Bullying in schools:
A shared understanding

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Acknowledgements

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to Alan, Joanna and Amie, for the space they gave me to indulge. Also my parents, William John and Sarah Margaret Doreen Davies, with grateful thanks for all their encouragement and love.

Abstract

This study reports on the understanding of the definition of bullying by students and staff in a secondary school setting. The aim of the study was to explore whether there was a shared understanding of bullying and if there were any notable differences between the two groups of participants. Adopting a qualitative approach, and organising the data collected from semi structured interviews thematically, which discussed six vignettes and followed with questions relating to the participants knowledge and involvement of antibullying policy in their settings. The research was undertaken in two large secondary schools in south Wales and explored the perspectives of students and a range of staff across both settings. There were 39 participants, 12 of whom were staff, school 1 had 19 participants and school 2 had 20. The study found that the participants understanding and defining of bullying is informed and drawn from the educational psychology definition of bullying, involving an imbalance of power, intention, repetition and impact. There was little evidence of the impact of wider social, cultural or political influences which shaped the identity of individuals or groups. A notable difference between the two groups was the reference of young people to the emotional impact and its effect on agency, coupled with their reluctance to ascribe labels such as bully or victim to individuals. In contrast staff drew on a deficit model of the child, ascribing labels to deficiency in the individual that needed to be rectified through behaviour management. Drawing on Foucauldian concepts this study explores how the dominant discourses on bullying enables school bullying to be conceptualisation as primarily rooted in the individual. Thereby denying staff and students opportunities for exploring how power relations and social oppression contribute and may offer alternative solutions to the problem of bullying. The conclusion suggests that there needs to be an analysis of the dynamic and fluid power relations that exist in the intersecting relationships between individual, groups and communities that widen the lens of observation from its focus on the individual to an examination of the social, cultural and political factors that influence and drive the conceptualisation of identity.

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1. Introduction

There is a wealth of statistics in both academic literature, third sector organisations, the media and research by government departments that support the view that young people and children are affected by bullying. *Beth Nawr* (Children's Commissioner for Wales 2019) reports bullying is highlighted as a cause for concern for children, parents and carers alongside professionals. A *Survey into the Prevalence and Incidence of School Bullying* (WAG 2010) found that 44% of year 7 students reported being bullied in the last school year. Research by the Department for Education (DFE 2015) reported that 40% of young people were bullied. The Commissioner's survey, highlighted a disparity, with 59% of 11 to 18 year olds stating that bullying was a concern, which contrasts with 5% for professionals. Bullying is mentioned frequently in main stream media and is often cited as a cause for distressing and long lasting impact. This prompts the question: what do we mean when we use the term bullying? If we were to ask a child or young person, a parent, a teacher and academic or indeed a policy maker, how would they define and describe bullying?

1.2 Motivation and rationale for the study

My interest in bullying was born out of personal experience as a parent to a child who was bullied throughout school. Also in my professional role as teacher and education adviser, I was struck by the repeated testimony of children who claimed that staff, more particularly teachers in schools, ignored or responded ineffectively to incidents of what they perceived as bullying. My interest in exploring the differences in describing and defining bullying between adults and students in a school setting grew as part of my role which involved providing advice and insight into the problem of bullying and how to resolve it. Are there differences in the way students and staff define bullying, and if so, how could we find more effective interventions to prevent bullying or intervene effectively?

"Bullying" is a word which provokes strong reactions in both children and adults. Individuals can often vividly recount experiences they describe as bullying. The word and indeed the behaviour could be described as emotive, with individuals expressing a range of feelings from anger to denial. Parents, children and the

media often describe bullying as behaviours which cause harm, distress or upset and often call for strong action in response. Yet despite interest and research in this area over decades, including numerous policy approaches and practice interventions in schools, it appears that bullying remains a key issue for children, parents and policy makers (Olweus 1978, Salmivalli et al. 1999; WAG 2003; WG 2011). Quantitative research point to figures of between 15 to 45% of children affected by bullying in schools, a figure which has seen little change over decades (Whitney & Smith 1993; Hunt & Jensen 2007; WG 2009; WG 2010; Ditch the Label 2014; Estyn 2014). Whilst there have been numerous studies that have looked at definition, there are relatively few that have explored the differences between student and staff understanding and defining of bullying (Bradshaw et al. 2007). There has been scant interest in teacher's perceptions of bullying in school (Craig et al. 2000) and those of students (Espelage & Swearer 2008).

Since Dan Olweus' seminal work on bullying *Aggression in the Schools: Bullies and Whipping Boys (*1978*)* and he has continued to provide an influential and persuasive body of work. Olweus' work centralised the idea that bullying was connected to individual personality. Much research has continued to focus on the behaviour, motivation or deficiencies of the individuals involved in bullying. There is a recognition of the complexity and challenges, whilst ongoing research continues to broaden and explore a variety of areas, including psychological, socio-ecological and sociological and feminist approaches. The establishment of a clear definition is ongoing, alongside a plethora of influential preventative and intervention strategies. This broadening of interest looks beyond the individual and their behaviours at the social and contextual understanding of bullying as a systemic issue. The difficulty of explaining a persistent, dynamic and complex issue is fraught with ongoing challenges, not least of which is the variety of nuanced ways in which bullying can be expressed through individuals and groups, in multiple and changing contexts. The challenges of reducing or eliminating bullying remains a constant. Not least of this is the understanding, interpretation and defining of bullying for those in the school context. Both students and staff in school settings can offer an insightful perspective. Illuminating differences between their understanding and defining of bullying might prove beneficial in developing further strategies to prevent bullying.

Policy development has become an increasingly important element of the discourse for schools when dealing with bullying. Espelage states "research has increasingly informed bullying prevention, policy and legislative efforts" (2016, p768) with national and local policies informing schools of definitions, interventions and preventative strategies. *Respecting others: Anti-bullying overview* (WG 2011) is heavily reliant on the Olweus definition and includes impact, intention and repetition, alongside an imbalance of power. The discourse inherent in these policy documents set particular conceptualisations around bullying and situate the way in which it is described within contextual and historical limits. The aim of this study is to explore both staff and students' understanding and definition of bullying in a secondary school context in Wales, including their awareness of school policy. This research will utilise a Foucauldian framework to explore how students and staff define bullying in a secondary school setting, drawing on Foucault's work to examine how individuals are influenced through the systems, structures and network of knowledge in which they participate.

The study adopts a qualitative approach through an examination of government and school policy documents, using six vignettes to prompt discussion on the definition of bullying. This will help offer insights into what has shaped meaning for the participants with opportunities to explore and critically reflect on their responses, examining any differences in the factors used to define bullying through the discourses utilised.

The Structure of the thesis

There are seven chapters in the thesis. This chapter deals with the intention of the thesis and introduces the theoretical ideas on which it has drawn.

Chapter 2 is the first of the literature reviews and discusses aspects of research that centre on bullying from a psychological and behavioural approach and the problematic issue of definition and the factors that affect interpretation of bullying. Included in this is a review and discussion of the research literature on more recent sociological approaches to bullying, looking at alternative interpretations of bullying and how they are embedded and adopted through systems, procedures, cultures and wider society.

Chapter 3 identifies bullying as a social construct adopting a Foucauldian approach as means of analysing the complexity and diversity of discourse, actions and interactions related to describing bullying.

Chapter 4 describes and discusses the research methods that were used in the generation of data and its analysis. Describing and critically analysing how the rationale for the fieldwork were taken and includes details of the field and its participants. Issues of ethics, validity and efficacy are discussed and the limitations of the study are highlighted.

Chapter 5 includes an analysis of the content of government and the participating schools antibullying policies. Critically examining how bullying is presented in these documents and how this reflects the current discourse around bullying. It includes findings from the semi structured interviews of students and staff, addressing their awareness and knowledge of policy documents and their participation in its development.

Chapter 6 Uses the data from semi structured interviews with 39 participants to discuss how staff and students in schools understand and define bullying in the discourse they use. Examining participant responses to the vignettes and illustrating their use of different discourses and revealing areas which are absent or marginalised followed by a discussion of the challenges facing schools in addressing the problem of bullying and the need to look at alternative conceptualisations.

Chapter 7 is a summation of the main findings. Discussing the research question it aims to offer concluding remarks that address the conceptualisation and defining of bullying in a school setting, discussing possible alternatives and the implications for practice. Discussions for the limitations of the study and further avenues of research end the thesis.

2. Literature Review

This chapter explores the literature which conceptualises bullying in schools. The discourse in both empirical literature and in popular culture is varied and complex reflecting the difficulties for students, school staff, parents, academics and policy makers in defining and describing bullying. Prevalence, impact, involvement and definition are all areas that continue to be of interest to academic research. Meyer (2008) suggests there are omissions and silences, especially in evidencing the perceptions and experiences of students and adults in schools. The review explores the literature that reflects differing aspects of definition including the psychological and sociological approaches.

My review and discussion is based on an initial literature search conducted in 2015. The databases ERIC, British education index and Web of science which identified relevant publications were searched using the following key words bullying AND vis *OR definition *OR schools *OR policy *OR practice *OR teachers *OR students. The criteria for inclusion consisted peer-reviewed articles published written in English. Articles were then included after examination of the abstract and reading and review of the text. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were included.

2.1 Impact of bullying

Bullying in schools has been described as the most common kind of violence in schools (Batsche & Knoff 1994; Pepler et al. 2006). Suicides of school children in Norway and the UK, alongside American school shootings have all contributed to greater interest in the problem. Investigations into school tragedies such as the Columbine shootings have attributed bullying as a factor, suggesting that the perpetrators have been bullied by their peer group (Muschert & Peguero 2010). The impact of bullying is described as persistent and pervasive, with health, social and economic consequences lasting well into adulthood (Hazler et al. 2001). The literature also suggests links between bullying and future criminal activity, for both the victim and the bully (Farrington & Ttofi 2011; Bender & Lösel

2011; Renda et al. 2011). Bullying in schools is seen to inhibit both academic (Juvonen et al. 2011; Lacey & Cornell 2013) and social progress (Sharp 1995). Work in the area of domestic violence has demonstrated strong links between bullying behaviour and future involvement in this issue (Baldry 2003; Corvo & de Lara 2010).

2.2 Prevalence and incidence

Incidence and prevalence data (Whitney & Smith 1993; Rivers & Noret 2009; WAG 2010) confirms that many children living in the United Kingdom experience bullying, including cyber bullying. Evidence from ChildLine (La Fontaine 1991; NSPCC 2015; Children's Commissioner for Wales 2019) indicates that bullying is still a major concern for children and young people, with at least one in three children reporting that they have experienced bullying. An annual antibullying survey conducted by Ditch the Label (2014) suggests 45% of young people that they surveyed suffered from bullying. Children perceived by their peers as being "different", in terms of their sexuality (Hunt & Jensen 2007) or having a special educational need or disability (Mencap 2007; Purdy & Mc Guckin 2014) are more vulnerable to bullying. National studies on bullying (Livesey et al. 2007; WG 2009; WG 2010) indicate that approximately 40% of children experience bullying, with some variation according to age, child characteristics and type of bullying (Fekkes et al. 2005; James 2010). These figures have demonstrated little change over the past decade.

International and national figures for the incidence of bullying remain a concern. Studies in school populations including the United Kingdom (Sharp & Smith 1991), Europe, Spain (Ortega et al. 2004), North America (Espelage & Swearer 2003), Scandinavia (Olweus 1978; Salmivalli et al. 2011) and Australia (Rigby & Slee 1991) have all reported children being bullied on a regular basis. The percentages range from 5% up to 40%. A 2010 survey commissioned by Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) was used to establish a base line figure for prevalence and incidence of bullying in Welsh schools. The survey utilised a self-completion questionnaire, drawn from the revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (Olweus 1996) and completed by 7,448 pupils from 167 schools, with pupils in years 4, 6, 7 and 10. The results showed the proportion of pupils who reported being bullied within the last school year were 47% in year 6, 44% in year 7 and 25% in year 10 (WAG 2010). Problems with assessing the scale of the

problem are inherent in the methods of collection, the time frames and socio metric factors such as age, gender, ethnicity and disability. Whilst a range of self-report measures, surveys and questionnaires are used in the collection of data, the purpose, quality and methodology used varies, as does the analysis of the data. There is a scarcity of observational data that can be used to compare and validate the findings.

Welsh schools have not consistently collected and recorded data on bullying in their settings. The introduction of the *Equality Act* (2010) requiring school to address inequalities for pupils with protected characteristics through a strategic equality plan, which requires schools to look more closely at issues of inequity. Estyn's *Action on Bullying* (2014) has also highlighted good practice in relation to the recording of bullying in schools; this was with particular reference to the protected characteristics. Questions remain as to whether this will bring about change in the Welsh school context of recognising, responding and recording of bullying incidents by teachers and schools.

2.3 Defining Bullying

Whilst Olweus is recognised as a pioneer for his work in schools in Norway (Olweus 1978), important contributions have been made from Australia (Rigby & Slee 1991), North America (Swearer & Doll 2001), Europe (Ortega et al. 2004), Asia (Yoneyama & Naito 2003) and the UK (Smith & Sharp 1992). Much of this work has served to raise the profile of bullying as a social phenomenon, but has also had an impact on national policies and practice in schools and classrooms. This is evidenced in the plethora of national policies, guidance, preventative and intervention programmes that schools engage with. Olweus's pioneering work (1978) has served to establish the debate regarding definition, the continuing academic debate has provided a variety of nuanced definitions. How these definitions apply in practice to schools generally and more specifically to students and teachers and other adults is less well defined. Boulton et al.(2002) suggests that few researchers have directly addressed the issue of definition. Much of the research work around bullying in school imposes already formulated definitions. Rarely has work been done to explore the subtleties in understanding and the

practical application of this knowledge by either students or teachers in recognising, responding to and recording bullying behaviours.

Definitions of bullying found in policy tend to be drawn from the psychological approach to bullying (Olweus 1993; Smith 2000; Salmivalli et al. 1996) which focuses on modifying and changing behaviour in the individuals involved in what is primarily viewed as a group process. The psychological approach focuses on individual behaviours and looks at social competence and encompasses the arguments of social information processing and theory of mind (Arsenio & Lemerise 2001). Theory of mind is based on the understanding that children become increasingly more competent at predicting and explaining others' actions depending on their previous experience of their actions, intentions, and perspectives. The ability to attribute the thoughts and feelings of others helps children to see and make sense of what others are doing. Arguments have been ongoing in this area with Sutton et al. (1999a) contesting the notion of 'deficit' put forward by Crick and Dodge (1996) which argue that bullies are better at reading social cues and enjoy inflicting suffering on their victims. The issue of social competence is fraught with difficulties. Arsenio and Lemerise (2001) argue that to view bullies as socially inept or skilful manipulators is simplistic and social competence must make reference to both moral and emotional aspects of bullying behaviour.

Exploration of nuanced understandings is needed to explore and gain insight into the problems associated with perceptions of bullying behaviours in schools. Whilst there might be some features of bullying specific to a particular society (Kanetsuna et al. 2006) arguments have been made by Smith et al. (2002) that there are significant cultural differences in defining bullying. He points to the differences between the two; ijime includes the construct of power being displayed through domination in social settings, with the effect causing either physical or emotional trauma to individuals within the group. In European, Australian and American definitions there is general agreement that bullying consists of several key elements (Rigby & Slee 1991; Slee 1995a; Baldry & Farrington 2000) including intention, repetition and power. Little emphasis is placed on social dynamics and group processes with Smith et al. (2002) calling for "situational" meanings to be fully recognised and understood.

In the national context of Wales the definition of bullying found in *Respecting others* (WG 2011) includes many of the criteria commonly associated with bullying, the deliberate intention to be hurtful; the difficulty of victims to defend themselves; repeated incidents, with the added provision that a one off incidence can be traumatising; and taking into consideration the child's perspective is noted as important. Examination of school antibullying policies suggests that general descriptions of bullying bear resemblance to a subset of aggressive behaviours which have been described as negative behaviours which are intended to hurt other individuals (Smith et al. 2002). This terminological distinction implies that there are defined concepts and characteristics which should not be used to include other forms of aggressive behaviour. Hunter et al.(2007) argue that bullying is seen as a distinct form of peer victimization, often specifically related to behaviours between peers. In highlighting the negative nature of bullying behaviours, there is an implicit understanding that accidental behaviours, which might cause harm, are not necessarily either bullying or aggression. Olweus (2012) identified two factors crucial to differentiating between aggression and bullying: aggression is viewed as a single act, whereas bullying comprises repeated acts. Whilst research definitions generally agree that bullying is deliberate, intentional and repeated, it is argued that power is the defining element. The imbalance of power between victim and perpetrator distinguishes it from conflict (Olweus 1993; Smith 2000). The emotional and psychological elements are what explain its difference; lack of remorse or empathy, allied with an unwillingness to seek a resolution is a striking feature which differentiates it from conflict.

The dynamic interaction between bully and victim (Juvonen & Graham 2014) links to the suggestion that targeted intimidation or humiliation of an individual who is deemed to have less power either physically or psychologically, makes the target feel powerless (Smith et al. 2002; Olweus 1993). It is this systematic abuse of power (Smith 2000; Smith et al. 2002) which makes it difficult for the victim to defend themselves and often leaves victims fearful of further attacks. Originally these definitions pointed to behaviour that occurred without provocation, but Pikas (2002) suggests proactive victims are also part of the complex dynamic of bullying behaviours. In the literature Guerin and Hennessy (2002) point to little replication of findings of the importance of power imbalance. Suggesting that for 60% of their study physical power was not an issue. A relatively unexplored area

is the individual's feelings of "oppression" (Slee 1995). This is yet another element added to the already complex definition of bullying.

Whitney and Smith (1993) in modifying the Olweus definition, point to the aggressive nature of the behaviour, alongside the imbalance of power aligned with an element of repetition. Whilst Olweus (1993) specifies that repetition is a necessary component of bullying, arguments have been made by Juvonen and Graham (2014) that a one off incident can have traumatic and ongoing effects, which give rise to a feeling of powerlessness and ongoing fear. The recognition that a "one off incident can leave a learner traumatised" (WG 2011, p2) still gives no clear indication of what a "one off incident" might look like in the course of a school day, leaving individuals, groups and schools open to interpreting their own understanding. This one off incident then has to sit alongside the general understanding that repetition is an important element in the defining of bullying. This raise questions of practice for schools. Do schools discount one-off incidents? Is there a general lack of recognition of the victim's feelings?

The thoughts and feelings of the victims of bullying have received scant attention in the earlier research, with Naylor et al. (2001) being a notable exception in this area. In this study defining bullying also takes account of the victim's feelings irrespective of the intentionality behind the behaviour. Intention to hurt is seen as an integral factor for bullies and victims, "a form of social interaction" (Cuadrado-Gordillo 2012, p1904) and should be viewed in the context of their wider social contexts. Smith et al. (2002) point to the negative actions involved in bullying behaviours, with the intention to cause damage to relationship. This is in contrast to Guerin and Hennessey's (2002) research which discusses views of children, indicating that intention was not considered as part of their construct of bullying. Cuadrado-Gordillo (2012) suggests that not only do students' interpretation and conceptualisation of bullying differ from than that of teachers, but it also depends on the roles they play, whether they are victims, bystanders or bullies.

Studies have shown that students do not agree with the view of adult researchers about specific behaviours. Boulton et al. (1999) suggest that there are concerns with the way in which pupils conceptualise bullying and their attitudes towards it. Evidence suggests that younger children use the term "bullying" to describe any kind of behaviour that appears to cause hurt, even situations that involve no power difference (Smith et al. 1999). Repetition, intention and power imbalance

were rarely mentioned. Studies suggest that younger children focus on and highlight physical acts, whilst adolescents have a greater awareness of relational bullying (Guerin & Hennessy 2002; Naylor et al. 2006). The changes in incidents of bullying over time reflected in surveys (WAG 2010) might be affected by issues such as organisational factors, involving greater separation of age groups in communal spaces, combined with increased social and cognitive skills (Naylor et al. 2006). Evidence points to the lack of congruence between children's definitions and those conceptualised by researchers (Vaillancourt et al. (2008).

There is evidence that gender plays a role in children's construction and understanding of bullying. Research has suggested that girls use relational and indirect forms of behaviour such as social exclusion; whilst boys engage in direct forms of bullying such as physical violence (Bjorkqvist et al. 1992; Whitney & Smith 1993; Rivers & Smith 1994; Crick & Grotpeter 1995). A question not fully explored in the psychological research is whether these gender differences also play a part in teacher's recognition and responses to bullying. Similarly Monks et al. (2006) examine age differences in pupils' and parents' definitions of the term bullying illustrating the differences between older and younger children. Older children in this study were able to distinguish between social and relational acts, with younger children less concerned about power differences and repetition of actions. Whilst highlighting that cognitive factors in the understanding of bullying across developmental age, little attention is paid to the organisational social and cultural factors and how these intersect with gender and age. Ringrose and Renolds (2006) argue that girls and girlhood are carefully regulated to produce normative and deviant girls through the use of 'mean' and 'violent' labelling and categorising, which is embedded in both class and race specific discourse around issues of femininity, through class and race-specific categories of femininity.

2.4 Bullying perspectives

The literature on the different types of bullying tends to concentrate on either students or teachers. There is a scarcity of qualitative evidence that examines and compares these two groups. Boulton (1999) suggests in his comparative study of English and Swedish school children's conceptualisation of bullying, that understanding of bullying is dynamic and changing. It also includes a range factors: gender, social, historical, geographical, contextual and developmental.

This would warrant further exploration of students' and staff understanding of definition and the factors they take account of. Research that also explores issues of organisation and structure in schools through a social ecological framework would give insight into the multi-layered complexities of bullying for both students and teachers (Purdy & McGuckin, 2014).

Whilst bullying is often perceived to be motivated by different intentions, to intimidate or to provoke a reaction, its dynamic nature means that it manifests itself in a variety of different ways, physical, relational, and more recently cyber bullying. Crick and Grotpeter (1995) argue that children adopt methods that will hurt their victims. Cyber bullying is a relatively new phenomenon and there is a growing body of research (Nocentini et al. 2010; Li et al. 2011; Olweus 2012) examining its conceptual and theoretical background. Ringrose (2013) highlights the narratives employed in emerging digital media and how this is negotiated both within school and community contexts. Issues of definition and participant engagement with regard to the similarities and differences of face to face or cyber bullying are relatively new and add to the challenges faced by teachers and students in dealing with bullying in schools. When incidents of cyber bullying take place, anecdotal testimony from schools reveal they often have difficulty in resolving issues that arise.

Evidence in the literature suggests that teachers view bullying as a behaviour that has serious consequences for students (Maunder et al. 2010), but conversely teachers tend to underestimate the extent of bullying that takes place. A variety of quantitative studies indicate a disparity between teacher's perceptions of the incidence of bullying in their own schools (Dake et al. 2003). Exploration of the difficulties or barriers that prevent teacher recognition and intervention are discussed by Hazler et al. (2001) suggesting that behaviours which halt teaching and learning, such as physical aggression, whether bullying or not, are recognised and dealt with. Conversely low level relational or indirect bullying, such as social exclusion or name calling are often ignored, despite children highlighting these as an area of concern. The difference between student conceptions of bullying and those of teachers may account for the difference in prevalence, and point to the need for bullying to be viewed through the child's perspective rather than the adult (Naylor et al. 2006). Addressing the implications of teachers' limited conceptualisations of bullying they argue that there is a need of more training, alongside improved communication of research findings.

In their comparative study of teachers' in the U.K. and the U.S.A., Bauman and Del Rio (2005) discuss teachers knowledge, attitudes and beliefs around bullying. It is argued that for teachers to be effective in dealing with bullying, responses have to be consistent; despite the belief by teachers that bullying was a serious issue, they often overestimate their efficacy in recognising and dealing with it. In a study of teachers' understandings by Mishna et al.(2005) they highlighted several factors which could influence teachers' understanding and responses to bullying. Organisational support issues and whole school ethos are stated as elements that inform the decision. But teachers were also influenced by their view of the victimised student and how the victim's behaviour impacted on the situation (Purdy & McGuckin 2014). Pikas' (2002) provocative victim mentioned earlier, is a factor that may characterise teachers' responses to students.

Lack of qualitative research into teachers' understanding of bullying and the factors that influence their decisions is a theme that runs consistently throughout the research literature. If we are to fully understand the disparity between student perceptions of bullying and teachers' responses, a qualitative study that looks at the views of both in an active school situation is needed. Further to this, schools are not inhabited just by students and teachers, but also a large number of adults in varying roles that have contact with the students. Whilst there is some evidence of work with parents, there is little evidence of how adults outside of a teaching role interpret and understand bullying. This scarcity of evidence exploring teachers' and students' understanding of bullying, including studies exploring relationships in both areas including differences in age, gender and interventions adds weight to the argument that there are still areas of omission in the study of bullying.

2.5 Participant Roles in bullying

It is acknowledged in the literature (Olweus 1978; Arsenio & Lemerise 2001; Pepler et al. 2006) that bullying is an aggressive act carried out by individuals, but often condoned or endorsed by the behaviour of bystanders. Pro-social skills and cooperative behaviour are an area of focus which has received growing attention, interventions such as KiVa, a program originating in Finland that seeks to influence the group norms and to build children's skills to encourage

constructive intervention and support for victims. KiVa is predicated on changing the role of bystanders, with the aim of reducing the opportunity for the bully to gain status by their aggressive actions is used to change the behaviour of individuals within the bullying cycle (Rigby & Slee 1993; Salmivalli et al. 1996 & 2011). The importance of context, roles and skills utilised by the various individuals in the situation are all considerations in forming judgements on individual participant roles. Salmivalli and Nieminen (2002) argue that the definition of bullying implies a proactive rather than reactive type of aggression. Arguing that bullying is not necessarily goal or reward directed and is coupled with an absence of emotion and perhaps perpetrated with no provocation. This has implications for the characteristics of each of the roles involved in bullying; victims, bullies and bystanders are seen as distinct groups. Difficulties for teachers and students in recognising and intervening appropriately often involve nuances and blurred lines that impact on interpretation.

A variety of measures, including self-reporting, peer or teacher nomination are utilised but little work has been done on how teachers identify and conceptualise the different roles. Inherent in these methods is the opportunity for bias or subjectivity and the difficulty of interpreting data (Griffin & Gross 2004). Whilst questionnaires provide teachers with opportunities to report on behaviours that they see or hear, often bullying behaviours are covert and difficult to detect, leading to gaps in reporting. This will have consequences for all the participants, but especially the victims. In the research literature there is little exploration in either the qualitative or quantitative areas of teachers' understanding of the roles students play in bullying. There is evidence which suggests that the role students' play in bullying can include being the victim, bully or bystander and those who demonstrate characteristics of both bully/victim are more at risk (Duncan 1999; Wolke et al. 2000; Smith 2004).

2.5.1 The victim

The classic view of the victim is the quiet insecure individual. Olweus (1993) describes these as shy, passive or submissive and nonaggressive and are generally evidenced in the literature to suffer from depression, anxiety, psychosomatic and physical somatic symptoms. Victims are often rejected by

their peer group, because of their actual or perceived individual or social differences such as appearance, ethnicity, disability or sexuality. These factors alongside negative self-perceptions often increase the risk of peer isolation or aggression (Salmivalli & Isaacs 2005). Whilst being less socially confident or disabled increases their risk of being bullied, alongside their difficulty of maintaining or establishing friendships (Purdy & McGuckin 2014). However, Salmivalli and Nieminen (2002) argue that empirical evidence suggests that many victims react with "counter aggressive" behaviours or employ methods which escalate the situation. Empirical studies suggest that this group of "bully victims" are not only in their turn victims, but can also be the bully.

2.5.2 The bully/victim

Provocative victims (Olweus 1993; Pikas 2002) sometimes referred to in the literature as the "bully victim"(Juvonen & Graham 2014) responses are often perceived as ineffectual, offering rewards of reaction to the bully. It is argued that they have problems with emotional regulation and attention problems. This group display provocative or aggressive behaviours which are characterized by a combination of anxious, emotional, aggressive behaviour patterns (Olweus 1978; Salmivalli & Nieminen 2002). Juvonen and Graham (2014) argue that rather than internalizing or self-blaming, this group externalize or blame others, helping to explain the bully victims retaliation or reactive behaviour in response to being bullied. In his research Sullivan et al. (2004) argue that the bully/victim often victimises those younger and smaller than themselves, and are often victimised by older peers. These he suggests are a particular problem as they display aggressive unacceptable behaviour, but are also vulnerable and easy to undermine. Often the bully victims are difficult to empathise with, seen as high risk, and have higher rates of problem behaviour in the form or mental health issues and display antisocial behaviour. Characterised as particularly complicated (Whitney & Smith(1993), with a greater likelihood of referral for psychiatric interventions (Kumpulainen et al. 1998). Bourke and Burgman (2010) suggests that this distinct group is problematic in relation to developmental trajectories. In displaying reactive aggression arguments have been made that this group requires different interventions and support from both victims and bullies. In

contrast those individuals who portray proactive aggression are more likely to be labelled as bullies.

2.5.3 The bully

The classic view of the bully is one often portrayed in literature, as being physically bigger and stronger than their victims and often viewed as the troublemaker. Besag (1989) proposes that there is a consensus of opinion regarding the attributes of bullies, suggesting that they are proactively aggressive and appear to enjoy conflict, especially in social groups. Labelling aggressive or bullying behaviour in this is way is simplistic and overlooks the multiple typographies (Sullivan et al. 2004).

Sullivan et al. point to the "not so clever bully" (2004, p15) who attract others because of their risk taking and antisocial behaviour, operating in socially dysfunctional ways. They often have a negative world view, poor academic achievement, suffer from poor self-esteem which may result in displays of anger. By bullying others they are reclaiming power. In contrast the academically able, popular, socially adept, good organisers, egotistical individuals are confident bullies, showing little empathy, and assuming a position of power or ignorance (Sullivan et al. 2004). These are usually well liked by teachers and can be difficult to identify, and are seldom in the groups that are targeted for interventions to change behaviour.

Arguments have been made that bullying is a behaviour stemming from home backgrounds, where authoritarian discipline is employed, coupled with a lack of emotional warmth or rejection. A lack of parental skills in setting boundaries or resolving conflict in non-confrontational ways give children examples of behaviour that can be used to gain power, control and status. This is in contrast to victims who it is argued tend to come from overprotected homes and have not learnt assertiveness skills, and are more anxious and insecure (Beaty & Alexeyev 2008).

Smith and Sharp (1994) suggest that links to social skills development represent a contributory factor for the development of bullying behaviours. Sutton et al. (1999a) argue that inequality of power implies dominance and this is often

associated with acquisition and use of social skills to manipulate individuals and situations, arguing that bullies have difficulty in processing social information and are not skilled in understanding the victim's feelings or emotions. However Sutton et al. (1999b) suggest that this is a false reading as work done in this area has often been based on empirical evidence with aggressive or conduct disordered children rather than bullies. They argue that given the social nature and context of bullying, bullies are clearly very skilled at processing such information. Bullies are able to victimise those they spend time with and know well, giving opportunity to utilising skills and knowledge required to gain control and power over the victim (Beaty & Alexeyev 2008).

Salmivalli et al. (1996) propose that there are two important features of bullying, a collective act, based on social relationships, which establish a hierarchy of dominance and it is in and through these groups that power is mediated, and bystanders play an important role.

2.5.4 The bystander

Attention has been given to individuals in the group who are at least aware of, or observe bullying behaviour. As interest in different participant roles have grown so has exploration of students' behaviour, individually or as part of a group during episodes of bullying. Bullying is acted out in the social contexts of playgrounds, classrooms, peer groups and school environments. Interest and a substantial body of evidence have grown around the dynamics within social groups and bullying.

Sutton and Smith (1999a) suggest that there are a range of behaviours displayed by bystanders. Joining in and supporting the bully or, finding the incident funny or imitating the behaviour, ties in with the belief that aggression is a powerful means to increasing self-esteem and social status within the group. Some bystanders have been shown to ignore the bully's behaviour, whilst showing little empathy for the victim. In this group process some bystanders have been shown to intervene, and support the victim, through challenging the bully's behaviour or by finding help or reporting to adults who might help. Salmivalli et al. (2011) produced KiVa, This intervention is predicated on changing the role of bystanders, with the aim of reducing the opportunity for the bully to gain status by their aggressive actions.

Gini et al.(2008) argue that the influence of peers, and the expectations of significant friends in their own networks are strong indicators of how to behave, including whether or not to report the incident to adults or teachers. This links to the research of Rigby and Johnson (2006) where they discuss how bystanders helping or intervening in a bullying episode is strongly linked to social learning theory, with children modelling behaviour that they see is rewarded. They argue that peers often reinforce the behaviour of the bully, whilst showing little empathy or help for victims. Given that indications in literature suggest that bullies are unlikely to be punished by teachers, this has implications for bystanders.

2.5.5 Teachers as bystanders

Education professionals' responses to dealing with this issue are exacerbated by the fact that children often do not tell of their experience, or seek support from adults in an educational setting. Anecdotally professionals in this sector report low incidence and prevalence of bullying in their settings. Pupils believe that teachers often are unaware or ignore bullying, and when they do intervene they are generally ineffective (Bauman & Del Rio, 2005). Conversely teachers tend to overestimate the number of times they recognise and intervene, and their overall effectiveness in dealing with bullying, especially verbal and psychological bullying (Boulton 1997; Yoon & Kerber 2003). Schools have "markedly different" understanding of why children bully (Rigby 2004, p288) a pertinent question is how do students' and adults' perceptions differ.

