reductionist treatment of other theoretical sociological perspectives. Rather, he developed a framework which encapsulates the agency of individuals, their socialisation, the arenas or fields in which they operate and what capital they bring to and acquire in practice within these fields. Although Bourdieu views capital as gender neutral, identified as an oversight, I assert that his conceptual tools can provide greater depth and breadth in my own research by locating the interplay within social structures within his key concepts of 'capital', 'habitus' and 'field'.

By drawing on Bourdieu, I recognise an ontological complicity between empiricism and theory; between agency and structure. Moreover, Bourdieu makes an important contribution to supporting a reflexive researcher's mindfulness and approach, which takes account of the researcher's positioning relative to data collection. He argues that acknowledging and laying bare the positionality of the researcher in the academic field, and upon reflection rejecting epistemological innocence, encourages effective social science (Rawolle & Lingard, 2013).

As habitus has the ability to be shaped by reflection and the array of fields experienced, knowledge is acquired on how to play 'the game' and how and where to perform or emphasise certain facets of identity. Understanding identity performance is central to exploring how and why prominence of different facets of identity are displayed within certain fields (Ratna, 2013).

Naturally, these concepts and how they impact on individual students cannot be considered independently. While MSWSs might exclusively identify with one category, i.e., only as male, their location is socially constructed along with axes of different identities, for example, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, etc. Therefore, using a single framework for analysis may limit the ability to see these "interlocking categories of experience" (Andersen & Hill Collins, 1992: xii). Including an intersectional approach when analysing social relationships is therefore of central importance (Yuval-Davis, 2006b).

Intersectionality, as discussed, can firmly locate the affects and effects of an individual's identity and has the ability to treat the important concept of gender as fluid. Moreover, it

supports the act of reflexivity endorsed by Bourdieu. At its core is its ability to examine in greater depth aspects of identity at micro, meso and macro levels. Indeed, social work can be seen to be practiced at the intersections between the individual and local and national levels of individual and socio-political spheres (Dominelli, 2002). Clearly for individuals all these concepts of potential oppression are structured differently but intersect and are impossible to separate (Stein & Plummer, 1996).

By drawing on intersectionality which promotes deeper analysis, I aim "to capture both structure and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more axes of subordination" (Crenshaw, 2002: 9).

By using Bourdieu's concepts of capital, field and habitus and the intersectionality of identity, such as, gender, age, etc., I can apply different lenses to analyse the fluidity of the self from one social field to another. This can identify a sense of belonging or non-belonging within those fields, which not only locate MSWSs motivations but their career intentions.

Therefore, it seems a logical progression that a theoretical framework, drawing on elements of Bourdieu's conceptual toolkit, which acknowledges the intersections in these concepts can, I contend, provide for a depth of analysis perhaps not demonstrated previously in similar studies. While both concepts are deployed as explicit analytical tools, power as an analytical framework has been applied throughout, and is perhaps most evident in the dynamics associated with gender.

I propose then that an overarching application of the work of Bourdieu, together with the nuanced approach that intersectionality brings, would be most appropriate for the analysis of the identified themes.

SUMMARY

This chapter sought to identify a body of theory most suitable to apply to the current research study. In terms of locating suitable theory, previous associated research was revisited with the aim of identifying and drawing out the dominant themes that body of work highlights. Revealed in stark relief by revisiting this work, were expressions of various emanations of power.

As can be seen, the male body and its potential for differing forms of violence is perhaps a disadvantage within certain caring professions, such as social work. It is the female body, aligned with nurturing, which supports the feminine association with care. For that reason, female capital can be seen to have primacy within the caring professions and can claim to have powerful influence within social work.

Foucault provides an extensive treatise on the various affects and effects of power and although insightful, omits to locate a framework of analysis. What his work does contribute in this area can be seen to illuminate the core principles of social work, identifying oppression and facilitating empowerment in face of the dominant white male hegemony. A focus of social work is to counter the effect of men's oppression and violence toward women.

Consequently, a feminised pedagogy arguably dominates the field of social work education (Parker & Crabtree, 2012). An awareness of this is rightly taught and forms part of the social work curriculum, a fact any MSWS will be acutely aware of, and as a result of being male in female spaces - of being perhaps 'the enemy within'. This may have the effect of isolating and excluding MSWSs. An interesting and remarkable exception or reversal concerning the traditional male hegemonic dominance of power relations set within the very social and structural contexts of those male power discourses, which Foucault explores. Individuals who, according to Bourdieu (1990), have internalised the performativity of their gender to the extent that it is enacted at a pre-reflexive level.

Indeed, Bourdieu's concepts of capital, field and habitus are discussed and the benefits to the analysis of this study clearly outlined. Bourdieu's conceptual toolkit together with the increased benefit that Intersectionality brings, has been identified as the overarching theoretical framework.

As discussed, sociological theory has much to contribute to the analysis of the affect and effect of power, and that concept combined with the fields of social work and education brought to the fore the theory to be applied to this study. The framework identified not only fits with the study but also my personal/professional ethics and values. In terms of Bourdieu's approach Fitzpatrick and May (2016: 112) comment:

> "It is no surprise that those interested in issues of social justice, reproduction and the politics of education have found Bourdieusian analysis so very productive for informing both theory and practice".

Reflecting upon my life journey, social work training and practice, power has been a complex and more nuanced mix of the cause and effect all of the phenomena discussed. Some taking precedence over others at different times and situations where again I can reflect on the usefulness of Bourdieusian and Intersectional approaches. Despite being a white male, due to my social class, background and sexual identity the various connotations of power have, on balance had an underlying pejorative effect, which I have sought to counter by recognising that habitus and doxa and the intersections at which these operate are not static, but can be changed.

When exploring the perceptions, experiences and motivations of MSWSs, qualitative methods are required to discover how these factors interrelate. The following chapter presents the methodology and methods used in this study, and outlines the theoretical approach used to analyse the data.

CHAPTER FOUR – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodology and research methods applied in this study. As a basis for determining an appropriate methodology, the chapter begins by reintroducing the research question and why it was developed. Moving on, the chapter discusses the philosophical foundations of this study and the rationale for employing qualitative methods. The design or methods that the study used is discussed, developed and determined. Next, the chapter describes the process of selecting university research sites and how participants of the study were selected and recruited. The chapter then outlines the demographics of the participant sample. Due consideration is then given to ethical issues and data protection of the study participants. Lastly, this chapter looks at the methods of data analysis and describes how codes were determined and what themes emerged.

4.1 INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

As highlighted in previous chapters, a paucity of males entering the social work profession has been of concern to regulators and policy makers in the UK, the reasons for which have not been addressed within the existing literature, so a substantive question for this research has been identified:

What are the main factors affecting the experiences and career decisions of male social work students (MSWSs)?

The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of enrolled MSWSs and recent alumni in the UK, identifying existing barriers which may exist for males entering the profession, while studying on what might be termed 'feminised' programmes, and what action might be taken to address them.

To gain further insight into this phenomenon, six objectives are set:

- To explore the motivations for MSWSs to enter the profession.
- To examine whether these motivations differ across intersections of diversity.
- To determine the qualities and assets they bring to the profession.
- To determine the intentions of MSWSs, and career choices determined by recent alumni, in respect of practising within the social work profession or an alternative.
- To determine any trends in preference expressed by male students in terms of the subject area of practice placements, and to evaluate if these trends vary by region.
- To determine what changes MSWSs and recent alumni recommend for improving their student experience on qualifying courses.

Those methods employed to meet these objectives, and to ultimately answer the research question are detailed further into the chapter. First, the foundational philosophy connected with the study requires some explanation to provide context to the study design.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

4.2.2 Ontological approach

Credible research requires a methodological framework from which to investigate. Gilbert and Stoneman (2016) identify that the term 'methodology' is too often employed to just mean the research methods employed in a study. Whittaker (2012) envisions methodology more holistically, as the totality of undertaking research, including the research approach (quantitative or qualitative), defining an epistemological position (e.g., interpretivism, positivism, etc.) and defining the specific research methods employed (e.g. interviews, surveys etc.).

Rather than developing hypotheses to be tested, qualitative approaches emphasise what is expressed, i.e. words as data, for example, personal narrative accounts and interviews. Qualitative research seeks to shed light on social phenomena which are explained by exploring how individuals understand their social worlds and their experiences which are historically and culturally situated (Crotty, 1998). Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 3) assert that:

> "Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world.
> It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible.
> These practices transform the world".

This means that in contrast to the quantitative dream of obtaining unbiased knowledge, the qualitative approach acknowledges that biases do exist and incorporates them within the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

This anti-positivist paradigm accepts the subjective, that interpreting phenomena is relative and constructed. Similar situations or phenomena can be interpreted differently, by different people with different perspectives and bias (Rescher, 2002, cited in, Sarantakos, 2005). Subjectivity however, has traditionally been viewed as a source of bias, not a valuable component to research, informed by background and identity (Maxwell, 1996). Consequently, it might be identified that subjectivity has biased the findings of this study. Subjectivity has been defined relative to objectivity, the former most strongly associated with social science. As Daston and Galison (2007: 17) state:

"To be objective is to aspire to knowledge that bears no trace of the knower – knowledge unmarked by prejudice or skills, fantasy or judgement, wishing or striving".

As a former MSWS, and the researcher of this study I am mindful of my position within it. It is important here that I acknowledge my insider perspective or 'emic' view, which stands in contrast to the 'etic' outsider view which affirms objectivity. Sharkey and Larsen (2005) suggest that the emic perspective is central to ethnography, moreover Kvale (1996) makes reference to 'perspectival subjectivity', which should not to be eliminated from the research, but rather included in a contextualised analysis. The way phenomena are interpreted is therefore key, and interpretivism is closely associated with qualitative research (Bryman, 2012).

According to Munro and Hardie (2019), the concepts of objectivity and subjectivity in social work research have become so ambiguous as to now lack true meaning. Instead they contend that a focus on the individual attributes of objectivity and subjectivity is key to determine how desirable attributes can be endorsed and undesirable attributes avoided.

This study used this interpretivist ontological approach, mindful that it encompasses social constructivism at its foundation (Berger & Luckman, 1967). Social constructionism determines that reality is brought about by social interaction. While conducting the research, I attempted to understand the perspective of the participant, not to generalise from it, or for it to be objective (Schwandt, 1994). Interpretive epistemological approaches demonstrate a subjectivity that knowledge is socially constructed, and therefore, important for this thesis, may be influenced by the social construct of gender (Lennon & Whitford, 1994).

In terms of social work, feminism is a founding ideology, which also tends to be anti-positivist. It has a long tradition of promoting qualitative approaches as appropriate for studying social phenomena. Feminist values and research approaches tend to focus on gender at the centre of social enquiry. They recognise that differences in power exist within wider society and the academe, traditionally favouring patriarchal approaches to research emphasising objectivity and distance between researcher and participants (Whittaker, 2012).

Reflexivity is a principle of all qualitative research including feminist research practice. Part of a rigorous qualitative study demands that I reflect upon my personal value base and my education as a social work practitioner. It is an important tool for examining my own beliefs, while striving to critically understand they may impact the research setting (Payne & Payne, 2004). Moreover, it "means attempting to make explicit the power relations and the exercise of power in the research process" (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002: 118).

I have reflected that my life experiences have grounded me in feminist humanist perspectives. I am a white gay male, now middle-class, with socialist, feminist leanings and sympathies. I am qualified as a social worker and have over eight years' experience of teaching social work

students as a university lecturer. As I have experience of being both an MSWS and a social work educator, I feel it important to hold on to all these experiences while making a study of other male social work students, so that I could better understand the differing perspectives affecting the student experience. Consequently, I feel well placed to make a holistic analysis of their perspectives. I believe that as our perceptions of reality are multiple and relative, the interpretative approach to both ontology and epistemology identified are suitable approaches to this study.

The study took a pragmatic approach by selecting a methodology judged most effective in addressing the research questions and the objectives of the study. The 'what works best' approach is endorsed by Greene and Caracelli (1997) was used in determining an appropriate qualitative methodology to use.

4.2.3 Determining a methodology

This study had the opportunity of incorporating an analysis of archived documents concerning the historical demographics of social workers. With a proposal that historical records were analysed and human participants involved, it suggested that the methodology to be considered should be mixed methods. Affirmation of this approach was encouraged by Bryman's (2012) suggestion of a `best of both worlds' stance purporting qualitative and quantitative approaches should be combined. Hammersley (1996) endorsed this view, suggesting a mixed methods approach can provide triangulation, where one set of findings either quantitative or qualitative, can be used to corroborate the other. One research approach can complement and provide facilitation for the other. Triangulation in this regard, however, has been critiqued primarily by Bryman (2012), who asserts that triangulated data is not always derived from appropriate and equivalent sources. Indeed, it transpired that this was the case here, as on further analysis these archived documents suggested that they would only provide some context and not form a substantive proportion of the study.

Garnering perceptions, experiences and motivations cannot be just a matter of asking questions and active listening. It also involves observing, analysing soft communication and interaction analysis which may be displayed by participants under certain circumstances over a suitable period. Hence, a range of methodological approaches were briefly explored.

Observation was therefore a key method of data collection, as perceptions can sometimes be clearly expressed by actions, however subtle. Observation is prominent in ethnographic research, with the literal translation of ethnography is 'portrait of a people' (Harris & Johnson, 2000). This allows for the study of culture and social behaviour, taking an in-depth holistic and interpretive analysis with an aim of uncovering structures and interactions within a group and

the meaning they subscribe to such interactions, underlining the bias of perspective (of culture, gender or experience) (Cresswell, 2007; Holway & Todres, 2005; McQueen & Knussen, 2002).

Ethnography, with its roots in anthropology and fieldwork of the Chicago School of sociology, is effective and went onto inform the transformative and political agendas of that city (Gobo, 2008). This method was employed by British colonialists researching 'exotic' cultures (Gilbert & Stoneman, 2016; Crabtree, 2012). It allows for an adequate relationship of familiarity to be built between researcher and participant and can reveal what is unseen or unheard in what are labelled; marginalised, socially obscure and disenfranchised groups (Deegan, 2001). MSWSs might be termed socially obscure and perhaps in certain circumstances, disenfranchised as they embark on a female majority occupation (FMO).

Ethnography and ethnographic methods have long had an affinity with feminist research, and witnessed a resurgence in the 1980s, as feminists examined the changing role of women in society, contributing gender as a primary category of analysis, a category employed in this study. "They both [feminist research approaches and ethnography] have experience, participants, definitions, meanings and sometimes subjectivity as a focus, and they do not lose sight of context" (Skeggs, 2005: 426).

Ethnography provides both descriptive and critical methods while being suitably flexible to accommodate a wide variety of data collection methods (Sarantakos, 2005). This flexibility enables the researcher to pursue fruitful avenues of inquiry as the study proceeds. These include conducting interviews, observation, written narratives, diary entries, questionnaires and spatial mapping, all of which could equally be subject to analysis as raw data. Such methods encapsulate the three basic types of data available to ethnographers: what people say, what they do and what they leave behind in terms of manufactured evidence or artefacts. LeCompte and Schensul, (1999) suggest that employing more than one of these data collection methods in parallel can provide robust data for triangulation.

According to Cohen et al. (2018), the methods of ethnography are conducive to subjectivist or anti-positivist approaches. It is also evident that the qualitative researcher cannot be objective or indeed produce such an account. Findings are either 'value-mediated' through the researcher or negotiated between the researcher and study participants (Snape & Spencer, 2003). True ethnography allows for a total submerging in the participants' experience, being party to their actions and reactions. This can reduce opportunities to just offer what participants believe the researcher would wish to hear (Gobo, 2008).

LeCompte & Schensul (1999) contend that analysis of ethnographic raw data begins after the first few interactions and that ethnographers need to engage in several modes or levels of analysis as they proceed. Gobo (2008) describes that the ethnographer does not observe the

setting, just the incidents and participants within it, although others contend that context is important in gaining a greater understanding (Parker & Crabtree, 2012).

Modes of analysis concerning ethnography document the insider and outsider position of the researcher. Kottak (2006) defines the emic (insider) approach as investigating how people think, how they perceive and categorize the world, their rules for behaviour, what has meaning for them, and how they imagine and explain things. In adopting an 'emic' perspective, Hammersley (1992) suggests requires the researcher to be immersed in student experiences while they study; to maintain a close contact which is interactive and developmental, in an attempt to garner their true perspectives (Snape & Spencer, 2003). White (2001) argues that advantages of being 'an insider' include a greater familiarity with the participant's experiential world and easier access to any sensitive material. My background has no doubt had an impact on the way I viewed and conducted this research, and the depth of reflexivity given over to primary concerns such as, ensuring the research was ethical and transparent.

While taking an emic approach, an etic (social scientific) approach shifts the focus from local observations, categories, explanations, and interpretations to those of the anthropologist. This approach recognises that members of a culture often are too involved in their own circumstances to interpret their cultures impartially, an approach particularly useful in group observations. In this way the study strived to take account of personal, local and regional phenomena and present those to others (Prus, 1996). Moreover, a critical ethnography seeks to link the subjective experience of participants to overarching social or institutional structures (O'Reilly, 2011). Using etic approaches, the ethnographer emphasises what they consider important, constantly aware of the guiding principles of self-reflectivity. Patton (1990, cited in Kuzel, 1999) asserts this approach also has beneficial effects for participants in developing their self-awareness and reflectivity, thereby informing the development of practice.

As the study was conducted in all four nations of the UK, data collection was over a number of different research sites. However, the strictures of time meant having a more limited opportunity to undertake a full ethnography at each site, therefore overarching ethnographic approaches were taken in the time allowed. Although it could be argued that using overarching ethnographic approaches over multiple sites could prevent in-depth familiarity with one site, I felt sufficient familiarity of the context through the experience of being a MSWS myself.

The benefit of ethnographic approaches do allow for the exploration of a wide variety of participants' perceptions which may culturally / geographically differ, and would outweigh any limitations. Marcus (1995) is credited with developing these approaches, which move away from traditional colonial roots of studying within a single site, to multiple sites of participation

and observation, which can contrast local conditions in context to the research question and objectives.

I believe that bringing an element of pragmatism to the study by identifying the most appropriate research methodology is effective. This approach also identified those research methods which are logistically possible. A true ethnography would have meant being in the field for a number of months if not longer, which was not possible due to a range of factors. Nevertheless, I felt that an overarching ethnographic framework for the collection and analysis of data was the best fit to answer the research question and associated objectives. In sum, ethnographic approaches support an interpretive epistemology and provide flexible research methods, which can link with quantitative document analysis of historic data to contextualise the study.

4.2.4 Design

The aim was to identify if applicants to social work had always been predominantly female since social work gained its professional status. Most anecdotal evidence from long-standing practitioners and academic colleagues suggested that a significant majority of social work students had been female over a substantial period. However, this does have its limitations, in that any significantly different trends in the gender of applicants could be linked to other factors, for example, legislation and social policy. An aim was to contextualise historic data with contemporary male social work student's perceptions and motivations. With this line of enquiry in mind, it was determined that vocational enrolment records could offer some insight.

Those wishing to enrol on a qualifying social work programme would have done so historically via either the Polytechnics Central Admissions Service (PCAS) or the Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA) (c.1963 and c.1986 respectively). These merged to form the current Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). UCAS was contacted with the aim of accessing the required quantitative data, they confirmed that they hold these records in hard copy but were unwilling to allow them to be consulted by anyone other than UCAS employees and had intent to publish this raw data themselves. A Freedom of Information Act 2000 request was made; however, it appears that UCAS are exempt from the provisions of the Act therefore rendering this data inaccessible.

This was disappointing, as it could have brought about new knowledge and important data which may have been used in further analyses. It was also disappointing as I had not considered that UCAS would not provide assistance to a research student of education. Consequently, the approach to analyse historic statistical data to determine whether males had always been the minority entering the profession, required revision with other avenues explored.

A further avenue of enquiry was to consult historical records of the social work regulatory bodies of the four nations of the UK in their respective locations. However, following consultations with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), the Scottish Social Care Council (SSCC), the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) and the Care Council for Wales (CCWales), it appears that if this data had ever existed, it had not subsequently been devolved to these regional regulators.

A positive development came about in the form of the realisation of historical records, which included some detail on student progression on qualifying social work programmes. The General Social Care Council (GSCC) was up until the end of July 2012 the social work regulator in England. In the possession of the GSCC were unique national datasets which provided information about social workers and social work students. Discussion and application of this data is detailed later in the chapter in section 4.4.2.

In terms of those MSWSs involved in this study, the terminology employed when referring to those consenting students was carefully considered. Labels such as, 'informant', 'respondent', 'subject', 'collaborator' and 'participant' are widely used in qualitative research and for varied reasons (Robson & McCartan, 2016). After consideration, 'subject' and 'respondent' were rejected as these suggest passive objects of research, who simply respond to questions. A term that suggests a valued partner in the research would be more appropriate. 'Collaborator' suggests cooperation from the very beginning. Terms that suggested co-researcher or being passive in the research were simply not the case. Much more suitable was 'participant' as someone with some autonomy within the study, and which I took as the term employed to refer to the valued contributions made to the study by consenting MSWSs.

The existing literature details the paucity of men in social work; however, the voices of male practitioners and students are not amplified in this area. Overarching ethnographic methods would therefore give existing MSWSs a voice to express how this phenomenon might be experienced (Silverman, 2011).

It was also appropriate to employ methods which enabled evaluation of both participants' actions and words. To provide a voice for MSWSs, it was important to seek their in-depth and nuanced accounts concerning their experience of being a MSWS. A design which included semi-structured interviews provided such an opportunity to explore their experiences and to develop nuanced understandings (Qu & Dumay 2011). This approach was used to elicit findings by using participants' own accounts and as a tool to explore their perceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2013). By choosing to visit participants in their own university environments, it was also my aim to build a relationship with them, albeit fleeting, to try and minimise the power dynamics inherent in the researcher/participant relationship. Holding feminist values, I had to

acknowledge that elements of this power imbalance would remain. By emphasising my postgraduate student status and having been an MSWS, I hoped would help minimise these effects.

Participant interviews have been used extensively in other studies concerning males in FMOs, particularly interviews (for example, see: Lupton, 2006; Schaub, 2017; Simpson, 2009; Williams, 1993). With the exception of Schaub (2017) however, many of these have relied on retrospective accounts of experiences at university, which as Gomm (2004) purports can be unreliable.

A hallmark of qualitative and ethnographic research methods concerns group, or participant observation. Schensul et al. (1999) define it as: "the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting". DeWalt and DeWalt (2002: vii) add that it involves "active looking, improving memory, informal interviewing, writing detailed field notes and most importantly patience". Indeed, actions and reactions can sometimes betray verbalised accounts, both during interview and conducting observations (Gray, 2018).

To enable some evaluation of questions posed, it was determined that group observations would be a useful addition to interviews and would provide some triangulation, which could evaluate some of the actions and responses of a range of participants chosen purposively. This is a method which is new to qualitative studies undertaken with social work students in their current educational settings and has provided a depth of enquiry for this study.

Visiting the research sites gave me the opportunity to conduct group observations and record field notes (for an example of these, please see Appendix K – page 260), which would not have been possible otherwise. During observations field notes were handwritten, or rather jotted, taking care that this activity was not disruptive in the situation observed as Gilbert and Stoneman (2016) recommend.

In comparison to quantitative methods which attempt to broadly generalise, the recruitment of a relatively small sample for the study following qualitative methods allowed for a greater depth of analysis.

4.2.5 Interview development

Upon ethical approval from Bournemouth University, I gained permission to begin my data collection there, which served as a quasi-pilot for the other research sites involved in the study. This provided the opportunity to 'try-out' methods for data collection. Miller and Glassner (2011; 137) assert that "interviewing is a particularly useful method for examining the social

world from the points of view of the research participants". As discussed earlier, this has been a tested method used with men in FMOs and social work.

Interview protocols for this study were therefore developed and determined by themes identified within the literature review. These were developed into direct questions aligned to the research aims and objectives. The questions were then piloted with a small sample of participants and their responses generated data that lacked the depth to respond purposely to analysis. This necessitated a review of them. Some were clarified, for example, one of the questions initially asked: 'what issues have you had academically and how might these impact your career?' Participants had difficulty describing academic issues they might have and how they perceived their future career, so the opportunity was taken to make the question less formal. 'Have you experienced any issues in relation to the course / practice placements?' (See Appendix G).

Thomas (2011) identifies that interpretivist research frequently makes use of less structured interview questions, which can elicit a greater range of data. To assist with this, I used audio recording equipment during interviews to avoid any hiatus and distractions of noting them down. Scourfield (2001b) suggests that social workers should be an easy group to interview, as they are used to interviewing in their practice. Although these participants were still gaining experience with the tools of social work, their familiarity with interviews was helpful as they were comfortable with the requirements of confidentiality and recording.

Following some initial discussion with participants of the pilot, it was felt that to use video recording equipment during any of the data collection could make participants feel self-conscious, uncomfortable and lead them to display somewhat false behaviour (Gray, 2018). Participants felt however, that audio recording was less intrusive and provides an excellent record of interviews. An approach that Bailey (2008) agrees is most conducive for both participants and researcher.

It was during this initial data gathering that I reflected on how unprepared I had been in the practical application of research methods and methodologies. This reflects Mason's (2002) assertion, that although pilot studies can be useful, research design should not be completely determined by them and adaptations can be made as appropriate.

What I determined from this pilot was with the benefit of audio recording that the guide of pre-determined questions could be used more as topics, and so my prescriptive open questions evolved into semi-structured interviews. Such freedom enabled participants to express the issues they identified as important and aligns with Padgett's (2008) assertion that 'most researchers go into the field with ready-made questions but expect and seek out the

impromptu'. As a result, the method of semi-structured interviews was used with most participants.

The audio recording of interviews also encouraged me to gather broader detail of participants experience in relation to their backgrounds and academic journeys than had been the case in my original interview protocols. This approach resulted in collecting more information on the background of participants making for a greater depth of analysis.

During interviews I observed participants' body language, mood and presentation, together with environmental considerations e.g. prevailing weather conditions and internal environments, which could also have a bearing on general demeanour. All of which were noted and consulted during data analysis.

All current participants opted for a face-to-face interview while alumni (back to 2008) opted to complete e-mailed questionnaires, due to practice commitments.

4.2.6 Questionnaire development

The practicalities of contacting the male alumni of participating social work programmes was more problematic. Not having their consent to be part of the study, I thought it unethical to request any details which may still be on record to begin correspondence, which would also be a breach of data protection legislation.

As HEI specific email addresses issued to students expire or are withdrawn by HEIs upon students leaving university, what I was comfortable with (before any GDPR regulations came into being), was to request from participating HEIs any private email addresses they held for their social work male alumni. Initial contact with them determined that for various reasons they could not commit to being interviewed. Wishing to elicit their responses, however, I devised a questionnaire based on those questions posed during semi-structured interviews.

Although the questionnaire closely followed the interview guide, completed questionnaires did not offer the same depth or opportunity for further exploration as the semi-structured interviews. They were however useful in contextualising aspects of the more extensive participant narratives.

Whittaker (2012) asserts that a common dilemma is determining whether to use questionnaires or interviews with participants. Interviews have the advantage of being more flexible and 'in the moment', in contrast to questionnaires. However, questionnaires were thought to have a role due to the inaccessibility of some of the potential research participants.

4.2.7 Field Observations

Observation is a method that Cotton et al. (2010) identify as being widely used in research involving students in higher education and is an important tool in qualitative research. Although prior consent had been given by participating HEIs and students, I was mindful to check their consent before undertaking any group observations.

Field observations and had two main applications within the study. The first application was to undertake group observations of students within a classroom setting. This method was used to determine if student interactions included the operation of gender or power dynamics within these arenas. This avenue of enquiry was informed by various scholars (Christie, 1998, 2001; Hyde & Deal, 2003; Scourfield, 2001c), who identify a lack of agency felt by MSWSs in social work education environments and classrooms, in particular due to wider accusations of abuse concerning their gender.

In total, eleven field observations were made during 2014: four at the participating HEIs in England; three at the HEI in Scotland; two at the HEI in Northern Ireland; and two at the HEI in Wales. Notes were handwritten to avoid any distraction to attendant students or lecturers/facilitators from potential noise of typing on a keyboard. These were subsequently typed (please see Appendix L – page 261, for an example of field notes).

The following basic observational structure informed the recording of data:

- The date and timings of the observations.
- Inside temperature and atmosphere. Outdoor conditions and temperature. Lecture room layout. The learning environment.
- The total number of students in attendance, further broken down by gender (determined both visually and with the aid of the cohort register) and obvious ethnicity noted.
- Student dress.
- The number of facilitators / lecturers present.
- The subject area covered by the session.
- Methods / resources used in teaching.
- Details of the interactions amongst students, with an emphasis on gender.
- Details of the interactions between students and facilitators / lecturers, with an emphasis on gender.

The second application of field observations was as part of the interview process, where the body language of participants was observed, adding meaning to the verbal responses of participants. This was noted down immediately following each semi-structured interview and as with the group observations, formed a meaningful part of the data analysis.

4.2.8 The BEM Androgyny Test

Participants were also invited to complete BEM androgyny tests to provide evaluation of some of the current literature (for example, Christie, 2001a; Cree, 2000), which suggests the masculine and feminine traits of male social workers have impacted their approach to practice which has called into question their sexual orientation. Participants were also asked to disclose their sexual orientation to compare with BEM results and to respond to conjecture concerning this, evident in the literature (Christie, 2001a, 2001b; Hicks 2001).

The BEM sex-role inventory is an instrument used in a calculation of gender perceptions, gender expressions and gender roles. These run on a Likert scale from feminine to masculine personality traits and is a self-assessment of how individuals identify themselves psychologically.

Although this test was devised in the 1970's, Holt & Ellis (1998) assert that, despite increased fluidity of the perceptions of gender since that time, it is still a valid instrument for assessing gender roles. Previous research suggests that males working in traditionally female occupations score higher on 'femininity' traits than those in traditional male jobs (Lennon & Eisenburg, 1987; MacDonald, 1977; Murray, 1996; Williams, 1993).

4.3 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

4.3.2 Selecting University Sites

As this study was conducted across all four nations of the UK, it required the approval and participation of HEIs other than my home university, and access to potential student participants. In order to employ overarching ethnographic approaches and to use qualitative research methods effectively, I had to visit each site and build relationships with those concerned with the study.

Across the UK there are ninety-eight HEIs or Colleges of Further Education that offer qualifying social work programmes (see figure 1). The following criterion was employed to determine HEI involvement and in the following order:

> • Collecting data from three HEIs situated in England and one each in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, reflecting the greater numerical availability of qualifying programmes in England than those of the other three nations of the UK
>
> • HEIs that offer the widest range of qualifying routes, i.e. an undergraduate and post-graduate programme and post qualifying/post graduate diploma will be invited.

• HEIs which capture data from both rural and urban locations, red-brick and traditional universities will be approached.

• The research approaches employed in this study involve costs in regard to travel, accommodation and subsistence for the researcher. To enhance existing budgets a successful grant application was made to the Santander travel fund. This had implications for the study as this grant could not be used to consider/attend certain UK institutions offering social work programmes.

To assist with the selection criteria diagrams were created using data available at the end of 2012 from the respective Care Councils of the UK. Having mapped these qualifying social work programmes in the UK detailed in Figures 1-4 (please see pages 265 - 268), invitations were emailed to HEIs inviting them to participate as sites for data collection. After taking account of funding criteria, some preference was given to those offering Undergraduate, Master's and Post-qualifying programmes. This approach was applicable to programmes in England and Scotland, but in Wales and Northern Ireland only undergraduate programmes are currently offered. Consequently, the criteria were adapted to reflect the realities in those countries.

Six universities were invited to participate ensuring an adequate range of data was collected for analysis, whilst remaining manageable for a lone researcher to complete within the timetable set. These included two Russell Group and four 'red-brick' universities. Two of these were in capital cities of the UK with the remainder in semi-rural locations.

In terms of data collection, it might be reasonably concluded that HEIs would welcome becoming involved in research. Research is of course one of the three fundamental roles of any university (along with teaching and publishing). However, initial invitations by email to HEIs to participate, generally met with disinterest and a lack of response, or suspicion as to why their particular university had been chosen.

Upon reflection I realised as a novice post-graduate researcher, I was unknown in the world of academia and perhaps relied too much on the reputation of my supervisors to gain access to these institutions. I soon learned that I had to do more groundwork to introduce myself, and therefore a subsequent change of approach was required to engage them. An approach which centred on building working relationships, akin to social work intervention itself, but with gatekeepers of potential student participants. It was here I learned that a feminist epistemology was not only appropriate when working with students, but with HEIs themselves.

As a result, further time was taken to ascertain the names of the framework leaders of the universities selected in line with the chosen criterion; happily, this coincided with an

opportunity to present the study at a JSWEC Conference. This conference is attended by students and eminent academics of social work, some of whom were aware of the study. The personal, networking approach at this conference had the desired effect and interest and invitations to undertake research at several HEIs were then forthcoming.

4.3.3 Participant Selection and Recruitment

Participant selection was purposeful in terms of the study selecting male participants to give voice to a board range of their experiences, perceptions and motivations (Gobo, 2004). Because this study focused upon the views of MSWSs, it required that the sample only included those who identified as male. It was decided to include only their voices because in other studies (aside from that of Schaub (2017)) they are largely absent. The studies by Preston-Shoot and McKimm (2012) and Woodward and Mackay (2012) are two such examples of UK studies, which make no mention of the numbers of males involved or contextualise the findings in terms of gender.

Whilst it is recognised that this study could have included participants who identify as female, this would have undoubtedly resulted in comparisons between the experiences, perceptions and motivations of both males and females. Although it is acknowledged that group observations involved observations of gender dynamics between male and female students, this is not the focus of this study, which was more specifically designed to engage MSWSs and garner their views.

Participants were drawn for undergraduate and post-graduate qualifying programmes. Among postgraduate participants were those from a 'Step-Up to Social Work' qualifying route. This is an initiative of the Department for Education and is fast track route of fourteen months, which enables graduates to train as children and family social workers. In this initiative, local authorities form partnership regions to fund the programme and its cohort. Trainees work in a local authority, gaining practitioner experience in exchange for having their course fees paid and receiving a bursary equivalent to a living wage. Generally, but not always, trainees are drawn from existing local authority staff, who which to change direction in their career (Smith et al. 2013; DoH, 2002).

In terms of participant recruitment, general details about the study were sent out electronically to the heads of social work departments at participating HEI research sites. This included a request that the general details be forwarded onto all social work students. It was important that all students should be aware of the study, as group observations with the researcher being present in many of their scheduled lectures necessitated consent from all students, not just MSWSs. Field visits were arranged once the whole cohort consented to be involved in the study. This included a request for contact with key admin staff, who could advise on the most

advantageous time for field visits, when most students were scheduled to be at University and not on practice placement.

Host university administration staff were also involved in attempts to contact MSWS alumni. A questionnaire format of the interview guide being emailed out to those prospective participants, concurrent with visits to each research site. Alumni (back to 2008) were approached by e-mail where addresses had been recorded by the HEI. Around 40% of these emails were returned to the server, due to the recipients' addresses being closed. From the remainder, the response rate was low (n=2) but nonetheless was included as data for this study.

This low response perhaps reflects the lack of personal contact and relationship building, however fleeting, endorsed by feminist approaches (Orme, 2002b). I reflected on how many email surveys I had consigned to the 'junk-folder' of my email, due to the lack of any personal engagement from the researcher. Although no feedback was given in this regard, it may be that constraints on time to complete a detailed questionnaire were a deciding factor in the lack of general response from male alumni in this study.

4.3.4 Males as elusive research participants

As can be seen in Table 11 (please see page 272), the number of MSWSs who actually took part in this study represent just over a quarter of males enrolled on social work courses at HEI participating sites. Although the social work programmes and course leaders were generally helpful in disseminating invitations for MSWSs to be included in this study, most potential participants did not respond, which was both surprising and challenging.

As Table 11 identifies, most participants HEIs had substantively less than ten MSWSs in each year cohort of their social work programmes. This meant that ideally most, if not all, MSWSs would need to agree to be part of the study to ensure a robust sample. This required almost continuous attempts to recruit. When attempting to recruit from evasive populations, snowball sampling is often recommended (Gray, 2018), I was however doubtful that this approach would be adequately fruitful, which resulted in the full relational network approach to recruitment as discussed in the next section. At each participating HEI site I took the opportunity of addressing entire cohorts of social work students which did have some effect in recruiting more participants.

Not having undertaken research on this scale before meant that I was unaware if this reluctance to participate in qualitative research studies was usual, or if this was attributable to the subject of the research, the gender of the participants or the context in which the research

was undertaken; perhaps all three. In any event, it was a challenge I believe I surmounted effectively.

