Primary school teaching: A classed and gendered profession.

Poetically exploring the narratives of female trainee primary school teachers.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the narratives of middle-class and working-class undergraduate women in their first year as student teachers on the three-year Primary Initial Teacher Education degree at a post-92 university. It simultaneously explores my own classed and gendered experiences as a primary school teacher, leader then HE lecturer through an autoethnographic lens. The thesis is theoretically framed by Bourdieu's concepts of cultural, economic and social capital and the later concept of emotional capital as theorised by Nowotny (1981) and Reay (2004) as a tool with which to interpret social class.

It examines the extent to which gender and social class impact 'choices' to become primary school teachers and the extent to which that choice is embedded in social and cultural practices and expectations. It draws on the work of Maguire (for example 2007; 1995), Reay (for example, 2017; 1997) and Skeggs (1997) amongst others to examine the historical context of this choice.

The thesis is presented using the methodological tool of narrative inquiry, specifically poetic re-presentation, influenced by the work of Richardson (2003) to present my data. The thesis engages with theories of Other, choice, symbolic violence and possible selves and discusses how these theories contribute to my participants' conceptualisation of class.

My findings demonstrate how economic capital is the overarching factor in my participants' conceptualisation of class, and that symbolic violence and its impact on the perception of choice is a central factor in their decision to train to teach primary school children.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 - My own story, context, and motivation

> *Changing class is like emigrating from one side of the world to the other, where you have to rescind your old passport, learn a new language and make gargantuan efforts if you are not to lose touch completely with the people and habits of your old life, even if they are among the relationships and things that are dearest to your heart* (Hanley, 2016, p.x).

This narrative, my narrative, came out of a lifetime of introspection and examining the choices that I have made that have brought me 'here': to my life as an academic, and its associated social, cultural, and economic advantages. I always knew that there was something else; that my upbringing was not my limit and the achingly close relationships amongst the women of my family were not my only future. Even now, in my fifties with only my mother, herself an octogenarian, 'left', I still feel the hot guilt of leaving combined with the intellectual relief of leaving what my father once described to me as *the cage – you got out, Chicken.* Those words are writ large on my heart and I hold them close knowing that I was right to go. Yet for years I cried as I drove down the road with them waving from the step, the pull of the close family so strong – wouldn't it just be easier to stay, to do what others in my family have done, to *settle*? But I always knew the answer.

My family wanted me to be *happy* – the familial homework support was focused on my school resistant brother; I was left to do my homework on my own, which I did with varying degrees of application. Being happy and doing 'what you can' (Maguire, 2001, p.319) was valued above seeking to excel. My mother wanted me to be a shorthand typist – just like her - and ensured that I 'chose' typing (CSE) not art (O Level) as I had wanted when the time came to pick subject options at secondary school; typing has turned out to be a useful skill, but not in the way that was intended for me. I finished my A Levels, applied late without direction, motivation, or success to study various in-vogue social sciences degrees at various polytechnics and worked as a music journalist and in a theatre box office. After dipping my toes into the Open University (OU), I eventually applied with conviction, and this time success, to university in my mid-twenties and was simultaneously 'headhunted' for a job setting up a ticket sales office in a new performance venue. *If you get offered this job, will you forget all this university silliness?* my mum asked. This niggled me for years and is another memory etched on my consciousness.

Despite my previous confidence and assumed understanding of the world, my cultural awakening happened when I moved away from Birmingham to study English Literature at Cardiff University. I was 25 and hardly the awe-struck first-generation university attender. Yet I *was* first generation, and I was awe-struck, but in a different way. After a year of OU and

encouragement from a tutor who believed in me, I now found myself in a new city with new friends, immersed in books, and conversations about books and meeting people who were different to me. I had left full-time work to become a student and I really *was* awe-struck. As other students fretted over deadlines, I felt incredibly lucky and found it difficult to believe that I was *here*, doing *this*. The 'imposter syndrome' (Wilkinson, 2020; Clance and Imes, 1978) experienced then still taps me on the shoulder from time to time. I thought I was rather 'cool' in Birmingham, with my arts and music work and associations. This, however, opened a whole new world of people and discourses and experiences. Yes, I had been in a couple of successful music producers' *eye-openingly* 'middle-class' kitchens in the affluent suburbs of Birmingham during my time as a journalist, but this was a new world of the established middle-classes and their associated cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1993) - not that I could name it as cultural capital then - that was at once intimidating and attractive. My understanding of the world and my positionality was constantly challenged and chipped away at and the first time I went to the house of a new middle-class friend I was genuinely dumbstruck by hearing her brothers refer to their mum as Sian. Yet through the confusion I could see a future with newly opening doors. Again, although I did not know it at the time, three years of studying English literature instilled in me an appreciation of a good narrative, a good poem and awareness of my own reflexivity as I both read and wrote.

Training to be a primary school teacher followed, an unenjoyable, intensive PGCE, which is imprinted in my head as a year of darkness and nineteenth century primary schools in the valleys of South Wales. I visit such schools now in my professional role as teacher educator and the disquiet comes back every time but alongside a quiet pride in what I have achieved and, of course, mitigated by that imposter syndrome. I did not enjoy training to be a teacher but the *being* a teacher was better. Since becoming a teacher everything changed It meant something. I seemed to have slipped into it following working on holiday play schemes whilst an undergraduate. It was never a vocation, and I cannot claim to have ever lined up my dolls and bears as a child to play classrooms, but it appeared to be a good idea. And it was a good idea that impacted my family; it was something real, it was something easy to understand and talk about, and it was something that had made them proud. Having become a teacher, a small but significant corner of that mass of guilt had subtly dropped away. My family talked with pride about me being a teacher; they could describe what I did, and it was now justifiable that I had *left 'ome*. And at the same time, I felt myself changing further: this is the point where I had entered the professional world of work; where new sets of conversations challenged my beliefs and understanding of the world, and continuing education was not only an option but an expectation and where I was doing something imbued with purpose, history, and future. ~~I~~ had become 'respectable' (Hanley, 2016).

During a holiday spent largely reading on a wet Welsh campsite while studying for my master's degree in the late 2000s, I had a moment of epiphany, one that 'leaves marks on people's lives [and] alters and shapes the meanings persons give to themselves and their life projects' (Barone 1995, p.71). This moment articulated for me the years of family guilt: I discovered Richard Hoggart. The Uses of Literacy (1957) had at once assisted me in managing my residual guilt and making sense of the ambivalent acceptance of my professional and academic successes. Hoggart's description of his childhood and associated discomfort at his intellectual success being both his escape route and his albatross resonated, and I started to find my own voice and see what had gone before as my own story. I was comforted by the 'kinship' I felt reading Hoggart and recognised and celebrated it as mine: *my* story, *my* narrative. Many years later Steedman's Landscape for a Good Woman (1986) further embedded this kinship and provided a missing part in the puzzle for me. Steedman's foregrounding of the voices of women in her descriptions of entrenched classed experiences opened my eyes to the discomforts of my own identity as not just situated in class but also situated in gender.

I opened and I close this introduction with the reference to 'my narrative'. My family might well be surprised or baffled by my perception of what they have felt about the choices I have made; their narrative/s might be different; I can only write about me. These are the stories that I have retained and have coalesced to form my narrative identity (McAdams *et al.,* 2006). They are the stories that have resonated and re-played throughout my adult life. Perhaps if I had chosen others my story would have been different as would my perceived identity and what I deem important. The story has shifted as I nurtured the language and the education within which to frame it, but this is the overarching set of experiences that have framed my ontological and epistemological positions. These personal experiences build the foundation from which to investigate and re-produce the stories of young women at the start of their professional journey. My own class and gender impacted my choices in terms of primary school teaching both consciously and unconsciously, and in my reading the theme of working-class women 'choosing' this profession has been presented by many, for example: Maguire (1997); Acker and Dillabough, (2007) and Reay, (2017; 2013). Through the poetic stanzas I construct with my participants' narratives, and my autoethnographic poetry where often my own narrative is reflected in those of my participants (chapter 5), I demonstrate the evidence that underpins my thesis, that primary school teaching is a classed and gendered profession.

In this thesis I am searching for my own story and laying it alongside those of my participants. I have found my way to poetry to support this; it is a way of embracing my own history alongside the emergent experiences of my participants. This is how– although I had not originally intended to – I arrived at autoethnography and poetry. My classed and gendered experience and my early grounding in reading poetry interweaved. The thesis is so embedded

in and driven by my own story that without my own story it could not exist (McAdams *et al.,* 2006). Yet it was not obvious to me that my story should be so boldly integrated, until it was pointed out to me by my supervisory team. This was a significant moment for me and one that I could not quite believe I had not come to myself. Once I started thinking about presenting my story alongside those of my participants it seemed that a hitherto absent piece had been slotted into a jigsaw. Douglas and Carless (2013, p.93) suggest that in traditional academic accounts there is possibly something missing; something at the edges of the writing. They subsequently describe the lure of autoethnographic writing:

> All I needed to do was to include my story alongside all the other stories being deposited in my vault. You would never have guessed this little provocation could start an avalanche. It was just a little whisper, a call, a crack. But…

This describes my own realisation that autoethnography was the missing thing in my 'vault' and opened new possibilities for my work which are developed in chapter 4.

1.1 - My research questions and aims

1.1.i - Overarching research claim and thesis title:

Primary school teaching: A classed and gendered profession: Poetically exploring the narratives of female trainee primary school teachers

1.1.ii - The Study

This thesis is a qualitative study that interrogates nine female undergraduate primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students in their first year of study at a post 1992 university. It investigates perceptions of class and identity, firstly at the start of the academic year within three weeks of joining the course, and again at the end of the first year of study when the students have completed both their academic input and their school placements. To address my research questions, I engaged with female participants who identify as middle-class or working-class and all these participants are of 'white British' ethnicity. I examine the literature on how primary school teaching is positioned as a working-class and lower middle-class profession and one that historically has primarily attracted women. The thesis is framed by Bourdieu's (1993) theory of capitals, and the research questions (see 1.1.iii below) were designed to address the Bourdieusian capitals cultural capital, economic capital and social capital. I also embrace the concept of emotional capital (Reay, 2004; Nowotny, 1981) which builds on Bourdieusian theory and is of relevance and impact in terms of the work of primary school teachers. I later added a further analytic lens – conceptualisation of class – and this is discussed in chapter 4.

I specifically chose to engage with undergraduate students rather than postgraduates as I wanted to target younger women who were relatively recent (within two years) school leavers.

My intention was to gather participants whose classed and professional self-perceptions were in the process of forming rather than the typically older cohort represented on the postgraduate (PGCE) route. I teach across both programmes, and I lead the Primary and Early Years postgraduate course (PGCE) so felt well-informed in terms of making these choices.

1.1.iii – Research Questions

Research question 1: What attracts the participants in the study to primary school teaching and is there a class influence attached to this choice?

Research question 2: What are the participants' perceptions of themselves in terms of social class and gendered choices?

Research question 3: What is the influence of parental attitude, expectation, and aspiration on the participants in the study and were there aspects of the participants' upbringing that impacted choices?

My supporting questions:

Research question 1:

1.i Why choose primary school teacher training?

1.ii Why choose this university rather than a Russell Group university / university located in a different city?

Research question 2:

2.i Do the participants conceptualise themselves in terms of social class?

2.ii What do the participants perceive to be the signifiers of the social class with which they identify?

2.iii What are the participants' attitudes and feelings about 'fitting in' at university?

2.iv Do they perceive differences between themselves and other students?

2.v What are the participants' perceptions of the potentially gendered nature of primary school teaching?

Research question 3:

3.i How does 'upbringing' in terms of capitals (Savage *et al*., 2015; Bourdieu, 1990) compare in terms of working-class and middle-class participants?

3.ii What is the participants' understanding/ awareness of capitals and the resultant 'rules of the game'?

My thesis title and research questions shifted slightly over the years of my study as my thinking crystallised and my work developed. For example, as my methodology became clearer, and I began to embrace the possibility of poetry as a powerful method of transcription, re-presentation and analysis of data, I shifted my overarching title to reflect this and embraced

poetry. I also began to appreciate how my original idea of substantively discussing professional identity was unwieldy and I would not have been able to do this justice in terms of the thesis' word limit. Furthermore, it become apparent to me that my participants did not have a secure grasp of the concept of class. As a result, I changed this focus to the idea of 'fitting in' at university and their own perceptions of themselves. I have acknowledged this in chapter 4 where I discuss professional identity. This shift produced richer data both in terms of my analysis and how it is reflected by the literature on social, cultural, and economic capital.

1.2 - Structure of the thesis

This chapter concludes with a brief overview of the chapters comprising my work, signposting, and justifying my approaches for the reader.

Below is a brief overview indicating this direction of the thesis after this introductory chapter:

Chapter 2: The substantive literature review where I define my understanding of the concept of class through my theoretical framework of Bourdieu's theory of capitals (for example, Bourdieu, 1993). I discuss the broader issue of class in terms of the historical impact of educational policy and, where appropriate, specifically in terms of the impact on young women. Finally, I examine the current landscape in the context of the classed and gendered educational opportunities for young people, looking at the concept of the Knowledge Economy (Gov.UK, 2016); the game, (Bathmaker *et al*., 2016; 2013); and the concept of possible selves (Harrison and Waller, 2018; Markus and Nurius, 1986).

Chapter 3: I continue to review the literature but narrow my focus to look at the body of work on young, working-class women's experience of teaching (for example Reay, 2013; Plummer, 2000; Maguire, 1997). While this is a shorter chapter than the substantive literature review, its centrality in terms of my overarching research claim and the title of this thesis justifies its separation.

Chapter 4: My methodological framework. I define the ontological and epistemological positions that underpin this work (Grix, 2010). I introduce narrative as my overarching methodological tool (for example Kim, 2016; Riessman, 2008; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). I discuss how I am re-presenting my participants' narratives as poetry (for example Faulkner, 2009; Richardson, 2003) and follow this by how I am juxtaposing my participants' stories – poems – with my own in a discussion of autoethnography (for example, Douglas and Carless, 2013; Ellis, 2004). I justify my partial use of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2020; 2006) before providing an account of my research

methods. I conclude this chapter by looking at the ethical issues I considered in my research (for example, BERA, 2018).

Chapter 5: My re-presentation of my data as poetry and in the context of my identified themes. The participants' poems are presented alongside my autoethnographic poetry which positions myself in the study. A prose commentary links and rationalises each section.

Chapter 6: I discuss and analyse my narratives against each of the themes, my research questions, and the theories that my findings have identified are central to my work. The chapter reflects key texts from my literature reviews as well as embracing additional perspectives which further illuminate my findings (for example: Ball, 2017; Reay *et al.,* 2005; Young, 2005; Ball *et al.,* 2002).

Chapter 7: I conclusively respond to my research questions. I then discuss the implications and potential continuation of this research, my contribution to the field and my recommendations for future inquiry. I conclude with a final reflection on the study.

Chapter 2: Review of the literature 1 - Setting the scene

2.0 - Introduction

In this chapter I review the relevant literature surrounding social class and gender, and policy decisions since the 1944 Education Act (Legislation.Gov.uk) which have impacted opportunities and choices for working-class women. This introduction provides an overview of how this chapter is constructed.

Initially, I define how I analyse class before going on to reject other interpretations. I examine historical notions of class and the Marxist model of class theory, justifying how my ontological position, and my presentation of class are situated in Bourdieusian theories of cultural, social and economic capital and how these theories embed and reinforce experience and theoretically frame the thesis. In 2.1.ii, Nowotny (1981) and Reay's (2004) discussion of emotional capital build on Bourdieu's theory of social capital, I go on to discuss this as particularly pertinent to the consideration of the experiences of female trainee primary school teachers.

The second section of the chapter (2.2) examines the impact of policy on social justice and discusses the 'four phases' of education as defined by Taylor *et al*. (2005) and developed from Brown's (1990) 'three waves'. Section 2.3 subsequently explores the signifiers of the current educational landscape in terms of the **'**Knowledge Economy' looking at how the concept of social mobility has replaced that of social justice and the impact of this in terms of choice and opportunities, particularly for young people from non-traditional backgrounds. The government's rhetoric of accessible and equal education for all despite their upbringing was significant in its disregard of classed and gendered histories and potentially disingenuously talked of 'inequalities' as something that can be addressed by an individual's own hard work.

2.1 – Defining the concept of class

2.1.i - Historical notions of class - Marx and beyond

Traditional theories have foregrounded class as an economic struggle. This was described at length and longitudinally by Thompson in his seminal work *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963, p.8) where class is defined as being embodied in human relationships and:

> … happens when some men (sic) as a result of common experiences …feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs. The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born – or enter involuntarily.

In the context of my ontological position and the socio-cultural lens of my work, this presentation of class based on the Marxist model of production is not relevant for early 21st century culture and society. Its focus on means of production and the place of 'men' does not

resonate with me; women's voices are largely absent from Thompson's work, as is a discussion of cultural factors that significantly impact contemporary discussions of class. Instead, the Marxist emphasis on exploitation of the workers who produce material goods to benefit the owners of the means of production within the structure of a capitalist society (Atkinson, 2015) is foregrounded. While it should be acknowledged that later interpretations of Marxism, such as Wright's (1978) discussion of contradictory class locations, make moves towards acknowledging a model which identifies occupations that 'fall between the bourgeoisie and the … proletariat' (Atkinson, 2015, p.26), Wright's model is rarely used and Marxism in its original form remains the dominant one (Atkinson, 2015).

While Thompson (1963) discusses how Marx is often misinterpreted, the fundamental argument for my decision not to embrace the Marxist model to position my work remains: it is people, specifically women, culture, and education that I am interested in. Furthermore, in the early 21st century landscape, contrary to Marx's theory that the 'proletariat' would unite and revolt, it is this least well-off class in modern society who are often the group who claim the least class identity (Savage *et al.,* 2015), and have become most integrated and ostensibly content existing within the structure of the capitalist model (Atkinson, 2015). 'Where there were or are pockets of resistance, from the uprisings in 1968 through to the Occupy movements of the early twenty-first century, these have usually been led by students, intellectuals and bohemians' (Atkinson, 2015, p.25). This point is reinforced by Maguire (2005, p.11) whose participant discusses how political activism at her teacher training college in the late 1960s was driven by the middle-classes '…you know, saving the working-classes from themselves sort of thing'. This demonstrates significant symbolic violence (Thapar-Björkert *et al.,* 2016) embedded in society, a concept that will be discussed as I review the literature. As I write in 2021, the same can be identified in the resistance movements surrounding climate change and sustainability in terms of the vocal demographic: it is not the less-affluent and less-educated sectors of society who are demonstrating and ensuring that their protesting voices are heard. As groups in society continue to both grow and fragment, it is increasingly less helpful to consider issues around class from the Marxist perspective; we need a different voice.

Crossley (2012, p.87) foregrounds the contemporary relevance of examining class through a Bourdieusian rather than Marxist lens. He discusses how, by the mid twentieth century when Bourdieu was writing, the Marxist argument surrounding industrial means of production no longer had the same resonance. Society had shifted and as the public sector grew so did the number of highly paid occupations that were 'elevated above manual labour by their dependence upon scarce forms of technical or cultural knowledge'. Crossley points out that as more people became more educated and qualified a tension emerged with the traditional ways of marking class by reference to economic capital and meant that social stratification became nuanced and complicated.

Weber, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, acknowledged such nuances of this social stratification. He did not 'tie social class to any theory of the inevitable progression of history' (Atkinson, 2015, p.41) and believed that class consciousness and subsequent uprising is not an inevitability but a possibility. Weber suggested a sociological model of class in his theory that there are not two classes but many and, unlike Marx, believed that society is stratified in multiple ways not just according to social class. However, Weber argued that 'societies can be classified according to their 'prevailing mode of stratification and that … modern capitalism was a '"class society" through and through' (Atkinson, 2015, p.42). While I do not see my work as Weberian in terms of defining social class, aspects of Weberian theory, being less deterministic than Marxism, are closer to my own position.

Building on Weber, Goldthorpe, writing in the1980s, moved closer towards a definition that resonates for me, and a modified version of which remains the UK government's method of class categorisation. He expanded Marxist definition by suggesting that there were in fact seven classes and two distinct types of employment. This was significant because of its focus on a difference between unskilled or manual work and 'work where there is a service relationship' – where the employee is remunerated not just with a salary and immediate benefits, but with '*prospective* rewards, including promised pay increases and promotion options' (Atkinson, 2015, p.51). Developing the socio-cultural model, Goldthorpe's more recent work has considered the idea of status with his classification and considered occupations and lifestyle choices alongside each other (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2010). Hence, lawyers are more likely to marry lawyers than, for example, plumbers and their choice of recreational activity is more likely to reflect affluent 'taste' such as gallery exhibitions (Atkinson, 2015). This shifts the definition of class further towards the Bourdieusian model framing my work, yet is not sufficiently satisfactory in that it again, does not fully explore the significance of culture and society offered by Bourdieu.

A further presentation of class in the context of society is offered by Giddens (1991) and Beck (1992). Both suggest the concept of a 'risk society' where class consciousness is redundant and replaced by an increased awareness of 'living in an environment of risk, uncertainty and insecurity [which] has become a major catalyst for social transformation' (Ekberg, 2007, p. 344). Ekberg goes on the argue that in such a risk society an individual's place in that society is threatened. This challenges ontological security - the certainty of knowledge of order and predictability in one's life (Giddens, 1991). In the context of a risk society, the security assured by certainty is challenged because society shifts away from traditional constructs of class-expectation and guaranteed futures. While there are differences in Beck's and Giddens' positions concerning risk, both theorists argue that knowledge and influence of those occupying superior social positions enables them to go some way to mitigate risk. I acknowledge the validity and potential societal impact of these risk-based arguments such as

the modern 'risk' presented by the prospect of environmental implosion. However, they are not central to the focus on cultural factors that underpin my work and hence I justify not taking my argument in this direction.

While disparate class-related issues have not disappeared or been superseded by other 'issues' as some theorists argue (Archer *et al.,* 2003; Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991), these issues have, rather, 'changed their form – they may look very different from the past but class structures, cultures, struggles and modes of domination persist as doggedly as ever' Atkinson (2015, p.15). It is through examining, and subsequently rejecting, the concepts of class discussed above that I arrived at Bourdieu and subsequently frame my work with the concept of capitals.

2.1.ii - My theoretical framework: Bourdieu's theories of capital

Class can no longer be seen in solely economic terms because the 'inequalities of a class society do not end with economic inequality: indeed, economics may not necessarily be the most meaningful way to talk about class' (Lawler, 1999, p.4). Traditional presentations of the term 'class' are increasingly dismissed as redundant and deficit (Savage *et al*., 2015; Jones, 2011; Skeggs, 1997) as is what it is to belong to a given class. It is through rejecting traditional assumptions that I construct my theoretical framework using the Bourdieusian theory of capitals. Bourdieu (1993, p.31) discusses how he has tried to 'move beyond what has been treated as a *theological* opposition between theories of social class and theories of social stratification'. He questions theorists' specific meanings in discussions of social class, and in doing so argues that those who are advantaged by traditional class theories are those who conceptualise it with a degree of 'self-satisfaction'. It is for this reason that Bourdieu turns to the concept of capitals. Savage *et al*. (2015, p.45) illuminate this position. They discuss how 'class is fundamentally tied up with inequality. But not all social inequalities are tied up with class'. Savage *et al.* (2015) present the example of an individual winning a significant amount of money on the National Lottery and is suddenly 'rich'. The traditional definition of class, based on economic assets and security would re-classify this newly wealthy person as belonging to a 'high' social class yet this is a crude definition in that this person is not necessarily imbued with other signifiers of high social class. Savage *et al.* (2015) describe how the same person might invest some of this money into property or a small business and gradually acquire what Bourdieu calls 'economic capital'; however, this does not mean that the person has now shifted class.

For Bourdieu, class '… is neither an essence nor an indeterminate set of fluctuating signifiers, but an arbitrarily imposed definition with real social effects' (Skeggs, 1997a, p.127), and Swartz (1999) discusses how capital cannot be divorced from Bourdieu's notion of class: 'For Bourdieu, it is the total volume of capital and the composition of capital, as well as the social

trajectory (upward, downward, or stable social mobility), which defines the three-dimensional space called "class"' (Power, 1999, p.50). In the following sub-sections I will define and contextualise Bourdieu's capitals that frame my work: cultural, social, and economic capital. I have discussed my own class background and throughout the thesis refer to the stories of other 'class mongrels', a term described by the journalist Melvyn Bragg (Cadwalladr, 2012). It is of relevance that Bourdieu himself was socially mobile and writing from an insider perspective which 'left him with an acute sense of what social space travel feels like and how it can be something of a double-edged sword' (Atkinson, 2015, p.116). Bourdieu created a terminology to embrace the complex nuances of social mobility beyond, for example, job opportunities (Atkinson, 2015) and this terminology provides the theoretical framework for my thesis and is how I conceptualise class. Additionally, central to Bourdieu's discussion of capitals is the concept of the family and I refer to family extensively in the context of my own work. Following Bourdieu, I employ Atkinson's (2015, p.224) definition of family as 'field'. Individuals comprising a 'family' will be

> …united by interest in a particular mode of recognition and a cluster of taken-for-granted assumptions about 'what one does' revolving around it…, yet dispersed by unequal possession of the powers (or capitals) necessary to garner that recognition… 'practical kinship'.

I see, therefore, the 'family' as the anchor to the past and the present, and 'practical kinship' in the context of a group of people who are usually related and bound together in terms of upbringing and habitus. Habitus will be discussed below.

Cultural Capital

Bourdieu (1984) sees class as being defined by capitals and cultural capital as the central distinguishing factor between the classes and holding significant symbolic power (Savage *et al*., 2015). Furthermore, cultural capital is embedded in educational achievement and is a principal signifier of middle-class, well-educated families in possession of significant intellectual, cultural, and academic prowess perpetuated by 'the combined effects of cultural transmission by the family and by the school' (Bourdieu, 1984, p.15). Cultural transmission is how aspects of one's cultural life embedded in family and upbringing are passed on in the context of family and society (Taylor and Thoth, 2011) and academic capital and cultural capital, therefore, are often positioned alongside each other in the literature (Atkinson, 2015; Savage *et al*., 2015). The possession of cultural capital has particular significance in terms of educational choices made by parents about their children's schooling, albeit not necessarily consciously (Archer *et al.,* 2003). It is how the middle-classes 'pass on to their children – knowingly or not – the capacity for them to succeed at school and university, and thereby get the sort of qualifications which help them to move into the best jobs' (Savage *et al*., 2015,

p.49). Savage *et al.* go on to state that this is not a literal act but rather a 'probabilistic one'; one's tastes and choices are embedded in intellectual and cultural status.

Cultural capital is a frequently misrepresented term and it 'refers to all which is usually described as "intelligence" and is, therefore, measurable through educational qualifications' Atkinson (2015, p. 62). It is from this position that Atkinson positions the concept of intelligence not as a reductive, IQ driven phenomenon but rather as the ability to rationalise and think abstractly, to understand art, political rhetoric and to have a sophisticated articulation of spoken and written language. All of these are the product of a particular quality of education which carries higher status, and the subsequent result of a family's cultural and hence academic capital. The fact that these attributes are constructed rather than 'natural' (Atkins and Duckworth, 2019) means that they must be foregrounded and acknowledged as advantage and in direct contrast to the different forms of cultural capital seen in the independence and survival skills brought to school by many less-advantaged children. Atkins and Duckworth (2019, p.148) describe the latter as 'street capital' and discuss how it is 'deemed redundant and not of equal parity at school'. Meanwhile, Archer *et al.* (2003, p.8) refers to 'class-culture paradigm' theory where 'social classes can be distinguished by their differing 'cultures' which play a part in reproducing particular class positions'. While different types of cultural capital are discussed across the literature, it is the middle-class, privileged discourse which is the dominant one and alternative forms of cultural capital are persistently seen as deficit. Furthermore, alternative forms of capital are not traditionally reflected and reproduced by educational institutions where success is necessary to ensure the production of further cultural capital and therefore further embed social divisions. Street capital and shifting forms of cultural capital were interrogated in the analysis of the Great British Class Survey (GBCS) (Savage *et al.,* 2015), which discusses how for sectors of educated society, particularly educated, affluent younger people 'no art form or cultural activity was out of bounds' (Savage *et al.,* 2015, p.116). Rather, the elitism was foregrounded in terms of being able to show how one picked one popular artist over another and specifically in the ability to be able to critically justify one's choice: 'Anything was possible to like, though in championing it, it was necessary to be able to explain why it was enjoyable through recognising the different taste registers at play'.