A lack of training may lead to poor confidence in their own efficacy, which in turn could lead to a lack of intervention (Hazler et al. 2001). Teachers' passive and inconsistent responses to bullying have been cited as an inhibitor in their effectiveness in dealing with bullying effectively (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004). The training and development of skills in teachers is cited as a problem area, despite new teachers viewing it as a serious problem (Craig et al. 2000; Kandakai & King 2002; Nicolaides et al. 2002; Purdy & Mc Gukin 2014). Teachers' perceptions of seriousness of a bullying incident are often led by a number of factors: the duration and type of bullying coupled with the level of parental concern, and the distress of the victim. Rigby points to the "continuum of seriousness" (2004, p288), with teasing at one end, and physical attacks or

exclusion at the other. Whilst physical aggression, even when it is not bullying is viewed and taken seriously, Holt and Keyes suggest that name calling and teasing are often ignored or marginalised (2004). This suggests that there are a number of complex reasons why teachers fail to intervene. Arguments have been made that they are afraid to intervene, or alternatively do not see it as their responsibility (Astor et al. 1999; Ting et al. 2002). Research suggests that teachers are given little training in recognising and responding to bullying behaviours and this might be a factor in their lack of response (O'Moore 2000). If individuals are unsure how to respond, or fear they might get it wrong, then intervening is a risky strategy that will not produce the desired outcomes. An exploration of the part supervision and attitudes to aggression play a part in individual and group responses and influence ethos, systems and practices found in schools might prove fruitful.

2.6 The sociological approach: moving the focus

A shift in focus in has emerged in sociological thinking in which bullying is viewed as systemic (O'Connell et al. 1999), nevertheless it is still often discussed in the terms of the victim bully dyad in academic and policy literature. The psychological understanding and interpretation of bullying has been adopted throughout education, with policy documents defining and describing bullying within the terms of the Olweus conceptualisation. Over the last decade a growing body of work has started to emerge that challenges this interpretation, utilising a sociological perspective that draws on post structuralist and feminist philosophy in understanding the world and self. They argue that individuals exist and are interconnected with the structures or systems in which they exist, and that these produce effects on and through the individual (Walton 2005; Jacobson 2010). Feminist theory with a focus on inequality and power relations has developed critiques of the definition of bullying (Ringrose & Renold 2010; Ringrose & Rawlings 2015). Both these approaches argue language, discourse and texts play an integral part in understanding and express the need for a close examination to discern their impact. The term bullying over time has become normalised in everyday discourse in school, work and personal relationships, and the current hegemonic conceptualisation is reflected in policy documents, media and journalism, including the everyday exchanges of students and adults.

Arguments have been made that in shaping the problem of bullying in this particular way it limits the way in which bullying is described, understood and responded to (Jacobson 2010; Walton 2011). Further it draws the focus of attention to the behaviour of children, away from any behaviours of adults or indeed between adults and children, ignoring or marginalising any power relations that exist.

Ryan and Morgan (2011a) sought to examine bullying through a post-modern social constructivist framework, arguing that knowledge and power relationships are an important element in developing an understanding of bullying. Challenging the definition of bullying through an examination of discourse, they argue that the "taken for granted knowledge" (2011a, p3) found in this conceptualisation ignores how knowledge is constructed between individuals and reinforced through social and cultural processes. This provides little opportunity to reframe the way in which bullying is conceptualised and provokes discussion of alternatives of where change might be effective in developing strategies to prevent and intervene.

Hepburn (1997) examines the use of language, power relations and how they operate through the discourse, arguing that teachers draw on current discourses to define and conceptualise bullying and to make sense of behaviour. Language is seen as the tool by which subjects and identities construct and give meaning to the world. The criticism of previous research with its focus on personality, behaviour and personal relationships (Olweus 1978; Smith & Sharp 1994; Fox & Boulton 2005) prompts responses or actions which are sustained, reinforced or challenged and serve to alter or modify reactions between individuals or groups. The current definitions rooted in the personality of the individual are productive and instrumental in shaping subjects and identities through the processes of thinking, speaking and writing which enables knowledge to be constructed in particular ways.

Jacobson (2010b) describes power as working through "narrations of subjectivity" (p262). Within this network of discourses, practices, relationships and experiences a hierarchy of value of is generated (Jacobson 2010b), the subjects themselves are then measured by their differences. In overlooking the wider cultural influences in the conceptualisation of bullying, the identification of difference in individuals is ignored, but also used as a form of control and normalises the accepted or taken for granted knowledge of truth. Hey (2003)

discussing subjectivity argues that "social interactions between self and others are conceived as neither arbitrary nor innocent but are positional, positioning and produce discourses of self-positioning (p322). An alternative critical approach to bullying needs to look at power and how it is normalised through a "network of practices, discourses and relations of power through which subjects are constituted" (Bansel et al. 2009, p67). Hepburn argues that postmodern or feminist paradigms can be used to question the assumptions that underlie the dominant discourses.

In challenging the current conceptualisations of bullying found in discourse, post-modernists examine the privileges of varying groups with regard to power and how this is demonstrated and maintained through inequalities. In an analysis of the cognitive revolution which envisages linkages between the external and internal world, focusing on behaviour and language there is an intimate connection with knowledge (Semin & Gergin 1990). A critique of the psychological approach to bullying in schools argue that "wider discourses" are both "highly visible" and "regulative" in shaping the subject as "deviant, and in need of discipline" (Ringrose & Renold 2010, p574), adding that the bully/victim binary contributes in practice to normalisation and subjectification, whilst negative emotions contribute to confusion and the possibility of finding effective solutions. Power relations are seen as pivotal in the formation of these "successful, normative subjects" (Ringrose & Rawlings 2015, p5) with both discourse and material objects contributing to the complexity of bullying. Drawing on the work of Judith Butler they discuss the intersection of social and cultural norms as being integral to reinforcing and normalising gendered behaviours into "normative performances of young masculinity and femininity" (p577) which are reflected in the discourses which describe 'boy' and 'girl' bullying.

The psychological interpretation of bullying as individualised behaviour is "definitional (stable, ahistorical and apolitical)" as opposed to "the discursive, the contingent, the contextual and the ideological" (Walton 2005, p61). The narratives found in the discourse marginalises broader social and cultural ideologies that come in to play in power relationship. There is a need for "reconceptualising the notion of bullying" (Walton 2011, p132) through challenging the normalised dominant discourse with its focus on safety and diversity. His analysis describes how bullying is drawn in very particular ways by those who are in positions of power and generate knowledge, often expressed in the form of policy. In ignoring

the wider political and social conditions that endorse differences and seek to exclude those who do not meet the cultural and societal prescriptions of what is acceptable, Walton argues policy documents "implicitly condone particular forms of violence" (p137). Bullying has a social purpose reinforcing "hierarchies of power and privilege" (p140), dictating who is to be included or excluded through the enactment of physical or psychological violence.

The way in which bullying is conceptualised needs to move away from the focus on the individual, and utilise a broader lens which enables a view of the "social, institutional and societal landscape upon which bullying occurs" (Horton 2016, p205). In doing so he argues that rather than viewing power as differences between individuals, either psychological or physical, it is important to look at how power is relational, working across relationships, systems and processes and is "unstable, shifting and open to contestation"(p210). These new conceptualisations of bullying include the work of Schott and Søndergaard (2014) which include negative emotional reactions of shame, fear and anxiety that are involved in social relationships and play their part in responding to others. Recognising the complex social processes that shape everyday interactions and manifest themselves in bullying behaviours, they suggest an alternative definition, which draws on the work of Butler's (1999) theory of abjection, alongside Barad's (2007) "intra-acting enacting forces" (p356). In approaching a conceptualisation of bullying in this way, it moves away from binary opposition that place limits on the understanding of the complex nature of the social phenomena of bullying. Schott and Søndergaard (2014) explore the exercising of social exclusion and the feeling of anxiety produced which enables individuals to make judgements on "other's behaviour, interests and artefacts" enabling strategies to be developed to "negotiate norms of appropriateness" (p357). In the social-emotional landscape of school this provides information and communication needed to position oneself in the group. The sociological interpretation broadens the conceptualisation of bullying. Whilst there is an acknowledgement that wider social and cultural forces have an important and influential role to play in bullying it would be remiss to absent individual agency, indeed the choices made at an individual level are one of the elements which need to be recognised in the of framing and defining bullying.

Paying attention to the social ordering and negotiations involved, Søndergaard (2018) highlights humour as a strategy that can be employed to either embarrass

or to alleviate tensions depending on the "social landscape". Describing bullying as "an intensification of the processes of marginalisation that occur in the context of dynamics of inclusion/exclusion, which shapes groups. Bullying happens when physical, social or symbolic exclusion becomes extreme, regardless of whether such exclusion is experienced and/or intended" (p48-9). Linking humour to the production of emotions such as shame and anxiety and used as a weapon of control and power that robs individuals of their dignity.

Rigby (2004, p288) suggests that the need to address bullying behaviour is often viewed as a "moral issue" and the misuse of power is seen as morally reprehensible. Current policies and practices place the responsibility for identifying and providing solutions for bullying on teachers, but Bansel et al. argue that both students and teachers operate in a two way exchange of subjectification, with each individual being a "form of subjection as much as subjection exerted by other" (2009, p62). Grant (1997) in her examination of higher education points to education being "fundamentally concerned with the formation of human subject" (p103). Exploring the idea of the "good student", arguing that the individual is "constructed and contested" through and within "multiple socially produced and changing discourses, each of which produces a range of subject positions" (p103).

In forming identities, adults and children are intimately tied to a range of cultural, social and political norms and practices. Schools and the students and adults in schools tacitly understand the norms and practices and conform or challenge these in the formation of individual identity. Teachers and other adults in schools respond to student behaviour viewed as bullying through normalisation and control established in the discourse in both policy and practice. It is through these taken for granted and often unseen power relations that subjects are shaped. The sociological approach is seen as enabling challenge on what knowledge is and thereby placing more emphasis on what knowledge can do.

2.7 Beyond the bully/victim dyad

A lack of qualitative evidence as a tool to examine bullying of both students and teachers, especially research using a social ecological framework has been cited by Yoneyama and Naito (2003) and Smith (2014). They argue from a sociological standpoint, that not enough attention has been paid to this area in the research literature. Although much of this work relates to the cultural specificity of bullying or Ijime in Japanese schools, the recommendation of a social ecological perspective is also relevant to schools in the UK. Espelage (2014) in her work on bullying argues that the individual is enmeshed in social and cultural systems that influence behaviour.

Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979a) has been used to explore bullying, whilst his focus as a developmental psychologist on developing his model differs from what sociologists want to know, in the context of schools it gives opportunities to gain a much broader understanding of this complex area. In the case of bullying behaviour involves looking in greater detail at the attitudes, values and beliefs in a much broader context of ecological systems. The individual is enmeshed in a macro system that applies the values, attitudes, behaviours and influences exerted on individuals in the culture in which they live. The individual is described at the centre on what he terms the micro system, this includes any regular relationships which exert pressure on the behaviour of individuals over their development. Included in this is family members or carers and peer group members. These individuals are part of a gradually expanding mesosystem; consisting of, in the case of bullying in schools, the school, family or social environment. Bronfenbrenner (1979a) suggests that in order to gain a better understanding of individual behaviour we need to examine the multiple wider systems in which they exist. This will include family, school and wider cultural influences, of both staff and students and hopefully provide more insight into the experiences of those involved in defining and understanding bullying. Additionally wider exosystems, such as local or national government might not have a close relationship with the individual, but exert influence on the settings in which they participate, so note must be made of the content and uncontested knowledge found in policy documents. Bronfenbrenner's macrosystem is the wider context in which the individual lives, and is the cornerstone to understanding of development and behaviour. In order to understand behaviour it is necessary to

unravel the relationships, connections and change over time which will allow insight into the perceptions of individual reality.

The holistic whole school approach has been cited as a contributory factor in reducing bullying in schools; teacher student relationships, coherent explicit standards of behaviour, clear leadership are all pointed to as elements that reduce bullying in schools (Rigby & Slee 1991). There is a scarcity of work done on the exo and macrosystem or "distal influences on bullying" (Lambert et al. 2008) and there is some evidence of the work which concerns the micro and mesosystemic processes (Boulton et al. 1999; Schwartz et al. 1997). An exploration of the wider issues and complexities of knowledge and power relationships may provide insight into the much broader social ecological framework of bullying relating to school contexts. Espelage and Swearer (2008) argue that bullying/victimisation sit within a social-ecological framework, and is not an isolated occurrence, but is a complex interaction between the individual, family, peer group, school and wider society. Peters et al. (2018) in an international collaboration draws attention to the 'cultural blueprint' of bullying, and the need to examine both the macro and micro levels, Recognising that cultural and emotional dimensions are essential when working towards a clear definition in school settings, perhaps illuminating and enabling the subtle differences not visible when considering the broader picture.

The importance of social roles in influencing the outcomes and changes in power differential in a bullying episode is highlighted by Cowie and Olafsson (2000). Work on the structure and organisations of schools and whether they lend themselves to hierarchical, authoritarian and justice based approaches which set up social structures which promote bullying is emerging through more recent research (Walton 2005 & 2015; Jacobson 2010; Renold & Ringrose 2010; Schott & Søndergaard, 2014) and implies that behaviours exhibited by bullies have links to much wider social influences. In an effort to gain greater knowledge of what forces influence understanding of bullying in schools, there is a need to examine and understand the rules, attitudes, values and norms of these systems and how they influence individuals and groups. The recognition of individual characteristics and choices within the structure, processes and 'entanglements' that contribute to bullying are an opportunity to highlight and examine how individual agency is one of a myriad of factors to be considered.

2.8 Summary

There still remains a wealth of work to build on the substantive literature about bullying being translated into effective practice in schools (Swearer et al. 2009). If bullying is demonstrated to have a strong and lasting impact on individual's behaviour it is important that we continue to work to give both students and teachers the skills, knowledge and understanding that will empower them to tackle this emotive issue. Mishna (2004) suggests that further work is need to explore the confusing and ambiguous instances involved in bullying for both students and teachers, with a recognition of the emotional content and impact of bullying, alongside raising awareness of personal attitudes and values.

Bullying in schools includes a challenging range of concepts. In order for teachers and children in schools to agree with and implement antibullying prevention and intervention strategies, there is a need for further understanding in this complex area. This raises a number of issues for schools, including the interpretation of meaning. Individuals, especially those with the power to implement preventative and intervention strategies, enable consistency in understanding and implementing a definition in practice. A lack of clarity in making explicit, subtle differences between conflict and bullying and the importance of power as displayed through social hierarchies are issues which are actively played out in the complex and dynamic nuances of group and individual behaviour in the social systems found in schools. The understanding of staff and students of these issues which may be a key factor in recognising, responding and reporting of bullying in a school context. The growing number of interventions that are now available to school, the limited success demonstrated by approaches that focus on only one area, demonstrate the need for multifaceted approaches, including recognition of bullying as socio-cultural phenomenon (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). Craig et al.(2000) argue that if schools are to continue to improve their practice in providing positive safe environment which enables all students to reach their potential the need for future research to focus not just on children but also on teachers and other groups that influence behaviour is necessary. If teachers are to become skilled at intervening and students are to develop greater confidence in outcomes from reporting, it is important that further studies look at process and systems in a social-ecological framework.

Whilst evidenced based practice relies heavily on quantitative methods of data collection, the literature evidences the need for greater observational and qualitative enquiries into this area. Griffin and Gross (2004) point to the lack of direct observation methods used which would recognise behaviour and emotional changes in participants, including both teachers and students. The recent sociological focused analysis of bullying begins to open up new ways of understanding and investigating bullying, which might lead to a broader, nuanced conceptualisation of bullying as a dynamic social phenomenon that utilises power, emotions, materials, performance as counterweights to each other resulting in a myriad of differing frames of reference.

Lack of qualitative research into teachers' understanding of bullying and the factors that influence their decisions is a theme that runs consistently throughout the research literature. If we are to fully understand the disparity between pupils' perceptions of bullying and teacher responses then a qualitative study that looks at the views of both in an active school situation is required. This scarcity of evidence exploring teachers' and students' understanding of bullying including studies exploring relationships in both areas including differences in age, gender and interventions add weight to the argument that there are still areas of omission in the study of bullying. A key element in all this work is developing understanding of how students and not just teachers, but how adults in a school setting understand and define bullying. What are the factors which influence their decisions on how they act, and is this changed by the context?

As a result of this literature review the research aims of this study seek to explore the language of bullying, and how this is conceptualised in policy documents. Exploring how discourse is used to establish truth, knowledge and power, and how this is exercised through subjectification, discipline and normalisation. The research questions are:

1. How is bullying conceptualised in the policy documents utilised in schools in Wales?

2. What are staff and student awareness of anti-bullying policies in schools?

3. What role do staff and students play in the development of school anti-bullying policies?

4. What factors do staff and students in a secondary school context use to define and describe bullying?

3. Conceptual framework

In order to attempt to grasp the problematic and complex reality of understanding and defining bullying in schools it is necessary to explore the factors that staff and students in school settings use in making those decisions. In identifying bullying as a social construct adopting a Foucauldian approach allows examination of the how, why and what. This enables an interpretation of reality and a means to analyse how discourse, actions and interactions are shaped by experience and assumptions related to the issue.

3.1 Reality and research

As discussed in Chapter 2, the conceptual framework of this study attempts to draw together a range of factors, concepts and variables and the relationship between them. What is captured and presented will necessarily be a simplified and an incomplete representation of a complex and dynamic phenomenon. Acknowledging that:

> Reality is always more complex than any theory can completely capture, and you need to construct a conceptual framework that takes account of this complexity and avoids gross oversimplifications of the things you are studying, (Maxwell, 2012 pxii)

One element of this is personal experience which is a tool that can help inform and shape the lens through which the topic is viewed. Whilst there are dangers in this, it has been argued (Mills 1959; Glesne & Peshkin 1992) that personal subjectivity, experience and knowledge are also a valuable source of insight and may offer a unique perspective of the research area being studied. An awareness and use of "critical subjectivity" (Reason 1994) in the process can prove valuable and also help prevent bias. Indeed, it is my personal experience and professional experience that led to an interest in this area, it appeared that bullying was an issue that troubled both students and staff.

Efforts to reduce impact and prevalence seem marginal despite increasing availability of interventions over time. Bullying is still highlighted as an important issue of concern for children, while staff appear to deny or reduce its prevalence

and overestimate their efficacy in intervening. This prompted the question as to whether staff and students conceptualised bullying differently? A combination of personal experience and a reading of academic literature, policy and the wider and social and cultural mediums represented the hegemonic discourses found in the psychological approach. Current theories on bullying are based on what Rawlings described as the "psycho-pathological understanding of 'bullying'" (2019, p698). Inherent in this are the concepts of impact, intention, repetition and power. The substantial and influential work of Olweus (1993) is the current default hegemonic of defining bullying reflected in policy documents in Wales: the conceptualisation that bullying is primarily a problem between individuals rooted in an imbalance of power. Numerous interventions attempt to alleviate the problem of bullying in schools, but are approached through the bully/victim binary and the power imbalances found between individuals. Alternative theories have begun to emerge that conceptualise the problem with a focus on how power imbalances are inherent in the systems and processes of social and cultural situations in which individuals form relationships. This moves the analysis away from the focus on the individual to the social and cultural settings in which they exist. This offers an alternative focus on power as an unseen, problematic and productive force that enables or disables actions and interactions and are both performative and normalising.

3.2 Changing approaches and challenging hegemonies

Foucault identifies discourse as a technique of power used to exercise control of behaviour in individuals. The "web of discourse is seen as a technique of power that penetrates society all the way into the bodies of individuals" (Jensen, 2014, p10). To examine the understanding and defining of bullying used by students and staff in schools and how power relations are produced there is a need to look again at the conceptualisation of bullying. Bullying is recognised as a complex phenomenon with multiple factors that react and interact to produce a variety of outcomes and is embedded within layers of social forces that create the culture that generates the opportunity for bullying to occur (Migliaccio & Raskauskas 2015 p30). Power in these social interactions has been described as dynamic or fluid (Boulton 1999). This is in contrast to previous work on bullying which has focused on power imbalances between individuals (Olweus 1993; Salmivalli et al. 1996; Smith 2000). Widening of the analysis to include the social, cultural and structural effects of power (Cowie & Olafsson 2000; Swearer & Espelage 2009) provides opportunities to

examine how power is embedded within society to maintain cultural norms and hegemonies linked to gender, race and heteronormativity (Hepburn 1997; Bansel et al. 2009; Ringrose & Renold 2010; Rawlings 2019).

The ambiguous nature of the interactions of between individuals and the structures in which they exist are focused in an intersectional approach, identifying difference and a deviance from social norms, enabling exclusion from accepted and normalised social categories. This enables a shifting of focus which examines the power relations, ideologies and discourses to identify the hegemonies at play. This approach provides opportunities to challenge the current conceptualisations of bullying, whilst still acknowledging the personal, individual and psychological actions at work in and through a matrix of communications. A focus not just on the individual but the multiple artefacts, actions and inter and intra-actions, which are both potent, agentic and malleable.

Few studies have examined the factors that influence and affect the agency of students and staff in defining and describing bullying. A study which examines the multiple, intersecting and dynamic descriptions of bullying would provide insight into how it is constructed in a school setting. The exploration of how students and staff conceptualise power and how it delineates the boundaries of agency would broaden understanding of bullying. Both Foucault and Bourdieu discussed the importance of power, structure and agency. Bourdieu's (1995) work focused on the way in which social order is maintained in social settings in which interactions happen between individuals. He argued that economic, social and cultural capital that individuals have at their disposal varies. As a consequence of this cultural capital, individuals on entering a social setting, such as school will be ascribed a position within that field that affects their agency within that field. Each field had certain 'doxa', the codes, rules and resources that govern accepted behaviours and dictate behaviour. Foucault, (1986; 1991) in contrast focuses on historical processes that produce accepted and normalised ways of thinking and acting within structures. Foucault introduces the concepts of governmentality and disciplinary power that are purposeful in making individuals within a structure or society instruments of government.

3.3 Power and its mechanisms

How staff and students in schools define bullying is a central focus for this study. Foucault envisages power exercised in subtle, pervasive and ever present influences of ideas and discourses. An examination of how power is exercised through and within the systems and processes of schools deserves further examination. Through the utilisation of a Foucauldian framework to examine how staff construct meaning around bullying, the analysis will establish keywords, concepts and binaries. How are these utilised by staff to facilitate disciplinary techniques operating in schools that maintain or challenge power relationships between staff and students (Bachhi 2009)? Danaher et al. argue that power in the Foucauldian sense is described "as a set of forces which establishes positions and ways of behaving that influence people in their everyday lives" (2000 p48). Arguments have been made that it is the systematic abuse of power that legitimises bullying (Hepburn 1997). If the focus is on the ideology that shapes understanding of the problem of bullying as due to individual pathology or character, it is this aspect of an individual which is then viewed as in need of control and regulation. There is a need to identify how the systems in school reinforce the idea of bullies or aggressors through the need to correct or punish deviant individuals and bring in to line. Schissel (1997) argues that the zero tolerance or get tough agenda that focus on corrective disciplinary acts fail to protect children, but allows for the naming and shaming of individuals, as either bullies or victims, which serves to reinforce an individualised conception that inherently condemns children to a specific role.

The focus of an ideology that places regulation and control at its centre is reflected and repeated in the public discourse around violence and aggression. The characteristics of the child as a passive recipient, dependent on adults to shape identity is reflected in policies that place the learner as an object of intervention and therefore as a subject in the discourse. Children and young people are instrumental in maintaining the moral panics that allow the exercising of power and control which hide behind the safe school discourse. The discourse found in current anti-bullying policies warrants examination, exploring how power is highlighted and expressed in these documents and how bullying is represented and framed. The conceptualisation of bullying inherent in the discourse becomes instrumental in setting the framework by which students and staff view, interpret and respond to the problem of bullying. A close examination of the policies will also offer opportunities to highlight any excluded or marginalised discourses.

Foucault states that "Power is tolerable only on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (1976, p86). By examining how policies shape subjects or individuals and the suggested responses to dealing with bullying it offers opportunities to highlight the ideology encapsulated in the discourse. This will enable an examination of the systems and processes that inhibit, prevent or enable how power is interpreted and recognised. What impact does social, political or economic ideology play in informing these policies and how does this helps shape and inform the problem of 'bullying' and those it affects? An examination of the policies can illuminate the conceptual frameworks. In examining how the discourse positions both student and adult and their knowledge, skills and competencies, perhaps offering alternative perspectives on how power knowledge relationships are enacted.

Ryan and Morgan (2011a) argue that the conceptualisation of bullying is fraught with ambiguity and contradictions. Research and evidence around bullying over the last four decades has been dominated by the quantitative research paradigm, with a focus on the individual and their interpersonal relationships (Olweus 1978, 1980, 1993; Smith & Sharp 1994; Fox & Boulton 2005). Walton (2005) argues that by focusing on this framework and definition we imply "that bullying is something that can be observed, discovered, found, analysed, reported, and ultimately stopped" (p92). Understanding whether there are different conceptualisations by students and staff of bullying, including the predominant concepts of power, intent, repetition and impact might offer opportunities to illuminate how to improve responding to and preventing bullying in schools.

3.4 The power of policy

In order to understand how bullying is conceptualised it is necessary to examine how it is represented in policy documents and look at the theoretical framework in which it is positioned. Policies have become an integral part of school organisation, increasing with the growing concern around keeping learners safe which manifests itself through the conceptualisation of the 'safe' school. Policies created by governments, local authorities, governing bodies and sometimes, albeit rarely, students themselves, are intended to guide action and decision making, and in doing so place a framework around how the problem is viewed. Bacchi (2009) argues this "conventional understanding" (p1) could be used to reflect bullying as a social phenomenon or problem, enabling government and school policy to shape

the discourse and understanding of these problems. McHoul & Grace argue policies in general are "given social object or practice" with conceptualisations of bullying found in policy limiting the way in which bullying can happen; this constrains the discourse on bullying and sets it "within specific historical limits" (1993, p31).

A Foucauldian interpretation of power suggests that it is not dependent on individual agency alone, but also on cultural, social and political conventions that establish the norms of behaviour and control of those who deviate from those norms. McHoul and Grace argue that discourse is "indispensable for an understanding of the role of 'power' in the production of knowledge" (1993, p57). A preoccupation with the individual and their relationships is reflected in the work of many of the major influencers in studies of bullying (Olweus 1978; Smith & Sharp 1994; Fox & Boulton 2005) in which there is a dominant discourse around the bully/victim binary, which has become accepted as 'truth'. This effectively maintains "the problem of bullying by continually reproducing it as a naturalized, individualized phenomenon" (McHoul & Grace 1993, p62). The process and act of "labelling and being labelled are integral to the process of subjectification" (Ryan & Morgan 2011a, p3). Labelling specific roles, 'bullies', 'victims' and more recently 'bystanders' is an essential feature of subjectification. Bansel et al. (2009) argue that there is a duality in that the subjectification is external and internal, with the discourse providing individuals with knowledge to position themselves "within the scope of that knowing". This gives a different perspective on power, rather than being perceived as an inequality between individuals, power is seen as instrumental in the production of knowledge. This makes the subject "become part of the power of production" of knowledge (Cheng 2018, p19), endeavouring to make sense of their world within the discourses available to them. Dahlberg and Moss (2005) point out that "subjectification has become the most common and effective means of government in modern times" (p20). Far less attention has been on the wider social, political and economic influences that inform individual behaviour within the context of environment

At the point of writing, Welsh Government policy offers a definition of bullying which encapsulates a view of bullying as happening between individuals, between whom there is with an imbalance of power. *Respecting Others* (WG 2011, P2) defines bullying as:

> • deliberately hurtful (including aggression)

• repeated often over a period of time, while recognising that even a one-off incident can leave a learner traumatised and nervous of future recurrence

• difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

Bullying can take many forms, but the three main types are:

• physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings, sexual harassment or aggression

• verbal – name-calling, insulting, making offensive remarks

• indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious e-mails or text messages on mobile phones.

Respecting Others (WG 2011) guidance include specific definitions for different types of bullying, each of which contain sections on "understanding", "the law", "preventing", "responding" and "resources" (p9) and includes "some of the key measures and issues that schools will wish to consider in preventing and responding to it" (p9). Guidance and policies reflect a form of classification and enhance individualisation in specifying and labelling certain distinct groups. This information is organised and categorised and includes specific guidance on "race, religion and culture"; "special educational needs and disabilities"; "Homophobic"; "Sexist, sexual and transphobic"; and finally "Cyberbullying" (p10). Foucault's concept of objectification includes scientific classification as elements and Cheng (2018, p25) argues by utilising scientific classification the policy generates and institutionalises knowledge which serves to "exaggerates or mythologizes the difference between groups and thus provides evidence of the supremacy of the dominant group" (Curtis & Harrison 2001, p740). Walton asserts that current definitions "carry the status as an outcome of relations concerning the hegemony of science as the most legitimate knowledge" (Walton 2005, p60). Furthermore Thornberg (2015) argues that this scientific classification "reinforce the socially constructed difference and hierarchy as core processes in school bullying" (p113).

Similarly Foucault's' dividing practices are evident in policy documents. There is an interpretation that the "learner" who is either 'bullied' or 'bully' comes under the 'gaze' of those within the hierarchical structure of school. This allows teachers and other adults to make the learner an object of surveillance, examination and governance, with resistance leading to punishment. The label of bully and victim are identifiers that then allows peers, staff and parents to coerce and control into a

defined role. *Respecting Others* (WG 2011) is instrumental in setting up this governance by positioning the "learning community" and "peers" as "responsible"; in addition the need for "practice" of skills remedying these individual deficiencies to enable "building positive relationships". Whilst the primary subject of focus in the policy documents is the learner, the 'knowledge' or 'truth' of bullying is achieved by those who have cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977) and who harness control of the discourse. Establishing the learner as the principal subject in policy documentation, establishes and determines what roles the learner can play, and furthermore dictates who can authorise and make legitimate the exercising of power to normalise deviant individuals.

The definition of bullying as presented in *Respecting Others* (WG 2011) as "deliberate", "hurtful" and "repetitive and "difficult for victims to defend themselves against "reflects the current discourse on personal individualised behaviour found in the definitions of researchers who are situated in the psychological or educational field, (Olweus 1993; Smith & Sharp 1994; Salmivalli et al. 1996). This conceptualisation is based on individualised anti-social behaviour, which draws on behavioural indicators that draw attention to deficits in personal, social or emotional skills (Walton 2011). The references to 'learners' and 'victims' highlights that bullying is situated in peer relationships and the binary relationship between individual learners as either victim or bullies is further reinforced by the absence of adults in the definition. Is it assumed that bullying does not exist between adults and children, or indeed adults in a school setting. Although this is not within the scope of this research it is an area that may warrant further investigation.

Reinforcing the binary nature of bully and victim sets up a framework in which bullying is viewed as a behaviour which exists between two people in a set of specific circumstances, and carried out in particular ways. This leaves the individuals involved very little opportunity or scope to resist a very specific framework that positions bullying within the dynamics of prescriptive binary relationships. Alternative legitimate frameworks with which to conceptualise bullying are marginalised or absent. This focus on individual behaviour effectively ignores the wider influences of power through political, social and economic ideology that exerts pressure on systems or institutions to perform in specific ways to produce the "docile body" (Foucault 1975, p198). The learner through surveillance and regulation of their bodies in terms of appearance, organisation and knowledge are positioned within a hierarchy of what is acceptable and what is not. Discipline is maintained by highlighting difference and is used to maintain and control societal

norms and values. These wider influences forces the subject to conform to the norm or risk being labelled deviant with the possibility of corrective procedures being enforced.

3.5 Governmentality

Whilst "education is fundamentally concerned with the formation of human subjects" (Grant 1997, p101), the student is the site of production and work. Schools students regulate students in a specific time and space with the desired outcome of the 'good student' and productive citizen, becoming "subjected and practised bodies" (Foucault 1991, p138). Education is the means of producing individuals who are independent, resilient and successful, both in a personal sense and within the economic world. This shaping of the student as a person is central to the liberal academic model of education in schools. *Respecting Others* guidance builds on an underlying theme for "personal and social transformation" (Llamas 2006, p667). Anti-bullying guidance is positioned as helping students achieve their "full potential" (WG 2011, p5). In order to achieve this the student subject is positioned in a state of "relative weakness: as child, subordinate" (Grant 1997, p103). Schools constructions of student identities which characterise some students as bully and/or victim, allows for the production of students "adapted and conforming to the norm" (Llamas 2006, p667). This requires schools to operate as a disciplinary "block" consisting of "enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, the pyramidal hierarchy" (Foucault 1986, p426).

Schools' disciplinary power is to guard the educational purpose and processes through the establishment of codes of conduct, both written and unwritten for its students and staff, incorporating and regulating specific uses of space and facilities. Schools and the subjects within them are made up of a complex interaction of social behaviours which bring about actions as they regulate, standardise and shape both staff and student behaviour (Barley & Tolbert 1997). What is problematic in schools is the access of individuals to varying discourses, which illuminates the "hierarchic surveillance power" producing a "system that produces 'power' and distributes individuals within that permanent and continuous field" (Llamas 2006, p668).

Categorisation and standardisation rooted in historical, cultural and social ethos prevalent in neo-liberal educational ideology set "intense social and academic competition of schooling environments" (Ringrose & Renold 2010, p592). This

culture of winner takes all, reinforces what Jacobson calls "hierarchies of value" (2010b p266), and is a marker of status, ability enabling "the creation of subjects measured by the gaps between them" (p268) facilitating the process of individuation. The organising of space and time enables regulation of bodies and includes such mundane acts as checks on behaviour and appearance, with an insistence on what is normal and allowed. This produces not only a conformity but normalisation of values and attitudes. Through this process of normalisation schools produce hierarchies and networks that co-exist and are subject to written and unwritten codes of conduct, protocols and procedures, enforced by sanctions and rewards. In their responses to students, staff employ dividing practices which have implications for the interpretation of bullying, including who is perceived to be the bully and/or the victim. Power is working through "narrations of subjectivity" (Jacobson 2010b, p262) which situates itself in the appearance of knowledge or truth and becomes the norm.