4.4 Sample

Gray (2018) asserts that qualitative research usually works using a purposive sample. He identifies that this strategy can elicit insights into particular phenomenon, in certain locations, context and time and from participants, which have characteristics relevant to the research. In view of this, MSWSs were drawn from six universities, a mix of red-brick and traditional HEIs, which not only provided a variety of qualifying routes, but also chosen to satisfy one of the objectives of the study; to elicit data from all four nations of the UK. The research sample comprised both undergraduate and postgraduate MSWSs, at different stages of progression on their respective programs.

Following a purposeful sampling strategy, a full relational network approach was taken to the sampling, which involved identifying multiple entry points into each social work programme (Trotter II et al. 2013). Using these networks, individual invitations to participate were extended to current MSWSs within those consenting cohorts, and recent male alumni invited to either attend an interview or complete an email questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews resulted in verbatim transcriptions, together with inscriptions of the reading of body language nuances to add raw data and enhance its analysis (Le Compte & Schensul, 1999). Although it is also acknowledged that non-face-to-face interviews could have assisted with more sensitive avenues of enquiry, observable dynamics such as, body language would have been lost.

Miles et al. (2014) make the point that in qualitative research there are no clear requirements in terms of sample size, however, these tend to be smaller in an effort to study emerging phenomena in depth and detail. A total number of thirty-four MSWSs consented to be part of the sample and participate in the study. Thirty-one participants agreed to an in-depth interview, with the shortest taking twenty-four minutes and the longest an hour and forty-five minutes, with a further two out of four requests returning completed questionnaires. This represents an average of just over 29% of all current enrolled MSWSs informed of the study at those HEIs participating across the UK.

4.4.2 Demographic information of social work students

To set a context in regard to the demographics of the participants of this study, it may be helpful to look at some historical trends in the demographics of social work students. The General Social Care Council (GSCC) had unique national datasets which provided information about social workers and social work students. Upon disbandment of the GSCC in 2012, these datasets were transferred to the social care workforce research unit and Kings College

London, with an aim of making them increasingly accessible to researchers and contribute to ongoing studies.

This study was kindly granted access to these datasets, the raw data from which has been analysed enabling the compilation of statistics (please see Tables 3 and 4 on page 269). Of particular interest was the ETIS dataset defined by Hussein (2012: 5), as follows:

> "ETIS dataset: information on students who undertook social work training in England since 1947 (however, the majority of records date back to 1980s). Over 265,000 records provide information on students' characteristics (such as age, gender and ethnicity), type and place of qualifications and progression data through their courses".

Hussein (2012) rightly identifies that the majority of records provide some detail from the 1980s. What is not reported however, are the substantial omissions in many individual records from 1947 up until the early 1990s. Although these datasets have been used to compile statistical data on the gender split of social work students, my analysis of the raw data concerns the methods of study and ethnicity of social work students. What has also been analysed but not thought appropriate for inclusion in this study is analysis of historic data of social work students' pass rates. Analysis of the raw data in relation to methods of study and ethnicity of social work students was undertaken to add some increased context to the demographic information of participants for this study (Table 3: Social work students' methods of study 1990-2012 - please see page 269).

The indications from Table 4 (Ethnicity of social work students 1990 – 2012 - please see page 269) concern ethnicity and identify that British students are the largest student body studying social work. This possibly reflects that English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish students have historically viewed their identity as belonging to all four nations of the UK, rather than its constituent countries. It may also reflect that former Commonwealth citizens have also identified as British, and not their country of origin. What is perhaps remarkable here is the indication that the numbers of male African students have historically far outstripped female African social work students.

4.4.3 Participant demographic information

Of the thirty-four participants, the actual breakdown in numbers in terms of location is detailed in Table 11 (please see page 272). Ages ranged from twenty to fifty-one, with an average mean age of thirty-two. Their method of study was full time, commensurate with previous social work students detailed in Table 3.

In terms of the other characteristics of demographics, participants disclosed details about their previous education, ethnicity, sexual orientation, personality traits (via a BEM androgyny test)

(please see Table 8 on page 270), and religious and political affiliations (please see Tables 9 and 10 on page 271). Of note is that none of the participants of this study stated that they considered themselves to have a disability or were registered as having a disability.

A majority of participants disclosed that they were previously educated to degree level, with a majority having undergraduate degrees in either sociology or psychology. Of the remainder, the majority had accessed social work qualifying programmes have completed an Access course to higher education (please see Table 5 on page 270).

The ethnicity of the participants of this study is commensurate with previous findings in studies by Cree (1996) and an evaluation concerning the 'Step-Up to Social Work' programme (Smith et al. 2013), where students tend to be overwhelmingly white. The post-graduate 'Step-Up to Social Work' route demonstrated the greater diversity. Eight students regardless of gender were observed as being from an ethnic minority background, which is lower than the national average of 15 – 22% of students in Higher Education (HESA, 2015). However, during group observations on field visits it was observed that ethnic minority representation was slightly increased in female students (please see Table 6 on page 270).

The disclosed sexual orientation of study participants is detailed in Table 7 (please see page 270). Comparing this with statistics on sexuality of the UK population is problematic due to the scope and qualitative nature of the research. This statistic however contrasts greatly with national statistics which indicate that between 1 - 6% of the male population identify as gay (ONS, 2012; YouGov, 2015).

4.4.4 Total number of interview and questionnaire responses

As can be seen from Table 11 (please see page 272), the total number of participants interviewed was thirty-one, with three alumni participants returning completed emailed questionnaires.

In addition, Table 11 details total numbers of social work students enrolled in each year of their respective programmes along with the number of MSWSs within those cohorts. The ratio of MSWSs to female students is given as a percentage (averaging 13%) and of the total number of MSWSs in participating sites, 26% agreed to be part of this study.

Whereas the gender of students was as expected, predominately female, the numbers observed far exceeded the national average of female students in Higher Education (HESA, 2015). Out of a total number of 193 students observed during field observations, just twenty-nine (15%) were male. This represents a 9% decrease in an average of 24% of male students enrolled on social work qualifying courses over the previous two decades (Hussein, 2012).

Cohorts of student participants attending learning sessions ranged in number from seventeen to over one hundred. Interestingly, the largest cohorts of participants to be observed were in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The larger cohorts perhaps reflect the increased social deprivation in these areas (NIMDM, 2010; SMID, 2010).

4.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount during the whole data collection process, and ethical approval for this study was awarded by Bournemouth University. Before attending each participating HEI, I forwarded the study's ethical approval, together with its parameters and context, which HEIs considered sufficient for their students to participate. Lecturers were helpful in disseminating details of the study and its implications to cohorts

It was important that this information was adequately relayed to potential cohorts of social work students, as not only would MSWSs be invited to participate, but these cohorts would be observed, and field notes taken. Upon agreement by these cohorts, I arranged to undertake field visits. I took the opportunity to address each cohort, explaining the research aims and took questions, which generally centred on recording methods in group situations and how the research was to be used. I believe this approach was instrumental in my gaining approval from each cohort of students I spoke with to undertake part of the study with them.

When inviting individual MSWSs to give informed consent, each potential participant was worked with to provide an outline of the research aims and purposes, and to explore an awareness of the limits of informed consent in terms of what they may disclose during interview (for example, abuse of others). Participants were also advised of how the raw data would be stored, how it would be used for publication purposes and the timescale for when it would be destroyed (Bryman, 2012). Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time throughout the process and were assured that this would have no impact or consequence to their progression on their qualifying programmes, or for those alumni participants.

It is recognised that an unequal power balance may have been experienced between researcher and participants, particularly as the researcher is a qualified social worker. The opportunity for participants to withdraw from the study at any time, and the option for their contributions not to be included, empowers the participant and helps to balance the power dynamic (Murphy & Dingwall, 2007; Farrimond, 2013). Power was a particular consideration with participants of Bournemouth University. As this was my everyday work environment, I was concerned that there might be a feeling of obligation to participate (Holloway & Wheeler, 1999). Akin to this is Padgett's (2008) concept of 'reactivity bias', where participants may change their behaviour and therefore their usual responses under research conditions.

A further measure designed to aid this power balance and to elicit as much information as possible, while promoting a relaxed informal interview process, was included at the conclusion of each interview. Participants were invited to review their contribution and asked if they would like to comment further or highlight any issues which they felt had not previously been addressed.

Provision was also made to support participants via links made with the pastoral service of each participating HEI. As the interview process involved participants sharing their life and student experiences, some issues may have come to light which would have necessitated their referral to such services.

Except for those participants at Bournemouth University, I was an unknown researcher and those other locations, my anonymity might enable participants to be suitably candid, unhindered by any prior dealings or relationship. The overarching ethnographic approach taken nonetheless encouraged some familiarity and developed the beginnings of a working relationship between researcher and participant, beneficial for open dialogue.

Consent was obtained in all cases to audio record semi-structured interviews, which were then subsequently transcribed by the researcher in conjunction with notes taken at the time of interview. Transcripts were typed following the conclusion of field visits and it was intended that participants would have the opportunity to review their transcripts and the subsequent preliminary analysis. Due however to the time elapsed producing these, some participants had completed their qualifying programmes making further contact with them difficult to pursue. A further compounding issue concerned participants' e-mail accounts which had closed down without signposting to alternatives. As a result, the opportunity for review by participants resulted in no revisions by them.

4.6 Data Protection and confidentiality

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, efforts were made to ensure data protection concerning HEIs, cohorts and individual participants. The contact details of participants were not requested or provided. Participants' names were not used, except salutations during the welcome to individual interviews. Throughout audio recordings participants were referred to by their location and number. For example, "thank you for consenting to be part of this study 'Wales 1'". Subsequently these were replaced with pseudonyms for the benefit of the findings and discussion chapters.

Emailed questionnaires were sent out by university course leaders or admin staff and any responses forwarded by them to me, having deleted any participants email address they had been sent from.

Although these efforts were effective in the objective of observing data protection and maintaining confidentiality, they did preclude opportunities to follow up on lines of enquiry which may have further benefitted the study. It also negated opportunities to contact participants later to check if they were content with the meaning derived from their participation in the study.

Bournemouth University's policy on personal data, storage and retention does not apply here, as the personal details of research participants were not requested or provided (BU, 2014).

4.7 Trustworthiness and Validity

While employing overarching ethnographic approaches as part of the research methodology, there could be some question over the validity of findings compared to the standards usually applied to quantitative research. Hammersley (1998) argues that while quantitative approaches of providing internal and external validity are important considerations in assessment of research, they lack the conceptual basis for more nuanced qualitative study. He argues that standards for judging ethnography are based on one or more of three methodological assumptions; naturalism, understanding and discovery. For example, whether the study captures the true perceptions of participants and further, beyond participants understanding, to include their behaviour and the wider context. Hammersley (1998: 60) asserts that "the appropriate criterion of assessment is the extent to which people's perspectives and/or behaviour and context are accurately captured". However, Smith (2009) argues from an interpretative and realistic standpoint that there are no abstract or general criteria from which validity can be derived; therefore, validity is a label applied to an account with which one with similar values and interests agrees.

4.8 DATA ANALSIS

As the methodology of the study took an ethnographic approach, it would therefore be reasonable to suggest that strategies implicit within ethnography could be used to analyse data. However, according to O'Reilly (2011), no established or prescriptive methods of data analysis for ethnographic processes exist.

The participants of qualitative research themselves may project behaviour and actions which are sincere, or conversely more promotive of how they wish to be seen, a form of impression management. Moreover, participants do not tend to produce organised speech, and in some cases had regional accents, both of which can render meaning ambiguous. Add to this, the context in which data is collected and any apparent simplicity can be concealed beneath multiple layers of complexity (Miles et al. 2014). It is therefore for the researcher to arrange the data by defining the main themes to be an effective representation of the data.

Wolcott (1990) identifies that the aim of approaches to analyse data is to reduce data using interpretive analysis without losing meaning. Coding is an essential tool in this respect (Padgett, 2008), and is offered as the second stage in the hierarchical typography of qualitative data of Miles et al. (1994); the first being the raw data and the third, analytic memos which explain the decision making behind the codes, and in turn relates to self-reflexivity.

4.8.2 Thematic Analysis

A suitable method for analysing data within the chosen methodology was identified in thematic analysis. This method allows for identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a wide dataset and is possibly the most widely used method of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis is a widely used but rarely acknowledged qualitative analytic method (Boyatis 1998; Roulston, 2001). It is popularly used to pinpoint, examine and record patterns or themes within data. Themes emerge across datasets and are important in identifying phenomena and describing them. A theme seizes upon something of importance within the data which relates to the research question, representing a patterned response or level of meaning within the whole dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Howitt and Cramer (2008) warn that thematic analysis conducted properly is an exacting task, requiring a considerable amount of time and effort. However, they assert that the support provided for the identification of each theme is only provided by quotes taken directly from the data assumed to be the most convincing. The loneliness inherent in this analytic process has been somewhat compensated by having an analytic friend in one of my supervisors. In a supervisory session she worked with me in a large empty office helping to sort, code and locate emergent themes.

Claims regarding the rigour to which the data has been subjected are easy to make in the absence of further detail and might therefore be made having reviewed just a sample of data. It is therefore important that the process of analysis is provided and illustrated. An example of the coding of data is shown in Appendix K (page 260).

Howitt and Cramer (2008) contend that Braun and Clarke (2006) outline the most systematic method of doing thematic analysis. Their method imposes a high standard on the analyst which supports and develops a greater depth required for exacting and sophisticated analysis. It was of great help to attend a qualitative research summer school at the University of the West of England, where Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke presented their work on thematic analysis and after, were on hand to work through examples with, and to seek further clarification in regard to approaches in analysis to this study.

In practice, Braun and Clarke (2013) identify six stages of thematic analysis, which is an approximation of the sequence of analysis, bearing in mind that earlier aspects of the process may be revisited to develop a more exacting analysis. This sequence, while systematic bears a great deal in common with generic analytic methods, previously outlined by Miles et al. (2014). These stages identified by Braun and Clarke (2013: 202-3) were adapted for this study and feature in Table 12 on page 273.

4.8.2.1 Stage 1: Familiarisation with the data

Initially, during data collection, when one becomes aware over a series of observations or interviews, certain features or responses which are repeated and therefore become familiar. As I was the only one involved in conducting the audio recorded interviews and hand-writing field notes, this familiarity started to embed early-on. My verbatim transcription of interviews and writing of field notes enabled the content to be prepared for data analysis, but also helped a deeper familiarity with the content. Each transcription and field note were re-read on numerous occasions not only to embed this familiarity, but so I could note any points which stood out and begin to identify themes. Data could also begin to be categorised by for example, personal experiences, motivations and drivers, philosophical perspectives which concerned a choice of career in social work.

In addition, immediately following each audio recorded interview with participants, I noted down any observations concerned with the interview. For example, the location, the physical conditions, and my reflections during the interview. These were used in the overall analysis and helped to contextualise some of the findings. An example of these field notes can be found in Appendix L (please see page 261).

4.8.2.2 Stage 2: Initial code generation

Although there is no set method of analysing data collected using ethnographic approaches (O'Reilly, 2011), certain analytical approaches include the use of computer software. Packages such as, 'Ethnograph' and 'Nvivo' were reviewed for their suitability. The first consideration when looking to employ software packages for analysis were the numbers of transcripts involved. This review suggested that analytic software packages were most suitable for the analysis of large numbers of transcripts. Working with just thirty-one transcripts although time may have been saved, I would not be as immersed in the data and familiar with it as a manual and personal approach would allow, a familiarity essential in an ethnographic approach (Creswell, 2012; Kumar, 2014). I also had concerns that software might treat words and phrases out of context and would therefore lose meaning; creating what Hoskins and Stoltz (2005) describe as 'disembodied research discussions'.

To truly immerse myself in the material, I decided early on to review the collated data by hand (Braun & Clarke, 2013). As a result, I was physically surrounded by transcripts and field notes, further developing my experience of undertaking research and using this as process to interpret, collate, code and analyse the data, and to begin to think about emerging theory; all of which are ultimate aims of ethnography (Roper & Shapira, 2000).

Initial codes began to form which addressed general responses of participants in terms of demographics, family dynamics and motivations. This process enabled a broad overview of the data and a physical whiteboard representation of a thematic map. Other headings and subheadings emerged during this initial stage of analysis. An example of which is shown in Appendix J (please see page 259).

4.8.2.3 Stage 3: Searching for themes based on the initial coding

Following initial collation and coding, four large word documents were created under the following headings:

  • Data responses from England

  • Data responses from Scotland

  • Data responses from Northern Ireland

  • Data responses from Wales

These were created to consider the data regionally and more broadly across the UK. This approach offered increased flexibility when looking for regional themes and exploring these themes across the whole research. Within these documents a further framework allowed for inclusion of any notes taken immediately post interview and observations and reflections on field notes taken of participants within the research sites. By doing so, this provided a rich and deeper context to the data as endorsed by Geertz (1975).

During this stage it became increasingly clear that some initial codes could be merged to create themes across all datasets. For example, all participants no matter of their location, expressed a deep-seated desire to make a positive difference to service users' lives. Clearly this was a 'motivation', already a central line of enquiry, and was a definite theme for review in stage four of the process.

4.8.2.4 Stage 4: Review of the themes

This stage reviewed themes to reflect accurate meaning from the collated data. Later, this familiarity surfaced in a different guise. When revisiting field notes, I was transported back to the spaces and situations in which participants were observed. Perhaps most vivid, were

listening again to the audio recordings of interviews, re-envisioning their facial expressions, their demeanour and character, thinking about notes I made at the time.

A thematic analysis of the transcriptions, using the method outlined by Braun and Clarke (2013), was produced following the reading back of each interview. From initial coding, development of a framework of core themes emerged which enabled further testing for repetition and contradiction. These themes were then evaluated using the known literature and previous research involving gender and social work students.

4.8.2.5 Stage 5: Theme definition and labelling

This is a significant stage of thematic analysis as it involves a close familiarity with participant's narratives and provides definition to the emergent themes. On reaching stage five, I realised that I had to disassociate myself with both the themes from the literature that I had read, and those preconceived ideas voiced by participants concerning the themes of the study during informal conversations before and after interviews took place. I had to re-focus on stage four to ensure themes emerged from my data and were not preconceived by others.

4.8.2.6 Stage 6: Report writing

This stage involved producing the analysis capturing the true nature of the research study. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), it offers the reader an understanding of the data, which assures them of the integrity and legitimacy of the analyses. The analysis had to be true not only to the methodology adopted to answer the research question and its objectives, but also foreground the voice of the participants who shared their stories. Therefore, it enabled me to gain a better understanding of the factors that impact MSWSs experiences, motivations and career decisions.

Having identified themes from the data, I re-evaluated specific examples identified earlier within MSWSs narratives which linked with the theoretical framework. Such lenses provided deeper illustrations and explanations of particular phenomena. For example, within the theme of 'education', participants' narratives offered perceptions of the operation of masculinity within the lecture theatre.

Using the lens of intersectionality, analysis suggested that at the intersection of gender and social work education, masculinity vied with the feminist principles of the social work pedagogy. Participants in these circumstances sought the familiarity of logical, technical approaches (Christie, 2006; Kamphorst et al. 2015; Leman & Mann, 1999; Orme, 2009), and seeking sanctuary in those identifying as the same gender.

Similarly, using the lens of Bourdieu, I was able to identify and locate a sub-field of masculinity in operation, formed as a reaction to the doxa of the field of the lecture theatre, where MSWSs could play 'the game' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), without the insufficiency of social and cultural capital that their gender represented in the field of the lecture theatre.

4.9 LIMITATIONS

Each study is subject to limitations and to present a balanced perspective, it was important to recognise these. Participants of the study included those from the first year of social work programmes. Although these participants were still able to comment on their qualities and assets, their motivations and career intentions, it was perhaps unreasonable to expect them to have enough experience of their course and HEI to be able to suggest improvements to their experience.

A further limitation was the purposeful sample of MSWSs. Having a random sample, which included females, could have provided further qualitative data, which could have been generalized to a broader population of students. Taking this approach however would not have foregrounded the voice of MSWSs or added to the discourse in this area, which was an aim and objective of this study. In addition, taking a larger, random sample may not have provided the depth of evaluation this study has achieved and would therefore not be an appropriate fit with the interpretive approaches employed.

During, and at completion of data collection, aside from those described concerning recruitment, there were no known difficulties for either participants or researcher. This may have been due to the preparation given prior to all interviews, but what cannot be known is whether participants really gave of their true perceptions. What they were prepared to share provides the themes and narratives explored.

Conducting a longitudinal study which followed participants throughout the experience of their qualifying programme would have provided a larger data set. Taking this approach however may have had a further impact in terms of the difficulties in recruiting MSWSs for the study and been increasingly problematic in terms of retaining them.

SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the philosophical foundations for the study, outlined the overarching ethnographic approach and the methods used to achieve the study objectives. The research question has been devised to fill a gap in knowledge concerning the main factors which affect the experiences and career decisions of MSWSs. Although the study involved participants of HEIs from all four nations of the UK, this does not imply that this is representative, indeed the methods and overarching methodology would preclude this.

However, this approach did result in diversity in the sample, an approach endorsed by Gobo (2004), with a range of unique characteristics, such as, ethnicity, and for the first time in studies with MSWSs, their sexual orientation.

The interpretative approach taken fits with qualitative research and allows for less prescriptive interview protocols (Thomas, 2011). The interview guide was informed by the existing literature and the questions refined through the piloting process. Group and individual participant observation have been used to provide further depth to the data.

The process for selecting HEI participant sites has been outlined, as have the challenges in engaging them and participants. Historic demographic data concerning social work students has been analysed and is used to contextualise the demographic data concerning current participants.

Data protection and ethical issues were considered throughout and are detailed. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study and were also advised about the limits of confidentiality. Provision of support was identified with their respective HEIs, had any issues come to light that warranted referral to such services or course leaders.

The study analysed data using thematic analysis and has significantly drawn on the work of Braun and Clark (2006; 2013) to achieve a robust analysis. The following chapter explores and provides analysis to the emergent themes by applying Bourdieusian lenses.

CHAPTER FIVE – APPLYING BOURDIEUSIAN LENSES

INTRODUCTION

Previous chapters have outlined the literature exploring men's experiences in the caring professions as well as their relationship to social work as a profession. Chapter 4 has described the research methods used in this study and how the themes emerged from data.

Analysis of the data found that male social work students (MSWSs) experience some aspects of social work qualifying education differently to their female counterparts, however, some of these experiences may not be dissimilar to those of female students. As this study places an emphasis on the voices of MSWSs however, their voices are privileged by exploring a series of themes which have emerged during the thematic analysis.

The chapter provides an analysis of these themes using the various lenses within the analytical toolkit of Bourdieu's social theory. Firstly, themes are analysed using Bourdieu's concepts of 'doxa' and 'habitus'. The chapter moves on to explore how Bourdieu's concepts of 'capital' have affected participants' experiences of qualifying social work education. Lastly, their doxa, habitus and capital are evaluated in operation using the Bourdieusian concept of the 'field'.

While undertaking the analysis of themes, I acknowledge that making reference to 'working-class' and 'middle-class' will immediately create definitional problems. I am mindful of that these terms emerge from participant's own discourse and also grant a measure of generalisation which is not wholly unwelcome in the context of this chapter.

Direct quotes have been used, and where words have been removed from these, they have been replaced with ellipses (…). Where words have been inserted for clarity, they have been enclosed with square brackets [ ]. Ages and locations have been stated adjacent to participants' responses, but actual names have been substituted for pseudonyms to maintain participants' confidentiality.

An overarching aim of this chapter is to address the objectives set for the study (detailed on page 15). In this chapter and the following chapter, themes are analysed which emerged from a thematic analysis of the primary datasets.

5.1 THROUGH THE LENSES OF DOXA AND HABITUS

The doxa is defined by Bourdieu (1977a: 164) as the "quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of an organization" in which "the natural and social world appears as self-evident". I understand doxa to mean 'taken-for-granted' assumptions or 'common sense', 'natural attitude' approaches which are un-reflexive. One of

these laid-down social constructions at an early age are normative gender roles (Sargent, 2005), which was identified as a reality for many participants. This is plainly evident in Patrick's (Scotland – white Scottish, 31) observation:

"My daughter gets given a doll to care for while my son gets a toy hammer. There's bound to be an element of that in it."

Talking in the context of traditional gender roles, Patrick identifies why social work might not be a natural occupation for males. His daughter is given 'a doll to care for', therefore an extension of the expectation that caring/mothering is a normative role for females. By contrast, his son 'gets a toy hammer' which not only suggests possession, owning as opposed to caring for, but also embeds the masculine notion of manual production (Connell, 2005). The 'gendering' of artefacts and indeed colours is historical, aligned to traditional gender roles, and Patrick's example mirrors the traditional doxa of western societies. Recognising this, Bourdieu (2001: 9) comments:

> "The social order functions as an immense symbolic machine tending to ratify the masculine domination on which it is founded: it is the sexual division of labour, a very strict distribution of the activities assigned to each sex, of their place, time and instruments; it is the structure of space, with the opposition between the place of assembly or the market, reserved for men, and house, reserved for women".

Connell (2009: 73) might identify Patrick's example as "gender order". In the same vein, like Bourdieu, Connell (2009: 11) identifies sexual identity and describes gender as "the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive area, and the set of practices that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes". Darren (Southern England – white Northern European, 38) also identifies sexual identity within gender order in his doxa:

> *"Obviously people have different views and different approaches, but for the whole socialisation of like children growing up you sort of like develop as a boy, as a girl and you have different 'bits' and perspectives on things".*

This identifies the doxa as one aspect of habitus but with a distinct difference, that the habitus is fluid, subject to change and development. Bourdieu (1977a: 72) defines habitus as a "strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations", which is "laid down in each agent in their earliest upbringing" (Bourdieu, 2003: 81). It is the "basis of perception and appreciation" (Bourdieu, 1977a: 78). Bourdieu explains that this "strategy generating principle" is transferrable and can be adapted and changed in different contexts and over time (Bourdieu, 1984; Navarro, 2006). It is formed by interaction in social fields and expresses "how individuals become themselves" (Webb et al. 2002: xii). These definitions of habitus are taken forward as a lens with which to provide analysis.

5.1.2 Personal ethics and values and the Habitus

Osteen (2011) identifies that social work students are often motivated to become practitioners based upon their personal values and experience. An overriding theme indeed suggests that participants have engaged with a vocation that found congruence with development of their personal ethics and values.

Personal ethics and values which had been instilled by the doxa of participants' families and influenced by habitus can act as a prime motivator for entering the profession. Many participants had been subject to circumstances or events within their lives, which had included a habitus of being socialised in an environment that valued people and relationships over materialist concepts. For example, James (Scotland – white British, 24) identifies that his own values, instilled by his doxa and developed by his habitus are congruent with those of the profession. James' parents were both educated to degree level, his mother a lecturer of education and his father a civil servant. In his close family unit, or social field, James' habitus has been developed and constructed amid an atmosphere which appreciates the benefits of higher education and service to others:

> *"I realised that there was a fair amount of congruence between social work values, principles, aims and my own. So, it, it only seemed natural, in the end, to go into it I guess".*

Thomas (Scotland – white Scottish, 28) echoes James's grounding in personal ethics and values, suggesting that his doxa and habitus encompassed these values. Thomas' parents are both graduates, his mother a schoolteacher and his father is a manager in social care. Again, the effect of a background appreciation of higher education and public service has on the construction of Thomas' habitus is evident in his comment:

"I believe that my own personal values are quite with the professional values that you'd find in the [social work] *industry".*

For other participants (mostly postgraduate) their habitus had developed resulting in a shift in focus for their lives and subsequent careers. Here their habitus has become increasingly influential over their career choice, in many cases contradicting their doxa, and emerging in various ways. Bourdieu (2002b: 30) theorises that "habitus is never a mere principle of repetition – that is the difference between habitus and habit. As a dynamic system of dispositions that interact with one another, it has, as such, a generative capacity" and therefore has the ability to affect a change in perspective and circumstances due to the fields it operates in and is developed by.

Shoiab (Wales – British Asian, 33) has experienced a journey of self-discovery and has completely re-assessed what he finds important in life:

> "I used to be a management consultant in London and my main aim in life was to feather my own nest. Over the past few years since the economic crash, I have decided to change my worldly views. I feel that I'm veering to being more socially responsible, I'm viewing society as a collection of individuals who need to assist each other rather than just themselves".

Shoiab discussed how he was consumed by working in a field of high pressure, which valued money and assets, and how these values were mirrored in his home life. Such dispositions exemplify masculinity and are not usually characteristics associated with those seeking a career in the caring professions (Connell, 2005; Simpson, 2009). He identifies an economic crash as the catalyst changing his perspective. For Shoiab, the crash demonstrated the relative fragility of economic capital. He witnessed closely how possessing just one form of capital, in this case economic capital, can quickly become valueless. Realising that investing in more than one form of capital can be enriching has developed his habitus. Shoiab's narrative described a similar but subsequent passion for social work that he once had as a management consultant. His habitus has been informed by a background where his parents are graduates. The benefits of education which has permeated his family social field has enabled him to actualise the strategy generating principle, where the habitus adapts to different contexts at different times (Bourdieu, 1984).

5.1.3 Familial influences on the Doxa and Habitus

The doxa of a family is shaped by beliefs and 'truths' that have been handed-down within the family unit, which shape the doxa of individuals within that unit. The habitus recognises that individuals are born into varying circumstances, for example, hardship or affluence, experiences which can affect change and development in an individual. Familial relationships and the field of family were seen by participants as an important factor in the formation of one's doxa and habitus.

As a form of enquiry into participants' habitus and doxa, genograms were drafted from respondents' answers in order to plot complex family structures. 44% (n=15) of all participants were often supported in their choice to train as a social worker by a close relative employed in the trades. This indicates that others in the social field of the family, whilst experiencing and recognising a lack of cultural capital themselves, can develop a habitus which recognises the value of education and self-improvement, resulting in an accumulation of capital. It would appear that by comparison with a manual trade, or even care work, becoming a social worker was seen as one of betterment, with the further advantage of it being ethically sound, which may also increase the social capital of the family as a unit.

By contrast, just under half (47%: n=16) of all participants reported a close personal relationship (often a near relative) with a public service professional (teacher, healthcare professional or social care worker). It might be assumed that these participants might identify a difference in social class to the other 44%, but none alluded to this. The narratives of these participants expressed admiration for these close family members and an appreciation of the cultural capital they held as a result of their occupations. Their narratives acknowledged inspiration by family members and had been encouraged to seek similar careers.

In the following example, Zak (Southern England – white Irish, 24) describes a doxa influenced by his parents and siblings who worked in, and greatly valued the public service. For him, his habitus appears enhanced by his own experiences of family, one disabled which has inspired him to seek a similar life course:

> *"My brother, an older brother has Down's syndrome. All of my family, like my sisters, they all work in you could maybe call it a caring profession. My brother's a fireman, my sister's a nurse, my other sister's a nurse assistant, and another sister works for the wheelchair association of Ireland. That's why I'm here I suppose".*

Craig (Southern England – white British, 24) describes the admiration he had for his mother's care work which has developed his doxa and habitus. His narrative includes a recognition of the capital his mother has accrued in her role as care worker. Craig expressed a wish to emulate her contribution to social care on a more professional footing:

> *"I've grown up with it really, from my mum's side where she worked as a care worker (…) I've seen the difficulties she faced, but then also I've heard the positives that you'd been through and the high respect she has for being allowed into a person's life".*

In the following quotes from James and Robert, family members had a more direct influence. James (Scotland – white British, 24), a postgraduate MSWS, stated his career experience had been in international development, providing back office support to frontline staff, and that this experience had developed his habitus to realise that direct work was more important and garnered increased capital. He disclosed that the social and cultural capital in social work had already been identified by his parents, however, the value of his previous experience was that it developed his habitus to realise this himself:

"My parents thought it was something I should have looked at a lot sooner. Um, possibly even as an undergraduate from what they said".

Robert (Scotland – white British, 34) describes contact with a social worker in an informal setting throughout his life. Through regular contact with her, Robert has identified his

congruence of habitus with social work and she has been actively encouraging him to enter the profession:

"My best friend's sister is also a social worker and through talking to her down the years, since I was a child, she always said I should go into this sort of thing".

These close familial influences are summed up by Boyd (Scotland – white Scottish, 51), who described the fundamental familial influence on doxa and habitus:

"And a lot of times when I see social workers, I mean there's a lot of social workers that have family members who've been social workers".

Participants emulating the career paths of family members in their own careers was a strong theme. They had embarked on a career path which matched or further developed the professionalism demonstrated by their families or close familial influences.

Other participants have experienced a doxa and habitus which motivated them to become members of the profession from another perspective. This was identified as being the child of a single parent, and in all these circumstances the parent was their mother. This represented 26% (n=9) of the participant sample, all but one of whom identified as 'Androgynous' in their BEM test scores. This may suggest that strong maternal influences have a primary effect on habitus and disposition. Paul's (Midlands – white British, 33) statement defines an effect of doxa:

> [Speaking of having personal ethics and values akin to those in social work] "*I think they were there already. I think they were probably instilled in me from an early age, by my mum. I really only had her to look to".*

Similarly, Jimmy (Wales – white Irish, 28) identifies his doxa and the strong influence his mother had on his formative years as his only parent. He goes further to identify that his habitus has been developed concerning her expectations of him to be a co-care giver with her to his siblings:

> "*It's kind of all about the values and stuff that come with it, eh? And hit home with me as well cos me mum being a strong woman and all, but caring with it. I kinda admire that and I'd had to look after me younger siblings like".*

Clearly for both Paul and Jimmy their habitus has been formed around a strong maternal figure, or disposition, to whom they attribute immense capital. As McLeod (2005: 14) points out "habitus is formed through the embodied accumulation and effects of dispositions". This admiration has served as a motivator to enter the field of social care, but again on a more professional footing, where they will themselves have opportunities to acquire both cultural and social capital.

5.1.4 Being service users and the generation of Habitus

Some participants had experienced the field of social work as a service user from a young age as part of the formation of their habitus.

Noting body language during interviews suggested that participants who expressed greatest connection with and enthusiasm for the profession, had at some point in their own lives required the services of a social worker, or witnessed a close family member requiring their intervention.

For them this influence on the habitus had either been very positive and productive, or conversely less than satisfactory. Aaron, Danny and Roger describe experiences which had inspired them to emulate the positive and productive social work practice they had experienced or witnessed:

Aaron (Scotland – white British, 30)

> *"I think back to my social worker when my mum died, he was a positive guy (…) I was 13 (…) On a Tuesday afternoon he'd get me out of school an hour early, he'd take me to McDonald's. He would drive us [referring to his sister] to meet my grandparents (…) from Hampshire down to Devon quite a lot. I remember him being a good guy (…) and when I think back on it, I heard he retired after our case (…) and I remember him being as heartbroken as us when he told us the news. I looked up to him very much and wanted to follow in his footsteps".*

Danny (Scotland – white British, 26)

"Em, my Dad actually is...he was affected by social work...early, well, 4 or 5 years ago, I was actually one of the reasons why I first considered the role".

Roger (Midlands – white British, 33)

> *"I did have a social worker when I was a child on two separate occasions (…) both female (…) I think that their involvement put a negative spin on things in terms of the way my parents would view them, probably the way my brothers and sisters view social workers. But I never got that and I got two free holidays, don't remember why but I got holidays. So I never had a negative view social workers myself".*

Jack (London – white British, 28) however, was keen to convey that he felt he had been subject to less satisfactory social work, the part of his habitus which recognised this served as his motivator to improve interventions for the service users he would go on to practice with:

> *"My experience* [as a service user] *of social work is pretty bad in terms of them never getting back to me and never hearing from them, either they were busy but like now I'm going to do it myself – but better".*

Jack was not alone in his perception of poor practice, but other participants who also identified this phenomenon had done so as MSWSs undertaking practice placement. With those participants, the effect appeared to be very similar; a determination not to emulate poor practice.