Wilkinson and Pickett (2010, p.163) draw on Bourdieu to discuss how individuals in society judge others, consistently making judgements of 'taste' in terms of accent, dress choices, entertainment choices and food chosen and - as foregrounded by Bourdieu (1984) '…their appreciation – or lack of it – of art'. Bourdieu's work frames and highlights social inequality and the agency of the elite to perpetuate these inequalities: a person belonging to the upper classes may make choices in terms of music and literature that might be deemed to be 'elite'. At some point mass society will catch up with these choices and it is at this point that shifts

will be made, 'upper class taste will shift to appreciate something new – elitism is maintained by shifting the boundaries' (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010, p.164). Furthermore, it is important to understand the 'centrality of the family to any understanding of cultural reproduction' (Reay, 2004, p.58). The potential impact of class on young women's choices in terms of primary school teaching is central to my work: 'Integral, therefore to cultural capital, is the potential for a complex analysis of the interactions between home background, the process of schooling and a child's educational career' (Reay, 2004, p.58).

Having established the concept of cultural capital, it is of relevance for this review of the literature and also to my later analysis of my data, to narrow the definition in terms of how Bourdieu saw cultural capital, not as a single entity but rather as comprising three specific, but not entirely disparate, forms or states. I use the lens of Reay *et al.* (2005) to conceptualise each state:

The **embodied state** is the investment in 'cultural distinctions' (Reay *et al.*, 2005, p.20) made by middle-class families from a young age. The **institutionalised state** is how capitals are 'presented and legitimised in institutionalised forms such as educational qualifications' (Reay *et al.,* 2005, p. 20), and the **objectified state** refers to symbols of taste: 'cultural goods such as books, artefacts, dictionaries and paintings' (Reay *et al.,* 2005, p. 20). These three forms, or states, combine to present a model of cultural capital that is insidiously powerful in its ability to limit equality and opportunity from the early years of an individual's lifetime.

Economic Capital

I previously referred to economic capital in terms of how one might accrue economic capital while remaining potentially devoid of other forms of capital (Savage *et al.,* 2015). In my initial planning of this thesis, I had not intended to look at economic capital as one of my central focuses but listening to my participants; reflecting on how this group of young women often saw class as being inextricably linked to financial assets, I revised my thinking. In Bourdieu's (1984) 1960s survey and in that conducted by Savage *et al.* (2015) in their GBCS, reserves of economic capital were not necessarily reflected by educational / cultural capital if economic capital is the accumulated wealth one possesses. Bourdieu (1984) employed the example of how schoolteachers, in possession of academic capital, yet relatively lowly paid (lacking in economic capital) would enjoy the more 'severe' artistic pursuits such as visiting galleries, yet those with more disposable income were able to attend expensive theatre productions. In a historical, means of production situated model, the distinction between those in possession of economic and cultural capital would be more sharply defined and, I argue, less nuanced in terms of cultural identification.

A criticism made by several theorists is that there has been a tendency to marginalise the significance of economic capital, focussing instead on the cultural processes (Sayer, 2005).

However, if cultural capital is identified as being the impetus behind middle-class parents' school choices for their children, access to economic capital will underpin these decisions with financial security affording parents the funds to pay for a private education or to buy property in affluent (and hence more costly) geographical areas. This grants access to what are often perceived to be the 'better' state schools (for example: Atkinson, 2015; Savage *et al.,* 2105; Crossley, 2012; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010) which, in turn, increases an individual's or family's reserves of cultural capital. Hence, having significant economic capital is advantageous because it confers both spending power and status (Crossley, 2012, p.86).

Social Capital

Social capital embraces social and familial contacts, network, clubs and the general notion of 'who you know'. It 'might open doors and get us special treatment' Atkinson (2015, p.63) and is the 'range and nature of people's social networks, that can affect people's life chances (Savage *et al*., 2015, p.52). Bathmaker *et al.* (2016, p.81) exemplify this, discussing how in their longitudinal study of university students, the parents of less advantaged students:

> did not have the connections to draw upon to offer advantages in the competitive world of student internships or accessing top professions… [their parents' social capital] did not match up to their aspirations as students who sought careers outside of the field occupied by their parents'.

Social capital may not be an exclusively elite phenomenon and Skeggs (1997a) considers how working-class communities might have social networks instrumental in securing jobs for member of the families belonging to a group. However, the value of the social capital is 'the type of employment to which these social networks provide access' (1997a, p.128). Bourdieu theorised that 'in state socialist societies where economic capital was less significant, social capital was the key form of differentiation alongside cultural capital' (Atkinson, 2015, p.63), underpinning how social capital is grounded in a society's given norms and value systems. Skeggs (1997a, p.128) discusses how communities can generate social capital 'as a means to gaining employment. The difference is the type of employment to which these social networks provide'. This theme is foregrounded by arguments surrounding social reproduction in terms of class inequality (Hoskins and Barker, 2019) in that the family has significant influence and impact on choices made. Hoskins and Barker (2019, p.246) discuss how their research focusing on the impact of genealogy in the context of social mobility and taking place in a state secondary school revealed strong familial connections in terms of employment choices. They argue that rather than individual agency and potential success in exams, the trend demonstrated by the participants was one of family loyalty and the social capitals shared within that family unit where 'family members in successive generations remain in similar or related occupations - upward and downward movement is within and between related

occupations'. The child of a teaching assistant chose to become a teacher and the child of a manager in a large retail company had joined that company as an apprentice.

Bathmaker *et al.* (2016) demonstrate how the social capital of their middle and upper middle-class participants embraced a network of contacts beyond the family and these 'contacts' were able to provide work experience in professional, high-status and highly paid industries. Western societies' class systems persist in ultimately valuing middle-class social capital more highly than the familial and community-embedded social capital evident in less advantaged groups. Christie and Burke (2021, p.87) state how the usage of the term social capital has become diluted and removed from its original definition, reduced to describing 'how networks and connections are used to informally reproduce social inequalities'. However, I adhere to Bourdieu's original discussion of the term, ensuring that I am not reductive in my discussion and stay mindful that for Bourdieu how social capital is distributed is central to inequality in society.

Symbolic Capital and Symbolic Violence

Symbolic capital is 'the form the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognised as legitimate' (Skeggs, 1997, p.8). While symbolic capital is not one of the themes framing my data re-presentation, it is of relevance to discuss it here in its manifestation as the representation of the other capitals when they are given intellectual credence, 'they only work, and confer authority, opportunities and life chances, in so far as they are generally (mis)recognized as legitimate' (Atkinson, 2015, p.63). Similarly, Skeggs (1997a, p.128) argues how 'legitimation is the key mechanism in the conversion to power'. Skeggs suggests that an understanding of symbolic capital is crucial to an authentic understanding of how capitals work because symbolic capital is gradually accrued as capitals become embedded. Moore (2012) exemplifies this with the example of cultural capital – embodied, multi-layered and growing over time, and contrasts this with the concept of the cruder notion of social status, a two-dimensional phenomenon which can be perceived more simplistically. However, it is necessary for cultural capital '…to be legitimised before it can have symbolic power [and all] capitals are context specific' Skeggs (1997a. p.8). Furthermore, there is limited access to valued, or valuable symbolic capital for working-class people within contexts such as education. While all individuals possess symbolic capital, some forms are valued above others and symbolic violence can be used to theorise how marginalised voices are not heard in the milieu of the dominant discourse (Thapar-Björkert *et al*., 2016).

This factor is seen in the discussion of cultural capital as 'street capital' (Atkins and Duckworth, 2019), which while a powerful capital amongst members of a particular group, is not legitimised by the dominant group – the middle-classes - and therefore not granted symbolism. In this way, symbolic violence is committed by the dominant group to the dominated, the working-

classes and societal status quo is perpetuated. While it might be suggested that the middle-classes lack the street credibility and hence 'respect' of the dominated working-classes, in the GBCS (Savage *et al.,* 2015) younger, affluent and educated participants embraced an eclectic selection of art forms, including 'street cred,' with an elitism being reflected in the individual's articulation of why this was a valid form of culture. It might therefore be argued that the middle-class is enacting symbolic violence in its ability to select from a range of capitals and take the notion of 'street cred' to make it their own by their ability to argue and justify its legitimacy. In contrast – and acknowledging Bernstein's (1971) theory of restricted and elaborated codes – the working-classes have only their own reserves of capital to draw on, just as their speech typically uses the restricted code. Hence it might be suggested that the middle-classes can, like speaking in both the restricted and elaborated codes, draw on a wider range of capitals and commit symbolic violence in terms of cultural appropriation of the values of the non-dominant group, the working-classes. For the working-classes 'attempts to escape class identifications through discourses of improvement and strategies of passing rarely succeed because of their lack of power to convert cultural capital into symbolic capital' Skeggs (1997, p.75).

Steedman (1982) powerfully demonstrates how symbolic violence is exercised to ensure that the three working-class 'little girls' in The Tidy House (1982) are subtly shown that they are not clever, effectively that they should not expect too much. The girls 'play houses' and Steedman does not present them as victims of working-class culture passively expecting to perpetuate the lives of their mothers 'but active, thoughtful and frequently resentful participants in the process' (Steedman. 1982, p. 31). Yet ultimately the story created by the children is a 'symbol of the inevitability of women's lives' and a presentation of the 'ambivalence of motherhood' (Steedman,1982, p.33). While Steedman gives these children a voice, the children's expectations are bounded by their immediate context and experience. Symbolic violence occurs and is normalised in the unnoticed practices of everyday life (Thapar-Björkert *et al*., 2016) and in Steedman's account this is happening to the children at the very time that they are working out the world in which they live. Steedman's little girls are emblematic of how symbolic violence is institutionalised and acts against working-class women before they even become women.

Contextualisation - Bourdieusian terminology theorising capitals

In this section I define the Bourdieusian vocabulary that relates to capitals and that I will be using in my thesis, namely 'social space' (or 'field') and 'habitus'.

Social space

Bourdieu discusses how social space, or 'field', is made up of capitals and has two key dimensions – volume and composition of capital - and while several individuals might occupy a social space this does not mean that they have a shared understanding or impetus to act (Atkinson, 2015). An individual whose economic capital is dominant will be occupying a different social space to one who is rich in perceived cultural capital and these individuals will be unlikely to represent a single class; this is contradictory to Marxist theory where individuals might be perceived to act collectively to 'form' a class. Bourdieu's mapping of social space concentrates on economic and cultural capital, though others such as Atkinson (2015) extend this to other forms of capital. The social space model provides a distinction between individuals who previously might 'otherwise be lumped together in the same space…on the basis of a difference in the primary resource at their disposal' Atkinson (2015, p.63).

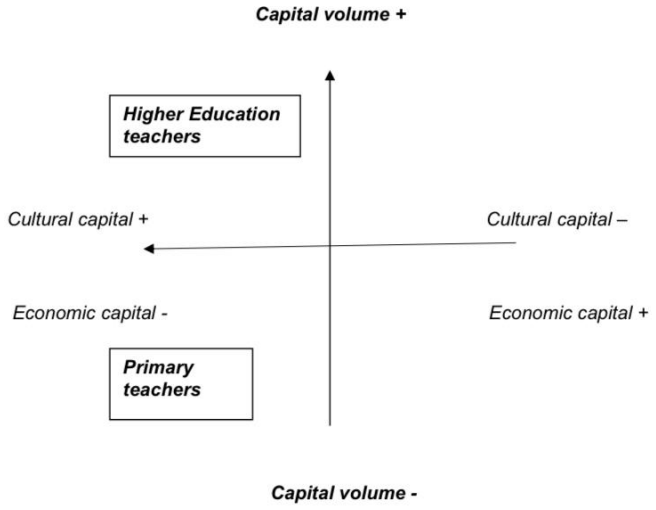

Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of Bourdieu's theory of social space

The diagram above is a depopulated presentation of Bourdieu presented by Atkinson (2015), which I have adapted by showing the horizontal and vertical axes. It demonstrates a visual representation of Bourdieu's theory of social space. This model, according to Bourdieusian theory, provides a tool to determine an individual's social space in terms of the amount of a given capital alongside how that capital is comprised. The vertical axis presents an ascending scale of combined capitals and the horizontal a continuum where high cultural capital and low economic capital is positioned at the far left and high economic capital and low cultural capital

at the far right (Atkinson, 2015). Bourdieu was insistent that social space is fluid and not a fixed phenomenon in contrast to, for example, Goldthorpe and Chan (Atkinson, 2015). In this model both HE teachers and primary school teachers are situated to the left, but HE teachers are situated further towards the top of the vertical axis. Atkinson (2015) argues that this is because they are imbued with more economic capital than primary school teachers. These individuals described would not 'form' a class in the old sense of the word and are distant in terms of economic capital, yet they may share a common ground in terms of cultural capital. They therefore occupy a similar social space in a way that would not have been possible in the context of Marx's reductionist model of class stratification. Consequently, these individuals are more likely to converge in terms of friendships, neighbourhoods and leisure activities which form 'real' groups and 'a tacit sense of their place in the world or class unconsciousness. This is what Bourdieu identifies as habitus and 'shaped by interactions within concrete social networks' (Crossley, 2012, p.91). Furthermore, Atkinson (2015) and Crossley (2012) write about the geometric nature of Bourdieu's social space with Atkinson, discussing this model as a 3D one and demonstrating how clusters will form. In Atkinson's 3D model (2015) the third dimension is time, paying attention to how social mobility – both upwards and downwards – shifts individuals' positioning in the social space and that 'necessity' governs one's position in a social space. This position will be governed by one's overall distance from necessity, a key Bourdieusian concept embedded in habitus and discussed below.

Habitus

> The fundamental proposition that the habitus is a virtue made up of necessity is never more clearly illustrated than in the case of the working-classes, since necessity involves for them all that is usually meant by the word, that is, an inescapable deprivation of necessary goods (Bourdieu, 1984, p.373).

Habitus is embedded in class and factors impacting an individual when growing up, are established and difficult to completely displace, 'even if an individual moves away from the class background of her childhood, subtle aspects of her accent, mannerisms, and bodily comportment may betray her origins' (Power, 1999, p.49).

Bourdieu discusses habitus in terms of structure, and it is described by Maton (2012,) as being structur**ed** by what one brings from the past in terms of family and upbringing and education, while simultaneously structur**ing** an individual's present and future. However, deeply problematic and elusive, habitus remains central to discussions of Bourdieu's work with critics arguing how the term is often simplistically reduced (Crossley, 2012). Atkinson (2015, p.65) describes habitus as Bourdieu's term for '… most fundamentally … how we see, appreciate and value things, all ultimately manifesting in lifestyles and making us who we are'. And with reference to the earlier point, a 'virtue of necessity', grounded in the fact that human beings

turn what they have into what they want to gain recognition. In the context of Higher Education (HE), Hoskins and Barker (2019, p.241) discuss that while operating as adaptive individuals in terms of decision making and agency, students 'are also part of the social world they inhabit, influenced strongly by family and friends and by the conditions of their lives'.

In his model of social space Bourdieu (1984, p.373) superimposes the preferences of taste in terms of, for example, choices of food and leisure activities – and calls them the 'space of lifestyles' or the 'symbolic space'. In the context of Bourdieusian theory's rejection of the traditional Marxist model of production and status, it can be seen how Weber's insistence upon the distinct difference between class and status was a precursor of the theory of habitus: 'If all these lifestyle practices, goods and activities correspond to positions in social space… then they function as indicators or symbols of one's class position' (Atkinson, 2015, p.66). However, there is fluidity in evidence, and activities, food or hobbies that might once have seemed synonymous with educated upper-class individuals, rich in cultural capital, may well reposition over time (Atkinson, 2015). Boundaries will shift and new indices of 'taste' will emerge. Maton (2012, p.51) considers how our life histories are encapsulated by habitus and discusses how experience impacts and influences our choices and actions; it is not a conscious act but rather, 'an ongoing and active process – we are engaged in a continuous process of making history, but not under conditions of our making', Listening to, and re-presenting my participants' and my own narratives, I am aware of how early experiences and relationships have shaped and influenced choices and how over the first year of teacher training these structures of their habitus evolve - 'neither fixed nor in constant flux' (Maton, 2012, p.52).

Discussing his experience as a working-class student struggling to make sense of being at Oxbridge in the 1980s, Jeffries indicated the contrast between the habitus of his home in the Midlands and his new world where '…memories of the time show me to have a flat, Midland accent that would never quite parse (sic) muster in Oxonian society, to my initial incredulity and continuing anger' (Jeffries, 2000, p.149). His habitus remained embedded in the way described by other working-class graduates (Cadwalladr, 2012; Hoggart,1957) as he returned to '…a bright place where people were pleased to see me. It was only 56 miles away and yet I crossed so many barriers to arrive and leave' (Jeffries, 2000, p.138). Jeffries' use of language - 'barriers' - is pertinent to my participants' language. Symbolic violence can be identified and observed working as an obstacle for working-class individuals clearly positioned as 'Other' in the context of elite universities.

2.1.iii After Bourdieu: Developing theories of emotional capital

Class identity is 'found in practices and accounts of practice' to introduce the notion of emotional or psychological embeddedness (Reay, 2005, p.192). Reay indicates that it is, in fact, to be 'found in how individuals think and feel about these practices… It could be argued

that it is class thinking and feeling that generates class practices'. It is from this perspective that I am interested in exploring how emotional investment has been developed as a further form of capital and how it particularly resonates for my work. It has been suggested (Huppatz, 2009, p.46) that Bourdieu paid 'little attention to the relationship between gender and capital' while acknowledging his capitals' framework has 'evolutionary potential' (Huppatz, 2009, p.46). Zembylas (2007, p.443) develops this in his analysis of embodiment which 'maps emotions onto experiences constituted and displayed by encultured and social actors'. This suggests that while Bourdieu did not overtly discuss and name *emotional capital*, it was 'situated in [his] work and provides a rich account of how emotions-as-resources are circulated, accumulate and exchanged for other forms of capital' (Zembylas, 2007 p.443).

Nowotny (1981) was the first theorist to define the concept of emotional capital as situated in Bourdieusian terminology (Cottingham, 2016). Nowotny (1981) developed emotional capital as 'a variant of social capital but characteristic of the private sphere' (Reay, 2004, p.60) and defined the concept as comprising 'knowledge, contacts and relations' (Nowotny, 1981, p.148). Despite arguments to the contrary (for example, Cottingham, 2016), Nowotny saw emotional capital as a gendered resource more prevalent in women than men and as a phenomenon 'developed in adverse circumstances – in response to barriers rather than opportunities' (Reay, 2004, p.60). I am interested in Reay's (2004, p.57) description of 'the murky waters of the emotions' - extending Bourdieu's capitals theory into the nebulous area of feelings - and I later identify how this is enacted in my participants' stories.

Much of the research in emotional investment has been around the positionality of mothers in terms of their children's education (Lareau, 2003; Reay, 2002; Allat, 1993) but I argue that emotional capital is also a key concept in theorising the work of female primary school teachers. Maguire (2005, p.6) discusses how the 'gendered nature of being a teacher… is conflated with discourses of caring… and discourses of mothering' and work with practising primary school teachers has foregrounded the 'importance of personal investment, commitment and relationship for teachers' work, motivation and satisfaction' (Vogt, 2002, p.252). This has been referred to as 'a culture of care' (Nias, 1999). Such narratives suggest that the presentation of teaching, particularly primary school teaching, might be a reason why many women are able to visualise their future selves working with children. This powerfully interacts with the potential of symbolic violence insidiously limiting the choices of career for working-class women (Maguire, 2005). Teaching might be perceived as a 'step up' in terms of professional work, yet choice is, equally insidiously, impacted. Bourdieu discusses how symbolic violence operates at a level of invisibility where 'individuals do not question their own role in the production and reproduction of domination and subordination' (Thapar-Björkert *et al.,* 2016, p.9). This is further underlined in the developing work of trainee teachers who, as they struggle to crystallise their own professional identity, will often foreground 'support,

patience and commitment' (Allat, 1993, p.143) as key personal characteristics. Allat (1993) discusses such resources in terms of the family and specifically the investment made by mothers, but the same may be argued for trainee teachers: When asked about their motivation for wanting to become a primary school teacher, several of my participants cited reasons relating to the care and nurture of young children. It is apparent in a discussion of emotional capital symbolic violence is exercised over individuals through everyday social habits and 'is generated through the subtle inculcation of power relations upon the bodies and dispositions of individuals' (Thapar-Björkert *et al.,* 2016, p9).

Colley *et al*. (2003) have explored the concept of emotional capital in the context of 'vocational habitus' and, while focussing largely on childcare and vocational educational qualifications, this has resonance for my work in the discussion of how students see themselves as 'fitting a set of idealised and realised dispositions… in order to become the right person for the job' (Zembylas, 2007, p.452). The student teachers I have engaged with for my research are, from even before the course commences, immersed in and bound by the criteria of the Teachers' Standards (Gov.UK, 2012) which govern and assess their work and include an expectation for them to be adhering to a consistently high and appropriate level of professional conduct: 'It [vocational habitus] operates in disciplinary ways to dictate how one should properly feel, look and act, as well as the values, attitudes and beliefs that one should espouse' (Colley *et al.,* 2003, p. 488). Furthermore, it can be argued that vocational habitus works with and inside emotional capital to shape and often limit horizons of opportunity defined by class and gender and how women are potentially trained in the school for certain classed pathways. Reay (2004, p.59) discusses women's work in the home in the context of 'emotional labour', a 'complex amalgam of practical, educational and emotional work' and Zembylas (2007, p.452) explores how Colley 'draws on Hochschild's (1983) theory of emotional labour to analyse feelings as prescribed and learned in the context of powerful norms.' Hochschild suggests that as women are potentially traditionally less exposed to the wider forms of capital, they tend instead to 'possess greater emotional resources than men' (Zembylas, 2007, p.452) and this position resonates with Nowotny's discussed above. Emotional capital is a phenomenon 'built over time within classrooms and schools and contributes to the formation of particular emotion norms and affective economies' (Zembylas, 2007, p.453). Zembylas goes on to discuss how, because of this, relationships in the classroom and school community are built. This is a key skill and expectation of a teacher who ensures that emotional capital is 'systematically transformed into social and cultural capital'.

In discussing emotional capital, I adopt Zembylas' position that for the concept to be given academic and theoretical resonance it is important to foreground its integrity as existent amidst other forms of capital. Zembylas (2007, p.458) articulates its importance in terms of its integral link with, for example, social and cultural capital and how it 'blends with them to facilitate or

prevent certain practices and discourses'. He reconceptualises and theorises emotional capital as 'political, cultural and social' in order to give value to 'previously established emotional capital – solidarity, trust, hope, loyalty, enmity and so forth' and see how individuals, in my case trainee primary school teachers, engage with it as an active and impactful phenomenon in their work in the classroom. Thapar-Björkert *et al.* (2016, p.8) discuss how symbolic violence 'is imperceptible, insidious and invisible. Invisibility constitutes an effective tool of silent domination and silencing the dominated'. By this conceptualisation and theorising of emotional capital, such invisibility is challenged along with its potential deficit perception. Emotional capital is given status and impact and is foregrounded to acknowledge and problematise that caring is one of the 'cultural scripts seen as suitable for women in a given place or time' (Acker, 1995, p.33). The concept of cultural scripts will be discussed in chapter 3.

2.2 - The impact of policy

Brine (2001 p.2) discusses the central role played by policy to 'construct class identity and maintain class relations', citing Ball's (1994) discussion of the two order effects of policy: 'The first order effects are changes in practice or structure, and the second order ones are the impact of these changes on issues of social justice, on who benefits or loses' (Brine, 2001, p.3). Through my discussion in the following two sections I aim to give an overview of both to locate my work historically and politically.

Brown (1990) discussed the English education system in terms of three waves of education in the 20th century, and this is the context in which my work is situated. Taylor *et al*. (2005) develop this further. They examine the system through the lens of diversity and equity of the system, which, in turn, is of relevance in framing my discussion of policy. Writing after Brown, Taylor *et al*. (2005) embraced the post 1990 era. The subsections below summarise these four phases to provide context for my study. This context means that the first section – 2.2.i – is longer than its successors as I believe it to be a crucial 'milestone' in terms of teaching as a 'choice' for working-class women.

2.2.i. - Phase 1: The 1944 Education Act and subsequent introduction of the tripartite system: Education for all?

Butler's 1944 Education Act (Legislation.Gov.uk), the product of the Norwood Report, 1943, aimed to reform education in the United Kingdom with and intention to create a socially just system of education to replace that dependent on birth and wealth. For the first time school attendance was made compulsory for children up to the age of 14 which was an initial move towards universality in education. While this represented significant progress, it also represented a new separation and division of children once they reached the age of 11 in

terms of the class in which they grew up (Benn, 2012). This 'tripartite' system filtered children according to 'ability' and has been criticised as an 'enabling of a pernicious three-tiered school system, based on the idea that children (from different backgrounds) had very different talents and aptitudes and should therefore be educated separately' (Benn, 2012, p.40). Furthermore, part of the rationale for the system was influenced by the work of Cyril Burt (1917) who researched IQ and eugenics. While Burt was later discredited and his data deemed inaccurate (Brine, 2001), at the time of the 1944 Education Act (Legislation.Gov.uk) his belief that 'social class correlated with intelligence: the higher up the social scale you were, the greater your natural fund of intelligence' (Benn, 2012, p.41) was highly influential. It might be suggested that such ideas have found a recent resurgence in current policy. As discussed later in this chapter, working-class young people who are not engaged in HE are blamed for this lack of engagement rather than the recognition of the barriers to access as a systemic failure (Archer *et al.,* 2003).

The tripartite system did not embrace social, cultural, or environmental factors, and achievement and children's opportunities were anchored to the eleven-plus examination. The examination was a flawed and highly classed test of children's knowledge and understanding of complex mathematical problems and tasks such as compositions based around holidays and experiences working-class children had little or no cultural knowledge of (Benn, 2012). A 'pass' in the eleven-plus meant the *potential* of a place at grammar school, and therefore the perceived high-quality education and experience it provided. 'Failure' meant a child attended the secondary modern school, or - for a small number of children - the technical schools which purported to offer a vocational education, although these schools never really became established. Schools that were not grammar schools represented failure and pupils invariably experienced 'thin curricula, poor resources and consequent low self-esteem that usually accompanied the education of those that failed in the eleven-plus' (Benn, 2001, p.46).

Children from working-class backgrounds had the additional potential disadvantage in the tripartite system of entry to the examination being dependent upon the opinion of their primary school teacher (Jackson and Marsden, 1968), automatically disqualifying numbers of children, where being working-class was conflated with low intelligence and perpetuating the perspective of Burt (1917). Furthermore, while some working-class children 'passed' the eleven-plus examination, this did not necessarily mean that they were able to attend grammar school. While financial constraints often prevented taking up a place at grammar school, social difference was also a key factor. Much has been written about this (Benn, 2012; Plummer, 2000; Jackson and Marsden, 1968) and class inequalities continue to shape – though not necessarily consciously – choices even when, it is argued, barriers have been removed.

Most working-class children were already culturally and economically consigned to the secondary modern by the age of 11 which, despite Norwood's vision in 1943, largely served

to perpetuate 'social control and the continuation of class-based power relations' (Brine, 2001, p.17). Brine (2001, p.17) goes on to discuss how 'there was very little of what could be called a liberal education, of an education fostering knowledge and understanding, let alone anything remotely approaching criticality or creativity'. The paucity of learning opportunities in secondary modern schools was further restricted for girls with voices such as Newsom (1948) believing that preparing for womanhood in terms of homemaking should be the focus for female pupils and central to girls' learning. Science and maths provision - already significantly less than that in grammar schools - was stripped back further for girls to facilitate greater emphasis on homemaking: 'A curriculum already highly restricted by social class was thus further restricted by gender – our 'main' educational task was to learn how to perform our future roles of wives and mothers' Brine (2001, p.18).

Jackson and Marsden (1968) conducted a longitudinal study of children passing through the grammar school system in Huddersfield in 1944. This seminal study embraced 88 working-class children and looked in detail at their experiences, at what Bourdieu (1993) would later refer to as cultural capital and habitus. Grammar school places were typically awarded to children of the professional classes, and it was an alienating experience for working-class children who tended to leave compulsory education more readily and were significantly less likely to attend university (Jackson and Marsden, 1968). This alienation presented by grammar schools was an overarching obstacle for many working-class children, and Jackson and Marsden (1968), reflecting Hoggart's (1957) emphasis on the importance of family and community in working-class lives, discuss how success at the grammar school was often embedded in the rejection of previous relationships and connections.