3.6 The subject under surveillance

Surveillance is the supervision, systematic and deliberate it is part of the systems of control that are used to coerce individuals into normative behaviours. Peters describes schools as "societies of control", where the body, time and spaces are monitored and regulated to enable identification of the deviant or different. Arguing that power operates "in institutions as capillary where it transgresses the rules of right and is embodied in techniques and exercised in networks – as a microphysics of power" (2017, p29). Surveillance of social interactions enforce tacit codes of conduct that normalise and curtail behaviour, positioning both students and adults in schools in hierarchies and networks of power. Dreyfus and Rabinow suggest "our culture attempts to normalize individuals through increasingly rationalised means, by turning them into meaningful subjects and docile objects" (1983, pxxvii).

The challenge for both students and staff is in unpicking the problematic and dynamic nature of possible bullying. Interpretation of character and personality, emotions and impact are linked to individual, social cultural values and include the power dynamics of gender and sexuality may lead to inconsistent decision making. A lack of clear guidance about how to intervene effectively in the case of homophobic bullying or highlighting of difference, 'in a policy environment which was itself often silent over them' (Watkins et al. 2007, p73) but concentrates on the individual as the subject in need of control and correction, it is perhaps not

surprising that there is challenge and frustration. The disparity between teacher assessments of their responses and efficacy in dealing with bullying mentioned in Chapter 2 is just one aspect of this complex issue. Moving the focus from the micro lens of the individual to the macro lens of schools and the systems and processes inherent in them will perhaps illuminate more effective ways of producing inclusive practice and illuminate alternative power relationships which exist in schools.

The production of the 'bully' and the 'victim in school narratives are interdependent and work to reinforce the truth or knowledge inherent in the current conceptualisation of bullying. By adopting this definition, the subject (in this instance, the learner) in school is identified as the source of the problem and no account is taken of the broader ideology that come into play in power/knowledge relations. If the learner is seen as deviant through deficits or abnormalities in his character then the school can then bring into play further disciplinary powers that can shape the subject. School environments and the students and adults within them are an ever changing landscape and the context of behaviour in classrooms, corridors, communal spaces reflect varying expectations, norms and inconsistencies in practice, especially in relation to bullying behaviour. The focus on the personality or character of individuals is at odds with the belief that environments nurture attitudes, values and behaviours that reflect the culture in which they exist. If schools aim to preventing bullying, the need to take the problem seriously and not tolerate bullying behaviour must look at alternative conceptualisation of the problem as existing solely within the individual, which legitimises an avenue of power through regulation, control and surveillance and subjectification.

3.7 Labelling: subject and subjected

The shaping and constituting of subjects and their identities is central to Foucault's understanding of power. In his work Foucault (2000) draws comparisons between the penal system and schools in as much as they produce identities that are located by character and upbringing and deviance or delinquent behaviour is re/produced through and by this system. He identifies discourse as an important element in the construction of these identities, but also acknowledges that these same discourses also curtail ways in which we define and explore alternative possibilities. The dominance of the conceptualisation of bullying as an individualistic issue that impacts on personal relationships, and the inequity of power between the 'bully' and

the 'victim' are well established in current discourses. Both students and staff are at one and the same time both subject and subjected, Foucault (2000, p331) says:

> There are two meanings of the word 'subject': subject to someone else by power and control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power that subjugates and makes subject to.

Foucault argues that disciplinary practices are often silent and subtle but an integral part of monitoring, regulating and maintaining order. Staff and students in schools are the subjects that help enforce power/knowledge embedded in educational practices which draw on a body of knowledge that construct the subject through the use of "binary oppositions and binary logic" (Hepburn 1997, p41). The focus on the student as the source of the problem behaviours, enable staff to exert power over students by constructing them as 'bully' or 'victim' and they are therefore intimately entwined with producing the subject. This construction of subjectivities allows for what Hepburn (1997, p41) describes as "the circular logic of humanistic discourses – the assumption that what you do is evidence of what you are". Bansel et al. (2009, p62) describes how this is integral to the process of subjectification, in being labelled they are constituted "of the forms that power might take". The label attached to any particular individual in school will position the individual in their own field of knowing, and is a form of "subjection as much as subjection exerted by the other" (p62). As a staff member or student in school you are subjected to both the role of enforcer through disciplinary technologies, but are also subjugated by those same disciplinary forces. They are part of what Rabinow (1991) claims are essential elements of normalisation, bringing into force the social, political and cultural context of the world in which they exist and their position within it.

Staff and students in schools are situated in the discourses that prevail in educational practice and exercise power through representing their acts of discipline as reasonable, acceptable and legitimised. The relationship between bullying and discipline sustains power inequalities and the part they play in the disciplinary technologies (Ryan and Morgan 2011a). Staff construction of discipline allows for the accepted and "common sense" (Ryan & Morgan 2011a, p4) discursive interpretations of the bully and victim, and inform their subjective responses to issues of bullying. Simultaneously their own ideas of self and agency are influenced and informed by the discourses prevailing which serve to "reinforce the hegemonic

discourses and power dynamics" (Ryan & Morgan 2011a, p12) existing in schools, which serves to normalise both students and staff behaviour.

If the 'problem' of bullying is to be addressed the need to look at alternative frameworks for shaping the subject is a necessity. Moving towards an acknowledgement and celebration of difference, there is a need to reframe the subject of the child/learner by giving them voice, enabling participation and representation in the development of their identity. A reconceptualisation of how schools systems and processes can be utilised to develop mutually respectful relationships between adults and children and thereby redefining the purpose of both teacher and learner, and ultimately schools.

3.8 Reimagining definitions

Emerging work is beginning to consider the 'macro system', encompassing the socio-political context in which relationships are situated (Horton 2016; Schott & Søndergaard 2014). An alternative definition for bullying has been suggested by Schott & Søndergaard: "a complex phenomenon which is enacted or constituted through an interactive/intra-active entanglements that exist between a variety of open-ended social, discursive, material/physical and subjective forces" (2014, p9) which influence individual agency. This moves the focus away from the individual or 'micro' lens to the 'macro' lens of social contexts, which then alters the perspective from which we view power. Rather than it being centred on individual behaviour and their abuse of power we focus on a spectrum of interrelated relationships within a social, cultural and political setting. This acknowledges the dynamic, conflicting and often contradictory nature of the problem. Ringrose and Rawlings (2015) drawing on the work of Butler, argue that whilst bullying takes place through discursive norms and their regulation, the acts of individuals are inherently performative; and it is the repetitive nature of performing that establishes 'normative' subjects, or alternatively produces "abject spectres" and through which a "matrix of power relations operates" (p5).

Policy is an opportunity to organise knowledge or legitimise the 'truth' of bullying and currently position the 'learner' in what Foucault calls discursive formations and establish their subjectivity. McHoul and Grace argue that individuals view themselves in the light of the context in which they find themselves, and are affected by the "disciplinary processes and concepts" (1993, p3) that prevent them

visualising themselves outside of this framework. The discourse found within the text of polices "position, locate, define, and, in some instances, enable and regulate readers and addressees" (Luke 1995, p21), thereby framing and positioning subjects in what calculated and divisive oppositions and binaries.

Policies refer to a number of specific groups including "parents/carers" and "families", "head teachers" and the "school community" further reinforcing the subjectivity of individuals by emphasising their roles within the problem of bullying. Head teachers, senior staff, classroom teachers, support staff, students, parent and carers all bring differing 'knowledge' or truth informed by what Bourdieu (1977) described as habitus, in which they experience the habits, skills and dispositions which inform their understanding and interpretation of bullying. Personal and subjective experience whilst informed by the prevalent discourse affects individual interpretations of what is meant when describing and discussing bullying in the field in which they are situated. Furthermore the subject position of the learner, teachers, support staff and parents will vary in social spaces they occupy and their responses to bullying will reflect the "complex phenomenon" described by Schott and Søndergaard (2014, p.9). Their positioning within "interactive/intra-active entanglements that exist" will reflect "a variety of open-ended social, discursive, material/physical and subjective forces" that inform what actions they take (p9). Extending our understanding of discourses and how they are brought into being is explored by Barad (2007, p149) who argues that "material phenomena" are integral in developing the "'intra-actions' between objects, bodies, discourses and other non-human material things". This will influence not just the discourse in policy, but also the agency and identity of individuals and use the symbolic nature of materials, such as clothing, appearance and space to re/produce bullying. Barad argues that "discourse and matter are understood to be mutually constituted in the production of knowing" (p149).

The sociological interpretations of Butler and Barad (as described by Ringrose and Rawlings, 2015) move beyond the individual, placing a focus on broader material objects that reinforce human psychological motivations. Foucauldian interpretation suggests that power is often hidden or elusive, disguising the means by which it exercises its authority, and if material objects are overlooked in how they exercise power the interpretation is still on individual behaviour. The breaking of dress, conduct and behaviour policies are reflected in the current discourse around the 'safe' school, and are intimately linked with producing an accepted and normalised version of the learner, which is implicitly linked with the right to discipline.

If as Walton (2005) claims, bullying is a manifestation of power relations in society, it is policies which set the framework of social and political parameters, and in doing so adopt a particular ideological stance. Presently that conceptualisation is centred on the individual with a focus on the victim and the bully, ignoring the wider social implications of how schools are organised in terms of curriculum, testing and measuring of academic achievement and how this reinforces authoritarian control on individual behaviour. Identification of a problem individual, group or social problem enables discipline to correct behaviour that it deems inappropriate. Ellsworth (1992) argues that this focus on individual behaviour effectively ignores the role of school in enabling or disabling the problem of bullying. Power is obtained through what Foucault (1987) terms the "technology of domination", discipline and regulation of behaviour carried out within and through the differing social spaces, activities, rules and practices found in schools.

Highlighting an alternative approach to the problem of bullying, Ringrose and Rawlings (2015) argue that "bullying is made possible through a system of ordered performances and repetitions" (p3) and that these involve not only "(hetero) sexual discourses" but "centre on enacting complex inclusions and exclusions". Acknowledging that that there are a number of discursive frames, whilst arguing that not all are equal, with some being excluded or marginalised, discourses have been defined as "ways of thinking and speaking about aspects of reality" (Cheek 2004, p1142). With social, historical and political conditions influencing discourse, which in turn enables an effect on subjects, whilst also constraining what can or should be known. Discourse is controlled, selected, organised and shared using a variety of procedures, to minimise or prevent its power. The discourse which frames students through positioning their identity as 'bully' or 'victim' reflects historical and particular "disciplinary processes and concepts which enable us to consider ourselves as individual subjects" (Mchoul & Grace 1993, p3). Power and truth in this framework are produced out of power struggles and are used to authorise and legitimise the workings of power. Llamas (2006 p668) uses Foucault's description in asserting that disciplinary power, is both "indiscreet and discreet, at the same time, since it is always on alert everywhere, leaving no shady place and controlling those who have to control it, and on the other hand it works permanently in silence most of the time".

The frame through which staff view bullying is informed by a "set of conditions in accordance with which a practice is exercised" and are "socially defined" (Scherich 1994, p302). Staff in schools are recognised as having greater power than students, in that they establish the boundaries and frameworks of the way in which knowledge

and truth are interpreted. The way in which adults in school are subjectively drawn, particularly teachers, invests their status with authority over the child and legitimises their 'truth' and 'knowledge'. This manifestation of power is exercised through the repetition of discourses and performative acts carried across and by staff in school. The way in which staff talk, and enact responses to reported bullying behaviour gives status to their knowledge and establishes the contextual truth about bullying in that context. Cheng (2018, p47) suggests that this in itself limits the ways individuals are allowed to "think, write, or speak" about bullying in a school context. The way in which school staff discuss and repeat discourses connected to bullying legitimises knowledge, and it is through this that a "system of institutional, historical, social, and political relations" (Walton 2005, p61) are rehearsed and practised.

Jacobson (2010b) describes an intimate complex connection between power and knowledge, quoting Foucault, who argues that power "invest[s] human bodies and subjugates[s] them by turning them into objects of knowledge" (1995, p28). Through establishing the character of individuals and the consequences of his or her behaviour, schools justify the use of sanctions or punishments that will rectify any perceived deficit in character, and bring the subject back to the 'norm'. This control and monitoring of the student is exercised through pedagogical practices that contribute to power relations in schools. Governance of knowledge, including disciplinary technologies of surveillance, regulation and individualisation, enable staff to bring students under the 'gaze', whilst they are simultaneous being observed and direct disciplinary practices upon themselves. The dichotomy of discipline in schools is demonstrated on the one hand in the positive language and ideas expressed through the discourses of self-empowerment and achievement, in direct contrast to the negative sanctions, punishments and control exercised when the framework or boundary of knowledge or truth is stretched or broken, when it strays from that expressed in policy and through everyday practices.

Behaviours are "a form of social interaction"(Cuadrado-Gordillo 2012, p1904), and should be viewed in the context of "more complex discourses" (Ringrose & Renold, 2010, p592) and their wider social contexts. Whilst there is less empirical research on the 'victim', during the last decade work has started to emerge that examines victims in a much broader conceptual framework. Ringrose and Rawlings (2015, p5) place power relations at the centre of the "performance of successful, normative subjects" but point out that discourses found in educational psychology of individual motivation for bullying are part of a much larger more complex picture of "material and discursive actants with varying levels of agency in particular

configurations"(p12). Moving away from a "focus on individuals as a source of problem behaviour" (Hepburn 1997, p29) suggests there is a need in addressing the problem of bullying to widen the issue, including how we construct identity and how this affects relationships. Reconceptualising identity and agency in bullying will broaden understanding of the limits of the current conceptualisation of bullying and prompt examining of the ways in which we attempt to solve the 'problem' of bullying. Finding alternative ways of framing the subjects will influence how we respond and remake identities in the context of schooling, and give light to some of the workings of dividing practices and disciplinary technologies used to maintain control of the subject.

3.9 Summary

Bourdieu and Foucault's interest in power, structure and agency present an opportunity and tools with which to unravel the discourse present in policy documents. Identifying the conceptualisation, understanding and defining of bullying in both government guidance in Wales and in individual school policies is a first step. Following on from this it is necessary to ascertain the awareness of anti-bullying policy by staff and students. This will help investigate the role of discourse in the understanding and defining of bullying. Are there substantial differences in the way in which policy and the language used therein represents bullying? Does this contrast to how students and staff in schools describe and define it? What factors do students and staff draw on when they describe bullying?

In evidencing the what, why and how of participant understanding, there is an opportunity to look at the broader concepts of governmentality, discipline, normalisation and subjectivity. This will enable an exploration of how power is exercised and made visible but will also offer opportunities to examine the hidden and marginalised discourses which might offer opportunities for challenge, that will enable more productive and effective prevention and intervention strategies.

This leads to the research questions:

1. How is bullying conceptualised in the policy documents utilised in schools in Wales?
2. What are staff and student awareness of anti-bullying policies in schools?
3. What role do staff and students play in the development of school anti-bullying policies?

4. What factors do staff and students in a secondary school context use to define and describe bullying?

In exploring the factors that adults and students in school use to understand and define bullying it is necessary to adopt a methodology which will enable an examination of the problematic and complex reality of discourse, actions and interactions of the participants in the study. The next chapter seeks to explain the rational for the methodology adopted.

4. Methodology

This chapter provides details of the research process for answering the research questions proposed at the end of the previous chapter. It will describe the epistemological and ontological perspectives, establish the research strategy, including the rationale for choosing a qualitative approach. It examines the implications for the reliability and validity of adopting a qualitative approach and the possible limitations this might place on any findings of the research. It includes a discussion of the methodological tools used in the research, access to the research sites and the rationale for participation in both the study and the selection of participants. This is followed with a description of the methods used for collecting and analysing the data and the use of a pilot, followed with the ethical principles utilised. The approach to analysis, including a description of the processes involved including a discussion of any limitations follows. The chapter ends with an overview of exiting the field.

4.1 Ontological and epistemological underpinnings

Rejecting the 'naïve' positivist position of Denzin and Lincoln (2011) the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin my work are firmly situated within the qualitative interpretivist tradition. This foregrounds the need to examine data drawn from participants in the real social world with the premise that knowledge is constructed by the actors within it (Berger & Luckman 1967). In taking this approach the aim is to help elucidate an empathetic understanding of the subjective meanings produced through interactions and discourse. A major focus of this philosophical position is the essential differences in studying people and the institutions in which they operate and exist. In using this philosophical approach, adults and students understanding of bullying in a school setting recognises that "social reality has a meaning for human beings and therefore human action is meaningful" (Bryman 2004, p14). Hennink et al., (2011) and Lecompte and Schensul (1999) argue that a position of absolute relativism is established through these plural versions of reality, which calls into question any claims of validity. In contrast Hammersley's (1992) 'subtle realism' acknowledges that all research will involve subjective perceptions and observations, and the methods employed during research will produce differing views of the participants involved. This epistemological approach seeks to

understand the participants' point of view. My aim was to understand the social world of teachers and students relating to bullying in a school setting, but also included other adults who shape the social and cultural world of schools. This would offer an opportunity to explore roles that are hidden from the student teacher relationship. The use of semi-structured interviews aligned with the discourse found in antibullying policy documents aims to understand and illustrate how the participants in the study interpret bullying in a school context, recognising the multifaceted and dynamic nature of social reality and the endeavour of individuals to create understanding. The findings of the study are necessarily imperfect, but never-the-less provide a resource that offers an interpretation of the views expressed by participants in the study.

The research design is an important element of the study indicating the direction of travel of the research and inform the decisions during the research process, informing how the research questions can be answered and which methods will usefully gain evidence. In choosing the appropriate methods to investigate a social phenomenon such as bullying, it is important to consider that researchers bring to the field their own experiences, values and assumptions.

The use of a cross sectional design was chosen to enable access to different groups based within schools to access understanding on how students and staff defined and described bullying. The groups and participants are selected based on the differences in their age, gender, role and experience. The aim was to recruit a number of schools to participate enabling a comparison across different settings and context. The study includes different developmental stages by including students from year 7, 9 and 11. Staff participants would include a variety of roles carried out by adults in a school setting, including those with limited experience, such as newly qualified teachers, experienced subject and class teachers; also included were support and administrative staff, managers and governors.

The choice of cross sectional design helps to illuminate existing differences between students and adults, but can also help to illustrate differences between gender, development, role and experience. The research focus is on finding differences in the relationship between participants knowledge and understanding of the definition of bullying found in policy guidance documents used in schools and if additional factors were considered when deciding whether an incident could be described or defined as bullying. Whilst using a cross sectional approach can limit the establishment of cause and effect, this was not the main purpose of this study,

which was to identify whether students and staff in secondary schools shared an understanding of the definition of bullying, and the factors they considered in describing and defining bullying. It provides a snapshot of a moment in time and would need to be scaled up and replicated to verify the results presented.

4.2 Positionality

The ontological assumption, 'what is there to know', and how this affects the epistemology, 'how we can know' (Grix 2002, p179) about the evidence is neither 'random nor ad hoc' (D'Cruz & Jones 2004, p57). Recognising and addressing the view and influence of the researcher is important, as it will exert influence over their area of interest and how to proceed in researching it. The research design needs to reflect ways in which perspectives of both staff and students could be accessed, enabling their subjective views, interpretation and experience of reality whilst detailing how this was constructed in their social world. Adopting an interpretivist epistemology would enable insight into how the subjects' knowledge of bullying was formed. In following this approach the focus of the research would be on the "subjective meanings of social action" (Bryman 2004, p13). Max Weber describes sociology as a "science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects" (Max Weber, in Bryman 2004, p13). The cross sectional design allows for the view that social phenomena and their meaning are in a state of constant revision and are continually being accomplished by a variety of social actors.

Adopting this research strategy and methodology would enable a suitable exploration of the problem of bullying in a school setting, capturing descriptions of how students and staff understood and described the factors that determined their definition of bullying. Gathering and analysis of contextualised, descriptive data drawing on the subjective experiences of the participants would yield perspectives and interpretations from staff and students on how they defined bullying. This would aid exploration of whether there was a shared interpretation, understanding and perspective that informed their definition of bullying.

It is necessary to employ methods that allowed the participants to feel comfortable talking about a potentially difficult topic, providing insight into how and what they knew in relation to defining and understanding bullying. In light of my previous professional roles I had an awareness of differences of interpretation in relation to

the experience of bullying and the frustrations of both staff and students in reaching satisfactory solutions to complex, dynamic and multifaceted instances of conflict and aggression. The impact of being a 'researcher' on the gathering of data and interacting with participants to discuss an emotive, difficult and problematic topic was an important consideration. An awareness of the power inequalities that the position of adult confers and how this might impact on student participants in particular necessitated an approach that would constrain or mitigate this. Similarly, with the adult participants the role of researcher presents obstacles which pertain to subject knowledge and professional role. In acknowledging my place as an actor in the field, I am endeavouring to fulfil Guba and Lincoln's (1994) criteria in assessing qualitative research in that it can be replicated whilst still having relevance and credibility for the participants.

The positioning of researcher and participants is key to untangling "common understandings" (Mannay 2010), presented and represented in the ambiguous and multiple meanings generated during research encounters. Recognising that interpretation of the data produced is influenced by the social interaction of participants, the endeavours of the researcher to make sense of encounters with the participants are problematic. Indeed the researcher has been described as a "transient outsider" (Roberts 2014). The ongoing debate of 'insider/outsider' recognises how this influences and mediates access and interpretation of knowledge through the relationships formed in the research process. Issues of eliciting meaning making on the part of the participants in the use of vignettes was used to disrupt the privileged position of researcher, enabling an exploration of multifaceted responses. The choice of methodological tools including interviews were used to mitigate my prior knowledge and helped to establish my role as outsider, with the hope of overcoming the taken for granted knowledge of both participant and researcher. In endeavouring to make 'the familiar strange' (Delamont & Atkinson 1995) the inclusion of both adults and students helped to facilitate understanding through difference. The methodological choices of semi-structured interviews alongside the vignettes and analysis of the policy documents offered opportunities to counter the "tacit and normalising effect of knowledge" (Mannay 2010, p30). These strategies aim to overcome epistemological, philosophical and methodological challenges which a qualitative research strategy presents (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 2002) and in doing so evidence the rigour, validity and reliability of such an approach.

4.3 Adopting a qualitative strategy

The choice of a qualitative strategy will highlight the priority of the context of the phenomenon being researched. The participants' experiences are recognised as being constructed by and through a combination experience. This approach recognises and understands that the 'real world' is and will be informed by and dependent on their own experiences and status within an historical and cultural context (Berger & Luckman 1967). It has been argued that this complex and multifaceted view of reality constrains and possibly prevents any valid interpretation of the truth (Lecompte & Schensul 1999; Hennink et al. 2011). In utilising this interpretivist view I acknowledge that my interpretation and understanding of reality might be incomplete, but hope that the exploration of the data will add to the broader picture of bullying in schools and how it is constructed by the variety of actors in that field, thus presenting a nuanced understanding of participants' definitions of bullying in educational settings and recognising what Hammersley terms "subtle realism" (1992, p69).

This study aims to contribute multiple perspectives to the problem of bullying, especially in exploring solutions to student reporting of bullying or adult recognition and acceptance that bullying has occurred. Account is taken of an ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner 1994) described in Chapter Two, recognising that bullying dynamics are seen to extend beyond the children who are bullied, to include peers, teachers, the school, community and parents. Maunder et al. (2010) and Bolton (1997) suggest that a key group missing from existing research evidence is the voice of support workers and parents. Whilst Besag (1989) has highlighted the need for teachers and parents to work together, Sawyer et al. (2011) argue that understanding parents' perceptions and conceptualizations is crucial to bullying research and intervention efforts. The focus in this study is on the day to day making of meaning of the participants within school setting and for this reason I chose not to include parents and families, but recognise that this would be of interest in future research. The inclusion of staff across the school setting, not just teachers will hopefully extend understanding of differing definitions and understanding of bullying. The views of different individuals gathered during the research will help identify the factors participants use to conceptualise bullying.

 In addition to the role of participants in the research I will also be examining the role of discourse found primarily in anti-bullying policy documents. The aim is to widen the scope of understanding of how bullying in schools has come to be framed,

uncovering underlying conceptualisations, and to examine whether adults and students are informed through and by policy documents by using the concepts of discourse, power/knowledge and subjectification to problematise bullying and participants' use of dominant discourses. A qualitative approach can provide a deeper understanding of some of the issues of students' and staff experiences of bullying and the factors they consider in defining it evidenced in previous research. Use of a qualitative approach to a complex phenomenon such as bullying can address issues of knowledge through a range of methodological diversity (Kvale 1996) and assist with understanding of "a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing" (Eisner 1991, p58).

4.4 Reliability and Validity

Davies and Dodd (2002) address the issue of rigour in qualitative research. Noting that there are differences in regard to the meaning of rigour between qualitative and quantitative approaches, they propose that "subjectivity, reflexivity, and the social interaction of interviewing" (p281) provide the necessary framework for supporting reliability and validity. In attempting to prevent bias Creswell and Miller (2000, p126) argue that the concept of triangulation may be addressed through "convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study". Accessing multiple schools and participants, through the use of vignettes and semi-structured interviews enables the perspectives of both students and staff to be made visible through a "set of interpretative material practices' (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p3). Whilst the use of multiple sites will aid the elimination of bias and support the researcher's truthfulness (Denzin 1978) allowing for comparison of the themes emerging from the data. I utilised detailed written records of what was discussed and observed in the field, alongside audio recordings, aiding accurate and authentic evidence in data collection.

The problem of familiarity, alongside the influence I as a researcher have on what and how the participants share their experiences requires a reflexive approach throughout. To enhance rigour the analysis requires an awareness of my involvement in the research interactions with the participants. Gaining access to research sites often requires prolonged and persistent interaction and this proved the case for this study. The multiple roles adds to the complex dynamic and it was necessary to adopt the role of what Hammersley and Atkinson described as the "acceptable incompetent" (2007, p99).

The choice of interview as a vehicle for allowing "voice" (Atkinson & Silverman 1997, p311) to participants from a variety of settings and experiences is widely recognised in the qualitative paradigm. But note must also be taken of the opportunity it offers individuals to provide a strategically presented account of their experiences and reactions. The use of interviews to collect data and to provide evidence of meaning or knowing about facts or events must take into consideration that the 'interview is both "constructed" and produces data from "a particular social interaction" (Sandelowski 2002, p106). The interview data must therefore be examined as "moving" (Becker 1996, p60) as this reimagines and refashions experience for both participant and researcher. With this in mind it is important to establish both credibility and authenticity when adopting qualitative approaches, adding a degree of confidence when presenting evidence of what is known from the data. In recognising the notion of individual identity which is dynamic and multiple (Blumenthal 1999) this approach recognises that there will be "contradictions and inconsistencies within individual participants' lives as lived and as told" (Sandelowski 2002, p107). Through the gathering of data from different school settings and interviewing both student and staff it is hoped to gain a more complete understanding of how the participants define and understand bullying from their differing perspectives set within cultural, social and historical contexts. This necessitates recognising they bring multiple identities to the situation, they are not just students, but children and siblings. Similarly staff will also bring their identities as parents. Their understanding and perceptions of bullying will be informed by multiple sources and experiences.

The aim of my research is to establish how students and staff in a secondary school setting describe and define bullying. Qualitative evidence relating to the views of students and teachers is scarce, with a recent exception being Purcell's (2012) qualitative study into primary school settings in Ireland. There is scant evidence to support the views that students and teachers are in agreement with these definitions. A study by Craig et al.(2000) of prospective teachers foregrounded differences highlighting the disparity between groups in a school setting. Qualitative approaches would enable a detailed understanding of how the participants conceptualised and framed bullying, eliciting descriptive and unique perspectives that reflect the participants' lived experiences. Also, given the increasing pressure on schools to include the voice of the child in the day to day operations of the systems and processes of schools, it is important to employ a participant led perspective. Qualitative methods would enable all participants to engage, hopefully,

feel comfortable and able to actively participate, whilst exploring their views and recognising the expertise of their own experience.

Policy analysis was utilised to widen the scope of understanding of how bullying in schools is framed, endeavouring to uncover underlying conceptualisations alongside how adults and students are informed through and by policy documents and participants' use of dominant discourses. Alongside vignettes and semi-structured interviews will provide insight into the research questions posed in the context of secondary schools in Wales. Qualitative data will aid development of the conceptual understanding of bullying in schools through the analysis of structures, processes and systems which are complex and multifaceted. Qualitative approaches can examine and develop a deeper understanding of some of the issues evidenced in previous research. These include examining the differences in definition; how developmental changes and gender raise implications for policy and practice in schools.

4.5 The Field and my presence within it

4.5.1 Locating research sites and gaining access

Recruitment of schools and participants presented barriers. Initial criteria for inviting schools to become part of the research study drew on bullying statistics (WG 2010) indicating that bullying in secondary schools gradually declines as pupils progress from year 7 to year 11. Using the Estyn inspection reporting framework as a selection tool to include a variety of schools achieving either excellent or adequate standards, this would allow for a comparison of the similarities and differences between schools. The south Wales area allows access to a large number of schools that would provide a range of social, economic, geographical and demographical factors.

Initial contact was made with 20 schools and discussion held with senior managers, including deputy and assistant heads, child protection leads, anti-bullying coordinators or wellbeing leads as to the possibility of participation in the research. Special schools were not included as the focus of the research was on mainstream education. Schools, or more specifically, senior managers in schools were often welcoming to the idea of research in their schools, but when told the topic and the involvement of children in the research, expressed a reluctance to become involved.

After the initial approach six secondary schools known to me through professional networks asked for further meetings to discuss in depth what the research would involve. Two schools agreed to participate, with the remaining schools citing pressure of curriculum content, time of staff to participate, or inspection requirements to meet, as barriers to involvement.

Initial planning involved case study as my chosen form of research design, including observation, document analysis and interviews. However, schools were reluctant to allow access on this basis observation in and around the school or accessing of records that recorded the incidents of bullying and their outcomes. The reasons given were that this would be too time consuming for staff, and there appeared to be a sensitivity around the issue of bullying and this research would perhaps highlight unforeseen issues and was therefore seen as problematic. My research strategy was amended to a cross sectional approach.

The schools where access was agreed, assistant heads were provided with an information sheet (see appendix) for the senior management teams, staff, students and parents; also consent forms that needed to be signed and returned to the school and myself. The senior managers acted as gate keepers, and were reluctant to allow me access to staff and students, so the opportunity to explain the research and recruit participants was very much in the control of senior managers. With regard to staff participation, one of the research criteria was to involve staff in both a teaching and non-teaching capacity. Ideally this was to include a senior manager, designated senior person for child protection, class room teachers with varying degrees of experience in terms of length of time teaching and pastoral responsibility and support staff such as librarians, administrative assistants, counselling or support staff, lunch time supervisors and school governors. In covering a cross section of adult roles within the school this would enable an insight into multiple views and experiences thereby addressing one of the gaps in previous research. In both schools the senior managers approached the staff, initially through staff meetings and then on a one to one basis asking staff to participate.

Both schools who agreed to participate in the study were situated in Wales and had over 1,000 pupils on role. School one was a city faith based secondary school, with a diverse intake of students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. There were a just below average number of students eligible for free school meals. School 2 was an urban comprehensive, there were very few pupils from ethnic-minority backgrounds and a small percentage of pupils received free school meals. There was a similar

small percentage of children with additional learning needs. Both schools were situated in areas of social and economic deprivation. In total there were 39 participants, 12 of whom were staff. (See tables 1 & 2) There was a disproportionate number of females to males in both the student and staff participants.

4.5.2 **Table 1**: Participant List: School 1

	Participants		Role	Year	School	Gender
1	S1	Lloyd	Student	Yr7	1	Male
2	S4	Cecile	Student	Yr7	1	Female
3	S5	Phoebe	Student	Yr7	1	Female
4	S9	Theo	Student	Yr9	1	Male
5	S10	Tommy	Student	Yr9	1	Male
6	S14	Lily	Student	Yr9	1	Female
7	S15	Ffion	Student	Yr9	1	Female
8	S18	Ellie	Student	Yr9	1	Female
9	S19	Benny	Student	Yr9	1	Male
10	S20	Darcy	Student	Yr11	1	Female
11	S22	Adam	Student	Yr11	1	Male
12	S25	Maisy	Student	Yr11	1	Female
13	S26	Lisa	Student	Yr11	1	Female
14	A28	Gwen	Assistant Head	Staff	1	Female
15	A29	Maggie	Administrator	Staff	1	Female
16	A32	Tara	Designated Senior Person	Staff	1	Female
17	A35	Mari	Head of Faculty	Staff	1	Female
18	A36	Mark	Head of Year	Staff	1	Male
19	A38	Ian	Student Support	Staff	1	Male

4.5.3 **Table 2**: Participant List: School 2

	Participants		Role	Year	School	Gender
1	S2	Billy	Student	Yr7	2	Male
2	S3	Bruce	Student	Yr7	2	Male
3	S6	Eira	Student	Yr7	2	Female
4	S7	Poppy	Student	Yr7	2	Female
5	S8	Belle	Student	Yr7	2	Female
6	S11	Harry	Student	Yr9	2	Male
7	S12	Evie	Student	Yr9	2	Female
8	S13	Henry	Student	Yr9	2	Male
9	S11	Harry	Student	Yr9	2	Male
10	S16	Moe	Student	Yr9	2	Male
11	S17	Fran	Student	Yr9	2	Female
12	S21	Luke	Student	Yr11	2	Male
13	S23	Kate	Student	Yr11	2	Female
14	S24	Bella	Student	Yr11	2	Female
15	A27	Jeff	Teacher	Staff	2	Male
16	A30	Megan	Governor	Staff	2	Female
17	A31	Val	Head of year	Staff	2	Female
18	A33	Philippa	Lunch time supervisor	Staff	2	Female
19	A34	Carla	Learning Support Assistant	Staff	2	Female
20	A37	Petra	Newly Qualified Teacher	Staff	2	Female

To strengthen the study it would have been beneficial to carry out observations in the school. This might have provided details of how bullying was reported and responded to, but also highlighted what was ignored or marginalised, and by whom. The language and discourse used in both the setting and the topic may provide a point of comparison, but also could provide a barrier to understanding or highlighting differences. An awareness of this issue when interviewing the participants meant that I, as the researcher, needed to achieve "an intellectual process of de-familiarisation" (Atkinson et al. 2003, p26). It would be necessary throughout the research period to reflect on researcher impact on the process, and move away from the personal bias that might be invested in my knowledge. For the research to be meaningful and robust it would need to involve critical reflection on the data that presented itself during the research, and how my role as researcher impacted on the participants during the data collection process. Similarly the interpretation of the data needed to have robust and organised systems to code, highlight and prioritise themes that emerged.