5.1.5 Cultural Influences on Doxa and Habitus

The doxa of families and habitus in diverse cultures can also be seen to influence the desire to uphold ethics and values congruent with social work, thereby making social work a natural career choice. Leo (Southern England – black African, 31) describes the doxa of his culture which had developed the habitus of large family of being a collective:

> *"My extended family lived together* [in Ghana], *and food was prepared together, farming is done together so everything is really on a collective basis. So if you're not able to, then you are catered for anyway so you have a system where my wife, your wife, somebody else's wife will all come together and cook the evening meal and then they serve all the men eat from one big bowl and all the women eat from one big bowl".*

It might be argued that habitus has a stronger influence in Non-white European communities, where structural influences, such as, the safety net of welfare provision, are perhaps more remote. Leo went on to link the values of this collective culture, its doxa and habitus, to a career in social work. Statistics imply that black Afro-Caribbean males are actually more likely to seek a career in social work than their female counterparts (see Table 4 page 269). This suggests that gender roles within this culture act as a division of labour in terms of caring which is more fluid than it is in western nations, albeit where women still take up this role.

Participants also acknowledged their perceptions of how the doxa of western culture had formed the habitus of female social work students and practitioners. Danny (Scotland - white British, 26) comments:

> *"I believe that simply because of their life journey, females are better prepared".*

Nigel (Northern Ireland – white British, 39) comments that other factors aside from the doxa can affect the habitus:

> *"I do think that there are biological factors, I really do. Um, you know women are more social, they're better at things like that. Like, um, you know, I'm not ... It is biological, and it's social. I mean we're taught to ... as men to be men, do you know what I mean?"*

Bourdieu (2001) identifies that such perceptions begin with the parental body and the sexual division of labour in the home. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 133) comment that the habitus 'is an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore

constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structure'. This division of labour is further institutionalised outside the family in western culture in terms of state welfare, education and the labour market (Skeggs, 2005). Themes from the data also identified other influences that participants described as generating their habitus.

5.1.6 Post-compulsory education and its impact on the Habitus

Unlike the majority of university students entering direct from A levels, social work students tend to be older. Indeed, 68% (n=23) of participants had either successfully completed an Access to Higher Education course or were postgraduates.

Bourdieu (1977a: 494) reflects that a lack of cultural capital in students from families with a disadvantaged background can have adverse effects on a child's habitus resulting in negativity towards education:

> "The educational system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give...[and] can only be produced by family upbringing when it transmits the dominant culture".

This may account for many entering higher education as mature social work students. Danny (Scotland – white British, 26) bares out Bourdieu's assertion that education is one of those generative capacities which can develop one's habitus. In the following example, he describes how education had challenged his doxa and world view, therefore developing his habitus, which then provided the inspiration to enter social work:

> *"During studying Sociology, I became aware of the, like, massive inequality in basically the entire world, but also in our society. And that was something that I began to feel quite passionately about and, basically led me on a path to following a career in social work (…) There was one teacher who was amazing. He got me to think about things like society and what people are the way they are and how they see things. I would say he was a big factor in me coming to the decision to go in something like social work".*

Other participants gave similar accounts on how their education (often as a mature student) had shifted their views and had caused their habitus to develop and change further.

5.1.7 The impact of religious faith on the Habitus

Historically in social work and social care, a strong religious conviction has been an altruistic motivator to enter the profession (Payne, 2005). For Bourdieu (1990) individuals are oriented in pursuit of symbolic capital and power, not altruism. He purports that dispositions, such as, religious faith, represent an unthinking and internalisation of norms in place of reflexivity (Bourdieu, 1984). Religion can be a significant factor in the doxa of a family unit, however, it

can also be a generator of habitus which is evident with Paul (Midlands – white British, 33) who sought to fill the large gap left in his life, following the death of his father:

> *"In the years after Dad died, I kind of got, had a circle of friends from school and who, who continued to be friends in college, who were members of a Church. And so, I started going to the youth group of that Church with them and then I started going to the Church. And a lot of what was going on in the Church made sense to me and I became Christian".*

Paul suggests that through experiencing the death of his father he became Christian, which demonstrates how Paul's habitus developed during that period. His narrative demonstrates that he took steps to embrace the doxa of the field of Christian faith, which could otherwise have developed a habitus of despairing hedonism had his self-professed congruence with social work ethics and values not already shaped his habitus. For Bourdieu (1990: 196) however, religion is a social construct, 'society is God' and those with faith are deluded:

> "Without going so far to say, with Durkheim, "Society is God", I would say: God is never anything other from than society. What is expected of God is only ever obtained through society, which alone has the power to justify you, to liberate you from facticity, congruency and absurdity (…) the judgement of others is the last judgement; and social exclusion is the concrete form of hell and condemnation".

In total 85% (n=29) of participants identified their personal stance concerning religious faith, 29% (n=9) of participants declared that they actively practised a faith 62% (n=13) and 29% (n=20) declared that they were either atheist or agnostic.

An awareness of religious ethics and values was expressed by participants with faith or none, as they felt it had some congruence with their social work ethics and values. Lee (Midlands – white British, 32) hints that his doxa recognised an appreciation for religious values, but his habitus has changed his view of faith:

> *"I would say that I was an atheist, but I think that there are tools and principles from that religion that I have picked up that are guiding tools to live your life by I would say. Talking about morals and ethics to an extent there".*

Unsurprisingly due to the visibility of religion and its influence on the doxa of the Province, 75% (n=4) of participants in Northern Ireland professed an active Christian faith. The Province has a well-known history of state and sectarian violence stemming from religious difference between Catholics and Protestants. Indeed, Bourdieu (1987a) suggests that religious habitus clothes state power with divine sanction. These doxic structures appear to have coloured participant's responses and experiences of working in social care, identifying themselves much more with community and group work. George (Northern Ireland – white European, 50) describes the challenge of consolidating his experience of social issues with his habitus:

> *"I worked with the local, um, church group (…) and with the local community group and uh I also worked with Samaritans since 2001. And I find both groups helped me a lot, (…) you could see the problems and you could see the need both on a local level and on a wider society level, seeing these problems put my faith on the spot".*

It is important to note that Bourdieu also views religion as a 'field' or arena where individuals demonstrate and reproduce their dispositions (Gaventa, 2003). George has clearly been proactive in this field to aid his community, which while challenging his faith, has not negatively impacted upon it or his habitus.

5.1.8 The impact of domestic politics on the Doxa and Habitus

As discussed, those with a close family member working in public service identified growing-up in an atmosphere where public service was highly valued, a clear representation of their family's doxa.

The ideal of public service is perhaps most closely enshrined by left-wing politics, and those values and ideology appeared to be shared among participants. Indeed, of those declaring political leanings (53% of participants), 74% identified with left of centre or socialist ideologies. For example, Joe (Scotland – white Scottish, 30) summed up the sentiments of other left of centre participants:

"I would argue that my political beliefs are quite, eh, left wing, I really like the idea of contributing to society and helping people".

Barry (Wales – white British, 30) however, demonstrated a depth of political belief in which his habitus had evolved:

> *"I'm very much I suppose, Socialist. Marxist leanings. I'm quite vehemently against any kind of capitalism, and particularly the kind of neo-Liberal direction that is going on at the moment with lots of privatization of public services".*

Although Joe and Barry identify their socialist political tendencies, they do so, knowing that they must practise in a neo-liberal environment where 'the market' demands measurable targets, results and ultimately profit. Social work interventions can be difficult to quantify under such criteria. The paradox lies where social workers as autonomous agents, working within anti-discrimination and anti-oppressive frameworks to enable empowerment and social justice, are also agents of the state enacting its law and social policy. This is not lost on Bourdieu et al. (2002a: 184), in which he asserts that "social work is shot through with the contradictions of the state". Practitioners are fighting on two fronts, to capacitate demoralised service users whilst wrestling with insufficient resources from the state to empower them. Pileggi and Patton (2003: 318) identify this as becoming "liable to two masters: the practices

and norms of the discipline and the practices and norms of the market". The dominance of neo-liberalism results in the very resources they believed should be at their disposal being diminished in a retreat of the state (Ovenden, 2000). The extent that social workers themselves become the resource within social work practice can exact a very significant personal impact on the practitioner on a daily basis (Harlow, 2004). Recognising this, Bourdieu comments that social workers should "feel abandoned, if not disowned outright, in their efforts to deal with the material and moral suffering that is the *only* certain consequence of rampant neo-liberalism" (in Bourdieu et al. 2002: 183).

Unsurprisingly, participants in Northern Ireland were those who expressed the firmest views on politics. The political awareness of these participants no doubt heightened due to the political tensions between the Republic and the Province which have been evident for almost 100 years. Ian (Northern Ireland – white, 50) demonstrates how his habitus has adapted to discount the heightened political doxa of the Province. His background suggested his habitus was more attuned to his religious faith, having grown weary of the machinations of politics resulting in a loss of trust:

"I hate politics…I don't like politics; I try and avoid politics and politicians at all costs".

By contrast George (Northern Ireland – white European, 50) appears to have accepted the politics within the Province which forms part of its doxa, and appears not to question it:

"I probably may be more right-wing but I believe that, uh, you know, I believe that political leaders have a responsibility to lead".

Nigel (Northern Ireland – white British, 39) however, describes how his habitus has rebelled against the doxa of neo-liberalism:

> *"Up until about eighteen months ago. Um, I would have been involved with going to (...) you know, Anti-Capitalist marches, and things like that. I was part of the Belfast (…) Anarchists and Derry Anarchists".*

5.1.9 The impact of Doxa and Habitus on social class

Social class has developed into a contested concept and is identified as more fluid than has historically been the case (Savage et al. 2013). This serves to demonstrate that the long-established socio-economic indicators of social class (although somewhat further re-defined in the 1990's) are outmoded. In 2011, as a response to these outdated schemata, Savage et al. launched *The Great British Class Survey,* the results of which suggest that social class is established using a broader range of dispositions than just occupation and familial background (ibid). In employing the forms of capital identified by Bourdieu (1984), Savage et al. (2013) were able to determine that an individual's social class could be defined using a more nuanced

approach which considered the stock of these three capitals. Beck (1992) goes further by identifying that the effects of individualism have degraded traditional social categories such as class.

Participant's perceptions of their social class were not specifically explored. This information was however readily volunteered by those undergraduate participants whose close family members were not in the public service and it appeared important for them to associate themselves with a traditional category of social class.

Most undergraduate participants identified as 'working class', which mirrors the findings of Parker and Crabtree's study (2012) with a smaller sample of undergraduate MSWSs. Their perception of being 'working-class' was despite their studying at university, which would by definition lift them out of being working-class and implies cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). This suggests that the habitus of these participants struggled to adapt to the new realities, of acquiring social and cultural capital. It appears that by failing to adapt, they impose limitations which are sometimes expressed in the imperative statements of resignation: "That's not for us" (or 'not for the likes of us') (Bourdieu, 2000: 185). The emphasis on their working-class backgrounds that many undergraduate MSWSs stated might suggest an uncertainty that their habitus had prepared them adequately for this change. Their cultural capital was not great enough for them to feel comfortable in the field of higher education. Patrick (Scotland – white Scottish, 31), illustrates this:

> "I've always been told that work was the way [to achieve in life] so I suppose coming to university was quite unusual for me especially because it's school. Nobody in my family liked school [laughs]. Dad's always been a labourer and said hard work with your hands paid good money. Mum says we're working-class and doesn't really understand why I've come to university".

By contrast, the majority of post-graduate MSWSs did not talk about their social class. Most of these participants had parents educated to degree level and perhaps their middle-class habitus meant that the doxa of their social class was taken for granted and not an issue for them. These participants generally presented as confident in their background and class and possessed enough cultural capital to feel at ease in the field of higher education.

Such different perspectives appear to form varying attitudes to social work. Generally, for post-graduate MSWSs, it was something to be done 'to' service users and carers, whereas, for undergraduate MSWSs it was something done 'with' service users.

For example, Shoiab (Wales – British Asian, 33) speaks about his career options following completion of his master's degree in Economics. Here he identifies why he then took a master's in social work:

"I looked into it a bit more and saw this as an opportunity to get a skill that would help me to assist others in the UK".

However, Nathan (Scotland – Caucasian British, 20) was an undergraduate MSWS, who declared his pride in being working-class and how he was the first of his family to study in higher education. His perspective concerning social work appears to be different to that of Shoiab; something to be done 'with' service users:

> *"I want to work with the homeless. The main aim was, to put people's perceptions straight on homelessness, try and change it. Because a lot of people think, em, homelessness is, is their fault and all, and it's not really".*

What these examples begin to illustrate is the importance which habitus can have on perceptions of one's social class. Reay (2004b: 434) notes that Bourdieu theorises, "a person's individual history is constitutive of habitus, but also is the whole collective history of family and class to which they belong".

5.2 THE LENS OF CAPITAL

Bourdieu directly links the concept of the habitus and social class as primary influences on whether an individual has capital or lacks capital, and not just in economic terms. Bourdieu (1986, cited in Navarro 2006) identifies broadly three forms of capital beyond that of economic – social, cultural or symbolic. In this section I go on to apply these lenses of capital, using examples from data to explore how participants feel they have been advantaged.

The economic capital of all social work students might be assumed as low given tuition fee debt, the degradation of the NHS bursary, and entry into a relatively low-paid profession may impact long-term on the ability to gain economic capital. For Bourdieu, the education system enables socio-economic inequality to perpetuate, serving only to legitimise existing social hierarchies (Bourdieu, 1997, 2006; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). For example, although social work and teaching are professions, they do not appear to be valued culturally as highly as say general practitioners or barristers which reflected in remuneration. This suggests that gaining economic capital is not the primary motivator for entering social work, as one study participant Altaf (Midlands – British Pakistani, 33) illustrates:

> *"People tried to put me off, my whole family and my friends were like are you crazy? You could be earning a lot more money in accounting, what are you thinking? But I'm in for the outcome not the income".*

Although pay and conditions were concerns for some participants, as can be seen from Altaf's contribution, they appear more of a concern for participants' families. This is perhaps a reflection of their expectations that for males, gaining economic capital should feature as a priority.

Economic capital (here in the form of a bursary) enables investment in education which then develops institutionalised cultural capital in graduating students and objectified cultural capital in terms of their future occupational success (Bourdieu, 1997). Edgerton and Roberts (2014) endorse this latter point by ascribing economic capital as being closely aligned with social capital in that social networks become broader and perhaps more productive of further opportunity and enhancement.

Considerations of economic capital were most prominent with participants of the 'Step-Up to Social Work' programme, here males presented 57% of the cohort. Not only had previous experience of higher education developed their habitus, but a range of capital appeared to be in evidence, particularly economic capital. Their bursary appears to have made social work an increasingly viable option for these MSWS, who also had familial responsibilities. The following examples from participants enrolled on this programme in the Midlands were unambiguous that economic capital had been a deciding factor:

Lee (Midlands – white British, 32)

"There was a bursary of £20K involved and course fees were paid for. It made it much more viable for me to consider".

Roger (Midlands – white British, 33)

> *"The fact that it is funded as well as it is, I mean the bursary, allowed me to give up my job in order to start this course. Which, actually doing Social Work full time, either through the Open University or through the sort of traditional means, I just wouldn't have been able to afford to do that".*

Paul (Midlands – white British, 33)

> *"So, to be given the opportunity to not only get that qualification, but receive a bursary, which was almost the equivalent of my salary, because it was tax free, it was kinda too good of an opportunity to miss".*

Possessing a range of capitals where economic capital is ultimately prized is, according to Connell (2005), a key characteristic of masculinity. Economic capital provides a critical additional incentive for male participants, which empowers them to engage in social work education.

Social capital is formed of 'social obligations' or 'connections' (Bourdieu, 2006). James (Scotland – white Scottish, 24) provides an example of this from his previous work as a development officer in international development. Here he identifies the social capital and social obligations of frontline practitioners such as, social workers:

> *"The world is full of anonymous people who can sit behind desks and type in monitoring and evaluation reports and funding applications and all that stuff. I felt like the real work in the organisation I was with, was being done by the people who were on the front line working with individuals".*

Participants' cultural capital forms an important part in understanding their experiences. Cultural capital is defined as "the possession of nuances of language, the aesthetic preferences and cultural goods, and other symbolic expressions and behavioural dispositions" (Shah et al. 2010: 111), which can go on to be formally institutionalised by educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986).

James makes the distinction between back office staff, and frontline practitioners who engage directly. The capital back office staff can amass in their professional lives is limited to the field they operate within on a daily basis. James identifies increased cultural and social capital being accrued from direct work with service users (social obligation) (Bourdieu, 2006). Not only will James gain cultural capital due to the award of a bachelor's degree, his social capital will be accrued in a wider field of operation, transferable into other arenas or fields (Navarro, 2006). However, he went on to make an important observation:

[Social] *"'Worker' doesn't sound too important does it? No wonder the pay's no good".*

James eludes to a lack of professionalism inherent within the title 'social worker', identifying a deficit of cultural and social capital, which perhaps impacts on how practitioners are widely perceived and therefore remunerated. A situation reminiscent throughout social care.

It was surprising that none of the study participants eluded to the symbolic power of a university education and being a degree level student. There was however a general recognition of the symbolic power that qualified practitioners hold by registering with the social work regulator as an "agent of the state" (Bourdieu et al. 2002a: 184). Paul (Midlands – white, British, 33) illustrates an aspect of this point (explaining his intervention with service users as a student social worker, without the inherent power in being qualified and registered):

> *"I think there's a lot more opportunity for families to take ownership of their own interventions, when there's no statutory involvement. I've really enjoyed doing it, for that reason".*

Here Paul highlights that in some circumstances his capital as a MSWS can be greater than that of a registered practitioner. As an example of a cultural field, a family unit enacts its own doxa, one that in this example, may eye any official interventions from 'agents of the state' with suspicion. Paul enters the field of some families and supports them in a less official capacity, which he identifies as helpful in terms of their engagement. It may be that Paul's previous experience as a service user of social work and child of a one-parent family, which

has determined and developed his habitus. This may align him to some of those families he has supported and therefore he is more able to accrue cultural capital with those families as 'one of us'. It would appear that Paul's narrative and position as an unqualified MSWS runs somewhat counter to Bourdieu's (1986) assertion that formal training and qualifications will result in increasing one's cultural capital.

5.2.2 The Capital of Gender

Bourdieu places less emphasis on gender than other ideological perspectives and views capital as gender neutral. For Bourdieu gender is "secondary", merely a difference in sexual identity (Bourdieu, 1984: 106), a hidden consideration in structuring social spaces and more akin to "overdeterminations" of social class (Bourdieu, 1984: 107). His view is that there need only be passing consideration of gender in regard to the sexual division of labour in the home.

His oversight is not universally accepted, particularly by feminist scholars. Both McCall (1992) and Huppatz (2009) contend that gender is indeed an important form of capital. The findings of this study suggest that gender is an integral part of cultural and symbolic capital. Participants suggest that their gender was a source of capital generally. James (Scotland – white Scottish, 24) sums up these up by stating:

"I think there are advantages to being a white (…) male pretty much everywhere in the world".

More specifically, participants identified that their gender was a form of cultural capital, on qualifying social work programmes. This perception is endorsed in the literature where the minority status of MSWS is seen as an advantage in terms of being favoured and seen as role models (Giesler, 2013; Parker & Crabtree, 2012; Pease, 2011) and as practitioners they are more likely to be promoted (Christie, 1998; Williams, 1995). Simpson (2009) asserts that similar advantages are also experienced by male students of other FMOs.

Nigel (Scotland – white British, 34) spoke about possessing capital because of the low numbers of males qualifying as social workers:

> *"There's clearly more female social workers in practice than there is male (…)*
> *I would imagine. So yeah, I think it would probably work to my advantage being*
> *male on this programme".*

Other participants specifically identified being male as having cultural capital advantageous to their future recruitment. Nathan's perspective (Scotland – Caucasian British, 20) is typical of many other participants who perceived that as male, they were more likely to be recruited as social workers than their female counterparts:

> *"So, there are ultimately more a males chances of getting employment. I know*
> *that, you know, I don't mean that to sound horrible and mean, but that's how*

> *some employers work… I think for every one female social worker there's five more. For every guy there's only one or two".*

Nathan's explanation of gender and cultural capital is expanded upon by Leo (Southern England – black African, 31), who was aware of his capital in terms of being promoted more quickly than his female counterparts, or boarding the 'glass elevator' in contrast to the 'glass ceiling' which females can experience (Cree, 2001; McPhail, 2004; Pease, 2011):

> *"I have an obvious advantage, not necessarily within the social work course, but in terms of progression within social work there's a disproportionate amount of males within management positions over females, and the advantage to me is that I'm more likely to be promoted quickly".*

Shoiab (Wales – British Asian, 33) supports Leo's view:

> *"If you're male on a social work course and intend on becoming a social worker for a local authority you have a kind of golden path to tread to the upper echelons of senior management".*

Mark (Wales – white British, 23) was intent on using his perceived cultural capital to his best advantage to gain promotion and thereby gain further symbolic capital:

"It's kind of evident that men are more within the higher positions, within management, and I have been working through the course with an aim to become management".

This is a theme that female social work students also recognise. Leon (Northern Ireland – white Irish, 28) reported about a conversation he had with a female student friend during which she stated:

"Oh well, when you come out [qualify as a social worker] *in 2 years' time you'll probably be my boss".*

Clearly a significant proportion of participants have considered their career choices and determined that management is an attractive pathway for advancement within the profession. All participants spoke about becoming registered practitioners, none identified completing their degree as a gateway to an alternative career.

Participant's perceptions of their cultural capital assisting their promotion within the profession appears to chime with McPhail's (2004: 325) assertion that "social work is more correctly described as a female majority, male dominated profession". However, other authors (Dominelli, 2002; Harlow, 2004; Kirwan, 1994) warn that a continued disproportionate number of males in social work management risks continued gender inequality in the profession which may have a negative impact on the career prospects of female practitioners.

Reay (2004a) developed Bourdieu's analysis of cultural capital identifying new concepts such as, 'emotional capital' which she asserts is both gendered and classed. Reay (2004a: 71) defines emotional capital as "all about investments in others rather than the self". She asserts that mothers' emotional involvement in their children's education is an attempt to operationalise this. The study by Risman (1998: 52) suggests that "mothering" is not just a female trait, as single parent fathers in her study were concerned with homemaking and caring for their children emotionally and practically. This suggests that the emotional involvement of parents is certainly not confined to gender of the parent. The findings from this research suggest that this is not necessarily just confined to mothers, or single parents, but can be applied more broadly. An example of this is Danny (Scotland – white British, 26) whose parents demonstrated an equal investment in his upbringing, describing emotional capital employed by his father which motivated him to seek a career in social work:

> *"Inspiration would have come from, em, my Dad. As I said, he was involved with social work, he saw in me the sort of skills needed for social work and encouraged me to gain the education needed".*

Clearly participants have determined that their gender is a primary 'quality', an asset they bring to the profession. Going forward, how the capital of MSWSs and qualified male practitioners is employed in various arenas is explored by applying Bourdieu's conceptual 'fields'. By contrast, in many of these fields males can actively lack capital.

5.3 THE LENS OF FIELDS

The term 'field' refers to a sphere of activity and its informal and formal patterns and mores. According to Huppatz (2009: 50), fields are a "semi-autonomous network of social relations that follows rules and regularities that are not directly explicit". Bourdieu describes a field as:

> "A field of forces, whose necessity is imposed on agents who are engaged in it, and a field of struggles within which agents confront each other, with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces, thus contributing to conserving or transforming its structure" (cited in Reed-Danahay, 2004: 32).

McNay (2004) and Fowler (2005) both assert that gender is not a field in itself, but a form of symbolic violence played out differently in different cultural fields.

Each field can be seen to possess its own core values and discourses. An unquestioned truth Bourdieu terms as 'doxa' (Webb et al. 2002). Based on its doxa, the field will attribute a position to the individual within it. It is:

"An adherence to relations of order which, because they structure inseparably both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident" (Bourdieu, 1984: 471).

The outcome is "the absolute form of recognition of legitimacy through misrecognition of arbitrariness" (Bourdieu, 1977b: 168). When habitus and field mutually support each other, the doxa presents itself as an appropriate 'feel for the game' within that field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The doxa of the field can be seen to be in effect in many examples, along with the habitus of participants.

Fields are formed around specific types of capital or a combination of capitals which "are both the process within, and product of a field" (Thompson, 2008: 69). This was very much evident in the examples of different fields provided below. From themes emerging from the data concerning social work education, three main fields were identified: The HEI; the learning environment; and that of practice placement.

5.3.2 The field of Higher Education

Since 2003 social work has been a degree level profession (Trevithick, 2012). Bourdieu (1986) attributes cultural capital with such professional qualifications and the field of higher education is where this cultural capital is gained. Boyd (Scotland – white Scottish, 51) one of the oldest participants identified the increase in the requirement to attain appropriate professional qualifications to work in the care sector:

> *"When I was younger like you didn't have to have the qualifications that you need now, to get any of these jobs. Like, eh, I've since realised, that I need some sort of qualifications for the kind of jobs that I applied for* [referring to his attempts to re-enter working in social care, following a period away]. *So, this is why I came to social work".*

Boyd expresses a shift in perceptions and understanding of the needs of educational attainment for a career in care, which has developed his habitus to recognise the value of education in the advancement of his career.

The habitus in terms of previous learning experience at degree level was expressed by postgraduate MSWSs, however, their doxa and habitus development was such that their siblings also went to university. This was markedly different to undergraduate MSWSs who had not been developed by prior experience of university education. Aaron (Scotland – white Scottish, 31) explains:

"I'm the first one in my family to go to Uni! Um, they're all working-class. Um, my dad, granddad were bus drivers, taxi drivers, worked in bars, that kind of thing".

Aaron eludes to his working-class habitus and that higher education had not featured or been considered in the doxa of his upbringing.

The increase in cultural capital through degree level study is recognised by other participants wishing to develop their careers in social care. Eighty-one per cent of participants cited their motivation for doing so was to gain professional status in social care where previously they had been working as support or key workers in various care settings.

Forty-one per cent of postgraduate participants came to qualifying programmes to either advance their existing career in social care or to change career direction completely. Forty-four per cent of these participants stated that their first degree was either in the humanities or social sciences with psychology featuring strongly.

In the UK, 94 out of 172 universities offer social work qualifying programmes. The field of social work education is therefore well established, and it is widely acknowledged that many of these programmes follow a feminised pedagogy (Parker & Crabtree, 2012). It could be argued that this ideological stance forms the doxa of social work.

Some participants felt that there was positive discrimination towards the recruitment of males on qualifying programmes. Joe (Scotland – white Scottish, 30) vocalised a common theme among participants that being male brought a uniqueness and cultural capital which would favour their applications to social work programmes:

"There could be the argument that you've got a better chance of getting on it [a social work degree course] *because you're a man and there's not enough men in the course".*

Heikes (1992) identifies that the heightened visibility of being male is advantageous. Although there is no current evidence that HEIs practise positive discrimination in favour of MSWSs, participants, such as, Mark (Scotland – white British, 23) perceived that unofficially social work HEI programmes were favourable to male applicants:

"I feel like there was a quota to fulfil by the university to get men on the course because I know it's quite a push now to get more men involved".

This could be an example of 'the game' in play, which Bourdieu asserts takes place within fields and where a temporary dominance of, prevailing hegemonic culture is favoured by, not always fair means (Webb et al. 2002).

Some participants felt that their cultural capital within the field of HEI social work education should be officially recognised by introducing positive discrimination as identified by Ian (Northern Ireland – white, 50):

> *"I don't know their policies on whether they want more males to actually be part*
> *of this course. So, I don't know whether that's the policy, but it would have been*

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nice to hear (…) I would like to see more positive discrimination from the university".

Despite the assumption of participants that males possess a unique cultural capital which assists their entry onto qualifying programmes, cohorts of students at research sites were observed mirroring the historic gender split in social work education (averaging 13% male). Boyd (Scotland – white Scottish, 51) identifies a common awareness of this among participants:

"There's 34 people in the course. I think it was 8 men out of the 34 on the course. I had the idea before I came, like it would be predominately women".

5.3.3 The field of the lecture theatre

Although participants felt their cultural capital as males aided their entry onto qualifying programmes, many identified that this capital had different effects in different fields of the HEI learning environment.

Bourdieu identifies fields as arenas in the struggle to gain capital within them (Bourdieu, 1984). Social work is not known for its competitiveness, however, George (Northern Ireland – white European, 50) acknowledges his surprise that this was evident at his HEI in the field of formal learning:

"It's very competitive I didn't think that it would've been as competitive because we're all aiming for (…) a caring profession".

This concerned George, who perhaps was expecting to operate more within the social work feminist principles of equality and empathy (Lazzari et al. 2009). Bourdieu (1995) emphasises that possessing a habitus, which is disposed to participating, having empathy with and an appreciation of the distinctions of that field, is closely allied to competence within it (cited by Samuel, 2013).

Ian (Northern Ireland – white, 50) however, identifies circumstances where there is a lack of competiveness or vying for cultural capital, perhaps due to the situation being far removed from the field of formal learning:

> *"We've got a bit of a collective that goes to the library together (…) even when we're working on different things, it's just nice to have other people around that you can kind of see, and you're not just sat in silence working. That's definitely happened, and we help each other out a lot. I think social media helps with that as well. We've got a Facebook group for the course".*

The field of formal learning in social work education is necessarily based on its feminised doxa. This is unsurprising given that much of social work practice has been based upon the feminist

stance of countering men's violence against women. Therefore, men can represent symbolic violence in any area of social work. Barry (Wales – white British, 30) critiques the doxa of social work by recalling some research he had read:

> *"Domestic violence is one* [issue] *that has been very much geared towards female victims/male perpetrators, and I know that a lot of the recent research has actually shown (…) I think, a 40/60 split, male to female victims, which is a lot closer than I think you would be led to believe".*

The feminised doxa of social work results in a reverse capital of gender being enacted within the formal learning field of social work education, contrary to the doxa of mainstream western society which is significantly influenced by patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity. A point recognised by Shoiab (Wales – British Asian, 33):

> *"Patriarchy dominates everywhere. Um, and when you're sitting there as a group of six men in a sea of, um, in a sea of women, you're like, "Really? Really? It's unusual, isn't it, in that way?"*

This suggests that the perceived cultural capital of MSWSs concerning their gender is diminished within the field of formal learning. Participants however identified that this did not mean that gender neutrality was promoted or evident. Symbolic capital within this field can be seen to rest with the feminine, as a reaction to the symbolic violence inherent in being male. This perhaps encourages pejorative undercurrents concerning men in social work.

An aspect of 'the game' is therefore in play where females and matriarchy possess the dominant cultural capital and therefore symbolic capital within this field. Roger (Midlands – white British, 33) recognises symbolic violence being expressed against MSWSs in the learning environment in relation to specific issues. He identifies that gender is the distinction by which he feels excluded and subjugated (Samuel, 2013):

> *"There's some subject areas that come up, like DV* [domestic violence] *for instance, where some of the reaction from the female students has been negative towards males all of a sudden. There's this real hostility that suddenly comes, or at least I feel it, it was kind of, let's attack the male gender".*

The phenomenon of diminished male cultural capital was intermittently experienced by Gerry (Northern Ireland – Northern Irish, 34). He suggests it would be more comfortable being male if this was countered, citing his view of contemporary society to justify this:

> *"We constantly refer to feminist theory which I am not against, I'm all for feminism, and um, but in the same respect I think, not historically, but in this new culture and new society we live in and in this modern age there's maybe a need to reflect and look at men as a minority, you know".*

Although Gerry supports feminist ideology here, it may be difficult to identify with his assertion that there is a 'new culture' or 'new society' that identifies men as somehow subservient. Connell (2005) asserts that hegemonic masculinity prevails within western culture, so perhaps Gerry is being optimistic as this was not stated by other participants in the region.

A variance in social capital was perceived depending on marital status. Gerry (Northern Ireland – white Northern Irish, 34), suggests that married MSWSs or practitioners garner more social capital in terms of trust, than those who are single:

"Say a single man wants to work with children. There's all suspicion and fear around the classroom".

It might be argued that Gerry is identifying that marriage or partnership develops the habitus in terms of security and a broader understanding. Partnered males may therefore be perceived as a safer option for working with children.

Perceived cultural capital attached to MSWSs has been singled out in the classroom. George (Scotland – white European, 50) experienced a situation where the cultural capital of his gender invoked unintended consequences:

"There's five of us [MSWSs] *in class, lecturers do tend to ask the guys quite a lot (…) they'll maybe pick on you".*

In the field of formal learning, or lecture theatre, it is the lecturer who holds symbolic power. Due to the uniqueness of MSWSs in the classroom, participants reported feeling singled out to engage or to contribute more. Requiring increased interaction from MSWSs in this environment could viewed as a form of symbolic violence.

Thomas (Scotland – white Scottish, 29) speaks about a situation where male cultural capital is identified by the lecturer, and where the lecturer appears fully engaged in 'the game'. Here the lecturer subjects this capital to what is perceived by Thomas as symbolic violence, which may be an example of how a pejorative undercurrent against MSWSs is formed:

> *"In lectures I've been reminded of the fact that there's more men in management and women. It's really put across to ya (…) one lecturer said, 'look around at all the guys in the class, because they're gonna be your managers'. I don't know if it builds up any resentment amongst the women, but it could do".*

Pejorative undercurrents can act as drivers for other fields to develop. James (Scotland – white British, 24) acknowledges his experience of a gender split within the field of formal social work learning:

> *"I think it's probably fair that all the male students know each other reasonably well and a lot of the female students know each other reasonably well. But there isn't a lot of crossover between male students and between female students".*

The example provided by Ian (Northern Ireland – white, 50) suggests that a separate field of gender formed within his cohort. Developing relationships with other MSWSs suggests that their capital has a more equal value within this field of gender, or perhaps masculinity:

> *"And, you know I try to then develop relations with the males that are on the course. I sort of focus more on that, as opposed to developing relationships with the females on the course. Well, in lectures it's just sort of a solidarity thing, it's more, you know, recognising that we were in the minority".*

Acting on diminished capital within the field of formal learning, MSWSs appear to have recognised others in a similar position and formed their own field of masculinity to counter this (Coles, 2009). One where they perceive the capital of their gender maintains its value. Barry (Wales – white British, 30) identifies that:

"There's a definite split in lectures. Um, which became a bit of a running joke. We refer to it as 'Man Corner'" [where MSWSs would sit together in lectures].

Niall (Northern Ireland – white Irish, 25) also identifies the formation of a field of masculinity within formal learning:

"The fellows have already got their group in class. It's kind of clique-y, in a sort of sense".

Robert (Scotland – white, 34) identifies that this field of masculinity operates as a subfield outside of the field of formal learning:

"There are like 60 of us [referring the whole cohort] *(…) but there was enough guys to get a football team for a game of football and we try to do that every year".*

Away from the formal learning field, the male network maintains a safe but competitive environment, a field of masculinity congruent with their habitus and capital, where the capital they bring to the field is similar and valued, and where they compete for additional capital (Coles, 2009).

5.3.4 The field of practice placement

Participants widely presumed that not only would cultural capital be present by definition of their gender on practice placement, but symbolic capital would be accrued by their status ultimately as a practitioner.

Gerry (Northern Ireland – Northern Irish, 34) explained that the cultural capital of males in social work was inherent in their different perspective:

> *"Men certainly bring a different perspective on to things in social work. Men bring in, um, equally as good of skills as women, and equally as good a knowledge, but just a different perspective".*

Being able to give choice to service users concerning the gender of their social worker was identified by participants as a strength in the field of practice. This symbolic capital is ascribed by Barry (Wales – white British, 30) in terms of heightening male service user engagement with social work practice:

> *"The most important thing that I think men bring to social work, is that connection with male service users. I'm thinking of child protection, around engaging fathers and getting men (…) to be involved in the child protection process (…) At the end of the day, if you won't work with a woman, then, (…) you need to have a man there".*

There is some conjecture whether such choice is offered in frontline social work, which could be largely dependent on organisational policies and staff resources.

The question of whether male social workers are needed or wanted in the field of practice was aligned with participant's perceptions of holding cultural and symbolic capital as role models. Aaron (Scotland – white British, 30) identifies his developed habitus:

> *"I'm a guy that has a family and cooks a dinner, and, and changes the sheets and stuff. So, I think that, you bring that role of a, as a positive male role model, you're saying to society there's decent guys out there".*

Aaron perceives increased cultural and social capital as a man with a family, outside the field of formal learning. Participants like Aaron explained that they felt trusted to a greater level by service users with families and children. Development in the habitus of these participants due to their familial circumstances appears to be perceived as more informed and associated with less risk. This is also reflected in the statement by Altaf (Midlands – British Pakistani, 33), who as a married man with children appears confident that while working in a domestic violence setting his cultural and social capital is sufficiently enhanced and he has currency to enter this particular field of practice:

"In a lot of the families I work with, the male is either absent, maybe deceased, transient male partners, abusive male partners, domestic violence is prevalent".