Jackson and Marsden (1968) discuss how it was remarkable that almost half of the children in the study became teachers and that this is the largest of the post-educational 'career' categories. Three quarters of the girls in Jackson and Marsden's study had become teachers with seventeen of these becoming primary school teachers and Reay (2017, p.107) discusses how these working-class children, and especially girls, had 'become teachers by default', comparing it to her own classed and gendered experience. These choices appear to have been influenced by their families' opinions where teaching was seen as a respectable choice: 'Mr Sadler … had decided very early on that his daughter was to be a teacher – 'a nice soft job, with reasonable holidays and plenty of pay.' He dismissed other suggestions by 'taking her down a peg or two' (Jackson and Marsden, 1968, p.132). The class-imbued language used by Mr Sadler continues to resound in later accounts of families' limited aspirations for their daughters (for example: Plummer, 2000; Skeggs, 1997) with expressions such as Mr Sadler's also echoing from my own childhood; this will be discussed further in chapter 3.

2.2.ii: Phase 2 - The introduction of comprehensive education

Plummer (2001, p.17) cites the introduction of comprehensive schools in the 1960s as:

> …a means of ameliorating the more brutal inequalities in society without really changing the base structure of capitalism, as well as a way of maintaining the smooth functioning of the existing social order.

As part of the comprehensive school social experiment, initially high-attaining children from secondary modern schools were interviewed for places at the new comprehensive schools, and Plummer (2000, p.165) discusses her experience as one of these 'girls' – working-class and top of the secondary modern sets now finding herself below the grammar school girls at the new comprehensive and feeing tangibly 'other': 'Some things could be hidden but others could not, like the hand-knitted cardigans and having the 'right voice', accent and grammatical style'. I read Plummer's words as I recalled years of quiet ridicule in my own - newly converted from being a girls' grammar – comprehensive, attired in the cardigans knitted by my nan. Brine (2001) discusses the frustrating lack of intellectual stimulation provided by the system and how she was directed towards typing and resisted it for as long as was possible and even now 'in this deep resistance lie the origins of my thumping techniques on the keyboard' (Brine, 2001. p.16).

Policy reformers and progressive educators seized the opportunities presented by comprehensives to access 'a wide range of knowledge and – perhaps the most crucial ingredient in educational success – hope and self-belief' (Benn, 2012, p.55). However, a systemic opposition to comprehensives pervaded, with a resistance to perceived social integration experiments where social groups might 'seek to capture the comprehensives for various misguided social targets' (Benn, 2012, p.53) and both Labour and Conservative governments failing to invest both financially and ideologically in their success (Benn, 2012).

2.2.iii Phase 3: Neoliberalism, marketisation and the rise of the 'parentocracy'

The 1980 Education Act followed by the 1988 Education Reform Act represented a legislative 'neo-liberal policy framework' (Taylor *et al.,* 2005, p.51). The concept of the parentocracy was sealed by the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988 which introduced rigid teaching requirements and a testing system in schools that remains with us. Despite the egalitarian visions of comprehensive education, the system had become one of selection, setting and chaos (Archer *et al.,* 2003) and located in a society embracing the norms of middle-class values.

When Thatcher's Conservative government replaced Callaghan's weakening Labour administration in 1979, it embraced neo-liberal ideals, neo-liberalism being the belief that 'a society's political and economic institutions should be robustly liberal and capitalist, but supplemented by a constitutionally limited democracy and a modest welfare state' (Spradley,

1979). This had always been there and 'can be seen as a replay of the struggles and tensions embedded in the crisis of the English state' (Ball, 2017, p.84). Ball goes on to discuss the Thatcherite administration's ideological distance from the concept of social justice, and how it embedded the social 'peculiarities that mark the English education system, particularly exclusions around class and gender that had been basic to provision since the 19th century' (Ball, 2017, p.84), arguably undermining what many believed to be almost half a century's worth of progression. Under the guise of addressing inefficiencies, the government reclaimed control they perceived as lost in previous decades and returned to 'market forces as an antidote to regulation and intervention, both within the public sector, and in relation to the management of the economy'. These 'twin pillars of individual liberty (the freedom to choose) and market freedom (the disciplines of competition) … were to form the ideological position of Thatcherism and its relationship with the public sector'. (Ball, 2017, p.84).

2.2.iv - Phase 4: 1997 onwards: The impact of New Labour and succeeding administrations

Despite New Labour's education legislation, little challenged or replaced that introduced by their predecessors (Ball, 2017; Benn, 2012) and despite the 'passionate rhetoric' of 1997 little happened to impact the 'big picture: the inequality embedded in favoured schools.' (Benn, 2017, p.71). New Labour embraced Giddens' 'Third Way' framework (Power and Whitty, 1999) to find a middle ground between left and right politics; indeed, the 1997 election manifesto stated 'Some things the Conservatives got right. We will not change them'. 'For Blair the social engineering function of education is much more to do with instilling discipline and responsibility than equality' (Ball, 2017, p.93). Targets and target setting were embedded in the discourse. This standards and targets focussed approach was encapsulated in the 1997 DfEE publication *Excellence in Schools* and embodied in Education Secretary David Blunkett's introduction to the document:

> We must overcome the spiral of disadvantage, in which alienation from, or failure within, the education system is passed from one generation to the next. We must replace the culture of complacency with commitment to success (DfEE, 1997, p.3).

The language of marketisation is seductive: *alienation; succeed; drive; commitment; success*. Under this system the comprehensive school was further marginalised; key Labour figures rejected state education in favour of London-based independent schools for their own children (Ball, 2017; Benn, 2012) and Education Secretary Estelle Morris stated in 2002 that 'Comprehensive schools don't cherish their differences. Equality of opportunity will never be achieved by giving all children exactly the same education' (Ball, 2017, p.103). Following Brown's short-lived Labour premiership, the Coalition government's ascension to power in 2010 was characterised in terms of education by famously moving away from several costly

initiatives such as Building Schools for the Future and, led by Michael Gove, a refocus on traditional Conservative values of facts and knowledge at the expense of what was perceived as Labour's more nebulous initiatives such as the work on thinking skills. Gove had kept the focus on marketisation while rejecting all that was – in the eyes of the teaching profession – transformative and exciting. Gove framed it as a focus on curriculum, on 'what matters' (Ball, 2017, p.106). The National Curriculum (Gov.UK, 2014) was based on the concept of 'official knowledge' (Ball, 2012, p.106) and what Gove called 'real subjects'. This emphasis on facts and, for example, learning poetry by heart. was an enactment of the 'powerful knowledge' described by Bernstein (1975) in his work on classification and framing in school (Bernstein, 1975) and potential further evidence of continued governmental symbolic violence, where the dominant state continues to control and constrain the dominated education system.

Teaching was once seen as a 'respectable' profession when compared to other professional public roles such as nursing or policing but controlling successive governments have eroded this. 'Teaching has been pilloried by various governments for so long that it has lost its status [that was] attached to becoming a teacher which existed in the 1950s or 1960s' (Maguire (2005, p.6).

2.3 The 'Knowledge Economy?' – 'The Game'; 'Possible Selves' and the rhetoric of social justice

The government White Paper of May 2016, *Success as a Knowledge Economy, Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice* celebrates a bright new horizon for university education where HE will be made accessible and desirable for everyone and claims:

> Teaching excellence matters, not only for students and taxpayers, but also for those who care about social mobility, since we will not truly begin to reduce inequality unless more students fulfil their aspirations and progress on into their chosen careers (Gov.UK, 2016, p.13).

This is a contentious discourse lying at the ideological heart of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat administration (and as recent history suggests, those that have taken place since). It was further problematised by the economic and socially divisive impact of Brexit only a month later. The use of language in the document is significant: language relating to 'aspirations' and 'chosen careers' and the shift away from social 'justice' to social 'mobility' which tacitly removes the responsibility – and blame - for social equality away from the state and onto the individual, regardless of background and access to opportunities. While the document discusses strategies that are aimed at increasing 'social mobility', these strategies focus on greater transparency of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in terms of sharing selection and application data and the ease of enabling students to transfer between institutions (Gov.UK, 2016). The document also states that while promoting the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) to accelerate teaching standards in HE, it is 'putting measures

in place to prevent the TEF being gamed and to ensure no institution is penalised for having a large cohort of disadvantaged students' (Gov.UK, 2016, p.57). It claimed the TEF will 'actively drive better outcomes and improved social mobility' and this is reflected in the language of the White Paper's introduction:

> These proposals will help ensure that everyone with the potential to succeed in higher education, irrespective of their background, can choose from a wide range of high-quality universities, access relevant information to make the right choices, and benefit from excellent teaching that helps prepare them for the future (Gov.UK, 2016, p.5).

In this final section of the chapter, I look at the literature to problematise the concept of social mobility and examine how such policy rhetoric can be misplaced and fail to address the sociological and cultural factors present in determining individuals' futures, their 'possible selves' (Markus and Nurius, 1986).

2.3.i Social mobility or social justice?

In the context of marketisation, there has been an increase in what Giddens (1991) and others refer to as individualisation which 'has led to a loosening of attachment to social-class identities with the result that class identities and inequalities have become obscured and hidden' (Archer *et al.*, 2003, p.15), or as Giddens (1991) argues, weakened. In his discussion of risk economy Giddens (1991) discusses how such collective opportunities have lost strength 'in response to the increase in new uncertainties, risks and opportunities of late modernity' (Archer *et al.,* 2003, p.15). It becomes the responsibility of the family to guide and make choices for children which is dependent on the value families put on education or that they are 'better at choosing than others and have greater financial and cultural resources to support their children in the post-16 arena as elsewhere' (Ball *et al.*, 2002, p.4). These families whose cultural and economic capital ensure the best schooling for their children are well-placed to access such resources as their children get older but, while parents' access to capital enable them to support their children's education, the market driven nature of society, 'individualisation,' means that for those not in possession of these resources 'concomitantly, 'bad' choices become a matter of individual responsibility' (Ball *et al.*, 2002, p.4). 'Working-class non-participants [in higher education] are often the subject of discourses that blame them, rather than social inequalities, for their inability to access higher education' (Archer *et al.*, 2003, p.16). Families are blamed for the failure of social justice as a construct: a further echo perhaps of Burt's (1917) rationale at the time of the tripartite system, associating social class with funds of intelligence.

The spirit of the 1944 Act (Legislation.Gov.uk) and of the introduction of comprehensive education was situated, if not realised, in the principles of social justice. These principles have become eroded over time and hence shifted focus to that of social mobility where, 'lack of

information is one of the major explanations put forward for low participation in HE by working-class groups' (Archer *et al.,* 2003, p.97). I noted this in the quantitative data I collected across two cohorts of students for my research and, as Archer *et al*. (2003) foreground, a key point made in the Dearing Report of 1997. However, in terms of HE related choices, 'there is no moment of decision' (Archer *et al.,* 2003, p.97) but rather it is an embedded expectation – or not – and for many potential participants from working-class backgrounds, a university education is not seen as a consideration for life. Working-class culture can mean that the decision to attend university might potentially be based upon emotion and identity and its multi-faceted presentation suggests it to be a 'landscape of choice' (Gerwitz *et al.,*1995) where 'decision making is more 'amorphous, processual, tentative and intuitive' (Archer *et al.,* 2003, p.98). Furthermore, this landscape of choice is not a level one and 'decisions are made within the context of a family' (Archer *et al.,* 2003, p.98), a point later reinforced by Hoskins and Barker (2019) in their discussion of family milieu theory referenced above and examined by Braun (2015). In her work with trainee teachers, Braun (2015, p.265) identified that the choices of her participants who had teacher parents were impacted by this connection and that from a relatively young age these participants had been 'helping out' with their parents' school and school associated activities. In her cross-gender study of 32 student teachers, all except one of the participants who were 'helping out' were female, the forms of 'helping out' had 'distinctively gendered dimensions [and]…commonly, these activities were led by their parents, teachers' (Braun, 2015, p.265). In all these cases the parent had invited them to help; it appears that classed and gendered 'choices' were unconsciously forming at an early age.

In the context of this landscape of choice it is possible to see how a simplistic discussion of information sharing at school level (for example) is not the answer to addressing issues of social injustice and the perception and interpretation of information. While information might be equally available to all school children, it is potentially confusing in its form and associated language, and to those without connections to the milieu of HE, this is magnified (Archer *et al.*, 2003). Archer *et al.* (2003) suggest that it is a general expectation amongst middle-class parents that their children will attend university and that parents will – because of their own access to capitals – be able to support and advise them. This is not so for children from the working-classes; while children from working-class backgrounds will be emotionally supported in their choices by their family, they will rarely be pushed in the way middle-class children often are. Reay and Ball (1998) discuss this as the 'working-class discourse of 'child as expert'' who relies on herself to identify how access to HE works (Archer *et al.,* 2003, p.101) and this is another point of resonance to my own story; I was the expert in terms of HE while I was 'pushed' to work in an office.

2.3.ii - The game

On asking one of her research participants to discuss their views on the factors impacting young people's opportunities in contemporary Britain, Reay (2017, p.112) was told 'money and background' and how, by the time this participant from a non-traditional background had understood how the education system operates, they had already made their 'wrong' ill-informed choices. Reay's research resonates in the *Paired Peers* project where Bathmaker *et al*. (2016) interrogate the experiences of two groups of students at two contrasting universities, a Russell Group university and a post-92 university located in the same city. Their longitudinal work with the students – there were two middle-class and two working-class students studying each of the eleven in-common subjects from each institution – reveal the differences in how students from different classes experience attending university. It contrasted their understanding of the importance of engagement beyond lectures and seminars in securing future career opportunities – the game. The game might be described as where students benefit beyond the curriculum by mobilising their inherited capitals during their undergraduate study and ultimately benefit from enhanced employment and social networking opportunities. Simply getting a degree is no longer enough and students with accumulated cultural capital arrive at university understanding this and know that they need to play the game. That working-class students do not come equipped with this valuable knowledge perpetuates historically embedded class inequality. The concept of the game foregrounds how background and education inform participants' choices of university and study pathway. Bathmaker *et al*. (2016), situate their discussion in Bourdieu's concept of the 'feel for the game' where comparisons might be made to a sporting game in which 'the middle-classes are not only dealt the better cards in a high stakes game, but they have internalised the knowledge through economic and cultural advantages, of when and how best to play them' (Bathmaker *et al*., 2013, p.740).

Lareau discusses how middle-class families create a 'concerted cultivation' of their children in their continual exposure to the capitals potentially working to establish 'advantage in both education and labour markets' (Bathmaker *et al*., 2013, p.725). Part of these conditions is an early understanding of the 'right' subjects to study at the 'right' university and – crucially in terms of effectively playing the game – the 'right' extra-curricular activities to engage with once there. Bathmaker *et al*. (2013, p.725) discuss how this 'personal capital' is created in some students who 'more readily mobilise several forms of capital simultaneously for example combining cultural capital in the form of "what they know" with social capital in the form of "who they know"'.

Cultural and social capital are embodied and underpinned by economic capital, as it is money that allows the activities and, for students at university, funds these activities. This is apparent

in the research of Reay (2017) and Bathmaker *et al.* (2016; 2013) and reflected in the stories of some of my own participants, where money is limited, and students must work alongside their study; the chance to play the game is significantly limited.

In the *Paired Peers* study several women but – at the time – no men, intended to go on to teach (Bathmaker *et al*., 2016). Reinforcing the habitus theory discussed in 2.1.ii, three of these women were themselves daughters of teachers: 'Their aspirations reflect a desire to achieve careers that are embedded within their family milieu' (Hoskins and Barker, 2019, p.244). However, the power and impact of that milieu is perhaps represented by Sally, a middle-class law student whose initial long-term trajectory – supported and assumed by her parents – was law. As a single parent, Sally decided the long hours and competitive demands of being a barrister were not for her and she shifted her attention to teaching. Sally saw teaching as a less demanding profession, lower status perhaps, and her parents, not accepting Sally's shift, continued to investigate opportunities in law for her, although Sally had made the decision to teach. However, despite Sally's decision, there remained for her a pervasive sense of this not being 'good enough', with Sally stating how she did not intend to stay in the classroom for long and would be looking towards higher status leadership roles in education. Sally states 'I feel like being a teacher is just a steppingstone to something bigger and more elaborate, but I haven't worked out what it is yet' (Bathmaker *et al*., 2016, p.110). Bathmaker *et al*. (2016) contrast Sally's aspirations with their working-class participant Jackie, herself the daughter of a teacher, who had been accepted for a PGCE and wanted to become a class teacher, firmly stating that she was not interested in leadership roles. 'While Jackie anticipated a steady career, Sally's middle-class perspective led her to aim, if not to be a 'hotshot lawyer', at least to be a 'hotshot teacher'' (Bathmaker *et al*., 2016, p.110): Sally evidently has a secure grasp of the game.

Braun's (2015, p.263) study of student teachers revealed similar stories to those of Bathmaker *et al*. (2016) in terms of parental expectations. Braun cites how a middle-class participant's father was disappointed at his daughter's decision to teach because of its lack of 'prestige in money and status … He felt she could "do so much better" and that she was not making good use of the expensive private education he had provided her with'

Another, Anjali, however, while initially coming from India, spent her childhood in a British seaside town. Anjali's pride is evident:

> I am now middle-class because I'm a teacher. But … I'm very much in touch that I've come from a working-class background, I see it as a positive thing, and I've moved my way up…. my parents wanted… us to move away, and they wanted us to go to university, get a degree and move up the scale, definitely. (Braun, 2015, p.263).

I acknowledge that Anjali's story is not only classed and gendered but also intersected by race. While this is a crucial, and at the time of writing, a prescient further dimension, it is

beyond the limitations of this study and an issue I have highlighted in my conclusion as worthy of further research.

2.3.iii - Possible selves

Markus and Nurius (1986) introduced the concept of possible selves as a lens through which to view one's future and available opportunities but foregrounding social and cultural factors as mitigating factors. They argue that while an actor is at liberty to choose her future self, the possible selves available to her are impacted by social and cultural factors such as class and its interpretation by the media, and the social world an individual inhabits. They state:

> Possible selves thus have the potential to reveal the inventive and constructive nature of the self but they also reflect the extent to which the self is socially determined and constrained (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p. 954).

Harrison and Waller (2018) discuss aspiration versus expectation in the context of possible selves. They suggest that aspiration is modified by expectation, the latter doing so via consideration of how achievable for an individual a given possible future might be. They cite Boxer *et al.* who indicate that 'disadvantaged young people tend to have considerably higher aspirations than expectations' (Harrison and Waller, 2018, p.921). Harrison and Waller (2018, p.921) go on to suggest that:

> Parents of disadvantaged young people are likely to *want* them to succeed through education, but may not expect them to do so, perhaps based on their own negative experiences or their potentially realistic assessment of a congested youth labour movement.

Outcomes from Harrison and Waller's research suggest an imperative for narrowing the gap between expectation and aspiration through broadening students' 'horizons for action' (Harrison and Waller, 2018, p.928). Horizons for action are what Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) cite as the basis on which individuals might make future career decisions, impacted by habitus, the labour market and hence 'our view of the world and the choices we can make within it' (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997, p.197).

Raphael-Reed *et al.* (2007), in their longitudinal study of aspiration in a working-class community, discuss how young people's futures are shaped and limited by the habitus within which they grow up and subsequently:

> …influence (and delimit) the palette of conceivable possible selves and the assessment of which are considered to be desirable (i.e.: aspiration) or probable (i.e.: expectation); these can then motivate and/or legitimise current actions. (Harrison and Waller, 2018, p.919).

In terms of the relationship between possible selves and horizons for action, Giddens (1983) discusses 'the dialectic of constraint' and how 'the fact that there are jobs for girls in engineering is irrelevant if a young woman does not perceive engineering as an appropriate

career' (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997, p.197). These factors combine to challenge working-class young women in terms of career options and again might lead to a known and reliable option, such as teaching.

Braun (2015, p.270) observes how their choices are in 'the particular social, cultural and economic capitals available to interviewees' and are impacted by parents. However, Braun goes on to state:

> It was also evident that the cultural and social capital bestowed by having teachers as parents facilitates access and knowledge about teachers' everyday lives but may be experienced as a mixed blessing when interviewees sense that their teacher parents would like something different and 'better' for their children.

If Braun is right, this might mark a slow but significant shift in the formation of habitus and its perpetuation, and a shift also in terms of Hoskins and Barker's (2019) family milieu theory. Similarly, it might also mark steps in moving away from the idea of teaching as a 'respectable' classed profession for girls. It is to this perception of teaching as a classed and gendered profession that I turn to in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Review of the literature 2 - A classed and gendered profession

3.0 - Introduction

Maguire (2005, p.6) discusses how teaching has 'predominantly been a feminized division of labour' and draws on Acker (1989) to discuss the labelling of teaching and nursing as 'semi-professions' and lower in status than professions such as law and medicine. Maguire (2005, p.6) goes on to discuss how teaching is perceived to be deeply gendered and hence unsurprisingly conflated with discourses of caring. In this chapter I review the literature that underpins Maguire's argument to address my overarching research focus of primary school teaching as a classed and gendered profession.

3.1 – 'Teacher training' colleges

In chapter 2 I referred to Jackson and Marsden's (1968) discussion of the significant number of working-class girls in their study who, on leaving the grammar school, went to teacher training colleges and these colleges were disproportionally populated by 'girls from working-class or lower middle-class homes… the sheer number of training colleges seemed to permit a form of social sorting-out' (Jackson and Marsden, 1968, p.162). This reinforces the concept of the classed and gendered perception of teaching and Jackson and Marsden (1968) suggest that the girls themselves were making decisions not to pursue university courses and 'simply lowering their sights and aiming at training colleges' (Jackson and Marsden, 1968, p.159). This manifests in the stories of researchers such as Reay (2017) and Maguire (1997) and as late as 2005 when Maguire makes a similar suggestion about the cohort of working-class participants she was working with. Maguire proposes that for these women perhaps the thought of university was 'aiming too high. Teacher training college may have been a safe compromise' (Maguire, 2005, p.8). Jackson and Marsden (1968) suggest that perhaps boys in the study pursued the unknown - the confusing world of applying to university - in the context of gender-related expectations. Meanwhile, girls possibly opted out and pursued the shorter route of 'higher' education - training to be a teacher at a training college as opposed to the longer, university-based route (McIntosh, 1959). However, the scope of Jackson and Marsden's research is limited and the story behind this assumed lack of female engagement in HE is picked up by the women I cite later in this chapter.

These women were largely products of the grammar school system, and their stories illuminate the lack of voice afforded to the girls in Jackson and Marsden's study. I find it disingenuous that Jackson and Marsden (1968) refer to four hypotheses in relation to these girls' choices: ignorance about what a university course was; assumption that as they 'only intended to become teachers there was little point in training for four years at a university, rather than two years at a college' (Jackson and Marsden, 1968, p.159); ignorance surrounding the employment prospects for female university graduates beyond teaching; and the girls

themselves possibly limiting their own potential because they are assuming (although Jackson and Marsden do suggest that this might be an incorrect assumption) that their parents may not be supportive of HE for women. While Jackson and Marsden (1968, p.159) acknowledge that they 'were not able to establish the reasons for this' and can only 'record notations' their problematisation of their four hypotheses is limited. In this way women's stories are forgotten; I aim, through the literature in this chapter, to foreground the reasons why working-class women have become teachers.

3.2 –The 'natural order of things'?

In her discussion of early iterations of Initial Teacher Education, Maguire (2000, p.150) states how teachers 'were to be moral and humble, and were predominantly drawn, first, from the 'respectable' working-classes and, later, from the lower middle-classes'. By the end of the 19th Century primary school teaching had become a profession deemed to be suitable for (young) women in its ability to offer them 'the opportunity to do what was considered a 'natural' activity Forrester, (2005, p.273). The dominant discourse constructed 'nurturing as an instinctive female attribute' which relates to my discussion of emotional capital where primary school teaching continues to be seen as a caring, therefore gendered, profession. This is also reflected in Steedman's (1986) work on being a good mother and how such attributes are 'innate qualities requiring little formal training' (Forrester, 2005, p.273).

Furthermore, historically, teaching was regarded as low-status and subsequently low paid and held in low esteem (Oram, 1996) and to reinforce the argument raised in the previous chapter, this continues to be present in the accounts of some middle-classed opinions that teaching is not a suitably high-profile career for their children to aspire to. An historic portrait is thus presented of primary schools being staffed by females and (except for some from the philanthropic middle-classes) from the classes needing to engage in paid employment. This has been a narrative reinforced and re-presented in the existing body of literature (Braun, 2015; Dillabough, 1999) and which also states that not only were female teachers paid significantly less than their (fewer) male counterparts, the large supporting workforce of teachers – unqualified and in receipt of half of their qualified colleagues' income – were almost exclusively female.

From the late19th century becoming a teacher was a 'respectable' path for lower middle-class and some working-class girls (Braun, 2015, p260). The class status of teaching in England is thus historically interwoven with gender and it was women in general and men from working-class backgrounds for whom teaching presented a 'good' choice and room for social mobility. Braun (2015, p.260) suggests that this early gendering of teaching, with its associated low pay and low status 'serve[s] as an important reminder that gendered job characteristics develop

over time until they are accepted as the natural order of things' and provides a further example of symbolic violence at work in the very infrastructure of society.

However, this itself is a construct where the idea of the teacher as a good mother figure was honed as a pedagogic device by 19th century educationalists such as Pestalozzi and Froebel, who 'used naturalistic observation of mothers interacting with their children to delineate maternal practice as the foundation of a new educational order' (Steedman,1987, p.122). Acker (1995, p.23) similarly argues how primary school teaching is constructed conceptually: notions of the mother, of the caring profession, of teachers being bound to 'an ethic of care' and that 'the maternal imagery is very strong in discussions of teachers and teaching'. Through her study of teachers in one primary school Acker (1995) demonstrates the reductionism embedded in this rhetoric. However, her wider argument is that while there are certainly trends associated with gender roles in primary school teaching, this does not have to be the case (Baxter Magolda, 1992). As with Steedman, Acker argues that there 'are certain cultural scripts seen as suitable for women in a given place at a given time, the caring self among them' (Acker, 1995a, p.33) and that 'cultural beliefs about what is appropriate work for males and females – or, more generally, the patriarchal patterns in society – provide a backdrop for everything teachers do' (Acker, 1995, p.116). The voices of the women I discuss below seek to problematise this perceived 'natural order of things'.

Indeed, writing about my own generation of women, journalist Deborah Orr discusses the careers advice offered to her following her set of good O level results. Her advisor stated how 'with these results you could do anything. Nursing OR teaching' (Orr, 2020, p.222). On stating that she was interested in attending art college, the advisor responded that she might become an art teacher. Orr states how 'It just felt a bit… binary. It felt like there were only two jobs that qualified women could do'. This resonates with my own post O level days in the early 1980s where neither felt a viable option for me, but I feigned an interest in nursing to attend the vocational pre-nursing course at my local FE college meaning I could do my A levels in that environment rather than staying on in the sixth form at the girls' school I attended. My mum made it clear that if I was not going to become a shorthand typist then nursing was the next best thing. I was a quiet child and teaching was not a consideration. Ironically, however, teaching would have been seen as getting ideas well above my station (Plummer, 2000) at that time.

3.3 – 'Knowing your place'

Several female voices have informed my understanding and belief that teaching – and particularly primary school teaching – was, and often still is, a profession that many women from working-class and lower-middle-class backgrounds who gained higher qualifications were either guided into, or came to themselves, as a credible, 'respectable' option (Skeggs,

1997). I present the latter point in the light of perceptions of respectability (Hanley, 2016) that many of us from working-class back grounds have heard since we were young girls: *not getting above yourself*, nor *becoming too big for your boots* (Plummer, 2000), not asking questions and being told not to *speak until you are spoken to* (Burn, 2001), needing to be *taken down a peg or two* (Jackson and Marsden, 1968) and *knowing your place* (Maguire, 2001). I repeatedly stumbled across such references during my master's research in the late 2000s and these combined with my enduringly unshakeable feelings of imposter syndrome in the context of my professional successes (Wilkinson, 2020; Clance and Imes, 1978). As my embryonic thoughts for this research began to grow it was these women's stories that have reinforced my own and given me voice and validity to re-present those of my participants.

This thesis is entitled *Primary school teaching: a classed and gendered profession*, and it is pertinent to unpick the perceptions surrounding 'teaching' in this context. Maguire (2005) asks whether teachers become middle-class simply by way of becoming a teacher. She discusses how teaching is a graduate occupation and even if a woman started out as working-class, how might she now position herself? If this is examined alongside the concepts of cultural and social capital discussed in chapter 2, Maguire is right to problematise the class position of educated working-class women now steeped in the institution of the school, where middle-class rules and control applies (Bernstein, 1975) and concludes that '[class] relationships must always be embodied in real people and in a real context' (Maguire, 2005, p.5).