4.6 Sampling

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews was obtained through purposeful sampling which "attempts to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling" (Bryman 2004, p334). The benefits of adopting homogenous purposive sampling as an approach is that it gives access to participants' who shared similar contextual experiences, alongside similarities in terms of age, gender and occupation. Used as a method to recruit participants who can provide the experience and information about the phenomenon being investigated, it provided a purposive convenience approach. The senior manager in both schools acted as gate keepers to accessing both students and staff. I was able to identify and set broad criteria for the schools to be involved and the ages, experience and roles of the participants, the senior managers then approached and recruited the participants. The use of clear criteria for guidance to senior managers recruiting participants would help eliminate researcher bias in selection. As a result 39 participants were recruited and interviewed. Warren (2002, p99) indicates that this should be a minimum of between 20 and 30, but the importance of sample size cannot be prescriptive, and is very much dependent on convincing conclusions (Bryman 2004, p335).Whilst the sample size for this study is small, the criteria for inclusion were met in that it covered a range of student ages and a variety of staff

roles in different settings. Alongside this simultaneous data collection and analysis indicated that there was no new information emerging from the data.

4.7 Challenges of inclusion and participation: recruiting participants

Both schools used staff, either senior managers or administrative assistants, who were line managed by senior managers to gate keep. The preferred method of recruitment would have been to present the research study to students and staff, and have voluntary participation. Both schools opted to inform particular groups of students and ask for voluntary participation. This negated the opportunity for all students to have the opportunity to participate and also allowed the school to mediate and control access, which might result in the selection of students who would be more likely to be viewed as 'good' students and portray positive experiences. It might also deny those who had experienced bullying the opportunity to participate. In school one, as a result of lack of uptake when approached by the senior manager, access was allowed to a class of year 11 students to tell them about the research and invite them to participate. This resulted in successfully recruiting additional students. A consequence of the gate keeping was that students were offered opportunities to participate, but only through very carefully moderated channels. In the school 2 the classes were selected by the assistant head and then participation of individual students was organised through an administrative support assistant who organised dates and times for the interviews.

This compromise in being unable to approach either staff or students directly to recruit participants was frustrating and allowed senior managers to exert control over participation in the study. A possible consequence of this was that participants who were recruited to participate by senior managers might have been chosen because of a criteria that I was unaware of, or because they were known to support a particular view. As a consequence this might have prevented participants who had personal experiences with the issue of bullying that were perhaps unresolved or different to the school policy or expectations and these prospective participants may not have been offered opportunities to express an alternative view.

My role as researcher and my personal identity researching a sensitive and emotive subject was being mediated through access of control. Singh and Wassenaar describe a gatekeeper as "someone who controls access to an institution or an organisation". The gatekeepers in schools were mindful of the impact of the

research on the school, and this necessitated a clear articulation of the aims of the study and the benefits to the school. The clear criteria of recruitment helped in reducing time constraints, and the promise of feedback on completion were an aid to involvement. Discussed with each of the senior managers in schools were the purpose, timescales, sampling and recruitment, alongside the confidentiality and curation of the data.

Putting in place clear strategies for minimising risk and ensuring confidentiality, safety and anonymity also helped to indicate clearly that all ethical considerations had been taken. In describing some responses it was necessary to anonymise the participant further by excluding their pseudonym and role to prevent identification. All participants' were given the opportunity to check for understanding of the agreement which included signposting to the confidentiality and feedback from the study. A clear procedure for passing on any concerns was also highlighted and discussed as a result of seemingly innocuous conversations that might raise sensitive or emotional issues. Dickson-Swift et.al (2008, p9) argue that "The benefits of undertaking the research have to outweigh the risks of undertaking the research" and in order to fulfil this criteria the issues raised by the schools willing to engage were addressed.

The two schools who agreed to participate were content to agree that the study focused on semi structured interviews with participants, access to outward facing policy documents and incidental observations. Whilst formal observation was not part of the design strategy, observations made in public spaces such as reception, corridors and open spaces of dining rooms and outside areas may form part of a researcher's experience of the setting. There was little opportunity to observe incidental observations as my visits to schools and the rooms in which I carried out the semi structured interviews were located in well supervised areas, away from the day to day activities of students in the daily life of the schools. Located in office areas, this provided quiet spaces, but it also signified my role as outsider and as such, the need to manage my experience through minimising contact with pupils in formal or informal settings. There was limited opportunities to include incidental observational data mentioned and agreed to in the staff consent forms. The one exception to this was whilst waiting in the reception area to meet with a member of staff, observation was made of a meeting and discussion with a parent and child who had been absent from school. Mannay and Morgan (2015) argue that this type of encounter "breaches the traditional boundaries between the public and the private" and it is this 'waiting field' that gives rise to "opportunity for a glimpse of the

familiar practices"(p174) within the school setting. Whilst the incident was neither recorded or formed part of the data collection, it nevertheless became part of my field notes and reflective diary. I was cautious about integrating these "observational interactions through chance encounters with interviewees, extraneous conversations" into my analysis (Pinsky 2015, p282) in view of ethical concerns about the parameters of the research. Also the school's reluctance to allow participant observation as a method of data collection raised a note of caution. Whilst these "incidental ethnographic encounters" (p283) are rarely included in the "unduly "tidy" version of the research" (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983, p 229) the lack of guidance in the research literature on how to incorporate this type of encounter leaves the novice researcher searching for resolution to a difficulty that might prove fruitful in enriching the data.

Differences in recognition of types of bullying and definitions including the concepts of power, intention and repetition are elements that offer multiple perspectives in research studies. My criteria for inclusion of schools and participants in the research aimed to add to the trustworthiness of the research and to enable a comparison of data in the analysis. This meant inclusion of more than one secondary school and a cross section of participants. The research in this particular area stemmed from a personal familiarity with the research area of bullying that had been raised during my professional career that included the challenges to recognising, responding and intervening effectively to bullying in a school context. Whilst bullying in schools has a substantial research history, research evidence suggests that adults are unaware of some forms of bullying in their school contexts (Boulton 1997). Research on views of teachers in reference to definitions of bullying suggests that teachers have a broader concept of bullying than pupils, especially with reference to direct bullying, but perceive bullying using psychological power such as exclusion, and rumour spreading as less harmful (Boulton, 1997). To explore whether students and staff understand and define bullying differently, the inclusion of a variety of staff roles was integral to the research design, to explore whether the conceptualisation of bullying was consistent across the field; did support staff interpret and respond to bullying in the same way as perhaps the assistant head or the classroom teacher? Maunder et al. (2010) highlight the differences in how bullying is perceived and the need for schools to focus on developing interpretation and shared understanding with a consistent approach. There is a noted absence in the literature of experience and voice of staff other than teachers in a school setting. Describing patterns of behaviour of a diverse range of individuals in similar but different settings may help

to illuminate some of the multi-faceted views around bullying and whether responses and interventions to it vary.

Including student voice across the school helps to illuminate some of the issues mentioned in research discussed. Evidence in research has highlighted age and development as contributing factors which affect pupils' understanding, suggesting that age related improvements in children's perceptions of social behaviour alter their views (Boulton 1997; Sutton & Smith 1999; Frisén et al. 2007). Thus access to students from the age of 11 to 16 years of age provided opportunity to ascertain their definition of bullying, and whether there were differences in interpretation and understanding during the developmental period of adolescence.

Gendered responses have been identified as an issue in research (Bjorkqvist et al. 1992; Fekkes et al. 2005) and the bigger proportion of girls and women in the participants might have an effect on the findings, having a conscious awareness of the problem helped to identify issues. It would have been preferable to have equal numbers of males and females.

4.8 Ethical Issues

Consent to complete this study was granted by Cardiff University's Social Research Ethics Committee. As mentioned earlier, bullying is an emotive and sensitive subject, in addition working with children and young people in a school context also presents a number of ethical issues. Exploring this area through research requires the researcher to minimise the potential risk of harm, and not place them at risk of marginalisation (Creswell & Miller 2003). The choice of vignettes is evidenced as a method that enables individuals to discuss personal issues and can help create a non-threatening environment (Barter & Renold 2000). Active consent was required from parents, students, staff and the Head teacher of the schools involved for inclusion in the research. Each particular group was given an information sheet about the research, including a period of time in which to process this information before deciding whether or not to participate. Participants needed to sign and return the consent form to participate. Students and parents signed consent forms. At the beginning of each interview the consent form was reviewed with the participant and reminded that participation is voluntary and they are happy to continue, but were still able to withdraw at any stage up until transcription. Each of the information sheets were appropriate to the particular participant groups. (See Appendix 3).

During the interviews students were not asked to divulge any personal information or any instances of bullying in which they might have had a role. At the start of each interview attention were drawn to the statement that if anything they said gave cause for concern for their safety this would need to be passed on through the designated lead for child protection in the school. Reassurance was offered to the participants that the information collected would be anonymised and the school and the individuals in that school would be assigned a pseudonym. At the end of each interview participants were asked if they knew where to go if they needed any support with issues around bullying. A slip with contact details signposting to relevant organisations for children and adults was prepared in the case of participants' not having knowledge of the relevant supporting organisations.

I followed Cardiff University's guidance and procedures for the secure storage of research data, including separation of data, and hard copies being kept in locked storage. All information stored electronically was password protected on a secure device that had appropriate malware prevention programmes in place. All non-anonymised data was stored for a period of two years following examination.

During data analysis, schools were assigned a pseudonym, all participants were be assigned a code number to protect their identity, student's age and year group were recorded. Similarly with the adult participants, a note will be made of their role. Only participants not known to me were included.

4.9 Inclusive methodology

The need to use a research methodology that suited both adults and children, was inclusive and allowed for the development of ideas through and with participants rather than 'about' them was an important element of data collection. The decision to include students in the research is a growing trend underlined by the introduction of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989). The Convention sets out the rights for all children 'to express views in all decisions that affect them' and has seen the development of more participatory research methods that involve children and young people. The use of qualitative research with children and young people has been demonstrated as an effective means of capturing "meanings, beliefs, judgements" (Barter & Renold 2000, p308). Holland et.al (2008, p7) discusses the differences of approach needed to work with adults and children, and states that "individuals across the age span needing flexibility in approach to

accommodate different levels of concentration, positions of marginalization". As a result the use of vignettes and a semi-structured interview could be viewed as appropriate methods enabling an exploration of the definition of bullying for both adults and children.

4.10 Inviting exploration using vignettes

There is evidence of the use of vignettes in qualitative research to explore issues that are of interest to social science (Barter & Reynolds 1999; O'Dell et al. 2012). The use of this methodology has been particularly useful when there is a combination of sensitive issues in the research topic and the involvement of children and young people. Bullying is a sensitive issue and the use of vignettes can enable participants to discuss issues that may seem threatening or emotive. This approach allows time and opportunity to explore attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of those participating in the study in a safe and non-threatening environment. It also allows exploration to gain insight into the subjective belief systems of those involved in responding to the brief narrative used as a means to promote discussion. Vignettes allow for an exploration of complex factors, situations and influences between students and staff. This methodology enables a range of variables to be explored, including age and gender, allowing exploration of frameworks which inform participants' thinking about the issues. Whilst the vignettes provided the nub of the story, they necessarily lacked clarity of detail, and thereby allowed space for the participants to imagine details which would inform or influence their choices. Of significance for this study are the issues that arise when trying to elucidate values, beliefs and attitudes as a means to understanding what participants know and how they know it.

Questions play an important role in eliciting detail from a vignette. The aim of the study was to give participants an opportunity to identify what factors are used to define bullying. The use of vignettes and semi-structured interviews asked them to respond to a situation, what their expectations are of actions taken by a third person, or perhaps what they might do. Context is also an important part of the dynamic; participants' lived experiences might differ and the ambiguity of the story allow the development of thought around the issues that arise and what factors they consider when making their decisions. Used in conjunction with analysis of policy this elicits a more personal viewpoint and provides finer detail than that elicited from broader observation.

Arguably there is a difference between examples given in vignettes and social reality (Finch 1987), what we say we would do and how we would actually act maybe differently. Inconsistency between what we believe we would do and our actions varies between situations. A second and common theoretical and methodological dilemma revolves around the notion that participants may initially provide socially desirable responses. Moreover, only upon probing they reveal how they truly believe they would actually respond to a particular situation or dilemma and why. Hazel (1995, p2) argues that vignettes "can then facilitate a discussion around the opinions expressed, or particular terms used in the participants' comments." Vignettes are a means to illuminate meaning and interpretation in complex situations and processes, Finch (1987) adds that because the vignette is imaginary it is not threatening, prompting more open responses.

Criticism is often made that a story in the form of vignettes cannot mirror the continual reactions between individuals and their environment, so findings cannot be generalised from this method. Barter and Reynolds (1999) argue that vignettes offer an opportunity to manage and isolate aspects of a social issue or problem. The use of vignettes as an instrument to elicit data recognises that identifying and responding to bullying is complex, dynamic and involves multiple systems. Using vignettes to present simple stories help to make salient the frameworks and systems that are operating and may often serve to obscure the phenomena being investigated. Ultimately no research tool can completely capture the complexity of social existence, however, by using the vignettes with a semi structured interview I sought to build on the individual strengths of the different techniques.

The six vignettes (See appendix 2) for this study were drawn from examples that included physical, psychological, cyberbullying and identity based bullying. Whilst these are stereotypical examples of possible bullying scenarios they are based on the categories of bullying described in the policy document *Respecting others* (WG 2011). They are designed to give a brief context which would enable the participants to have an understanding of the situation, but be vague enough to prompt discussion of additional information that might cause participants to decide whether or not it was bullying. The use of the vignettes and semi structured interviews were tested with a pilot group of five students and modified in light of their responses and comments.

4.11 The pilot

The importance of piloting materials is highlighted in Sampson (2004), discussing how the appreciation of "interactional complexities" and "local knowledge" are integral to refining and amending materials and interactions to be used in the research project. The importance of piloting suggesting that omitting to pilot can leave the researcher ill prepared or responding haphazardly or not utilizing them as a learning tool for accessing the research field (Hammersley 1993; Delamont 1993).

The purpose of my pilot was to prepare a novice researcher for entry into the field and refine and develop the research instruments. Whilst I was fully conversant of the daily structure in a secondary school setting from my time as a teacher, the role of researcher provided a different lens. In my role as researcher the relationship between myself and the participants differed, I was no longer in the role of 'teacher' but that of 'researcher' requiring a different approach interacting with participants.

The first of these challenges was organising and gaining access to participants in schools. As a result the pilot took place in school one, with a group of five participants that volunteered. This was as a result of a presentation that was given to a class identified by the assistant head. There were several issues that arose as a result of the pilot.

The failure of participants' attendance and/or not completing the appropriate consent forms: this resulted in an adjustment of the meeting schedule during the research to ensure that I had received consent forms prior to the interviews and arranging times and venues independently with each participant. This did not fully alleviate the problem of the no show, but minimised its effect to having only five participants becoming a 'no show'.

Testing and refining of the vignettes and the semi-structured interview schedule was key to try and limit observational bias and increase validity. This became problematic (Whyte 1996). Mindful of Bloor's insight that "All encounters between researchers and researched are species of social relationships governed by conventions of politeness and etiquette" (2001, p392) that participants were likely to be wholly positive in their responses.

The pilot helped to refine issues with the structure and time constraints, consequently the original research instruments were amended in relation to order of presentation, with the vignettes being presented first, and the questions on knowledge and involvement of policy coming at the end of the session. The pilot

was crucial in refining my questioning technique and tailoring the session to fit into approximately fifty minute sessions.

During the interviews with participants I allowed them to choose the order in which they talked about the vignettes. This was in contrast to the pilot interviews where I presented the vignettes to the students in numerical order. The rational for this change was that the participants would feel that they had choice in the process and be more relaxed when responding. The other change I made was asking two direct questions about their knowledge of policy and their involvement in its development. During the pilot none of the participants volunteered this during the interviews; as this is central tenet of the research, questions relating to participants knowledge and understanding of bullying through policy, I felt it was an important amendment.

The material collected during the pilot was not be used as part of the data collection, due to slight modifications to the presentation of the materials and inclusion of direct questions about knowledge of the antibullying policy and participation which were amended. This was as a result of the reflexive process in reviewing field notes and listening to the voice recordings of the pilot interviews with students. It would have been useful to also trial this with adult participants, but this opportunity was rejected due to time constraints by the gatekeepers.

4.12 Probing for understanding

Semi-structured interviews – using definition as a guide

Using a semi-structured interview as a technique to gather information around discussion of the vignettes would facilitate an approach that allowed participants to cover specific areas that were of interest, but allow enough flexibility to provide an informal and relaxed atmosphere. This method was also suitable for use with both adults and children, enabling an authentic representation of all the participants' views (Babbie 2004). The same vignettes were presented to both staff and students. The vignettes are printed onto individual sheets and participants could select them in any order. Each of the participants were asked: "Do you think it's bullying?" This was followed with a discussion of what factors had informed their decisions. The advantage of using the same vignettes with both student and staff participants is this allows the researcher an element of control around the areas of discussion and to provide a context in which the information being conveyed by the

participant can be reflected back to them to ensure that the meaning of what they are saying is checked.

This choice of interview is preferable to the more structured formal interviews as it fits the qualitative nature of the research exploring the meanings of social phenomena. The interview guide consisted of a series of prompts, referring to intent, impact, repetition and power allowing for the sequence of the questions to be varied in response to the participants descriptions and answers (Bryman 2004, p113). The aim was for the interview to be more conversational, albeit with "controlled conversation" (Jamshed 2014, p87) that centred on the defining and describing of bullying and the factors that participants' brought into play in their discussions. Semi-structured interviews would allow the opportunity to probe any answers that needed clarification or expansion (Hoinville et al. 1978). Whilst the exploratory design of the study is to elicit individual perspectives it must be remembered that participants' descriptions, might be open to interpretation. Argyris and Schon (1974) argue that what individuals say and what they actually do may be different, and there may be no deliberate attempt to obscure or manipulate, because they remain largely unaware of the differences between what they say "espoused theory" (p6) and what they actually do "theory-in-use" (p7). This was considered when interpreting the participants' responses.

A further consideration was the issue of confidentiality; bullying is a sensitive and emotive topic that is often informed by personal experiences. Consideration was given to conducting interviews in pairs with the students as this might have helped allay any fears or anxiety that students might have felt in being interviewed by an unknown adult. However, this was decided against as it was important to capture individual responses that reflected personal and subjective experiences that illuminated responses to the vignettes. Working in pairs might have inhibited the free flow of information, despite it perhaps providing new themes and understandings through an exchange of shared information and understanding, rather than individual opinions and experiences that are a true reflection of the individual's views (Babbie 2004).

A particular issue that might inhibit the sharing of information, especially for the students, was the formal setting and the timetabled approach to meeting. Research with children has found that they prefer more relaxed approaches and would prefer to have some choice as to their method of participation (Hill 2006; Holland et al. 2010). Meetings with both staff and students took place in either a small office

space, or in a counselling room. There was occasional disruption or interruption because of factors beyond my control, e.g. on one occasion a car alarm just outside the room went off repeatedly throughout the interview, and on another occasion when the interview was taking place in a classroom, a member of staff asked could they just collect books and resources from the room during the last few minutes of the interview. These incidents were recorded in my field notes and mentioned in the transcriptions and noted in my field work diary.

Meetings for the interviews were roughly lesson length, around 55 minutes in length. Students and staff were allocated times by the assistant head in one school and the administrative assistant in the second, and were told where the meeting was to take place, consequently there was little control over either the surroundings or the room set up. This was mitigated slightly by my provision of water and snacks to make the meeting seem less informal and by asking participants where they wished to sit.

One of the difficulties of having little control over how and when the meetings were to take place was that initially five or six meetings were arranged in one day. This afforded little opportunity for reflection between each participant. Consequently I requested that there would be a maximum of four participants during the day. This gave an opportunity for reflective review of the interview and also time in which to write brief field notes, making note of any significant details.

The interviews were only conducted once with each participant. The interview data was captured through audio recording which occasional additional handwritten notes, which accommodated a focus on the interview content and the prompts in the interview schedule. Chatting informally at the start of the interviews gave opportunities to gain an insight into the participant's day to day life. This as Babbie (2004) points out is often subjective, and might undermine the accuracy of the information collected. To mitigate this I had a brief introductory guide that I used with each of the participants to try to promote consistency, whilst trying to put the participants at their ease. I was aware that my status as researcher and an outsider in their setting might affect their responses and behaviour and was keen to minimise this by setting up a relaxed and informal setting where they felt confident and at ease and therefore might offset my influence to a certain degree, enabling them to discuss the vignettes or other questions freely.

The interviews were guided by a schedule of key phrases were designed to allow the participant to talk freely. Records of participant name, year group or role were noted. General housekeeping and mention of the possibility that during the

conversation notes might be made and audio recordings would be made. The process of looking at the vignettes in any chosen order explained; also the choice to read the vignette themselves or have them read aloud. After reading the vignette each participant would be asked "Would you describe this as bullying?" and then asked to explain what factors they considered in making the choice. The interview schedule was used as a reference point to make sure that all the areas had been covered. The content of the open-ended questions focused on the current definition of bullying found in the policy documents, around power, impact, intention and repetition. Note was made of whether there was any reference to gender, ethnicity, sexuality and identity. The session for both students and staff ends with questions around whether they knew about the school policy and their involvement in developing it. In addition, did they know where they could find a copy of the policy?

Atkinson and Coffey (2003) describe interviews as a performance, both on the part of the researcher and that of the participants, as is any social interaction. The interviews were a tool which enabled me to gather data, to illuminate whether there was a sense of shared understanding of the definition of bullying. Both the vignettes and the semi-structured interviews were tools which would provide insight into the subjective and personal framework with which the participants constructed their understanding of bullying.

4.13 Documents

This research study seeks not only to understand the participant's point of view through the semi-structured interviews, but seeks to enhance this understanding through examining the policy documents that offer representations of reality. There were 3 policy documents which were utilised for the analysis of policy, these were *Respecting Others Anti-bullying overview* (WG 2011) and the antibullying policies of both schools who participated. The table below illustrates the number of pages, and word count for each of the documents.

Document	Pages	Words

Respecting others: antibullying overview (2011)	14	2870
School 1 antibullying policy	11	2950
School 2 antibullying policy	7	1872

The Welsh Government guidance is available via the www.gov.wales. School one, at the time of the research did not have a hard copy available, and it was not available on the school website as it was under review.   School two had a hard copy available in the reception area of the school and it was available through the school website. The use of documents provides a distinctive snap shot of socially produced documents aimed at informing and guiding actions in practice. The policy documents chosen are formal acknowledgment of processes and systems and social documents on how bullying as a phenomena is represented. Choosing these documents provides an appropriate and rich source of information. Using this alongside the data gathered from the participants enables the themes of the research to be explored more fully utilising the Foucauldian framework discussed earlier. Both written discourse and participant responses can be scrutinised and analysed to establish authenticity and accuracy. This is pertinent in regard to school antibullying policy and staff and student involvement in the consideration of where, when and who created the document.

The analysis of these documents uses a strategy that focuses on how antibullying policy seeks to embed content in the social context (Atkinson et al. 2001) enabled "insight into individual and collective actions, intentions, meanings, organizational dynamics, and institutional structures, in short, to interpret the social reality indicated in the documents" (Miller& Alvarado 2005, p351).

Initially the methodology had included review of a selection of documents, including records of reports of bullying incidents and their resolution, alongside the policy documents for each of the schools. As this proved a barrier to gaining access, only the public policy documents for both schools, alongside the *Respecting Others* (WG 2011) anti-bullying guidance used. Using a Foucauldian framework to analyse these documents enabled a more reflexive approach to the content and also helped to position the subject matter in a less familiar context. Written language and discourse provide an interpretation of the subject area that is often prioritised as the truth and a valid form of knowledge. Simultaneously, it also shapes the subject and provides

a point of contrast in examining what is included or excluded. My analysis of the three policy documents enabled comparison through the discussions around the vignettes during the semi-structured interviews, a framework with which to probe and examine understanding of the definition currently positioned as the expert view.

Analysis of policy documents took place after the use of semi-structured interviews based around the vignettes. Document analysis is an important part of triangulation in methodology, it is a means to compliment the data achieved through semi-structured interviews and provides a means of "contextualising" (Bowen 2009) the research area. Initially reviewing the documents to gain a broad picture of their contents, identifying relevant ideas, concepts and messages and using a reflexive journal to note any problematic areas, endeavouring to avoid researcher bias which would reduce the credibility of the findings.

4.14 Exiting the field

The participation of both schools happened in blocks of time with access to school one being followed by school two a few weeks later. Despite the initial barriers to gaining access, very quickly, each school was welcoming and accommodating. A total of 39 participants, 27 students and 12 staff provided sufficient material to inform the research. For future work, replicating the research with a broader and larger participant base would enable greater reliability and validity to be established and offer an opportunity to delve further into some of the emerging themes and broaden the involvement of participants with the addition of parents.

I informed senior managers and participants that the research would form part of a thesis, and would notify them of its completion.

4.15. Analysis

Whilst establishing what is 'known' through a qualitative approach has been described by Miles (1979) as an "attractive nuisance". The difficulties of analysing complex, rich and large range of data, can provide difficulties in interpretation and the need for rigorous analysis throughout the research process in the attempt to avoid what Lofland (1970) describes as "analytic interruptus" in developing the conceptual analysis. Although this approach would lead to a large amount of data in the form of field notes, interview transcripts and documents, a clear structure and

consistent approach to the analysis of data is needed in order to understand what staff and students 'know'.

In an attempt to overcome some of the difficulties inherent in a qualitative approach during work in the field, a clear set of guidelines were utilised, including notes about context immediately after the interviews and making sure to note any significant, interesting or important points that arose. The recordings of the interviews were listened to and transcribed as quickly as possible. This proved invaluable, if time consuming. Having them transcribed professionally would have been time saving, but the act of listening and transcribing proved insightful and constructive in getting to know the data intimately (Bryman 2004, p331). The transcriptions were reread multiple times to begin the process of identifying codes within the data. This process enabled an in depth knowledge of the content and also cross referencing with field notes, noting tone of voice, pauses and hesitations in participant responses; it also enabled comparison of staff and student responses. Highlighting specific sections of text, whilst adding notes in the margins of anything pertinent, including language, ideas or descriptions, alongside the use of the reflexive diary, enabled generation of codes and patterns to begin with a view to identifying themes (Fielding & Thomas 2008).

Initially the codes identified related to the concepts within the current literature of defining bullying, including power, repetition, impact and intent. Re-examining and revisiting highlighted any significant evidence in the transcripts that identified further codes that were not routinely mentioned in the current conceptualisation of bullying. Connections to each other and any noticeable gaps began to emerge and produced a much broader picture. The drawing of a mind map to identify the key codes, helped to visualise the links and connections and also helped to identify some of the gaps. This helped to generate some theoretical ideas about the data and how it related to the current literature on the understanding and defining of bullying. These were later refined and form part of the findings chapters. Using Foucault's theories as a critical agent to examine the themes and meanings in the participant responses prompted less obvious interpretations. Morrow and Richards (1996) discussing the ethical issues of the subjective interpretation of data, highlight the need for the researcher to have a heightened awareness of presenting a distorted picture of the participants' viewpoints. The importance of maintaining quality field notes, noting body language and interaction is essential to providing contextual information and adding depth to the analysis of data. My reflective practice provided ample opportunities to question my practice as researcher.

A thematic analysis approach was utilised to the data gathered from the participants and informed interpretation through coding from the discussions of the vignettes in the semi-structured interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data" (p79). As a novice researcher the choice of thematic analysis allowed flexibility in the analysis of the rich, thick and complex data collected from the semi-structured interviews and alongside analysis of policy documents. The coding was carried out by reading and rereading the transcripts and highlighting key words, phrases and concepts in different coloured inks, then bringing these together under themes and categories which were drawn out in a mapping exercise. In utilising the 39 participants' data, there was a rich vein of data to compare and contrast. This approach was a good fit with the overall research aim which was to ascertain whether there were differences in staff and students' definitions of bullying.

This approach was not without its limitations, one of which is the "theory-neutral" approach (Bryman 2004, p407). As an experienced practitioner working in the field and having conducted a literature review an awareness of an existing conceptualisation of the research problem was identified and addressed through reflective practice. Also, the practical implications of interviewing, transcribing and analysing the data were not insignificant. Whilst allowing a certain flexibility in the process of collecting and analysing data, at some points a more structured procedure to follow would have proved useful. The organic nature of the analysis through themes can often feel nebulous and sometimes a little incomprehensible, but consistent attention to process and systems utilising reflection enabled findings to emerge. Through the data analysis, four broad themes were identified:

1. The language of bullying, links to question one, the conceptualisation of bullying in policy documents.

2. Truth, knowledge and power relates to questions two and three, how discourse is a powerful tool used in enforcing the current understanding of bullying.

3. Becoming a subject, relates to the factors staff and students use in defining and describing bullying.

4. How discipline and domination are used by both staff and students to normalise and subjectify individuals.

4.16 Summary

This chapter has set out the approach that best suited my research goals. I have set out my epistemological and ontological understanding and approach to the data produced. I have outlined my research design and my methodological choices, including a discussion of some of the problematic areas of gaining access to research sites. My choices produced rich data drawn from the use of vignettes and semi-structured interviews and an analysis of policy documentation. I recognised how familiarity and bias could undermine the validity of my findings and how my position and indeed that of the participants in the field are influenced by a variety of factors. My approach allowed insight into how thirty nine participants drawn from two schools understood and described bullying. The following two chapters present the findings derived from my policy analysis and research interviews. I provide descriptive detail and analysis that relate to the four themes identified earlier.

5. Disseminating and sharing knowledge through policy

This chapter analyses the content of the schools' anti-bullying policies. Critically examining how bullying presented in these documents and how this reflects the current discourse related to bullying in schools. Also findings are reported from the semi structured interviews of students and staff awareness and knowledge of policy documents and their participation in its development. It addresses the research questions:

1. How is bullying conceptualised in the policy documents utilised in schools in Wales?
2. What are staff and student awareness of anti-bullying policies in schools?
3. What role do staff and students play in the development of school anti-bullying policies?

5.1 Disseminating knowledge through policy

Legislation and guidance are used as vehicles to disseminate and reinforce a particular conceptualisation of bullying. *The School Standards and Framework Act* (1998) requires schools to have an anti-bullying policy. All state schools are required to have a behaviour policy in place, including measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. The *Education Act* (2002) places a duty on school governing bodies in England and Wales to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in their care.

Further reviews in Wales embed the focus on individual behaviour as a framework for improving standards and outcomes for children, including *The National Behaviour and Attendance Review* (WG 2008) followed by the *Behaviour and attendance: Action Plan* (WG 2009); both set out the context of managing behaviour and attendance in schools in Wales. *Respecting Others* (WG 2011) was intended "to strengthen the ongoing work of the Welsh Government, local authorities and schools in promoting positive behaviour and attendance"(p5) which is "intended to enhance the nurturing and support of children and young people to guide them during their education and to help them reach their full potential" (p5). Further it states "Work on preventing and responding to bullying will need to be seen within the wider context of work on behaviour and attendance in schools" (p5). The

guidance endorses the understanding that "children who are bullied are less likely to achieve" with the aim of supporting schools to "understand, prevent and respond effectively to all types of bullying" (p.4). In addition *The Equality Act* (2010), brought together several strands of discrimination legislation and placed a duty on public bodies to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation with reference to specific groups. Whilst the *Respecting Others* (WG *2011)* is named as 'anti-bullying', the ongoing legislative framework in Wales encompasses discrimination, participation, empowerment and wellbeing of children in Wales and includes T*he Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure (*WG *2011);* the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (*WG *2014)* and the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (*WG *2015)*.

This plethora of legislation serves to reinforce and establish the framework and conceptualisation of discrimination and victimisation, including bullying under the guise of safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children. Indeed guidance relating to safeguarding children in education in Wales (WG *2015*) now names bullying as a 'specific circumstance' with regard to the abuse of children. The ideological implications for school policy places an emphasis on individual accountability and responsibility alongside regulation and control within the centre of the neoconservative policy discourse. How the individual is shaped and formed draws on the interpretation of these two tenets of political ideology, shaping how we conceptualise the subject, both student and staff. The policy produced in Wales related to bullying and how it affects individuals is intrinsically linked to a neoliberal ideals which "increase their individualised and decontextualized human capital" (Beckmann et al. 2009, p321).

The policy documents reflect the neoliberal, contextual and historical understanding of human behaviour. The discourse frames the responsibility as "legal" for those who are involved in preventing and dealing with bullying in schools. Set within institutional structures, such as schools, whose responsibility as an agent, is to correct behaviour of those who are deemed to be inadequate in forming an identity that is responsible, accountable and normative. Students and staff sense of self or subjectivity, is viewed as a personal and individual responsibility, closely linked to individual freedom and choice. Captured in this is the normalising of heteronormativity, reinforced through systems of surveillance and control. Peters argues that "[t]his is the basis for understanding the 'government of individuals' in education as a technique or form of power" (1996, p81) and is instrumental in producing the 'truth' or 'knowledge' of bullying. Chapter 6 will explore staff and

students conceptualisation of bullying, exploring factors which influence their defining of bullying. It will also examine how discipline and control is used in the amending or correction of specific individual behaviours.