The argument for male role models in social work practice has long been made but more recently developed by Pease (2011). He warns however that this should not be done without thinking about the impact of issues such as, gender, masculinities and gender equality. Indeed, Hicks (2001) points out that practice should not be based upon stereo-typical male roles. This awareness is highlighted by Gerry (Northern Ireland – Northern Irish, 34) who acknowledges this contrast:

> *"If you're a minority group and male, you certainly need a role model (…) I'm thinking here in particular about young gay men, or middle aged gay men, the role model might not necessarily come from a family member, so they're always looking out to see if they can see others, other males that have other perspectives".*

Like in the field of formal learning, some participants however perceived a pejorative undertone when engaged in the field of practice placements, reflecting the symbolic violence represented by their gender. In areas of practice such as, domestic violence and child protection, un-partnered participants identified having insufficient cultural and social capital to enter these fields, which proved problematic. James (Scotland – white British, 24) grapples with this issue:

> *"A stereotype or an understanding that women are more suited to working with children and working in that particular field. Then, I can understand that being a man, for some people, might be a problem. I don't necessarily think that should be the case".*

Mark (Wales – white British, 23), a single male, recounts his direct personal experience about being refused a placement in the field of domestic violence, which he also attributes to the symbolic violence of being male:

> *"Going back into placement, I wanted to work with domestic violence, and there was a lot of hesitancy around it (…) the suggestion now is for me to go work with women's aid. And, there was actually an opportunity for that, but they I believe refused to take a male student".*

Clearly, he is perceived not to share the developed habitus and cultural and social capital which Aaron and Altaf have attained through their status as a married men with children. Gerry (Northern Ireland – Northern Irish, 34) also identifies the lack of capital in being a single man as a barrier. Not just in the profession itself but emanating from wider society:

> *"Now, even less males are coming forward into the caring professions and in particular social work, and it would seem that the issues around child protection and the issues that society has with men working with children are a barrier, because the first question now is, why does say a single man want to work with children? There's all suspicion and fear".*

Barry (Wales – white British, 30) (working in adoption and fostering) identifies that the capital and symbolic violence inherent in his gender can however be an advantage in some situations:

"You're a big guy. This needs to be double handed. Come along with us."

In this situation, two female practitioners wanted the perceived security of Barry's presence when undertaking a home visit to a domestic violence case. The cultural capital of male

practitioners being 'macho protectors of women' which Barry relates, is explored by Christie (2006).

The general lack of cultural capital, which some participants perceived they could present working in the fields of child protection and domestic violence did not prevent 59% (n=20) from identifying child protection and child services as preferred fields for their practice placements. Although participants recognised the difficulties of entering into these fields of practice, particularly single MSWSs, they remained drawn to practice in these fields.

Criminal justice is a potential field of practice that MSWSs may find more congruent with their perceptions of cultural capital. However, just 26% (n=9) of all participants expressed a preference for practising in the area of criminal justice, which might be perceived as a more 'masculine' area of social work practice.

This analysis of MSWS experience in different social fields demonstrates that males also "experience degrees of both autonomy and subordination as they move across social fields" (McLeod, 2005: 22).

SUMMARY

This chapter has applied the Bourdieusian analytical concepts of doxa, habitus, capital and field to key themes emerging from a thematic analysis of data, primarily from the semi-structured interviews conducted and questionnaires returned.

By applying the analytical tools of doxa and habitus, this analysis has demonstrated that participants perceive themselves as being aligned with the profession. The socialisation inherent in the doxa and habitus have been analysed and suggest that these concepts highlight three distinct motivators for them entering into social work. They involve formative contact with those in the caring professions, either as a previous service user of social work, or having family members already in the public service.

Varying forms of capital held by MSWSs have been explored and the analysis demonstrates how these varied through different fields. Analysis has found that capital of gender is a reality for participants, accrued or diminished depending on the circumstances and field of operation. Although far from unique to males, a key factor in attracting MSWSs appears to be sufficient economic capital to allay financial concerns inherent in student status, particularly when married with children.

The social and cultural capital perceived to be inherent in gender, which as males they expected would enable them in formal social work learning, was perceived in many cases to work against them. Indeed, many participants felt that their social and cultural capital was diminished. Some felt discord, perceiving negative undercurrents, citing the symbolic violence

inherent in their gender, particularly in domestic violence and child protection environments. Single MSWSs in particular are eyed with suspicion, whereas married MSWSs were attributed with increased social and cultural capital, perceived as possessing a habitus with more congruent attributes than single MSWSs, and presenting less of a risk in these fields of practice. In general, these negative attitudes have had the effect of MSWSs creating their own masculine field of support within the field of formal learning which further amplifies the gender divide.

Analysing their experiences using Bourdieu's concept of fields, some MSWSs found that their opportunities to gain work experience in child protection and domestic violence were limited in the field of practice learning. They did, however, perceive their social and cultural capital to be such that they could be a role model or provide choice for service users in certain practice situations. In other practice situations the capital of their gender was employed where a risk to female colleagues was assessed as real.

The following chapter offers further analysis using the theory of intersectionality. Where Bourdieu focuses upon the intersections of habitus, capital and field, intersectionality as an analytical framework, asserts a greater number of possibilities for nuanced analysis.

This is important as it offers another lens with which to provide further analysis to the complexities of male identity, including intersections around class, race, sexual orientation, etc. As McCall (1992: 851) highlights:

"Gender as an organising principle is not given systematic treatment throughout Bourdieu's work because gender division is seen as universal and natural".

CHAPTER SIX – APPLYING INTERSECTIONALITY

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided an analysis of the themes drawn from the perceptions of MSWS participants by employing Bourdieu's conceptual toolkit. This chapter builds on the previous chapter insofar that it develops some of the themes in greater depth.

One of the primary reasons in presenting a further analytical chapter was to analyse the responses of gay participants. This was achieved by providing an analysis of how the sexual orientation of MSWSs intersects with other characteristics, dispositions, environments and situations that participants were subject to. This was important as a significant percentage of the study participants (21%/n=7) disclosed that they were gay.

Craig et al. (2017) suggest that an intersectional analysis of the experiences between social work students and their learning environments is important in exploring intersecting sources of oppression. Indeed, the concept of intersectionality has been discussed in some detail in Chapter 3. Although the intersectional analysis offered focuses on gender, masculinity, age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, in doing so it does not imply a hierarchy within these factors, neither does it suggest that these are the only factors which can be used to provide an intersectional analysis.

In applying a framework of intersectionality appropriate for analysis of this study, I am mindful of Brittan's (1989: 141) statement that:

> "The fact that men are divided among themselves along ethnic and class lines and enact competing versions of masculinity within the same class or ethnic group, only makes the task of analysis more difficult".

As with the previous chapter, aspects within the themes identified will be similar to those experienced by female social work students. However, as this study concerns the perceptions of MSWSs, the voice of the male participants can be seen to be privileged. The chapter uses intersectionality as an analytical tool through which emergent themes are analysed to provide greater contextual depth, linking with divergent intersectional categories.

While I acknowledge that gender is a contested term and subject to fluidity (Connell, 2005), I have adopted participants' understanding of the binary use of these terms (perhaps more correctly based on 'sex'), with which to provide analysis.

Again, direct quotes have been used in this chapter and where words have been removed, they have been replaced with ellipses (…). Where words have been inserted for clarity, they have been enclosed with square brackets [ ]. Ages and location have been stated adjacent to

participants' responses, but actual names have been substituted for pseudonyms to maintain participants' confidentiality.

An overarching aim of this chapter is to address the objectives set for the study (detailed on page 15). In this chapter themes are analysed which emerged from a thematic analysis of the primary datasets.

6.1 Gender, power and masculinities within social work

Being male is synonymous with holding power in society. Being white, heterosexual, middle-class and male is considered to personify the apex of this power (Connell, 2005). The nature of gender is viewed by sociologists as socially and culturally constructed reflecting normative assumptions of gender (Llewellyn et al. 2008; Sheach-Leith et al. 2011). A view that Scourfield (2002) echoes, identifying gender as a social category and gender inequality therefore a social phenomenon.

The most common use of term 'gender' in social work refers to assumed characteristics, as 'already given' (Smith, 1990: 159). The subtext of men as a 'gender' within social work concerns their presentation of power. The dynamics of power between social worker and service user are well documented (Smith, 2008). The concept of 'power' in terms of social work practice with men is often associated with destructive and discriminatory factors (Tew, 2006). Hugman (1991: 190) asserts that "masculinity, socially constructed maleness, is structured around the excise of power", and can therefore be seen as an emanation of power.

In social work negative perceptions of men as service users abound. Such perceptions manifest either due to men's power over women (Pollard, 1994), which is often based upon routine daily contact (Briere et al. 1994; Pollard, 1994; Pringle, 1995), or as abusers of children (Hicks, 2001; Scourfield, 2003). Positive characteristics of being male within social work are usually found focused upon male practitioners, occupying positions as role models for male service users (Christie, 2001a, 2001b; Pease, 2011).

Negative perceptions of male social workers are broadly a result of their abuse of service users, or for perpetuating gender inequality within the profession (Hicks, 2001; Christie, 2001a). Williams (1995) asserts that men maintain forms of masculinity, power and privilege within occupations that primarily consist of women. Unequal power relations between men and women can be identified as rooted in unequal gender regimes which have the capacity to be reproduced if left unchecked.

Male privilege and power within social work often creates gender related tensions primarily between practitioners. Christie (2008) identifies two mechanisms which men employ to resolve these tensions. The first he identifies as 'horizontal segregation', where a male practitioner will

seek a more specialised or technical aspect of practice, for example, probation, where he can take comfort in the presence of other males. The second is 'vertical' segregation, where men in social work are seen to exert power in terms of their gender and ability to enter into senior and management positions more quickly than their female counterparts (Dominelli, 2002; Harlow, 2004; Kirwan, 1994). Either action could create further gender related tensions, as in doing so, not only do they limit their contact with female practitioners and service users but are seen to further entrench gender inequality within the profession.

In the formal learning environment of social work, both institutional and gender-based power can be seen to operate (Cree, 2001). Connell (2005) makes links between structural relations of power and individual male behaviour which provides a basis for hegemonic masculinity. The term 'hegemonic masculinity' is described as being synonymous with the concept of what it is to be a 'real man' (Connell, 2005). This ideal of masculinity not only operates as an ideology, but also provides a normative framework in which male roles are defined, enacted and reproduced. Gender operates within interactions, by both 'doing' gender and presenting an identity.

Males who deviate from the prescribed expectations of male hegemony may face barriers and subordination in the hierarchy of 'maleness' (Connell, 2005). One participant, Roger (Midlands - white British, 33), provided an illustration of this hierarchy in operation:

> *"My best friend is a policeman, and my friends are in IT. They don't follow the same social circles as I do and actually, we've got quite different views on things. I'd say I'm much more of a sensitive man than they are. They are very much matter of fact (…) they're man's men I suppose. I've always had a bit more empathy and sensitivity and that's kind of always drawn me to feel like I should help people. I can't think of many men that I know that ever thought to themselves or ever said to me, "I really like the work that you do". Most of them say: "I don't understand why you do the work that you do".*

Males who feel marginalised often do so as a result of a problematisation of one or more categories of their identity, so that the privilege of being male is rendered invisible. A key challenge for males in social work is whether they are active in challenging power inequalities within the profession and the extent to which they are willing to surrender the power and privileges associated with their gender (Christie, 2001b; Pease, 2011).

6.2 MSWSs and the intersections of gender and sexual orientation

Due to the non-traditional nature of men as social workers, discourse on the motivations of males to train and work as social workers has included a certain expectation that men working in a caring profession exhibit more feminine traits. In western culture, male homosexuality has been traditionally associated with expressions of effeminacy (Edwards, 1994; Pronger, 1990), which may go some way to explain the speculation regarding the sexual orientation of male

social workers. Within the literature there is speculation that this may be a contributory factor for the motivation of males embarking on a career in the care sector - social work (Christie, 2001a).

This study asked participants to disclose their sexual orientation. As with any question, participants had the opportunity to decline to answer or request that their answer would not form part of the research. No participant declined to answer, and as Table 7 suggests (please see page 270), just under a quarter, 21% (n=7) of all participants disclosed that they were gay with one participant identifying as bisexual. Comparing this with statistics concerning sexual orientation in the UK is problematic, due to the scope and qualitative nature of the research and the preparedness of participants to answer truthfully. This statistic however contrasts greatly with other sources which indicate that between 1-6% of the male population identify as gay (ONS, 2012; YouGov, 2015).

As a gay man, I reflected on my experiences of being asked about my sexual orientation in sometimes a pejorative manner of thinly disguised negativity. When this situation occurred, it did so with someone I was unfamiliar with. In such circumstances I may have given an answer I thought the questioner wished to hear, to close down their line of enquiry. Mindful of my own experiences, this question was asked towards the end of the interview with the intent of maximising the familiarity element in the brief relationship between participant and researcher.

Although posing this question in this manner, there were nonetheless occasions where this enquiry appeared to evoke increasing indignation in participants. Some clearly wanted to challenge labels and perceptions which have been traditionally found at the intersections between being a gay male and the cultural and societal attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals. Participants identified that structural law and social policy was not always designed to treat them as equally valuable within society. Connell (1992: 737) comments in terms of gay men that:

> "Men who have sex with men are generally oppressed, but they are not definitively excluded from masculinity. Rather they face structurally-induced conflicts about masculinity – conflicts between their social presence as men… and in their construction of relationships with women and heterosexual men".

Societal, cultural and structural treatment of LGBTQ people has undeniably changed within the last few decades, most noticeably perhaps with the shift in social policy i.e. the introduction of same-sex civil partnership and later marriage (Civil Partnership Act 2004; Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013). The impact of historic experiences concerning pejorative attitudes toward gay people at personal (micro), cultural (mezzo) and structural (macro) levels of society can still resonate, as can be seen in different intersections in the lives of participants Simon, Jack and Thomas.

Simon (Wales - white British, 35) comes from a background where both his parents have degrees and his three siblings work in the care sector. He was a newly qualified social worker and identified cultural discrimination in his written questionnaire response concerning his sexual orientation:

> *"I'm homosexual and I do believe that the socially constructed stereotypes of my sexuality have impacted and influenced why I came into this profession. As a gay man, I felt alienated and I think this heavily influenced my desire to become a social worker, particularly as it enabled me to work with marginalised and stigmatised groups and to challenge oppressive systems, cultures and thinking which is in place in our society".*

Simon identifies that the historical structure and culture of British society in the 1970s/80s projected stereotypes of gay men as either a parody of the effeminate, with 'camp' personas - often subject to ridicule, or as deviant members of society with perceived dubious sexual practices, sometimes involving children. This often resulted in verbal or physical homophobic attack (Forrest, 1994).

Since qualifying, Simon writes that he has been provided with the tools and the professional status/authority to challenge discrimination and oppression at all levels of society. He can now intervene with the authority of a qualified practitioner of a profession. Although Simon cites he has been subject to cultural oppression, his enlightened family background suggests that these attitudes have not necessarily pervaded his home life.

Jack (London - white British, 28) discussed his experiences of being a gay man while studying at university and during his practice placement work experience. The latter is discussed later in the chapter, but in this example, he outlines the impact of negative attitudes he experienced from other social work students of religious faith:

> *"I think I've found it difficult 'cos there's a lot of strong people with a lot of strong religious views on this course that have strong religious views about people that are gay".*

Although Jack's negative experience of being a gay MSWS was not a common experience among other gay participants in HEI settings, it remains somewhat surprising. Prospective social work students are subject to a selection process, which enquires on the concordance of their own value base with those of the profession, it is therefore of concern that homophobia remains an issue (Aymer & Patni, 2011). However, previous studies have found that homophobia and heterosexism are prevalent in social work education (Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Brownlee et al. 2005; Chinell, 2011; Chonody et al. 2014; Dentato et al. 2016; Fairlough et al. 2013; Johnston, 2002; Krieglstein, 2003; Newman et al. 2002; Riaz & Saltzburg, 2007; Swank & Raiz, 2007).

Many scholars identify that religiosity is a common factor associated with homophobia among social work students (Berkman & Zinberg, 2007; Crisp, 2006; Krieglstein, 2003; Kulkin et al. 2009; Snively et al. 2004; Schaub et al. 2017; Swank & Raiz, 2010). O'Neill (1995) however argues that social work as a profession has a duty to oppose discrimination based upon sexual orientation. Krieglstein (2003: 88) asserts that this divergence is an ethical issue where social work needs to 'walk the walk' and challenge such discrimination.

Hylton (2005) also identifies the incongruity of social work as a profession, which challenges discrimination and yet fails to respond to those who identify as anything other than heterosexual. A study by Fairlough et al. (2013: 480) with LGBTQ social work students concludes that, "heterosexism operates by rendering invisible those who are not heterosexual. They find that within social work education heterosexuality is considered normative and homophobic behaviour is ignored or condoned". Manning points to this paradox by identifying, "even as we teach about difference, we act as if we are all the same – that is heterosexual" (cited in Chevillot et al. 2002: 193). This invisibility pervades much of the literature, which discusses the history of social work omitting any mention of the sexual orientation of its founders, many of whom identified as lesbian (Aronson, 1995; Tully, 2000).

The study by Chinell (2011) found that homophobia among social work students was most problematic in the lecture room environment. Some authors (Chinell, 2011; Fairlough et al. 2013; Kulkin et al. 2009) contend that vacillation, hesitancy and avoidance of this issue in social work education by social work educators prevents an effective framework for educational practice and awareness from being broadly implemented and placed firmly in the curriculum.

Thomas (Scotland - white Scottish, 28) identifies as working-class and has perhaps felt pejorative attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals, which can be evident at various social intersections. He is from a small town near Glasgow, unmarried, but has a partner. When he left school, he entered into traditionally masculine work roles, first as a bouncer and later as an apprentice electrician. Determining that these roles were unrewarding, prior to enrolling on his social work programme, he was a support worker in a homeless hostel. At the time of interview, Thomas worked on a part-time basis as a doorman for a nightclub.

During our interview Thomas' projection of his self-image both physically and verbally was a presentation of the personification of masculinity (Goffman, 1976). When coming to the conclusion of the interview, his sexual orientation was discussed:

> *"Well, em, I am gay. But I would say that, em, I'm effeminate in the slightest, to be honest with you (…) the way that I've been previous wouldn't dictate somebody who was effeminate in fact it maybe would be completely the*

> *opposite. - Eh, in fact, when I usually tell, uh, heterosexual men that I am gay then they're really usually surprised".*

I was equally surprised. Thomas presented as a young heterosexual male, nothing about him suggested effeminacy in any way. Indeed, Thomas was keen to emphasise his lack of effeminacy and distance himself from it:

> *"Maybe because of my sexuality, I don't know, it might be from socialisation, but I've been trying to produce something* [different], *as I said I've been working on doors* [Thomas is a regular gym goer, he then points to the size of his biceps] *I don't use the word 'straight acting' about my sexuality, but yeah, I wouldn't see myself as effeminate".*

Halperin (2003) suggests that LGBTQ individuals have learned to adopt positions of ambiguity ensuring that they are difficult to read, masking their true identity in an attempt to resist forces of power and violence. Halkitis (2001) asserts that gay men associate masculinity with physical appearance; being muscular and having a big frame. It transpired that Thomas has created a presentation of self that exudes toughness, vitality, power, respect and autonomy; all qualities that Whitehead (2002) associates with the contested concept of 'hyper-masculinity'.

Thomas's account identifies socialisation as the key cause in his presentation of hyper-masculinity. Socially constructed stereotypes of gay men represented in mainstream media discussed earlier would have been a cultural reality for Thomas' parents, and as he was born in 1987, perhaps Thomas himself.

Such emanations of physical masculinity, which appear unquestionably grounded in heteronormativity may also shield him from homophobic attitudes within social work education. Bywater and Jones (2007) refer to the historical, social, cultural beliefs, ideas and norms that construct heterosexuality as the normal and therefore unquestioningly accepted 'way to be'. According to Kimmel and Mahalik (2005: 1188), gay men who are concerned with conforming to these cultural expectations are more likely to experience psychological issues if their body image does not live-up to the "physically powerful masculine ideal".

Thomas (Scotland - white Scottish, 28):

> *"Not that I'm bigging this up or anything, but I've got a criminal conviction for assault, which I wouldn't class as effeminate. I would say that my background is maybe the reason for the way I am and my sexuality, do you know what I mean?"*

The background to which Thomas refers, identifies his socialisation and the effects this may have had on his self-image. The intersection of geographical location can also be a significant factor in socialisation. Scourfield (2006b) highlights the significance of location on the construction of gender identities, suggesting that identities can be constructed by localised

culture. Glasgow and its immediate surroundings, with its associated problems of poverty and substance misuse, are ranked as the UK's most violent area (IEP, 2013). In such circumstances, violence can become a normalised behaviour because of its frequency and visibility (Lombard, 2015). According to Winlow (2001: 171), Thomas's part-time occupation expresses:

> "Violence as a form of social interaction in which they specialise; they are bouncers not just because they feel they are up to the job because they possess skills in self-defence, but also because they are knowledgeable about the vague micro-intricacies of contemporary urban violence".

Akin to this is presentation of the self. Displaying a tough no-nonsense persona (see Goffman, 1969, 1971) becomes crucial in the deterrence of violence. Combining this with presenting a physical form of hyper-masculinity can further enhance such a deterrent (Winlow, 2001). Analysing the intersections where Thomas's self-image is at play in his everyday life underlines that he has dedicated significant thought, effort and skill at self-presentation, which moves through these intersections with minimal discord.

Thomas went on to identify the paradox of cultural assumptions concerning sexual orientation and the presentation of self:

> *"Because you can have a really effeminate, uh, practitioner that's well, really reflective, really thoughtful practitioner, that's really calm, respectful. That's completely straight, you know?"*

However, in Thomas's case he feels comfortable enough with contemporary cultural attitudes toward his sexual orientation that he can acknowledge that he has a male partner.

Interestingly, participants appeared unaware of the sexuality of their male student peers, assuming them in many cases to be 'straight'. It could be argued that this forms part of a wider phenomenon, whereby MSWSs acknowledge each other and cooperate appropriate to their academic surroundings, but they perhaps give more of themselves to their female counterparts. This is interesting as it also speaks to the hetero-normative argument within social work education that heteronormativity pervades providing a foundation for heterosexism (Aymer & Patni, 2011). Jimmy (Wales - white Irish, 28) observes that when he chooses to disclose his sexual orientation and career choice, cultural attitudes still broadly conform to a stereotype of gay men:

"When you say to people you're going to be a social worker, they're a bit less surprised then".

Craig et al. (2017) assert that cultural attitudes toward LBGTQ social work students can still result in direct and indirect discrimination, which can have a negative effect on academic performance and longer-term personal and professional identity development. The effects of

this can be also perceived in social work practice, in particular while on practice placement, which I discuss later in the chapter.

6.3 MSWSs and the intersections of gender, age and culture of social work education

6.3.2 Intersection of gender and the culture of social work education

For MSWSs in education the ways of being a man can be seen to differ at different intersections of social and formal contact. Scourfield (2003: 180) purports that:

> "There are multiple, possible ways of being a man, and men's practices vary according to culture, class, race and sexuality and other mediating factors. Becoming a man is not a passive process of socialisation, but an active construction of an identity".

At the structural intersection of HEIs, a commonly voiced perception by participants was the view that their gender was privileged by admissions tutors. While this perception is unsupported by the literature, it does highlight the paucity of male practitioners in such a way that this may become a real issue (see in particular Christie 2002, 2006). The subsequent experiences of many participants appeared to be in stark contrast to the enthusiastic welcome of university admissions tutors, which MSWSs at the time perceived to be an attempt to balance the gender disparity in social work. When enrolled, participants actually experienced a pedagogy, which foregrounds feminism and feminised perspectives against a background of discrimination and oppression, mainly as a reaction to the actions and sanctions of men.

In such an arena, participants found themselves disenfranchised, a finding of other studies (see Cree, 2000; Christie, 2002, 2006; Parker & Crabtree, 2014), a point to which I shall return. However, there were areas in social work education where MSWSs identified as being more comfortable. Male practitioners and MSWSs are seen to be orientated towards more technical, specialised and practical aspects of work (Christie, 2006), which are often associated with the expectations and discourse of hegemonic masculinity (see Connell, 2005: 171-2). Bywater and Jones (2007) note that orientation towards these practices demonstrate that men seem able to prioritise their masculinity in other ways than just being sexually active. Leon (Northern Ireland – white Irish, 28) points to his alignment with the practical, technical approaches of social work, an opinion widely shared by other participants:

> "I guess the lecture that really resonated with me was the law lecture. Because me and the-the other guy, in my class, um…it really stimulated our kind of man senses and just kind of like, it was legal, it was logic and it seemed like structured. I don't know if this is related to gender or not, but I feel as though there's not enough debate facilitated in class. I like to see ideas and values challenged".

Certainly, the perceptions of participants were largely that they respond differently in formal learning environments to their female counterparts. They believe that female social work

students focus more on the empathetic and counselling role inherent within social work, a point made by Winston (Wales - black African, 41):

"One of the things I find a little bit challenging is empathy. I think the females are, not to be disrespectful, but I think they are more 'into' empathy than males".

The fundamental misalignment that Leon and Winston highlight might be seen as a symptom of what Crabtree and Parker's (2014) study identify as being male in female spaces. Their study, together with the contributions of other authors (see Lloyd & Degenhardt, 1996; Phillips & Cree, 2014), state that social work education essentially enacts a feminised pedagogy where a focus on anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice are key themes throughout. Some participants described almost being socially handicapped due to their socialisation and the expectations of their gender, which became most apparent when intersecting with the structural power inherent in social work education and associated pedagogy.

Shoiab (Wales - British Asian, 33) provides an example of this phenomenon. First, he takes up the theme within the social work literature and then how anti-male perspectives inherent in feminism are enacted within lectures:

> *"The biggest challenge I've found, and I think this would be echoed by the other guys in the group is that there does seem to be a quite an anti-male flavour to some of the literature and topics that we encounter* [on the programme (…) which emphasise] *male dominance in society in general whilst not recognizing the female dominance in social work".*

It appears that this is also a perception of a male alumni. Simon (Wales - white British, 35) writes that:

> *"The course was tough and at times I found domestic violence topics challenging as they focussed heavily on women as victims and men as perpetrators. This was uncomfortable during discussion and teaching, as our cohort consisted of ten men and thirty-eight women, so we were in a minority".*

Shoiab identifies how this has translated into female/male power dynamics within lectures:

> *"We had an interesting lecture which was supposed to be about the transition from childhood to adulthood and how 40 years ago, that transition would be made six years earlier than now. However, that transposed into 'men do worse at school but do better at university and then earn more for doing the same jobs'* [as females]. (…) *We'd gone from talking about transitions to adulthood, to talking about male dominance in tertiary education and male dominance in the workplace!"*

It would appear that on some occasions, and paradoxically due to its foundation in empowerment, social work education does not recognise the power of its discourse to disempower MSWSs. According to Tower and Gray (2005), men are disadvantaged because

of an unfamiliarity with the expectations associated with a feminised pedagogy, which employs its own normative interactional styles. Indeed, some participants felt they were being judged much more critically during discussions and presentations as a result of their gender.

What Shoiab does not identify in his narrative is the formation of a 'high trust' learning environment where students and staff can give voice to the minority perspectives on substantive issues within social work, such as, culpability within domestic violence (Crabtree & Parker, 2014). Guckenheimer and Schmidt (2013) argue that feminist learning environments are far from 'safe spaces' and should not be promoted as such. Indeed, the performance and defence of hegemonic masculinity evident in Shoiab's account can substantially limit a high trust 'safe space' learning environment:

> *"Sometimes find yourself having to defend the male position, which is ridiculous, because of all the people in society, you would think that the males on a social work course were perhaps some of them that didn't need persuading about those types of issues [feminism], but it seems to be on-going!"*

This kind of defensive language used by Shoiab in his response mirrors the finding of Hyde and Deal's (2003) study where MSWSs felt marginalised and viewed unfairly as symbols of oppression. Pease (2011: 409) contends that "male student's defensive responses to feminist content do not bode well for the future of gender-conscious male social workers in the profession". Howe (2008) warns that this can be a symptom of relationship breakdown between educator and student in the social work learning environment. Conversely, Warde (2009) regards such advocacy in action in various arenas as a valuable skill for the profession that could and should be put into practice. As a solution Guckenheimer and Schmidt (2013) describe the benefits of separating male and female students when discussing problematic gender issues, an approach which could help preserve a high trust 'safe space', but which may not be practicable in HEI learning spaces.

Further gender-power relations were identified between male and female students, where MSWSs were seen to be over-compensating for their minority status both in terms of the social work narrative and in physical numbers within learning spaces. Here masculine voices might appear more authoritarian than female voices, a dynamic which can be problematic for MSWSs, as Shoiab (Wales – British Asian, 33) expresses:

> *"If you dare to stick your head above the parapet and mention that, you feel 'got at' as a male, as a male group, they're like, "Well, that's ridiculous, 'cause I mean look at how"* [advantaged you are as a male]. *One of the girls that I'm quite friendly with* (…) *she was saying, 'well, you're saying that* (…) *females are dominant in this group, but who speaks up more in lectures? Is it the men or the women?' I'm like you can't blame us for speaking up in a group setting. If you don't want to speak up, but we do, that's not us dominating, that's just us*

responding. But then you could look at it the other way, you could say (…) *we're over-representing. Basically, what she's saying is that there's only 15% of you, but you take up 25% of the talking time".*

Field notes taken of an observation of Shoiab's cohort supports the observation of his female colleagues that male contributions were greater than those of females. Of the forty-three students in the cohort, five were MSWSs and from a total of seven student contributions, five of those were from MSWSs. This dynamic is discussed by Orr (1993) and Philips and Westland (1992), who identify that minority male students tend to dominate classroom discussion particularly when they are resistant to the subject matter. Classrooms are political spaces where discussions about inequality and privilege concerning minorities are often subject to confrontation (Davis, 1992; Haddad & Lieberman, 2002; Webber, 2005). They therefore require careful and appropriate management. Jimmy (Wales - white Irish, 28) echoes these points by acknowledging a lack of appropriate approaches within his programme:

> *"I do think maybe more could be done with regards around masculinity and the male* (…) *because with social work, it's most commonly female people that you come into contact with".*

Power relations within learning spaces did not appear evident for MSWSs in Northern Ireland. Gerry (Northern Ireland - white Northern Irish, 34) felt compelled to comment on his lecturers and their positive approach to MSWSs:

> *"I'm thinking because they're enlightened, is there such a term? I mean, they're welcoming and they're open, and they're glad that there's males here, and they're glad 'cause they're thinking about the future, and males getting out in the community, and that's gonna be a positive thing. I think you're made to feel fine, and welcome and it's very inclusive".*

Messner (2000) promotes pedagogic approaches which demonstrate how men may lack the privilege of class, race and sexual identity, while placing an emphasis on how problematic masculinities can be in practice. Gerry also recognises an environment where hegemonic masculinity is far from dominant and describes a more reflective approach to the minority status of MSWSs, where he also considers male practitioner's perspectives on gender dynamics in their work.

> *"Well, as I suppose a minority, you could think about males being in a minority, the way that we always talk in lectures about feminism, we might want to talk about the new role that men as a minority might have, or we might want to meet other males that are in the profession. So, you might be a special meeting at the start. I mean out of 160* (…) *there are 20 [males] on the course, you know,* (…) *just to make connections, and make sort of associations early on in the course".*

The final point which Gerry makes was echoed by several participants. The solution to the exclusion they felt centred on forming specific all male 'support' groups within programmes. Parker and Crabtree's (2014) study also discusses this possibility and identifies it as a formalised approach included in the curriculum of some social work programmes, the effectiveness of which highlights an important area open to further research.

Such accounts demonstrate MSWSs conscious or unconscious decisions on how they react in learning spaces, informing how dispositions at these intersections react to them. For example, those choosing to be proactive taking 'the man of action' stance and challenging a feminised pedagogy, may cause a very different reaction from the submission demanded by the feminised icon of 'the gentleman' (Christie, 2006). According to Crabtree and Parker (2014: 20):

> "Social work students must learn to construct an acceptable script in their communications with social work educators in the classroom and on placement, where the correct 'newspeak' must be learned in order to avoid damning accusations relating to their values and their skills".

A natural extension of Crabtree and Parker's assertion is that the omission of MSWSs to recognise and reflect appropriate demeanour and language could result in isolation at best, or ultimately exclusion and failure.

Isolation of males by design or otherwise is a theme that runs through into practice due to the gender imbalance of most social work teams (Christie, 2006). This was also a theme foregrounded by participants, closely aligned with issues of exclusion, discussed previously. Newson et al. (2011) identify a lack of published research concerning the subjective experiences of older mature students.

6.3.3 Intersection of gender and age

Feelings of isolation while enrolled on their social work programmes were commonly expressed by participants due to either their gender and/or age. Their accounts identified perceived barriers concerning these issues at both social and structural intersections.

Boyd (Scotland – white Scottish, 51) captures a general sense of isolation due to his gender by reflecting on the counter situation for female social work students attending his programme:

"See I think the advantages of being a woman on the course like is, is there are more women on the course (…) *there's less men like, so there's less of a mix".*

Danny (Scotland – white British, 26) identifies a fusion of the intersections of gender and age. He relates his perception of the majority gender in operation and reflects upon their maternal responsibilities, perhaps as he is still a younger man himself:

"There is a strong female dynamic and a kinda lot of them [female students] *have kids, kids that would be my age."*

Those who reflected most on how age intersects socially and structurally for them as individuals were, unsurprisingly mature participants (50+). This initial perceived barrier to formal education by older participants was voiced by Ian (Northern Ireland – white European, 50):

"My fear coming into the course was my age, not my gender".

George (Northern Ireland - white European, 50) expands upon Ian's point citing the significance of the change to his personal circumstance, the uncertainty it brings, and how it represents a separation from more familiar environments:

> *"When you leave your profession you get very isolated* (…) *(if you've done it for 20-30 years)* (…) *so I believe that going back to education isolates yourself, to a certain degree you socially exclude yourself because you're not in the same environment* (…) *and that is difficult".*

George goes on to identify the barrier age can be in social interaction with younger students:

"The age thing might be a barrier for me, you know? Like eh, when we're doing small groups and all".

Wilson (1997) states optimistically that feelings of isolation due to this factor will lessen over time. In addition, however, Ian (Northern Ireland – white European, 50) highlights the barriers to social communication he feels due to his previous life experience:

> *"Um, I haven't really mixed with the younger students, or our tutor group. Maybe being more mature* (…) *it's back to age. You know, there's a depth* (...) *I'm bringing a depth of experience to the course, which isn't necessarily recognised".*

Laming et al. (2016) identify that life experience can be a barrier to effective inter-generational communication. From the perspective of older-mature students of either gender, disclosing experience risks fear of being identified as outdated, and as discussed later, can impact differently on men. Such life-experience can be intimidating for younger people and their contemporary social interests can be completely misaligned, both of which limit fluid communication.

In addition to talking about issues of intersection and age, both George and Ian identify a structural barrier when trying to access VLE resources, where they report issues due to being unfamiliar with IT systems. This represents a steeper learning curve than for younger learners, more acquainted with on-line systems. Laming et al. (2016) argue that for men, this will have

greater impact due to gender and social expectations of masculinity, remarking that, "universities talk enthusiastically about the need to enrol students from diverse backgrounds, but this is at odds with their behaviour" (Laming et al. 2016:15). Waller (2005, 2006) identifies that mature age students will feel uncomfortable at various interfaces of the university due to age and previous life experience.

Examples of varying degrees of dissonance that participants discussed may be reflected in their success rates. The overall success rate for enrolled MSWSs achieving qualification is 54% (source – ETIS Database). At the time of data collection, I was not sufficiently aware and was surprised about the barriers age can bring to mature MSWSs. Peer support networks recommended by Newson et al. (2011) may be difficult to achieve given the even greater dearth of older MSWSs.

6.4 MSWSs and the intersections of capital, gender and ethnic culture

Thirteen per cent (n=5) of postgraduate participants expressed their motivations to quit their previous professions such as, banking and business. Often described by them as being unrewarding and 'grubby', they sought a career in social work to make a positive difference to people's lives, which they felt was personally rewarding, gaining them social capital.

Postgraduate MSWSs wanting to change careers and qualify as social work practitioners experienced structural, cultural and social barriers in terms of the costs of enabling them back into higher education.

Capital, in terms of finance, was a primary concern for these postgraduate participants. Although it is not unique to male postgraduate students, funding for masters-level study is often subject to structural barriers in terms of financing postgraduate education. Tuition fees are currently set at over £9000 per annum and tuition loans are set at just over £10,000 for a whole course (Gov.UK, 2018).