If class is operational as 'an identity and a lifestyle, and a set of perspectives on the social world and relationships in it' (Ball, 2003, p.6), it might be argued that through early socialisation, young, educated women might be drawn to teaching as the viable option in terms of that social world that is available to them. I hope to make sense of how class pervades personal and professional choices and consciously or unconsciously guides the choices of women who train to teach in the primary school. I have made earlier reference to Reay's becoming a teacher by 'default' (Reay, 2017) and she discusses this in terms of being a working-class woman having graduated from university with a good degree in politics and economics and being written about in a reference by a male tutor as having a:

> …co-operative and sensible disposition; being 'personable and agreeable…always sensible and extremely well-presented' and having 'a strong dose of innate intelligence and practical ability (Reay, 2017, p.107).

This demoralising casting off of three academically successful years led to Reay becoming a teacher and putting off returning to academia for 20 years. Her account aligns with the aspect of imposter belief where a woman might 'fear that eventually some significant person will discover that they are, in reality, unintelligent' (Clance and Imes, 1978, p.241) and Reay was clearly impacted:

> When I read it I felt simultaneously upset and betrayed but I was also struck by a powerful sense of recognition. I did not challenge it because, on one level, I felt this man had seen the real as opposed to the fabricated me (Reay, 2017, p.107).

Thompson (2000, p.17) reflects on the working-class community of her childhood where 'girls had roughly three choices'. She discusses these choices as 'marrying a local boy; getting O levels and therefore the opportunity to train to be a nurse or doing A levels to go to university or training college to become a teacher'. Thompson's experience as a working-class girl attending a grammar school is repeatedly reflected in the stories of others, where women were taught about the lives of famous men and where, while it was an all-girls' school, 'the influence of men was in the very fabric of the place… It was the kind of education for girls which directed 'A' stream pupils towards universities and careers – preferably as teachers –but in ways that left unchallenged the world we were about to enter' (Thompson, 2000, p.22).

3.4 – Working-class 'Other'

The underpinning ideology of the education system Thompson is describing is located in a specific cultural script that foregrounds the notion of women as carers and this is mirrored by Acker (1995, p.33) in the context of the 'caring script' – the conventional expectation of women to perform caring roles in society. This form of symbolic violence is evident in the context of the perception of women's work at the time and in the narratives of both Thompson and Reay cited above. Reay (2017) goes on to discuss how this sense of class shame has become embedded in working-class psyche in that social mobility (and underlining arguments made about this concept in the previous chapter) is not the straightforward and welcome seamless journey from being working to middle-class but is fraught with obstacles, with guilt, and with a feeling of never being truly good enough. It is a widely documented narrative of social mobility (for example: Reay 2017, 2005; Maguire, 2005; Jeffries, 2001; Hoggart, 1957) and one that is central to my own experience. For Maguire (1997) university after leaving school was not an option. She discusses how 'for a working-class girl, becoming a teacher was a step-up' (Maguire, 1997, p.94). Like Acker (1995), Maguire states:

> I was the first in my family to go on to a form of higher education – never mind that teacher training was a gendered choice or that my route was class-specific; teacher training and not university, for no one gave me any career advice and my parents were not aware of alternative possibilities (Maguire, 1997, p.94).

This latter point is significant in terms of the discussion about HE opportunities for working-class women and Reay discusses 'Otherness', stating:

> There is an underlying fragile balance between realising potential and maintaining a sense of authenticity. Almost by definition, working-class ambition is pretentious, a hankering after 'the other' rather than an acceptance of the self. The powerful yearning

> that drives social mobility is never fulfilled, rather it produces an individual caught between two worlds (Reay, 2017, p.108).

Burn (2001) discusses 'Otherness' in terms of how her strong regional accent impacted her early experiences as schoolgirl, teacher and academic, and the concept of 'Other' was one recognised by Maguire (2005) in both her own experience and that of her participants. Maguire's own Otherness, situated in her class and gender, was intersected by both race and religion in terms of her family's Irish Catholic background. Meanwhile, Maguire's participants' accents immediately marked them apart from the other women at teacher training college, as 'sounding "other" can work to reinforce feelings of not belonging, feelings of subordination as well as anger and, potentially, resistance' (Maguire, 2005, p.9). Maguire builds on this in her consideration of the working-class women hovering at the edges of becoming middle-class through their career choice of teaching: 'if they are working in particular school contexts or in positions such as headship or in teacher training, they may sometimes feel "fraudulent" and "dislocated"' (Maguire, 2005, p.14).

Maguire (2005, p.3), outlines how 'aspects of early classed identities continue to be significant for (some) working-class women teachers in their profession', going on to discuss how the working-class women in her study, starting their teaching careers at varying points between the 1960s and 1990s, all identified with that class or origin. These women are 'contingent choosers; that is their choices were made within limited horizons' (Maguire, 2005, p.8). She discusses how the women had seen their own teachers as successful women and believed teacher training to be within reach and economically viable in its likelihood of guaranteed work on completion. Furthermore, Maguire discusses how for these working-class women teaching was an 'obvious' choice of career. It would 'fit' with other imagined feminised futures and it would stave off any chance of future poverty' (Maguire, 2005, p.9).

3.5 – Educated out of her class

I discussed Plummer's (2000) work in the context of the secondary modern school in the previous chapter and pick it up here to refer to Plummer's impetus as an educated working-class woman to become a teacher. Plummer (2000, p.xvi) discusses her case studies of 'girls' who embraced education and 'aspired to obtain a formal education during the 1950s, 60s and 70s and were educated out of their class'. Plummer (2000) discusses how class continues to impact society, both implicitly and explicitly. She acknowledges Walkerdine's theory that for her generation of young, educated women, society effectively controlled the working-classes and 'knowledge of occupations was limited to those of the working-class and schools simply directed us along the traditional avenues for upwardly mobile working-class girls: office workers, nurses, primary teachers' (Plummer, 2000, p.196). She goes on to cite Walkerdine's

argument that 'This is part of a mechanism for controlling the working-classes' (Plummer, 2000, p.196) and, I believe, a manifestation of symbolic violence at work in society.

Like Maguire, Plummer discusses how her parents had little understanding of how education works, and she discusses their lack of value placed on formal education:

> Out of the blue one day [my father] said he thought I had done the right thing. He never clarified what the 'right thing' was and I was so taken aback I did not ask. I interpreted his comment to mean that he had once thought I had not done the right thing in pursuing a formal education and a career. Neither of us referred to it again (Plummer, 2000, p.139).

It took until she was a graduate in her mid-twenties, having taken up her first teaching post, for her father to acknowledge her academic achievements; she was a teacher, this was a visible, tangible achievement and one that could be validated by others. I recall my own father's delayed congratulations when I phoned to tell him I had passed my undergraduate degree with a 2:1. His praise was perfunctory during the phone call but profuse when he called back 20 minutes later having spoken to a male acquaintance who lectured in mechanics at the local university. His acquaintance told him that a 2:1 was just one step down from the highest possible degree classification, the – I remember vividly – 'crème de la crème'. As with Plummer's memory of the conversation with her father, these things stay with us and are part of the habitus that informs and impacts our future personal and professional lives.

3.6 – A 'profession'?

I discussed Braun's (2015) positioning of teaching from the end of the 19th Century as a profession attracting middle-class and working-class women and argue that during the 20th Century policy shifts enabled women to succeed as professionals in the context of teacher training becoming a graduate profession 'introducing and emphasising academic and pedagogical theory' (Braun, 2015, p. 261). Significantly a landmark time which reflects this upgrading of the status of teachers came in 2018/19, impacting many who had gone through the teacher training colleges and obtained their 'certificate'. Several universities, in recognition of the fact that teaching became a graduate occupation in 1980, announced that they were inviting retired teachers – overwhelmingly female – back to claim their degree. A small thing perhaps and certainly anecdotal in terms of robust references (little remains beyond online local news stories); however, the fact that this was short-lived and not universally embraced by HEIs may be a small indication of teaching again being de-professionalised and 'demoted' in terms of status and celebration. As I edit this thesis there is a potential manifestation of further policy change diverting teaching back towards being a directed profession. School-based provision, the perception of 'learning on the job' such as School Direct programmes and School Centred Initial Teacher Training which 'privilege practical experience over some

aspects of pedagogy and theory' (Braun, 2015, p.261) are taking precedence over academically robust university led courses. The recent Market Review (Gov.UK, 2021) has meant that providers have had to bid to stay accredited and has caused further anxiety in terms of policy shifts and potential de-professionalisation of teaching. And, I would argue, has removed a layer of professional and autonomous control for practitioners, effectively re-presenting it as 'women's work'.

This is not to say that the body of work surrounding female primary school teachers is homogenous; there are other voices to be heard and it is crucial that teaching is not presented as in some way a deficit career, particularly in the context of the accounts presented above and personally in my own professional context of teacher educator. For many of the women who went through the training college system this was **not** a compromise – be it conscious or unconscious – based on expectations surrounding constructions of women's work. Burns (2001) discusses how the women teachers who taught her appeared to be living a better, more intellectual life than those of their pupils' mothers; they had books and they were, to the schoolgirls they taught at least, perceived as 'intellectual':

> I did not become a teacher to 'serve' or become the 'good' mother… I did not define teacher training as a "second-rate education or career". I never considered teaching a non-intellectual occupation (Burns, 2001, p.12).

I share Burns' position and through teaching I have changed my own life; serving or becoming the 'good' mother held no attractions for me, either. However, it has led me through a long and sometimes difficult process of introspection and, ultimately, to this thesis which has enabled me to align over 25 years of experience as a 'middle-class' female educator with my working-class childhood, and to understand how as individuals we can bridge that gap, but the personal legacy of class and habitus continues to travel with us and our identity does not necessarily shift alongside the status of a professional occupation (Plummer, 2020; Reay 1998). The literature I have reviewed in this chapter demonstrates how this tension perpetuates and how teaching as a choice is bounded within this tension.

Chapter 4: Methodological approach and methods of data collection and interpretation

4.0 - Introduction

In this chapter I initially locate my work as a qualitative study, defining and justifying that choice and go on to discuss how my ontological and epistemological position is embedded in my work (Grix, 2010) and my choice of research questions (4.1). I move to looking at narrative inquiry as my chosen methodological approach (4.2). My work draws particularly on that of Riessman (2008, 1993) and Clandinin and Connolly (2000). In this section I consider narrative research genres and justify my decision to re-present my narratives as poetry (for example: Faulkner 2009; Richardson, 2003) (4.3). I go on to embrace my use of autoethnography as integral to my work, justifying how I will juxtapose my own and my participants' classed and gendered experiences (4.4). I then move on to discuss thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2020; 2006) to demonstrate how I am working with the themes I have identified in constructing this research (4.5). In 4.6 I describe my research process and finally, I discuss the ethical considerations underpinning my work (4.7).

4.1 - My methodological framework

Mills and Birks (2014) discuss methodology in the context of a lens through which a researcher casts her gaze. The following section demonstrates how my ontological and epistemological positions are enacted through my choice of methodology: how I can acquire the 'knowledge' that I have stated exists and is knowable (Grix, 2010) for me. I demonstrate how who I am and what I believe is an integral part of the motivation for and direction of this thesis.

4.1.i - Qualitative research as my research paradigm

My background and my thesis are grounded in people and their stories, and qualitative research affords the researcher the license to try to 'make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.2). In this context, I am not interested in the 'hard, measurable and quantifiable data' (Kim, 2016, p.3) associated with quantitative research but rather the stories and creative opportunities presented by qualitative research. Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013, p.11) acknowledge the myriad of interpretations offered to understand and categorise qualitative research while foregrounding that it is not possible to approach it in one singular way. However, they offer the overarching position that qualitative research is 'social research that is aimed at investigating the way in which people make sense of their ideas and experiences'. My impetus for this research is to make sense of my ideas which are a product of my experiences, and this hence satisfies and justifies my adoption of narrative inquiry as my methodological tool. Narrative inquiry is

embedded in qualitative research and listening to stories which 'hold significant promise for qualitative researchers because stories are particularly suited as a linguistic form in which human experience can be expressed' (Kim, 2016, p.6).

I briefly use quantitative data in the form of an initial questionnaire with both cohorts I work with to gather some wide-ranging contextual data in terms of their educational and familial backgrounds. Quantitative research, specifically the use of questionnaires, is often grounded in positivism, a 'view of the world that deals with assumed certainties and reliable facts, which leaves less room for doubt' (Burgess *et al.,* 2006, p.54). This, however, was not representative of my study which is concerned with stories not numbers. However, many doctoral researchers do mix methods and this is acknowledged practice in that rather than engaging in 'paradigm wars [we should] be concentrating on the development of better research skills and the understanding of all, not just a few, research methods' (Burgess *et al.,* 2006, p.56). I do not view my approach as a mixed methods one but feel I can use this argument to justify my use of questionnaires in the context of my work which is qualitative in all other ways.

4.1.ii - My ontological and epistemological position

Our ontological position is constructed by 'what we believe constructs social reality' Blaikie (2000, p.8). I believe that society – and hence how I interpret reality– is socially constructed, and what is there to know is dependent upon who I am and my experiences within that society. Politics, gender and social positioning will influence the way an individual sees the world and the decisions they make, so as a female from working class origins, issues of social justice frame my understanding and interpretation of reality. I believe that people's experiences are governed by their gender, their class, their race, and their profession. The latter is impacted by funds of capital and thus 'choices' in regarding where to live and the subsequent effect this will have on the quality of one's life. I look at the world through this lens and it influences my responses and decisions. While I claim to listen actively and critically (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002) to my participants' stories, I inevitably bring to the research my own beliefs and predispositions. I acknowledge this though my inclusion of autoethnography in the presentation and discussion of my findings. I opened this thesis with a reference to the metaphor of shifting class as a journey (Hanley 2016) and this is comparable to my own experience as the thesis has developed. As I have read, researched, and written I have been reflexively viewing the world and my awareness of what has happened in terms of my own life experience, and this has impacted my ontological position.

My epistemological position is a social constructionist one where my understanding and how I make sense of the world reflects the Vygotskyan (1978) perspective that knowledge is co-constructed. Savin-Badin and Howell Major (2013, p.28) discuss how sociologists arrived at the term social-constructionism in that 'individuals construct social meaning, and their own

shared realities through interacting with each other'. If my ontological belief is that class and gender impact communities, then, epistemologically, it is through shared experience and dialogue - grounded in class and gender - that sense is made of the world. However, Savin-Baden and Howell Major's presentation of social *constructivism* made me question what I had identified as my epistemological position, in the context of their discussion of individual agency rather than the individual being 'governed' by societal and cultural positioning to create meaning. While acknowledging the fluidity and interchangeability in terms of the precision – and sometimes interpretation – of theoretical terminology, I believe my own positioning and ontology consistently come back to the impact of interaction and shared meaning as the creators of experiential narratives, therefore social constructionism rather than constructivism. While Grix (2010) claims that ontology and epistemology are distinct phenomena, Crotty (1998, p.10) discusses how they often combine because 'to talk of the construction of meaning is to talk of the construction of meaningful reality'. In the process of creating narratives from socially constructed experiences, my ontological and epistemological positions sometimes merge and 'cultural influences play a part in the way that individuals construct knowledge through interacting with each other' (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2013, p.28).

4.2 - Methodological positioning and justifications

The following sub-sections describe, discuss and justify my use of narrative as a methodological approach.

4.2.i - Narrative inquiry as the methodological tool

If my epistemological position is a social constructionist one where my understanding and how I make sense of the world reflects the Vygotskyan (1978) perspective that knowledge is co-constructed, my choice of a narrative methodology underpins this way of knowing. A participant tells a story, but the researcher plays a role in the reconstruction and re-presentation of that story by her analysis and perspective; it is the interpretation, conjoining, and re-presenting of a narrator's story by the researcher that presents the *story* of the life (Ricoeur, 1991). My overarching rationale throughout this research is that of narrative inquiry being a way of understanding experience(s). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) claim that, definitively, narrative inquirers study experience; and Chase discusses narrative inquiry as 'an amalgam of interdisciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods – all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p.651). In my presentation of narrative inquiry, I see those *biographical particulars* as being subject to interpretation, to the impact of experience (Clandenin and Connelly, 2000) and ultimately the result of an interview which generates a story and where meaning is constructed through the interaction of both interviewer and

participant '(Mishler, 1986). Furthermore, writing from a therapeutic background, McLeod (2016, p.241) discusses how narrative 'invites a personal response by evoking feelings, emotions and memories in the reader' and this is at the heart of what I want to achieve in my own narrative research.

Riessman (1993) reflects upon how her early grounding in literary theory provided a foundation for her work in narrative inquiry and this resonates for me in terms of my first degree in English Literature, where three years immersed in literary criticism, in the interpretation, deconstruction and re-construction of texts established my interest in the concept of story. Belsey (1980, p.4) discusses the assumptions made when we read, and that a reliance of the 'common sense' notion of truth promotes an assumption of reading as 'natural' and not in need of interpretation nor deconstruction. I bring Belsey's challenge to my interpretation of the narratives of my participants. There is no single notion of truth nor state of reality which is universal and understood by each member of society: 'To present something as the real thing is not the same as to produce it' (Burn, 2001, p.1). Belsey's concept of truth is at the heart of the analysis and re-presenting of my participants' stories.

Finally in this section it is pertinent to acknowledge the perspective offered by Frank (2009) who defines a strict difference between the terms narrative and story. I am aware that in my own writing I use the terms interchangeably. Frank (2009, p.107) discusses how 'only observers think much about *narratives*; people tell *stories*. Stories are the spoken expressions of narratives'. He goes on to discuss that if people were to be 'enabled to reflect on the narratives that are the necessary resources for their stories, they can learn something about why they tell the stories they do, and they may become freer to imagine their experiences differently' (Frank, 2009, p.107). I argue that this distinction is less pertinent for my work; I take my participants' narratives and turn them into poems; the poems are my stories. That said, were I to repeat this process I would ensure that my participants were, indeed, enabled to reflect on their narratives by finding a robust and convincing way to share my poetry with them.

4.2.ii - Narrative approaches: narrative inquiry genres

Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013) discuss how it is important for the researcher to be clear about the diversity of narrative approaches to avoid confusion in terminology and to position her work precisely. I locate my work in the narrative genre drawing on Savin-Baden and Howell Major's (2013, p.231) emphasis on the telling of the story being as important as the end-product, the story itself and what 'humans make meaning through… the researcher listens to participants' stories [and] acknowledges the mutual construction of the research relationship (both researcher and participant have a voice with which to tell their stories)'.

Just as I acknowledged in my introduction that I recognise how my own story has shifted with some aspects foregrounded and others potentially forgotten, I embrace the interpretations of

their lives that my participants offer and my own part in retelling their stories, in co-constructing their narrative identity (McAdams *et al.,* 2006). This is my starting point in my interpretation of what it is to be a narrative researcher. Furthermore, I have considered Barone's (2007) discussion of 'research storytellers' to describe the researcher's position in terms of how the research data are narrated / retold by the researcher and the form that that takes. Kim (2016, p.120) discusses how it is helpful (while simultaneously not compulsory) to identify one's narrative genre to achieve clarity and stay 'more attuned to the direction of your data collection and writing'. In embracing what was important and resounded with me I turned towards poetry, making 'writing conspicuous and [paying] attention to particulars' (Faulkner, 2009, p.25). Poetic representation enables me to foreground particular words and phrases that are pertinent to my research questions and how they resonate with my own experience and the story of my life that I want to tell. I describe this partial autoethnographic approach in section 4.4 below.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p.17) foreground the centrality of experience and our reflection on this, and they state 'We know what we know because of how we are positioned. If we shift our position… our knowing shifts'. This has significance for my presentation of my autoethnographic data and which of the participant data that I chose to foreground. Clandinin and Connelly go on to discuss their key concept of the Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space, their research framework originating in the theories of Dewey (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.49) in which inquiry is liberated from conventional temporal boundaries and is thus enabled to travel 'inward, outward, backward and forward and situated within place'. In my work I am seeking to hear stories of lives which may not in their telling be chronologically constructed.

A further overarching influence on my work has been Riessman (2021; 2008; 1993) and I end this section with a discussion of her distinction between story and narrative. Riessman uses these terms interchangeably, an approach I also adopt, and presents a theoretical interpretation which grounds my work and acts as a reminder for me of it as a piece of theoretical research beyond a collection of experiential stories told by undergraduate trainee teachers. Riessman (2008, p.7) discusses how 'Narrative has a robust life beyond the individual. As persons construct stories of experience, so too do identity groups, communities, nations, governments and organisations construct preferred narratives about themselves…' Just as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) discuss how narrative should be seen as non-linear and not restricted by time, Riessman (2008, p.1) embraces 'looking back, looking forward'. It is with Riessman's and Clandinin and Connelly's frameworks at the forefront of my analysis that I will later turn to the interview process and subsequent transcription.

4.2. iii – Professional identity at the edges of the narrative approach

Originally, one of my research questions, and embedded in my work as a teacher educator, was the concept of shifting teacher identity. This is embraced by Riessman (2008, p.7) who discusses how the increased presence of narrative as a credible methodology has been foregrounded by relatively recent emphasis on identity in research. She suggests that identity can no longer be an assumption or truth but must be consciously constructed by individuals and, 'in postmodern times… can be assembled and disassembled, accepted and contested, and indeed performed for audiences'. However, as my interviews progressed it became clear that the concept of professional identity was a nebulous one for my participants and I therefore reframed the question to ask the participants how they saw themselves in terms of fitting in, and what were their perceptions of themselves particularly in the context of class and gender. Nias (1989) discusses how primary school teachers' personal and professional identities are often conflated in the individual and this was evident in my interviews with the students seeing themselves as students or as student teachers. Identity is constantly revised and reassessed and I argue that for my participants this is of relevance in the context of them establishing themselves simultaneously as students and emerging professionals in a work-based context.

Having defined and justified my narrative research genres, the following sections clarify and embed my substantive interpretive tools of poetic re-presentation (4.3) underpinned by autoethnography (4.4).

4.3 - Poetic Analysis: The rationale for re-presenting narratives as poetry

In her seminal poetic work, *Louisa May*, Laurel Richardson presents her participant's life as a poem. In a subsequent discussion of *Louisa May*, Richardson (1995, p.704) states:

> Poetics strips those methodological bogey-men of their power to control and constrain. A poem as "findings" resituates ideas of validity and reliability from "knowing" to "telling". Everybody's writing is suspect – not just those who write the poems.

Acknowledging data as a construct was a significant factor in drawing me to poetry as a vehicle to re-present my data as I was then able to liberate my thinking further by presenting my participants' stories as poems alongside my own autoethnographic stanzas. Intersecting poetic re-presentation of participants' data with poetic autoethnography was hugely exciting and opened the possibility to me that research could be 'different'. This section critically engages with how I approach poetic re-presentation with rigour and reflexivity.

Faulkner (2009, p.16) asks 'why use poetry?' and her justifications provide the foundations of my rationale. I am particularly interested in the way poetry exposes language, and the creation of a stanza of verse taken directly from a participant's words can foreground themes and their

use of language and emphasis which might get lost if transcribed as prose (Mishler, 1986). Richardson (2003, p.187) argues the legitimacy of poetic analysis by questioning the assumed dominance of prose and highlighting how the latter is '…simply a literary technique, a convention and not the sole legitimate carrier of knowledge'. This alternative mode of presenting my data gave me license to re-present my participants' narratives as stanzas of poetry, each selection of stanzas representing one of my identified themes. Researchers (Richardson, 2003, 1995; Glesne, 1997) have embraced poetry as it 'offers a language' (Patten, 2002, p.87) for presentation and interpretation of data. My background in English Literature long ago alerted me to the construction and nuances of language and the integral importance of the presentation of words on a page. 'I was able to see how 'poetic analysis provides an opportunity [for researchers] to explore their conceptualizations with more fluidity and freedom' (McKenna-Buchanan, 2018, p.2) than a traditional paragraph of text on a page might. People potentially respond differently to poetry, and 'poetic representations can touch us where we live, in our bodies… and evoke the emotional dimensions of experience with an economy of words' (Sparkes and Douglas 2007, p.172). I kept this statement close as I re-presented my data. This was at the heart of my argument for my use of poetry to re-present my data. The background in English Literature I have discussed meant that the opportunities to choose language, specific words, to convey experience carefully and concisely as afforded by poetry lends a unique insight to my work that – from my perspective – a collection of prose, for my purposes, would not.

Kim (2016, p.108)) discusses the importance of giving careful consideration to the traditional presentation – and subsequent 'dullness' – of much qualitative writing, what she describes as 'impersonal, rigid, authoritative, jargon-laden, and disengaged work'. This liberated my thinking and underpinned my belief in an original and engaging mode of data representation and analysis, and within this a recognition that my transcription of the data*,* how I present it in terms of stanzas, line breaks and emphases, is a significant part of my analysis. Richardson (2003, p.188) argues that no discourse can be privileged above another, so prose does not have to be seen as the legitimate and dominant conduit of information, 'the true one: a "research" story'. The traditional convention of prose 'conceals the handprint of the researcher who produced the written text' (Richardson, 2003, p.188). Poetry is immediately revealed as an artifice and that handprint is made explicit from its inception on the page.

I began thinking about how I might reproduce my participants' spoken words as poems but imposing my own analysis with the visual form the text takes to draw the reader's eye to the themes I am foregrounding. By presenting words as poems in this way I am candidly 'playing' with the data (Richardson, 2003) and by foregrounding poetry as an artifice can capture the nuances and cadences of my participants' narratives. Sparkes and Douglas (2007, p.175), discuss how Douglas, in her representation of her participant 'Leanne' was able to identify

stanzas as Leanne spoke. This prompted Douglas to look for 'unambiguous phrases, strong statements, eloquent expressions, wording that appealed to her, and portions of the narrative that she felt strongly captured Leanne'. This is what I am striving for in my narrative poetry – capturing the classed and gendered identities of my participants through their most impactful and effective utterances.

Kim (2016) employs narrative research *genres* to define specific areas of narrative research and identifies Arts-Based Narrative Inquiry as encompassing poetry and gives this - and other non-traditional forms of narrative inquiry - name and therefore agency. McKenna- Buchanan (2018, p.4)) discusses poetic approaches and legitimises the creativity and instincts of the researcher in his discussion of its lack of rigid rules and acknowledging how this '…is part of the beauty and freedom of utilizing poetic analysis as no matter which direction a researcher takes, one is drawing on their own poetic sensibilities'. However, arguments to the contrary claim that poetry is not research and question its legitimacy. Poindexter (2002) suggests that there is a potential tension in terms of how poetry is might be robustly evaluated and Crotty (1998, p.48) discusses how poetic writing along with other forms of personal writing (for example autoethnography which I discuss in the next section) is imbued with 'rampant subjectivism'. Furthermore, Patten (2002, p.86) discusses the objections he has encountered to poetry as research and, 'those who want to write creative non-fiction or poetry should find their way to the English Department of the university and leave sociology to the sociologists'. However, it is precisely this blurring that interests me and how as an English Literature graduate, an educator of primary school teachers and a researcher whose work is framed by Bourdieusian theories of capital, I can legitimately fuse these interests in the form of robust research. Richardson acknowledges this, naming the poetic research genre 'creative analytic practice ethnography' (Patten, 2002, p.86) and stating how this should meet 'high and difficult standards; mere novelty does not suffice'. This insistence on high standards as the key to credibility is also acknowledged by Faulkner (2009, p.74) who discusses the 'craft of poetry' and insists on the imperative to avoid 'lousy poetry' and, like Richardson, subjects it to rigorous criteria in order to ensure its validity as research while foregrounding its subjectivity. Longenbach (2008, p.xi) discusses how data are presented as poetry in a self-conscious way and my 'craft' in doing so has focused the *form* in which I present it:

> Poetry is the sound of language in lines. More than meter, more than rhyme, more than images or alliteration or figurative language, line is what distinguishes our experience of poetry as poetry, rather than some other kind of writing.

McKenna-Buchanan (2018) discusses two overarching approaches to conducting a poetic analysis – poetic *transcription* and poetic *interpretation*. While these are distinct phenomena it is acknowledged that there may be some overlap and I can identify this in my work. My analysis identifies with **poetic transcription** in that it reflects a participant's told story (as

opposed to changing language and sequence, a feature of poetic interpretation) and while I compare participants' stories in my analysis (chapter 6) the re-presentation of them remains distinct from each other. I take the words spoken by my participants and present them visually as verse. I do not deviate from what is said in terms of changing language but have omitted some words for poetic effect, for example repetitions or some words or phrases that do not – in my transparently subjective opinion – contribute to the impact of the utterances I have chosen to foreground. In terms of illuminating the language and foregrounding my research themes, I have taken out excess words or words that do not address the theme I am discussing in the analysis. My transcriptions are, however, re-presented as verse that I have constructed: the words are my participants' but the lines, the space and the stanzas are my own and in doing so I am imposing my own analysis on the transcripts. By structuring the poems in a particular way, I am foregrounding the themes that I am exploring.