*Respecting Others (*WG 2011) guidance states on the summary page that its aim is to:

> Provide information on tackling bullying in schools. It offers direct practical solutions to both prevention and dealing with incidents of bullying and gives the legal background and an explanation of the roles of all involved in preventing and dealing with bullying (p 3)

The guidance and legislative framework requires policy to be decided by the school and staff, whilst parents and pupils must be made aware of it, but as the excerpts below will illustrate, this is not necessarily the case. Few participants, had involvement with policy development, indeed one member of staff was unaware of where the document could be found. The hierarchical dissemination of information and knowledge is evident in that those with greater status and responsibility in the school have greater awareness of policy and its role in prescribing behaviour, but as the policy travels through the layers of staff and governance, awareness of content reduces and is non-existent for the vast majority. What emerged and is evidenced later (see 5.7 and 5.8) through the questions asked in the semi structured interviews and discussions of the vignettes was a distinct lack of awareness of the content of policy documents on the part of staff, whilst student awareness, knowledge and participation in development of school antibullying policy was similarly non-existent, despite being a requirement in Wales. Nevertheless, whilst the 'material' substance of the policy, was not widely known by either staff or students, its influence on how bullying was described, defined and understood as a problem was disproportionate to participants' knowledge of the content of policies.

5.2 Focusing on individual behaviour

The focus of bullying in the current conceptualisation found in policy documents is the disruption of a relationship between two individuals. The guidance focuses on the "learner" and "victim" and goes on to describe and categorise bullying as the behaviours which are physical, verbal or indirect (see page 84 *Respecting others (WG 2011, p2).*

It does not consider or include how wider issues such as hierarchical structures, cultural and social norms which are informed and connected to particular political and philosophical ideologies are linked to and influence individual behaviour. It is only relatively recently that the focus has started to move away from the individuals involved and began to explore elements that influence behaviour. These include cultural, social and political values placed on individuals or particular groups and how they intersect to produce and position individual identity through gender, sexuality, age, race, religion and class. There is little evidence, challenge or exploration made of how these constructs have been given their value; how they are monitored; who carries out the surveillance and legitimately imposes sanctions to maintain the ascribed normative value. How the norms and values are arrived at is rarely questioned. How bullying is conceptualised lacks consideration of factors other than the individual. The social and political context is implicit in the ideology that informs policy. However, the hierarchy in which the individual sits and their access to social capital, the networks of relationships, shared sense of identity and understanding are noticeable by their absence in the policies of both schools and government guidance.

In a broader relational approach behaviour is understood as a function in the relationship between individuals in a particular context rather than by individual characteristics. Aquino and Lamertz argue that victims are not defined by their personalities but in the "social interactions" between individuals, which are dynamic over time (2005, p1024). This moves the site of power away from the individual, to one where power takes on many forms and is inherently bound to hierarchical structures and the ability to access additional resources to support and maintain status or position within that social setting.

5.3 A broader focus

Missing in this conceptualisation of bullying and evidenced in the related discourses are two key elements. Firstly, the influence of wider power relations, including those related to class, race, sexuality and gender. There appears to be little space or acknowledgement of cultural, institutional or systemic factors that influence how individuals and their behaviour are perceived or managed. The school is the authority that sets the boundaries and norms of behaviour and enforces these through discipline and control, set within a prescribed framework that is encapsulated in policy documents. Absent in the policies is the means by which

students in schools have access to tools, skills and knowledge that would help them identify and challenge social power and privilege. Ringrose & Renold (2010) discuss the lack of cultural and contextual factors that contribute to a decontextualising of bullying, results in highly emotional responses to being either named as victim or bully, reinforcing the binary relationship which relies on punitive consequences to effect changes of behaviour. Interventions such as bystander behaviour and telling, further reinforce surveillance and control, contributing to continuing inequalities and punishing individuals rather than identifying and tackling the barriers that prevent resolutions to the problem of bullying.

5.4 The discourse of school antibullying policies?

The definition found in the policies all include an imbalance of power in inter-personal relationships between children. In current school and government policies there are linguistic and discursive devices used to ensure that power is hidden. One of which is the construction of the 'safe school', which has been influential in shaping the narrative and discourse around bullying. The idea of the 'safe' school has arisen over recent decades in response to a growing concern with violence enacted in schools, such as the school shootings in the United States and increasing concern and awareness of childhood abuse, often highlighted and commentated on in the media. Schissel (1997) argues that these moral panics "decontextualize particular events and legitimate punitive discourse and policies" (p15). This is reflected in the legislation and guidance offered to school, positioned alongside the rights agenda, and the responsibilities of schools to amend behaviour to prevent violence or aggression.

The introductory paragraph of *Respecting Others* is "Every learner in every school has the right to learn, free from fear of bullying" (WG 2011, p2). School 1 states, "Parents are entitled to feel confident that when they send their children to school that they will be safe" and that the school will create "an environment in which children feel safe and are able to express themselves without fear or intimidation". Both schools state that they will aim "to demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of pupils is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying". School 2, in its introductory paragraph states that it "strongly uphold the ethos of a safe and secure environment", linking this with connections to the "Policies for the Safe Use of Pupils' Images" and "E-Safety". Both school policies include a statement that reinforces the gravity of bullying and how the "the school takes bullying seriously

and will not tolerate it". School 1 adds that they will "encourage the bully to understand and overcome the causes of his/her behaviour", identifying the root of the problem as an individual one. The power imbalance in the relationship between adults and students is absent and focuses on the role adults have in exercising discipline. Ryan and Morgan (2011) argue that this underpins power inequalities in education and can be employed by both students and staff, albeit in different ways to ensure that control is maintained in school settings. Both make use of "disciplinary technologies" that are employed to bring about a "docile body that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault 1975, p198).

Reflected in the policies as "legal responsibilities" to "deal appropriately with cases of bullying" (WG 2011, p3). School 1 presents a list, including "Action to be taken by the appropriate staff in the school", which precedes a "full investigation", "explanation of the findings", ascertaining the "severity and frequency" before determining "the action to be taken". Again the focus is on modifying behaviour through regulation and control:

> Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the school. However, responsible staff should recognise that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies and may include:
>
> - severe reprimand, to include the witnesses who did not intervene (if appropriate)
>
> - verbal warning that future incidents will lead to other sanctions:
>
> - placed on pastoral report
>
> - detention
>
> - inclusion
>
> - exclusion
>
> - permanent exclusion

School 2 also identifies individual behaviour in the form of "bullies" or "bullied" and how "changing the attitudes and behaviour" and "sanctions will also be used against bullies"; further reinforcing it in its policy which states:

> Any of the school's formal punishments can be used against bullies as appropriate. For persistent offenders or incidents considered as gross acts of aggression a student could be

permanently excluded. As well as punitive, educational sanctions should be implemented.

School 1 further highlights the "responsibility of the Head Teacher and Staff to ensure that the experience of education takes place in an atmosphere that is both caring and protective". By placing discipline in the context of safety and the welfare of the child, it reflects the 'duty' or responsibility espoused in the *Education Act* (2002) section 17. The expectation that schools take "reasonable measures" and "appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of a child or children", reinforcing the performativity of the school to ensure that these boundaries are policed and upheld.

Whilst no one would deny the moral and ethical reasons behind "keeping learners safe", by enabling the construction of behaviour in this way, e.g. safe or unsafe, it effectively hides the operation of power and allows teachers to use discipline to maintain social control. It also reinforces the hierarchical nature of schools reflected in the detailed list of responsibilities found in both policies. "Action to be taken by the appropriate staff in the school" (school 1) to recognise and respond to reports of bullying, whilst School 2 presents a detailed list, which starts with "the teacher" dealing with the incident, who "will record the details of the incident" and inform the Pastoral Leader; an agreed course of action will then be decided by "Pastoral Leader/Form Tutor will determine in consultation with the Assistant Head Teacher (Wellbeing) the appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying". The responsibility of policing and maintaining control are once again placed on individual staff members, but in a strictly controlled hierarchical fashion, with senior managers having the ultimate say and sanction. Whilst there is continual reference to a "whole school approach" there is little mention of support or administrative staff having capacity or authority to deal with an incident.

Both school policies, as one would expect reflected the definition offered in *Respecting Others (*WG 2011) guidance. In its policy School 1 defines bullying as:

> It is a persistent wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten somebody either physically, verbally or mentally."(Italics in original)

> This aggressive or insulting behaviour may be committed by an individual or a group, often repeated over a period of time that intentionally hurts or harms. It is difficult for victims to defend themselves against it.

Whilst school 2 policy states as its definition:

> Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, whether physical, psychological or emotional, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

> Bullying commonly:

> - involves aggression (deliberate). Aggression being violent and hostile behaviour or an unprovoked attack
>
> - involves unequal power relationships
>
> - results in pain and distress, both physical and mental
>
> - is persistent

Both school policies reflect the interpretation of personal individualised behaviour with school 1 adding the "desire to hurt". Both are reliant on the concepts of power, impact, repetition and intent. Both policy documents include references to "deliberately hurtful" behaviour, which is "repeated", "persistent" and is "deliberate" or "conscious". School 2 mentions "unequal power relationships", whilst both describe the behaviour as either "difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves" or "difficult for victims to defend themselves against". The focus is on individualising the problem both in terms of behaviour and in doing so placing responsibility on individuals in labelling those involved as "bullies" and "victims" accountable for their behaviour.

The policies highlight the behaviour of the individual by the detailed listing of specific types of bullying behaviour. National guidance and the individual school policies all reflect the categories of bullying found within *Respecting others (*WG 2011*)* which states:

> Bullying can take many forms, but the three main types are:
>
> • physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings, sexual harassment or aggression
>
> • verbal – name-calling, insulting, making offensive remarks
>
> • indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious e-mails or text messages on mobile phones. (P2)

The definitions set out in *Respecting Others* (WG 2011) guidance include specific definitions for each of the types and includes "some of the key measures and issues that schools will wish to consider in preventing and responding to it" (p9). Further WG guidance states that each of these types will contain sections on "understanding", "the law", "preventing", "responding" and "resources" (p9). Guidance and policies both reflect this in their classification and enhance individualisation in specifying and labelling certain distinct groups, including specific guidance for bullying around "race, religion and culture"; "special educational needs and disabilities"; "Homophobic"; "Sexist, sexual and transphobic"; and finally "Cyberbullying"(p10).

5.5 The safe school: Taking appropriate measures and immediate action

Upon examination of each of the school policies, both had explicit direction for "appropriate measures taken" (School 1) or "take immediate action" (School 2) when dealing with bullying. Individuation is central to correction and the need for control, the system can then produce individuals that conform to accepted and expected norms of behaviour. Put simply the individual is identified as at fault not the system in which they exist. The individual becomes complicit in this control, with a central tenet of policy incorporating the need for individuals to report to those perceived to have power. 'Telling' was highlighted in both school policy documents as a strategy for dealing with bullying behaviour. Both stated the need to "promote an environment where it is regarded as normal and healthy to tell someone about bullying" (School 1) or "it is acceptable to tell someone about bullying" (School 2). Under the heading "procedure" it is states "encourage pupils to tell, to undermine the secret power of the bully" and to offer reassurance that "telling them about it was the right thing to do" (School 2). Poppy a year 7 student stated that the advice students receive is "we should tell a teacher". But Maisy, a Year 11 student highlighted the issue of teacher efficacy, pointing out perceived problems with this course of action:

> I wouldn't go to the teachers, because I've done it before and
> they haven't been that helpful …. It just didn't stop, and I just had
> to deal with it

Oliver and Candappa (2007, p72) point to the "continuing gap between the advice given to pupils, and their own beliefs", and this seems to be reflected in adult responses. Other than telling, there was little evidence of strategies offered to students as a means of responding or coping with bullying. If staff in school were indeed told of a bullying incident, there appeared to be a general awareness that the policy gave information on the process for dealing with incidents, but overwhelmingly, all staff were unable to give details of how they would deal with bullying other than talking to the pupils concerned or passing on the information to a more senior member of staff. A support member of staff, describing her actions, "No. I just got to grab a teacher and say to the teacher, and say what do I do, and where do I go". Highlighting the hierarchical structure of schools, staff with greater responsibility or management roles were perceived to have the 'power' to make decisions. Whilst classroom teachers and support staff were aware of their role to pass information on to those who had greater knowledge, authority or power. These practices can isolate and control subjects and is reflected in the frustration felt by students such as Maisy when told to report bullying.

This frustration was also reflected by an experienced teacher, who had personal experience of being bullied by other adults and students in a school setting as an adult. Whilst recognising the importance of reporting he stated: "you have got to report it to us, as a school we try to monitor and follow up". When asked "If you needed support for bullying, would you know where to go?", replied that on a personal level he would contact the police, because, "I tried and tried and tried and going through the system of reporting it, recording it all, writing it down, it just didn't get anywhere". In addition he comments on written policy, stating, "they had their strategies, it was all written, it was all documented beautifully, but couldn't care less if it happened to an adult". This emphasis on the focus of policy in school is on the relationship between students, no mention was made of adults being 'bullied', either by pupils or staff, and was not a focus in this research study, but is an area that warrants further exploration.

The current narrative around bullying positions adults as arbitrators and decision makers, reflecting the cultural and societal norms of children having less power. The gaps in adult recognition and response leaves them with little access to strategies that could prevent or effectively challenge bullying behaviour. If the content of policy is not well known and understood, how could students and staff in schools understand and reflect this conceptualisation of bullying? Both school policies have a definition of bullying, but participants' knowledge of the detail in

policy was problematic or non-existent. This is evidenced further in the discussions of the vignettes, illustrating differences in the factors staff and students use in defining bullying. This will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter.

5.6 A shared knowledge?

During the semi-structured interviews participants were asked supplementary questions about their awareness of and involvement in the development of the school anti-bullying policy. What emerged from the responses reflected a lack of detailed knowledge of their school policy. All of the student participants professed a lack of knowledge or awareness of a policy, where to find it and had no knowledge of the definition in the policy, also they had no involvement in the development of policy. In contrast, with one exception, all staff knew there was a policy, and knew where they could find it, but again had little or no knowledge of the information contained in the policy

5.7 Staff awareness of policy - "It's in my files" (Jeff, class teacher)

In response to the question of awareness of the policy, all staff with the one exception, reported that they were aware of the policy and stated that it could be found in the staff handbook or through the school website. The exception was Philippa, the lunchtime support who had daily contact with students, states that she knew of the policy, but didn't know where to find it, adding "(…) they haven't given me anything like that". Jeff an experienced teacher commented, "It's in my files, in amongst all the thousands of files that I have got (.) It's there, I think I have looked at it once when it was given to me". Similarly, Petra a newly qualified teacher reflected, "Umm, when we started with the school, we did go through policies and that, and I have read through all the policies including the bullying policy".

No members of staff were able to confirm the definition or the content of the policy. The majority of the staff commented on the content of the policy with generalisations. This included, "the policy, from what I can remember from reading it, simply tells me what I should do, and is what I would do anyway" (Assistant head Gwen). This awareness of the policy did not translate into concrete knowledge of its content, but a rationale for the purpose is described by Head of year Andrew as:

It just tells you different responsibilities… pupils are responsible
for, teachers are responsible for, parents are responsible, I think
the head teacher is responsible, and basically it just gives bullet
points of who is responsible for what throughout the school and it
does classify what bullying is

Head of Faculty Mari, explains that the policy gives details of "how we deal with it".
The process and the systems that the policy reinforce are mentioned by Governor
Megan who states that it: "defines what bullying is and the different people's roles
within". No staff were able to give the definition found in the school policy. Head of
year Andrew said: "The definition would be something like, I don't know, constant or
persistent". This lack of detailed knowledge of the definition and limited staff
opportunities to meaningful influence in the development of policy gives rise to the
question of how do staff develop their definition of bullying.

Staff members who had additional responsibility as head of year or child protection,
stated they had opportunities to offer feedback on the policy during pastoral and
departmental meeting times. Designated lead for child protection Tara:

whoever the senior member of staff is who has done that, will
distribute it to … so if it is an antibullying policy it will make sense
to give it to heads of year, and pastoral staff, and we then would
get an opportunity to say, we don't really agree with that bit, can
we put this in it, so we do have, yes we do feed in to it that way

A notable exception to this was the assistant head Gwen, from School 1, who was
responsible for formulating and writing the policy; she mentioned her participation in
a local authority anti-bullying workgroup, which aimed to gain consistency of policy
across all schools in the local authority and how she had been guided by this in
developing her school policy. This approach of adopting not only a school based
interpretation, but local authority and governmental interpretation of bullying
underlines how systems and processes adopted reinforce the 'truth' about the
problem of bullying represented through policy documents. This is evidenced in later
chapters and is reflected in the discourse of both students and staff.

What emerged was the limited input from adults in the formulation of policy,
mentioned only by those who had leadership and management responsibilities.
Heads of year in both schools reported that they were asked to comment on the
content and suggest any amendments during formal meetings, but otherwise played

no part in the writing or formulation of policy. Governor Megan, from school 2 discussed the role of the governing body and their overview and sign off for the policy:

> governors have a role in reviewing that … we have a wellbeing committee, which I don't sit on, but they would be, that policy would go to them, so you would expect that committee to ask questions about how effective it is

Head of year Val adds that when trying to resolve issues of bullying with parents, having a policy "adds weight to the case if you have a document that you can show them". The recognition of the power of a formal document which can be used to exercise the strict framework to which bullying must fit is of itself problematic. As evidenced in the discussions of the vignettes, defining bullying for staff or students rarely sat neatly into the criteria laid out in policy. The lack of staff awareness of the content of the document other than generalised statements around its purpose, including lack of involvement in the development of policy was a theme that continued with the students.

5.8 "No" – student's awareness of policy

Overwhelmingly when asked whether they were aware of the school antibullying policy, the resounding answer from all participants was "no". They had no idea of where to find it, in addition students in school 1 made no reference to the anti-bullying charter printed in their pupil planner. None of the interviewed students reported that they had been involved in the development of definition or the formulation of school policy. The adults interviewed, when asked for involvement and review of the policy did not mention pupil involvement in the formulation or review of policy. Without further clarification from the wider student body, this suggests that for some students they are not as yet contributing meaningfully to 'knowledge' or 'truth' about bullying through the development of policy.

In spite of legislation and guidance around the empowerment and rights of children, student voice and rights was noticeable by its absence in the narratives of either staff or students. Despite the development of a range of legislative and policy directives focusing a greater emphasis on human rights. In Wales *The Children and Young people: Rights to Action* (WAG 2005), based on the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Children* (UNCRC 1989) seeks to ensure that all

children and young people have access to rights. This rights based approach and involvement of children in the development of policy was notable by the lack of awareness of students in both schools. Effectively absenting student participation and active voice from the discourse, denying them the opportunity of contributing to or developing a different or alternative conceptualisation. It also helps maintain the "systematic abuse of power" (Rigby 2002, p95) in that adults control the narrative, whilst simultaneously failing to recognise the impact on adults. The vision of the *Learning Country* (WAG 2001; 2006) and the adoption of learner voice and rights enacted in legislation from the Wales Government proved to be elusive in this research study.

5.9 Truth and knowledge in policy

What is reflected in the descriptions of school bullying in the discussions of the vignettes in the next chapter is the ability of an individual to influence through identification, inclusion and/or exclusion, utilising emotions to exercise control. The broader relationships within groups and cultures are not made explicit in policy. This elusive form of power is then productive and facilitated by the support available through the networks of relationships within that group. The culture and ethos of schools and the peer groups and individuals who are engaged in these are the influencers of not just behaviour, but the arbiters of acceptable and unacceptable. In the establishment of these norms, the deployment of both punitive and coercive control is exercised by both students and staff. This serves to reinforce acceptable bullying behaviour and is functional in exercising control.

In failing to look at the broader issues of power imbalance through the systems, processes and social hierarchies in which the individual sits, the focus is maintained on the individual. Whilst failure to respond to behaviour that is disrespectful or aggressive, but does not fit the framework of the current narrative and discourse around bullying implicitly condones the behaviour. In denying or deterring access to the process of policy development, relatively few individuals have opportunities to influence and offer alternative interpretations based on critical questioning of the norms and standards that inform these policies. The system reinforces the boundaries of what is acceptable through a clearly defined hierarchy, and by control or access to knowledge. The positioning of policy as instrumental to informing the view of students and staff plays a powerful role in ascribing the truth about bullying

in schools, but is carefully monitored and controlled not just in school, but through the structures of local and national government.

The focus on deficits found within individuals, constructing bullying as personal failure, unrelated to structural conditions, isolates the problem and limits opportunities to resolve the problem. The neoliberal context of understanding human behaviour is set within institutional structures and schools are the sites in which this system is expressed and reinforced. This establishing of our sense of self or subjectivity, is viewed as a personal and individual responsibility, closely linked to individual freedom and choice. If policy were to shift its focus away from the individual to the much broader picture of the social, contextual and political in examining the often tacit rules, expectations and values imbedded in these it would allow for an examination and questioning of how and why these standards have come into being. If we take the example of clothing, which manifests itself in school uniform regulations in school, examining how, why and by whom the rules were constructed might provide insight into the expectations of gendered norms of dress. Linking behaviour to expectations around gender, appearance and conformity to a norm, the school itself becomes the site of power in 'othering' those who do not or cannot conform to its expectations, and administers sanctions and punishments to enforce standards and rules. There appears to be little opportunity for students to question why these standards or norms are expected and how they have come about.

Physical, emotional, psychological and social actions between individuals or groups is viewed through lens that focus on individual acts of conflict and aggression. Little or no attention is paid to the wider landscape in which this sits. Using a horticultural analogy to illustrate this, we could compare this to the growing of a plant, for instance a rose. What we see is the final outcome, the rose itself, the stem, thorn, petals, colour, shape and perfume. The value placed on the rose is closely linked to what we want from the rose, the colour or perhaps the perfume, the shape or size, is it to be picked or remain in situ. We take for granted and often overlook the elements that come together to produce the rose, that happens without comment or limited observation. Without elements such as the soil and the nutrients and chemicals found there, the water, the position in the environment, the climate and all integral to the rose. It is a combination of these elements which interact and react together that enables the production of the rose. The power is in the skills and knowledge of the horticulturist, who overseas and monitors, who chooses what to omit or enhance, enabling him to control and alter the characteristics of the rose, so

that they are suitable purpose. The relevance of these to the development of individuals through the shaping of the subject is reflected in the intersectional, performative and reiterative acts and actions that are played out in schools.

If we take gender as an example, participants in their discussions of the vignettes casually and routinely referred to the behaviours, the appearance and the social expectations around being 'girl' or 'boy'. These descriptions and norms become part of the discourse in providing the normative narrative around the how to 'do' gender. The actions and interactions between boys and girls lay clear markers as to what is acceptable and what is to be challenged. At the same time material artefacts, in the form of clothing, appearance, size, shape and colour all seek to reinforce the stereotypical norm of boy or girl. Those who transgress the accepted convention are punished through a range of "normative cruelties" (Ringrose & Renold 2010).

In vignette 6, the exclusion of Emma during PE sessions, 100% of the staff and 92% of the students, mentioned body image relating to weight as an issue that would be commented on as a marker of difference. Year 9 student Harry, says: "Yeah, that like being bullied, when she's trying to get something out and get more active, but people are like aww, no you're a certain weight, you shouldn't be doing this". Similarly classroom teacher Jeff discussing Emma being called "fatty" describes how this is related not just to body image, but also gender specific:

> Oh, I've seen people who I would never consider as being fat,
> being called fatty (.) Especially girls will find it deeply disturbing
> and it affects their self-worth, especially girls … so no … she
> might be umm … she might not be fatty, but it is still a bullying
> insult, isn't it?

The impact of identifying appearance as a marker of difference through which to exercise the power to exclude can be compared to control of appearance through dress code, in the form of uniform. If the power to exclude is a disciplinary act that is legitimised through lack of adherence to a particular appearance, is this reflected in the choice to mark Emma as different because of her size and therefore exclude her? Weight is the focus, and is closely aligned to perceived norms of body image that are acceptable for a particular gender, but the marker of difference could also be race, religion, race or sexuality.

Student Lisa discussing Rachel and Chloe in vignette 2, suggests that negative behaviours might be linked to issues of identity and gender roles. In describing

Chloe as "one of those people who are quite bossy" she invokes gendered language, alongside the issue of Chloe's identity, illustrating the complexity of identifying the problem of bullying. The construction of an identity for Chloe as someone who uses her power to organise her peers, but in doing so implies that this might not be a positive, especially for a girl. Currie et al. (2007) argue that it in this construction of identity, cultural norms and "way(s) of being", (p24) are organised by a combination of subtle markers and standards and regulated by those who hold power, and are ever present in the discourse employed. Reinforcing a comment from Year 7 student Poppy: [it] "affects the way you act". This allows for the manipulation of power across school settings, with students having little recourse to effective strategies other than 'telling', or descriptions of behaviour labelled under the guise of humour, or as simply misunderstood. Whilst staff and students recognise that bullying might be taking place, it is viewed in a binary of bully/victim with little knowledge, skill or understanding of what effective strategies for prevention and intervention are available or useful.

Missing in this conceptualisation and the related discourses are the means by which we help students in schools have access to tools, skills and knowledge that would help them identify and resolve bullying and conflict. The ideological implications for school policy places an emphasis on individual accountability and responsibility alongside regulation and control within the centre of the neoconservative policy discourse (Walton 2005). Interventions such as bystander behaviour and telling someone further reinforce surveillance and control, contributing to continuing inequalities. Meyer (2016) questions whether this emphasis on reporting and intervening encourages greater monitoring and surveillance. The emphasis on individual responsibility for behaviour are given voice in the links between behaviour and anti-bullying policies which offer opportunities to regulate behaviour. Conceiving power as based on status, hierarchy or possession between individual students is a central problem for school policy, as it limits the conception of bullying by staff and students in a school setting.

Power can and does exist in interpersonal relationships, but it is also present through the systems and processes that exist in and around the individual and it is this element which is overlooked in an examination of bullying in schools.   Walton reinforces the theme of "behaviour modification" (2006, p148) which is set within the current compulsory nature of liberal education, which focus on the child being the subject of continual improvement. The principles of free choice and responsibility found in neoliberalism but have entered the narrative of discourse with which

individuals describe and define themselves. Positioning the child as responsible for their choices but simultaneously managed, controlled and regulated with a view to fitting into a confined and prescribed version of what is suitable and appropriate. Thereby masking the control and hierarchy that "educational policy and pedagogical practice enact violence upon students" (Walton 2005, p110). The need of individuals to be part of a peer group, to conform and achieve standards that will allow them access to greater wealth and status underlies the power schools have in managing and controlling behaviour. The discourse often found around success or failure is rooted in achieving standardised, measured tests which will enable or disable access to greater social power and privilege.

5.10 Interactive and intra-active possibilities

Viewing policies through a Foucauldian lens we can examine how those identified as subjects within anti-bullying policies are constructed. School staff, students, parent's victim are all objectivised through what Foucault would term 'dividing practices'. The repeated reference to "learners" and further defining this as "individual learners" in *Respecting Other* (2011) guidance and school policy places the focus on the individual, implying the problem of bullying is fixed within the relationships between children and does not extend to adults in the school. The labelling of individuals as either 'bully' or 'victim' offers little opportunity to resist or escape objectification. This focus on the individual narrows the concept of bullying to the micro level. Horton (2016) adds that this failure to widen the lens and look at the macro level, examining the environments where they are situated and how this influences relationships between students leaves the social context and the institutions and systems that are found there less well examined.

5.11 Conclusion

As the analysis reported in this chapter demonstrates, current policies position power relations as existing between individuals, usually in the form of power imbalances in the relationship between bullies and victims. The findings suggest that the dominant discourse influences how bullying is defined through the predominantly psychological approach. This appears to leave little opportunity for individuals to effect change and probably serves to inhibit or prevent resistance for both students and staff. There appears to be little evidence of the sociological approach which references the performative, repetitive, material occurrences that contribute to and characterise bullying. The following chapter discusses how defining bullying is problematic for staff and students in school settings and how their distinct interpretations affect their responses to issues of power and their 'truth' about bullying.

6. Defining bullying according to staff and students

This chapter discusses how staff and students in schools understand and define bullying in the discourse they use. Drawn from semi-structured interviews with 39 participants across two schools, it examines how they defined and described bullying. The chapter examines the responses of school staff and students to the vignettes, illustrating their use of different discourses and revealing areas which are absent or marginalised and finally discussing the challenges facing schools in addressing the problem of bullying, and the need to look at alternative conceptualisations. This chapter will address the research question: What do staff and students in a secondary school context use to define and describe bullying.

6.1 Shaping the subject: the bully

 "Is he just an unpleasant child?" (Head of year, Val)

The subjectivity of the individual concerned was a key concern for Head of year Val, discussing vignette 1, and Levi's imitation of stuttering, asks, "Is he just an unpleasant child?" Indicating clearly that the problem is located in Levi's character or personality. This was echoed throughout the responses of teaching staff with class teacher Jeff, discussing the same vignette, stating "it is important for the person, talking to them as well, to know … a bit about them I would say". The importance of having knowledge about a student's personality or character is foregrounded as central to making a judgement. Child protection lead, Tara, discussing Rob in vignette 3 states that: "I would want to know a little bit more about what kind of character he is", implying that if you didn't already know the student you would want to find out how he is described by others. Similarly Governor Megan, discussing vignette 3, and the defacing of Rob's poster adds, "The class teacher would know Rob, and may have some idea of what kind of lad he is … and that is a big feature here". Administrator Maggie, discussing Steve tripping Jacob in vignette 4, says "again, I don't know what personality", suggesting that not knowing the individual concerned adds another dimension of difficulty.

The 'learner' is discursively produced by staff, locating it in Jacobson's (2010b, p256) "narration of subjectivity". Knowledge of the learner's personality or character

is utilised by staff and sets the framework for interpretation of their behaviour, locating any problematic behaviour within the subject. Staff shaping of the subject appears to be set in the framework of knowing your learner, and illustrates incidental and perhaps unintended consequences of the current discourse. This emphasis on the personality of individuals is commented on by classroom teacher Jeff, when he comments on vignette 1:

> in a school environment you would already … you would know
> Levi … his teachers, his head of year, whoever … most of us in
> the school, we get to know a bit about the majority of the pupils

This was also highlighted by Petra, a newly qualified teacher who says that when making these assessments, "it is knowing your learners", suggesting the reliance of adults in a school setting having a good knowledge of their learner appears to be a key factor in making a decision as to whether the child is in need of interventions that would change behaviour.

Foucault points to a much broader envisaging of the need for individuals to be dominant or claim status. He suggests that institutions create the capacity to create, categorise and label behaviours of individuals as deviant or outside of the norm, thereby setting up an environment that subtly endorses the policing of behaviours that are deemed unacceptable. The similarities between the concept of the 'good school' and 'good student' and the description of the ideal individual enables disciplinary practices to be put into action. Staff monitor, regulate and maintain order under the guise of keeping students safe, and achieving best outcomes academically, as mentioned earlier in 5.1, taking actions that shape the subject.

This subjectivity is illustrated when head of year Val considers previous behaviour, discussing Jacob being tripped up by Steve:

> We know our kids so well, and if someone has done this, I think,
> oh yes … you know who is likely to be unkind to other children …
> A nice boy who has not set a foot wrong until … And he is having
> a bad half hour

The character and personality of the students involved play a key role in the decision making, whether they are perceived as bully or victim. Val comments:

> I've got a little boy, Jacob in my year group, …… a strange little
> thing, very sensitive, who would be the sort that the Steve of this

> world, might identify as being … sort of boy who fallen over, might
> start crying……… If it's one of the boys, it's one of the gang it has
> happened to … oh well, here we go again, it's another bit of …. It
> comes from knowing your children

Several factors are brought into consideration; firstly knowledge of the individuals involved and their character as shaped or perceived by adults. Val is creating, categorising and labelling drawing from her knowledge of the subject, describing Steve's status as a good student or "nice boy" until he trips up Jacob, despite this momentary lapse from "not setting a foot wrong". In a similar way she outlines her knowledge of a victim, commenting on his "strange" and "sensitive" character and how this might alter her perception of the incident. Depictions of both bully and victim are drawn from the well-established known framework of bullying described in policy. Locating individual behaviour within the peer group, she illustrates how the behaviour could be viewed differently, depending on the relationship of the individuals involved and their character, suggesting that if it was between "one of the gang" and it happened before it might be viewed differently. Although the act is the same, the outcome of the response is dependent on the shaping of the subject, and is contingent on multiple factors, but is still located as an individual problem.

The positioning of Steve as "bully" and Jacob as "victim", in vignette 4 drew on a very subtle interplay of these factors. The negative appraisal of Steve who would take advantage of Jacob, draws upon the view of the bully as an individual who uses his physicality in maintaining or improving status. The deviant or deficit character are located through the typologies of bullies, victims and bully-victims in the literature reminiscent of categorisation mentioned in paragraph 2.5.3 (Sullivan et al. 2004, p15). Once again the source of the problem is described in terms of inadequacy. The difficulty of labelling individuals as either socially inept or skilful manipulators is disputed in the literature (see paragraph 2.3: Crick & Dodge 1996; Sutton et al. 1999b; Arsenio & Lemerise 2001) pointing out the simplistic nature of this view which tends to ignore both the moral and emotional aspects of behaviour.