For many of those embarking on postgraduate social work education, their circumstances mean that they are often responsible for meeting all or part of the costs of raising a family, housing, utilities, etc., making the cost of postgraduate study prohibitive. Lee (Midlands - white British, 32) illustrates the decision of a male colleague from MENCAP, who considered becoming a MSWS, but had to revise his decision:

> *"It was too big a step for him to take. At that time, they were worried about issues in their family for example, child care, and there was the monetary aspect of providing for his family".*

For those enrolled on postgraduate social work education, finance remained a significant factor. The contributions of both Altaf and Roger were common responses of participants who

identified financial constraints of returning to university education. Both had familial responsibilities; Altaf a wife and four children and Roger a wife and one child. Both stated that they provided the main source of family income. This is despite the fact that family structures of stay-at-home mothers and 'male bread-winner families' have been identified as in steep decline and outdated (Whitehead, 2002). Altaf (Midlands - Pakistani, British, 33) states that:

"I decided [on] *'Step Up' because I couldn't afford to go back to University to do a second degree; that was not an option".*

Similarly, Roger (Midlands - white British, 33) identified that:

> *"The* [Step-Up to Social Work] *bursary allowed me to give up my job in order to start this course. Which, actually doing Social Work full time, either through the Open University or through the sort of traditional means, I just wouldn't have been able to afford to do that".*

Most 'Step-Up' postgraduate participants (please see page 90 for a discussion on this fast-track qualifying social work route) identified a personal need to remain the family 'bread-winner' even while studying at university, subsequently the bursary payments were an essential component. This is highlighted by Altaf (Midlands - Pakistani, British, 33):

> *"Had it not have been for this 'Step up' programme, I would probably have been stuck in Accounting for the rest of my life. Which I would've hated, but I would've done in order to support my family".*

Adoption of this traditional male gender role may be as a result of socialisation and localised cultures; this is an issue which further intersects with race and one which I will explore later. However, the significance of geographical place on the construction of gender identities by localised culture has been discussed earlier and is shown to have an effect on the individual (Scourfield, 2006b). These participants live in a working-class area in 'The Potteries', where gender roles are entrenched historically and defined along traditional lines.

Such findings contrast with those from postgraduate participants studying at an HEI in an affluent area of the south coast of England. For example, Gavin (Southern England - white British, 37) took a different view, accepting financial help from his parents to support his family:

> *"With a young family I had to stop working. That was a big worry* (...) *but I got the backing of my Mum and Dad, financially, if I needed it, which fortunately I haven't actually needed to. But I wouldn't have done it without that sort of safety net".*

Undergraduate participants were also conscious of their perceived responsibilities concerning their gender and gaining financial stability for their families. Aaron (Scotland – white British,

30) studied subjects that interested him and found a way to combine these disciplines into a career which will create financial stability:

> *"I was loving the psychology course (…) and the sociology, you know? Uh, brilliant! But then really, I wanted to get a job out of it at the end. There's no point in doing all this, with a family if I can't get a job".*

Thomas's (Scotland - white Scottish, 28) situation however appears less pressing, appearing more mindful of his longer-term career and security, perhaps due to him not having children to support:

> *"There's not that much money* [in] *social care jobs, and I thought that maybe becoming a social worker would be financially more secure for the future as well, and it was more of a career prospect than just doing social care jobs".*

Expectations in terms of gender and 'Step Up to Social Work' participants concerning their existing financial responsibilities was also a key factor for their families. Altaf (Midlands - Pakistani, British, 33) comes from an Asian, Muslim culture, one of eleven siblings. He is married with a wife and four children. He highlights ethnic cultural issues which can intersect with attitudes toward financial capital and career choice:

> *"My whole family were like, are you crazy? You could be earning a lot more money in accounting what are you thinking? So that has been really difficult because I've got 4 kids and a wife to support as well. All Asian parents* [of his parents' generation] *want their children to be Doctors, they really do. And you know, if a child does really well, they're encouraged to go into a profession like that. Social work isn't really recognised as a profession in my culture".*

This traditional male provider model appears not just a concern for Asian families. In Lee's (Midlands - white British, 32) account, he describes how his father has reinforced traditional gender roles concerning a stable, salaried career, although it appears much less prescriptive:

"*My father would say as a man, you need to do something that earns money, that is secure and* [to] *get security".*

However, Wong (2016) asserts that parents and communities from the Indian sub-continent transfer their own career desires onto their children, as opportunities denied them. Preferences are for careers that are considered high-status and highly paid, and in many cases, this means in medicine, healthcare, law and business and finance (Kirton, 2009; Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006).

Studies into the aspirations of British Pakistani parents for their children are inconclusive, but appear dependent on gender (Ahmad, 2007; Connor et al. 2004; Dillon, 2011; Kirton, 2009; Shah et al. 2010). Findings demonstrate that British Muslim parents of males see the importance of education, encouraging them to achieve, hoping that they will enter a high-

status career and gain institutional, cultural and social capital (Dale et al. 2002). For females however, this can be viewed by their families as a potential risk, exposing them to westernisation and secularisation which may result in them taking part in socially unacceptable activities, which will reflect on their families (Ahmad, 2007).

For English social work education, the success rate of Pakistani males qualifying is 65%, with females at 75%. Pakistani males represent less than a third (29%) of all Pakistani's qualifying as social workers (please see Table 4 – page 269). This suggests that social work is not considered a high-status career by the families of male British Pakistani's. In Pakistan social work is not traditionally considered a profession, with only three universities offering a qualifying route (Graham et al. 2007).

It appears that the traditionally held view that social work is a non-profession is one that permeates the contemporary British Pakistani community, whereas a career within local government is considered higher status. Themes which Altaf (Midlands - Pakistani, British, 33) went on to identify:

> *"When older people from my background, ask me what I do, if I said social work, they'd be like, what is that? And if I explained it, they'd be like, well that's not proper. If I tell them I work for the council, just say that, oh that's really good".*

These accounts reveal the perceptions of participants who feel the social and cultural expectations inherent in their gender and the presumptions in culture concerning gender roles and masculinity. Notwithstanding that social work is considered a female majority occupation, it does appear to attract males on the basis of stability and security, compared to other jobs in social care.

6.5 MSWSs and the intersections of gender, sexual orientation and practice placement

6.5.2 Intersection of gender and practice placement

Forming a professional identity for social work students early-on in their education has been shown to facilitate development into practice and beyond (Craig et al. 2017). Practice placements provide an opportunity for social work students to develop and refine skills in social work and are a requirement of the regulator (Fortune et al. 2007; HCPC, 2016c; Parker, 2007). As practice placements represent 50% of the social work degree, for all students there is a focus on placement learning throughout, which was mirrored by participants of this study.

Issues identified focused on working with service users and carers, and also colleagues at the placement i.e. at the intersections of both direct practice and within the agency. Practice placement experiences highlight the advantages and disadvantages of gender, sexual

orientation and age. One of these prominent issues concerned demonstrating the social work skill of empathy, a key skill for forming relationships with service users and seeing things from their perspective. Some participants expressed some trepidation about empathy, lacking confidence that they always demonstrated this skill effectively.

Simpson (2004) considered how men in FMOs manage potential conflict between the feminine nature of their work and their own gender identity. Participants expressed concern that on occasion it was something they struggled with. Various authors have described how the cultural norms of masculinity prevent men from admitting weakness, and in this case 'weakness' can be ascribed to exhibiting a traditionally feminine skill (Travis, 1992; Wilson, 2003: Chan & Hayashi, 2010). This perspective however, runs contrary to the perceptions of a range of participants of this study. Here Winston (Wales - black African, 41) sums up these fears when working with a qualified female colleague on his placement:

> *"The level of empathy that she showed, I can't match that. Absolutely not, so I think, in that sense, those are some of the challenges that, as a male, I won't be able to match up to - that kind of deep and very feminine or caring empathy that she has".*

Such fears are not unfounded. Bowl (2001) describes how men have learned to operate within a practical framework of logical problem solving that denies emotional intelligence; a prerequisite for empathy. For some men, emotional equates to irrational, and displaying either is to be avoided as they run counter to expectations of masculinity. Interestingly, the findings of the BEM androgyny tests undertaken in this study indicate an awareness and ability to employ empathy was not restricted to any particular type of personality trait. Thompson (1995) however, describes 'emotional restriction' which in some men limits their ability to appreciate a range of emotional circumstances and to express a suitably emotionally informed response, impacting on their ability to demonstrate empathy.

While acknowledging the need to develop their skills for practice placement, participants expressed what they perceived were advantages that their gender afforded. These either centred on MSWSs' ability to 'connect' more effectively with male service users or being a role model for them. For example, Jimmy (Wales - white Irish, 28) identifies the benefits of his ability to bring a male perspective. He has been able to develop a more effective therapeutic relationship with male service users than he conceives they would experience with a female practitioner:

> *"There's so much stuff male service users would talk to me about that they'd never talk to the female social worker, who was my supervisor. Because they're on a lot of medication, they're suffering certain side effects - male personal* [impotence] *problems, like. And that's no problem to talk to me because I'm a fella, so they would chat that out like. But,* [not with] *women, they feel, and*

especially some of them are quite young, like eighteen, nineteen. So, it's embarrassing, but then they come talk to me, just chat over a cup of tea. (Laughs) And, so for male service users, I think, it gives them that avenue to go down that they might just avoid otherwise".

Jimmy outlines the 'equity argument' in social work where a greater gender balance is proposed within the profession to promote equal opportunities for both male and female service users and carers (Christie, 2001b; Gibbons et al. 2007; Pease, 2011; Pringle, 1998). Mahavdevan (2009) asserts that social work should reflect local and wider society, therefore increased numbers of male social workers should be recruited and retained through the provision of targeted campaigns and be provided with increased support in practice. However, as Williams (1995) points out, the inherent risk with such a policy is that males have a tendency to occupy managerial positions quickly which could be further detrimental to gender equality within the profession.

Participants also provided examples of how their gender intersected with practice placement and its environment. Their experiences appear mixed and where Jimmy and Roger perceive advantages in being male, Mark and Jack outline the contrary. Jimmy (Wales - white Irish, 28) relates a conversation with an on-site educator where he considers his gender and the paucity of MSWSs will increase the chance of obtaining his preferred practice placement:

> *"I noticed certain placements I'm interested in do want to have* [an MSWS]. *One individual was saying to me* (…) *when he's planned to take students for placements, he always aims to go for one male and one female. So you've got a circumstance where you've got one male, seven females. Well, the male's going to have a much easier ride of it, getting to that placement than the female".*

There is some evidence that MSWSs do experience an 'easier ride' in practice placement. In Furness's (2011) study entitled *'Gender at Work: Characteristics of 'Failing' Social Work Students'*, an example details a male practice educator who had supervised 188 social work students, failed three white female students and referred one. Even though he identified the issues he had with some male students' practice, they progressed to pass their placements. This illustrates the capacity of males in positions of authority to endorse sexist favouritism.

Roger (Midlands - white British, 33) describes his experiences with hands-on practitioners in his placement, which appeared to have resulted in a positive experience for all concerned:

> *"I'm currently in my local Support Team – there's a real optimism and enthusiasm with the people I'm working with saying: "Do you know what? We could really do with some more males generally in this team, in Social Work teams".*

A contrary view is shared by Mark (Wales – white British, 23), a single male, who illustrates a situation at the intersection between gender and practice placement:

> *"Going back into placement, I wanted to work with domestic violence, and there was a lot of hesitancy around it (…) the suggestion now is for me to go work with women's aid. And, there was actually an opportunity for that, but they I believe refused to take a male student".*

Mark's account reflects the narrative regarding males working with domestic violence. With males being the majority perpetrators of that violence, it can be a problematic area for males (and transient students at that), a point to which I shall return.

6.5.3 Intersection between practice placement and sexual orientation

Returning to a point made earlier, the sexual orientation of an MSWS can also intersect with the practice placement environment. Jack (London - white British, 28) reported that he thought his feminine personality and self-presentation (a perception echoed by the findings of his BEM androgyny test) had affected his working relationships during his most recent practice placement:

> *"I was on a group facilitation of domestic abuse as a placement with uber-heterosexual men who didn't really, some of them I should say, not all of them, didn't really like gay people, didn't understand it, so that was difficult".*

A social work student participant in the study by Hunt et al. (2007) disclosed a range of homophobic responses to her being 'out' on placement. Messinger and Topal (1997) also discuss their experiences of being in a sexual minority as social work students in practice placements, feeling unprepared about disclosing their sexual orientation in such settings. Messinger (2007) identifies the importance of agreeing between student and practice educator how their 'coming out' might impact on their placement experiences. She notes the key in negotiating the intersections of 'coming out' concerns the congruence of student and field educator's perspectives on LGBTQ issues. This includes perceptions of the agency, issues raised in supervision, and the relationship between student and practice educator.

Jack does not comment on the relationship with his practice educator. However, reflecting on Messinger's findings suggests that their relationship perhaps lacked the congruence to support him more effectively in practice placement.

A North American online study points to the important link between teaching and practice learning and implicit programme support for LGBTQ students. They highlight that explicit inclusion of LGBTQ content was associated with a rounded readiness for practice (Craig et al. 2016).

6.6 Preferences for areas to practice at the intersection of gender

Participants identified a wide and varied range of areas in social work which they considered for practice. Forty-seven per cent (n=16) of participants expressed a preference for working with children, perhaps attracted by the technical ability of working with this service user group. This accords with Christie's (2006) assertion that male social workers opt to work in more specialised areas, which are often more technical, and action orientated, which can be seen as a "reform of masculinity" in FMO environments (See Connell, 2005: 171-2).

This is interesting as a majority of participants were aware that working with children was contentious, linked to the dangers inherent in masculinity intersecting with this area of practice. Discourses which concern risk and the presence of men as dangerous are well documented (Cameron, 2001; Furness, 2011; Pringle, 2001; Scourfield, 2003). A majority of participants identified the potential for them to experience pejorative undertones when working with children, expressing anxiety that their motives for doing so might be questioned; themes which are echoed by Hood (2001). Gerry (Northern Ireland - white Northern Irish, 34) summarises participants' contributions on this issue:

> *"I think there's a fear of men working with children. We could discuss whether that's right or wrong, and it's quite obviously wrong* (…) *that sense of, men shying away from getting into social work 'cause people question their motives".*

This goes to the centre of the issue of men in social work, where their motives for entering the profession are speculated upon. Hicks (2001) identifies this speculation regarding gay male practitioners and an assumption that they abuse children. Scourfield and Coffey (2002) argue that heterosexual men are statistically more likely to abuse children. Christie (1998) also asserts that there exists a constructed perception of men's 'potential' to abuse by wider culture and society.

Participants' perceptions were that men are seen as a threat, and this is a determining factor for social work not attracting men into the profession. Indeed, Scourfield (2001: 76) contends that "the discourse of men as a threat is a particularly powerful one" gaining prominence in the media. Pringle (2001) opened the debate on whether male practitioners should be excluded from working with vulnerable children. Gerry contextualises this argument citing the increasingly high-profile media coverage which identify men as the primary perpetrators of abuse:

> *"All the cases that have come up in the media, all the serious case reviews, and the problems we're having with the historical abuse inquiries that, I guess it's coming more to the fore, I think men as a gender are getting the majority of the blame".*

George's (Northern Ireland - white European, 50) perception was that fear of males working with children is inextricably linked to domestic violence. Social work has traditionally been defined as a profession which serves women to counter the violence of men (Orme, 2009), therefore the presence of male social workers in cases of domestic violence can be problematic for a range of reasons. Danny (Scotland – white British, 26) appears to concur, asserting that assigning a male social worker is not always appropriate:

"Some of the women who have been gone through domestic abuse (…) *would act differently to a guy* [a male worker] *in those situations".*

The invisibility of male service users and their avoidance of social work and support projects, particularly concerning domestic violence is well documented (Christie, 2001; Hearn, 2001a; Milner, 1996). Jimmy (Wales - white Irish, 28) illustrates a similar point using his previous experience of working in this field:

> *"Male service users I find, especially in areas of, like, domestic violence and stuff like that are quite invisible I find. I think there could be a bit more done about working with that sort of invisible male, and trying to develop skills, to encourage men, to engage with services a bit more".*

This is a situation which Johal et al. (no date) ascribe somewhat to the invisibility of male workers. Their findings suggest that to engage men as service users, male workers are needed to reduce perceived barriers to services by men. George contends that domestic violence can be more ascribed to culture and geographical location. Here he cites that it is a particular problem in Northern Ireland:

> *"I think there's no hiding the fact that males are the highest category of offenders. Certainly, if you look at the prison population in Northern Ireland, you can see that its 85% male. I believe that it's a cultural problem which is there and* [stems from] *domestic violence (…) I believe that, when you're discussing topics (…) it doesn't matter what anyone says you're still a male. And a lot of perpetrators are from that gender (…) so I believe that is a challenge".*

Quantitative analysis however suggests that the prevalence of domestic violence across the province is in fact marginally lower than that for England and Wales. George's perception may be based on the local situation in Belfast where incidents represent a 30% increase on those in the rest of the province (Police Service of Northern Ireland, 2018). This points to the intersection of 'place', which Scourfield (2006b) asserts produces a local culture where gendered identities and behaviour are often formed and localised.

Boyd (Scotland - white Scottish, 51) highlighted a further barrier to effective working with service users. He spoke of his concerns about the dilemma of demonstrating unconditional positive regard to service users he worked with, in terms of a hug or touching them on the arm

– when appropriate to the situation. Boyd felt this would not be an issue for a female practitioner but felt conscious that this could leave him open to accusations of inappropriate behaviour or even abuse. It appears that in an open discussion during lectures, the topic received a mixed reaction from his fellow students of both genders. Some stated that physical contact with service users should be avoided by males, others questioned whether this was contrary to agency policy and some even questioned the legality of showing support and understanding in this way.

A study by Lynch and Garrett (2010) with child-care social workers identifies that touch is generally avoided due to the fear of false allegations. These findings mirror those of Steckley (2012) concerning residential children's care workers. This points to the wider cultural and societal fears concerning male practitioners, discouraging them from using this basic form of communication and expression of emotional competence (Green, 2017). She nevertheless prescribes touch as fundamental to practice, citing its everyday use in the way we support and comfort one another.

This is an area ripe for further research. There appears to be very limited social work literature discussing touch as a positive, supportive tool for social work, and the current general approach to the subject is 'just use common sense' (Gallace & Spencer, 2010). Green (2017) ascribes the negative and restricted use of touch in social work to a risk-averse society, and to the many violations concerning touch reported in the media and in some care practice. By contrast, for male GPs (and regardless of a patients' gender) touching a patient's forearm/shoulder is widely acknowledged to convey support and concern (Gueguen et al. 2010).

6.7 Perceptions of MSWSs on the culture of social work

6.7.2 Perceptions of the intersection of gender and the culture of social work

McPhail (2004) reflects that although women dominate social work due to their numbers, they do not control the profession, a position with which many authors concur (Gibelman & Schervish, 1993; Kadushin, 1976; Simpson, 2004). Gray and Heinsch (2010) identify that men are overrepresented in both management and in specialist roles. Studies have found that women are less likely to take roles in social work management and are paid less for undertaking comparable roles to men, sometimes due to absence for childbirth and care (Anastas, 2007; Bent-Goodley & Sarnoff, 2008; Davey, 2002; DiPalma & Topper, 2001; Koesk & Krowinski, 2004; Lewis, 2004; Sakamoto et al. 2008).

There was a majority assumption by participants that attaining management status in the profession was an automatic privilege ascribed to their gender and constituted a natural

progression for them. Figueira-McDonough et al. (2001) argue that social work education reproduces gendered oppression in social work, whereas Gibbon et al. (2006) contend that the failure of social work educators to acknowledge structural gender privilege serves to continue the profession's oppression of women. Social work education therefore provides excellent opportunities for MSWSs to critically explore their unearned privilege (Pease, 2011). The response of participants concerning their gender privilege suggests that this remains an area where social work education has still much work to do. Jimmy (Wales - white Irish, 28) commented that:

> *"When it comes to employment, I think it's probably going to, um, be prevalent there* [advantage as a male]. *Because, you know what I mean? You stand out a bit more which means, I think, it makes you a bit more memorable, as opposed to when you've got a quite few female workers".*

Lee (Midlands - white British, 32) appears to have considered the strategic advantage of being a male in social work and one that he is very much open to:

"It's a factor of moving into this profession, the fact that if you can get ahead, if you want to and if you want to develop yourself in this way, it seems quite possible".

George (Northern Ireland - white European, 50) provides a fuller response, where his age results in an interesting intersection concerning perceptions of a more traditional view of females taking a career break when having children. When asked if gender affects promotion in social work he opines:

> *"It may well do but I don't think it should. I would hope that it would be the best person for the job. Now if it, it depends on the age group of the ones who stay in social work, if the ones who are frontline workers are a certain age group where they want to have children or take a career break, therefore you know promotions may come up".*

These narratives, concerning automatic opportunities for promotion into management because of gender, demonstrate the majority view of participants in this study. Their ambition was indeed to board 'the glass elevator' (Lyons et al. 1995; McPhail, 2004; Williams, 1992) within their careers and be promoted into social work management. Participants however, reported varying timescales for this to occur, from as soon as possible to those who wished a more holistic social work experience, nevertheless this was an overriding aim. Simpson (2004) opines that this is a natural reaction to tensions over re-establishing their masculinity within a FMO, what McLean (2003) identifies as a distancing or separating strategy, or one that Christie (2008) terms as 'vertical separation' seeking to resolve such tensions.

This cannot of course be extrapolated for all male practitioners or MSWSs. Indeed, this was not an ambition shared by older participants who appear to want to avoid boarding the glass elevator of promotion. George and Boyd voiced a common dissent, where age has provided a different perspective:

George (Northern Ireland – white European, 50)

"I really hope to be a frontline worker, I've been in management before (shakes his head), *I mean I'm 50 now and hope to work until I'm at least 70"*.

Boyd (Scotland – white Scottish, 51)

"I have managed over things in the past, managing negotiating services and outreach work like, which is fine, but managing people's just not my thing now, you know?"

Mature participants expressed more structured ideas concerning their ultimate field of practice than younger participants who appeared more open to a range of social work experience. They were mindful of considerations such as, using contemporary communication, an ability to effectively relate to their client group and other factors concerning their age and the length of their remaining career. George frames these in his observation:

"You know because and I think and people might say age and all that, but you have to be practical, you know. If you're not in the same social group, then you have to fit in [to areas of practice] (…) *and so I believe that there'll be certain areas* (…) *where I think I wouldn't be best* [working]. *So, I think I would choose my area more and probably will be more something that would be more therapeutic, would be at a slower pace, I just think that would suit me better. And I'm not trying to duck work I think it's just that I like to be practical"*.

A further issue for male practitioners is the perceived need for men to be role models for male service users. The role model argument has been widely discussed within the literature and was a subject, which participants contributed to. Many authors suggest that the perspectives of their gender are beneficial at the intersections between male service users and the profession (Christie, 1998; Hicks, 2001; Warming, 2005). The benefits outlined include an expectation that male social workers can bridge the gap between absent fathers and counter negative male influences (Christie, 2001b). Mark (Wales - white British, 23) summarises the view of many participants by saying:

"I think they [male social workers] *bring in a little tenacity. I think some service users appreciate the option, and perhaps, men would respond a lot better to having them with them, and I think that's similar actually for kids as well. I think they might be more receptive to a male role model, you know"*.

However, as Hicks (2001) points out, this perception neglects to recognise reproduction of the less desirable aspects of masculinity consistent with further engraining gender stereotypes and gender roles, which ultimately do not promote gender equality. Pease (2011) contends that a lack of strategy to challenge gender issues will result in reproducing traditional forms of masculinity, which may be detrimental to being a role model. The role model argument has been critiqued for its inability to address issues of power and diversity in men's lives (Cameron, 2001; Connell, 2005; Pease, 2007). McLean (2003) suggests that this situation continues to restrict opportunities for career progression for women.

6.7.3 Perceptions of the intersection of sexual orientation and the culture of social work

At the intersection of sexual orientation and the culture of social work, contrasting perceptions were voiced by participants. Lee (Midlands - white British, 32), a heterosexual MSWS identifies the anti-discriminatory stance inherent in social work values, but not necessarily evident in other work settings:

> *"People seem to be more open to sharing sexual orientation within this profession and there must be some sort of security attached to that* (…) *certainly from the environments that I have worked in, they have been able to be open about who they are in general and not fear being ostracised - unlike say a motor mechanic would be".*

Lee observes multiple masculinities in operation and suggests that their presentation can be quite different when intersecting in different working environments. He identifies how different the situation might be for an LBGTQ person in a working environment seen as more masculine. This view accords somewhat with Christie's (2008: 21) that the location of social work is a profession "requiring feminine characteristics". Therefore, those displaying such characteristics are more likely to be concordant with the environment of the profession, which does not 'other' females, but embraces such characteristics (Lupton, 2000).

From the outside looking in can certainly provide a different perspective to one's own experience. Gerry (Northern Ireland – Northern Irish, 34) identifies discrimination in a social work environment due to his sexual orientation. Cosis-Brown and Cocker (2011) observe that public attitudes toward LBGTQ people have not necessarily kept pace with changes in legislation and equal opportunities. As a gay man, Gerry talked about negative and discriminatory undertones concerning his sexuality which he experienced while at his most recent practice placement:

> *"You see people discriminating, yeah, and treating you differently, even if they don't realize it, so you get that sense of not only injustice, but you get that sense*

of, um, service users and clients from a minority group, and how they're treated by others, you know, the types of discrimination are they being subjected to".

Gerry identified this as a valuable, albeit regrettable, learning experience, which he now uses to inform his practice with vulnerable people. This has also been my experience and provides very different perspectives on oppression and discrimination, perspectives that I too have used to inform my practice. Messinger (2004) found that 87% of lesbian and gay participants disclosed issues in practice placement, as a result of being open about their sexual orientation. Indeed, Chinell (2011) identifies that this is an area where there is a paucity of social work literature.

These two accounts, one a perception of gay men in social work settings and the other from a gay man's experience within a social work setting, illustrate how the intersections of sexual orientation and being male, can provide a very different meaning to a disposition, depending on one's own sexual orientation.

6.7.4 Perceptions of the intersection of ethnicity, faith and social work

Some participants chose to speak about their experiences concerning their race and culture and how these factors intersect with social work practice. Leo (Southern England - black African, 31) spoke of the pride his family have in him having chosen a career in social work. Despite this, he describes an ethical dilemma that represents a conflict between his cultural values and the ethical values of the social work profession:

> *"Because of the strong religious belief we have about serving and helping people they are really sort of proud in the career path that I've chosen. However, there is also a bit of a battle in terms of the ethics of my faith and some of the ethics of the job. So, for example, if I was placed into a position of supporting a service user to have an abortion that would be a difficult to position for me. So as much as they are proud about what I do there is conflict in terms of the practicalities of what I can and can't do".*

Leo professes to be a strict follower of the Christian faith and there exists a considerable amount of common ground between Christianity and social work (Payne, 2005). One of the areas in which there is divergence is on the issue of abortion. For social work this is encompassed under the right to self-determination of the mother (BASW, 2014; HCPC, 2017), but for Christianity, it is an issue of life or death of the child (Anderson, 1977; Ekland-Olson, 2012), where the sanctity of life for an unborn baby is paramount (Geisler, 1989; May, 2000; Stott, 1999). Neagoe (2013) states that although self-determination remains a key value for Christianity, it is the responsibility of the service user and not the practitioner to make such decisions.

Such situations can highlight the potentially problematic relationship between personal and professional ethics.

SUMMARY

This chapter has used an intersectional framework of analysis to contextualise and evaluate themes of the study.

A primary theme was that of the operation of sexual orientation and social work. Denato et al. (2016) identify that opportunities to give voice to the presence of intersecting identities can empower LBGTQ social work students who can otherwise feel disempowered due to their gender and sexual and identity.

Andersen (2005) and Murphy et al. (2009) suggest that sexuality does not occupy the same space as intersections of race, class and gender. The former is identified as a political/structural issue while the latter factors are concerned with social and cultural issues. Schilt (2008) identifies however, that gay men and lesbians who have non-normative gender presentations, who are working-class, and/or who are racial/ethnic minorities, are often those who end up being most excluded from legitimate avenues of employment. Analysis in this chapter suggests that sexual orientation does intersect with factors, such as, gender, age, etc., supporting Schilt's assertion. An interesting perspective was that of Thomas and his projection of hyper-masculinity which belies his sexual orientation.

The paradox of the positive perception's participants had as applicants and social work student freshers, compared to the reality of their experience in the lecture room and in practice placement, appears marked.

In particular, the analysis brought to the fore how much some participants felt like 'a fish out of water' in the feminised, feminist world of social work education and practice. It demonstrates how some participants clung to the rational, technical aspects of social work learning and practice and highlights how some struggled with the whole concept, which is largely alien to their socialisation where men hold the power in society. This sudden gear-change may in part account for the low numbers of MSWSs successfully completing their studies.

What the analysis also foreground is participants discomfort at facing issues of male violence, e.g., domestic violence, sexual abuse, etc., which may not be resolved by the apparent genderless way in which social work education intersects with its students. It is clear from participant's narratives that broadly their masculinities remain unchallenged and unprepared to challenge the oppression of women. This reverberates with the observations by Christie (2001), Pease, (2011) and to some extent Cree (2000) who identify that the challenge for men

is to be active in challenging power inequalities within the profession and surrender the power and privileges associated with their gender.

Where appropriate, I have sought to include reflexivity into the discussion within the chapter. Christoffersen (2017) identifies that as a researcher, it is important to consider one's own social positioning, values, assumptions and experiences to provide further context to data analysis.

The following chapter provides further analysis and discussion of the key and associated findings identified in the Bourdieusian and Intersectional analysis offered in chapters five and six.

CHAPTER SEVEN - DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will critically discuss the analysis drawn from the two previous chapters. It highlights both similarity and divergence in regard to the perceptions of MSWSs. The primary aim of the study is revisited to demonstrate how the chosen methods were determined, together with the aims and objectives of the study and an analysis of how these are addressed. To enable this, the following five questions will also be given attention: 1. what does the data mean, and does it answer the research question? 2. Are there any common trends or differences drawn from the different regions of the United Kingdom in terms of the perceptions of MSWSs? 3. How can the research be validated to be authentic? 4. How are the findings of this study placed in terms of existing research into the sparsity of male social workers?

As highlighted in Chapter two, there are relatively few studies which have researched the perceptions of MSWSs and their experiences while qualifying. Of those undertaken, with the exception of Schaub's (2017) study, they have not theorised their findings. This research adds to the literature by exploring the perceptions of MSWSs and by applying a novel theoretical framework to its findings.

The chapter begins by examining the interpretation of the underlying application of theory to the themes. These are evaluated against the stated aims of the study which provides a basis for discussion in the chapter, with a particular focus on the literature chosen in Chapter two. This chapter will then conclude with a reflection on the appropriateness of the original research question and the suitability of the methods and methodology of undertaking this research, discussing decisions which might have been determined differently.

As outlined in chapter one, the primary aim of this study was to garner the perceptions of male social work students who were engaged on a programme of qualifying studying within the UK and to identify any barriers, which may exist for males entering the profession.

7.1 Reviewing the context

A majority of participants recognised a tension between their gender and being a social worker. Their responses in most cases mirrored those themes discussed within the literature and outlined in Chapter two. Some recognised the suspicion with which they might be eyed and their motivations for working largely with women and children would be called into question as sexual predators (Froschl, 2002; Pringle, 2001; Robb, 2010). Others observed that showing empathy and compassion, an essential skill, by using appropriate touching, would be out-of-bounds for them and refrain from using this form of communication (Buschmeyer, 2013; Evans, 2002; Harding et al. 2008; Nentwich et al. 2013; Sargent, 2005).

Some participants assumed that by choosing to become a social worker, they would automatically be perceived and labelled as gay (Christie, 2006; Hicks, 2001). Generally, participants were quite pragmatic about this, while identifying that sexual orientation can be more fluid than is perhaps presently commonly accepted by mainstream society.

Participants also felt that the presence of their gender within the profession could also be of benefit (Pease, 2011) and could also accord them swifter opportunities for progression (Davey, 2002; Kullberg, 2012; McPhail, 2004; Pease, 2011; Williams, 1992).

These themes demonstrated both negative and positive, subtle and overt perceptions attributed to being male in social work. Examples were used to highlight actions and reactions to MSWSs at different intersections in their learning journey, and the capital of gender in different fields where capital is either accrued or diminished. Indeed, as Crabtree and Parker (2014: 9) suggest, MSWSs can be found "vibrating between positions of marginalisation and privilege".

Participants demonstrated that HEIs and practice placements were not always welcoming environments for MSWSs. In some cases they recognised feelings of isolation and exclusion. This is resonant with studies of male nursing students (Stott, 2004; 2007), and Schaub's (2017) contribution concerning MSWSs attrition from social work programmes. These are environments where males do not feel the normative assumptions of privilege attributed to their gender and may also identify as being oppressed (Hyde & Deal, 2003).

The discussion now moves to critically evaluate the findings of the study against the theory identified in Chapters seven and eight, to enable a greater depth of analysis.

7.2. Perceptions and experiences of MSWSs on academic programmes

In the academe, Ross (2007: 492) highlights the importance of giving students an opportunity to be subject to the "living curriculum that we engage in as educators and students when grappling with differences between us". Within their accounts, participants expressed discomfort due to their gender when considering topics central to social work practice, such as, domestic violence or working with children, and where their ability to demonstrate social work skills such as, empathy, were called into question. In the classroom, many participants felt a lack of power and privilege, or cultural capital usually attributed to their gender. Participants identified that their female counterparts had no such difficulties or barriers, and the affinity linking social work with females has been discussed by other scholars (Christie, 1998; Scourfield, 2001c).

They were sometimes identified as symbols of oppression, as social work can be seen as a reaction their gender, for example, male violence or sexual abuse (Christie, 2001; Hyde &

Deal, 2003). As Hearn (2001b: 67) observes; "men remain the specialists in the doing of violence". Hyde and Deal (2003) elude to the heightened discomfort of MSWSs in such circumstances.

It was expression of thoughts and feelings concerning these subjects that participants found particularly challenging. Consequently, in the classroom environment participants felt disempowered, unable speak freely and cited examples of self-censorship, often feeling silenced due to concerns they might be seen as sexist (Messner, 2000). This led to a degree of isolation within their respective student cohorts.

The responses employed under such circumstances involved seeking safety in numbers, grouping together with the other MSWSs, or developing a closer bond with a select few female students, who they would seek to be nurtured by (Samuel, 2013). These responses align with a desire to increase individual capital by changing the nature of the field of operation, or indeed creating an alternative field of masculinity (Bourdieu, 2002a).

From observations across all participating HEIs, it was evident that during discussions on domestic violence or men as service users, heterosexuality was eluded to as the legitimate and natural social order. Such heteronormativity can mean that LBGTQ students are underrepresented, and it is to their experiences I now turn.

Those who were a minority within a minority, gay participants (21%, n=7), generally reported experiences commensurate with their straight male counterparts within learning spaces. Studies by Dentato et al. (2006) and Kulkin et al. (2009) suggest that homophobia is evident in social work education and most commonly exhibited by MSWSs, those exhibiting a high level of religiosity, or those coming from remote communities. One gay participant described being subject to a form of oppression by some of his fellow students, where he was described as 'dirty' by a small number of African female students, citing that their firmly held religious views had informed their perspective of homosexuality as morally and inherently wrong (Aymer & Patni, 2011).

Levy (2014) asserts that those with religious belief are frequently mentioned in the literature as being less accepting of LGBTQ people, as they tend to be highly spiritual, with religion at the forefront of every aspect of their lives. Religiosity has been found by previous studies to be a predictor of anti-gay bias (Finlay & Walther, 2003; Schulte & Battle, 2004; Whitley, 2009). Commentators have long established the origins of social work as rooted in the practice of Christian charity, which mirrors the value base of many religions (Burnham, 2012; Gray, 2008; Payne, 2005). However, it should also be noted that historically social work has viewed homosexuality as a pathology (Jeyasingham, 2008).

Here, the participant described circumstances where at the intersection of religion and sexuality he experienced oppression, a theme identified in other studies (Bernard et al. 2011; Chonody et al. 2013b). This appears to add to Schilt's (2008) argument, that sexual orientation can be seen as equal to other single categories in intersectionality, such as, race, class and gender, which can be subject to oppression.