While my substantive presentation of data takes place in chapter 5, I illustrate the process I have described above in the following reproduction of two brief transcripts of Polly discussing her middle class, affluent background in the uncomfortable context of talking about background and money with her less well-off peers. Transcript A is an initial transcription of Polly's words. In Transcript B I distill Polly's words and experiment with form for poetic effect in terms of poetic craft (Faulkner, 2009). For example, the words 'there are some barriers still up' have their own line and I have put line breaks around the word 'difficult' to make her words resonate. I use line length, punctuation, pauses and positioning of words on selected lines to create effect and emphasise meaning. I have omitted some of Polly's words and to demonstrate this here I have highlighted in transcript A the words I have kept; I have taken out the word 'quite' to make words flow more readily, although I did this with some consideration as I did not want to impact the 'essence' of what is being said. This extract is part of my data analysis of perceptions amongst my participants of economic capital being a distinct signifier of their conceptualisation of class. It demonstrates Polly's growing awareness, discomfort, and uncertainty around social class. My aim is to foreground the latter point by the repetition of 'I think'.

Transcript A

I do think the there are some barriers still up I think and certain of my friends find it quite difficult sometimes to accept*, no what I say because I can be quite sensitive, but sometimes I find -* they know where I go home to *- if they are struggling for money they can get quite upset about it and obviously I'm - no - supportive I'm their friend but they I think they find it quite difficult to talk to me about it because they know I can call mum if I need money, I don't normally but if I'm struggling and we have to put our deposits down on a house for next year and they all know that my parents are going to put down the money for me and I can pay her back when I*

have the money whereas they all have got to have loans or extra loans in order to put three or four hundred pounds down I think can be quite difficult and that barrier is still up I think.

Transcript B – 'The Barriers Are Still Up'

I do think
There are some barriers still up
I think.
And certain of my friends find it
Difficult
To accept.
They know where I go home to
If they are struggling for money they get upset about it
I think
They find it
Difficult
To talk to me about it
They know I can call mum if I need money.
We have to put our deposits down on a house for next year.
They all know that my parents are going to put down the money for me
And I can pay her back
They all have got to have loans
Or extra loans
To put three
Or four
Hundred pounds down.
I think that can be
Difficult.
That barrier is still up
I think.

'It is important that the researcher believes in what they are composing and feels as if they have captured the spirit of their participants' words / voices throughout the poetry presented' (McKenna-Buchanan, 2018, p. 6). After a significant period spent wandering around the edges of narrative inquiry, poetic analysis connected my disparate ideas and ponderings and enabled me to effectively capture the spirit of my participants' words and to believe that what I am doing is credible. Richardson (2003, p.197) discusses how 'self-reflexivity brings to consciousness some of the complex political and ideological agendas hidden in the controls exercised over how interview materials are represented'. She goes on to discuss how when minority groups (and discussed in terms of, for example, disability and ethnicity) enter academia their own 'meaning making [can be] in opposition to the conventions and discourses of hegemonic disciplinary practices' (Richardson, 2003, p.187). Furthermore, under-represented groups 'find

the option of poetic representation beckoning and supportive, as they do other representations that honor (sic) the arts as a legitimate path to knowing and expressing truths about lived experiences' (Richardson, 2003, p.189). This presented as a powerful perspective for me as a working-class primary school teacher turned Initial Teacher Education (ITE) academic, ITE itself being a marginal area in traditional academia. Additionally, poetry is an exciting and potentially powerful way of considering class which, in terms of academic engagement, has historically been the preserve of sociological representations. I look forward to contributing to the body of literature surrounding Bourdieusian theories of class from the perspective of this very different methodological approach and from a position where I have spent significant amounts of time grappling with my own class identity.

I opened this section with Richardson (1995) who describes how she was verbally assailed by delegates of a symposium during a discussion following a reading of *Louisa May* and she reflects upon whether the delegates' words would have been so derisive had she presented her research in a traditional form. Delegates had accused her of 'fabricating research' (Richardson, 1995, p.704). Through engagement with the literature, I have demonstrated the power of poetry in this section and my belief in it as the appropriate tool for the re-presentation and analysis of my data and its potential for authenticity. I conclude with Richardson's (1995, p.696) reference to her ongoing 'process journal' in which she discusses her synthesis of and ideas on poetic transcription. She states:

> Fourth draft! I like it. I love this work. I feel I am integrating the sociological and the poetic at the professional, political, and personal levels. I love what I am doing. I love the process.

My engagement in poetic analysis is reflected in Richardson's words; *finding* poetic analysis was a watershed point for me in which my engagement with my research found its voice and its legitimacy. Like Richardson, I love what I am doing. I love the process.

4.4 - My autoethnographic lens

In my introductory chapter I discussed how this thesis is grounded in a longstanding engagement with my own story in terms of class, opportunities, familial expectations and the 'burning guilt'. My education and experience have gradually but irreversibly shifted my perspective in terms of who I am and what I identify with. As I read, wrote, and discussed my work with my supervisory team it became apparent that I could not present the stories of others while disregarding my own: it felt disingenuous to talk about such lives without acknowledging the exponential way my own experience has shaped the direction of this thesis. In my work I am 'considering ways others may experience similar experiences [and] illustrating facets of cultural experience embedded in personal experience' (Kim, 2016, p.125). I am therefore, as

introduced in chapter 1, interweaving the re-presentation of my participants' narratives with my own; I am presenting my own 'stories' as poetry to mirror and to be congruent with those of my participants.

To make explicit the direction of my work and to contextualise my precise use and meaning of the term autoethnography, I use Kim's perspective (2016, p.123) to see autoethnography as

> a form of narrative research that seeks to systematically analyse the researcher's personal experience embedded in a larger social and cultural context……it presents critical self-study or an experience of the analysis of the self. It is a genre of first-person narrative scholarship based on a premise that understanding of the self is a precondition and a concomitant condition to the understanding of others.

I intend to interweave my own narrative – aspects of my history – with those of my participants. This will be done judiciously and selectively; each section of chapter 5 will begin with a poetic autoethnographic re-presentation of my own story. As discussed below this will be a conservative and carefully constructed stanza to avoid what Faulkner (2009, p.75) disregards as 'lousy poetry'. In interweaving participants' stories with my own I 'problematize social and cultural norms and practices in light of [my] personal experience' (Kim, 2016, p.124). Similarly, in extensive ethnographic work, Bochner and Ellis (2002) claim an important relationship between the researcher and her own lived experience. However, I acknowledge that in representing my version of myself I cannot claim an independent 'truth' but can illuminate my experiences as an impetus for my work and a lens through which I might make sense of the narratives of my participants.

Coffey (1999) discusses how autobiography is a key element in ethnography and should hence be presented 'up front' rather than as opaque referencing in the appendices. Therefore, I make explicit reference to this autoethnographic aspect of my work. It is pertinent to examine the etymology of the word and to look at its tradition. Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013, p.201) acknowledge Ellis (2004) in stating that autoethnography 'seeks to 'describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)'. I am consciously attempting transparency in my positioning when presenting my own story to interweave with those of my participants: I am writing in a specific cultural context, presenting a specific classed and gendered life.

My interpretation of the term autoethnography aligns with that of Ellis as this aspect of my work is driven by the 'auto': my story mirroring that of my participants and displaying 'multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural' (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p.739). I am embedding my own experience in the social and cultural context of others (Kim, 2016). This position sits in contrast to that presented by, for example Reed-Danahay (2017) – as 'critical autoethnography [that] can contribute to our knowledge of power and social inequality' (Reed-Danahay, 2017, p.144). Reed-Danahay (2017, p.144) argues critical

autoethnography as foregrounding the concept that 'personal narratives should be subject to the question 'whose interests are being served [and] should not be taken at face value but, instead, be interrogated for their social positioning'. In terms of identifying the contrasting interpretations of autoethnography, Reed-Danahay (2017, p.144). foregrounds its purpose in illuminating power relations and 'fuse[ing] interweaving participants' stories with my own'. While aspects of Reed-Danahay's position inspire me, particularly in terms of the interweaving of participant and interviewer stories, I acknowledge my subjectivity in identifying with Ellis. Because of my own positionality I support the perspective that autoethnography 'has become the term of choice in describing studies and procedures that connect the personal to the cultural' (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p,740) as opposed to a focus on issues of power and domination. It is the personal and the cultural in which my research is embedded.

Autoethnography is aligned by some researchers to literary practice and literary language (Ellis, 2004; Coffey, 1999). My own background in literature and literary theory also makes autoethnographic re-presentation as poetry attractive to me, my interests and the way I process text. However, I am mindful of the potential for negative criticism. Faulkner (2009), in her discussion of what is 'good' poetry cautions autoethnographers against a lazy or unstructured approach to poetic autoethnography and references Gingrich-Philbrook's discussion of this: researchers working on re-presentation of narratives as poetry rarely draw attention to the actual poetic value of the autoethnographic text being presented. It is my responsibility to avoid 'lousy poetry that masquerades as research' (Faulkner, 2009, p.75). I have redrafted my autoethnographic poems several times to capture effective language to convey feeling, memory and the potential of shared understanding with my readers, as well as to find appropriate rhythm and poetic structure.

In terms of obstacles that might be encountered when embracing autoethnography, it is important that I do not lose sight of the fundamental differences between myself and my participants. While I spent initial time talking to them about my own working-class background and – where I felt it was appropriate – identifying with some of their own experiences in terms of childhood and familial expectations (or *lack of* expectations) I remained conscious of our differences. Coffey (1999, p.31) discusses how during ethnographic fieldwork she felt that she had become close to her participants and that the boundaries between friend and researcher had become blurred at times. She draws on Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) to discuss how 'if one's perspectives get too closely aligned with those of one's research "subjects" or hosts, then the analytical cutting edge of the cultural difference will be lost'. It is 'in the space created by this distance that the analytical work of the ethnographer gets done' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.31). Additionally, it is important to maintain distance between myself and my participants to ensure ethical integrity. This is discussed in 4.7 and alludes to the power

relationship between myself positioned as lecturer and researcher and the comparatively less powerful position of my first-year student participants.

It is crucial to remain robust and authentic in terms of creating credible and authentic autoethnographic data – in my case poetry – and to avoid self-indulgence (Kim, 2016). In concluding this section, I therefore take the following four points created by Kim (2016) as my reference point to avoid such indulgence (Kim, 2016) and 'lousy poetry' (Faulkner, 2009, p. 75):

- Comparing and contrasting personal experiences against the existing research
- Analysing personal experience in light of theories and literature
- Considering ways others may experience similar experiences
- Illustrating facets of cultural experience embedded in personal experience

'Back and forth autoethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and the cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward exposing a vulnerable self' (Bochner and Ellis, 2002, p.739). It is with credibility and authenticity that I wish to demonstrate this gaze; looking inwards at the relevance of my own experiences and outwards to authentically situate my work in terms of cultural and social relevance.

4.5 - The use of reflexive thematic analysis to interpret my data

4.5.i – Theoretical justification

While my overarching method is narrative interviewing, the starting point for my analysis of the interviews is through thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2020, p.19) conclude their 2020 paper with the advice that when engaging with the ever-changing and evolving landscape of thematic analysis, researchers should 'read the most up-to-date writing and advice from authors' to inform their work. It is with this advice in mind that I approach this section and justify my use of thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2020, p.8) foreground the notion of *reflexive* thematic analysis and its 'values of… recognising researcher subjectivity and that knowledge is contextual'. I keep this at the forefront of my thinking as I examine and justify my use of thematic analysis as an interpretive tool and discuss its relevance and centrality to narrative inquiry and the poetic re-presentation of my data.

Riessman (2008) identifies a story's content as the focus of the thematic analysis approach: what is being said rather than how it is being said. It is a concentration on the 'told' rather than the 'telling' where the researcher interprets data according to specific *themes*. Furthermore, Steinmetz (1992) discusses how thematic analysis has significance for narrative inquiry in that events from a narrative are selected for their specific relevance to the researcher's theme; he

states how, in his work, *emerging* themes specifically surrounding social class were foregrounded for analysis. Braun and Clarke latterly underline the importance of making themes transparent to avoid the narrative becoming 'typically a realist account' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.10). However, and challenging Steinmetz, they also make explicit the point that themes – or topics – should be identified at the point of research design, themes do not simply 'emerge' (Braun and Clark, 2020; 2006). For reflexive thematic analysis it is crucial that the researcher does not passively assume that themes will present themselves as 'diamonds scattered in the sand' (Braun and Clarke, 2020; 2006) because this 'denies the active role the research always plays in identifying patterns / themes, selecting which are of interest' (Braun and Clarke, 2020, p.16).

Furthermore, Jupp (2006) discusses how, in the thematic representation of narrative inquiry as a methodological approach, the researcher gathers several stories from which are formed conceptual groupings. My work is deductive in that I bring to it pre-considered themes – or at this stage what might be considered as 'data topics' (Braun and Clarke, 2020, p.14) which I expect to be located in my data. It is therefore not situated in, for example, grounded theory as I have clearly identified my substantive area of inquiry as the exploration of theories relating to social class and gender. I hence identify with Braun and Clarke's (2006) position that themes are initially considered and created in the research design while acknowledging their 2020 position that the reflexive thematic analyst will be looking creatively at the data and play a part in 'generating initial themes' as an 'active researcher' (Braun and Clarke, 2020, p.16).

I use Braun and Clarke's most recent iteration of their *six-phase process for data engagement, coding and theme development* (Braun and Clarke, 2020) to frame my work and to ensure theoretical robustness, and I use Bourdieu's capitals discussed in chapter 3 as my theoretical 'lens through which data are coded and interpreted' (Braun and Clarke, 2020, p.5). To make my intention explicit at this stage I reproduce these six stages here:

1. Data familiarisation and writing data familiarisation notes
2. Systematic data coding
3. Generating initial themes from coded and collated data
4. Developing and reviewing themes
5. Refining, defining and naming themes
6. Writing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2020, p.4)

This structure enables me to be rigorous in my work and reassures me, as a novice researcher, that I am following an acknowledged procedure. Braun and Clarke's discussion of reflexive thematic analysis acknowledges that my coding will not be constrained by codebooks and multiple coders, rather, I am afforded the authors' assurance that the phase-approach is 'not intended to be followed rigidly. And as one's analytic (craft) skill develops, these six

phases can blend together somewhat, and the analytic process necessarily becomes recursive' (Braun and Clarke, 2020, p.4).

With the starting point for interpretation of data as reflexive thematic analysis, I turn to narrative analysis to discuss my themes and investigate what I can know about my participants from their narratives, 'how can this narrative be interpreted so that it provides an understanding of and illuminates the life and culture that created it?' (Patton, 2002, p.115). While I am looking at the broad themes across the participants' narratives, by use of narrative analysis I hope to be able to interrogate individuals' stories in depth. Indeed, Braun and Clarke (2020, p.11) discuss 'exciting mash-ups of reflexive thematic analysis and discursive and narrative approaches'.

Riessman (2008, p.73) underlines the value of thematic narrative analysis in terms of how 'prior theory serves as a resource for interpretation of spoken… narratives' which is a valuable starting point for my own work. However, she warns against oversimplification and avoidance of the assumption that interviewees all mean the same by what they are saying in an interview; it is the skill of the interviewer to attempt authenticity in the face of the essentially subjective analysis of the data. In the context of my own work this will mean ensuring that I am consistently reflexive in my re-presentation of my participants' stories as poetry. Reflexive thematic analysis, with its consistent emphasis on challenging researcher assumptions (Braun and Clarke, 2020. p.3) alongside acknowledging the researcher's subjectivity, is an appropriate tool for the analysis of my data.

4.5.ii – The six stages of my work

To return to Braun and Clark's (2020) six stages cited above, Table 1 indicates how they manifest in my work and evolve as my research.

	Theme	**Development in work**	**How final themes decided**
1	Data familiarisation and writing data familiarisation notes	Review of my data – listening and re-listening to transcripts; noting matches to themes and patterns developing in narratives	Overarching themes matching my research questions. As I progressed though both my literature reviews and my methodology it became clear that the themes should be grounded in the theories of capitals.
2	Systematic data coding	Identifying and locating the	I identified the three Bourdieusian

		'matches' from my data in terms of my themes and coding them accordingly. The data were transcribed in collections of poetry under each thematic heading and a match per theme was made using my own autoethnographic poetry.	capitals, cultural, economic and social, alongside Nowotny's (1981) subsequent theory of emotional capital. In considering them as overarching themes I foregrounded how they interact with each other in the lives of my participants and coalesce to inform their conceptualisation of their class-identity. I added this as a fifth theme (see below)
3	Generating initial themes from coded and collated data	Themes identified as 'capitals'*:* *Cultural Capital* *Economic Capital* *Social Capital* *Emotional Capital* Generating a new overarching theme*:* *Conceptualising class identity* because following several trawls through my data it became apparent that this further layer of analysis would be needed as a key part of how capitals interact with each other.	
4	Developing and reviewing themes		
5	Refining, defining and naming themes		
6	Writing the report	i) Five themes, above, used to re-present the data in chapter 5. ii) The analysis chapter (6) is framed by these five themes and the theories that dominated my discussion. iii)The research questions are responded to in the analysis in chapter 6 and conclusively in chapter 7.	

Table 1: The six stages of thematic reflexive analysis

4.6 - Research methods

4.6.0 - Introduction

In this section I describe the process of my research from the point of collecting my first set of data through to my data presentation and analysis. My aim is to provide a clear account of

how the thesis has been executed and provide clarity and guidance for the reader. My starting point for data collection was the collection of broad data in the form of questionnaires.

4.6. i - The initial questionnaires

My questionnaire (Appendix 1) comprised a combination of quantitative questions and open-ended questions and from this I was able to get a 'feel' for the cohort and their characteristics. As discussed in 4.1, the use of questionnaires is regarded as a largely positivist approach. Therefore, as quantitative data, a questionnaire might appear to contradict my theoretical position, where listening to and interpreting stories is valued above the gathering of facts and supposed scientific knowledge (Burgess *et al.,* 2006). While it has been ascertained that a mixed method approach is acceptable in doctoral research, I justify my use of questionnaires in that it forms a very brief part of my data collection and is intended only to provide some context in terms of the whole cohort. Initially I had intended to work with one cohort of trainee teachers, but the first year's data set was ultimately too small, so I repeated the process the following year. As a result, my data set is made up of Cohort 1 (September 2018 intake) and Cohort 2 (September 2019 intake) as indicated in Table 2 below. In both years, the questionnaire was administered at the start of a colleague's lecture – I had negotiated this time with the colleague concerned – and I spent approximately 10 minutes introducing myself and my research. The questionnaire then took students approximately 15 minutes to complete and the gathering of completed documents a further 5 minutes (assisted in both years by the session's tutor). When I explained the focus of my research to students, I made it clear that it was the experience of females that I planned to interrogate for my substantive research but that at this point, in terms of the questionnaire, I would like everyone to complete it to provide some context for my study. On both iterations I told the cohort – and this was also clearly stated on the questionnaire – that by completing the document consent is assumed, also that they were under no obligation to complete the questionnaire. Additionally, I stressed to the students that the questionnaire is anonymous and (unless they wished to engage with me further; this is discussed below) they should not identify themselves on the document. I also distributed with the questionnaire an information sheet (Appendix 2) giving a written account of the verbal introduction that I had given about my research at the start of the session.

Questionnaire 1 – October 2018		
Number of students in cohort	*Respondents*	
104	**70**	
Key characteristics: • 3 respondents were male. There were 15 males in the whole cohort. The rest were female, no one stated anything other than male or female in response to this question • 28 of the respondents' parents (1 or both) are educated to at least first-degree level • 56 of the respondents had left school within the last three years • 39 of the respondents' most recent pre-university postcode demonstrated an address in the city of Bristol or one of its directly neighbouring counties (commutable from the university)		
Questionnaire 2 – October 2019		
Number of students in cohort	*Respondents*	
118	**53**	
Key characteristics: • There were significantly fewer respondents to the questionnaire in this round • 5 respondents were male. There were 8 males in the whole cohort. The rest were female, no one stated anything other than male or female in response to this question • 19 of the respondents' parents (1 or both) are educated to at least first-degree level • 40 of the respondents had left school within the last three years • 36 of the respondents' most recent pre-university postcode demonstrated an address in either the city of Bristol or one of its directly neighbouring counties (commutable from the university)		

Table 2: Overarching questionnaire data

My questionnaire, while seeking to gather overarching data cannot be regarded as solely quantitative and several of the questions sought responses that were qualitative in their nature. In terms of quantitative data collection, I asked, for example, the participants to state the gender that they identify with, the year they left secondary school and the postcode of their last place of residence prior to coming to university. These questions all generate quantifiable data that can be 'counted'. However, other questions require a more narrative response and at this point the quantitative method of data collection becomes more qualitative through open response opportunities. A very small number of respondents chose to answer that question and they were all female. In the first round of interviews (2018), I had explicitly stated that I am looking at the experience of young women; this resulted in just 3 male respondents. In my second round of questionnaires in 2019, while I again stated that I am looking at the experience of young women for my research, I emphasised that I would appreciate responses from male members of the cohort. This might explain why I had a larger number of males opting to complete the questionnaire in 2019. My rationale for including males in the

overarching questionnaire was twofold. I wanted to gain as full a data set as possible to get an understanding of the cohort and its overarching characteristics - the males' data is included in my overview of the questionnaires. Also, in the interests of parity, I felt it would not be inclusive to only ask females to respond. This was one of the first lectures in the first year of the students' three-year degree and I did not want to appear to convey any gender-based bias to students which might (albeit possibly unconsciously) impact their emergent impressions of the course and the perceptions of teaching and initial teacher education.

In the first round (2018) I had no teaching responsibility for this cohort at all. However, in the second round (2019) I taught English to one group (approximately 30 students). At the end of the questionnaire, I made a call for participants to take part in my substantive research project. To mitigate potential ethical complications arising from being one of the group's tutors I specified during my introduction that I was unable to work with them. I have discussed this further, along with issues surrounding storage of data and the General Data Protection Regulation (Gov.UK, 2018) compliance in the ethics section (4.7) of this chapter. At the end of the questionnaire there was a space for interested students to communicate their name and contact email address to me; in this I stated that it would take the form of up to 3 one to one interviews. As stated, I stipulated that this section should only be completed if the respondent was interested in working with me.

4. 6. ii – Sample size and characteristics

I had planned for this research to include between 6 and 10 participants – first year undergraduate teaching students – and to conduct 3 interviews with each participant over the course of the academic year. Kim (2016, p.160) discusses the importance of being able to justify a sample size, highlighting how insufficient participation is 'a typical target of criticism against qualitative research'. With both points in mind I settled at between 6 and 10 to ensure that I collected sufficient data to make my work valid and robust, but not so much as to impede the quality and depth of the poetic re-presentation of my participants' stories that I have chosen as my narrative research genre. As I am presenting these stories alongside representations of my own story (4.4) an oversaturation of data would be inappropriate in terms of the length and quality of a professional doctoral thesis.

My criteria for participant inclusion were:

- Students who are, or identified as, women
- Women who had left school no more than 3 years ago
- Women of working-class and middle-class origin

Following the whole cohort questionnaire in both years, I gained a small number of participants for my substantive research. While in both years an average of 15 students expressed interest,

when I followed this up, uptake was significantly lower. I secured 5 participants in the first year, and 4 in the second although in both years one person dropped out following the first interview. In the first year this was without explanation or any further contact from her in response to my emails. In the second year this was because the student withdrew from the course; I tried to contact her by email but had no response. However, neither of these participants requested to withdraw their data – the terms of which were clearly stated in the consent form – I therefore believed it ethically acceptable to continue to use the data provided. At the commencement of each interview, I asked the participant to complete a consent form (Appendix 3) and gave them a participant information sheet (Appendix 4). I was not afforded the luxury of being able to select my participants from a large pool of responses; I embraced all who responded and therefore my sample is a 'convenience' sample (Lunneborg, 2007).

To contextualise in terms of my data at this point, Table 3 below gives an overview of the key characteristics of my participants. All names are pseudonyms. I also reproduce this information as data poems at the beginning of chapter 5.

Participant name *	**Years since leaving secondary school**	**Social class participant self identifies with**	**Highest educational level of mother**	**Highest educational level of father**	**Occupation of mother**	**Occupation of father**
Cohort 1						
Polly	3	middle	degree	doctorate	senior nursing sister and ward leader	detective in a police force
Kate	0	working	none	none	teaching assistant	retired car park attendant
Lucy	0	working	apprenticeship	O levels	self-employed cleaner	electronics engineer
Anna	0	middle	degree	HE diploma	occupational therapist	farmer
Eve	3	lower middle	MA	HND	nurse	mechanic
Cohort 2						

Emma	2	middle	GCSE	GCSE	retail (visual merchandiser)	HGV night driver
Carrie	3	working	GCSE	None	shop assistant	kitchenhand
Wendy	3	working	GCSE	GCSE	cleaner	ex-military now NHS resource manager
Kitty	0	working	none	none	HCA in care home	factory worker

Table 3: Key characteristics of my participants

In both years I interviewed initially in October (2018 and 2019) and re-interviewed in May (2019 and 2020) rather than also doing an interview in January, which had been my original intention at the time of the design of this research. I decided, due to where the first-year students do their placement in school the data in January would not be significantly different to October as in January the students would not have been exposed to different university / primary school experiences as part of their training. This decision was supported by my supervisors.

4.6. iii The narrative interviews: semi-structured interviews

Cohort 1			
Participants interview 1	**Date and duration**	*Participants interview 2*	**Date and duration**
5	*October 2018 between 20 and 40 minutes*	**4**	*May 2019 between 30 and 45 minutes*
Cohort 2			
Participants interview 1	**Date and duration**	*Participants interview 2*	**Date and duration**
4	*October 2019 between 20 and 40 minutes*	**3**	*May 2020 between 30 and 45 minutes*

Table 4: The narrative interviews – length and frequency

I justify my use of semi-structured interviews with Kvale (1996) who discusses how interviews are at the core of qualitative research methods in terms of his miner / traveler (sic) analogy. Rather than regarding research data as facts to be dug up in the process of interviewing, Kvale conceptualises the researcher as 'a traveler on a journey that leads to a tale to be told on returning home… [she] wanders through the landscape and enters into conversations with the people encountered' (Kvale, 1996, p.4).

Table 4 shows the length and frequency of my interviews. My choice of interviews drew on Burgess' (1984) concept of the interview as a reciprocal conversation made richer by its focussed depth and purpose. In narrative interviewing, this conversation evolves, and the participant and interviewer collaborate, though not necessarily consciously, to co-construct meaning (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002; Mishler, 1986). Jupp (2006, p.190) discusses how the often-rigid rules in conventional social science interviews are disapplied and replaced with those of conversation and how 'one story can lead to another as narrator and questioner / listener negotiate spaces for… extended turns'.

I focus specifically on semi-structured interviews which Kim (2016) states are effective in guiding the narrative of the conversation with one's participants without rigidly governing responses. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p.130) suggest that rather than a list of rigid questions, the interviewer should prepare 'an outline of topics to be covered with suggested questions' and this is shown in my interview schedule (Appendix 5). Furthermore, Burgess *et al.* (2006, p.73) discuss how semi-structured interviews provide participants with the 'latitude to talk about themselves and issues that concern their own individual and unique experiences'. I have framed this 'latitude' with my themes and have tried to be explicit in that while the interview is not formally structured some areas of experience will be foregrounded above others.

To return to Kvale's (1996, p.4) miner / traveler (sic) metaphor, 'the journey may not only lead to new knowledge; the traveler (sic) might change as well'. As I discuss in my analysis and reflection (chapter 6) the interview process took me into unexpected territories and reflections and has changed my perspectives on some key points around my substantive research area, young women's understanding of class and gender, and how they conceptualise class in terms of capitals. For example, I had originally anticipated that a significant part of my focus would be on the concept of developing professional identity yet in both cohorts it was not discussed by any of my participants, and I hence chose to shift its focus and reduce my discussion of it in the literature review and subsequent data analysis. Similarly, I had not anticipated my participants' foregrounding of the relationship between material wealth and their interpretation of social class and because of this I have adjusted my thesis to foreground the concept of economic capital in my consideration of my participants' perceived signifiers of social class.

What stood out as being of specific significance is that these factors were key characteristics in both of my cohorts.