Links to behaviours outside of school is supported by the participants. Home backgrounds, authoritarian discipline, lack of parental skills and of 'toxic childhoods' (Palmer 2006) are evidenced as possible reasons for the behaviour. Petra, a newly qualified teacher, describes a student whose behaviour she feels is motivated by his experience at home, she explains: "I think it's a lot to do with the attention he doesn't get outside of school, so he wants to be in charge of the room … he tries to control

all the kids in the room". Experienced teacher Tara, recognises the emotional and social context of behaviour when discussing vignette 1, commenting on Levi's imitation of Brett, "is this something that Levi is doing because he got a good reaction from it, and likes to be the centre of attention". This view of the bully as someone who participates in behaviour that aggressively uses techniques of violence, exclusion or othering is evident in the literature (Smith et al. 2002; Hunter et al. 2007; Olweus 2012). Reflected in the responses of staff to the vignettes is the connection to the prevailing discourses of the deviant character in need of correction, found in policy documents, and reflected in the current discourses found in popular media and journalism.

Staff interpretation of the problem of bullying is curtailed by the discourse of bullying which "has become a highly visible, regulative socio-cultural phenomenon circulating well beyond the institutional cultures of schooling, or wider discourses" (Ringrose & Renold 2010, p574). The subject is shaped as deviant, and in need of discipline to rectify the behaviour. No alternative interpretations are proposed or allowed that might alter the framework in which this is viewed or responded to. The "problematic discursive effect" (Ringrose & Renold 2010, p587) of these dividing practices in invoking the bully/victim binary offers little practical or emotional support for those who are tasked with responding to conflict or aggression.

6.2 Shaping the victim:

"A strange little thing, very sensitive" (Head of year, Val)

The narration of the victim in the literature (see paragraph 2.5.1: Olweus 1993; Salmivalli & Nieminen 2002; Salmivalli & Isaacs 2005) also draws on the deficit or different characterisation of the victim. Whilst difference is a factor that is remarked upon, the proactive aggression towards those who are bullied is often justified by the "something the person had done" (Burns et al. 2008, p44). School office administrator Maggie describe how she views the act of exclusion in vignette 2, in which Rachel is excluded from a social group: "I wouldn't say this was bullying at all, because there is no deliberate targeting of Rachel". A range of factors are considered, including the suggestion that she needs to be proactive in finding new friends or alternative peer groups, which shifts some of the responsibility for the exclusion back to her. Maggie adds, "Umm …I think we would need to talk to Rachel, about making friends, you know, that's the natural course, isn't it?"

The suggestion of a "natural" movement between relationships, brings to the fore how current discourses can be employed flexibly to justify the labelling and categorisation of the subject. Head of year Val, discussing the same vignette says: "You join the school, suddenly you are miss popularity, you make this group of friends, then, naturally those friendships change", adding, "when you get to know somebody and they are difficult to be around…that Rachel is difficult … half the group suffer this behaviour". Describing Rachel's behaviour as a possible source of upset for the group: "she upsets them or frustrates them, the result is emotional upheaval, caused by Rachel suggesting she might be complicit in the behaviour. As a consequence the group might "certainly end up thinking, oh no, we have a laugh, but when she's around it changes".

Charon (2001) suggest that this shaping of identity is central to establishing justifications for what might be deemed an unacceptable social act of bullying. By presenting Rachel as the problem, Val helps maintain and preserve the identity of those who are excluding, and allows the individuals in the group to achieve consonance, which offers positive outcomes for some students (Festinger 1957). By positioning Rachel as the deviant subject or at least lacking in some social skills, staff invoke their knowledge of students and their greater authority in attributing meaning to the behaviour of those who exclude or are excluded. In establishing difference or deviance of an individual it normalises the behaviour of those who are involved (Grove & Zwi 2006). This contributes to "enhanced power and status within their peer group and the school community" (Burns et al. 2008, p48). Highlighting perceived differences "defines and secures an individual or group's own identity of sense of self by distancing and stigmatising an 'other' " (p.47).

Teacher Tara's earlier establishment of Levi as provocative, because his behaviour is annoying or inappropriate once again centres the problem in the individual. Students justify bullying because of provocation to overcome "feelings of dissonance" (Burns et al. 2008, p48) allowing them to preserve their own identity and gain control of a situation. Arguments have been made that place a focus on augmenting and enhancing the skills of students, with the current discourse even producing suggested remedies or strategies to help victims to change their behaviour. Counselling, mentoring, alongside assertive responses are all interventions that seek to achieve change in the individual. The highlighting of difference is viewed as a negative, and therefore places individuals outside of the norms of expected behaviour in their setting, with an expectation of a need to conform and change their behaviour; this is often reflected in the discourse of risk

and the need to promote 'safe' spaces. The absence of alternative frameworks that would celebrate difference and promote inclusivity are marginalised or unspoken.

The risks to Rob becoming a victim are discussed in vignette 3. Identified by Assistant Head Gwen, discussing the different roles within the scenario, "You know, Rob would obviously need, umm … by putting himself up for election, you know, he is obviously exposing himself to his peer group". She identifies the risk inherent in drawing attention to yourself, explaining, "That incident might not have happened had he not put himself up, and put the posters up". Self-awareness is also highlighted by Gwen, suggesting students would need to have a level of social cognition because they might be putting themselves in a vulnerable position: "so you know, he needs to be aware of, his behaviour as well". Social manipulation, gossip and rumours, alongside exclusion (Lagerspetz et al. 1988) have been highlighted as causing victims both physical and psychological defence. Other than frustration and difficulty in resolving situations, there was little recognition by staff of the feelings and emotions were notable by their absence in staff responses, reflecting the lack of mention of emotional impact in policy. If recognition of emotions and their impact are overlooked in policy, what implications does this have for individuals attempting to manage and control their own and the recognition of emotional impact on others in a social context?

This formulation of the 'subject' also applies to staff, and is illustrated in the following extracts, which illustrate how staff view themselves as enforcer and supporter, with a particular set of skills. However these sit within a set of accepted discourses that define and police a particular view of the subject. Head of faculty, Mari discussing Jacob, in vignette 4, being tripped in the corridor says:

> I think the investigation is the important part (.)You'd have to
> investigate really to find out further, to find out if this is a one off,
> but it's not acceptable whether it's a one off or it happens a lot

Mari continues "so I would say that unless you find out the facts, you wouldn't know if it was bullying or not, if it's just a one off". Fitting the actions into the prescribed framework of intention, impact, repetition and power offer staff opportunities to marginalise or ignore behaviours that do not fit within this criteria. Whilst for head of year, Val, establishing facts played a central role, she comments on the importance of finding out "who trips them up, or does it happen all the time?" All of the extracts above indicate that the staff saw their role as 'investigators' with the need for

establishing factual evidence, demonstrative of disciplinary technologies of subjectivity, governmentality and labelling employed to maintain control.

6.3 Disciplinary Technologies

The complexity of interactions between individuals is reflected in the responses to viewing behaviour that could be described as bullying. The status of the individual within the hierarchical structure of the school, alongside expectations of role can limit or enable actions. Not only are there differences in status between children and adults, but also between adults in their differing roles. These categorisations normalise the expectations of behaviour within schools. The lack of access to the policy document (discussed earlier 5.1) combined with status within the school staffing hierarchy combines to constrain or forbid courses of actions that might be available to other members of staff. This contrasts with head of year, Mark, discussing Levi's imitation of Brett's stutter he states that children:

> sometimes need to be shown, kids when they are eleven, twelve, thirteen, they have quite a narrow view of the world, they know certain things are wrong and they know certain things are right, they don't necessarily know the grey areas in between

His specific discourse demonstrates the complex nature of relationships between individuals, drawing on educational discourses and conceptualisations of the child. He also connects it to a moral or ethical standard, employing a "discourse of personal responsibility" which "creates a self which is focused on itself" (Hepburn 1997, p36). He references his role as teacher in modifying or changing behaviour, "if you can draw a parallel as a teacher or pastoral leader between what they already know is wrong, with something that they don't know at the moment is wrong, then that helps them learn". His role as 'teacher' or 'pastoral leader' enable him to take action to correct behaviour he deems as unacceptable in students. This interplay of actions by both students and staff illustrate how the availability of discourses to individuals are representative of power relations, in that members of staff, 'subjects' in school both approach actions of students with a differing framework, not just knowledge, but also the ways of responding and actions taken.

The contrast between actions are illustrated in through the differing job roles indicated earlier (p86) demonstrating how discursive and social contexts both enables and constrains ways of thinking, speaking and acting in systematic ways.

Positioning within the school hierarchy of staff produces remarkably different agency and actions. Both are limited by the dividing practices of labelling distinct roles. This construction of the individual as central to their own agency continues to reinforce and maintain existing hierarchical power relations, not just for students, but for staff. Essential to the existence of power is one who can act and so there are in principle, many possible responses or subject positions within a relation of power. Bradford and Hey (2007) argue these interactions between staff and students and indeed between students are neither arbitrary nor innocent, but aim to position the subject, whilst simultaneously self-positioning. Some staff position themselves as subjects with the role of surveillance, with actions being limited to passing information on. The higher your position in the hierarchy, as demonstrated by head of year, Mark expands your role from merely surveillance, but also identifying where and how action can be taken.

Similarly students would employ the positioning within a hierarchy of staff, those with greater status as denoted by their title and position in the hierarchy of schools being deemed to have more power. There would be differing responses to a request from a head of year as opposed to a support member of staff. Illustrating Schott & Søndergaard argument that "a complex phenomenon which is enacted or constituted through an interactive/intra-active entanglements that exist between a variety of open-ended social, discursive, material/physical and subjective forces" (2014, p9).

Whilst it is pertinent to note that as subjects within a setting their role is clearly prescribed in policy as an "active approach" *(Respecting Others* WG 2011, p2) and for the majority of staff in responding to bullying this necessitated "investigate really to find out" (Mari, see page 93). Asking staff to respond to the vignettes may place staff in the position of needing to garner further information which might be more readily available to them when dealing with situations that arise in their own school settings,

6.4 The subject under surveillance

Staff willingly become part of the disciplinary technologies that seek to maintain the power knowledge relationship, "surveillance is made of willing participants who give their consent to the system of control" (Peters 2017, p34). Staff view themselves as enforcer and investigator consistent with their own identity within the hierarchical

structure of schools. These technologies exist within a set of accepted discourses that define and police a particular view of the 'subject', both student and staff, regulating, labelling and enforcing compliance. Staff saw their role as 'investigators' and the need for establishing factual evidence, suggesting that there is a framework that involves a set of criteria. This offers few opportunities for consistency relying on "narrow definitions that clearly define its acts, perpetrators and locations", but is "problematic in the reality of student interactions" (Rawlings 2019, p699).

Despite the different stereotypical types of bullying that might be suggested in the vignettes, for staff the "character" or the "personality" of those involved applied to both the possible bully and victim. Administrator Maggie discussing the name calling of Emma in vignette 6, adds "(I) think that would need to be investigated "and goes on "that not only the victim identifies bullying, but the observers recognise it as bullying". The focus is not just on the one individual, but also the bully, victim and bystander concur that it has happened. The establishment of factual evidence is part of the investigative process for staff in arriving at the decision whether a behaviour is bullying or not. It is not enough to simply acknowledge that in some way an individual has had an emotional, physical or psychological reaction to a particular set of actions or interactions. The limits of interpretation are fixed, and often reinforced by a procedural set of actions. Assistant head, Gwen reinforces how the reporting procedures help to monitor, and continue the surveillance students:

> But with everything, any incident, you have got to report it to us, as
> a school we try to monitor and follow up, and the head of year has
> a very good handle on whether this is, you know, Jacob was
> tripped over by Steve today, but yesterday he was tripped over by
> Andrew, and the day before he was tripped over by Ben, they
> would have a very good handle on that, rather than the teacher
> who deals with that incident. So that is why our reporting
> procedures are really important, so they are aware

Developing the 'subject' is not a one off act, but a "whole ensemble of regulated communications" and a "means of a whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, the pyramidal hierarchy)" (Foucault 1986, p426). The concept of 'discipline' is central to the power/knowledge dichotomy where the truth of bullying is deemed to be isolated behaviours of deviant individuals that need to be rectified, and are legitimised through the exercising of power relations. Power /knowledge is exercised through the technologies of

domination and of the self and affect both students and staff in schools (Grant 1997) and are further enhanced with the use of control.

6.5 "It's done with more than one person in mind" (Jeff - teacher)

Schools themselves control the movement of bodies through time and space, regulation and discipline. Class room teacher Jeff draws attention to a much broader purpose behind behaviour perceived as bullying. He highlights that individuals are proactive in causing hurt and distress to the individual, he suggests that there is a much wider agenda, in that it is a clear signal to others, a way of communicating to a larger social group with the objective of obtaining or maintaining power and control; aimed at an individual to cause hurt and distress, with the effect of controlling the behaviour of others. This seeks to reinforce the unstated, but closely observed rules of social groupings, and often invokes race, class and gendered identity. This is part of the policing of what are considered to be behaviours that are outside of the "norm". If we take Rob's efforts to become elected as class representative, the defacing of his poster offers alternative views by speculating on his sexuality. The purpose of which Jeff observes, "It's done with more than one person in mind", establishing power relations through the gaze of others.

Whilst both Tara and Jeff showed some awareness and recognition of the social context of bullying and the need for the presence of others for actions to be effective, they both pointed to contributory factors located within the individual such as status, home environment, emotionally vulnerable, physically weaker or marginalised by identity as central to motivation or intent. This illustrates the argument made by Ringrose and Renold (2010) that the policing and identification of difference as a marker are used as a method of coercing individuals into gendered roles deemed appropriate in their cultural setting. Thus retaining the focus of adults on investigation and the hierarchical nature of passing concerns on, continuing to emphasis the binary relationship between victim and bully.

6.6 Frustration and efficacy: "This is a difficult one isn't it?" (Tara - Designated child protection lead)

For some staff there were issues about identifying whether or not the example was bullying. "This is a difficult one isn't it?" says Tara a designated senior person for child protection, discussing Levi's imitation of Brett's stuttering in vignette 1. She identifies that before she could make a decision there would be "lots of questions here". Staff understanding and response to school-based student violence lead to either silence or frustration in their struggle to address issues around gender, sexuality or race (Ringrose & Renold 2010). Head of year, Andrew, talking about the exclusion of Rachel, in vignette 2, states how he finds these problems, "incredibly difficult to solve". Staff expressed similar challenges in assessing and deciding whether the vignettes described bullying or not. Megan, a school governor discussing Rob, in vignette 3, comments "difficult, difficult… err … I don't know". What emerged for all the participants throughout the discussions of the vignettes was the problematic nature of labelling behaviour. Participants brought into play a number of other factors which were necessary before they could make a decision about whether any of the vignettes could be described as bullying. Remorse, humour, provocation, social cognition, peer relationships, personality and identity were all considerations which added to the difficulty of fitting the prescribed criteria.

Staff expressed their frustration in working within this system, but other than the frustration of dealing with incidents made little reference to their own feelings and emotions. The discourse, concepts and ideas used by students in contrast to those of staff illustrates differences of interpretation of how the systems and processes of socially and culturally constructed sites mediate both student and staff power and knowledge and help shape defining and understanding bullying.

6.7 Status and control

"Everybody wants to be at the top" (Adam year 11)

Whilst neither group had concrete knowledge of the definitions found in policy, what is reflected in the discussions are the hegemonic discourse of what has been described earlier as the "psycho-pathological understanding of 'bullying'" (Rawlings 2019, p698). Students' comments, like staff, reflected this discourse, with power being embodied in individuals. They also shared some of the "socio-cultural phenomenon" (Ringrose & Renold 2010, p574) associated with the

conceptualisation of bullying. Illustrating an acute awareness of being both subject and subjected, students described behaviours of individuals that were perceived to control individual actions, but also recognised the relationship to their own individual identity.

Students recognised status and popularity as aspects of power. "Everybody wants to be at the top" commented year 11 student Adam. Discussing the Steve's tripping up of Jacob in vignette 1, Year 9 student, Theo, suggests that the intention behind Steve's behaviour is "showing that they are dominant (.) show everyone who is like boss". Benny, year 9 agrees, "I think he's doing it … like he wants to be like … popular and other people to know that he doesn't want to be messed with and that". Both Theo and Benny recognise that the behaviour of individuals served as a means to positioning themselves within the peer group and exerting control.

Adam, a year 11 student talking about Lizzie and the name calling via social media in vignette 5, says, "Just trying to get her to say something back, just trying to be popular again, so, but quite a lot of bullying people do it to be popular". The status of an individual appears to play a role in whether they have the authority to behave in this way. The performative nature of bullying was integral to boundary setting and the enforcement of norms of behaviour. Students described the behaviour of individuals as a method of exerting influence of control over the actions of others, taking various forms including name calling, physical violence and exclusion. Darcy discusses the individual need for control, "I feel like bullies need the control and they need everything around them the same and everyone to back them up". Similarly Kate, year 11, discussing Lizzie's exclusion, "Yeah they control it, I think girls use it to control the people they are friendly with coz they can't get away." The practices of domination illustrated by the student highlights how the establishment of norms of behaviour and ways of being are influenced by individuals and groups who are perceived to have power over others.

Both Darcy and Kate see the power of the individual as central, but they also recognise the role of bystanders and their relationship within the peer group. Darcy implies that in order for this power to be effective it relies on peer group support or assent in enforcing it. She goes on to mention how some individuals appear to hold power because of the element of fear:

> There are certain boys who have like …authority, but you know
> the boys who kind of like, they'll get into a fight or something, and
> people are scared of them and stuff

The risks to individuals are laid bare in Darcy's referencing of physical violence, aligned with the emotional impact, invoking authority through inducing fear. The threat of physical violence especially from boys looms large, and links to the boundaries set around expectations of how gendered performances are normalised in the casual references in the discourse. Fran, a year 9 student points out the anomaly in these perceptions:

> Some bullies, they want to … be like king or something. I can pick on you because you are lesser than me. But you know it's being like most of the time it's not really true. … … They want to be powerful, but picking on them, it … means that their power, they don't actually have any … … They are just picking on them to make them seem higher than them, but they are really not

Grappling with the concept of power Fran recognises that they "don't actually have any power". The intention is designed to create the illusion of power and in doing so creates the subjectivity of both victim and bully. The performative nature of bullying was integral to boundary setting and the enforcement of norms of behaviour. Students recognised that positioning within social relationships is an important element of forming identity and enabling agency, but also the marking and policing boundaries to preserve this.

Students recognised that if they stood by those identified as victims there was a personal risk, in the form of exclusion or exposure to ridicule. Whilst both Lizzie and Darcy discuss fear of exclusion from the peer group, the prospect of personal abjection through challenging the individual who is perceived as popular or cool is evidenced by Darcy, year 11. She discusses the effect that witnessing or intervening might have on an individual's status:

> I don't know, you don't want to be on the bad side of the people who are doing the loser and (.) saying the things, coz then you are like getting a name for yourself as being uptight and all the stuff

The reputational risk is evidenced in the language. The danger of becoming a "loser" indicates a position that places you as a possible victim and is linked to choices of how you behave. Invoking the spectre of being "uptight" or "getting a name for yourself" indicates that individual's view of their own identity is under

surveillance and policed by themselves and others. Darcy highlights possible consequences, "showing that if they do one thing to one person", there is a risk of becoming isolated and vulnerable, and "people are not going to be friends with her". She goes on to explain how emotions are central to reaction of others who witness this, "Because they might be afraid that this could happen to them". Reflecting on the constraints placed on individual agency, she explains "they are not going to want to do that." Agency is limited through the fear of surveillance and the consequences of being excluded from the peer group. The consequences of challenging or not joining in is countered by the recognition of reputational risk.

This curtailing or enabling of actions is identified by Theo, year 9, talking about Levi in vignette 2, "I think he is quite a popular person … and if they don't laugh … he'll just turn the bullying the other way around." The ability of individuals within peer groups to be able to position themselves as 'popular' or 'cool' and having a sense of individual agency, reflects a complex set of factors and relationships that come into play. Adam year 11 discussing vignette 6 and the name calling of Emma suggests:

> Sometimes they think it looks cool, it's seen as like the people who are bullying them are the cool people, well cool. Well it doesn't seem like … if you stand up to them you are going to be unpopular, and nobody will like you

When asked to explain what he meant by 'cool people' he says:

> I'd call them popular, but I'd like … they are not really, because it's not cool to bully people. But everyone thinks that's a cool thing to do, you look … popular

The ability of individuals to position themselves with status and power are recognised as being able to draw the boundaries of expected behaviours, by excluding or including individuals, confirming both their private and public positions within the contextual heteronormative order (Pascoe, 2007).

It is evident that students like staff, found making these assessments difficult. Students categorised and captured specific ways of 'being' and 'being seen'. Being 'popular' or 'cool' indicates that not only is it desirable to belong to a particular group because of the status it confers, but also offers subject positions that enable students to interpret their social world in a specific way. The discourse coordinates language with "ways of acting, interacting, valuing, believing, feeling" (Gee 2002,

p23). The victim's difficulty in defending against what Smith (2000) calls "abuse of power", leaves them fearful of exclusion or repetition.

This belies power as interpreted in policy, as non-action by students is productive in that in it also serves to set boundaries and enforce normative social and contextual behaviour, not just on individuals, but also the group in which they exist. The action of bystanders whether proactive or reactive, ignoring or participating are productive in relation to power. Rawlings suggests that these "broader power differentials" (2019, p698) found in the discourse enable or disable courses of action. Illustrated by year 11 student, Kate, discussing Vignette 4 of Jacob being tripped up by Steve:

> it depends what kind of environment that you are in, I think, it's something like that happens, like in this school, it would be completely like depending on what year group it was, what kind of people it was. Coz if I saw that happen and I was like with my friends I don't think people would join in, they would help them

Kate acknowledges multiple factors, including social context, the individuals involved, relationships, individual agency and identity play a part in the decision making process. What became evident in the descriptions is student reluctance to name bullying, or take purposeful action which would disrupt, impose order or constrain actions through the expectations within social situations (Forsberg 2017). Kate's mention of "year groups" and "what kind of people" are involved, seems to suggest that development stages and relationships would be an important element in mediating behaviour. Kate's response positions individuals and their reactions as central to the problem. This behaviour is "neither arbitrary nor innocent, but positional, positioning and produce discourses of self-positioning" (Bradford & Hey 2007, p600). The personal and psychological dialogue of the students is linked to the social and cultural fields within which they find themselves and the boundaries of individual actions and reactions change in the dynamic complex theatre in which they sit.

These markers serve to position students in particular ways. Luke, a year 11 student, highlighted gendered behaviours:

> Boys it's more … fight … I don't know … I think girls are worse … because … I don't know … it's … I don't know how to word it (.) I think girls are more personal in a way, like they kinda say the things that would hurt more. Whereas boys would just go up to someone else and try and beat them up

Making explicit the stereo typical gendered norms of girls being sly and covert in their actions, whilst boys are linked to the aggressive and violent behaviours, he goes on to explain how relational aggression in the form of exclusion or name calling is difficult to deal with, whereas the more visible fight requires immediate action:

> It's kinda easier to deal with if boys are just fighting, you clearly can see it, but this, it's like you don't know who it is and what's happened

The gendered heteronormative ideals encapsulated in Luke's descriptions highlights the differing levels of violence, both physical and emotional inherent in these descriptions. Moita-Lopes (2003) discussing masculinities in a school context illustrates how language and discourse is used to "construct social life and identities" and how this contributes to "hegemonic masculinity and in which both boys and girls are implicated" (p43). Whilst physical violence between males is easily recognisable, the emotional and psychological violence encapsulated in the "more personal" method he describes employed by girls is recognised as difficult to deal with. Not only is it seen as covert, but identified by Luke as emotionally damaging. Stereotypes which are echoed by Darcy, year 11, discussing how boys and girls would react differently to the name calling of Lizzie in vignette 5:

> They don't realise that if they say it to a girl it affects them in different ways (.) I think with girls, they take it to heart and take what people say seriously and in more detail, as like the boys can shake it off. I feel like the girls think about what is being said

Mention of gender specific roles is an indication of how discourse is influential in reference to how boys do bullying as opposed to girls. Darcy draws attention to the difference between boys and girls, commenting on expected male behaviour she says, "Boys they behave like (…) acting (…) manliness". This normalisation of gendered roles are an essential feature of "normative performances of young masculinity and femininity" (Ringrose & Renold 2010, p577). The performative aspect of these ways of doing gender are highlighted by Butler (1990) where she notes the intersection of social and cultural norms that reinforce and normalise gendered behaviours. Gulbrandsen (2003) argues "the recognition that gender is one of the fundamental social and symbolic markers in human societies" and is

present in and contributes to "sociocultural contexts that children inhabit" (p129). Participants in their discussions of the vignettes casually and routinely referred to the behaviours, the appearance and the social expectations around being 'girl' or 'boy'. These descriptions and norms become part of the discourse in providing the normative narrative around the how to 'do' gender. The actions and interactions between boys and girls lay clear markers as to what is acceptable and what is to be challenged. At the same time material artefacts, in the form of clothing, appearance, size, shape and colour all seek to reinforce the stereotypical norm of boy or girl. Those who transgress the accepted convention are punished through a range of "normative cruelties" (Ringrose & Renold 2010).

In vignette 6, the exclusion of Emma during PE sessions, 100% of the staff and 92% of the students, mentioned body image relating to weight as an issue that would be commented on as a marker of difference. Year 9 student Harry, says: "Yeah, that like being bullied, when she's trying to get something out and get more active, but people are like aww, no you're a certain weight, you shouldn't be doing this". Similarly classroom teacher Jeff discussing Emma being called "fatty" describes how this is related not just to body image, but also gender specific:

> Oh, I've seen people who I would never consider as being fat, being called fatty (.) Especially girls will find it deeply disturbing and it affects their self-worth, especially girls … so no … she might be umm … she might not be fatty, but it is still a bullying insult, isn't it?

The impact of identifying appearance as a marker of difference through which to exercise the power to exclude can be compared to control of appearance through dress code, in the form of uniform. If the power to exclude is a disciplinary act that is legitimised through lack of adherence to a particular appearance, is this reflected in the choice to mark Emma as different because of her size and therefore exclude her? Weight is the focus, and is closely aligned to perceived norms of body image that are acceptable for a particular gender, but the marker of difference could also be race, religion, race or sexuality.

Student Lisa discussing Rachel and Chloe in vignette 2, suggests that negative behaviours might be linked to issues of identity and gender roles. In describing Chloe as "one of those people who are quite bossy" she invokes gendered language, alongside the issue of Chloe's identity, illustrating the complexity of identifying the problem of bullying. The construction of an identity for Chloe as

someone who uses her power to organise her peers, but in doing so implies that this might not be a positive, especially for a girl. Currie et al. (2007) argue that it in this construction of identity, cultural norms and "way(s) of being", (p24) are organised by a combination of subtle markers and standards and regulated by those who hold power, and are ever present in the discourse employed. Reinforcing a comment from Year 7 student Poppy: [it] "affects the way you act". This allows for the manipulation of power across school settings, with students having little recourse to effective strategies other than 'telling', or descriptions of behaviour labelled under the guise of humour, or as simply misunderstood. Whilst staff and students recognise that bullying might be taking place, it is viewed in a binary of bully/victim with little knowledge, skill or understanding of what effective strategies for prevention and intervention are available or useful.

 Missing in this conceptualisation and the related discourses are the means by which we help students in schools have access to tools, skills and knowledge that would help them identify and resolve bullying and conflict. The ideological implications for school policy places an emphasis on individual accountability and responsibility alongside regulation and control within the centre of the neoconservative policy discourse (Walton 2005). Interventions such as bystander behaviour and telling someone further reinforce surveillance and control, contributing to continuing inequalities. Meyer (2016) questions whether this emphasis on reporting and intervening encourages greater monitoring and surveillance. The emphasis on individual responsibility for behaviour are given voice in the links between behaviour and anti-bullying policies which offer opportunities to regulate behaviour. Conceiving power as based on status, hierarchy or possession between individual students is a central problem for school policy, as it limits the conception of bullying by staff and students in a school setting.

Year 9 student, Tommy, highlights other expectations and norms when discussing the tripping up of Jacob in vignette 4, illustrating the difference between reactions to tripping up a child or an adult:

> *Tommy*: Because if it's towards an adult it's more serious, but if it's to the same age there's a way to work it off?
>
> *SJ*: Is that fair?
>
> *Tommy*: No not really, like everyone should have the same rights. Like if one person said something they might think it was a joke, but if it was an adult they'll take it more seriously.

SJ. Is it taken more seriously when it's done to adults?

Tommy: Umm … because it's more like, when you do it to an adult it's more like … say you do it to a policeman you'll find like an offence to them, they say like to a black police man. People say, like, why you think, it would be like abuse to them, and they think it is more serious for an adult.

Adults are seen to be positioned differently within power relations. Tommy demonstrates how regulation of young people is taken for granted and illustrates the inter-subjectivity of power hierarchies. Tommy's views that violence towards adults is viewed as "more serious" highlights not only the hierarchical structure in place between adults and children, but also violence towards adults is perceived as an "offence" with likely legal consequences. Tommy goes on to illustrate, that adults have a moral responsibility to 'teach' and keep others safe by not allowing incidents to escalate:

Tommy: Like young people won't know about it as much, yeah so they think it's a joke or … but with like adults they know more about what can happen, so they want to like take it more seriously to stop it spreading to young people.

SJ: How do adults react …?

Tommy: Yeah. Like say something got thrown at a kid, like throw something, they would want to throw it back or react. But if it's a teacher, they want to do like consequences so they can learn from it and not do it to other people, so no one gets hurt.

Tommy's comments are reminiscent of Head of year, Mark, who positioned his role and responses to moral and ethical concerns for the safety of students. Once again the discourse of keeping learners safe is ubiquitous. In contrast students and staff indicated that violence towards a peer might be construed as a joke.

The remarks of Year 9 student, Ffion, discussing Levi's imitation of Brett's stutter, in vignette 1, acknowledges the difficulty, stating that "it's quite hard to determine". Evie, another year 9 student suggests "it's really confusing". The right to be safe from violence as either adult or child was noticeable by its absence. What emerges are personal interpretations that highlight the difficulties in recognising and responding to interpersonal aggression that are closely linked to individual emotions. Alongside this is the dynamic nature of relationships set within particular

areas and with particular groups, so that no one response was fruitful in providing resolution.

Power is conceptualised as being held by individuals, who use techniques to enhance and maintain their positions within the hierarchical systems and processes reflected in schools and culture generally. The subtle differences of discourse through the descriptions of mean or rude, evidence the lack of opportunities to challenge and resist the cultural, social and hegemonic truths operating in schools around the discussion of the 'problem of bullying' and thereby offer insights and opportunities for change. The gaps around issues that are not highlighted in policy or practice, how and what are the norms of behaviour for children or adults, boys or girls, how were they formed, what shapes and polices them are noticeable by their absence.

6.8 The significance of impact for students

Students described the emotional impact of bullying participants with a personal, emotional and immediate response. Emotions were at the heart of guiding students on how individuals respond to the challenges to their identity, especially when invoking the spectre of bully or victim. Year 9 student, Fran, who suggests that the bystander's fear of what will happen to them is a motivating factor in choosing a course of action *"they think if they don't join in, then I'm going to get picked on"*. There is a growing literature on the connection between emotions and bullying. Borg (1998, p442) argues that "understanding of the problem of bullying is incomplete without a consideration of the emotional feelings experienced". This emotional connection was recognised by Olivia, year 7, talking about Rob and the defacing of his poster:

> I think it's really unfair what they are doing … they are not just saying it to him, they are saying it to everybody, everyone who walks past can see that poster, umm... and they might be going to vote for him. They might just be jealous of him

Whilst noting the inequity of the situation, like staff she also prioritises the purpose behind the action of defacing Rob's poster. In questioning Rob's sexuality with the written slur of "gay", not only are they questioning his personal sexuality, marking the boundaries of heteronormative behaviour through both personal and public

humiliation. Victimising Rob serves both a personal and public performance of surveillance and normalisation of gendered roles.

Students in particular identified the ability to effectively manage emotions in stressful incidents as core to accessing coping strategies. Phoebe, a year 7 student, discussing vignette 5 describes "you can see its hurting" and will make you feel "self-conscious … feel really bad". The reaction of victims to what they perceive and feel as bullying has been highlighted as a social function of bullying (Hunter et.al. 2004). Eira a year 7 student, discussing Jacob being tripped up in vignette 4, in a public space describes the emotional impact: "it's upsetting that person both inside and outside … that's worse". Acknowledging both the physical act, it is the negative emotions connected with feeling bullied that Eira prioritises, saying we all "know the feeling of being bullied". She notes that a combination of public shame and embarrassment alongside the internal feeling increase the impact for the individual. Students recognised the combination of both physical and psychological factors increases the impact on individuals and negative emotions risk of damaging self-esteem and status in the peer group (Hunter et al. 2004).

Year 9 student Bella explains the dilemma facing individuals in deciding how to respond, describing how, "if you just ignore them… they might do it again". Managing these feelings individuals have to draw on personal, social and supporting resources to cope or alter the outcome. The dangers of ignoring are discussed by Evie, year 9, who states: "it's likely if you rise to it, they are more likely to do it again". The risk in "rise*(ing)*" to the action highlights the uncertainty of outcome, mentioned by Ffion, who says "you don't know what is going to happen next", producing both fear and anxiety which will affect responses to the perceived threat. Feelings of shame and fear, alongside the pejorative label of 'victim', is associated with the need to escape the scrutiny of others and the possibility of public humiliation. Year 9 student, Theo suggests it "just goes through your mind all the time", highlighting the heightened awareness of the victim, the fear of repetition and the humiliation being a constant presence. Students highlighted the difficulties of interpreting situational meaning whilst negotiating emotions as students also indicating a limited range of strategies available to help them.