The incident resulted in the participant feeling isolated within a cohort of students training for a profession which demands application of anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice. He stated that at an institutional level, this was not addressed (Chinell, 2011; Dentato et al. 2016), however, this assumes that academics were aware of this event and this was not confirmed. The study by Craig et al. (2017) however asserts that LBGTQ social work students do desire the support of the faculty in such matters, citing modelling and mentoring to be the most effective methods used.

In this study, those who professed to have religious faith were from an ethnic minority, a group much more likely to face oppression from others themselves (Aymer & Patni, 2011). Melville-Wiseman (2013) addresses a dichotomy between religion and sexuality in social work education. Her article identifies a schism between faith-based views that homosexuality is sinful, and anyone thinking that homosexuality *is* sinful is not suitable to be a social worker. Both perspectives are at odds with the core values of anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory approaches of social work (BASW, 2014), and the legislation which supports these approaches (Equality Act 2010). Practice should emulate these core values and a starting point for this should be an examination of personal values before embarking on social work training (Banks, 2006).

Such a pejorative attitude was surprising to gay participants of this study. They had assumed that a social work programme would not include oppressive attitudes, which some cited as motivation for embarking on training and a career in social work. This mirrors a finding in Chinell's (2011) study of LGBTQ social work students in Canada.

Conversely, participants expressed that they felt more confident in contributing to the debate when more prescribed areas of social work such as, law and social policy were under consideration. This mirrors the findings of the study of social work students' gender in operation within the classroom by Hyde and Deal (2003). Such topics align with social work as a 'rational, technical' project, which has been discussed by various authors (Kamphorst et al. 2015; Leman & Mann, 1999; Orme, 2009) as an expression of masculinity (Christie, 1998; Orme, 2009; Perry & Cree, 2003; Pringle, 1995). Some also had a sense of being privileged with greater cultural capital within the classroom by being favoured by academics which they

thought would be due to the dearth of MSWSs generally (Giesler, 2013; Heikes, 1992; Williams, 1995), and therefore starkly evident within learning spaces.

7.2.2 Perceptions and experiences of MSWSs on practice placement

When engaged on practice placement, participants thought there was a need to be more circumspect in their dealings with service users. Many participants thought that they were likely to be the subject of allegations of inappropriate behaviour from female service users. Others cited that they felt inhibited in not feeling empowered to use touch to comfort or affirm, a subject of broad discussion within the literature of the caring professions (Green, 2017; Lynch & Garrett, 2010; Pringle, 2001; Sargent, 2001; Skelton, 1994; Steckley, 2012), which could impact negatively on their professional relationships with service users. Participants envisaged that they would be viewed as less approachable than their female counterparts, who they perceived to be relatively free of such concerns.

Managing relationships with multiple family members, especially female victims of negative male behaviour, was identified as especially problematic by participants. It was felt that any capital attached to being male was diminished in such circumstances, and time constraints on practice meant little opportunity to explore these negative effects on each family member or to begin to develop relationships, which could lead to more positive perceptions of men.

Most participants, however, stated that their masculinity was favoured in more overt ways and a benefit they could bring to practice itself was the masculine presence. Some cited examples where female colleagues had requested their additional presence in offices or on visits, providing an amount of protection into potentially hostile situations where service users might be confrontational, where they would "save the day" (Christie, 2006:400). Attributes, such as, assertiveness, toughness, dominance and ultimately aggression are all aligned with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005; Dionisi, 2014; Scott-Samuel et al. 2009). Such attributes are found in Christie's (2001a) 'man of action' discourse. This employs the capital inherent in the symbolic violence of hegemonic masculinity at intersections where female colleagues were at risk of being oppressed or subject to physical violence.

Although a majority of participants felt that their gender had a default association with masculinity and this would be an advantage in some practice situations, they also professed to the softer or more gentlemanly, reflective persona identified in Christie's (2001a) discourse. This was echoed in the results of the majority of BEM androgyny tests, which identified participants as having mostly androgynous personality traits. However, none of the participants reported a negative relationship with their male identity and all appeared comfortable with their own particular masculine identity, congruent with the findings on a study of masculinity by Coles (2009).

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Hicks (2001) asserts that external perceptions of male social workers, particularly in children's services associate them with being 'soft', 'nice', 'unusual', or even 'gay', but not being 'real' men. Indeed, Cree (2001) observes that being a male social worker carries with it the assumption of being gay. Participants rejected stereotypes associated with having an effeminate persona with being gay. Many participants understood non-adherence or non-presentation of hegemonic forms of masculinity to be an asset for males entering social work, and in many cases attributed social and cultural capital to their practice by not presenting as overly macho.

Within the literature (Cree, 2000, 2001) there are reports that male social work practitioners are eyed with suspicion, their motives called into question for entering a profession where the majority of practice concerns females and children. This also extends to male service users, where Scourfield and Coffey (2002: 323) report that, "pejorative discourses of client masculinity are in fact dominant in childcare teams". The perspectives attached to these suspicions are widely discussed in Chapter two. Participants generally reported no such issues during practice placement. They spoke about negotiating relationships with practice and field-based educators, but broadly felt welcomed, where a male dynamic within the team would be of benefit to both practitioners and service users. There were however two exceptions to this.

The first, where a participant was refused a placement at a safe house for female victims of domestic abuse, a decision based upon gender alone, denying the student the opportunity of learning and new ways of communicating (Cree, 2001; Schaub, 2017). Although Pringle (2001) highlights the debate on whether male social workers should be restricted from practising with women and children, the demands of social work practice make home visits and a majority of practice with women and children inevitable (Christie, 1998; Ferguson, 2011; Scourfield, 2001a).

The other was an openly gay participant working with a group of male perpetrators of domestic violence. Here, vocalised assumptions such as, "you don't have children, how would you know?" left him feeling the victim of heterosexism. Discriminatory attitudes were identified to a much greater extent by the majority of LGBTQ participants in Messinger's (2004) study, following her negative experiences of being lesbian during practice placement, where one of the first questions she was asked was, 'are you married?' (Messinger & Topal, 1997). Such expressions of diminished capital in fields, mainly concerning gender and/or sexual orientation, were common for participants where the violence of men was the focus.

It is important to be aware that upon qualifying, MSWSs are more likely to advance into positions of power and board the 'glass elevator' into management more quickly than their

female counterparts (Pease, 2011; Williams, 1992). It would not be unreasonable to assert that one motivation for male social workers doing so, would be to avoid practice situations where they describe being most uncomfortable; namely domestic violence.

In contrast to the published literature concerning the pejorative experiences of ethnic minority social work students in different social work learning environments (Bernard et al. 2011; Hussein et al. 2008; Moriarty et al. 2009), ethnic minority participants of this study did not identify any such negative experiences due to their ethnicity whilst on practice placement. Many in fact stated they felt it an advantage, as assumptions had been made by others that they possessed increased cultural competence (Furness, 2003; Penkeith, 2000) and therefore capital, in terms of an increased awareness of the family as a unit, formed from their own habitus. Ironically however, Asian participants doubted they would have the opportunity to draw on this capital at intersections of practice with those from similar ethnic backgrounds. They have cited that Asian families tend to deal with any issues which might require social work input within their own family units.

7.3 Participants' views on why male social workers matter

In 1965 John Lawrence echoed the sentiments of Dame Eileen Younghusband in putting forward a case for an increase of male social workers within the profession. According to Pease (2011), the rationale for doing so falls into three main arguments. These have been grouped as: the role model argument; the gender diversity argument; and the professional status and prestige argument. Participants of this study were keen to put forward their views of the benefits of having male social workers in practice, all of which inform these arguments.

- *The role model argument*

Participants were aware of the potential cultural and symbolic capital they held as a result of their gender, and how this might be of benefit in practice. Some participants had been inspired by male role models which had formed part of their own habitus wanting to emulate this in their social work practice. Similar observations have made by other scholars (Christie, 1998; Hicks, 2001; Warming, 2005), who highlight the need for boys and young males to have the opportunity to associate and connect with male social workers who act as role models to them.

This argument has however been critiqued by many authors (Cameron, 2001; Connell, 1995, Pease, 2007; Pease, 2011), citing a misconception that masculinity is somehow transmitted by males to younger males, failing to address issues of power and difference. Participants highlighted the wider opportunity of role modelling positive behaviour as a male for dysfunctional families, particularly where male partners were absent, transient or abusive.

What has been largely unaddressed in the social work literature is evidence that young service users themselves consider the gender of workers is important when providing them with support. The study by Robb et al. (2015) contributes to this literature and found that personal qualities, such as, respect, trust, consistency, care and commitment, were more important to young male service users than the gender of those working with them. What was identified was the importance of the gender of workers in terms of shared experiences; ethnicity and/or social background helped to develop effective working relationships, with the opportunity to model more positive forms of masculinity.

Similar perceptions were expressed by participants of this study, and not necessarily attributed to gender. A need for (minority) groups to have social work practitioners with similar backgrounds and life experience working with them was seen as a definite advantage. The International Federation of Social Work (2014) broadly concurs with this, citing the benefits to practice of indigenous knowledge. This could be particularly useful in engaging those groups who are difficult to reach in social work practice, such as, the travelling community. Such possibilities might provide changes in perceptions of social work generally and from those it seeks to serve.

When considering how to practice as a male social worker, Williams (1995) asserts that reproducing stereotypical male roles does little to challenge male hegemony of the profession and is inconsistent with gender equality. Hicks (2001) asserts however, that male social workers are ideally placed to challenge such reproductions. Participants were keen to demonstrate that non-violence was the norm of their gender, and those who were married identified the capital inherent in disclosing that they had a positive family life in their practice. Similarly, Hicks (2001) used the capital of his sexual orientation to decry male violence which enhanced his working relationship. Where male service users are present at social work interventions, male practitioners have the opportunity to interact with them to confront any derogatory attitudes they may have about females, where female social workers might have a lesser impact.

- *The gender diversity argument*

Many scholars assert that there should be a greater balance of gender within the profession to ensure that men and women's interests are met (Christie, 2001a; Gibbons et al. 2007, Pease, 2011; Pringle, 1998). It is also contended that social work should reflect the wider society it serves (IFSW, 2014; Mahadevan, 2009). Participants of this study supported greater gender diversity within the profession. While recognising that different sections of society might relate better to each other than 'outsiders', this largely disregards one of the fundamental

skills required in social work; empathy. A truly skilled practitioner will be able to relate to individuals and families across all sections of society.

Williams (1995) posits that greater gender balance equals greater balance of power. Pease (2011: 411) however asserts that, in and of itself, gender diversity "is not likely to break down traditional gender roles and will not challenge gender hierarchy in [social work]". Male practitioners are uniquely placed to embody a different masculinity, one which is always mindful of power imbalances and rooted in equality. By modelling behaviours that run counter to hegemonic masculinity, there is more likely to be a shift in the power dynamic between the genders.

A majority of study participants, however, voiced their desire to progress as opportunities allowed to enter management. Such a perspective does not illustrate a willingness to model new behaviours to promote greater gender balance in social work, but rather maintain the current dominance of male practitioners (Cross & Bagilhole, 2002; Simpson, 2004).

- *The professional status and prestige argument*

Historically social work as a FMO has proved problematic in gaining full professional status (Pease, 2011; Williams, 1995), with many authors arguing that this is a significant reason why social work is not regarded more highly (Christie, 2001a; Harlow, 2004; Lewis, 2004).

The theme of professional status was addressed by participants of this study, but without attributing this to gender. They commented that the term 'worker', within the title of 'social worker', does not convey sufficient professionalism. Currently the title of 'social worker' is protected by law; only those who have graduated from a qualifying programme and who are registered with one of the profession's UK regulatory councils are entitled to use the title (Care Standards Act 2000). It appears that indications of social or cultural capital concordant with the statutory responsibilities entrusted to social work is absent from its title. Any review of the title of 'social worker' that reflects this observation could result in redefining the status of the role in context to other roles in health and social care. Such a name change may result in increased social and cultural capital for both practitioners and the profession.

The findings from this study suggest that any current lack of prestige or status within the profession is not necessarily concerned with the number of males practicing within it, it appears to be a broader issue of professional presentation. This has wider connotations across intersections of society on how the profession is perceived. For example, the media portrays social workers as either spiteful or inept (Jones, 2012), part of the "sustained nature of the negative media images of social work that have been commonplace" (Munro, 2011: 122).

Like many occupations concerned with social care, social work continues to be associated with low pay and conditions (Simpson, 2009). Motivations to enter the profession cannot be economic, but altruistic, emotional labour traditionally associated with women (Fiore & Facchini, 2013). Male social work practitioners appear to derive other benefits due to patriarchal assumptions attributed to their gender and professional status. The study by Dionisi (2014), for example, identifies that co-workers and managers afforded males a greater degree of autonomy in practice than females. Such a dynamic illustrates that social work is far from exempt from greater cultural and structural influences, which can be oppressive to females. Male practitioners are uniquely placed to challenge and undermine these oppressive influences, enacting non-hegemonic masculinities as defined by Connell (2003).

The requirement of a degree level qualification for social work, and the inevitable financial debt accrued as a result, no doubt results in fragile financial situations for any student. This was a primary theme of the study, where family circumstances and societal expectations to financially support their immediate families exerted significant influence. The majority of MSWSs highlighting this were enrolled on 'Step-Up to Social Work' programmes, which is funded and attracts a bursary to cover fees and living expenses. Most identified that without this financial incentive the profession would have remained closed to them. The realities of student funding under normal circumstances appears juxtaposed to the prevailing discourse in favour of increasing the number of male practitioners, a situation which may increase salaries and employment conditions overall (Christie, 2001a, Lawrence, 1965; Lewis, 2004).

While some of the themes identified in this study fit the three arguments highlighted by Pease (2011), discussed above, it could well be asserted that the arguments themselves are reminiscent of larger patriarchal ideals. These arguments therefore contend that males as role models are intrinsically different or better than females. Simply working toward greater gender diversity in the profession, as a suitable response to challenge and break down traditional gender roles and hierarchies in social work is somewhat questionable. There also appears to be a lack of awareness that the social constructs of professional status and prestige can serve to further entrench hegemonic masculinity. What Pringle (2001: 46) identifies however, is that men should have a significant presence in social work as they "have a particular responsibility to challenge those relations of power from which (to lesser or greater extents) they benefit".

7.4 Motivations of males to enter the profession across intersections of diversity

Against a backdrop of the poor image of social work projected by the media, low status and pay, and compared with the length of training, a shrinking bursary, and the amount of student debt incurred as a result, it would appear that anyone wishing to enter into social work must have significant motivations for doing so (Furness, 2007).

Such motivations have been subject to longstanding speculation. Many scholars (Binnie & Stewart, 2005; Christie, 1998; Christie & Kruk, 1998; Osteen, 2011; Parker & Merrylees, 2002; Strevens et al. 2010) identify that motivations for social work students to enter the profession can often be attributed to their personal identity, values and life experiences. This is true of the study participants and the motivations they identified. Most participants cited a general motivator was to be a positive role model to young males in their practice, and many felt that their gender positioned them favourably. This mirrors the main thrust of the role model argument structured by Pease (2011) and was not an unexpected response from participants.

Analysis of the themes demonstrates that their own motivations were based upon three main prime motivators. It cannot be claimed that these motivators are unique to MSWSs, but the following analysis contributes to the discourse in the literature and narrative which address a desire to attract more males into social work.

All participants cited one of three following factors as their core, or prime motivation to enter the profession. For clarity of discussion, I will attribute terms to these motivators of 'succeeders', 'achievers' and 'accomplishers'. 'Succeeders' and 'achievers' can be seen to have been inspired by influential people in their lives, or role models. The first prime motivator that of 'succeeder', stems from participants having a close family member in the public service, a significant proportion working in health and social care. For example, a sister might be nurse, their mother a psychiatrist, father a surgeon, etc., and other examples included close family members working as teachers or teaching assistants. In many of these accounts, the dedication of family members to their respective professions, above and beyond their contracted hours, was highlighted and attributed as being a vocation for them. Such examples of dedication for the benefit of others have served as inspiration for 'succeeders'.

'Succeeders' family members have experienced further or higher education to enable them to pursue their careers in public service, suggesting that these participants have developed in a climate of cultural capital attached to public service. The habitus and perhaps middle-class familial influences of 'succeeders' is conducive to and can be attributed to their motivation to enter social work, and conveys normalised attitudes of higher education and dedication to a career in helping others. 'Succeeders' reported that support with academic work was readily found within their family unit and that they generally had no concerns at attaining a passing grade in their academic. Foregrounded was the reality that these relatively privileged participants had been able to enter into these new environments with the assistance of their families.

Reponses of 'succeeders' outlines the need to take a broader view within social work and reflect upon social structures and the need to motivate change within them. They were

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fortunate in being absorbed in the habitus and cultural capital, which nurtured a deep awareness of welfare and collective action. Much of their motivation to enter the profession appeared rooted in socialist-collective perspectives, which Payne (1996) defines as an approach to social work practice.

The second prime motivator which I ascribe to the term 'achievers' can be attributed to turbulent familial experiences, resulting in social work intervention previously in their lives, experienced either positively or negatively. The outcome of these experiences is a desire to emulate or improve the social work practice they had been subject to. The doxa and habitus of 'achievers' are very different from that of 'succeeders'. 'Achievers' reported challenging formative years, where the majority had experienced broken or chaotic family structures, concordant with findings of Parker and Merrylees (2002). 'Achievers' were more likely to have family members in the trades, or more manual occupations; father a bricklayer, mother a clerical assistant, brother a painter and decorator, etcetera.

'Achievers' generally entered into higher education at a more mature age than 'succeeders'. Like 'succeeders', the vast majority had previous work experience in a health and social care related job, but 'achievers' generally had greater first-hand experience in unqualified roles than their 'succeeder' counterparts. Moreover, 'achievers' reported that generally they were the first in their family to enter university, having gained entry via further education by completing an access course in health and social care related programmes. Although in many cases 'achievers' reported receiving encouragement and emotional support from their families, they had no natural assistance or privilege from their families and were therefore somewhat isolated in achieving their career ambition.

'Achievers' lacked the social and cultural capital of 'succeeders' in terms of lacking a habitus grounded in the value of further and higher education. They reported seeking an increased level of academic and pastoral support from their student peers and their HEI to assist their academic studies, in which they wanted to attain good grades.

Generally, the two distinct motivators of 'succeeders' and 'achievers' identified, intersect with differences in social class. Participants whose background was grounded in the attributes of the 'middle-class' ('succeeders'), in which stable professional careers and undergraduate study were the norm, were more situated to accumulate and retain social and cultural capital than 'achievers'. The habitus of 'succeeders' was imbued with the values of public service where engaging in higher education as a means to enter a profession was normalised.

This was very different to the experiences reported by 'achievers', who freely identified as 'working-class'. Their familial experience or habitus was not grounded in a familiarity of higher education or the professions, largely lacking cultural capital as a result of their background.

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'Achievers' made very definite attempts to accrue social capital, evident by developing support and peer networks within the academe, while actively striving for good grades in academic assignments to gain cultural capital. However, their lower-class backgrounds heightened the financial implications of tuition fees and supporting themselves during study. The approach to social work practice by 'achievers' is grounded in assisting individuals to achieve personal development and power over their situations, very much akin to their own personal experience, and linked to the 'individualist reformist' approach identified by Payne (1996).

Although an analysis of the motivations of females to enter the profession could well elicit similar findings, this analysis of motivations provided by role models to enter into the profession, can be seen to broaden the role model argument developed by Pease (2011). Such an analysis can locate the motivations of potential male practitioners firmly within the literature and add different perspectives to the role model argument concerning male service users.

A third prime motivator concerned a change in career, from what were perceived by participants as unrewarding occupations. Here I term these participants as 'accomplishers'. Previously they had careers in banking, accountancy and administration, etc., but found their financial inducements alone unrewarding, identifying the need for increased meaning and personal satisfaction in their work. For some 'accomplishers' this had coincided with their redundancy from previous careers, due to eventual effects of the 2008 financial crisis. For 'accomplishers', this had been the catalyst they needed to revaluate their future and seek a challenging, personally rewarding and ultimately more stable career. The desire to change career by 'accomplishers', supports findings within the study by Furness (2007). Where findings differ was not the attraction of monetary capital, many 'accomplishers' had achieved this in their former careers, but instead the accumulation of social capital perceived to be attached to the profession and their altruism. They were also more likely to be postgraduates and could therefore enrol on fast-track post-graduate routes such as, 'Step-Up', with tuition fees paid, and a living wage paid while undertaking social work training.

At least two of the four ethnic minority participants can be identified as 'accomplishers'. They cited a desire to change career for the reasons stated above, however, the participant from an Asian background reported that the reaction of his family, particularly his parents, was openly hostile. By his choice of social work as career, they were concerned that he would lack the economic capital to support his wife and children.

7.5 The qualities and assets MSWSs bring to social work

According to Gillingham (2006), male practitioners should comprise the social work workforce, as they have the opportunity to model alternative or different masculinities than the hegemonic

norm. A majority of participants were certain that social work practice would benefit from the different perspectives that male social workers bring. Williams (1993, 1995) identifies the speculation of a dissonance between male practitioners' personal and professional identities. Participants identified that in many ways their identity was incongruent with prevailing hegemonic masculinity, which they appeared to avoid (Simpson, 2009), recognising that social work is discordant with this accepted view of male ego/masculinity. This presents a challenge to traditional models of masculinity and speaks to the discourse on multiple masculinities envisioned by Connell (2005).

To identify this difference, a section of the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews enquired into the personality traits and sexual orientation of participants. These enquiries were set against Christie's (2001) discourse on the personality traits of male social work practitioners, perceived as aligning along a spectrum from heroic man of action, protector and champion of service users and female colleagues, to that of a quiet, reflective practitioner, who deeply considers responses to any given practice situation.

Although most study participants associated themselves with being masculine, the data from the BEM androgyny tests (please see Table 8, on page 270), demonstrates a difference between their self-image and the test results.

Although many did not hold with the associated attributes of hegemonic masculinity, such as, assertiveness, dominance and toughness, they did associate themselves with having a masculine persona. Whilst seeing themselves as the equal to their female colleagues, a majority recognised they hold cultural and social capital within the profession and stated that they would take opportunities for promotion into management positions, if opportunities arose.

What emerges from the 'hero vs reflective male practitioner' discourse are assumptions made about the sexual orientation of male practitioners. Part of Hicks' (2001) discussion presents social work as a safe haven, for those who question their sexuality or are gay. Indeed, many gay participants identified that social work was a profession they felt a particular affinity with, because it worked with those marginalised and oppressed, which in some cases echoed their own experiences. These participants felt a strong connection to the empowering nature of professional values and stated that their career choice was of no surprise to family and friends.

Within the literature there is an assumption that gay male social workers will be passive, gentlemanly, or effeminate (Christie, 2001). In contrast to this, an openly gay study participant presented a (naturally) 'macho' persona that could be perceived as hyper-masculine (Whitehead, 2002). This ambiguous or contra presentation of how mainstream society may perceive gay men was a learned behaviour, a protection against violence and power (Halperin, 2003). The participant thought this would be an asset in his practice as a social worker, as he

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might avoid negativity due to his sexual orientation, and perceived that as a gay man, he would be able to demonstrate a greater depth of empathy.

Such assets to social work practice were also perceived to occur at the intersections of ethnicity by ethnic minority study participants. These participants felt that their gender, socialisation and habitus uniquely placed them to work in communities they grew-up in. African participants relayed that the gender divide of providing care in their cultures was less structured than in contemporary western cultures. Some cited examples of witnessing older male relatives and siblings engaged in child rearing and household tasks. For one Asian participant, although there was awareness of and expectations to support the family, there was less emphasis that males would assist in day to day household tasks. Paradoxically in Asian families, there is little evidence of social work practice being required (Quareshi et al. 2000). Asian service users however, may experience discrimination at the hands of social work (Dominelli, 2018). One Asian participant identified that their knowledge and habitus could help avoid such discrimination, for example, breaking down language barriers.

7.6 Longer term MSWS career intensions

The majority of participants thought it was too early to envisage what their long-term career aspirations might be, however, most saw their future in social work, taking opportunities presented along a journey into management (Davey, 2002). Most perceived that the cultural capital inherent in being a male practitioner would fast-track them into managerial positions more rapidly than their female counterparts. Such accounts are concordant with other reports within the literature (Kullberg, 2012; Lupton, 2006; McPhail, 2004; Pease, 2011; Simpson, 2009; Williams, 1992), all of which discuss the relative ease with which male practitioners' progress into management, gaining increased power and pay.

Flood (2014: 36) offers another perspective in his study of the perceptions of male social workers, and contests that "either male identity must be constructed to fit within a context, or the context must be redefined to fit the male identity". This could go some way to explain the desire of study participants to progress into management early in their careers. This represents one mechanism for redefining the role of social work practitioner to fit conceptions of male identity, assertiveness and emotional distance, thereby detaching them from the difficulties of direct practice they may encounter as male.

None of the participants saw their future career outside of social work, which somewhat supports the findings of Patrick and McCrystal (2007) and Stevens et al. (2010). A longitudinal study by Sharpe et al. (2011) suggests that whether newly qualified social workers remain in the profession can largely be attributed to concordant factors between learning on qualifying programmes and the realities of practice. Hussein et al. (2013) found the emphasis concerned

the quality of qualifying education and whether that had sufficiently prepared them to maintain an appropriate level and quality of practice.

7.7 Trends in MSWS practice placement preference by region

Participants were asked what preferences (Table 13 – please see page 273) they had in terms of the subject area of practice placement. This was to determine any trends they expressed for particular areas of work and to evaluate if these trends varied by UK region.

As detailed in Table 13 (page 273), working with children and families was the most popular area of practice chosen. Given that many participants expressed on average two practice areas they wished to experience, a preference for working with children and families was strongly identified and would represent approximately 32% of all participants. The proportion wishing to work in the area of criminal justice was approximately 12%, and those wishing to work in mental health and with adults were 6% respectively.

The study by Wilson and McCrystal (2007) set a very similar question to social work student participants, immediately following graduation. There are however significant differences in terms of the sample, where findings were all based on questionnaire responses of over 100 male and female students at Queens University, Belfast.

This study and that of Wilson and McCrystal (2007) clearly identify a strong preference of participants for working with children and families (Wilson & McCrystal = 32%; Galley = 32%). An extensive literature on the negatives concerning males working with children and families has been identified and previously discussed in Chapter Two. However, there are also many scholars (D'Cruz, 2002; Farmer & Owen, 1998; Scourfield, 2002; Stanley & Goddard, 1993), who identify that both men and women are responsible for the protection of children and as such, men have a professional role to play in improving relationships between men and children (Hood, 2001).

Significant difference can be seen, where a sizable proportion of study participants (24%) express a preference to work in the criminal justice field; double that of the respondents of the earlier study by Wilson and McCrystal (12%). In this study the preference to work in the area of criminal justice was expressed most significantly by participants in Scotland. Although in Scotland recorded crime has decreased by over one third since 2008-9 (Scottish Government, 2018), crime rates in its major cities have been some of the highest in Europe, (O'Hare, 2019), which has been subject to regular and high-profile reporting over a sustained period.

In broad terms, social work practice within the field of criminal justice has historically centred on the probation service and youth justice, which has traditionally attracted male practitioners (Walton, 1975). While social workers continue to practise in the area of youth justice across

the UK, due to policy changes in 1996 in England and Wales, social work practice in the probation service is now only integral to practice in Scotland and Northern Ireland (Payne, 2005). This illustrates UK regional differences in law and social policy which guide social work practice.

Authors identify that contemporary practice in criminal justice social work in Scotland and Northern Ireland is grounded in the practice of managerialism and risk management (Doran & Cooper, 2008; Fenton, 2012). Child protection work is also firmly grounded in statutory social work responsibility (for example, in England and Wales, the Children Act 1989 & 2004). These areas of practice are seen as examples of technical, specialised and action-orientated social work practice, attributes often associated with male hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005; Orme, 2009). A significant proportion of participants more closely identified with preferences for practice underpinned by the more prescriptive requirements of law and social policy, compared to areas of practice which place greater emphasis on an exploration of feelings and emotions.

Participants ascribed a certain cachet or capital inherent in working in specialisms, which practice in a strongly defined legal policy framework. In addition to their perceptions regarding the added cultural capital that practising in such a technical specialism can acquire, it could be reasonably asserted that practicing within such specialisms can draw male practitioners closer to the 'glass elevator' where they can progress swiftly into management (Pringle, 2001; Williams, 1992). A majority of participants broadly professed that promotion into management roles was a common aspiration for them.

7.7.2 Common trends and differences of MSWS perceptions in UK regions

Within the study, data were collected concerning the political ideologies that MSWSs supported and their religious affiliations. Although these cannot be extrapolated to all MSWSs across the UK, some trends can be identified.

In terms of the political ideologies supported by participants (please see Table 10, page 271), by far the largest group (35%/n=12) identified as not supporting any particular political ideology. Houston (2002) contends that culture, class and political power intersect to maintain discrimination and social division. An awareness of political philosophy addresses issues, such as, limitations of the state and the private and voluntary sectors in providing welfare services affecting social work practice (Payne, 1996). With social work ethics and values firmly rooted in anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice, and the profession one of the greatest exponents of social welfare, this result is surprising. Such disinterest in politics denies the role of the social worker as an agent of change. Cree and Davis (2007: 148) assert that:

> "Most social workers come into social work either out of a desire to help others, or to   challenge social injustice. What they all enjoy in social work is the opportunity to build relationships with people … to make a difference in their lives, and perhaps even society as a whole".

Such disinterest in politics is even more remarkable, when one considers that a majority of participants disclosed that aside from discussion concerning the mistreatment of women and children by men, they relished debate within the classroom. Possible explanations for this include the broader symptom of general political apathy and attempts by the dominant global forces of neo-liberalism to produce 'non-political' social workers (Jones, 2004). The latter emphasises the shift away from welfare collectivism to neo-liberal concepts of choice and personal responsibility in the market economy. It is also of note that two participants in Northern Ireland perceived that an involvement in politics at any level remained potentially dangerous.

In terms of the 21% (n=7) of participants that identified 'other', this was largely a regional difference in Scotland, where participants identified support for the policies of the Scottish National Party.

Concerning the religious affiliation of participants (please see Table 9, page 271), 59% of participants identified as agnostic, atheist or as having no religious faith. Perhaps this indicates a growing secularism within the general population and/or a lack of diversity within the participant sample. One might also contend that the founding tenets of social work, derived in the west from Christianity, are being replaced by capitalist neo-liberalism. It could be that the historic link between Christian philosophy and social work endures in some regions, a majority of participants in Northern Ireland identified that a significant amount of their pre-qualifying experience of working in health and social care was in projects facilitated by the church.

7.8 The changes MSWSs recommend for improving their student experience on qualifying courses.

Financing of study was an issue of great significance raised by those participants from the 'Step-Up' programme. All these participants stated that they would not have been able to enrol as a MSWS without the financial incentive of a sizeable bursary. They cited that their responsibilities as primary 'bread-winners' would have excluded more traditional qualifying routes. By identifying their role as 'bread-winners', a concept which according to Fraser (1994) is outdated, participants emphasise male financial control, which sustains hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005; Messner, 2000). No doubt, many of their female counterparts had similar responsibilities to their families and concerns about financing their studies.

Evidence suggests that there are relatively higher numbers of men enrolled on Frontline fast-track social work programmes, compared to 'Step-Up to Social Work' programmes and more traditional qualifying routes (Baginsky & Manthorpe, 2015; Maxwell et al. 2016). Hussein et al. (2011) identify in their study, that men are attracted to the profession by sponsorship or secondment. At the time of writing, Frontline candidates pay no fees and receive bursaries of between £16,756 and £19,591 in their first year, depending on location. In their second year they are paid a newly qualified social worker's salary (Stevenson, 2018). Due to the bursary, the cost of training a fast-track student is significantly more than double that of an undergraduate student, and nearly double that of a postgraduate student (Cutmore & Rodger, 2016).

Participants recommend financial incentives be offered to attract greater gender diversity across the spectrum of qualifying routes, and to improve the student experience of future MSWSs. Incentives identified include a 'golden handshake', or an ongoing bursary as awarded by fast-track routes. Unsurprisingly, there are significant ethical and value-based issues associated with this approach, which would again favour men over women. Furness (2007) identifies the need for increased financial support of all social work students when engaged on placement, as they have little opportunity to undertake paid work alongside their studies.

Gay participants asserted that the university and placement environments need to be more aware of discrimination and oppression in terms of sexuality. They identified examples where in some programmes it was a case of just 'talking the talk and not walking the walk', with perhaps an unconscious bias toward heteronormativity, supporting findings from an LGBTQ social work student study by Chinell (2011).

7.9 Transferability of learning

The transferability of learning from this thesis occurs as readers draw their own conclusions on the findings (Polit & Beck, 2014). While the information complied herein has been based on the information freely disclosed by participants, their perceptions and narratives are located within their own social and philosophical contexts (Page, 2009). It therefore follows that these will influence any interpretations based upon these narratives. Whilst I acknowledge that as a former MSWS with a similar background to some of the participants, my own interpretations are subjective, they are however validated through the credibility and fidelity and rigour of the research. This is demonstrated by the study's design detailed in the planning and construction (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Although the narratives of participants are authentic, consideration must be given to their social construction through transposable dispositions, which inform the habitus. This assumes that the interpretation of reality is not solely based on meaning developed by the individual,

but by the evolving influence of the social milieu within limits of earlier experiences (Wacquant, 2005). It was therefore important within this study that the context and culture were presented in the findings to enable the reader to understand how these have been applied.

Another consideration of the transferability of learning from this study concerns how the data might translate into different settings. The findings and theory generated by this study suggest a wider application to other contexts provided those contexts are appropriate (Gilbert & Stoneman, 2016).

7.9.2 The study in the context of the existing research

Discussion now turns to the viability of this study and how it fits with other studies concerning MSWSs. This study has addressed the research question set and the aims and objectives of the research, by producing sound data and findings which contribute to the existing literature on the paucity of male social workers.

At the time this study was initiated, a renewed interest in the paucity of male social workers was evident, giving rise to this study and an objective of evaluating these findings in order to contribute to a body of literature concerning this phenomenon. The final chapter of this thesis, Chapter eight completes this objective.

Because of the relatively small number of participants involved in generating qualitative data for this study (n=34), it must be acknowledged that there are resultant limitations. The findings which have emerged from themes are therefore not generalisable to every MSWS. The views and perceptions garnered however can be employed to provide a deeper understanding of the issues which concern MSWSs. Although this study has not claimed to be representative of all MSWS experiences and perceptions throughout the UK, there are some similarities and differences of note with other studies previously undertaken with MSWSs in this area. The most recent of these studies broadly concerns the progression of MSWSs in qualifying programmes.

The studies by Parker (2010) and Schaub (2017) concern the progression/attrition of MSWSs through qualifying programmes. Both studies use qualitative research methodologies, with Parker's sample taken from one HEI on the south coast of England and Schaub's across seven HEIs in England. Parker's (2010) study focuses on how power imbalances between MSWSs and tutors, and powerlessness felt by failing MSWSs in the field of practice placement is a significant cause of drop-out.

Schaub's (2017) study finds that the progression of MSWSs is affected by their experiences in terms of feeling isolated, finding specific topics in class challenging, and having concerns over the potential for allegations in direct practice with children. Many of the findings by

Schaub are supported by those of this study. Schaub however, goes onto identify what he terms 'dual spoiled identities', where their professional identity is spoiled by being male and the male identity spoiled trying to become a social worker. Participants of this study appeared more pragmatic, even optimistic that their gender would provide choice and make a difference in the profession.

Those qualitative studies undertaken by Parker & Crabtree (2012) and Crabtree & Parker (2014) gathered the narratives of MSWSs from a single HEI on the south coast of England. Their participants identified negative perceptions of men through having minority status in a feminised profession, teaching a feminised pedagogy, resulting in issues during their progression on social work qualifying programmes.

A quantitative study by Perry and Cree (2003) using a statistical analysis of the continuing decrease in male applicants to social work courses over an eight-year period (1993-2001) adds broadly to the debate about motivations, or the lack of them, for males to enter social work. Among their findings, they posit that financial considerations, the problematic public image of social work, and changes to traditional masculinities, all contribute to push-pull factors for male applicants. Many of their observations are themes which participants of this study have identified and discussed.

This study adds to the existing literature on the perceptions of MSWSs, having conducted research across all four nations of the UK, which includes enquiry into personality traits hitherto the subject of speculation, while applying Bourdieusian and intersectional lenses to its themes.