In terms of the profile of my participants and reflecting the aims of my research proposal, all were females who began their teacher training within 3 years of completing their secondary school education. These key characteristics are displayed in Table 3 and show that while almost half of the participants self-identify as middle-class, in terms of parental occupation and education several would be securely identified as from working-class origins. Waller (2010, p.56) discusses this phenomenon when he states, 'irrespective of structural positioning, people see themselves ontologically as working class or middle class'. Early analyses of my data suggests that this class-identification is related to the participants' perceptions of how financially 'comfortable' their families rather than a discussion of cultural factors that contribute towards a Bourdieusian understanding of class.

4.6.iv – Transcription, re-presentation and analysis of the data

Following completion of each interview I listened to the recording and transcribed each myself. I chose to do it myself to appreciate the richness of each interview, its speaker's vocal nuances and stresses and to ascertain where gaps and pauses in speech gave depth to the speaker's utterances. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) discuss how transcription, rather than being a straightforward administrative process, is interpretative and demands attention to detail and it is with this in mind that I actively listened to my recordings.

I listened to the recordings several times alongside my transcript to allow the speakers' voices to take shape in my head and to enable me to choose how to re-present their utterances as poetry. As discussed in 4.5, I have identified my analytic themes as cultural, economic, social and emotional capital and the conceptualisation of class, and this allowed me to work along the broad principles of analytic thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2020). I adapted Braun and Clarke's six-phase process for data engagement, coding and theme development to suit my work by combining stages three, four and five into an overarching theme identification section, and began working through the transcripts re-presenting pertinent parts of the interview text as poetry to illuminate the capital the speaker was specifically referring to. Alongside this I was collating my field notes about my own experiences as a working-class child, young woman then working-class female primary school teacher, with a growing awareness of class-consciousness and class-shifting. These field notes reflected the experiences under discussion by my participants, and as part of my process I constructed stanzas of poetry. Gradually, I built a collection of poems demonstrating how the 5 themes I was working with coalesced to inform the participants' awareness of gender and class-identity and the impact that my own gendered and classed-identity has had on me. This was then thematically reproduced in my re-presentation of the data (chapter 5) and linked by relevant

commentary to ensure that the poetry 'flows' for the reader. Chapters 6 and 7 respond conclusively to my research questions.

I had told my participants that I intended to re-present my data as poetry and offered to share it with them. While my participants expressed mild interest in this none of them wanted to see the poetry and acknowledging their busy academic and professional placement timetables at the time, I did not pursue this further. However, in retrospect I appreciate the importance of member checking, and how this is central to avoiding the production of 'lousy poetry' (Faulkner, 2009): finding a way to ensure my participants saw the poetry that I wrote with their data should have been central to the validation of my work. To seek validation elsewhere I had affirmation from my supervisors that my poetry 'worked' by illuminating the aspects of my participants' data I wanted to foreground alongside the carefully chosen language in my autoethnographic poems. They stated I had succeeded in both shining a light on my own experiences and underlining the classed and gendered narratives of my participants. Furthermore, I shared my poetry with my brother-in-law, himself a poet, who offered the following insight:

> *The participant poems get to what is important really quickly and this is achieved by your vocabulary choices; you get a sense of the participants' perspectives and a flavour of getting underneath their skin. The autoethnographic poems meanwhile were clear, immediate and resonated with the experiences of the participants through language and repetition.*

I also shared some poetry with colleagues in ITE who were excited by this unusual way of presenting narratives, a way that might be a possibility for some of our future undergraduate dissertations. Between these peer perspectives I have outlined I believe that while I do not have the assurance of member checking I have had a degree of validation that I have not produced 'lousy poetry' (Faulkner, 2009)

4.7: Ethical considerations

I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the ethical issues surrounding my research and the steps I took to ensure its compliance and integrity. I acknowledge that research can have positive impact on participants, underpinning the ethical justification for my own research with potentially vulnerable first year students. My aim was to 'gather data not change people' (Patton, 2002, p.405) alongside my overarching intentions of searching for new knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon (Jupp, 2006). Both perspectives are supported by qualitative research's claim to, through the creation of new ways of knowing, make positive future impact. In the narrative approach I am taking, the importance of listening to stories, and of being reflexive in terms of my own 'background' and positionality indicates the centrality of these perspectives. Kvale (1996, p.69) discusses how rather than being able to solve and

address ethical questions in a single swoop, ethics should be viewed as 'fields of uncertainty [and therefore continually] addressed and reflected on'. Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p.170) problematise the issue of ethics in the context of narrative inquiry in their discussion of how attempting to completely address ethical considerations prior to the commencement of research is not wholly satisfactory because of the organic nature of the methodology. To do this 'works against the relational negotiation that is part of narrative inquiry'. In this section, I present how I have demonstrated and engaged with ethical considerations throughout the thesis; I contextualise and theorise my ethical position and justify why I made specific choices. Bassey (1999) states that three areas demand explicit attention in ensuring ethical research: democracy, truth and individuals. To address these three areas, justify my work, and frame the potential ambiguities of ethics, my research is grounded in the BERA (2018) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research in which ongoing and dynamic voluntary informed consent (BERA, 2018; Aubrey *et al.*, 2000) has been obtained from my participants. Their right to withdraw at any time during the research period (BERA, 2018) has been made explicit as has consistent protection of participants' privacy (BERA, 2018). Confidentiality and anonymity in the data have been respected through detailed participant information literature and ongoing verbal reassurance. I have assured participants of safe and confidential storage of their data (interview recordings and transcripts) and that following completion of my work this data will be securely destroyed (BERA, 2018); these factors are made explicit on the participant information sheets (Appendices 2 and 4). As I had collected insufficient data from my round of interviews in 2018 which resulted in repeating the process in 2019, I submitted an amendment to my ethics form to secure approval for this from the Ethics Committee (Appendix 5) and this was approved. For both cohorts I launched my data collection with a whole cohort questionnaire (Appendix 1) which I discussed in the verbal introduction of my research at the start of a lecture in both years. I explained that to get an overarching picture of the cohort I would like them to complete the questionnaire (as discussed in 4.6) and ensuring ethical robustness by indicating that this was entirely voluntary. I also stated that while my substantive research would focus specifically on the experiences of young women, I would like them to all complete this questionnaire - if they were willing to participate – for me to understand the overall picture of the cohort. However, to address ethical issues of consent I told them that completion is entirely at their discretion, and unless they were interested in taking part in my wider research, they should not write names or contact details on the form in the interests of anonymity. I reiterated this on the accompanying research questionnaire participant information sheet (Appendix 2) that I distributed multiple copies of in the lecture theatre along with the questionnaire. In both years of data collection when I collated the completed questionnaires it was evident that not all students in the room had participated and this satisfied me that I had clearly shared the information surrounding informed voluntary consent.

At this point in the process – my first contact with students – and again when I interviewed my participants, I was explicit about the storage of data in line with GDPR (2018) guidelines and that on completion of the thesis all data would be destroyed.

In both years, and as discussed in 4.6, the questionnaires invited students to record their contact details on the proforma if they wished to take part in my substantive research. I have described this process in 4.6, but in the theoretical consideration of ethical issues around good practice became further sharpened as I began engaging in qualitative interviewing. A tension arose in that I wanted to gain as much data as I could from my participants but simultaneously respect their position as new students on a course on which I teach (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). I therefore had to gain the confidence of my participants alongside maintaining professional boundaries. Patton (2002) discusses how the creation of rapport is embedded in effective qualitative interviewing. In terms of positioning myself in the research, I am mindful of my own insider status and of the subsequent power differentials embedded in the relationships with my participants. This has prompted me to consistently consider my role and integrity to avoid 'faking friendship' (Duncombe and Jessop, 2002) and to address ongoing ethical issues (Ball,1993) consciously and transparently. Transparency has been crucial throughout my interactions with participants (BERA, 2018, p.16) and while I cannot alter the power relationship in terms of my position as lecturer and theirs as first-year students, I can attempt to mitigate its impact through relentless reflexivity which is essential in terms of examining and reassessing power relationships (Pillow, 2010). Macdonald (2002) discusses how consent is potentially constrained by power structures within social relationships and this has reminded me to ensure that consent is dynamic and discussed with participants at both rounds of interviews.

However, it is important to consider the extent to which consent can ever be truly and authentically informed and I am mindful of the 'relational negotiation' of narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.170). Because of the discursive, co-constructed nature of narrative research, roles and relationships shift over time and what commenced as a focus at the start of the study might, in the context of the interview process, shift and mutate. As a novice researcher I am conscious of this and actively ensured that participants are in no doubt about the dynamic nature of the consent process. At each interview I reminded them of their right to withdraw either their participation or their data at any point before the agreed deadline in the process. Yet I am troubled by the concept of the 'agreed deadline' in that this was my deadline and they agreed to it I wonder to what extent is that deadline another example of insidious power relationships resulting from our respective positionality (Ball, 1993). I can only mitigate this by reflexively foregrounding such concerns as I research and write, acknowledging these constraints discussed by Macdonald (2002) and the inevitability that insider research is 'always entangled in relationships of power' (Juritzen *et al.*, 2011, p.648).

In both my initial contact with my participants then in the two interviews that followed over the course of the year I reiterated how participating in this study would not impact their studies or their relationship with me as a member of the wider academic team. I did this to mitigate any detrimental effect of my research on participants and to be clear that I was not advantaging those who chose to take part in my research over others in the cohort who did not by offering incentives (BERA, 2018, p.19). I created distance between myself and the participants by negotiating with the Programme Leader and Module Leaders to avoid direct teaching activities or one to one placement supervision with any of the participants. Similarly, when marking was not anonymous (for example face to face or recorded presentations) I negotiated with colleagues to avoid being part of my participants' assessments to avoid having conscious contact with their work. At the time of submission of this thesis I had done this successfully with Cohort 1 and have just three further months to negotiate with Cohort 2.

Because of my positionality it is important to remain alert to how, in the process of my research, my resulting data may well be 'inherently sensitive, and therefore, potentially dodgy in… ethical terms' (Sikes, 2006, p.111). From the inception of my research, I was mindful of the risk of participants wishing to share information or opinions with me that may not be congruent with my perceptions of our undergraduate provision and, indeed, my wider part in this provision. However, more potentially serious was the potential of a participant raising a colleague's possible malpractice. This would raise issues of disclosure and related privacy (BERA, 2018, p25). In accordance with BERA, participant confidentiality would only be superseded following careful consideration of the situation and discussion with my Director of Studies and my Associate Head of Department. I would be careful to ensure that the participant was aware of my actions, the consequences of these and the protection they would be given in such circumstances and throughout this process detailed notes would be kept (BERA, 2018). While neither of these situations arose for me during the data collection period, I believe that actively staying alert to these considerations of good practice during my interviews has developed my skill as a narrative researcher probing the lives of others and equipped me with the tools to address this in future work. It is central to my own philosophy of education to ensure that participants have faith in the credibility of my work (Burgess *et al.,* 2006) as they have continued to know me as a teacher and researcher in the department over the three years of their degree (Thomas, 2011).

Following the move to all contact being online because of the COVID 19 pandemic, my final three interviews with Cohort 2 were conducted by telephone and I gave the participants the choice of telephone or video. All three remaining participants said that they would rather talk on the phone than video because the prospect of a video call made them feel uncomfortable. This was at an early stage in the university's move to online learning and experience tells me that students, especially the first years at the time, were less confident and relaxed about

using video calls than they have become and because of this I acknowledge that had the medium of the second interviews been different for Cohort 2 my data might have been different and their quality potentially improved. My fourth participant had left the course and, while not withdrawing data from her first interview, did not engage with me in terms of further discussions.

As a narrative researcher, re-presenting my participants' data as poetry along given themes, reflexivity is central to my epistemological position. Pillow (2020, p.176) asks 'Can we ever truly represent another?... How do I do representation knowing that I can never quite get it right?' In mitigating issues of power in terms of the ownership of data I have been explicit in making my participants aware that I am using their words to create poems, and while interested to see the published thesis, none have requested scrutiny during the process. Having discussed this with my supervisors in terms of ethical integrity, it was agreed that while I have gathered their words, I hold the academic knowledge and skill to frame the data theoretically and group according to themes, as opposed to presenting a series of authentic accounts of participants' lives; I am not presenting a verbatim transcript, I am presenting an interpretation of selected sections of their words and I have been open and honest in sharing this information with them. Ethical rules 'must always be understood contextually' (Kvale, and Brinkman, 2009, p.69) and in this context it has been acceptable not to share data once transcribed. That said, however, as discussed elsewhere looking back on the process I would be more adamant in terms of member checking in future projects. Through careful attention to these ethical issues discussed, I aim to unpick and re-present narratives in the spirit of Whitehead and McNiff's (2006, p.79). insistence on 'reflective self-scrutiny and absolute honesty'.

Chapter 5: Re-presentation of the data

5.0 – Introduction

In this chapter I re-present my narratives as poetry and do so using the 5 themes that I have identified using the process of reflexive thematic analysis in the context of Braun and Clark's (2020) six-stage model. I am interested in how the capitals coalesce and interact with each other to build the participants' conceptualisation of class

Table 5 shows how the poetry is grouped – along with my autoethnographic poems – under each theme and how I divided these themes into subheadings to make them clear to the reader.

Theme	Autoethnographic poem	Subthemes	Clarification
5.2: Conceptualising class identity	A Different Class	A thing?	Here, participants refer to not seeing the concept of class as of relevance to their lives.
		I'm pretty certain I'm working-class	These participants self-identify as working-class and with a generally more definite sense of certainty about their judgment.
		I'm (sort of) middle-class	This group of poems re-present the narratives of participants who verbally identify as middle-class. It is of note here that it is just Polly who is resolute in her classed identity.
5.3: Cultural Capital	Kitchen Suppers	Suited and booted	This section focuses on some of the participants' attitudes to the workplace, governed by their parents' occupations and attitudes.
		'Other' people	Participants discuss the differences they have identified between themselves and other students they have met in classroom and domestic situations

			since being at university.
		I come from	This poetry re-presents participants' perspectives about their homes and backgrounds.
		This place…	This is where participants discuss their choice of university and their subsequent feelings about being at this university.
5.4: Economic Capital	Spanish Sea	Don't quite get it	Narratives of working-class participants reflecting on the way more affluent peers do not seem to understand that money is a struggle for some.
		The barriers are still up	Three poems specifically presenting middle-class Polly's narrative about how economic capital impacts friendships in certain situations.
		We are doing well but…	This short subsection demonstrates working-class reticence to avoid directly stating that they are struggling financially.
		We are different and the same	These poems foreground how the participants acknowledge their similarities as trainee teachers while simultaneously acknowledging economic difference.
5.5: Social Capital	The Only Slave	Fitting in	This is poetry reflecting how at ease – or not – the participants feel at university with the peers (from potentially different social groups) that they have met.

		Different friends	This poetry looks at the friendships the participants have; it considers both university and 'home' friendships.
		Who do you know?	This looks at the participants' narratives in the context of how family and social connections have contributed to students' choices about choosing a teaching degree
5.6 Emotional Capital	Our Own Glass Ceiling	You'll make a good teacher	Poetry surrounding families' narratives. These are potentially tied up with cultural scripts and symbolic violence (as discussed in the next chapter) – about the perceived suitability of these young women to enter the profession
		I love children	The impact of the participants' 'love' of and working with young children. This is built on in the next section reflecting families' perspectives on this.
		It's a girl's job	Poetry presenting the perception of teaching as 'women's work'.
		We just want you to be happy	These poems reflect the – largely working class - trainees' narratives about their parents' principal desire is for them to 'be happy'.
		We are proud of you	These poems present the participants' family pride at choices made about becoming a primary school teacher.
		Make sure that you are sure	Where middle-class parents are anxious to ensure that their

			daughters are making the right choices.

Table 5: Overview of the thematic presentation of the data poems

Continuing my emphasis on foregrounding subjectivity and reflexivity throughout my work the grouping of the poems is my own. Another researcher might have chosen different extracts from the narratives to illustrate, for example, the manifestation of cultural capital amongst the participants. In doing so I acknowledge my own positionality and potential assumptions surrounding the choices that I have made. It is also of relevance that none of the participants make any reference to the concept of capitals and my discussion of their narratives is thus through my own Bourdieusian lens.

Following this introduction, I start my poetic representation (5.1) with a short poem about each participant using their own words – 'cherry-picked' from the interviews – to present a brief poetic picture of each participant: their background and how they identify in terms of class. Like Richardson (1995, p.704) my poetry 'resituates ideas of validity' in terms of findings 'from knowing to telling' and I make no claim to representing a single truth. I am conscious of how I situate myself in the poems; I have chosen the participants' words to present a portrait of them that address my research questions, not strived for an objective representation (Kim, 2016). However, the words are their own and while I might not be presenting a direct account of what they said, I am using their own utterances to construct a 'sense' of each participant.

As indicated in the table above, I present sections of my data as poetry, presented under the five themes I have indicated and divided into a selection of subthemes, explained in the table. For example, in 5.3 I focus on cultural capital. One of the subsections is entitled 'other' people and this collection of stanzas re-present some of the participants' thoughts about feeling a difference between themselves and their peers in terms of background and upbringing. I start each section with a reflection of my own experience, presented as poetic autoethnography and these poems broadly reflect the extracts of data I am re-presenting. The autoethnographic poem opens each section, has its own title, and is identified by use of a different font. After each autoethnographic poem there is explanatory text providing continuity and appropriate clarification. This gives the poetry context and meaning. To clarify where necessary, I have put a brief explanatory sentence in smaller, italicized text below the poem and marked with an asterisk. There is some unavoidable conflation of data as in the process of thematically sorting my interviews few were solely reflecting a single capital at any given time: capitals are 'interconnected' (Reay *et al.*, 2005, p.21) and I have had to make choices.

To return to my methodological position, Clandinin and Connolly (2000) discuss the three-dimensional space where inquiry can travel *'inward, outward, backward and forward* and *situated within place*' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.49). My poetry consciously embraces this non-linear concept as I aim to present perspective on a theme rather than to construct a

chronological ‘story’ for each participant and, while not foregrounding this approach, recognise the part it plays in the context of my data. As indicated, I use line length, the positioning of text on that line and the occasional slightly enlarged word or bold text to create impact and resonance through *poetic craft* (Faulkner, 2009). Finally, I identify with Longenbach’s (2008, p.xi) position that how I use words on a line and lines on a page ‘distinguishes our experience of poetry as poetry, rather than some other kind of writing’.

5.1 - A poetic portrait of the participants

This section presents a brief overview of each participant’s background and self-identification in terms of class.

Anna
I’m from a little village
Just north of Oxford
I’m an only child
It’s always been just me.
My mum is an occupational therapist
My dad grew up on a farm
Two
Or three
Miles away.
He’s a self-employed farmer
Mostly sheep.
We’re probably middle-class

Carrie
I’m from Bristol
My mum and dad worked at the chocolate factory
Until it closed down.
Now she works in a supermarket
And he is a pot washer.
Working-class I suppose.

Emma
So, I’m obviously from the Midlands
And I’ve got both parents
Who are still together
Living under the same roof
Which you don’t find very often
It’s becoming very rare.
My mum works in retail
And my dad’s an HGV driver
I’d probably say we’re a middle-class family.
To be honest.

Eve
I’m from Wiltshire
But we moved there – from Bristol - when my parents separated
Lots of my family are from Bristol
I love Bristol. I wanted to come back.
My mum’s a nurse

She's kind of
At the top of her field.
My dad, with my nan, owns a skip hire
So I've definitely got a middle class mum
And my dad
He's got a middle-class position
But he's very lower-class minded.

Kate
I come from a small town
Outside Plymouth
My mum used to be a civil servant
Now she's a TA*
My dad is retired
He's quite old compared to other people's parents
Now he's a car park attendant
I don't really know how the social classes work but *I'm pretty sure I'm working-class.*
**school teaching assistant.*

Kitty
I've always lived in Bristol
Not been away really
My dad works in a factory
And my mum she's a carer
In a care home
Yeah, we're all pretty working-class.

Lucy
I'm from Cornwall
My upbringing was really good; lots of outside play.
My dad's an electrical engineer
He worked throughout our childhoods
My mum now cleans
She's self-employed
She did other stuff as well
I would say working-class.

Polly
I'm from the south coast
Lived with my mum and dad
Until I was 14
Then my parents divorced
Now I live with my mum
My dad is in charge of *
In the *
My mum is a nurse
But she's always been
Head Honcho
In the hospital
I'm not ashamed to say *I'm quite middle-class.*
**text redacted to ensure anonymity*

Wendy
I grew up between
Wales and Salisbury

My dad was in the army, then.
My mum is a cleaner
When money was better with dad
She looked after us at home
But for the majority of her life All of my life
She's been a cleaner.
As a family we have a bit more money now
But I think we're still
Decidedly working class.

With some prompting all the participants were able to identify a sense of their background and arrived – with different *degree*s of prompting – at an at least tentative self-identification of class.

5.2 - Conceptualising class identity

I begin this section with my autoethnographic poem, each of these poems is presented in a different font to ensure that the reader is clear that they relate to my own experiences:

A Different Class

By now I was a teacher
A real live teacher
And I was shopping with my real live teacher friends,
Different to me.
My mum is the FACE of M&S – or words with some such similar emphasis – said one
And others agreed.
I cannot remember
If other friends
Named other stores
But I remember the familiar reminder of difference
As I thought to myself
My mum
Just loves
A charity shop.
In 2021 that's 'cool'
And fashionably sustainable
But on that day
In 1990s Essex
It signified poverty
And that signified shame

And I was reminded that I am from a different class.

Re-presentation of my participant data as poetry

In the autoethnographic poem above *A Different Class*, I have conveyed my own perception of class at the point when I became a newly qualified teacher and meeting new groups of friends who were different to me. The following poems are my participants' words about how they position themselves in terms of class. Some participants did not readily see class as being relevant to their lives, and these poems are collected beneath the subheading **A thing?** Several working-class participants were able to identify themselves as such and these are collected under the subheading, **I'm pretty certain I'm working class.** Those who self-identified as middle-class tended to be less certain and these poems are collected under the heading, **I'm (sort of) middle class**.

A thing?
I don't know
I never really speak about it
To my friends
Because I don't think it's really a thing.
It's more like
It's not so much about
Class
As how well-off you are. **(Lucy w/c)**

It's kind of weird
We can all get along
Really well
Without thinking too much about who we are
As in background.
At the start of the year
I wouldn't have thought too much about myself and social class
But then maybe,
When making friends with people
I might have thought
Actually
We are quite different
Because we have different social classes. **(Lucy w/c)**

I think we're
Almost
On the same…
Everyone's got the same
Level of education
Because they're all here.
We're all students
We're all struggling for money
In terms of social status
It's not such a big deal
Being a student. **(Polly m/c)**

I feel
That as time has gone on
The things that separated us
In terms of class
And background
Become less relevant.
You realise that you're working to the same goal
And you just worry about it less
Because you're more focussed
On yourself
And getting to where you want to be
Rather than worrying about
Fitting in.
And it all happens quite naturally I think
And when you're on placement
And in someone's class
You don't have to be from a certain background
There's a place for everyone. **(Carrie w/c)**

I'm pretty certain I'm working class

I'm pretty certain I'm working-class
But that's all I can tell you. **(Kate w/c)**

I'm working-class
I know that
People on my course
Their parents
Have actual career type jobs
Rather than manual labour.
But being working-class
Gives me an awareness.
I am representing working-class people going into a proper profession.
Children who've grown up on council estates
With their mums
And dads
Having no interest
In reading to them at home
I have a natural connection with those kinds of children. **(Carrie w/c)**

My mum
She cleans
She's self-employed.
But my parents don't earn that much
Don't earn enough
To put into me being here.
I'd definitely say we're working-class. **(Lucy w/c)**

Working class
Absolutely
Working class. **(Kitty w/c)**

I'm (sort of) middle class

If people ask
I say sort of
Middle-class.

It's sort of
The one I tend to go to
I live in an ex-council house
And the village that I'm from
Has a wide range of people
And people who wouldn't necessarily fit
Into the lower-class bracket.
Some of them would say
They are more upper-class
But then there's a lot like me
Who just
Sort of sit
In the middle.
And are happy in the middle. **(Anna m/c*)***

I'd probably say
We're a middle-class family
We're not
We've got
You know
We've got the income coming in
But we haven't got money to be throwing around.
I'd class ourselves
As a middle-class
Family.
My dad
He paid for lots
He was very like
I want a new car
And it's suddenly on finance
And you're like Dammit! **(Emma m/c)**

I don't really care about it
I class myself as middle-class
Based on what people have said.
I do not see class as an important thing at all
I just think it's something
We make up to try
To put barriers between people.
It's other people saying things
It's other people's opinions
What other people have said
And how they see us. **(Eve m/c)**

I'm probably quite middle class.
I know that. **(Polly m/c)**

This section has conceptualised class in the words of the participants, but their uncertainty in terms of categorically defining themselves in terms of class is an overarching characteristic of their narratives. Several qualified what they were saying about class with modifiers like 'sort of', 'quite' and 'probably'. Through the lens of Bourdieusian theory, Anna's self- identification as middle-class is not supported by her narrative, but Polly's is and her natural confidence and

her parents' financial and cultural investment in her education has clearly impacted her own reserves of capital. Meanwhile, Kitty's 'absolutely working-class' is accurate, but Lucy's 'definitely' is less so. While Lucy identifies during the narratives as working-class there are contradictory indicators such as her mum being able to spend time with her children when they were young and spending that time on 'walks with the family and lots of reading'. Such activities suggest that the family are in possession of a degree of cultural capital, and this is demonstrated in the following section 5.3.

5.3 - Cultural capital

The autoethnographic poem that opens this section, *Kitchen Suppers*, presents my own upbringing and my gradual understanding of what cultural capital is, although it would be many years before I could name it. Peppered throughout the thesis is the indication that my home was a 'respectable' working-class environment where traditional working-class values sat alongside love, and lack of aspiration. While my education, income, and 'taste' (Bourdieu, 1984) may now reflect a socially mobile individual who has 'collected' cultural capital along the way, the residual feeling of being a 'class mongrel' (Cadwalladr, 2012) and never quite fitting in remains, and is demonstrated at the end of the poem.

Kitchen Suppers

Home was television, tea at 5 and love.
Where 'supper'
Was custard creams and hot milk
And spaghetti was strictly out of a tin.
Olive oil was warm, on cotton wool and soothed sore ears
We cooked with lard.
Then, university,
Where I learnt so much more than literature.
Before, I did not have
Friends whose parents were professionals, had careers.
They had jobs
Job jobs
That paid the bills
And were largely hated
And the **big holidays** were counted down to.
And now
Careers, professions
Professions that people's parents were proud of

And talked about around large kitchen tables, invitingly lit.
And facilitating lifestyles
And houses
And holidays to places I had seen on tv.
And books; so many books
And easy talk, opinions, ideas.
Confidence.
Cultural capital
Nebulous, nameless yet palpable
It was only later that I could capture it and pin it
Feel guilty about it
Yet never quite have it…

Re-presentation of my participant data as poetry

This section continues with the theme of cultural capital in the participant's words. Throughout the interviews none of my participants, at any point, used the language of capitals and this reflected my expectations. However, their language, the references they made and their discussion of their lives and perspectives enabled me to collate the poetry into groups which have the same broad themes. The first group of poems under the subheading, **Suited and booted** shows attitudes towards work of the contrasting families of two of my participants towards and education and these words demonstrate their funds of cultural capital. The other subheadings in this section are **'Other' people** which highlights differences which from my interpretative perspective shines a light on perceived difference between my participants and other new students that they have met; **I come from** where the participants discuss their family home and background and **This place** which presents poetry surrounding choice and perceptions of the university and how the participants feel about being there; this is analysed through the lens of The Game (Bathmaker *et al.,* 2016, Bourdieu, 1998) in the following chapter.