This apparent lack of awareness of strategies that could be utilised was a recurring theme, with students referring to 'telling someone', or 'ignoring' it as the main strategies they were aware of. The current discourses of bullying in schools "leaves children with few ways to cope with residual anxiety, defensiveness, guilt and

feelings of failure" (Ringrose & Renold 2010, p590) regardless of the role they play. This link to behaviour in social contexts has been described "as a dynamic system connected to other key psychological processes" (Mahady Wilton et al. 2000, p227). Barriers to effective action and intervention were identified by Darcy, a year 9 student stating that it "stops people… expressing who they are". Poppy, a year 7 student, discussing the vignette 5, recognises that the impact, "affects your health and it also affects the way you act". This is echoed by Year 9 student Tommy who suggests that intervening "takes a lot of courage"; the emotional response of fear, alongside the shame of not intervening are integral to the responses of all involved, but particularly so for victims. The identification of victims and the positioning of them outside of their peer group has been identified as a means of impacting on children who are not targeted themselves as they will do their best to identify what the bully or individual with high status defines as normative (Juvonen & Graham 2014). This combination of emotional impact alongside, the pressures of normalisation, and limited options for responding and intervening without damage to themselves, leaves students feeling vulnerable (Ringrose & Renold 2010).

The importance of emotions in informing behaviour and shaping the reactions is supported in the literature by Ortega et al. (2012, p343) arguing that the "same event could lead to different reactions by different people". The student participants discussing impact highlight emotions as a key consideration in understanding the definition of bullying. The significance attached to them indicate the divergence of a shared understanding around bullying. Student focus on the emotional impact caused is in contrast to staff who express the need to establish intention through investigation. The limitations of the bully victim binary in the current conceptualisation of bullying only serve to heighten and exacerbate the negative emotions and effects highlighted by students (Ringrose & Renold 2010). This leads to further confusion and highlights the difficulty of finding effective resolution.

6.9 Marking the boundaries through humorous performance

An alternative to telling or ignoring violence between peers was the use of humour. As mentioned earlier bullying is often disguised or disregarded because it is described as a 'joke'. Lily, a year nine student discusses the different approaches, "Boys tend to make fun of each other more than girls, and they take more like a joke, whereas girls take it a bit more seriously". The use of humour was often commented on by students, adding an element of confusion, and often seen as a

legitimate excuse for behaviour, especially between friends. The labelling the behaviour as humour, coupled with perceived stereotypes is mentioned by Evie, year 9, discussing vignette 1, Brett's imitation of Levi's stutter:

> Well, I think he's doing it because it is making people laugh, making him the joker and the class clown and things like that. I think he is carrying on doing that because it's giving him the attention

Describing Levi as the "class clown" can serve to legitimise the oppressive behaviour of highlighting Brett's stammer through imitation. Evie tries to negotiate the difficulty of not positioning Levi as bully, or Brett as victim. This leaves her searching for reasons to describe why Levi might act this way. In attempt to make it routine and normalised, with the performance becoming expected and accepted. The shaping of individual subjectivity to a stereotypical role is reflected in the othering of Brett through the subtle imitation of difference. The expectations of gendered male roles which position boys as subjects into the binary bullying discourse as either bully or victim. Neither of these subject positions offer resolution and often serve to heighten impact. Gendered student subjectivities were defined or diminished through the medium of humour. Tommy, year 9, recognises the double bind of labelling when he discusses the defacing of Rob's poster with the word gay in vignette 3:

> Even though it is an insult used a lot, like quite a lot, umm … when you find it can happen quite a lot. And yeah … I don't think it should be used, but it is used … like if, if you are gay then it definitely is a big insult and very harsh to be recognised as that and to be, and to be like to be called that when it's just … it shouldn't really be like that

The questioning of heterosexual masculinity with the use of 'gay' as a pejorative label, positions Rob as a victim, to which Tommy asserts as a resistance to this label, "But if you are not then it's just a bit of a joke and obviously you just take it on the chin (.) if it's with your mates". Once again the spectre of heteronormative gendered behaviour is the focus, with humour and relationship being key components in negotiating the defining of bullying behaviour. The difficulty for students in negotiating the set of subject positions that are reinforced through the discourse in schools expressed through the bully/victim binary, exposes the

challenges facing students in positioning themselves and others between the narrow confines of binaries, either bully/victim, boy/girl, good/bad.

6.10 Reframing the discourse

Currie et al (2006, p32) describe "cultural duplicity", the "missing discourse" used by participants to police and regulate behaviour and in doing so tells us a great deal about the dominant culture and how power exercised through systems and processes are used to invoke unwritten rules that regulate and police behaviour. "I think it's so rude", year 11 student, Maisy says when discussing the defacing of Rob's poster in vignette 3. Lilly, year 9, states that Levi's behaviour towards Brett in vignette 1 was "being mean"; the language used by students rarely reflected the language used by staff in schools, or indeed policy. In actively sidestepping the discourse are they sidestepping the thorny issue of naming bullies. Is this a reflection of a lack of skills, knowledge and capacities to deal with what they see as a particularly challenging emotive issue, where they are caught between two ends of a binary dilemma? Does student reticence in naming bullying and bullies suggest a denial and disengagement around the issues consciously position themselves against the label of bullying currently emphasised in school cultures. Rather than identifying individual behaviours can the discourse around bullying examine and raise awareness of the material, performative and repetitive objects and acts which take place within cultural and social settings, which exposes a different aspect of power in reinforcing and informing individual behaviour?

By reframing power as a force which alters the shape of freedom of choice, placing constraints on individuals and groups, within their social and cultural networks, rather than individualised and positioned within the context of the bully victim binary, would it be possible to give both students and staff in school a greater insight into what is meant by bullying? If power limits individual's freedoms, there is the need to untangle the difficulty in distinguishing how the course of action chosen is influenced by a variety of other agents. Moving away from personal individual power we need to examine and deconstruct power and illustrate how it is not concrete, but fluid and malleable, flowing between individuals and groups, social, political and cultural settings and demonstrate how it can change its shape and composition responding to the boundaries and networks it encounters. To use an analogy with liquid, it can be likened to water, in that it can exist in many elements, steam, water, snowflakes or ice, to fill the gaps it finds, and set the boundaries of action or non-action.

Whatever power touches it provokes a reaction, whether this is reactive in the sense of active change or inert in that it does not participate or engage. Each individual or group will be culturally and socially different in that it responds in ways that are unique and dynamic to that particular circumstance or situation, and the forces or boundaries that exist. The actions of any individual will depend upon the influences of many including peers, parents and staff, and be intersected by gender, class, race and sexuality. The difficulty of ascertaining whether actions are free are bound up with our identity, and our identity is formed through and in immersion in social networks. How students think, feel and reason, how they identify in the social and cultural settings in which they exist and those they feel excluded from, all form part of the boundaries that limit or influence their actions. The actions of any individual will be defined by their social boundaries. Power is not an individual possession, but is made explicit through rules, norms and customs that are shared and enabled through inter and intra-subjective actions of many different actors. Hayward (1998, p12) defines power "as the capacity to act upon the boundaries that constrain and enable social action" by changing shape or direction. Students will adhere to a rule whether tacit or explicit that is intended to change the behaviour of another student, in direct contrast to freedom, which allows individuals to shape the boundaries that define what the field of action is by acting in ways that affect the boundaries that define for them what is possible.

Discourses of culturally endorsed ways of thinking and talking that carry meaning beyond the immediate context and is used to sustain a particular meanings. The difficulty of a shared understanding of bullying is rooted in the common sense, widely accepted, hugely influential literature of educational psychology which has increased our understanding of bullying as a problem and given a framework for analysis. Rooted in individualised and personal attributes we have yet to unpick the wider social and cultural norms in which this 'problem of bullying' exists. If we widen the lens and look at distinct and unique mechanisms embedded in our understanding of bullying, and how this sits in a larger network of rules, regulations and norms, and how these have been brought about, then we might begin to slowly untangle the complex web of inter and intra actions that inform individual actions and behaviours, and help make power less illusive. At the moment policy gives little clear guidance on this and allows both student and adult room for misinterpretation, and has the effect of perpetuating and leaving unresolved the gaps between policy and practice.

6.11 Conclusion

The findings evidenced in this chapter appear to highlight a number of absences and missing discourses available to students and staff. These include democratic structures, participatory engagement and a broader conceptualisation of power in developing definition of bullying and school policy. The lack of access to alternative discourses maintains the current hegemonic of educational psychology in defining and addressing bullying. This narrow framework presents as problematic, challenging staff and students' understanding and defining of bullying. The focus on the bully victim binary appearing to add to the frustration of students and staff in dealing with aggression and conflict. Coupled with a lack of clear guidance, there are few opportunities for staff and students to respond effectively, presenting further barriers to resolution. There is a need to move away from the conceptualisation of power in schools which is found in anti-bullying discourses present in current policy documents and evident in the discourse employed in school contexts. Opportunities to reframe power away from an individual skill or deficit, to one in which power is exercised through the monitoring of boundaries and networks. Perhaps the inclusion of a wider examination of social and cultural norms that enable and inform agency, will help to challenge heteronormative social and contextual power relationships and help develop an alternative broader definition of bullying.

7. Discussion

Introduction

This chapter offers a summary of the findings in answer to the research questions and draws on the findings presented in the previous two chapters. I consider and reflect on the existing body of research and discuss the theoretical and practical implications. The study's limitations are then noted, before some final remarks on avenues for further research are made.

The research questions which have been addressed in this study are:

1. How is bullying conceptualised in the policy documents utilised in schools in Wales?

2. What are staff and student awareness of anti-bullying policies in schools?

3. What role do staff and students play in the development of school anti-bullying policies?

4. What factors do staff and students in a secondary school context use to define and describe bullying?

Findings and general conclusions

The empirical chapters of this thesis contain three clear messages which emerge from the study about staff and student understanding of the definition of bullying:

1. The understanding and defining of bullying in school is informed predominantly through the influence of psychology and reflected in policy which conceptualises bullying as an act of aggression between individuals where there is an imbalance of power.

2. The way staff and students viewed the act of bullying is rooted in the deficit model, whereby the individuals involved lack either skills, knowledge or understanding and require sanctions to enforce cultural and historical norms around gender, class, race and sexuality.

3. There was a difference in the focus of staff and students in school, with staff primarily focusing on personality and the correction of what were seen as deficits. Whilst students showed a reluctance to label in terms of the bully victim binary, focusing on emotions and their impact on behaviour.

4. There was little evidence provided by the participants in this research of meaningful participation and engagement with policy and its development.

7.1 A shared understanding – defining and describing bullying

There were remarkable similarities, but also some notable exceptions, in how staff and students in a secondary school setting interpret, define and understand bullying in a school context. Understanding and defining bullying in school is informed predominantly through the influence of psychology which conceptualises bullying as an act of aggression between individuals where there is an imbalance of power. The notable absence of concrete knowledge of school or government policies from either staff or students suggests the dominant discourse around the issue of bullying is a pervasive hegemonic present in day to day talk. These subtle, yet pervasive messages are often overlooked because the focus is placed on the power in the bully/victim binary. The drive to rectify and manage what are perceived as individualised deficits, are embedded into responses that aim to stop or deter bullying, and pay little attention to the broader sociological, political and cultural influences that shape this view of power. The personalised responses of individuals to perceived bullying demonstrated a range of intersecting, performative and reiterative acts that sought to make sense of complex contextual behaviour.

The focus within the policy documents is primarily on the student and their behaviour and addressing the problem of bullying through discipline and sanctions that aim to bring the errant individual back to what the school regards as 'normal'. This leaves little opportunities for individuals, be they staff or students in a school setting to bring about change, as bullying is conceptualised in a particular framework. The discourse of bully/victim and their personality is not just found in school policy. This deficit model of the individual is also reflected in mainstream media and journalism and is also found in the descriptions of the subject in educational psychology. There appears to be a lack of alternative interpretations which would reframe behaviour and help illuminate and understand the hidden role cultural, social and political norms have in shaping what is considered normal. This

prevents alternative ways of seeking solutions and for offering emotional and practical support for those caught in the double bind of the victim/bully binary. Both staff and students are necessarily part of this process in that they are also subjects and are shaped by the context in which they exist. All are subjected to the role of enforcer through the disciplinary technologies of surveillance and observation and normalising judgment which allows classification and comparison that establishes 'truth'.

The policy discourse in Wales around bullying seeks to reinforce the current norms of neoliberal ideology by focusing on individual responsibility and accountability. Whilst simultaneously applying neo-conservative philosophy through the enforcement of punishments and sanctions to those who are seen to step outside of the social and cultural norms. For bullying this means that it is reproduced as an individual problem which is reflected in the discourse, highlighting the bully/victim binary as opposed to the wider social and cultural influences that promote and maintain particular behaviours in specific contexts. This is explicitly stated in the definition of bullying found in current guidance on bullying, with both government guidance and school policy focusing on personal individualised behaviour, reliant on power, impact, repetition and intent, with the need to reinforce acceptable behaviour through the use of punishment and sanctions for the bully and help and support to modify the victim's behaviour.

Despite few of the participants having concrete knowledge of the contents of either government or school policies, the discourse found in school policy proved to be influential in informing the views of the participants in the study. What was evident from both student and staff was the general framework currently embedded in the psychological approach to describing and defining bullying underlies their understanding of bullying and shapes their definition, albeit with nuances of focus on key aspects.

7.2 The deficit issue

Staff and students viewed the act of bullying as rooted in the deficit model, whereby the individuals involved lacked either skills, knowledge or understanding and required sanctions to enforce cultural, historical norms and expectations around gender, class, race and sexuality. Currently the policy context places the focus on safety and wellbeing of the child, alongside the expected measures to prevent

bullying. This focus on individual accountability sits alongside a particular view of the child as non-competent, in need of protection, regulation, control and management. There is little connection to the wider sociological influences in shaping the problem of bullying. Power, labelling and subjectification are achieved and maintained through the prioritisation of a particular discourse, in this case the use of power in the bully/victim binary.

Foucault points to a wider interpretation of power which is not dependant on individual agency alone, but takes account of the cultural, social and political conventions that establish norms of behaviour. For bullying this means that it is reproduced as an individual problem which is reflected in the discourse which highlights the bully/victim binary as opposed to the wider social and cultural influences that promote and maintain particular behaviours in specific contexts. This is explicitly stated in the definition of bullying found in current guidance on bullying, with both government guidance and school policy focusing on personal individualised behaviour, reliant on power, impact, repetition and intent, with the need to reinforce acceptable behaviour through the use of punishment and sanctions for the bully and help and support to modify the victim's behaviour.

Further categorisation into specific types of bullying further enhances what Thornberg (2015) refers to as socially constructed differences such as gender, which sit within a hierarchy at the centre of bullying. Whilst power is acknowledged as the key instrument, it is knowledge and how it is produced and distributed which enables individuals to position themselves within a hierarchy, becoming part of what Cheng (2018) describes as the production of power, as they strive to make sense of their world. The subjectification of the learner further embeds bullying as an individual problem, ignoring the inequity in power relationships, which is dynamic, in that it moves between both adult and child, and across social contexts and groups. Recently work has been growing on evidencing the macro lens of social contexts, heralding a move away from the micro analysis of children as the site of the bullying problem. Increasingly there is work on conceptualising bullying as a more complex phenomenon that involves not only discourse, but is constituted through physical and subjective forces which influence individual agency. (Schott & Søndergaard 2014).

The discourses, concepts, ideas and practice that underlie the understanding of bullying in schools are key influencers in encouraging or curtailing individuals to behave in certain ways, key to this is the relationship between power and

knowledge. The way in which staff behave and talk legitimises both their position and their authority through power relationships. Their power is legitimised through systems that are institutional, rooted in tradition and have been established and embedded in and through social and cultural contexts and informed by political ideology. The inequality of discursive frameworks has been highlighted by Foucault and is closely aligned with the shaping of individual identity. During the discussions of the vignettes staff focus was on the individual character or personality, locating problematic behaviour within the individual. The subjectification of the learner is exercised through pedagogical practices that contribute to power relations in schools, and helps shape how the bully or the victim is constructed. The governance of knowledge is managed and applied through a range of systems that include surveillance, regulation and individualisation. Through this classification, a production of hierarchies are formed which facilitate the process of individuation.

7.3 The difference - an absence of emotion

Whilst the similarities of defining bullying focused on the educational psychological definition, there was a difference in the focus of staff and students in school, with staff primarily focusing on personality and the correction of what were seen as deficits. In contrast students showed a reluctance to label in terms of the bully victim binary, focusing on emotions and how they informed behaviour. The key difference for students was the centrality of emotions in shaping responses, the feelings invoked by becoming bully or victim, recognising them, avoiding them and controlling them were a continual theme throughout their discussions of the vignettes.

The notable difference in the descriptions of staff was the lack of reference to emotions. Tackling the issue was described as both difficult and frustrating and often unsolvable, but staff rarely discussed how bullying impacted on their own emotions or how they themselves experienced bullying. The inequity of access to alternative discourses for both staff and students enhances and promotes construction of the individual as central to their own agency and reinforces and maintains hierarchical systems within schools. This continued focus on the micro lens of the individual as opposed to the macro lens of schools and the systems and processes inherent in them is perhaps a barrier in promoting inclusive and equitable schools, where the adult voice and knowledge is prioritised over that of the student. There is a need to widen the scope for examining the structures and processes

embedded in schools by using a critical sociological examination of not only the characterisation of the child and staff, but also the repetitive, performative actions and interactions that seek to reinforce the binary of how the bully/victim is made, or indeed how the boy/girl or student/teacher is shaped.

Students were reluctant in their discussions of the vignettes to label the individuals as bullies or victims, preferring to ascribe labels to the behaviour. Describing it as mean or rude there was uncertainty when asked did they perceive it as bullying. The status and/or popularity of an individual were cited as factors by students in ascertaining whether the behaviour was bullying, with the impact on the individual being considered as an important element of the decision as to whether or not the action or behaviour was deemed as bullying. This interpretation of power as being an unequal balance between individuals, whether through status, popularity or intention reflects the current conceptualisation of power present in definitions of bullying.

The agency of individuals was described as being constrained, with students identifying a range of risks, including reputational risk, through exclusion or exposure to ridicule if the behaviour is challenged. Personal agency is seen by students as being limited through surveillance by their peers which establishes norms of behaviour. Students recognised that those who were perceived to have positions of power were able to control individual actions and this had consequences on an individual's sense of identity. Emotions, both recognising and managing were seen as instrumental to responding to or challenging the individual or the behaviour. Also mentioned was the ability of individuals to recognise and manage their own emotions and how this impacted on their choice of response to viewing bullying as a bystander or being the victim.

The shaping of identity, what it means to be a boy, a girl, a student or a teacher were noticeable in that they were often stereotypical. Staff and students offered descriptions of gendered expectations of behaviours. The surveillance and regulations embedded in schools that are culturally and historically situated, and are repeated and performed by individuals and groups were never explicitly voiced by students or staff. These missing discourses allow for a continuing view of bullying as one dimensional, between individuals. There is scant recognition of a much broader sociological view evident in either staff or student discourse. This version of bullying is taken for granted as the truth and is reinforced through the discourse of the bully

victim binary with little acknowledgment of intersectional nature of race, gender, class and sexuality.

If the boundaries of normal are to be challenged and reshaped then Hayward (1998) argues that we must give individuals or groups the capacities to know how to challenge and reshape. There is a need to offer a Foucauldian conceptualisation of power as a positive force which can enable and enact change. Power was overwhelmingly viewed as a negative by both student and staff. There was little discussion of ways of subverting power other than ignoring, telling or through humour. The subjectivity of students is situated within the social and cultural norms and expectations in which they exist, their agency varies depending on the relationships within those settings. The lack of clear guidance other than that of the current education psychology view of the victim/bully binary denies opportunities for both staff and students to escape from heteronormative discourses that mask the working of power in the broader sociological sense and effectively enables barriers to solving the 'problem' of bullying.

7.4 The missing discourse

There is a missing discourse in the interpretation of bullying, with little evidence of the wider sociological frames of what shapes individuals and their subjectivity, and how this might offer opportunities which promote shared understanding and effective responses. The discourse of bully/victim and their personality is not just found in school policy, this deficit model of the individual is also reflected in mainstream media and journalism and is also found in the descriptions of the subject in educational psychology. There appears to be a lack of alternative interpretations which would reframe behaviour and help illuminate and understand the hidden role cultural, social and political norms have in shaping what is considered normal. This prevents alternative ways of seeking solutions and for offering emotional and practical support for those caught in the double bind of the victim/bully binary. Staff are necessarily part of this process in that they are also subjects and are shaped by the context in which they exist, are subjected to both the role of enforcer of sanctions and discipline, but are also subjugated by those same disciplinary forces. Students similarly become part of the surveillance and monitoring through the requirement to 'tell'.

7.5 Substantive Insights

School bullying during the last half century has been a subject of interest to not only academics, but parents, school staff, young people and increasingly the media. Whilst the solutions to preventing or solving the problem of bullying have been numerous and varied, as yet, if the statistics evidenced from a variety of sources are to be believed, few of the many strategies and approaches have made any consistent or noticeable difference to the experience of young people. If this is the case, what is it that needs to change to bring about effective solutions and interventions? Why do schools in particular seem to find it difficult to address the concerns and find effective strategies to deal with bullying and reduce the incidents reported by young people? What emerged during the study was the perception of an entrenched view of what bullying was and how this interpretation persists and is principally informed by extensive work in the field of educational psychology. By viewing bullying in this way the locus of power is seen as interpersonal and constrains the way in which bullying is conceptualised, organised and classified, thereby setting a framework by which students and staff view, interpret and respond to the 'problem of bullying' and the means of solving the 'problem'.

The striking feature of the study was that both staff and students in a secondary school setting shared an understanding of bullying in as much that their framework of reference, their knowledge and understanding were primarily informed and enforced through one interpretation of bullying. The field of educational psychology has a long and impressive pedigree in the field of bullying (Olweus 1993; Rigby 1996; Salmivalli 1999; Smith 2000) and many others mentioned in the course of this study providing a persuasive and substantial argument and body of evidence. This has developed and informed the general understanding of not only students and staff in school settings, but also the wider public discourse about what is meant when we discuss and describe bullying. It is only recently, (in terms of research, the last two decades) that we start to see growing discussions around a much broader understanding of the wider sociological influences that are often Exploring this avenue and seeking to highlight and interpret the phenomenon of bullying through a post structuralist, feminist and intersecting approach is a developing area (Ringrose & Renolds 2010; Jacobson 2010; Walton 2011; Schott & Søndergaard 2014). The work of Foucault has helped to provide a framework to assist in exploring the power relationships within this conceptualisation and helps to problematise the issue.

The prevalent discourses in the discussions of both students and staff through their discussions of the vignettes, evidenced what Foucault described as disciplinary

powers and dividing discourses that operate to enable the acts of bullying to be perpetuated and maintained in school settings. Currently policy and discourse focus on the character or personality of the individual. Aligned with this is the focus on the relationship between the bully and the victim. This binary relationship lies at the heart of many of the strategies that have evolved to prevent or provide solutions to the problem of bullying. Both the victim and the bully are described as deficient in some aspect, and are both therefore in need of help to correct or rehabilitate deficits in character that enable the relationship between them to happen. So whilst the bully is perceived as having control or choice in his decision to bully, the question that needs to be asked is what influences and mediates that individual choice. The focus on individual agency alone obscures and challenges those who are tasked with responding and resolving bullying incidents as reflected in the majority of participant responses highlighting the difficulty involved in recognising and resolving bullying episodes in schools. The complexity of social relationships alongside the developmental and cultural norms are an area that can be improved on in the training of not only teachers and students, but also parents. Work to broaden the focus towards the sociological, but inclusive of the contribution of the psychological may introduce new avenues of resolving the bullying problem other than the disciplinary route. The danger with new ways of thinking is that we abandon all that we know, and leave practitioner confused and unsure, recognising individual agency as a starting point it would be advantageous to build the picture by introducing new elements which help practitioners a more nuanced understanding of bullying.

There is now a growing interest in the wider societal, cultural and political fields that are also seen to play a part in how individuals are influenced and behaviour is reinforced through the systems and processes inherent in everyday discourse and practice. What this study highlights is a missing discourse in the formation of the concept of bullying: there was little awareness of the part of our broader culture, values and philosophy and the part they play in shaping the subject, delineating both the bully and the victim, and more recently the bystander. The primacy afforded to the discourse found in policy and practice focusing on the individual, enables, reinforces and perpetuates the current conceptualisation of bullying in schools.

The discourses are a key element in framing how bullying in schools is perceived and dominate how it is framed and discussed, the knowledge and truth presented in both policy and practice in schools through the bully victim binary limits how the issues are presented and may prevent alternative responses and reactions that

could offer effective solutions. These discourses and practices have been normalised through social structures which prioritise a set of strategies that effectively inhibit or prevent alternative discourses. Jacobson argues that the bully is a "narration of subjectivity" (2010, p256) perpetuated by educational discourses currently in play in schools. The bully is seen to be the site of power, which is recognised as a central element of bullying, and named throughout the study. The discourse and its focus on the individual, continually establishes the cultural and social context and thereby shapes the subject, both bully and victim. This focus on the individual and their choice of behaviour does not take account of how the dynamic social conditions, actions or indeed non-actions of individuals and the "continuously emerging dilemmas" (Schott & Søndergaard 2014, p390) influence and affect the individual. Foucault's work on subjectification was a useful tool with which to explore further how power can be conceptualised as other than the individual, but through the functions of the social and cultural contexts in which individuals are situated, including the systems and processes that operate with those domains.

Foucault saw both discourses and practice as instrumental in reproducing and maintaining power through the domains in which it operates. It is in this working of power that individuals are discursively produced, through what he saw as dividing practices and disciplinary procedures. The continual monitoring and surveillance of both students and staff serve to enhance a culture of dominance and hierarchy, where individuals are compared and competing with each other through value laden and socially constructed difference. Both students and staff recognised that an inequality of power contributed to bullying, but saw power as held by individuals, rather than the culture and social norms of the context producing "reality and domains of objects and rituals of truth" (Pinar 2016, p187). The discourses employed in both policy and practice in schools, shape not only the individual but also give knowledge and truth to how individuals are able to recognise and react. This interpretation them becomes normalised and the expressions of frustration and helplessness voiced by staff in challenging or responding to bullying may reflect the lack of any credible or viable alternatives by which to interpret or develop strategies to address the issue of inequitable power other than through very personal and binary constructs.

Power is seen as working through the establishment of the relationship in creating both the bully and the victim. Whilst both staff and students commented on factors that might influence individual behaviour, including family, social or even cognitive

issues, the solutions to correcting these perceived problems were through administering sanctions or punishments, or in the case of the victim, offering support to fill the deficit, such as building resilience or self-esteem. This labelling and subjectification creates individuals who are shaped through individuation, sitting within an endorsed hierarchy. It is through monitoring and surveillance of both staff and students that the deviant is identified; monitoring individual behaviour, how and with whom the individual spends time, what is said and how it is said; including control and monitoring of the body, what it looks like, how sexuality and gender are expressed, with and through the activities you participate in. These were aspects that both staff and students commented on in their discussions of the vignettes and in relation to their broader experience, but regularly returned to the individual as the site of choice. Changing individual choice was through the exercising of sanctions and rewards; individuals are trained or punished to conform to the norms of that particular social and cultural context. Both staff and students are objects that are shaped to be compliant through comparison and positioned in the hierarchy, they then become subjects which can be measured against a normative value.

It is of no surprise then that students' and staff preoccupation with status is a key issue as they are reflecting a reality that they are part of. Being able to position and compare yourself to others is a norm that they see reflected in their everyday experience of school. They are reflecting back the system in which they are situated. There is little evidence of the questioning of those norms, or the development of critical thinking about how these came about, or how they could be changed. Other than the relational aspect there seemed little awareness of what power could be described as, or how it operated. Power as social and cultural proved an elusive and nebulous concept that both staff and students skirted around. Whilst this seems disheartening there appears to be hope with the rise of participation, learner voice and rights agenda that have a growing influence in both policy and practice will perhaps help to shape and modify ongoing debate in and around schools, students and staff. The Children's Commissioner for Wales has drawn attention to the complexity of children's lives, and the need for them to sit at "heart of policy making" (2017, p4). In the adoption of the UNCRC framework in Wales by the Welsh Government there is a recognition of children as active citizens and their differing needs (Welsh Assembly Government. The Children and Young people: Rights to Action, 2005). It is to be hoped that this influence on the discourse within school will offer opportunities to explore alternative interpretations which

might propose more fruitful and effective strategies and solutions, moving the focus away from the individual to the wider lens of cultural, political and social contexts.

In order to create what Jacobson (2010b) describes as new spaces of difference and value there has to be an engagement and understanding of the value base of current educational thinking. The neo-liberal philosophy of individual perpetuates the motivational discourses that encourage schools to position not only themselves, but their students in a hierarchy of value. It has become normalised to compare one school, one cohort or individual student against another in terms of achievement or personality. The disciplinary power that resides in the practices within schools are reflected in what Foucault describes as dividing discourse and work to provide a hidden but persuasive culture of domination. Students discussed the links between how those who appeared to dominate, through status or popularity appeared to have greater degrees of influence or power and were perceived as having achieved a disproportionate voice in decisions. The connection between the systems that produces this subject was rarely made by either students or staff, the focus was always on the individual. These practices and systems that produce the subject be they bully/victim or student/staff, deny any alternative development of a sense of self. The opportunity to affect agency through challenge or resistance is constrained by the value laden hierarchy that is endorsed through subtle, repetitive and performative acts. The systems and processes established, monitoring and correction ensures a strict adherence to the development of the norm.

There is little opportunity to develop a wide ranging discourse that allows space for identification of what impacts on the development of individual creativity, self-expression which recognise and accept difference. There are recent examples of work in Wales that promote creative, participatory and co-produced research that inform practice. The AGENDA resource is one such example, this free online resource has involved children in developing creative age appropriate resources around equality and diversity, and offers opportunities for them to engage as active citizens in highlighting issues that are pertinent to them (AGENDA: A Young Person's Guide to Making Positive Relationships Matter, 2016). The work of Renold (2017) and Mannay et al. (2018) draw attention to the possibilities for creative approaches enabling children and young people an opportunity to play an active and participatory role in both research and policy development. Arguments are made for moving away from the omission of the subjective experiences of children where children are passive onlookers, where their actions are constrained by apparent powerlessness to engagement that is interactive, meaningful, creative and

accessible to young people. The use of film, art, music and other creative activities can develop cogent and influential space for young people to engage with issues that are pertinent to them.

The uniqueness of individuals is often overlooked in the everyday life of schools in the competition to rise to the top. Representation of the bullying problem in schools through what are often gendered norms appear to over simplify a complex phenomenon. The bully/victim are prioritised as the site of the problem, rather than being elements of a much wider focus on the deployment of power through intersecting axis that include gender, race, class and sexuality, all elements that collectively combine to affect the distribution and utilisation of power in schools. The subject, whether student or staff are regulated by a number of factors that will mark them as deviant, and are then regulated by "normative cruelties" (Ringrose & Renold 2010, p574). Subjects that transgress these norms are shaped by the stereotypical gendered responses, with the vast majority of students and staff making reference to the expectations of idealised gendered behaviour: boys fight and are tough, whilst girls are emotional and expected to be nurturing.

The structure of schools which centre on discipline and control, enhance social groupings, competition, dominance and conformity and lead to a culture of blame. Horton (2016) suggests we move away from the microscopic analysis of individual behaviour with its attention to specific and prescribed filters which are attributed to "asymmetric power relationships" (Olweus, 1993, p10). This conceptualisation of bullying requires a shift, to one that recognises the subtle, pervasive and shifting nature of power relationships within the wider social and cultural contexts. Returning to Foucault, it is necessary to envisage power as a "complex strategical situation" (1990, p93). Strategies and interventions which allow and develop awareness and a reworking of knowledge which allow for navigation of shifting power relationships outside of the current personal binary level. By looking at the wider cultural and social contexts and examining who implements and controls this might provoke insights on how best to challenge or resist power relations, and provide for a more inclusive and equitable systems.

The one dimensional interpretation and defining of bullying is demonstrated by both students and staff in the discussions of the vignettes, normalising the developmental, gendered and psychological frameworks in which school bullying exist. Issues of the inequity of power within the relationships between staff and students are rarely addressed. The positioning of students as a homogenous group,

compelled to attend and perform to an idealised standard and closely monitored gendered expectations shape the student. Any transgression of normative performances by students are carefully regulated by staff, teachers in particular, who deem themselves responsible for surveying, maintaining and administering students within the system. The structure of schools themselves reflect social groupings in the organisation of specific groups and spaces, that facilitate and enhance the cultural expectation of competition, dominance and conformity, discipline and control, all crucial elements in maintaining the organisation and structure and producing the ideal student. Devices employed to regulate, classify and administer the subject in school, both student and staff, positioning the subject as an "object" (Søndergaard 2002, p450) within a particular field, both child and adult in the socio-cultural setting of school.

Foucault sees this process of subjectification and agency as productive power. The current narrative around bullying positions adults as arbitrators and decision makers, reflecting the cultural and societal norms of children having less power. The gaps in adult recognition and response leaves them with little access to strategies that could prevent or effectively challenge bullying. Despite the actual content of policy being an unknown by students and staff in schools, they nevertheless understand and reflect this conceptualisation of bullying. The messages in the policy are translated into repeated, performative actions that in themselves interact to subtly and powerfully signal messages that shape both the bully and the victim. Despite school policies having a definition of bullying, the reaction of participants to understanding and applying this definition to the vignettes offered for discussion illuminates how powerfully discourse and practice interact to provide a dominant, all-encompassing framework for students and staff to be shaped as subjects in the exercising of power through the establishment of norms of behaviour that are sanctioned, ignored or empathised with through their understanding of bullying. The differences for staff and students in defining bullying were marginal and prove insightful in how the child and the role of staff in schools is conceptualised.