SUMMARY

It is important to recognise that my own identity may have influenced the interpretation and the discussion of findings from this study. For example, I may be unconsciously biased in how I interpret the nuances of participants' perceptions. Moreover, as a white gay male I may have difficulty in fully identifying the experience of race, religion and ethnicity, having a more natural empathy with experience of those LGBTQ study participants. Therefore, while I have endeavoured to be circumspect in evaluation, I am bound to recognise that there is always the possibility that my subjectivity within the research subject may affect the discussion of findings.

The analysis within this chapter has discussed a range of factors affecting the motivations and experiences of MSWSs, which impacted on their decision to enter into social work. The chapter has presented further analyses on the findings of the study, detailed in Chapters five

and six. In doing so it has reflected the perceptions and experiences of participants both on the academe and on practice placement.

From these accounts and the subsequent discussion, it appears evident that gender, or perhaps more particularly emanations of masculinity do indeed feature as a factor for MSWSs. These factors can arise as a result of the juxtaposition between masculinities and a FMO.

In some ways MSWSs felt silenced or oppressed. In others, they perceived that their gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation gained them capital within the various fields they moved through and between. Many participants aligned themselves to other males within their cohorts or female students who they felt nurtured by.

Participants identified that role models had been a significant factor in their motivation to enter social work and discussion of these themes were also analysed using Bourdieusian and intersectional lenses.

This discussion has contributed to the social work and LBGTQ literature by focusing on the intersections of personal and professional identity that participants experienced and the acquisition and deficit of a range of capital within these intersectional experiences.

The role model argument is one I can reflect upon as a motivation being most influential in my entering social work. Twice in my life, once as a very young child and again as a teenager, I have been subject to social work intervention, which inspired me to take a similar life course and career choice.

Drawing on the discussion from this chapter and that of the findings of the study, the final chapter which follows, outlines recommendations for social work policy, practice and education.

CHAPTER EIGHT – CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

> "The end of a story does not have to be predictable, but it must be meaningful. In short, a narrative must have a point….. the question every narrator tries to fend off is, 'So what?' And for narratives to have a point, they must incorporate this important element of bringing together disparate elements into a single plot" (Lawler, 2002: 246).

The final chapter aims to follow the sentiments of Lawler, as it summaries and concludes this thesis. The chapter begins in briefly summarising chapter 4 (methodology and methods), chapters 5 and 6 (the Bourdieusian and Intersectional analyses) and chapter 7 (discussion). Whilst doing so, this chapter will outline the theoretical developments this thesis has contributed to the literature and knowledge in this area. This will include contributions made by the study, including new knowledge, policy implications for social work education and policy implications for practice. The chapter then concludes by offering an overview of the original contribution of this study and identifies opportunities for future research.

The reasons for the gender imbalance in social work has long been speculated about and this study has informed the literature and discourse in this area by seeking the views of the studies participants, male social work students (MSWSs) (Galley & Parrish, 2014).

In the context of themes from the literature and earlier studies, this study demonstrates new understanding through undertaking UK wide research in this area for the first time. Giving MSWSs a voice to the exception of others was unusual but important. Participants' narratives can then be heard by a wider audience, including policy makers, where they have located the main factors which have affected their experiences and career decisions.

This thesis has applied a novel theoretical framework in order to understand MSWSs experiences on qualifying programmes, the factors leading to their isolation in social work education and their perceptions of being male in the profession. It identifies that their motivations to become social workers are largely as a result of their life course experiences. The study also identifies personality traits which appear congruent with being a MSWS/practitioner. This has been achieved by addressing the research aims and in particular, the research question.

In terms of the research question, this chapter proceeds to outline the main factors affecting the experiences and career decisions of MSWSs.

8.1 Review of methods and methodology

Drawing upon the methodology of previous studies in this area, the methodology for this study was qualitative and employed semi-structured interviews, emailed questionnaires, group

observations and some limited analysis of primary quantitative data, which was refined during the pilot study. Semi-structured interviews offer the flexibility of adapting a line of enquiry to pursue responses in greater depth, in a way that emailed questionnaires cannot. Taking an emic perspective, enabled me ask follow-up questions which could elicit richer data, perhaps adding value for an etic perspective. Group observations provide opportunities to watch and listen without posing questions which can be useful in evaluating participant responses against other methods (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Again, reflecting on emic and etic perspectives, my positionality as a trained social worker allowed me to see where participants were perhaps influenced by my presence, projecting what they wanted me to see. As a researcher of social work however, it was important to view the group dynamic as a whole.

Part of the trustworthiness of this study is due to these established methods, enabling authentic data to be collected in a systematic way. However, it must be recognised what factors can impact on the validity of such methods. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified three broad themes which can impact validity. The first is 'reactivity', where the presence of the researcher may interfere with the setting or behaviour of those involved. The second concerns 'respondent bias', where interview participants may impart what they believe the researcher may wish to hear, or perhaps withhold information. The third is identified as 'researcher bias', bringing one's own preconceptions and assumptions which can impact the design of interview questions and participant selection.

Among the strategies to ameliorate these potential effects on validity, triangulation and reflexivity as shown to be effective (Cohen et al. 2018; Robson & McCartan, 2016). Both of these strategies were employed throughout this study.

Methods were based on a research design that was underpinned by overarching ethnographic principles and sought to learn through the experiences, perceptions and motivations of participants. Empowering MSWSs by giving them a voice goes some way toward an emancipatory strategy of reflexivity. A further strength of the design was the emic approach adopted, as I was previously a MSWS myself. It was however acknowledged that this carried the inherent possibility of subjective bias (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Thirty-four participants were purposely selected from six HEIs across the UK, which included those from diverse groups. Identifying a sample for this study was an iterative task across all six research sites. Ethical considerations were paramount in the study and all participants volunteered free of any inducement and were free to withdraw at any time. Data were analysed using thematic analysis and as a result of the analysis, key themes emergent included masculinities, gender and identity, and being male in FMOs Bourdieusian and intersectional

theoretical frameworks were applied, which illuminated participants' narratives, and while enhancing understanding, lend credibility to the study.

Bourdieusian theory provides a framework for deep evaluation of the influences upon participants (habitus, doxa) and what assets (capital) they bring to different arena (fields). However, one of the main omissions in Bourdieu's work is his disregard of gender as factor that can affect capital and position in the field, whereas his focus suggests that education is a leveller of cultural hierarchies (Reay, 1997, 2004a). Intersectionality is perhaps more effective at identifying where disadvantage and marginalisation has impacted participants' experience in terms of their various dispositions, i.e., class, gender and race (Rollock, 2014). However, the relative ambiguity of the intersectional approach may mean that it can lack focus and a defined set of goals (Davis, 2008).

The range of data collected from across the UK not only demonstrates some regional differences, but also reinforces some consistent messages from the framework of theoretical analysis. In this way, credibility of the research is further developed, and understanding is enhanced. Although the findings of this study may not be generalised, it appears that MSWSs from similar studies share some of the same issues and challenges, therefore some of the findings are transferrable (see for example: Christie, 2006; Furness, 2007; Giesler, 2013; Hyde & Deal, 2003; Khunou et al. 2012; Stevens et al. 2010). The final consideration of whether the methodology and methods of the study were appropriate lies in its contribution to the knowledge in this area of research. New insights have been realised into the experiences, perceptions and motivations of MSWSs.

8.2 Summary of key findings

Participants described how they thought their gender was an advantage during the admission process and in gaining a place on a qualifying programme. They perceived that their scarcity relative to female students, meant that their gender accrued capital and there was some positive discrimination in play. Some participants however, identified the requirement of economic capital for entry into social work education, and that a lack of economic capital would be a barrier to enrolment. Principally, minority ethic participants felt that their familial responsibility of being 'bread winner' ensured their entry route necessitated a paid programme of learning, particularly as salaries are not regarded as substantial. This situation is certainly not unique to MSWSs, and no doubt a consideration for students of any gender.

In the academe, many participants explained how relatively at ease they felt contributing under certain circumstances in the lecture theatre. Favoured subjects included debates and discussions concerning law and social policy, examples of the rational/technical aspects of social work, and these aspects identified as expressions of masculinity (Bywater & Jones,

2007; Christie, 1998; Christie, 2006; Kamphorst et al. 2015; Leman & Mann, 1999; Orme, 2009; Perry & Cree, 2003; Pringle, 1995).

Within the lecture theatre environment however, MSWS felt that the capital they perceived as inherent in their gender could be significantly diminished. Being male in these female spaces was seen as a disadvantage, with their skills in social work, for example, empathy, called into question. Here a prevailing feminised pedagogy was seen to focus upon the violence of men and their abuse of women (Crabtree & Parker, 2014), where, "men remain the specialists in the doing of violence" (Hyde & Deal, 2003).

A majority of participants perceived this theme to represent a barrier in attracting males to the profession. This theme pervades public perceptions depicting men as abusers prominent in both the press and serious case reviews. This can create negative experiences of MSWSs in social work education.

When such topics came under the spotlight, most MSWSs felt representative of their gender and therefore uncomfortable and personally judged. Examples demonstrated how isolating being an MSWS can be in a field of female counterparts, resulting in self-censorship for some participants, and feeling silenced in some classroom debate.

While some participants identified a bond with their entire cohort, many felt a safer affinity with their fellow MSWS. In ameliorating the effects of isolation, some resulted in creating their own group, a separate field of masculinity, both in the classroom environment and outside. Social work educators should perhaps be mindful of the need for increased support for MSWSs and be increasingly proactive in developing appropriate support networks endorsed by their respective HEIs.

The age of participants was also identified as a potential barrier to the profession, both socially and structurally. With fellow MSWSs, older participants felt outdated, particularly at lacking similar IT competences, especially with HEI Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs). Such structural barriers, it is argued have a greater impact for men (Laming et al. 2016). This highlights the need for increased support in this area for mature students. Conversely, younger participants felt intimidated by the life experience and different social interests of the MSWS peers, which could inhibit effective communication.

Further diversity is apparent from speculation in the literature that gay men are perhaps attracted to social work (see for example, Christie, 2001a). Gay participants described situations where this disposition intersected with their learning environment. A range of studies have found homophobia and heterosexism prevalent in social work education and its environments (Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Bernard et al. 2011; Brownlee et al. 2005; Chinell,

2011; Chonody et al. 2013b; Chonody et al. 2014; Dentato et al. 2016; Fairlough et al. 2013; Johnston, 2002; Krieglstein, 2003; Newman et al. 2002; Riaz & Saltzburg, 2007; Swank & Raiz, 2007). Some gay participants experienced homophobia/oppression at the intersection of religiosity and sexual orientation.

One gay participant who was open about his sexual orientation and freely identified as presenting as slightly 'camp' disclosed experiencing homophobia by male service users of a domestic violence support group when engaging with them. He described circumstances where male perpetrators had difficulties with his authenticity. Such occurrences can add to a sense of isolation.

Particularly interesting was one gay participant who presented a constructed persona of hyper-masculinity, not 'acted', but learned as a result of his early socialisation. This display of heteronormativity had the effect of protecting him from homophobic attitudes (Aymer & Patni, 2011). Unhindered by questions of sexual orientation, he employed aspects of his personality, which he ascribed to his sexuality as being useful tools, particularly in practice placement, such as, a deep-seated demonstration of empathy. He described his physicality as a deterrent from violence, similar to those participants identifying as straight.

Surely by addressing isolation by introducing increased support, those participants who feel silenced during discussions on the abuse of men, and those gay participants who felt oppressed for other reasons, would contribute to improving the student experience.

Male gender was seen to have varying effects in practice placement. Participants identified many advantages, which intersected with their gender in this environment, with cultural and symbolic capital also in play. For ethnic minority participants, this included assumptions of increased cultural competence. The partnership status of participants was also perceived to have a bearing on practice. For example, some married participants thought that by demonstrating they had successful family lives with children would provide them with the cultural and social capital to make effective interventions with families.

Participants envisaged their physicality bringing an amount of security to female colleagues, where a risk of violence might be encountered in practice. They further perceived they might be particularly effective in building practice relationships with male service users and being a more effective role model to young males than their female counterparts. Such perceptions run somewhat counter to the literature, which suggests that cultural background can be a barrier, and that being a role model cannot be ascribed to just gender (see for example, Bernard et al. 2011; Hussein et al. 2008; Moriarty et al. 2009; Robb et al. 2015).

Generally, their experience of being on placement was positive in terms of participants being accepted and welcome as males. There was a general perception of them being favoured, perhaps even having an 'easier ride' (Furness, 2011).

Tensions were however also evident in practice placement where some participants felt a lack of social and cultural capital. Single participants perceived their relationship status to have a negative influence. They could be fearful at the prospect of working with women and children, where they might be eyed with suspicion. The possibility of being subject to allegations was a concern and some participants identified practice disadvantage by not being able to physically comfort in the way their female colleagues could. This lack of social and cultural capital was prominent in the fields of domestic violence and child protection, where one participant had been refused a placement on the basis that his gender would be problematic in practice with female service users.

Professional status was a concept on which participants offered their perspectives. Along with Pease (2011), they thought greater gender balance could increase social work's professional status. Although the propensity to enter management via the glass elevator was widely discussed, one participant brought additional insight concerning the term 'social worker', identifying that the title portrays a lack of skill and status, which therefore presents as a barrier, particularly to males considering a career in the profession.

Most participants held a favourable view of career prospects in social work when qualified. They expected that promotion would come quickly for those majority of participants that would want to enter the 'glass elevator' into management (Lyons et al. 1995; McPhail, 2004; Williams, 1992). Participants found it difficult to envision their long-term career intentions. However, the difficulties they perceived in practice as a result of their gender perhaps explains the desire to seek promotion into management, providing some distance from service users.

The qualities and assets that participants perceived they brought, centred on facets of their personas and identifying a value base concordant with social work's ethics and values and stance on anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice. For entry of males into the profession, three prime motivators, which centred on this value base, were identified and ascribed terms. This further develops and refines the motivators identified by Osteen (2011) and Warde (2009). 'Succeeder's' and 'achievers' enter social work due to their socialisation and role models who have influenced their habitus. The former because the familial doxa could be seen to have greater developmental effect in those who had an immediate family member in the public service, here there was a strong motivation to emulate this service to others.

With the latter, participants had experienced a doxa and habitus which had seen less advantage, where participants had been subject to social work intervention previously in their

lives. Their motivation was developed by this intervention, either being determined to be a more effective and professional practitioner than they had experienced personally, or they were motivated to mirror good social work practice they had been subject to.

'Accomplishers' were those who had changed direction in life, both in terms of career and what they valued. Lastly, other participants described a shift in their habitus, triggered by changes in career prospects, where they sought a more personally and morally rewarding career than had previously been the case.

Enacting masculinity and being male differently can be seen in the results of the BEM androgyny test, suggesting the majority of participants had androgynous personalities. This was further demonstrated by applying participants' experiences to the theoretical framework, suggesting dispositions ascribed to gender are fluid, shaped by personal experiences and contexts, a social relationship as Hicks (2015) contends. This framework serves to bring an increasingly holistic view on the nature of gendered identity and applies theory situated outside dominant masculine perspectives, which could assist in challenging gender inequality within the profession.

Despite their perceived difficulties, nearly a third of participants expressed a preference for practice placement with children and families; a finding concurrent with that of the study by Wilson and McCrystal (2007). However, in terms of regional variations, participants from Scotland most strongly identified a preference for a placement in criminal justice. The link between social work and probation is still current in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and practice in this field may provide a better fit to expectations of masculinity. In Northern Ireland much of social work practice had strong links with the church, harking back to beginnings of social work. Surprising among participants was a general disinterest in politics. Particularly as social work practice is guided by law and social policy that is inevitably constructed by political ideology.

The narratives of study participants were authentic to their own perceptions and experiences. The transferability of the findings of the study can only be evaluated by the reader in terms of their subjectivity (Polit & Beck, 2014). What stands however is the contribution of this research to the literature concerning MSWSs, detailed later in this final chapter. What can surely be asserted is that MSWSs do indeed "vibrate between positions of privilege and marginalisation" (Crabtree & Parker, 2014: 9).

8.3 Policy implications for social work education

Participants identified that finance and cost affected the accessibility of social work training and was a potential barrier to the profession for them. It is interesting to note that government

financial support for social work bursaries and placements fell by 30% in the period 2012/13 to 2014/15, and the number and value of bursaries has remained static since 2014. Although the number of students enrolled on both undergraduate and postgraduate remained stable from 2014/15 to 2015/16, during 2014/15 the number of qualifying programmes in England fell from 276 to 256 (Stevenson, 2018).

Post-graduate participants from the 'Step-Up' qualifying route identified that a major factor in seeking out this route was the bursary, which is nearly six times greater than the standard NHS Business Services Authority bursary awarded to undergraduate students enrolling via traditional routes. Other recent fast-track qualifying routes such as, 'Frontline' and 'Think Ahead', offer similar bursaries and all have the general requirement of graduate entry and it would be interesting to see longitudinal data on the gender spilt of students qualifying using these routes. Even more recent is the proposal of 'integrated degree apprenticeships for social workers'.

These new qualifying routes see a shift in responsibility for financing of qualifying routes from government to local authorities. As such, students are directly contracted to employers and as their funders, employers could have increasing influence over the curriculum. The aim of these fast-track programmes is to attract increasing numbers into social work to counter the nationwide shortage and it may be that these financial terms offer an increased incentive, however, only to those who already have a degree.

Given the financial incentives of fast-track programmes, perhaps widening their remit to include undergraduates may increase recruitment of MSWSs. Indeed, as these fast-track routes necessarily draw MSWSs closer to social work practice, usually in working environments they are already familiar with, they may have a positive effect in terms of student retention.

A further concern of participants is the learning environment within the social work academe, or perhaps more specifically the feminised pedagogy, which has unwittingly impacted males by identifying violence and abuse by men. Participants found this particularly challenging when engaged in specific classroom discussion which included men's oppression of others, specifically domestic violence and the abuse of women and children. To counter such situations and the resultant isolation, Burke et al. (2013) suggest that support for lectures should be given in the form of continuing professional development and to develop communities of practice where lecturers can collaborate to develop critical but inclusive pedagogies. Managing group discussions is important to ensure that MSWSs do not feel targeted, while gaining an understanding of the impact men's abuse has on others and how to address this impact. In terms of those group discussions, in addition, it may be helpful to

explore how MSWSs can successfully engage in social work roles. It may also be helpful to challenge deeply engrained gender roles by providing space within the curriculum to explore the narrative on gender. As discussed above, there is also increased potential to develop targeted networks of support for MSWSs, which could reduce the effects of isolation as a result of the barriers of gender, age and sexual orientation (Newson et al. 2011; Parker & Crabtree, 2014).

In countering homophobic attitudes in social work students in the academe, Chonody et al. (2013b) suggest employing pedagogical interventions which utilise intergroup contact, which have been found to decrease a negative bias toward LGBTQ students. Again, this could be used to counter oppression and isolation experienced by these MSWSs. In practice placement, both the studies by Messinger and Topal (1997) and Craig et al. (2016) purport that greater readiness for social work practice in LGBTQ students was providing implicit programme support for them, together with inclusion of LGBTQ content on qualifying programmes.

Part of preparing all social work students to acknowledge diversity and find acceptance within it could be to use the theoretical framework identified in this study as a teaching tool within scheduled learning sessions, to explore those different perspectives.

8.4 Practice implications for social work

Despite a majority of participants of this study expressing a desire to work directly with children and families, they have nevertheless demonstrated concerns about the potential for allegations in doing so. As has been discussed however, it appears that MSWSs are drawn to this area of practice. The prescriptive frameworks of practice in this field, which are among others, laid down by the Children Act 1989, speak not only to the attractiveness of technical-rational areas of practice discussed by various authors (Kamphorst et al. 2015; Leman & Mann, 1999; Orme, 2009), but also the increased pay and status associated with practicing a specialism and their clearer links with masculinity (Connell, 2005).

In satisfying the desire of social work to become more gender balanced in its workforce, it is important to understand why males are motivated to enter the profession to plan recruitment strategies for qualifying routes (Christie & Kruck, 1998). However, addressing gender inequality within the profession, where men continue to dominate in managerial and policy roles, is deeper than merely findings ways to attract more males into social work. It involves encouraging a greater awareness of how masculinity operates in covert and overt ways to maintain gender inequality. Reflection on one's own male identity can correlate with an awareness of how masculinity dominates, and steps taken to counter this.

A finding of this study recommended the possibility of amending the title of 'social work', with its unskilled connotations, to reflect a practitioner of a profession. This contributes to the discussion by Perry and Cree (2003: 382), which suggests "positive action must be taken to upgrade the social work profession". Although Binnie and Stewart (2005) identified that social work had equal stature to other professions, such as, nursing, policing and teaching, none of these hold the title of 'worker'. In seeking a closer parity of perceived value with other professions, particularly between the medical and social model which is encouraged by government policy, perhaps social work having a presence in GP surgeries, representing a closer drawing together of health and social care could also warrant investigation.

8.5 Original Contributions

A strength of this study has been to foreground a wide range of MSWS voices, which have remained central throughout its analysis and findings. Previous studies, with the exception of those by Crabtree and Parker (2014), Parker and Crabtree (2012) and Schaub (2017), have drawn mixed gender samples. Foregrounding male voices as the 'unheard gender' in social work, when men are a minority is a valuable contribution in helping to shift an ontological view that men are 'bad' and women are 'good' in the field of caring (Amato, 2017; Baum, 2015).

The study used multiple sites of research to develop an understanding of the experiences, perceptions and motivations of thirty-four participants, and is the first in this area to have collected data from across all four nations of the UK. Previous studies, aside from that of Schaub (2017) have been single-site or region investigations (Crabtree & Parker, 2014; Cree, 2001; Parker, 2010; Parker & Crabtree, 2012). By seeking a broader sample, a wider understanding of their experiences, perceptions and motivations have been gleaned.

This study has identified three prime motivators for males aspiring to qualify as social workers and has attributed the term Succeeder's for those motivated by familial influence, Achievers for those motivated by previous experience of social work as a service user and Accomplishers as those seeking a change in career to something more intrinsically rewarding.

Participant accounts demonstrate how isolating their experience can be in social work education, whereas there is perhaps a need to engage them at an even deeper level with a range of issues connected with masculinity and gender than previously envisaged. This sets into focus the feminised pedagogy of social work education and the need to address issues of diversity and gender as threads that run throughout the curriculum.

The application of the theoretical framework developed from Bourdieu's (2000) conceptual toolkit from sociological theory, and Intersectionality derived from feminist theoretical approaches demonstrates their use with a sample and issue not previously subject to these

analytical frameworks. The use of this theory responds to calls that it can provide new ways of thinking about domination and struggle within social work research (Emirbayer, 2005; Garrett, 2007a, 2007b, Mattsson, 2014; Mehrotra, 2010).

Results of participants BEM androgyny tests indicated that in many cases they had close to androgynous personality traits, suggesting more open and fluid attitudes to gender and gender roles. Contrary to the assertions of other scholars (Andersen, 2005; Murphy et al. 2009), this study has demonstrated that sexual orientation does indeed occupy the same space as other dispositions such as, class, race and gender and intersects with them. By using these theoretical frameworks, three possible motivators for entry into social work by males have been identified for the first time. Expanding this body of theory to consider these contexts has not previously been undertaken and has proved a fruitful avenue to further understanding.

This study further develops the knowledge and literature concerning HEI and practice placement experiences of MSWSs. Developing this understanding can help to contribute to increasing their recruitment into social work, but perhaps more importantly to their experiences on qualifying programmes and also help improve gender equality in the profession. Participant's perception of the profession was that it was under-valued, as evidenced by its pay scales, the title of 'worker' and wider societal attitudes towards it.

Considering methods for how men might be increasingly supported within social work education would be useful as barriers that are encountered by them constitute significant areas of challenge. This study develops those aspects of the study by Hyde and Deal (2003), which ascribe MSWSs to the male gender stereotype which acts as a barrier in learning environments. Reviewing the social work pedagogy and introducing specific support methods and frameworks could be beneficial, in particular, when working with women and children as MSWSs without the experience of raising children. In connection with this, consideration should be given to how service users interact with male practitioners who have experience of being fathers in terms of their perceived competence with children and more broadly in family life.

In addition, the study contributes to the discourse on gender roles and gendered boundaries of viable careers for males. Exploring participant's narratives suggests a keen awareness of these boundaries and the challenges they have experienced in connection with them. Their concerns in connection to working with children and families, and the potential for allegations while doing so, further highlights areas of practice which may seem 'off-limits' and require enhanced awareness to negotiate.

8.6 Opportunities for future research

While there were a great many interesting insights disclosed by participants of this study, several avenues for future research might be suggested, some of which are based on the limitations of this study. Given the renewed interest in the paucity of MSWSs, rather than exploring the experiences, perceptions and motivations of current MSWS or recent alumni, it may be more productive to examine the earlier experiences of males.

Firstly, any future research may wish to explore how social work is perceived as a viable career for either gender during their time in compulsory education. More than one participant remarked that social work was never promoted as a career option for boys at school or college. This might be used as a tool to 'de-genderise' career roles and increasingly promote social work as a viable and secure career for young males in schools.

It may also prove fruitful to examine the experiences mature students, as a definite distinction is drawn in this study about the isolating effects of generational differences and increased support identified as desirable concerning HEI IT systems, highlighted by mature participants of this study.

As mentioned in chapter one, whether the paucity of males as practitioners has a negative impact on social work generally, or on those it serves is unclear. Although a renewed interest in male social workers has given rise to this study, which has focused on the paucity of male practitioners and the call for greater gender balance within the profession, it may be a fruitful avenue of enquiry to try and determine if males are actually wanted or required in frontline social work practice, or whether they might be confined to other, secondary roles within the profession.

REFLECTING ON THE STUDY

My feelings about being so 'close' to the research and the settings have been mixed. On one hand I felt a great affinity with participants of the study. Having myself been a MSWS, I felt I knew something of the challenges and advantages they perceived on their journeys to qualification. I had insight into social work education both as a former student and as a social work academic, which enabled me to quickly become familiar with the teaching and learning environments at each HEI I attended, I was therefore able to develop relationships conducive to undertaking the research almost immediately.

On the other hand, I had deep concerns that this closeness could lead to unintentionally being biased and making assumptions which could potentially invalidate the study. Aware of this, I took great pains in designing the study ethics and was mindful of the potential for bias throughout data collection and analysis. It was a constant preoccupation with my social identity and background that ensured I employed reflexivity throughout. I had to ensure that I became

a blank sheet during data collection and analysis, and be constantly aware as any potential bias or assumptions crept in. The relative swiftness of data collection I think assisted in this as I had no time for any prolonged involvement, but that raised concerns within me that my approach was not a true ethnography.

On reflection, such concerns actually kept me to task and further reading about contemporary ethnography allayed my misgivings concerning the methodology. I can now appreciate the hard work involved in research, as those concerns and my actions to counter them were quite exhausting, in addition to actually collecting data.

Looking back at the whole research journey and thinking back on those participants of the study and the interviews conducted, I was immensely privileged to have shared in participants' life stories. Their contributions were not just answers and limited discussion to pre-set questions (although by its very nature this was the process followed by those participants submitting completed questionnaires by e-mail) but as it transpired, as storytellers with individual ideas on the issues of gender within social work education and beyond. It is therefore possible to view the relationship of researcher and researched from the outset as co-producers and co-creators in the area or 'community' under study. Participants with the experience and insight of what it means to be a MSWS, with the researcher attempting to analyse, evaluate and write up, while reflecting on his own experience as a MSWS, is a humbling experience. I feel that I have developed key skills in the qualitative methods of interviewing and observation that become further imbedded in practice.

The process was not however without its trials. Conducting a lengthy series of semi-structured interviews can be extremely tiring and I think more so due to the travelling involved. By turn it can also be sometimes quite frustrating, particularly when despite all efforts to bring them back to the matter in hand, participants verbalise a rather circuitous route before getting to the point. While recognising my frustrations, I was also extremely mindful not to cut short any contribution or lead the participant, but to learn different strategies which could help in such situations.

Now as I look back upon the whole study, its research, the write-up. I, like I suspect many other PhD researchers, feel a palpable growth in my learning and understanding of research methodology, academic writing and above all research relationships; the object of the exercise I suppose. My one wish is that I'd started this journey as a younger man. Living in digs and thumbing lifts to undertake research at a certain age is one thing but beginning on what I hope will be a research career, coping with life's events of family births, marriages and deaths, and working alongside contemporaries who appear so much more accomplished has quite some impact. I also acknowledge delay in writing this thesis due to life events. In sum, however, I

feel a debt of gratitude to the opportunities afforded me and for those around me who have helped me along this journey.

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Legislation

Care Standards Act 2000

Children Act 1989

Children Act 2004

Civil Partnership Act 2004

Equality Act 2010

Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ETHICS APPROVAL

Bournemouth University

School of Health and Social Care

Research Governance Review Group

Researchers: David Galley

Title: Social work is women's work; right? An exploration of the perception of male social work students enrolled on qualifying programmes in the UK.
Level; PhD

Date: 20.12.13.

BU/Ref BUREC1263

To whom it may concern.

This study secured formal ethical approval from the Bournemouth University Research Ethics Committee on the 26.11.13.

This letter provides additional evidence of that approval process for your own administration purposes.

Please do not hesitate to contact Martin Hind, Research Ethics Coordinator for the School of Health and Social Care at rg2@bournemouth.ac.uk if you have any queries, or need any further clarification in relation to this approval process.

Yours sincerely

Professor Vanora Hundley

Deputy Dean Research

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO REQUEST HEI AND STUDENT ACCESS – by email & mail.

Dear Colleague

The respected social work programme at *'Your University'* offers both an undergraduate and post-graduate route to a professional social work qualification within the United Kingdom.

As such, I would like to invite male social work students from your programme to participate in a UK wide study I am undertaking as part of my PhD thesis. The study is funded by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and is supervised by Professor Jonathan Parker and Dr. Sara Ashencaen Crabtree.

My PhD research investigates the experiences of male social work students in all four nations of the UK and seeks to elicit their perceptions of the journey through a qualifying programme and their wider observations of a career in social work.

The study seeks to gain students' perceptions of their current experiences of being male and enrolled on a social work programme and what their experiences were which led to that enrolment. This part of the study draws on ethnographic narratives and as such there would be a requirement for me to meet face to face with them and become part of their student experience for a short time. In practice, this will mean a confidential

one-to-one interview and the opportunity of observing participants in a group setting, i.e. a lecture/seminar/workshop.

Of course, should you allow me to engage your students in this research, the permission of students to participate would be sought separately with each individual and would specify the option of them withdrawing at any time (please see sample participant information sheet).

It is envisaged that the outcomes from the study could enhance the social work curriculum in terms of gender awareness and gender practices. These outcomes will be of interest to the Social Care Councils in the UK, The College of Social Work in England and BASW.

I do hope that you feel you are able to grant permission for '*Your University'* to become part of this important national study. Ethical clearance has already been gained from Bournemouth University (see attached).

I look forward to hearing from you and hope to discuss potential dates to attend *'Your University',* and in the meantime I am more than happy to apprise you of the implications and requirements of the study in more detail.

With best wishes

Yours faithfully

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Student Colleague

Exploring the gender imbalance in social work: what are the perceptions of male social work students in qualifying UK programmes?

I would like to introduce myself. I am a PhD student based at Bournemouth University, funded by the Higher Education Academy currently undertaking research into male social work students in qualifying programmes. You are being invited to take part in the research project as a male student on a social work programme in the UK.

Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Feel free to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, take time to consider whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the project?: There is a perception that social work has historically been, and is presently a female dominated occupation. A growing body of literature questions whether this

should remain unchallenged in a profession where equality and anti-oppressive values are so prominent. This study seeks to explore the perceptions of male social work students of their journey and experiences in qualifying programmes.

Why have I been chosen?: As a current, or recently qualified social work student you are invited to participate in this nationwide study. Social work students from more than six universities across the UK are being invited to participate.

Do I have to take part?: It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without it affecting your studies in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

What do I have to do? / what will happen to me if I take part?: If you are female, your permission will be asked to observe your whole cohort in one or more of your lectures. If you are male, additionally you will be invited to take part in a one-to-one confidential interview with the researcher. Your permission will be sought to digitally-record these interviews which will be transcribed and anonymised (please see confidentiality paragraph about how that data will be managed and your identity protected).

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?: None are identified for the group observations. Interviews ask for your perceptions, in certain cases this may involve you recalling events that you have not already worked through and which may be uneasy to recall. No further risks have been identified in taking part in this research.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?: Whilst there are no immediate benefit for those participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will inform the UK social work curriculum and raise awareness of issues of gender and gender practices within social work programmes.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential? / What will happen to the results of the research project?: Any information gained during group observations, or given by interviewees is for academic purposes only and will be used solely for the purposes of this study. The individual identities of participants will remain confidential and interviewees are guaranteed their anonymity where at all possible. Information will be treated in the strictest confidence and stored securely away from your University and will not be accessed by anyone connected with your University. Access to participants' student records will not be requested.

Data stored on USB drives or using other methods will be destroyed by November 2015 following the writing up of the findings. Research findings will be written up in the form of a doctoral thesis with additional academic papers. If you wish, you may see copies of these write-ups prior to publication and your comments and observations would be most welcome and helpful.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?: The group dynamics will be studied during observations. Interviews will explore your perceptions of the reality of being a male social work student, what motivated you to embark on the profession and your wider perceptions of social work as a career choice for men.

The study will go on to inform a wider debate of gender awareness within the profession and go on to inform an evolving social work curriculum which will be of interest to the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC), the College of Social Work and the British Association of Social Workers (BASW).

Who is organising/funding the research?: This research is being funded by the Higher Education Academy and has been developed as a PhD research project and is co-ordinated by Bournemouth University.

Contact for further information: Should you agree to be interviewed please e-mail and a convenient time and place can be arranged. You will be asked to read and sign a consent form prior to the interview.

Finally I should like to emphasise that your participation is purely voluntary. You have the right not to be observed or interviewed, or not to have your interview sound recorded. You may also refuse to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable and you may decide to terminate the interview at any time and if so you do not have to give any reasons for your decision. I do hope that you will feel able to assist in this research project and if so, I look forward to meeting you in due course. Please feel free to contact me at the above e-mail address should you have any queries, I would be very pleased to hear from you. Thank you for your time in reading this letter.
David Galley – PhD Researcher.

APPENDIX D

INVITATION TO ALL STUDENTS TO BECOME RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

School of Health and Social Care

Dear Colleagues,

Have you noticed the lack of male students in your social work lectures?

I'd like to introduce some national research I hope to be undertaking at '*Your University*'. My name is David Galley and as part of a PhD thesis, funded by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) I'm looking into the possible reasons for the lack of male students on qualifying social work courses in the UK.

This is not a new phenomenon, but one which the forerunners to the HCPC, the GSCC were keen to try and address. As a result, the HEA have funded a study to explore the perceptions of male students and why male students think there are so few of them.

The results of this research will be of interest to the College of Social Work and may provide a revised pedagogy for the social work curriculum nationally.

I hope you will agree to take part in this research. Unless you are a male social work student, you need do nothing, all this will mean is an observation of one or two of your lectures. The reason for

this is to observe the group dynamic and any obvious gender dynamic. Of course being observed can be slightly uncomfortable, but I would wish to assure you that all you would need to do is act naturally and forget I'm there.

I would like to stress that should you agree to any observations, no findings will be communicated to '*Your University*' and this will have no impact whatsoever on your progression on your degree. For those male students among you, the same holds for any additional interviews you might agree to.

To accompany this letter of introduction, further details are attached separately in the form of a 'Participation Information Sheet' and if you're male, a letter inviting you to take part in an interview. I encourage you to read the documents carefully as it is important that your consent is informed.

I hope to be in a position of visiting '*Your University*' in the near future and meeting you all.

Best wishes

David Galley

PhD Researcher & HEA Fellow.

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

Full title of project:

Social Work is women's work; right? An exploration of the perceptions of male social work students enrolled on qualifying programmes in the UK.

Name, position and contact details of the researcher:

David Galley, PhD Fellow. Centre for Social Work, Sociology & Social Policy, Bournemouth University, Room R401, Royal London House. Christchurch Road. Bournemouth. BH1 3LT.

Name, position and contact details of the supervisors:

Professor Jonathan Parker, Centre for Social Work, Sociology & Social Policy. Bournemouth University, Room R203, Royal London House. Christchurch Road. Bournemouth. BH1 3LT.

Dr Sara Ashencaen-Crabtree, Centre for Social Work, Sociology & Social Policy, Bournemouth University. Room R206, Royal London House. Christchurch Road. Bournemouth. BH1 3LT.