Suited and booted

My step dad
Kinds of potters between jobs.
Gardening now
Telecommunications then.
He does things that pays the bills.
But both of my biological parents have careers
Careers in management
And that has rubbed off on me
I'm going to be a head teacher by the time I'm thirty. **(Polly m/c)**

I think it was probably
Them

Managing and talking
About their meetings
They wore their uniforms a lot
But also
Often
Would go to the office
In shoes and shirts and suits and stuff; suited and booted.
Because they would be going to meetings.
And I see people
My dad works with
On the telly
And when they stand in front of *
And I see my dad
And some really important person
Stood under the sign
I think that's really cool
I could do that!
I could be a famous person **(Polly m/c).**
**text redacted to maintain confidentiality*

Me and my brother have been brought up
With my parents doing well.
Living in nice houses
In nice areas
With high expectations of us.
The growing up expectations have always been there for us.
We've had a good education
We've been put through private school Mostly.
'We've paid for your education
Now
We want
You to give us something back
By doing well'. **(Polly m/c)**

At home
There was always the pressure
To leave school
And get a job.
I said no I want to go to college.
And that caused a few ripples. **(Wendy w/c)**

In the nicest possible way
My family
Don't really value learning as a concept.
They don't see the value in it.
They're better now
I'm training to be a teacher
Because it's more of a job job.
Originally I said I was going there*
To study theatre
And they were like
That means nothing to us
It's very scary
And we don't think you should do it. **(Wendy w/c)**
**The Russell Group university in the city.*

‘**Other’ people**

It’s kind of broadened
How I see the world
Through how other people see the world
When my flatmates talk to their parents on the phone
And I am there
They want to grill you about your life
And you want to grill them back
Because everyone
Has very different
Experiences.
And it’s just nice to share them. **(Polly m/c)**

We didn’t grow up
With people who had books and stuff
I’ve been in
A couple of my friends’ parents’ houses
And they
Like
Blow my mind.
The stuff
The books
The gardens
And they all talk lots
And it’s like they are genuinely interested in you.
That’s what I want
I’m gonna get my education here
And that’s what I’m gonna have.
That’s what you can do when you go to uni
You just have to make sure you are doing it like they are! **(Kitty w/c)**

There were a couple of people
That were obviously
Are probably…
Higher social class than myself.
I could tell the difference
Not intentionally
But it’s always there.
I’d never really have noticed before
But it’s you know things like
Being able to do certain things
And the ways that they speak
And react around people
That was really quite a change… **(Emma w/c)**

I never went on days out with my parents
They were always working
But I used to go out with my nan and grandad
To the park, things like that.
Didn’t get to do
A lot of the things
Like going to the museum and stuff like that
That I do know
I would want to do

With my kids.
But yeah
Mostly non-educational stuff
Like going to the park
And things like that. **(Carrie w/c)**

I come from…

I come from
A leafy green area
And I've never been friends
With people from
er…
Council estates.

Or just
I haven't got to know them
I think that sounds really bad
I'm glad I do know
People like that
Now.

I never had a problem
With people who are from
If we want to call it
A lower social class
I never had a problem
With people from a lower social class

But I never got to be their friends
Because I never got the opportunity.
My parents don't have many friends outside our social class. **(Polly m/c)**

A lot of the people
On my course
Are from families whose parents
Have got an actual career type job
Rather than manual labour
Factory worker
Like mine. **(Carrie w/c)**

When we were really young
My mum didn't work
So that was nice
To have her there all the time.
Lots of play
Lots of outside play
Going for walks with the family.
Lots of reading as well
We do that on our course
About how
Like
Reading is
Really
Really
Important

I think definitely
It is. **(Lucy w/c)**

It was a bit of a culture shock
Coming to university
And seeing the backgrounds
That people are from. **(Carrie w/c)**

I'm always happy to pay for my friends
It's the way I've been brought up
It's just what I do when I'm back home with friends
Or with family
You offer to buy someone a drink. **(Polly m/c)**

<u>This place…</u>
I love it here
It feels right for me
Not stuck up
I love this place. **(Kitty w/c)**

Most of my friends
Have gone to a more
Middle Class University.
They've stuck with
The same kinds of people.
Social groups – in my opinion - are not as important now.
I'm happy to
Blur the lines
And be friends with anybody and at this university I liked the campus vibe
And the figures aren't bad here.
I think
Anywhere you go
You're going to do well if you try hard
I know I've got the right attitude
So I know I'll do well
Wherever I go
But if you do try hard
You are going to do well wherever
Whatever
Whether you go to Oxford or Cambridge
Or if you go to the little college down the road… **(Polly m/c)**

I think there's a part of me
The part that sees myself as working class
That feels comfortable
At this university.
It doesn't make me anxious
About where I've come from
It doesn't make me anxious to talk about upbringing
Amongst my peers. **(Wendy w/c)**

My brother goes here
My mum is from Bristol
And it's a campus university
But for people like me It's good. **(Carrie w/c)**

The poetry in this section demonstrates the participants' nebulous grasp of class which, following the uncertainty presented in the previous chapter, suggests that while they are both uncertain and to a point unwilling to attach themselves to a given class, they are able to position themselves in terms of where they come from, their background and what they bring to university. Securely middle-class Polly talks about the impact her successful parents have had on how she sees the world and her place in it, while the narratives of both Carrie and Wendy demonstrate a contrast; in this way I have shown the participants' differing reserves of cultural capital. The poems I have grouped together in this section demonstrate the participants' awareness of difference and this is marked in the narratives of Kitty who, on seeing the lives of some of her contemporaries stated that it *blew* her *mind* but also was explicit in terms of how she was going to work hard because that is what she wanted for herself, demonstrating her own agency and understanding of how class and education 'work'. Emma, meanwhile, who had self-identified as middle-class, noted that she perceived difference between herself and some of her new contemporaries in the way that others speak and react to people, suggesting that she is re-evaluating her original judgment. The narratives demonstrate my participants' implicit understanding and degree of possession of cultural capital, correlate with my own classed experiences, and are reflected in my autoethnographic poem 'Kitchen Suppers'.

However, the capital that resonated most strongly with my participants was economic capital and all participants put considerable emphasis on wealth as being the most significant indicator of class, and an individual's place in society. This is introduced by my autoethnographic poem Spanish Sea which recalls a distinct memory from childhood where my family's lack of economic capital was made not just apparent but explicit by a trusted adult, and the subsequent feelings of shame and embarrassment remain a vivid memory for me.

5.4 - Economic capital

Spanish Sea

In primary school

Mr Jackson
A generally good bloke,
        An understanding and fair head teacher
Did an assembly about foreign travel.
He asked all the children who had
                been **abroad**

To put up their hands.
In the mid-70s many families with a 'liveable' income could take their
Big holiday
Abroad.
Largely to Spain.
The envy.
A Spanish sea of hands shot into the air.
Mr Jackson said, as there are so many of you let's make it easier
So STAND UP
If you have never been **abroad**.
The parquet floor was scuffed and so were my shoes
And my white socks would not stay up on their own.
The playtime that followed was a very miserable one for me, my brother and a couple of other unremembered kids.
The kids whose parents barely scraped that 'liveable' income.

Re-presentation of my participant data as poetry

Spanish Sea demonstrates how easily working-class children can be made to feel 'other' by casual and thoughtless assumptions made by advantaged adults. This assumption I go on to conceptualise as symbolic violence pervades society and is mirrored in my participants' narratives. The poems in this section demonstrate the psychic impact of economic capital and illuminate difference particularly between comparatively wealthy Polly – whose economic capital and cultural capital have combined as a powerful factor in her life – and the working-class participants who are uncomfortable with the liberal spending of some of their affluent peers.

The first subsection in this collection of participant poems focuses on how some working-class participants feel that their more affluent peers **Don't quite get it**, they don't understand what it is like to be economically vulnerable. The next section - **The barriers are still up** – comprises of poems from middle-class Polly's perspective and focus on her own – not entirely comfortable – awareness of that advantage. Polly was highly conscious about her privilege despite attempts at several points during the interviews to present a perspective that everyone is the same, really, and that once you arrive at university the common ground of the course overrides class, and specifically economic, difference. However, the 'cracks' in Polly's perspectives are frequently hovering below the surface of her words; she talks of her contemporaries' discomfort at her ability to pay for her rent and pay for her peers' wine or coffee. Meanwhile, **We are doing well, but…** presents what might be perceived as a

defensive working-class narrative suggesting a reticence to say one's family struggles financially while making the point that they do. **We are different and the same** considers how some of the participants effectively pinpoint economic capital as the divisive factor amongst them.

Don't quite get it

I have some friends
Who don't quite get it
When I'm like
I can't afford to go out this weekend.
And they're like
We won't be spending much
Though it's making a habit of it
That's become an issue.
Me and my sister
We've talked about this
A little bit.
She's in London
And now she can see
A huge difference
Between herself and other people at university
There's a lot of people
She's at university with
Who are really well-off
Middle-class people.
She can see quite a difference
And sometimes so can I, here. **(Lucy w/c)**

I live with this girl
Who talks
A lot about her background
Where she's from
How well off she is…
It's difficult to listen
When I know
There are other people
Who are completely not well-off
Who struggle.
And hearing her talk about how her life is…
I'm thinking to myself
Not everyone
Has that
I would never speak to other people
And say
I'm so wealthy
I've got all this
I've got that
Because it makes people feel bad about themselves.
There's definitely something to think about
How her speaking like that
Has made me
Think more about how I speak
How I come across to people. **(Lucy w/c)**

This girl I live with
We go food shopping together…
Now I'm really, really careful with my money
It's been drilled into me
Ever since I was younger
By my parents
You've got to be careful!
You've got to save it!
Get a savings account!
Don't touch it!
It's for the future…
So I am; I do; I'm frugal with my money.
She will buy
Whatever she sees
That she wants.
I wish I was more like that but then I have this kind of conscious thing in my mind.
(Lucy w/c)

I was talking
To Lou yesterday
And she was talking
About how her family
Go on holiday
Every year
She said
They have got
Loads of money
But they don't use it all!
Cos they've all still
Got normal cars.
She kept going on
And I just sat there.
We go on holiday
Pretty much every six years
My parents do have money
We are not rich
It's liveable sort of money
We're not lower-class
Because we do have enough money
But we're not upper-class
We don't go crazy spending kind of thing. **(Kate w/c)**

I think
My biggest issue
With the students at the other university*
None of them had money issues
They were supported by their parents
Almost entirely.
They didn't get
That I had to get a job
That was always a sticking point for me. **(Wendy w/c)**
***Wendy had briefly commenced a drama degree at the other, Russell Group, university in the city**.*

I was amazed

By the people
Who had money
Given to them by parents
And just spend it on nights out. **(Emma m/c)**

I was shocked
At how other people
Spend money.
And the things that people have
And their parents sending them money.
I've been struggling
To finish my resits
With coronavirus
Because I didn't have a laptop
Some people were coming in
With MacBooks
And the latest phone.
I didn't have any tech before university. **(Carrie w/c)**

I'm not saying
I don't come from a family
With a little financial support
But going to university
Was based on me
Going to work
And getting that money
Myself.
And they* saw me
Having to do work
While doing my course
As something they couldn't imagine themselves doing.
They were amazed that I had no free time to myself. **(Emma m/c***)*
**Emma's student housemates*

<u>The barriers are still up</u>
I do think
There are some barriers still up
I think.
And certain of my friends find it
Difficult
To accept.
They know where I go home to.
If they are struggling for money they get upset about it
I think
They find it
Difficult
To talk to me about it
They know I can call mum if I need money.
We have to put our deposits down on a house for next year.
They all know that my parents are going to put down the money for me
And I can pay her back
They all have got to have loans
Or extra loans
To put three

Or four
Hundred pounds down.
I think that can be
Difficult.
That barrier is still up
I think. **(Polly m/c)**

I'm always happy
To pay for my friends
It's the way I've been brought up.
A coffee
A glass of wine
Whatever.
If I pay
£20
You can see…
People get uncomfortable
Because they know
It's easy for me
And it's not easy for them.
And when it comes
To the discussion of money
Things get a little more tense.
And that's the only time
Any of us
Struggle in our friendship
And I struggle myself
I find it quite difficult
But I'm happy to foot the bill
But I also know they are not a charity
That can be quite difficult. **(Polly m/c)**

I'm going on summer holidays
And I have friends who aren't.
Again
You can't
You have to
Hold your tongue. Be sensitive.
It's the only struggle.
Yes
I think social class does exist and there is a gap
There are some barriers up
But those barriers can be taken down
Not all of them
There are some that are still there
And things you can't talk about
Or have to be careful talking about
And there are some things that you can very openly talk about
You can talk about until the cows come home. **(Polly m/c)**

<u>We are doing well, but…</u>
Money is something
My parents are always thinking about
They are doing well
But

It's kind of like
On the
Tipping point
Of not doing well.
It's definitely something I have thought about more
In the past year
Since being at uni. **(Lucy w/c)**

Listen
I'm not saying
We are poor. My family would hate me to say that.
We are respectable
We are doing ok.
But we probably struggle more for money than most of my friends at uni. **(Kitty w/c)**

We are different and the same
I've realised
Through student finance
That my parents earn a lot less than others
Because I get quite a lot more.
But I don't think
That it has any impact
On my position
I feel class
Like
The money side of it
Is obviously part of it.
But MY identity is still middle-class. **(Anna m/c)**

You always get called
Certain things
Yeah
But your family are rich
Because there's different money standards and stuff. **(Eve m/c)**

I do **know**
There's another…
How the other
half
lives
When my parents divorced
We moved out of this big house we had
And into NORMAL houses
I know my parents
Have done well for themselves.
And
I'm not
Ashamed to say
I'm quite middle-class
Because **I know**
My parents have worked
Very hard
To have the money we have
And give us the upbringing we've had.
And we've not been fed on a silver spoon

We've worked hard
They've worked hard
And they've made us work hard as well. **(Polly m/c)**

We are all students
We are all struggling for money
I think parental background and stuff
Doesn't play a role
Now that we are here.
Because we are all getting our loans in
And obviously
People who have parents
That pay their way a bit more
Get a smaller loan.
And other parents don't pay their children any money.
Because they can't
But they get the higher loans.
So… we're actually more kind of equal.
You get people who are really struggling
And you get people who are doing really well for themselves
But we're all in the same ballpark now.
In terms of social status it's not such a big deal being a student… **(Polly m/c)**

I grew up
In a penny counting household
There's certain things
That other people
Could afford to do
That we just couldn't.
I think part of that
And part of the way I was raised
Is that
You leave school
You get a job
You support yourself
And we are hard workers before anything else. **(Wendy w/c)**

In this section I have demonstrated my participants' emphasis on the centrality to their lives of economic capital. Participants from working-class backgrounds display a clear discomfort at their middle-class peers' easy talk about their upbringing and financial security, both in terms of themselves and their families. Polly, meanwhile, demonstrates unease at her own financially privileged position in her discussion of the difference in terms of 'barriers'. Both middle-class and working-class students' narratives suggest that there are economic values that have been reinforced in them from a young age. With the working-class students (for example Lucy and Kate) the concepts of saving and frugality have been in place since they were very young. Polly discusses how her parents have always worked hard and have made her do so too. Her language reflects the contemporary political narrative of neo-liberalisation with her easy reference to how some (more affluent) parents 'pay their way' in terms of financial contributions to their children's education.

This section has also reflected participants' differences in terms of the imperatives of some to work while studying and how this difference is reflected in class attitude. Emma identified as middle-class but here is another example of how perhaps this is not an accurate self-assessment. She makes the point that she needs to work to supplement her parents' contribution, but some more affluent peers are 'amazed' that she needs to do this. Meanwhile Wendy stated how her Russell Group contemporaries 'didn't get it' that she had to work. Students working while studying will be discussed further in my analysis in chapter 6.

I now move on to look at social capital and the impact of an individual's social connections. While my narratives suggest that this concept is less developed in younger people, it is largely their parents' social capital that impacts both in terms of 'getting on' and having the ability to form easy and confident social connections, a skill which will benefit them through these first and formative months at university and subsequently in later life. I open this section with my autoethnographic poem The Only Slave in which I recall a moment at secondary school where I knew I did not fit in; I was socially awkward and from a different class to most of the girls I was taught alongside. At 14 years old I was becoming aware of and compensating for my class in order to avoid being 'caught out'.

5.5 - Social Capital

The Only Slave

The Latin teacher said
Next week
We'll have a Roman feast.
We'll all dress in togas
white sheets from home
And lie on sofas
our desks
Be fed grapes (the 'be fed' part started to make me feel uncomfortable)
And drink goblets of wine
Ribena.
Lying on the desks in sheets and drinking wine– wow!
Then the Latin teacher said
I just need a couple of you to be the slaves
To go around the class feeding grapes to the other girls.
Don't worry though, you'll get grapes too!
I don't remember what happened next but what I do remember
Palpably and painfully

Is that I was a girl who didn't fit, who wore the charity shop clothes and that I had to volunteer to be a slave before I was volunteered by someone else.
The discomfort that I had felt earlier had manifested.
When I was 14 years old, I did not have a name for it, but I did not have the social capital to lie on a desk and be fed grapes by someone whose brilliant white socks stayed up without elastic garters.
I don't remember the feast; only that I was a slave, the only slave, no one else volunteered.
They were better than me
They were from a different class.

I knew – instinctively and experientially – that I was different. My reference in *The Only Slave* to the white socks encapsulates this. I might equally have referred to our second-hand clothes and home-knitted cardigans. It took me a long time to understand and play the game in terms of social capital and a residual social awkwardness remains with me, a combination of class and personality and perhaps decades of 'knowing my place' that I discussed in chapter 3. Several of my participants' narratives mirrored many of my experiences and Kate's belief that if she was not on that bus at 4.30 it would go without her presents an insecurity that embraces both class and social discomfort. This sense of discomfort in social situations reflects the poetry in my first subsection **Fitting in.** In **Different friends** the poetry focuses on the new friendships my participants have – or have not - forged at university and I have attempted to show how class has impacted these decisions. In **Who do you know**? I consider through my participants' narratives how middle-class Polly contrasts with working-class Kitty in bringing informed choice and experience to her degree**.**

Fitting in
With certain people
I feel like I fit in
At the start of last year
I didn't really mesh with anyone
Totally.
Yeah but with them I fit in
And our work ethic is similar. **(Lucy w/c)**

Do I feel like I fit in and have friends?
Honestly?
No.
I feel like it could get to 4.30*
Would anyone realise I wasn't on that bus?
And I got to the point
Where I thought
Probably
No. **(Kate w/c)**

During their first year placement students were driven by a university commissioned bus in a group to their school each day.

My values have shifted.
Everybody
Comes to university
Consciously worried
About people liking you
And fitting in with the university culture.
Whereas now
I don't really care.
Now, I've done my first year
And I just want to focus on
Becoming a teacher which is why I'm here.
I'm less worried
About the social aspects
About will they like me
It doesn't matter.
I just focus upon becoming a teacher at this point. **(Carrie w/c)**

I live at home
And my family
Think it's hilarious that I get up at 5.30
To get the bus
To go to placement.
They said it's like doing a real job
And they think it's hilarious that I want to be a teacher.
And I've got a work ethic
But I do think they like that
That I'm training to do a real job… not just writing essays**. (Kitty w/c)**

It's about the learning
You feel like a student because you've got to learn
You're expected to learn
And you're expected not to know everything
So you do feel a little more like a student than a professional
You've still got to be learning
But some of the time you are teaching
I think you get a bit of a muddled identity
You're definitely a trainee teacher
Student
A bit of both **(Polly m/c)**

<u>Different friends</u>
In the group
There's people
You all seem to have your friends
But we are very like minded
And have the same work ethic **(Anna m/c)**

At uni
I have this extended group of friends
And we all accept
That we are different

And it doesn't matter.
And then I go home
And my group of friends back home
When I talk about my friends at uni
They
It's clear
That they wouldn't have friends
Like I have
And they haven't.
I know they don't mean
To have a prejudice
But they do.
And they don't have a problem with my friends at uni
But they don't know them
And they don't understand
What I see in them. **(Polly m/c)**

I did make two friends *
And funnily enough
They were both people
Who hadn't been to private school.
And we were able
To relate
In a social, socio-economic sort of way.
They had similar values
Similar backgrounds. **(Wendy w/c)**
***Wendy had briefly commenced a drama degree at the other, Russell Group, university in the city.*

My friends from home*
Laugh when I tell them about my uni friends
I say they're
Like
Really good people
But my friends, they don't get it
They don't believe me
And they think that my uni friends
Think that they are better than them
But they don't.
They haven't met each other
Still. **(Kitty w/c)**
**Kitty lives with her parents and siblings in the same city as the university and travels on a bus to campus.*

<u>Who do you know?</u>
I always knew
I wanted to work with children
I thought about paediatric nursing
My mum's a nurse
I thought about child social work
But my aunties are all teachers
Honestly?
It was just the easiest way to get work experience. **(Polly m/c)**

Like I said

I knew I wanted to work with children and there were lots in my family
But
I never knew anyone
That could help me.
My family didn't know any teachers or people like that. **(Kitty w/c)**

In this section I have presented how my participants enact social capital and how this impacts their behaviours. Working-class Kate does not fit in with her peers; however, while Kate's values and dispositions indicate a social disadvantage, my insider knowledge of her suggests an individual who finds social relationships, particularly interacting with groups, difficult. I foreground this as I am anxious not to pathologise Kate's social discomfort as being exclusively class-based. Meanwhile, Polly, whose middle-class 'confidence' (Reay, 2002) is consistently evident, demonstrates in her narratives the ease with which she interacts with her peers but also points out how they contrast to her 'home' set of friends who share her solidly middle-class upbringing and values. Of all the participants Polly, with her family's accumulated capitals, appears to be the one thriving most effectively, and consequently accruing social capital of her own, confidently using the language of the middle-class workplace such as 'professional' and 'identity'.

Finally, I look at emotional capital, a concept emerging from the theory of Bourdieu and embedded in the work of Reay (2004) and Nowotny (1981). In chapter 2 I theorise emotional capital as being embedded in the work of primary school teachers, in their gendered upbringing and societal cultural scripts. While I cannot say that I was guided towards teaching, my own upbringing reflected my family's expectations for both my brother and me. My autoethnographic poem, *Our Own Glass Ceiling*, discusses my parents', or specifically my mother's aspirations for us. She had worked in an office which was a perceived 'step up' from the factory, bar, and cleaning work engaged in by her own parents and my father. My mother had attended a secondary modern school and her own aspirations had been to sing in a fifties 'big band' or to be a commercial artist. She had been secretly successful in obtaining work to do both things before my grandfather, disapproving of the male-dominated environment of these industries, had stepped in and thwarted her ambition. She subsequently became a 'shorthand typist' and fervently wedded to the perceived respectability and security of 'office work' and wanted this for my brother and me. This was the 'aspirational' narrative we both grew up with. I was quiet but bright, and my mum worked hard to get me into that office. I resisted these aspirations and, reflecting Wendy's narrative, university was not really understood 'as a concept'. I got my first teaching job and became 'respectable' in a different way; my mum is very 'proud' of me now. The overarching and enduring message though, was that she wanted us to be 'happy'; educational success was not as important as being 'happy'

alongside local, 'unaspirational' employment. The concept of being happy is reflected in the literature that I discuss in chapter 6 and a feature of my working-class participants' narratives.

5.6 - Emotional Capital

Our Own Glass Ceiling

'If you got offered
A really good job
Would you forget all of this silly university nonsense?'
They wanted us to be happy. They wanted the best
And they wanted the best within the confines of what they knew
What she knew…
My mum so desperately wanted the best
For me
For my brother.
Neither of must work in a factory
So I 'chose' typing
And my brother had to do his homework
Endless
Extra
Homework.
But it didn't work out like that for either of us.

I begin this section with a group of poems exploring how the participants' feelings about working and nurturing young children impacted their choices: **I love children.** This links with the next subsection, **You'll make a good teacher**, where participants discuss how this narrative has been reinforced for some time, and chiefly by family members. Emotional capital is explicitly working to influence the choices of young women in terms of work and possible selves and **It's a girl's job** explores the extent to which these choices are bound by gender**. We just want you to be happy** looks at how, for some of my working-class participants, this was the overarching factor in terms of their family's aspirations for their future selves. This theme is continued in the subsection **We are proud of you** where participants discuss their family's pride in their going to university to train to be a teacher. These last two collections of poems demonstrate the working-class narrative of working in an area of familiarity and understood reference points, indicators of emotional capital impacting young women's choices in terms of future careers. The final subsection, **Make sure that you are sure** reflects how

the middle-class participants' parents – and specifically mothers – had been anxious to ensure that their daughters were making the right choices about HE.

I love children

It was that thing
Helping a child
To understand something
When I felt
That that
Was definitely
Something I wanted to do
For a degree
For my life. **(Lucy w/c)**

I love children
I love being with them
I can't imagine wanting to do anything else at all. **(Kitty w/c)**

I love being with them
Looking after children
It was all
I wanted to do. **(Kate w/c)**

You'll make a good teacher

They were all
Like
You like children
You want to be a primary school teacher
And I was ahhhhhh
Yes. **(Kate w/c)**

Everyone's always told me
From when I was a lot younger
I'm good with young children
That's what I've been told
From my mum
From my family friends
When I was tiny.
When they say to you
You're really good with children
What do you think you're going to do with that?
There was no option
To say
You know what
I'm going to become a firefighter! **(Polly m/c)**

Since I was a teenager
They all said
Oh, you're good with
Your brother
Your cousin
Your neighbour
You're good with children
You could be a teacher
That's a good girl's job

They said… **(Kitty w/c)**

I spoke to quite a few people
And everyone I spoke to said
You'd be great!
My cousins are all primary aged
And I find them really fun
I like the fact
You get one class
And you bond with them. **(Eve m/c)**

<u>It's a girls' job</u>
That's a good girls' job
They said.
My brother said
It's not a job for him.
Men don't work with little kids. **(Kitty w/c*)***

I have noticed this -
Females are a lot more dominant
In teaching.
Educating
As a career thing
I never really noticed before university
How few men there are. **(Emma m/c)**

Maybe teaching is seen as a motherly role
Perhaps that's old fashioned
But it sort of requires
Empathy
And typically feminine traits.
Obviously
Times are changing
It's more socially acceptable
For men to have empathy
And it's more encouraged
For men to express emotions
Maybe that is why more men
Are going in for it. **(Carrie w/c)**

<u>We just want you to be happy</u>
Both of my parents
Their main thing
Is that they want me to be happy
In what I choose. **(Lucy)**

I think they're happy I've got to university
They're
I don't know where you get your brains from
Sort of thing
I don't think they understand deeply what it is I'm doing to be honest
They are quite detached from the idea of going to higher education
But I think they're happy

And proud. **(Anna m/c)**

I had something to focus on
To be happy about
Everyone was pleased; they wanted me to be happy
I told people
My dad's side
They said yes
That's for you
We just want you to be happy. **(Eve m/c)**

They always said
Do what you want
You must do what you want
As long as you're happy
That's the important thing. **(Kitty w/c)**

We are proud of you
Every time I tell my dad
About grades or things
He tells me he likes to tell his friends
About what a good teacher I'm going to be.
He is like
I just think you're going to be amazing
I can't wait 'til you actually become a teacher
I think you're going to be so good.
And I'm like Oh thank you. **(Kate w/c)**

I think
It's that
Like they're proud.
But they are the sort of people
Who aren't going to be like
I'm so proud of you.
But it's a quiet sort of proud thing. **(Carrie w/c)**

When it came to the actual course
That I'd be studying next year
Everyone in my family
Especially my nan
Everyone was really excited about it
My nan
My nan was over the moon.
And my dad
Said how proud he was of me the other day
Which isn't something we say
Isn't something we show
We don't really say it
It was really sweet.
And my mum said as long as you are happy, I'm happy. **(Eve m/c)**

Make sure that you are sure…
My mum was always
Very wanted
To make sure

That I was making the right decisions.
So even before the week I moved to uni
She was saying:
Are you sure this is what you want to do?
Are you sure this is what you want to do?
She made sure I had spoken
To the right people
And asked the right questions
Beforehand.
To make sure
I was sure.
I was sure though.
My dad
He was more laid back
And he thought
That if I knew what I wanted to do
Then I would do that… **(Anna m/c)**

They were really supportive
Really pleased
A bit
Are you sure?
Not a paramedic?
Not paediatric science?
Not in a telly off sort of way
Not trying to discourage me
But… Are you making the right decision?
Make sure you're sure. **(Polly m/c)**

Teaching
Was always the thing for me.
When I was looking around universities
A lot
Of family members
Said why don't you do a degree in a subject then do your PGCE afterwards?
To make sure
You're sure.
I thought a 3-year course would be better and more beneficial
In terms of learning about the pedagogy. **(Anna m/c)**

This final section of chapter 5 has explored how emotional capital has been embedded in my participants' choices. As reflected in the literature, the participants who identify as working-class have a significant legacy of family members telling them that they want them to be happy, that they are good with children and that, potentially because of this, these participants 'love children'. These are cultural scripts (Acker,1995) embedded in class, and while these participants are training to be 'professionals' they are potentially doing so in the context of family habitus and societal expectations. Middle-class Polly in the subsection **You'll make a good teacher** is very aware of the impact of family and choice in the context of her aunts being teachers and the reinforcement of how good she is with children over time. This is

discussed further in chapter 6 in my discussion of the complexities surrounding the 'middle-class' label (Davey, 2012) but Polly's awareness of social processes is captured well in her point that after years of being told you are really good with children, choices become limited and there was 'no option' to, for example, say 'I'm going to become a firefighter'. Middle-class Polly and Anna's mothers are both foregrounded in their discussions relating to choices, wanting their daughters to be 'sure' that they are making the right choice and reflecting the literature (for example, Reay, 2002) relating to mothers' – and the specific success of middle-class mothers' – investment in their children's education.