The intensity of emotions played an important role in our responses to bullying and the agency of individuals caught up in the complex and multifaceted problem of positioning oneself within the hierarchy of school. The recognition, control and expression of emotions were seen as crucial to their understanding of bullying. Ringrose and Renold (2010) draw attention to how developmental, social and cultural norms are legitimised and normalised through the use of humour, the blurring of boundaries which enable "bully discourses" and which "formalise and

entrench a set of unviable subject positions" (p583) which have the "problematic discursive effect of engendering heightened defensiveness, anger and anxiety"(p587). Foucault (1982) discusses the complexity of relationality and how different aspects of power inequalities produce effects on social settings and individual responses, but also discusses how it can be positive and enabling. There is a need to take account of how individuals process the rational, emotional, sensual and cognitive aspects of behaviour, noting that they are often contradictory, flexible and fluid but are key to beginning a more "reflexive discursive practice" (Søndergaard 2002, p452). The current "individualising focus" (2002, p451) both delineates and reduces processes that could potentially be utilised in more dynamic and interactional ways.

In addressing the problem of bullying in schools the a focus on recognising and questioning what are the social, cultural and political norms, examining the cultural and symbolic discursive, material and performative acts and symbols that are involved in the reproduction of power. The 'problem' fails to consider, how and who legitimises subject positions such as the bully or victim. Once again Højgaard and Søndergaard (2011) suggests that needs examination is, who is ignored, or empathised with to help create these subject positions within a school culture. In moving forward with the conceptual understanding of bullying there is a need to explore, express and develop understanding of the material, performative and iterative actions of not just individuals, but the systems and processes in which they exist. This provides a challenge for practitioners, policy makers and academics in finding ways that are meaningful for students, staff and parents to express the complexity of issues involved in addressing conflict and aggression in schools. Rather than promoting a particular definition, work needs to be done through alternative creative approaches that allow a variety of subject voices to be expressed and heard. In doing this we might help to disentangle the complex actions and behaviours of not only individuals but the systems, processes and cultures in which they exist, thereby introducing new and explorative elements to solving the problem of bullying through developing an alternative conceptualisation.

7.6 Recommendations for practice

The aim of this study was to examine whether students and adults in a school setting had differing conceptualisations of bullying, it did not set out to evaluate the work of staff in schools when dealing with relational and/or aggressive behaviours.

Neither did it seek to prioritise the views of students in regard to conflict and the input of adults into disputes between peers. In seeking further understanding in this area the aim was to try and identify how policy and practice regarding the "problem of bullying" could inform and indicate fruitful ways forward to lessen the prevalence and impact on schools, in particular children and young people and the staff who deal with these issues.

The findings of this thesis have highlighted the centrality of the education psychology interpretation and framing of bullying. Schools, staff and students are utilised to promote and maintain the position of this current persuasive argument that positions the individual as the root of the problem. This prioritisation denies opportunities to staff and students in schools to challenge social and structural conditions that cause emotional distress, disadvantage, inequality and ultimately oppressive practices. The question that this thesis raises is how can students and staff in school mitigate and change the effects of the current conceptualisation of bullying and the responses to it? How do they mitigate the pressures of unseen power that will enable a new focus on bullying and ultimately allow a differing perspective to be voiced and heard?

It would be prudent to offer greater participation through a range of creative methods that can broaden the conceptualisation of bullying. There is a need to look at how power works through cultural and social practices that draw on gender, sexuality, race and class to prescribe what is acceptable. This will offer opportunities for differing interpretations that move away from the stereotypes that are currently offered and would utilise the growing body of emerging work which draws on the sociological field of performativity and material-discursive intra-actions to examine these issues.

Establishing the space to address the difficulty of influencing practice and challenging distinct frames of understanding in the context of school policies can lead to frustrations and misunderstandings. Enabling change to happen through presenting alternative frameworks of understanding will need to be addressed sensitively with both teachers and students, and will perhaps involve offering alternative creative methods of raising and discussing issues. Instead of the top down approach that is encapsulated in the current dissemination of knowledge and information through policy, curriculum provision and third party providers perhaps students can raise issues through participatory involvement. Utilising a variety of interactive activities that are not necessarily teacher or adult led, but facilitated,

using performative and creative activities that allow equitable access to those who are marginalised. The foundations of school councils and pupil participation is often led by adult driven agendas. Schools could use opportunities to create student led agendas; this requires developing trust and an understanding of the barriers that face particular groups in schools including managers, staff, students and parents.

In addressing shared understandings it is vital to look at new and alternative ways to bring children's experience and knowledge into focus. A body of work is evolving that incorporates a move towards recognising the expertise of children in their own lives. This is supported in through the rights agenda for children in Wales, with significant legislation and guidance setting a framework for engaging young people in the development of resources and influencing policy. The AGENDA resource (2015) that has been co-produced for both primary and secondary schools is an example of creative, participatory engagement of issues that are relevant and meaningful to students. The resource offers insight into a host of creative methods that offer inclusive, rights respecting, positive relationships, including equality and diversity, with which children can engage. Similarly Mannay et al (2019) evidences "participatory visual methods" through "multimodal techniques" (p53), but highlights the issue of "disseminating their messages in accessible ways that can engender changes in both policy and everyday practice" (p52).

Whilst a shift towards engaging and participatory methods for children and young people is emerging, there is also a need to develop and implement resources, training and space for school staff to actively engage with new curricula content and methods of delivery through professional learning resources and support. Highlighting the need to recognise, understand, support and offer alternative strategies to students in dealing with bullying. The language and framing of the problem needs to move away from the personal psycho-educational binaries of bully/victim to a focus on relationship based approaches and wellbeing. The repositioning of relationships as central to the understanding of bullying, can offer scope for both a universal and targeted approach, but would also need to seek change in the policy framework to one in which school staff feel enabled and supported. This approach is evidenced in The Compassionate and Connected Classroom curricular resource (Education Scotland, 2019) which seeks to support professionals to understand behaviour in terms of recognising, managing and responding to emotions and feelings. In addressing the importance of relationships there is space to build on current understanding of individual agency when children

are perceived as bullying, that enables an understanding of the dynamic and multifaceted factors that influence individual behaviour.

The competitive and hierarchical nature of schools are a defence against change, as it is difficult to argue against keeping children safe and achieving best outcomes, perhaps the focus of change would need to be on improving mental and physical health of all participants in school settings and not necessarily academic outputs.

Humes and Bryce (2003, p176) offer an examination of the challenges facing policy research in education, and argue that there is a need to "negotiate the shifting configurations in the relationship between research, policy and practice". The conceptualisation of bullying in schools may benefit from a multifaceted approach, such as posited by poststructuralism, rather than the more traditional modernist and structuralist approaches. This would offer multitude avenues of research, widening the different fields of knowledge, and allowing space to challenge current interpretations of what is prioritised as knowledge and truth. By positioning students at the centre of the work to highlight the issues and problems that affect them the focus of knowledge and understanding moves away from the role of education as that of imparting knowledge to children and young people, helping to facilitate a critical and reflexive learning, in a creative, dynamic and student led way. Moving away from the "'grand narrative'" of social progress and effective solutions (Pring 2000, in Humes & Bryce 2003, p177) and the current strategies used to 'solve' the problem, space might be created for alternative or challenging discourses that seek to highlight the working of power other than through interpersonal relationships, mainly rooted in young people. Enabling young people to identify priorities through a range of different kinds of research which can challenge established positions can produce interactions and intra-actions to intersect with the ideological, economic, bureaucratic and professional pressures that exist in schools.

The difficulty of this for staff in schools, teachers in particular, is their position in the field, which has implicit connections with progress, outcomes and discipline. The neo-liberal context of schooling, alongside managerialism that seek for schools to provide value for money, give a framework to learning and hierarchy and also deliver outcomes acts as a considerable downward pressure to resist social and cultural change. A move towards schools and staff facilitating and listening to the priorities that students identify requires an enormous step of trust and a belief in their own knowledge and competence. Only then might schools provide a catalyst, which enables change in solving the bullying problem. Flyvbjerg (2001) argues that

the generating of new perspectives to understand where we are at will help us understand more fully the issues of value and power. He does, however, add that in order for this to have effect, the means of communication must be more effective.

Schools in Wales are at an interesting juncture, with the introduction of the new curriculum and the move away from a prescribed curriculum for all, to areas of learning which sets wellbeing at the centre. This provides both schools especially those shaping the content and pedagogy to influence student participation to a greater extent and to offer resistance in reworking and understanding how bullying is not just about power inequalities between individuals. Moita-Lopes (2003) suggests that "schools should be able to present alternative ways of being male and to collaborate in the transformation of social gender identities" (p45). Highlighting the importance of "discourse in the social construction of gender, as well as its situatedness in history, culture and institutional life" (p45) and further suggests that students are involved in collection and analysis of stories told around them.

My own delivery of training to staff in schools has included broadening of their understanding and defining of bullying, and a reworking of their policy documents, including their visual representation. More importantly it has led them to question how and why they have implemented their current definition, and in doing so opened spaces for discussion and interpretation, and hopefully has an impact on developing positive relationship between individuals, but also recognising, mediating and mitigating the imbalance of power inherent in school systems and processes.

7.7 Limitations and strengths of the method

There are both methodological and circumstantial limitations and therefore any conclusions are of necessity tentative. The small scale nature of this qualitative research, accessing only two schools and a small sample of participants also limits the conclusions that can be drawn. The choice of secondary schools as a site of research excludes the primary sector, and therefore does not give a view across all schools, and omits the voice of younger school students and staff in those settings. Similarly including the voice of parents and carers would have been a useful and informative addition to the study. The issue of access to research sites emerged as problematic at the onset and resulted in the reworking of the research design from that of a case study to a cross sectional approach with access to two school of broadly similar demographics, other than their geographical locations. This allowed

for a thematic approach to the analysis of data generating knowledge grounded in human experience (Sandelowski 2004). The flexibility of this approach was useful in examining differing perspectives of participants. Holloway and Todres (2003) argue that applying a consistent approach to the interpretation of data and using an interpretivist epistemology throughout, would enable insight into how the subjects' knowledge of bullying was formed. Whilst the use of two sites is a small sample, it provides a check on the research process, confirming its credibility in the replication and re-emergence of themes from both research sites. This simplicity in the research design will also allow transferability to other research sites with relative ease. Similarly the use of the data to illustrate interpretation of the findings also confirms how interpretations have been made and conclusions have been drawn thereby enhancing the credibility of the research.

The choice of semi-structured interviews provided the individuals who participated with an opportunity to discuss the sensitive issue of bullying, without it being directly about their own personal experience. Used in conjunction with the vignettes it enabled participants to draw on their own experiences in providing reasons for why they described the incidents as bullying or not, allowing them to express personal and subjective views in a safe environment. The use of this method provided a strategy for developing open two communication which would offer opportunities for participants to introduce ideas that were not part of the prepared questions. Whilst this method can be viewed as time consuming, it also allowed for the development of themes of interest as the number of participants grew and they covered issues that were personal to them, without eliciting questions that were prescriptive or leading. Future research which would strengthen children and young people's voice could include them in co-production, using more creative and participatory methods not only in ascertaining their experiences and understanding but also collaborating with them as peer researchers in the design and implementation of future work around the problem of bullying.

The use of a reflective journal allowed for adjustments and rephrasing of questions during the timespan of the study. A necessary skill that developed during the course of the interviews was to redirect or cut short responses that strayed away from the main topic areas to be covered. Whilst female participants outnumbered males, a total of 39 participants provided enough data to be able to look for similarities or differences and enabled general comparisons to be made and gave access to a way of capturing information from both staff and students on the topic.

Whilst those participants drawn from the school communities involved in the interviews were not approached and enlisted in the study through voluntary participation, the general cross section of students and staff gave opportunities to those who are not generally accessed in the researching of bullying in schools. The voice of the learning support, lunchtime support staff and a governor helped to present a more nuanced insight into the topic area, in light of their varying position, activities and responsibilities within school. Although parents are a group that are purely represented in bullying research, the adults drew on their experiences both from within their professional and personal roles in responding to the vignettes.

Time spent transcribing the recorded interviews and cross referencing with notes and reflective journals gave a thorough knowledge of the data and provided a broad framework from which codes and themes emerged. Although time consuming and laborious to complete, it provided reinforcement of overall impressions recorded, and the hesitations and pauses prompt reflection on the meaning and validity of the claims being made. Whilst using a professional transcriber might have been time saving it would have provided none of the prompts or the contextual knowledge that helped to shape emphasis throughout the text.

This helped with the classifying of the information gathered into multiple codes, which were then categorised into themes and categories. Working in isolation presented issues in that it was necessary to validate the findings and not become biased, utilising a system where I categorised themes first by highlighting and colour coding, and following this with examining key phrases and words mentioned by the participants. Having gained a thorough knowledge of the data through the transcription process, and the re-reading and colour coding the final mapping into an overview document of the themes gave an oversight of the findings.

7.8 Avenues of Further Research

This thesis focused on schools and the understanding of the definition of bullying in secondary school children and staff. It has highlighted the conceptualisation of bullying as primarily rooted in the educational psychology definition of bullying that underpins staff and students everyday practices. It would be productive to explore whether similar findings emerge in comparable qualitative studies of staff and students in primary and alternative educational settings. A more productive insight that might illuminate alternative interpretations of bullying may be an exploration in

community settings. A useful extension would be to explore whether similar findings emerge with parents and families, and other settings that engage with young people and adults such as those in sports activities.

Finally in focusing on bullying a school context this thesis has chosen to add to an already extensive field, but one which is being increasingly recognised as challenging in providing effective solutions to the problem of bullying in schools. This brings unique challenges in that it is a field in which it is situated has a strong pedigree in empirical evidence into the conceptualisation of bullying. Further empirical research using creative qualitative methods that will enable insights into our conceptualisations and understanding of bullying. This thesis has not included the views of parents and carers and it is hoped that future research might address this area. Whilst this study is perhaps a small study into the area of how students and staff in schools conceptualise bullying, a larger and more differentiated sample might provide further evidence.

There are notable differences between primary and secondary school settings and it would be instructive to compare the findings between these two sites. The complexities and multifaceted nature of schools and the extraordinary pressure that they find themselves under to perform to a notional standard of excellence in academic achievement places undue pressure on staff and students; it is in this challenging and emotive environment that highlighting problematic issues of conflict and aggression can be seen as counter-productive.

In taking note of these limitations the conclusions drawn are offered as a starting point in understanding the challenges and limitations of the conceptualisations of bullying in school settings.

7.9 Final Remarks

This thesis set out to explore the staff and students understanding of bullying in a secondary school context. The participants of the study expressed their frustration and sometimes distress on the part of students, that bullying appeared to be an intractable problem that impacted upon individuals, sometimes with devastating outcomes. The distinctive identity and agency of each group was framed and maintained through a conceptualisation of bullying as a problem that was rooted primarily in childhood, with little acknowledgement of the power differential between adults and children. Similarly the effect of material, performative, interaction and

intra-actions that position each within the hierarchical structure of the competitive environment that currently exists in schools was a missing element. Staff and students understanding were rooted in a narrowly focused view of bullying that marginalised the opportunities for alternative discourses and interpretations. What is called for is a widening of the focus on understanding why and how normalising discourses and practices happen, looking at the intersecting issues of gender, sexuality, race, class and age. The use of creative, participatory and democratic methods that explore and connect with emotional impact might provide an opportunity to challenge and rupture the current impasse we seem to have reached in solving the problem of school bullying. This might be productive in enabling development and access for staff and students to a range of strategies that aid them in responding to and managing the dynamic, multiple, complex and challenging actions that are currently presented simplistically within the confines of the bully/victim binary.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Vignettes

Vignette 1

Levi is good at making people laugh and is well known for carrying out practical jokes. Brett stutters due to a speech impediment. At the start of school today Levi is making everyone laugh by imitating famous people and some members of staff, Levi goes on to imitate someone with a stutter, everyone joins in the laughter. Over the next few days, Levi continues to imitate different people, always including someone with a stutter.

Vignette 2

Rachel is a new student, she quickly makes friends with a group of students in the tutor group. A few days later, Chloe who has been off school with tonsillitis, returns to school. During the next few weeks the group who have become friendly with Rachel, begin to leave Rachel out of conversations and no longer spend time or include in conversation or activities at lunch or break time, or include in their chats on social media.

Vignette 3

Elections are being held for school council, each candidate is asked to prepare a poster to support their campaign. Rob has posted his in each of the year 10 classrooms. When he returns to his tutor room, someone has crossed out the word "class" in "vote for me for class representative" and written "gay". All the class are laughing, when he takes it down, Emily says "it's just a joke – we're still going to vote for you".

Vignette 4

Jacob is walking down the corridor to his next lesson, Steve is walking the opposite direction and trips Jacob up. Jacob lands on the floor, and people trip over him and call him names. Steve continues to walk on.

Vignette 5

Lizzie has got A* in English G.C.S.E, which she sat in year 10. Today, answering a question in class, one of the class muttered "swot". At lunch time everyone was messing around with their phones, taking photographs of each other. Later that day, at home, Lizzie receives an anonymous email calling her a "swot" and "loser" and "teacher's pet". Attached to the email is an edited picture of Lizzie, which has been shared across different social media platforms. There are lots of unpleasant and nasty comments attached to the photo.

Vignette 6

Emma enjoys being active, and particularly likes helping out with the after school sports club. During PE lessons, whenever there are team activities, Emma is always the last to be chosen, and is often called "fatty".

Appendix 2

Interview Guide 1

Adults

Introduction (To establish relationship and put at ease and check understanding)

- Introduce yourself and thank them for agreeing to participate.

- Check their understanding of the research by referring to the consent documentation: Including:

    o Research project is about exploring any differences between adult and student

      understanding of the definition of bullying.

    o Time - roughly 30 minutes or a maximum of 45 minutes.

    o Participation is optional and they can stop the interview or decline to answer specific

      individual questions at any time should they wish.

    o Confidentiality

    o Consent

    o No identifiers

    o Ask if they have any questions.

    o Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

    o During the interview we will look at some examples and perhaps watch a short film.

  Context (To establish confidence and triangulate with orientation observations)

    - Tell me a little about yourself

        o How long have you been teaching?

        o At this school?

        o What subject area do you teach?

        o Have you any areas of responsibility or TLR's?

Possible prompt questions:

1. Are you able to describe what happened?
2. Would you describe what happened as bullying?
3. What would have to be different for it to be bullying?
4. What do you think happened?
5. Why do you think that happened?
6. How would you respond?
7. Why would you respond in that way?
8. What would happen if you didn't respond?

9. What is wrong with …..?
10. Why would that be a problem?
11. "Some people think it is important to do Y. What do you think about that?"
12. Or "Last week I interviewed a teacher/student who said they thought Y was more important than X. What do you think about that?"
13. What would need to change for you to act differently?
14. Say what you mean by [term or phrase]
15. When you say, [term or phrase], what are you actually doing?
16. It sounds like you are saying, ". . . .". Is that a fair summary?
17. So you are saying . . . .? (Check understanding)
18. Tell me more about that.
19. Can you give me an example?
20. What would that look like?
21. How do you do that?
22. Can you tell me more about that?
23. What were other people doing then?
24. How did others [e.g., students] respond to that?
25. If I were watching you do this, what would I see?
26. Why was that important to you?
27. Why does that stand out in your memory?
28. Why do you think you noticed that?
29. Why does that matter?
30. What motivated your response?
31. How did you feel about that?
32. What was significant about this to you?
33. Do you always response [or do this] this way?
34. What might make you respond [or do this] differently?
35. Have you always felt this way?
36. How has your approach changed over time?
37. What motivated this change?
38. Last week I observed a teacher who did B. What do you think of that approach?
39. Last week I interviewed a student who said he thought ? was more appropriate because . . What do you think about that idea?
40. I recently read about a school that had a policy that required B. How would you feel about a policy like that?
41. Suppose a new teacher came to your school and she advocated doing B. How would you respond to that idea?

End statements/Questions

1. We are coming towards the end now
2. Is there anything else that you would like to mention?
3. Do you know where to go for support if any issues have been raised today? – signposting – possible sheet with information

Interview guide 2

Student

Introduction (To establish relationship and put at ease and check understanding)

- Introduce yourself and thank them for agreeing to participate.

- Check their understanding of the research by referring to the consent documentation: Including:

    o Research project is about exploring any differences between adult and student understanding of the definition of bullying.

    o Time - roughly 30 minutes or a maximum of 45 minutes.

    o Participation is optional and they can stop the interview or decline to answer specific individual questions at any time should they wish.

    o Confidentiality

    o Consent

    o No identifiers

    o Ask if they have any questions.

    o Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

    o During the interview we will look at some examples and perhaps watch a short film.

    o Advise on note taking and recording

  Context – (To establish confidence and triangulate with orientation observations)

- Tell me a bit about the school

    o Have you been here since year 7?

    o Do you belong to any clubs or groups?

Possible prompt questions

1. Are you able to describe what happened?
2. Would you describe what happened as bullying?
3. What would have to be different for it to be bullying?
4. What do you think happened?
5. Why do you think that happened?
6. How would you respond?
7. Why would you respond in that way?
8. What would happen if you didn't respond?
9. What is wrong with …..?
10. Why would that be a problem?
11. "Some people think it is important to do Y. What do you think about that?"

12. Or "Last week I interviewed a teacher/student who said they thought Y was more important than X. What do you think about that?"
13. What would need to change for you to act differently?
14. Say what you mean by [term or phrase]
15. When you say, [term or phrase], what are you actually doing?
16. It sounds like you are saying, ". . . .". Is that a fair summary?
17. So you are saying . . . .? (Check understanding)
18. Tell me more about that.
19. Can you give me an example?
20. What would that look like?
21. How do you do that?
22. Can you tell me more about that?
23. What were other people doing then?
24. How did others [e.g., students] respond to that?
25. If I were watching you do this, what would I see?
26. Why was that important to you?
27. Why does that stand out in your memory?
28. Why do you think you noticed that?
29. Why does that matter?
30. What motivated your response?
31. How did you feel about that?
32. What was significant about this to you?
33. Do you always response [or do this] this way?
34. What might make you respond [or do this] differently?
35. Have you always felt this way?
36. How has your approach changed over time?
37. What motivated this change?
38. Last week I observed a teacher who did B. What do you think of that approach?
39. Last week I interviewed a student who said he thought ? was more appropriate because . . What do you think about that idea?
40. I recently read about a school that had a policy that required B. How would you feel about a policy like that?
41. Suppose a new teacher came to your school and she advocated doing B. How would you respond to that idea?

End statements/Questions

4. We are coming towards the end now
5. Is there anything else that you would like to mention?
6. Do you know where to go for support if any issues have been raised today? – signposting – possible sheet with information
7. Thanks, been really helpful, good to talk to you.

Appendix 3

Parental consent letter

Shân Jones,
School of Social Sciences,
Cardiff University,
Glamorgan Building,
King Edward VII,
Cardiff, CF10 3WT
Date

Dear

I am a post graduate student in the School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University. As part of my professional doctorate I am carrying out a research study looking at how students and staff in school settings understand and define bullying.

The research explores whether there are differences in understanding between students and teachers and other adults in schools, and whether gender and age influence understanding. This will include exploring what part the school bullying policy has in influencing the understanding of the definition of bullying. I hope that the information gained from this research will help and support schools to develop and aid good practice in responding to bullying behaviours.

I am writing to ask if you would be willing to give permission for me to ask your son/daughter if he/she would like to take part in my research. This will involve interviewing your son/daughter in order to find out how he/she defines bullying behaviour. The interview will include one or two short fictional bullying scenarios for students to comment on so that they do not need to disclose their own experience.

The interview would take place at (insert school name) during normal school hours and will take between 15 - 20 minutes of your son/daughter's time, either during breaks or immediately after school. Your son/daughter's participation in this research will be treated confidentially and all information will be kept anonymously, meaning that no one will be able to work out what it is your son/daughter has said.

This project will be supervised by Dr R. Jones of Cardiff University. If you have any comments or questions about this research please could you contact my supervisor, Dr R. Jones, using the contact details provided below.

This research has been approved by the Cardiff University Ethics Committee. If you wish you can contact the Cardiff ethics committee by telephone (029 208 70360 or by email (psychethics@cardiff.ac.uk) if you have any complaints about this research.

Many thanks in advance for your consideration of this research project. Please let me know if you need more information. I would appreciate it if you could complete the attached permission slip and return it to (teachers name).

Regards,

Shân Jones

(Shân Jones, researcher) Professional doctorate student

Parental consent form

Thank you for consenting to your son or daughter participating in the research study.

	I understand that my son/daughter's participation in this project will involve:	Please tick or initial each statement to agree consent
1.	Taking part in an interview with (Shân Jones, researcher), in which he/she will be asked questions about his/her views on defining bullying.	
2.	During the interview, notes will be taken and the interviews recorded for later transcription. The interview will be fully anonymised when it is transcribed. The audio files will be destroyed.	
3.	I understand that my son/daughter's participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that he/she can withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason.	
4.	I understand that his/her participation will be treated confidentially and all information will be stored anonymously and securely. All information appearing in the final report will be anonymous.	
5.	My son/daughter will have the option of withdrawing their data from the study, up until his/her transcript has been anonymised.	
6.	I understand that observational data will be used in the research.	
7.	I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time. I am free to discuss any questions or comments I would like to make with Dr R. Jones (supervisor).	
8.	I understand that I am free to contact the Cardiff University Ethics Committee to discuss any complaints I might have.	
9.	I also understand that at the end of the study I will be provided with additional information and feedback about the study.	

I, _____ (PRINT NAME) consent to (Shân Jones, researcher) proceeding with this study with the supervision of (Dr R. Jones, supervisor).

Signature of Parent or Guardian:
....……..

Date: ………………………………

Name of Child:
....

Parent information sheet

Who are you? – My name is Shân Jones, and I am a student in Cardiff University. The project is called a research study and is about how we understand what is meant by bullying. I am interested in how schools in Wales understand and define bullying.

Why do this study? – I am interested in how students, teachers and other adults in schools define bullying, and whether age or gender affects how bullying is described.

I am also interested in finding out how the school antibullying policy informs you about the definition of bullying.

I need to collect data from students, teachers and other adults in school to see if there is a particular way that schools can work to help young people and teachers to deal with bullying.

What will my child's participation involve? - This research involves having an interview about how your son or daughter understood and define bullying. All the information they give me will be stored anonymously, which means no body will know what has been said by each person.

I will also be talking to some teachers and other members of school staff about how they understand and define bullying.

How long will the interview take? – The meeting should take between 15 - 20 minutes, and will be take place during breaks in the school day or immediately before or after school. I might ask your child to take part in a further meeting.

How will you remember what you have been told? – During the meeting audio recording will be used, and notes kept of what was said. No names will be recorded, so no one will know who has said what. The audio tapes will be destroyed when they have been written up.

Why have you come to our school? – The Headteacher and staff were invited to take part in the research study.

Are we the only school taking part? - There is another school in a different part of Wales taking part in the research.

How long will you be in school for? – This depends on how quickly I can collect all the information I need for my research project, but will probably be between 3 – 6 weeks.

What happens when you have collected all the information you need? – The information will be analysed and explained in a report called a thesis.

I will provide you with information about when and where the information I have used will be published, but this usually takes quite some time, perhaps one or two years.

What happens if you agree, but your child decides they no longer want to take part? – Once you have agreed to your child taking part, they can decide whether or not they want to continue. They will not need to give a reason for changing their mind, but it would be great if they could let me know that they are not going to continue.

What happens if an adult or child tells you something that might put them or another child in danger or at risk? - I will be unable to keep this information confidential. If this happens I will have to share that information with the head or the senior designated teacher because of my concern for keeping a child or children safe.

What if I have more questions? –There will be opportunities for you to ask me any further questions to find out any other information you might need to know.

Staff consent letter

Shân Jones,

School of Social Sciences,

Cardiff University,

Glamorgan Building,

King Edward VII,

Cardiff, CF10 3WT

Date

Dear

I am a post graduate student in the School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University. As part of my professional doctorate I am carrying out a research study looking at how students and staff in school settings understand the definition of bullying. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to take part in my research. This will involve interviewing you to find out how you understand and define bullying. The interview will include one or two short fictional bullying scenarios for adults to comment on so that they do not need to disclose their own experience.

The research explores whether there are differences in understanding between students and teachers and other adults in schools, and whether gender and age influence understanding. The study will include exploring what part the school bullying policy has in influencing the understanding of the definition of bullying. I hope that the information gained from this research will help and support schools to develop and aid good practice in responding to bullying behaviours.

The interview would take place in school, during normal school hours and will take between 20 – 30 minutes, arranged at a mutually convenient time for yourself and school. Your participation in this research will be treated confidentially and all information will be kept anonymously, meaning that no one will be able to work out what it is you have said.

This project will be supervised by Dr R. Jones of Cardiff University. If you have any comments or questions about this research, please contact my supervisor, Dr R. Jones, using the contact details provided.

This research has been approved by the Cardiff University Ethics Committee. If you wish you can contact the Cardiff ethics committee by telephone 029 208 79051 or by

email (*WatkinsD2 @cardiff.ac.uk*) if you have any complaints about this research.

Many thanks in advance for your consideration of this research project. Please let me know if you need more information. I would appreciate it if you could complete the attached permission slip and return it by post in the enclosed stamp addressed envelope.

Regards,

Shân Jones

(Shân Jones, researcher) Professional doctorate student

Staff consent form

Thank you for participating in the research study.

	I understand that my participation in this project will involve:	Please tick or initial each statement to agree consent
1.	Taking part in an interview with (Shân Jones, researcher), in which I will be asked questions about my views on defining bullying.	
2.	During the interview, notes will be taken and the interviews recorded for later transcription. The interview will be fully anonymised when it is transcribed. The audio files will be destroyed.	
3.	I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason.	
4.	I understand that my participation will be treated confidentially and all information will be stored anonymously and securely. All information appearing in the final report will be anonymous.	
5.	I will have the option of withdrawing his data from the study, up until my transcript has been anonymised.	
6.	I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time. I am free to discuss any questions or comments I would like to make with Dr R. Jones (supervisor).	
7.	I understand that I am free to contact the Cardiff University Ethics Committee to discuss any complaints I might have.	
8.	I also understand that at the end of the study I will be provided with additional information and feedback about the study.	
9.	I understand that observational data will be used in the research.	

I, _____ (PRINT NAME) consent to (Shân Jones, researcher) proceeding with this study with the supervision of (Dr R. Jones, supervisor).

Signature of member of staff:
…………………………………………………………………………………..

Date: …………………………………

Staff information sheet

Who are you? – My name is Shân Jones, and I am a student in Cardiff University. I am a former teacher and currently work as an independent education consultant.

Why do this study? – I am interested in how students, teachers and other adults in schools define bullying, and whether age and gender are factors.

I am also interested in finding out how the school antibullying policy informs understanding and practice.

The study will collect data from students, teachers and other adults in school to see if there is a particular way that schools can work to help young people and teachers to deal with bullying.

What will my participation involve? - This research involves a one to one interview. All the information gathered will be stored anonymously, so no one will know what you said.

How long will the interview take? – The interview should take between 15 - 20 minutes. This will be arranged at a mutually convenient time. I might ask you to take part in a further meeting.

Why is this school involved? –I am interested in how schools in Wales describe and understand bullying, and have approached a number of schools in different parts of Wales to participate in the research.

How long will you be in school for? – This depends on how quickly I can collect all the information I need for my research project, but will probably be between 3 – 6 weeks.

What happens when you have collected all the information you need? – I will provide you with information about when and where the information I have used will be published.

What happens if I agree, but then change my mind? – You can decide whether or not you want to continue to take part. You will not need to give a reason for changing your mind, but it would be great if you could let me know that you are not going to continue.

What happens if you tell me something that highlights a cause for concern about a student or individual in your setting? - I will be unable to keep this information confidential. If this happens I will have to share that information with the head or designated senior person.

What if I have more questions? –There will be opportunities for you to ask me any further questions to find out any other information you might need to know.

If you are interested in more detail about the research project I can provide you with an academic rational.

Pupil consent form

Thank you for taking part in my study.

Read through the checklist below and make sure that you understand what you are being asked to do before you sign.

If you are unsure, ask me or (teachers name) for help.

When you have read each statement, if you are happy to agree and join the study, tick the box.

You are called a 'participant', which means you will be agreeing to take part in the project.

The form asks you to sign to say that you understand what this means.

	As an informed participant of this research study, I understand that:	Tick each statement below
1	I understand that my participation is voluntary.	
2	I may stop taking part in this research study at any time, without giving a reason.	
3	I understand notes will be taken and the interviews recorded.	
4	I understand that my name and any details identifying me will be removed or changed	
6	All my questions about the study have been satisfactorily answered.	
7	I am aware of what my participation involves.	
8	I understand that Shân Jones (researcher) will have to share information that causes concern for my welfare.	
9.	I understand that observational data will be used in the research.	
	I have read and understood the above, and agree to take part:	
	Participant's Signature:	Date:
	Print Name:	

I have explained the above and answered all questions asked by the participant:

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4

Confirmation of ethical approval

Cardiff School of Social Sciences
Head of School Professor Amanda Coffey FAcSS
Ysgol Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol Caerdydd
Pennaeth yr Ysgol Yr Athro Amanda Coffey FAcSS

4th June 2015

Our ref: SREC/1532

Shân Jones
Professional Doctorates Programme
SOCSI

Dear Shân

Your project entitled *'Is it bullying really? Students and education professionals perceptions of bullying in two Welsh schools'* has now been approved by the School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of Cardiff University and you can now commence the project.

If you make any substantial changes with ethical implications to the project as it progresses you need to inform the SREC about the nature of these changes. Such changes could be: 1) changes in the type of participants recruited (e.g. inclusion of a group of potentially vulnerable participants), 2) changes to questionnaires, interview guides etc. (e.g. including new questions on sensitive issues), 3) changes to the way data are handled (e.g. sharing of non-anonymised data with other researchers).

In addition, if anything occurs in your project from which you think the SREC might usefully learn, then please do share this information with us.

All ongoing projects will be monitored every 12 months and it is a condition of continued approval that you complete the monitoring form. Please inform the SREC when the project has ended. Please use the SREC's project reference number above in any future correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Professor Adam Hedgecoe
Chair of School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

cc: C Perkins / Supervisors: R Jones & T de Villiers