Please Initial Here

I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet for the above research project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question(s), complete a test or give a sample, I am free to decline.	
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	
I understand that the themes I discuss may be published in a thesis and/or other academic papers.	
I agree to take part in the above research project.	
I agree / do not agree to be contacted (if required) in connection with this research up until December 2015. Please insert your personal email address, if you agree: ………..	

_____ _____ _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

David Galley   Date   Signature

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the participant information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents which must be kept in a secure location.

APPENDIX F

INVITATION TO MALE STUDENTS FOR INTERVIEW

Dear Colleague

<u>**Your University**</u>

Important national research sponsored by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) into male perspectives of social work education and a career in social work, is being undertaken at '*Your University*'.

This letter invites you, as a male social work student to be part of that research and by participating to inform a PhD thesis.

Your contribution would be a one-to-one interview with me as the researcher (please see participant information sheet for further details) during my visits.

This is your opportunity to share your perceptions on social work education which could go on to develop a revised pedagogy for social work programmes.

I look forward to attending '*Your University'* and would be delighted to meet with you, should you wish to participate.

If you are interested in taking part in a confidential interview for this study, please contact me using the details below to register your interest:

Many thanks & best wishes

David Galley, PhD Researcher & HEA Fellow.

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Overview of the Project:

- Introduce myself
- Describe the project and its goals
- Describe eventual product: PhD Thesis, academic papers and presentations and a revised pedagogy.
- Describe eventual benefits: Revision of Social Work curriculum to become increasingly aware of the issues which may confront male social work students.
- Interviews are audio taped for ease of transcription. Discuss archiving and destruction policy.
- Explain consent form and ask them to sign it.

Interviews are semi-structured and will include, although not exclusively, those issues listed below. As well as acting as prompts, these key areas will allow respondents to lead into areas of importance to them.

Interview – obtaining background

Could you state your age and would you like to tell me about your ethnicity? (Different cultures / communities have different attitudes to care-giving).

Can you tell me about your family background? – i.e. composition, parents educational attainment, gender roles, (Again, different cultures and communities have differing attitudes to outsiders assisting with social needs).

Interview Prompts

What is your academic background that led you onto this course? (Informed by Cree's point about struggling male educational attainment in SW)

What jobs had you done before you started on this course?

What experience have you had of working in the care sector?

Please tell me why you wish to become a social worker?

Have any role models affected your decision to become a social worker? (A closed question, but follow-up if answered in the affirmative).

What has inspired you to take this direction? (Ask for examples and biographical stories)

What route did you take for entry onto a qualifying programme? (Informed by Cree's point about struggling male educational attainment in SW)

What made you choose this university for your studies?

Do you know of other males who did not gain a place on a social work programme? What were the reasons for this do you think? (Undergraduates only)

What would you suggest to improve your student experience on this course?

What social/peer/family/other support do you have with your studies? Can you give examples? (informed by Kulkin et al. 2009, etc. on homophobic and heterosexist attitudes between SW students).

What challenges do you think gender, or your gender in particular creates on a social work course?

Please tell me about any advantages / disadvantages you perceive to being male on a social work course.

Please tell me about any advantages / disadvantages you perceive to being female on a social work course.

Have you experienced any issues in relation to the course / practice placements?

Do you have/have you expressed a preference for a specific area of practice in regard to practice placements? If so, why was that? (Responses to inform a contemporary comparison with historic GSCC data).

Are there any specific client group areas you would you like to work with when you qualify?

Where do you see your career once you have successfully completed your social work degree? (Responses to inform a contemporary comparison with historic GSCC data on progression into SW practice).

How do you think gender might affect promotion within the profession?

Do you wish to remain primarily as a practitioner or enter management as soon as opportunities become available? (Explore further if appropriate).

How would you describe your sexual orientation? In what ways do you think it has affected your experience in relation to the course? (Informed by Christie's & Hicks' identified stereotypes about care vs. control)

- Which stereotype do you most relate to, the 'gentle-man' or the 'macho-hero'?

In your opinion, what do you think men bring to the social work profession?

Finally, within the context of the interview are there any questions / burning issues you'd like answer that have not been addressed?

To Conclude

- Thank you for your participation.
- Confirm participant is willing to let their interview become part of the research.
- Reiterate arrangements for data storage.

Source:

Jacob. S. A. & Furgerson, S. P., 2012. Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report* 17(6) 1-10.

APPENDIX H

INVIATION TO MALE ALUMNI TO PARTICIPATE

Dear Colleague

'Your University'

Important national research sponsored by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) into male perspectives of social work education and a career in social work, is being undertaken at '*Your University'*.

This letter invites you, as a former male social work student to be part of that research and by participating to inform a PhD thesis.

Your contribution would be to complete a questionnaire you should receive with this invitation. It's completely anonymous and may be returned by email to the address stated on the foot of the questionnaire.

Any reference in either the 'Participant Information Sheet' or the 'Consent Form' in regard to taking part in an interview should now be read as agreeing to complete the attached alumni questionnaire.

This is your opportunity to share your perceptions on social work education which could go on to develop a revised pedagogy for social work programmes.

I would be very grateful if you would consider completing the questionnaire to inform this study. Should you decide to do so, **please return to the below email address by: 14/11/2014.**

Many thanks & best wishes

David Galley, PhD Researcher & HEA Fellow.

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONAIRRE *SENT TO CONSENTING MALE ALUMNI*

Exploring the gender imbalance in social work: what are the perceptions of male social work students in qualifying UK programmes?

This questionnaire assumes that you identify as **male** and have **completed a qualifying social work programme** in the last five years at a UK university. Please complete as much or as little as you wish, if you'd rather not answer a question please leave it blank. The questionnaire is confidential and anonymous.

Your age: Your Ethnicity: Do you identify with a faith?:

What year and which University did you qualify as a social worker from:

Could you comment on your family background in terms of your parents and siblings educational attainment and subsequent careers and how they view gender roles (in terms of their attitude appropriate careers and gender), in particular their attitude to you qualifying as a social worker:

What is your academic background that led you onto a social work degree?

What jobs /work had you done before embarking on your social work degree?

What experience had you of working in the care sector prior to enrolling on your social work degree?

Have any role models affected your decision to become a social worker?

What inspired you to train as a social worker?

Why did you choose the university where you qualified in social work?

Do you know of other males wishing to become social workers who did not pursue this calling or gain a place on a social work programme, and do you know the reasons for this?

Did you have / did you express a preference for a specific area of practice in regard to practice placements? If so, why was that?

Have you experienced any problems in relation to the course / practice placements?

What would you suggest to improve the student experience on the course you qualified from?

Did you have any family/peer/other support for your studies when undertaking them? If so, what form did it take?

What challenges do you think gender, or your gender in particular creates on a social work course?

Please tell me about any advantages / disadvantages you perceive to being male on a social work course:

Please tell me about any advantages / disadvantages you perceive to being female on a social work course:

Where do you see your career now you have successfully completed your social work degree? For example, will you go into social work practice?

Should you go into practice / are in practice, is there any specific client group you would like to work with?

How do you think gender might affect promotion within social work?

Would you wish to remain a front-line practitioner or enter social work management as soon as the opportunity arose?

In your opinion, what do men bring if anything to the social work profession?

In the literature, stereotypes of male social workers are identified as either the 'gentle-man' – a thoughtful and empathetic practitioner or the 'macho-hero' - coming to the aid of the less fortunate and supporting female colleagues. Which of these, if either, do you identify with most and why?

How would you describe your sexual orientation and in what ways do you think this may have affected your experience of undertaking a social work degree?

Finally, is there anything you feel this questionnaire has missed, or any burning issues in regard to men in social work you would like to address?

Thank you for completing this anonymous and confidential questionnaire. When completed please return it to

APPENDIX J **DATA COMPARISONS**

Demographics & Values	N. IRELAND 1 (1st year BA, 3 yrs)	N. IRELAND 2 (1st year BA, 2 yrs)	N. IRELAND 3 (3rd year BA, 3 yrs)	N. IRELAND 4 (1st year BA, 3 yrs)	N. IRELAND 5 (1st year BA, 2 yrs)	N. IRELAND 6 (1st year BA, 3 yrs)
Age	34	28	50	50	39	25
Ethnicity	White, Northern Irish	White, Irish	White, European	White	White, British	White, Irish
Fathers Job **Mothers Job**	Bricklayer Housewife / Carer	Sheep Farmer Housewife	Farmer Care work / Housewife	Civil Engineering Instructor & Minister Nurse	Unknown Retired	Labourer Home care worker
Fathers ed. Attain **Mothers ed. attain**	Comp. Ed Comp. Ed	Comp. Ed Comp. Ed	Comp. Ed Comp. Ed	Uni College	Unknown Comp. Ed	Comp. Ed Comp. Ed.
Current Religious Position	Christian / Agnostic	None	Catholic	Christian	None	Catholic
Political values	Left Wing (Feminist)	Liberal	Disenfranchised / Right wing	None (politics should be avoided)	Anarchist / anti-capitalist	None

Home Town	Belfast	Donegal. Eire	Belfast	Belfast	Manchester	Trillick, Co. Tyrone
Sexual Orientation	Gay	Straight	Straight	Straight	Straight	Straight
Previous Job	Office Licence Manager. Banking	DWP: Benefits & Welfare	Electrician (self – employed). Construction. HGV Driver.	Police Officer (Hate Crime Liaison Officer)	Office work; BBC Information Researcher; Tesco – Manager.	Vehicle Salvage / EBay seller
Previous work experience	Housing Authority & Welfare Rights. Family Hostel.	Childline, NSPCC	Church / Community Group. Samaritans	Community Policing	N.I. Health Board (research in domiciliary services)	Youth Club Volunteer. Victim Support Volunteer.
Previous academic attainment	BA History. Postgrad in Teaching. BTEC & HND in HSC	BSc Psychology.	Technical college. Access Course: Health & Social Sciences	Access Course: Social Sciences. 7 'O' Levels.	Access Course. BA Psychology.	BA Building Surveying
Preferred placements	Mental Health. Criminal Justice. Child Abuse.	Looked after children.	Residential care	Looked after children / young people	Addictions / substance abuse. Children & families.	Older people. Children
Stated Personality	Soft / Reflective	Effeminate	Soft / Reflective	Soft / Reflective	Middle	Soft / Middle
Issues on Placement? Placement setting	N/A	N/A	Lack of resources / Shortage of contracted staff. Adult services.	N/A	N/A	N/A
BEM Androgyny	Feminine	Feminine	Androgynous	Androgynous	Feminine	Androgynous

THEMATIC ANALYSIS CODING EXAMPLE

Midlands – MSWS Interview 3

Legend: Motivation | Finance | Impact of family | Isolation | Age | Experience

Theme	Coding	Transcript
Finance	Barrier to social work education	MIDS 3: I decided 'Step Up' because I couldn't afford to go back to University to do a second degree that was not an option. DG: Yeah. MIDS 3: Had it not have been for this 'Step up' programme, I would probably have been stuck in an Accounting profession for the rest of my life. Which I would've hated, but I would've done in order to support my family. DG: Yes. MIDS 3: So this is sort of like that last chance if I'm completely honest. I came across it, I remember saying to one of my friends early on, whilst I was working in Accounting, that, do you know what, I'd, I've come across this social work department, doing their accounts obviously. And I thought, that's the sort of work I'd love to be doing, but I didn't think I could, because I didn't have a degree in Social work. So when I saw something about the 'Step up' programme, I was like that sounds perfect. DG: What issues have you encountered while you've been on the programme? MIDS 3: Well, I live in Stoke-on-Trent, but my placements are in Hereford. So that has been really difficult because I've got 4 kids and a wife to support as well, she's not working at the minute. And although the bursary's £20,000, once you take off your accommodation and travel to and from, it's been a real struggle, a real, I'm not gonna lie.
Familial influences	Attitudes of others	DG: So, are there any role models, is there anybody in particular that influenced you to become a social worker? MIDS 3: Not really, no, I wouldn't say there was. And in fact, if anything, people tried to put me off, cos my whole, my family, my friends were like, are you crazy? You could be earning a lot more money in accounting and what are you thinking? And, and you're very indecisive. Because I've had a few different jobs, and I think they were just more worried about whether I was serious about it or not. But if anything, people were trying to discourage me from doing it because they thought my career prospects would be much better in accounting. DG: Yeah. And have your family and friends been more supportive since? MIDS 3: My brother, who works in the Youth offending team, has really encouraged me, since, from the point where he realised that I was serious. He has, you know, he's said that it's a good profession and he's really encouraged me to work hard and he's been brilliant. Any my Mum kind of supports, my Dad's passed away, but my Mum kind of supports me in everything I do.
Sexual Orientation	Gender isolation	DG: Can I ask you what your sexual orientation is? Of course you don't need to answer. MIDS 3: Well I'm, yeah, I'm straight, but I can understand why people would think like that, if it is mainly females that do the profession. I remember something similar with primary school teachers. I don't know of anyone that I've come across in the profession, any males that I've encountered, but I haven't encountered many males on the course so it's difficult I haven't encountered any males that I, I know of as being gay. But if they were, it wouldn't surprise me. Do you, do you know what I mean?

Step up to social work

29 students present. 7 males (one mixed race)

Outside: 20° sunny.   Inside: 22°

10 AM

Large lecture room with tables grouped for groups of up to 9 students. The room has aspirational images of successful students in academic dress holding degree certificates.

All students in casual dress. Age range approximately between late 20s – to late 40s.

Session began with an introduction to the research with an opportunity to questions before I left the room, to enable students to discuss consent for the study with their lecturer. I was invited to return to the room and informs that the whole group the consented whereupon I thank the cohort and explained a bit more about the methodology underpinning the study in response to a question for more detail.

The lecturer introduced the guest speaker for the next two days, Dr Carly Spicer who will lead on the unit and substance misuse. Students were invited by Carly to reflect and share any previous work experience they had in this field. At this stage males of the cohort were more vocal and willing to share their working experiences than the females in the cohort. Many of these experiences were concerned with working with alcohol addiction.

Students were invited to fill out a tick box exercise, a self-assessment of their current knowledge level of certain issues within the subject area. Students took this as an opportunity for general discussion among themselves, with the males of the group noticeably more animated than females on the same tables. The whole group demonstrated an ability to get on well with others within the cohort, making for a lively atmosphere outside formal presentations. They appear to have formed quite close bond with each other.

The whole two days were introduced and reviewed. Another tick box exercise introduced the completion. Definitions of various illegal drugs were introduced and then discussed. At this point most questions were asked by the men in the group. Unrelated low murmur conversation then began on a table comprised solely of female students.

Student contributions demonstrated quite adept at working baseline knowledge of the subject during feedback from the tick box exercise.

Coffee break was then called giving me the opportunity of informal discussion with students. It would appear that most come from a background working in schools/HSC in various disciplines mainly in lower qualified roles. Step up to social work students receive bursaries equivalent to a living wage. This has enabled them to enter higher education while still supporting their families. The course runs for one year and students leave with a PG dip. The previous programme at this HEI was a Master's programme lasting 18 months. This program pulls in students from across central and northern England.

Lectures resumed with group work of defining the word drug. Free textbooks entitled the skilled helper – a client centred approach, were then handed out to students for them to keep, funded apparently by a partnership between the local authority and the University.

These were used to inform the unit being presented. An even gender representation was evident when feeding back concerning the definition. This demonstrated a working through of a comprehensive handout provided at the beginning of the session. The medical and social models were identified in relation to this subject and have been highlighted quite a few times.

The atmosphere of the lecturer was more direct than I have witnessed before. Strong views were expressed without perhaps enough opportunity to reflect and unpack those terms and the meanings behind them. The presenter may have picked up upon this as she immediately called the student self-reflection on their personal family experiences of substance misuse within emphasis on impact on themselves. A safe space was called for to enable and encourage this.

More animated conversation began between groups on each table in regard to drinking habits. This caused general hilarity among many groups. Students were then brought back after 10 minutes discussion to again feedback.

One male student felt empowered to share quite an intimate account of his and his families experience with alcohol. Discussions at this point were dominated by males in the room. Lunchbreak was not time specific, but when the session had naturally drawn to a close, within a 15 min range.

During the lunchbreak I conducted the first interview with the male student participant. In the afternoon a video from YouTube was shown demonstrating the effects of substance misuse. A student then joined the cohort who haven't been present earlier in the day. I silently handed her the participant information sheet and I reflected what my course of action might be if she withheld her informed consent. However, at that point she nodded, smiled and placed them to one side without looking at them, thereby delaying her consent.

Reflections – this cohort have developed a close bond between each other. This may have been out of necessity. The program is intense and condensed, perhaps the need to form support networks in this situation is greater than less condensed programs.

Selection criteria for the programme is rigorous and specific. Educated to degree level and paid HSC (or similar) experience. Attendance is monitored and their £20,000 bursary is dependent upon this and other factors, regularly reviewed by the panel of representatives from each of the five funding local authorities. Attendance is therefore excellence and contributions forthcoming (another factor for their progress on the programme and payment of their bursary). A marked difference from undergraduate social work programmes, where passing the academic work and success on placement is acceptable to qualify.
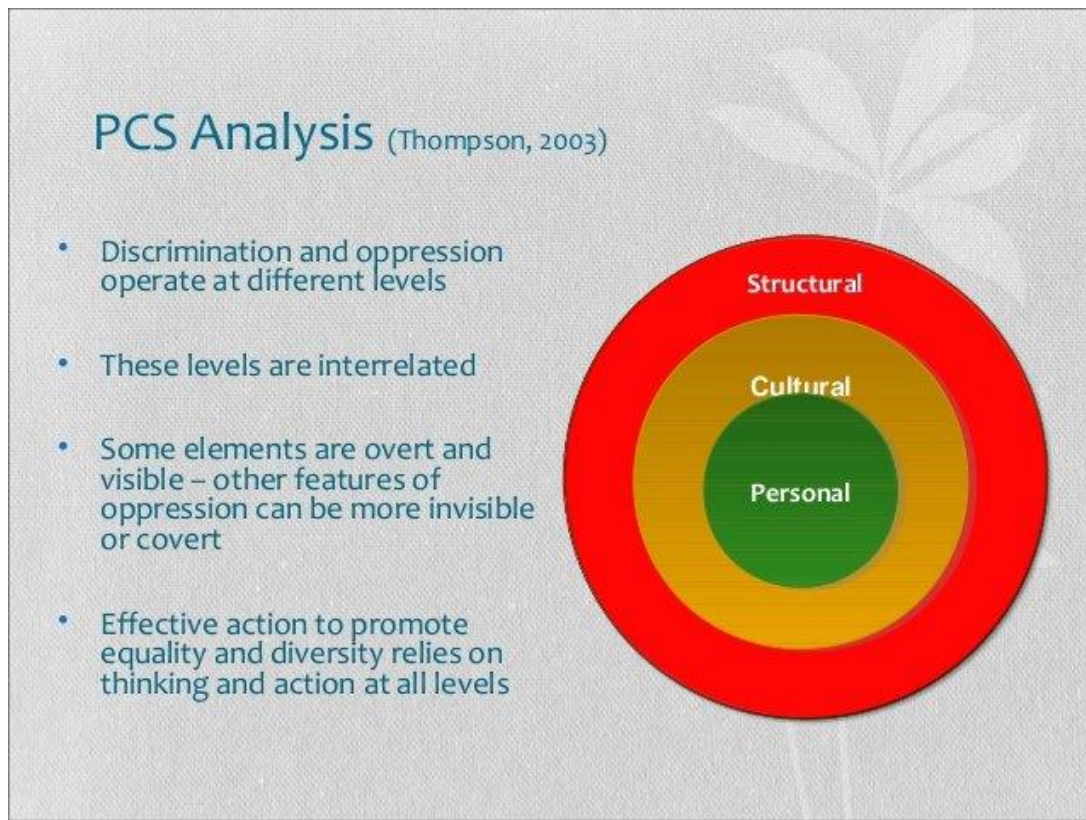
According to Thompson (2007), oppression can occur at **P**ersonal, **C**ultural and **S**tructural levels of society.

- **Personal** – oppression through individual thoughts, feelings, attitudes and actions.
- **Cultural** – shared ways of thinking and doing. Assumed consensus about that is 'right' and what is 'normal'.
- **Structural** – how oppression is simply a part of society. Oppression in law, policy and institutions.

FIGURES AND TABLES

Table 1 – Electronic literature search

Key concepts	Alternatives	Combinations
Masculine	Masculin*	1. Masculin* = 204,924
Gender	Gender*	2. Gender* = 2,550,462
Male hegemony	Male hegemon*	3. Male hegemon* = 1,085
Sexuality	Sexualit*	4. Sexualit* = 407,050
Social work	Social work*	5. Social work* = 881,450
Caring professions	Caring profession*	6. Caring profession* = 2,737
		7. (1 OR 2 OR 3 OR 4) AND (5 OR 6) = 45,210
Students	Student*	8. Student* = 10,527,628
		9. (1 OR 2 OR 3 OR 4) AND (5 OR 6) NOT 8 = 39,656
Limit: 1983 – 2014 = 38,297		
Language: English = 3,739		
Duplicates removed = 2,555		

Table 2 – Number and location of social work programmes offered within the UK

	Number of HEIs	Social Work undergraduate programmes offered	Social Work postgraduate programmes offered	Social Work PQ / PG. Dip offered	Total programmes offered
ENGLAND	82	75	48	29	152
SCOTLAND	7	6	6	6	18
WALES	5	5	1	0	6
NORTHERN IRELAND	4	4	0	0	4

Figures 1 - 4

The key to figures 1-4 is as follows:

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME OFFERED (in Red)

POST-GRADUATE PROGRAMME OFFERED (in Green)

POST QUALIFYING DIPLOMA / POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA OFFERED (in Blue)

Figure 1

QUALIFYING SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMMES IN ENGLAND

Source: HCPC, 2012

ANGLIA RUSKIN

BATH

BEDFORDSHIRE

BIRMINGHAM CITY

BOURNEMOUTH

BRADFORD

BRADFORD COLLEGE

BRIGHTON

BRISTOL

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE NEW

CANTERBURY CHRISTCHURCH

CENTRAL LANCASHIRE

CHESTER

CHICHESTER

CITY COLLEGE NORWICH

CORNWALL COLLEGE

COVENTRY

CUMBRIA

DE MONTFORT

DERBY

DURHAM

EAST ANGLIA

EDGE HILL

GLOUCESTER

HAVERING COLLEGE

HERTFORDSHIRE

HUDDERSFIELD

HULL

KEELE

KENT

LANCASTER

LEEDS METROPOLITAN

LEEDS

LEICESTER

LINCOLN

LIVERPOOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

LIVERPOOL HOPE

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES

MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN

NEW COLLEGE DURHAM

NORTHAMPTON

NORTH EAST WORCESTER COLLEGE

NORTHUMBRIA

NOTTINGHAM

NOTTINGHAM TRENT

OPEN UNIVERSITY

OXFORD BROOKES

PORTSMOUTH

PLYMOUTH

READING

RUSKIN COLLEGE

SALFORD

SHEFFIELD

SHEFFIELD HALLAM

SOUTHAMPTON

SOUTHAMPTON SOLENT

SOUTH ESSEX COLLEGE

STAFFORDSHIRE

STOCKPORT COLLEGE

SUFFOLK

SUNDERLAND

SUSSEX

TEESSIDE

WARWICK

WEST LONDON

WEST OF ENGLAND

WILTSHIRE COLLEGE

WINCHESTER

WOLVERHAMPTON

WORCESTER

YORK

LONDON

BRUNEL

EAST LONDON

GOLDSMITHS

GREENWICH

HAVERING COLLEGE

KINGSTON

LONDON METROPOLITAN

LONDON SOUTHBANK

MIDDLESEX

ROYAL HOLLOWAY

Figure 2

**QUALIFYING SOCIAL WORK
PROGRAMMES IN SCOTLAND**

Source: SSSC, 2011

DUNDEE

EDINBURGH

GLASGOW CALEDONIAN

ROBERT GORDON

STIRLING

STRATHCLYDE

WEST OF SCOTLAND

Figure 3

QUALIFYING SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMMES IN WALES

Source: CCW, 2011

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN

GLAMORGAN

GLYNDWR

SWANSEA

WALES

Figure 4

QUALIFYING SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMMES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Source: NISCC, 2012

Queens Belfast

South West College

Ulster

Table 3 – Social work students' methods of study 1990-2012

Social Work Students enrolled on UK qualifying programmes 1990 - 2012
Method of Study

	Other / Unknown	Distance Learning	Part -Time	Full - Time
■ Female Students	45%	3%	9%	44%
■ Male Students	42%	4%	10%	45%
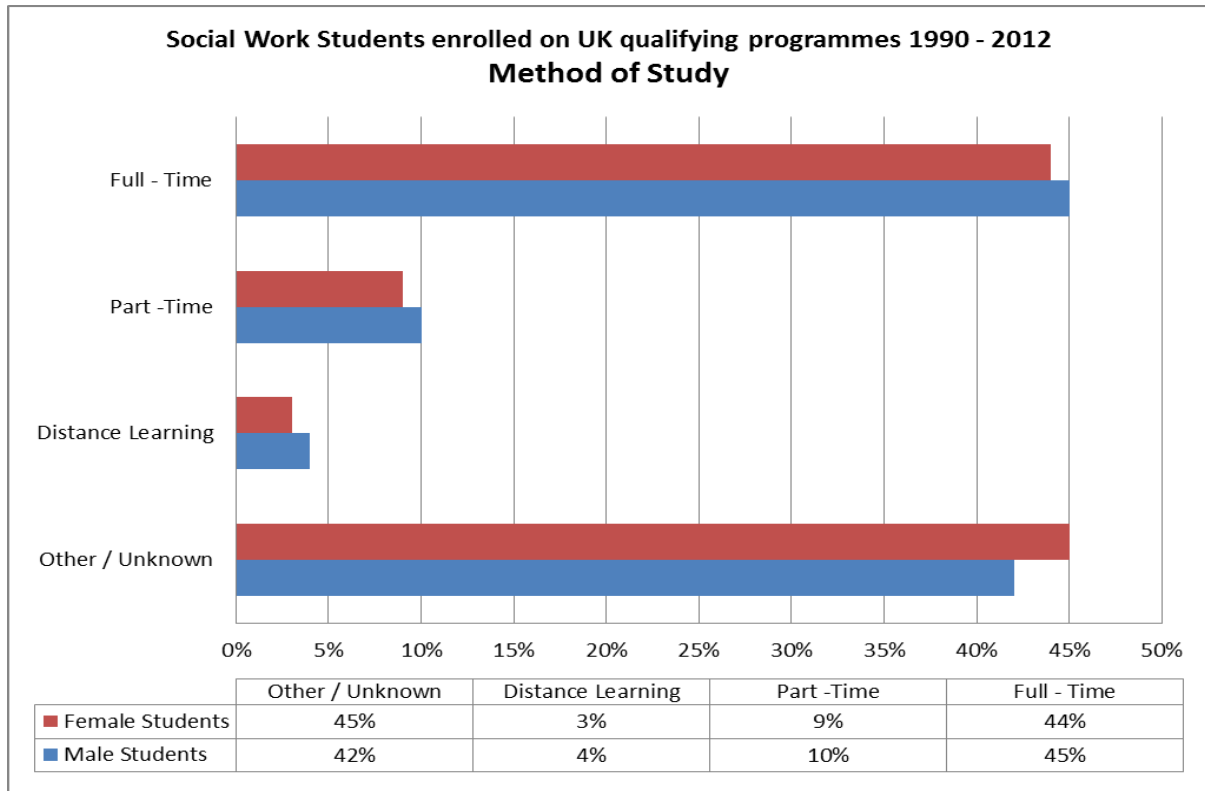
Source data: ETIS Database

Table 4 – Ethnicity of social work students 1990-2012

Social Work Students enrolled on UK qualifying programmes 1990 - 2012
Ethnicity

	Not Provided	Any other ethnic category	Other White background	Other Mixed background	Other Black background	Caribbean	Asian	African	Irish	Welsh	Scottish	English	British
■ Female Students	13%	2%	2%	0%	0%	5%	3%	4%	1%	0.75%	1.50%	13%	52%
■ Male Students	13%	2%	2%	2%	0%	4%	4%	7%	1%	0.70%	2%	12%	51%
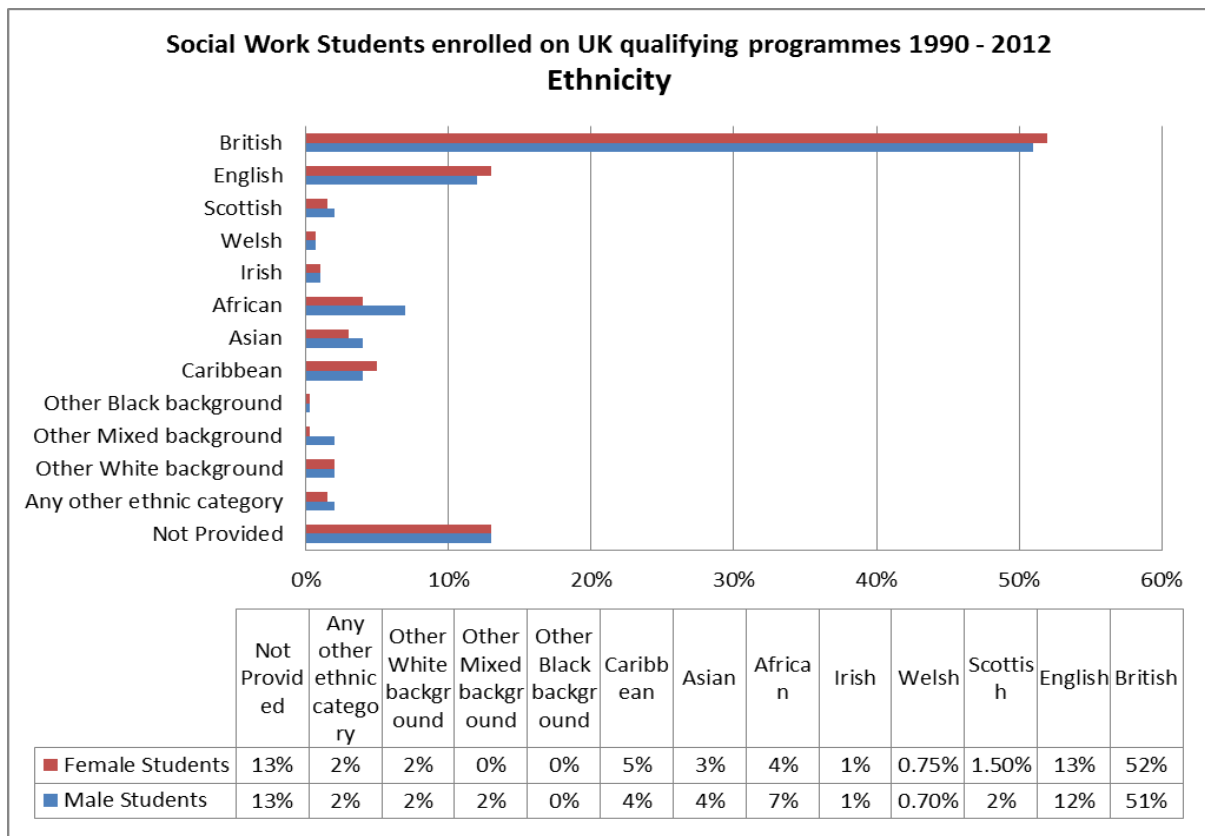
Table 5 – Entry routes of participants into social work qualifying programmes

Highest previous qualification	England (n = 12)	Scotland (n = 9)	Wales (n = 7)	N. Ireland (n = 6)	
Other Degree	8	3	7	3	21 = 62%
A Level	1				1 = 3%
HND/other Dip	1	4			5 = 15%
Access	2	2		3	7 = 21%

Table 6 – Ethnicity of study participants

Ethnicity	England (n = 12)	Scotland (n = 9)	Wales (n = 7)	N. Ireland (n = 6)	
White British	7	4	4	2	17 = 50%
White Scottish		5			5 = 15%
White Irish	2		1	3	6 = 18%
North European	1			1	2 = 6%
Black African	1		1		2 = 6%
Pakistani	1		1		2 = 6%

Table 7 – Disclosed sexual orientation of study participants

Sexual Orientation	England (n = 12)	Scotland (n = 9)	Wales (n = 7)	N. Ireland (n = 6)	
Straight	11	7	3	5	26 = 76%
Gay	1	2	3	1	7 = 21%
Bi			1		1 = 3%

Table 8 – The personality traits of MSWS participants

BEM Androgyny test results	England (n = 12)	Scotland (n = 9)	Wales (n = 7)	N. Ireland (n = 6)	
Masculine					0 = 0%
Nearly Masculine	3	1	2		6 = 18%
Androgynous	8	8	5	5	26 = 76%
Nearly Feminine				1	1 = 3%
Feminine	1				1 = 3%

Table 9 – Religious affiliations of MSWS participants

	England *(n = 12)*	Scotland *(n = 9)*	Wales *(n = 7)*	N. Ireland *(n = 6)*	
Christian	2		1	2	5 = 15%
Catholic	1	1		2	5 = 15%
Muslim	1				1 = 3%
Spiritualist			1		1 = 3%
Agnostic	1	1	2		4 = 12%
Atheist	4	2	1		7 = 21%
None	1	4	2	2	9 = 26%
Unstated	2	1			3 = 9%

Table 10 – Political ideologies supported by MSWS participants

Politics/ideology supported	England *(n = 12)*	Scotland *(n = 9)*	Wales *(n = 7)*	N. Ireland *(n = 6)*	
Left / Labour	3	1	1	1	6 = 18%
Social Democrat	3			1	4 = 12%
Right / Conservative			2	1	3 = 9%
None	4	3	3	2	12 = 35%
Decline to answer	2				2 = 6%
Other		5	1	1	7 = 21%

Table 11 – Statistics detailing research participants and research sites

HEI Location / Programme Year	South Coast	London	Midlands	Scotland	N. Ireland	Wales	Totals
1st Year Undergraduate	33 (3)	64 (8)		50 (5)	112 (13)		259 (29)
2nd Year Undergraduate	26 (1)	50 (7)		49 (6)	89 (10)		214 (24)
3rd Year Undergraduate	56 (5)	54 (7)		60 (8)	107 (18)		277 (38)
4th Year Undergraduate				43 (4)			43 (4)
*'Step-Up' Programme			31 (7)				31 (7)
1st Year Masters	17 (2)	5 (0)		31 (7)		47 (5)	100 (14)
2nd Year Masters	24 (5)	2 (0)		28 (4)		47 (7)	101 (16)
Total number of students	156 (16)	175 (22)	31 (7)	271 (32)	308 (41)	94 (12)	1035 (130)
Total number of MSWSs as a percentage of social work students	10%	13%	23%	12%	13%	13%	**13%**
Number of group observations	2	0	2	3	2	3	12
MSWS participants interviewed	6	1	4	9	6	5	31
Responses to emailed questionnaires						3	3
MSWSs interviewed as a percentage of the total male cohort	37.5%	4.5%	57%	28%	15%	42%	**26%**

Key:
Total number of students enrolled on cohort year: **00**
Total number of male students enrolled within cohort year: *(00)*
  Course not offered at location:
* For an explanation of the 'Step Up' to social work programme please see …

Table 12 - The stages of thematic analysis (adapted from Braun and Clarke, 2013: 202-03)

Stages of Thematic Analysis	
Stage	The process
1. Familiarisation with the data	Data preparation and transcription
2. Initial coding generation	Reading and re-reading transcriptions. Becoming familiar with data. Noting initial points of interest.
3. Searching for themes based on the initial coding	Completing initial coding. Linking codes to potential themes, gathering all data to potential themes.
4. Review of the themes	Developing emergent themes by revisiting earlier stages. Producing a thematic map showing categories and the relationship between them.
5. Theme definition and labelling	Refining by searching for connections between emergent themes. Determining names and definitions for each theme.
6. Report writing	Finalising the analysis. Selection of vivid extract examples which relate to the research questions and literature. Production of the scholarly report.

Table 13 – Practice placement preferences of participants

Fields of Practice	England *(n =12)*	Scotland *(n = 9)*	Wales *(n = 7)*	N. Ireland *(n = 6)*	
Children & Families	9	4	3	5	21 = 62%
Disability	2				2 = 6%
Mental health		4	1	1	6 = 18%
Adults/Older people		1	3	2	6 = 18%
Other*	2	8	1	2	13 = 38%
Undecided		1			1 = 3%

Note: *Other preferred fields of practice were: Probation (1); Criminal Justice (8) (6 in Scotland); Domestic Violence (1); Drugs & Alcohol (3). Some participants stated preference for more than one field of practice.