I now move to chapter 6 which closely examines the data in the context of my theoretical framework, overarching theories I identify, and my research questions. The research questions will then be explicitly responded to in chapter 7.

Chapter 6: Analysis and discussion

6.0 – Introduction: context and structure

> Class is something beneath your clothes, under your skin, in your reflexes, in your psyche, at the very core of your being (Kuhn, 1995, p.98).

Kuhn's words have resonated with me for many years, and I have spent a significant amount of time reflecting on my own background, choices and perceived social mobility and that while I can *play the game*, in terms of class, I cannot – and do not want to - escape an upbringing which was very different to the life I live now and is indeed *beneath my clothes and under my skin*. My data indicate that participants tend to believe that their education is their great leveller, that they are all training at graduate level to train to teach. Perhaps these young women do not carry their class under their skin and in this analysis I consider this. Yet despite my education I still palpably feel the presence of class and class difference. This has been a recurring conversation for decades with a close friend from a similar background, now a professor at a post-92 institution. We have often made this point which I later found in Steedman:

> I read a woman's book, meet such a person at a party (a woman now, like me) and think quite deliberately as we talk: we are divided: a hundred years ago I'd have been cleaning your shoes. I know this and you don't (Steedman, 1986, p.2).

Perhaps the landscape of social class has shifted and when this group of young women become established professionals they will not be thinking in this classed and self-conscious way. I will consider this thought in my conclusions in chapter 7.

Throughout chapter 4 I discussed my methodology reflexively in the context of my choices and artifice in terms of creating poetry from my participants' data and this was enacted in chapter 5 where my choices were consciously subjective. I now return to reflexive thematic analysis as my analytic approach and in writing I foreground Braun and Clarke's (2020, p.3) assertion that it 'emphasises the researcher's subjectivity as an analytic resource'.

In this chapter I bring together my data, my theoretical framework (which forms my themes) and my overarching theories in the context of my research questions.

6.1 - A return to my themes, theories and theoretical framework

6.1.i - Themes

In chapters 1 and 2 I discussed how I identify with culturally embedded interpretations of class where it might be defined by background, experience and social inequality (Savage *et al.,* 2015) and can be looked at through a Bourdieusian - and post-Bourdieusian - lens of capitals. I identified this premise as underpinning my epistemological and ontological beliefs and that

my conceptualisation of class and gender are theoretical lenses through which I made sense of the world.

Following my re-presentation of data in chapter 5, this chapter is framed by my themes, foregrounding how the conceptualisation of class and the capitals I have focussed on interact with each other in the lives of my participants. I therefore subdivide my analysis into the following sections:

- 6.2 - Conceptualising class identity: an overarching perspective of how my participants conceptualise class and how this relates to their journeys to becoming trainee primary school teachers
- 6.3 – Cultural capital
- 6.4 – Economic capital
- 6.5 – Social capital
- 6.5 – Emotional capital: the emotional and psychological embeddedness of social practices impacting choices for young women choosing to be primary school teachers (Reay, 2005; Nowotny, 1981).

As I analyse, I consider how the capitals coalesce to inform, both consciously and subconsciously, my participants' conceptualisation of their class identity and I simultaneously address my research questions (RQs). 6.2 and 6.3 are intentionally longer sections as this is the place where much of the theory is being re-introduced; subsequent sections build on my arguments.

6.1.ii – Theories underpinning the analysis

During my review of the literature (chapters 2 and 3), I identified several theories underpinning my substantive exploration of the impact of class and gender on my participants' decisions to become primary school teachers. As I analysed my data, it became apparent that some of these theories were central to my work in providing a lens to support my theoretical framework. I have identified these central theories below, and have given examples of some of the main literature I have drawn on to theorise my arguments:

- Possible selves (Harrison and Waller, 2018; Scott, 2012; Markus and Nurius, 1986)
- The game (Bathmaker *et al.,* 2016; Bourdieu, 1998)
- Symbolic violence (Thapar-Björkert *et al.,* 2016; Scott, 2012; Bourdieu, 1998)
- Other/ing* (Maguire, 2005; Reay, 2005, 2006) * *Othering has been referred to during my literature reviews and presented in accordance with the relevant literature. To make my meaning explicit in this analysis I capitalise 'Other' to explicitly indicate my own theorising to the reader.*

- Theories surrounding perceived and actual choice. These include child as expert (Reay and Ball, 1988) embedded and contingent choosers (Ball *et al.,* 2002) and hot knowledge (Ball *et.al.,* 2002). I foreground the concept that choice is not a binary, transparent term but is embedded in upbringing and class.

Each section will look at my themes and theories alongside the overarching research questions.

6.1.ii – A return to the research questions (RQs)

Throughout this section I reference my research questions which are reproduced below:

RQ1: What attracts the participants in the study to primary school teaching and is there a class influence attached to this choice?

RQ2: What are the participants' perceptions of themselves in terms of social class and gendered choices?

RQ3: What is the influence of parental attitude, expectation and aspiration on the participants in the study and were there aspects of the participants' upbringing that impacted choices?

Supporting questions:

RQ1:

1.i Why choose primary school teacher training?

1.ii Why choose this university rather than a Russell Group university / university located in a different city?

RQ2:

2.i Do the participants conceptualise themselves in terms of social class?

2.ii What do the participants perceive to be the signifiers of the social class with which they identify?

2.iii What are the participants' attitudes and feelings about 'fitting in' at university?

2.iv Do they perceive differences between themselves and other students?

2.v What are the participants' perceptions of the potentially gendered nature of primary school teaching?

RQ3:

3.i How does 'upbringing' in terms of cultural capital and social and emotional capital (Savage *et al.,* 2015; Bourdieu, 1990) compare in terms of working-class and middle-class participants?

3.ii What is the participants' understanding/ awareness of capitals and the resultant 'rules of the game'?

6.2 - Conceptualising class identity

This theme has foregrounded how my participants conceptualise themselves in terms of social class (RQ2) and asks if they identify as being from a particular class. Skeggs (1997, p.77) states how 'Talking about class… is somewhat different from living it' and Reay (2005, p.923) discusses how despite living in a deeply classed society, few believe that class impacts their own existence: 'individuals seem to believe it does not touch them personally. It has not taken a hold inside'. This reflects several of the initial interviews I held with my participants where they did not acknowledge class as a concept. Superficially this might seem to indicate that my participants do not conceptualise themselves in terms of class. However, the data suggest that the position is more complex and nuanced and indicate the impact of the first of my theories, symbolic violence. Symbolic violence impacts my participants' perceived choices and opinions because they are part of an established and taken for granted system which is so embedded that it is no longer a conscious consideration, rather is accepted and unquestioned (Thaper-Bjorkeft *et al.,* 2016). Lucy discussed class in terms of 'how well off you are' however she later stated that as the year progressed it had become apparent to her that 'we all have different social classes*'*. Lucy attached this difference to economic status which is discussed in 6.4 but her narrative indicates that she was noticing difference and beginning to perceive how symbolic violence works. In the context of RQ2, Lucy's perspective surrounding class identity was shifting and she was able to perceive difference between herself and other students.

The narratives indicate a differing degree of certainty in terms of class identity amongst my participants. In terms of symbolic violence, it is apparent that while my middle-class participants were largely more tenuous in their classed self-identification, my working-class participants were not. Kitty stated that she is 'absolutely working-class' and Carrie 'definitely' working-class. Thaper-Bjorkeft *et al.* (2016) discuss how society operates to ensure that dominant classes stay dominant: my working-class participants knew they were working-class. Carrie discussed how at university she has peers with parents who have professional occupations, not the manual labour of her own parents and hence 'I'm working-class I know that'. Meanwhile, Lucy revealed how her parents do not earn enough to pay for her education, leading her to conclude that 'I'd definitely say we're working-class'. Symbolic violence is exercising its control: these participants' parents are paid less and have less prestigious jobs than their peers; Kate could not articulate reasons but was 'pretty certain' about being working-class. Symbolic violence 'is wielded with a tacit complicity between its victims and its agents' and the dominant, middle-class voice 'becomes monolithic and thus naturalised' (Thaper-Bjorkeft *et al.,* 2016, p.152). My working-class participants knew their place and that place was not in the middle-classes. However, challenging the constraints of symbolic violence, Carrie demonstrated a consciousness which problematised her position as the victim who does not

‘question their own role in the production and reproduction of domination and subordination’ (Thaper-Bjorkeft *et al.,* 2016, p.152). Carrie discussed how her classed identity makes her aware that she is ‘representing working-class people going into a proper profession’. This inversion of the impact of symbolic violence is a potentially powerful one and is discussed further in the context of my recommendations for the future of the course.

Working in tandem with symbolic violence is the theory of Other (Maguire, 2005). Young (2005, p.152) draws on Hall to state that ‘only when there is “an other” can you know who you are’. This is evidenced by both my middle and working-class participants seeing the difference between themselves and the perceived Other, and most markedly with my working-class participants whose narratives demonstrate that they were in no doubt about difference in the way that my participants identifying as middle-class were. However, and in contrast to my middle-class participants, these participants did not present a straightforward working-class homogeneity. Of the poems depicted here, three of my participants were securely working-class in terms of upbringing and parental occupation. Reay *et al.* (2005, p.105) highlight that within the working-classes there are ‘fractions’ which highlight ‘intra-working-class differences’ and these fractions are less researched and documented than middle-class fractions. This assumed homogeneity of working-class culture can be theorised as symbolic violence in its refusal of agency and nuance, a nod to the *lumpenproletariat* of Marxism. The classed-certainty of these participants matches their classed-profile presented in chapter 4 and their narratives throughout are illustrated with this sense of Other. Reay (2005, p.913) discusses this in terms of the psychic landscape of social class, the ‘affective aspects of class’ that acutely resonate for working-class people who are positioned as Other in society. Reay (2005, p.911) argues that class is integral to individuals and ‘could be something in the blood, in the very fibre of a man or woman’. While my middle-class participants were largely less resolute about their class identity, an ingrained, potentially unconscious sense of working-class Other exists for these working-class young women. Additionally, Bathmaker *et al.* (2016, p.73) discuss how ‘students come to an understanding of their class position in relation to other students they encounter at university’ and this is what emerged – to varying degrees – with my participants over the year as all articulated a ‘difference’ which some eventually conceptualised in the context of class, as indicated in Lucy’s shift of perspective, and in the way that Carrie identified as working-class by contrasting herself with other people on her course whose parents have professional jobs ‘rather than manual labour’. To respond to RQ2.iv, while not all talked at length about class, the participants were all able to perceive differences between themselves and other students.

Expanding on the concept of perceived difference, this lack of specific and tangible reference to class is reflected in my autoethnographic poem *A Different Class*. While I was a newly qualified teacher rather than a trainee, my experience mirrors that of my participants. Although

I could not articulate it, I could recognise a distinct difference and for me this was very much interwoven with the concept of being Other and I stayed silent about it. Young (2005, p.160), discussing working-class deficit, foregrounds difference in terms of how 'the shared humanity of all human beings becomes lost and submerged as people are "othered" through the use of derogatory labels and theories.' My poem sits alongside my participant poems as they demonstrate that the emotions felt, such as 'envy, deference… [and] embarrassment… contribute to the affective lexicon of class' (Reay 2005, p.913). However, and underpinning this thesis, I am from the working-classes and despite being unable to name it, I knew the difference. In contrast to this, Bathmaker *et al.* (2016, p.75) suggest from their data that 'none of the middle-class students… recognised class… as an issue because their privileged positions allowed them to be blinkered to the world beyond their bubble'. This is reflected in Polly's narrative who, though identifying as middle-class, claimed that being at university studying for the same degree makes the students all 'the same' and that 'in terms of social status it is no big deal' while Eve, who self-identifies as middle-class, does not see class as important but rather 'something we make up to try to put barriers between people'. To return to RQ2.iv, it appears that the working-class participants, through their experience of symbolic violence and Othering, are more likely to perceive differences between themselves and other students.

While Polly, Eve, Anna, and Emma self-identified as middle-class, their backgrounds and apparent cultural assets were very different. Polly is the only securely middle-class participant, while Emma's middle-class claim was undermined at several points during the interviews. Meanwhile, Anna and Eve's narratives (and the class profile of them presented in chapter 4) indicate that they are not securely middle-class. Davey (2012) suggests that rather than a homogenous 'middle-class' there is a distinct non-binary presentation of middle-classness at work in society. This is discussed by Davey (2012) in the context of differing levels of security in terms of middle-class identity and illuminates how the term embraces a wider range of society than it might have done prior to socio-cultural constructions of class-identification. Davey (2012, p.3) discusses middle-class identity in terms of 'three distinct types' which are broadly dependent upon a family's reserves of social capital and how embedded the family's middle-classness is. At the 'top' of Davey's model is the 'natural, effortless and destined' middle-class where university was always assumed and 'students hold high levels of cultural capital and … an easy and laid-back confidence'. While elements of this group resonate in Polly's story – she is privately educated and she is confident and assured – she more closely aligns to the second type, 'strategic and ambitious' where families are involved in decision making, often have their own experience of HE and students have a high level of the specific knowledge that they need to achieve their goals. At the point of writing, despite her private education Polly had a strategic plan to work – and make a difference in – state education.

Both Eve and Anna are less securely middle-class, and I suggest that both participants are represented by Davey's third type, the less secure 'aspiring and vocationally-specific' middle-class whose:

> parental occupation confers a middle-class label, but who nevertheless have little or no experience of higher education. The students' cultural capital is reasonably high in terms of their academic credentials [though their] primary concern is vocational, with university regarded as a necessary step towards a career (Davey, 2012, p.4).

In response to RQ2.i, these participants have clearly conceptualised themselves in terms of class, even if their own self-identification is not secure. The commonality between Anna and Eve identifying as middle-class is their professionally qualified (to degree level) healthcare mothers and self-employed manual-work fathers. Their middle-classness is more tenuous than Polly's yet is applicable; this is not so for Emma. Emma identified as middle-class, but her discussion did not reflect an understanding of the class system and her background refutes this claim. Her mother works in retail and her father drives a lorry and Emma described how her dad wants 'a new car and suddenly it's on finance and you're like DAMMIT'. Emma based her initial judgement solely on economic capital: her family are ostensibly financially secure, and it is this, rather than embedded cultural factors that signified class for her. The family 'haven't got money to be throwing around' but they are evidently comfortable. Emma later became less certain in her judgements and discussed how – in the professional context of education – she started to redraw her boundaries as she met people who are distinctly different from herself. The significant factor for Emma is that all the university-related fact-finding and decisions were undertaken by Emma alone. Her family supported her in terms of love and care but were not able to share 'hot knowledge' with her (Ball *et al.,* 2002, p.338) and this brings me to the consideration of the concept of choice in my research. Ball *et. al.* (2002, p.337) discuss hot knowledge as being embedded in middle class habitus and where family or social networks can share 'first or second-hand recommendations or warnings related to specific institutions based on some kind of "direct" experience'. While Polly has access to hot knowledge, it is clear from her narratives that Emma does not. Ball *et al.* (2002, p.337) identify contingent and embedded choosers where contingent choosers are 'typically a first-generation applicant to higher education… Their parents are working-class and have low incomes. The student can expect little financial support from them in choice-making or in funding higher education itself although there may be emotional support' and this is apparent in the narratives of my working-class participants. In contrast to this, middle-class Polly presents as a securely embedded chooser for whom university attendance was never a binary choice but more of a 'well-established and expected route beyond school, part of a normal biography' (Ball *et al.,* 2002, p.342).

In RQ3.i I ask how upbringing in terms of social, cultural, and economic capital compares between working and middle-class participants; these data demonstrate the difference. While less securely middle-class, the narratives of Anna and Eve demonstrated that, like Polly, university was an expected progression; this was not the case with Emma as indicated above. While her family was emotionally supportive, Emma presented as an example of child as expert (Reay and Ball, 1998) in terms of choices available to working-class young people. Reay and Ball (1998, p.443) discuss how, where parental understanding of the mechanisms of the education system is limited in working-class families, there is 'greater power [for children] to influence choice'. This was also evident by Carrie who presented a classed identity in her discussion of herself as 'representing working-class people going into a proper profession'. Carrie had researched becoming a teacher and while her parents are unable to engage with the academic process, she has clearly done that work for herself.

This is very powerful in terms of social justice and was reinforced by Carrie's desire to advocate for her future working-class pupils. Like Maguire's (2005, p.8) participants, Carrie demonstrated a desire to embrace her background, carrying her 'footprints in the past' into the future, what Maguire (2005, p.9 and drawing on Mahoney and Zmroczek, 1997) refers to as her 'footsteps forward'. Carrie described the pupils not only in terms of economic capital but also cultural capital and like Lucy foregrounded the importance of reading in young people's lives (Bearne and Reedy, 2018). Both Lucy and Carrie are recognising how education is pivotal in acquiring cultural capital. Archer *et al*. (2003, p.8) discuss 'class culture' in terms of 'how differing cultures play a role in producing particular class positions' and perhaps Carrie recognised this position: that the understanding of class culture, effectively addressing the problem from within, is potentially the way to tackle this inequality.

In this way the choices that Carrie is making can be seen through the lens of possible selves theory (Harrison and Waller, 2018; Markus and Nurius, 1986). Carrie has clear aspirations, and she is realistic in terms of knowing where she is from. Markus and Nurius (1986, p.954) state that 'Possible selves are the ideal selves that we would very much like to become' going on to assert how they 'derive from representations of the self in the past and they include representations of the self in the future'. Carrie is clearly reflecting on her own upbringing in the context of the difference she wants to make as a teacher in her statement 'I have a natural connection with those kind of children'. The connection, though, is not enough in itself; her aspiration was clear: she 'holds a vivid possible self' (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p.954) as a teacher making a difference in the lives of children from challenging backgrounds. Additionally, Carrie also reflected on class in terms of 'the things that separated us'. While Carrie remained aware of her working-class background and her desire to improve the lives of young people, she is seeing beyond this background and embracing her possible self as a teacher: '…you're more focussed on yourself and getting to where you want to be'. As an embedded chooser in

possession of hot knowledge, this was Polly's perspective at the start of the course; Carrie has got there through her child as expert (Reay and Ball, 1998) position and a clear aspiration regarding the self she 'would very much like to become' (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p.954).

The final theory I am using as a lens to analyse my data is that of the game (Bathmaker *et al.*, 2016). Bathmaker *et al.* (2016, p.155) discuss how their middle-class participants understood the rules of the game and how 'hot knowledge and family social capital were extensively used by middle-class families'. My data show that upbringing in terms of capitals (RQ3.i) has impacted some of my participants. The differing degrees of understanding and awareness of how the game works (RQ3.ii) become more apparent in my analysis of the ways in which the capitals interact with each other in the lives of my participants, and this brings me onto section 6.3, the impact of cultural capital.

6.3: Cultural capital

In chapter 2 I discussed how the three forms of cultural capital – embodied, institutionalised and objectified (Reay, 2005) – powerfully combine to limit an individual's opportunity. In this section of chapter 6 I will be analysing the narratives that I have subjectively foregrounded as the most representative of my participants' discussions surrounding cultural capital. In doing so I address RQ3.i which asks how upbringing in terms of cultural capital compares amongst participants from working and middle-class backgrounds. In considering the forms of cultural capital, it is pertinent to consider Skeggs' (1997, p.10) discussion of 'the affective aspects of inequality'. Middle-class Polly participant confidently and consistently embodies these aspects. Her middle-class advantage, the way she discussed her parents' high-status professional work and the impact this has had on her own choices and ambition demonstrate significant funds of cultural capital which illuminate the inequality that Skeggs (1997) discusses. The 'symbolic representation' of middle-class factors such as 'going to the theatre' and a 'knowledge of books' (Atkins and Duckworth, 2019, p.148) have an exponential impact on the formation of cultural capital for young people such as Polly. Polly's upbringing makes it appear 'natural' that she will 'achieve success in the transference of this 'inherited' cultural capital in terms of 'academic success [and] qualifications' and the subsequent formation of her own cultural capital. Polly's taken for granted advantage, might be seen as 'concerted cultivation' (Lareau, 2003), where the family engages in 'continual working on the child to create an individual with the right capitals to succeed in life' (Bathmaker *et al*., 2013, p.726).

Polly is consistently aware of the impact of advantage and is sure that she does not want to identify with her stepfather who 'kind of potters between jobs'. Polly is clearly located as an embedded chooser whose informed and affluent family background ensure that her attendance at university is a certainty (Ball *et al.*, 2002). Polly discussed her parents' professions and professional attitudes in the context of how 'this has rubbed off on me, I'm

going to be a headteacher by the time I'm thirty'. This informs research RQ3.i in that Polly has an explicit understanding of how her family's associated capitals, and foregrounded by cultural capital, have coalesced to impact not only her class identity but also her perceived future. This certainty, however, is not seen in Wendy's narrative. 'First generation choosers without appropriate cultural capital … may easily find themselves in the 'wrong' place or in the 'wrong' course with all the risks of drop-out that that brings into play' Ball *et al.* (2002, p.353). Wendy, whose family 'don't really value learning as a concept' because they 'don't see the value in it' were unable to support Wendy in her choices which Wendy found to be 'wrong' as she dropped out of the drama course at the Russell Group university in the city. While Wendy's family were in favour of Wendy training to be a teacher because of their perception of teaching as a 'job job', she also dropped out of this course before I was able to conduct a second interview. In the previous section I discussed child as expert (Reay and Ball, 1998) theory in terms of choice making; while Wendy might have initially been child as expert, her experience of not having the embedded capitals of the middle-classes has demonstrated how she effectively became displaced in terms of academic pathways.

Continuing consideration of choice theory, all my participants (and this was also overwhelmingly represented in the whole cohort questionnaires) had cited this university as a first choice for their teacher education, following visits to other institutions. This relates to RQ1.ii which asks about choice and type of university. The literature demonstrates that working-class students often feel a better sense of fit with a modern post-92 institution rather than an elite one' (Bathmaker *et. al.,* 2016) and this was evident in my narratives. My participants all discussed their choice of this university in very resolute terms with the three working-class participants using language like 'comfortable', 'for people like me' and 'feel right' to qualify their responses. My data reflect those collected by Bathmaker *et al.* (2016, p.82) who describe their working-class participants in the post-92 university as feeling like a 'fish-in-water' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992): the positive alignment between a person's habitus and their social world. This reflects the experience of my working-class participants and is also referenced by Reay *et al.* (2005, p.91) discussing a participant whose 'priority is to go to an institution where he is comfortable, somewhere there is a chance he will feel at home within education'. Furthermore, Bathmaker *et al.* (2016) indicate how working-class students might dismiss non-local options because they are sure that they have identified the 'right place' for them. This further suggests contingent choosing (Ball *et al.,* 2002, p.337) where perceived 'choices' in terms of HE are often 'local' and the 'processes of information gathering and choice are mostly left to the student, who often will act on the basis of very limited information' and this is further reinforced by Reay and Ball (1998) who discuss how working-class families often value locality over and above other considerations. In the previous section I cited Carrie in the context of her sense of social justice; Carrie stated that she chose this university because

it is right for her, both as a local institution, the place her brother attends and for 'people like me', it is a good choice. Kitty stated, 'it is not stuck up' and that she 'love(s) it here' while Wendy, following her brief experience studying drama at the (local) Russell Group university, said 'here doesn't make me anxious about where I've come from, doesn't make me anxious to talk about upbringing'. While all three participants' discussions indicated informed and independent choice, these choices are culturally and socially mitigated and for contingent choosers reflect how 'family and community relationships are positively valued' (Ball *et al.,* 2002, p.337). Furthermore, these working-class participants reflect data collected by Raphael Reed *et al.* (2007) discussing the impact that family and locale can have on an individual's choices and how this can be limiting in terms of the way working-class children can potentially repress their own self-expectation and aspiration. Alongside this university's excellent reputation for teacher education sits its accessibility: campus-based, post-92, an approachable Programme Leader and advertising itself as community-oriented, and my questionnaire responses indicate that this has played a part in terms of the choices my participants made.

Alongside the theory of contingent choosers sits that of symbolic violence, and this is reflected in my participants' choices to study at a local or relatively local university as discussed above. For working-class students, their perceived 'choice' of staying relatively local and maintaining a sense of what is known in choosing a HEI, is a way that symbolic violence maintains 'social hierarchies and inequalities' (Thapar-Björkert *et al.,* 2016, p.151) and the mechanisms of symbolic violence ensure that the local and familiar is maintained in the context of working-class ambition. Further evidence of symbolic violence can be identified in Wendy's corroboration of her working-class self-identification. She discusses how, in her home, there was always a pressure to curtail extended study in favour of getting a job and this was particularly prescient for Wendy during a brief period where she was studying drama at the city's other (Russell group) university. Archer *et al.* (2003. p.8) discuss class as culture, how middle-class families might have a culture of encouragement and participation, suggesting that these families 'were more likely to encourage their children to progress in post-compulsory education'. While Polly's family clearly demonstrate a culture of encouragement, Wendy's family do not: 'There was always the pressure to leave school'. Bourdieu (1990, p.116) discusses habitus as embedded, acquired in a family over time and 'the product of social conditionings [that] raises or lowers the level of expectations and aspirations' and this is evident in Wendy's family's working-class habitus, lacking the cultural funds to make the shift towards valuing education in its own right. However, Wendy's family's perspective shifted when Wendy began training to be a teacher which is 'more of a job, job'. This resonates with my own story where my family only made sense of my university education when I commenced my postgraduate teaching degree after three years of a non-vocational English degree. In

chapter 3 I discussed how 'for a working-class girl, becoming a teacher was a step up [and is] part of a tradition of class mobility' (Maguire, 1997, p.94). Both Wendy's family and my own demonstrate that while HE represents a threat and the unknown, primary school teaching might be seen as a 'nice safe choice' (Maguire, 1997, p.94), tangible and understandable in terms of its embeddedness in the cultural scripts of caring and feminised work (Acker, 1995; Maguire, 1997). Furthermore, the contingent choosers' choices were made within limited horizons' Maguire (2005, p.8). Symbolic violence maintains these limited horizons and limits professional expectations for women from working-class backgrounds and this is evident in Wendy's narrative.

Wendy's narrative also suggests possible selves theory in that her aspirations were clearly limited by her family's lack of support for her drama degree which would not lead to a 'job job'. Markus and Nurius (1986, p.954) discuss how, while deeply personal, possible selves are 'the direct result of previous social comparisons in which the individual's own thoughts have been contrasted to those of salient others. What others are now, I could be'. Wendy aspires to be an actor, to be a teacher and on one hand has been able to imagine herself at given moments as both these possible future selves. However, without family support, access to capitals and access to hot knowledge, Wendy is not able to realise these selves. Harrison and Waller (2018) develop possible selves theory in the context of young people's decisions about HEI attendance. They problematise how parental expectations are instrumental in mitigating the aspirations of young people in terms of university education, that while parents of 'disadvantaged young people are likely to *want* them to succeed through education, [they] may not expect them to do so, perhaps based on their own negative experiences' (Harrison and Waller, 2018, p.921). Wendy's parents do not value education, did not achieve at school themselves and have no funds of knowledge with which to support Wendy. This contrasts with Polly's assertion that 'the growing up expectations have always been there for us', ensuring that she realises the possible self she aspires to be and providing a clear response to RQ3.i in the identification of the marked differences between upbringing in terms of cultural capital for my working and middle-class participants.

This is further seen in Carrie's narrative which reveals careful consideration of her future self in terms of her explicit references to how she would like her own future children to benefit from, effectively, what she knows now. She comments on how she did not have days out with her full-time worker parents but instead would do 'mostly non-educational stuff like going to the park' with her grandparents. While Polly is drawing on her inherited capital when she sees her future as a headteacher by the time she is thirty, Carrie sees a possible self, not through the lens of her own habitus, but through the cultural awareness that is concomitant with a university education. This is also evident in Kitty's aspirational narrative surrounding how she wanted what she was seeing in the homes of her middle-class peers. Kitty's aspiration is

transparent in her statement: 'That's what I want / I'm gonna get my education here …You just have to make sure you are doing it like they are!' Kitty's narrative is resonant of Lawler's (1999, p.10) working-class participants who are 'ascribing to the self of cultural artefacts such as knowledge, intelligence and taste'. Lawler (1999) goes on to discuss a dread amongst her working-class participants of returning to the opposite of these 'cultural artefacts'. Both Kitty's and Carrie's narrative can be seen through this lens; neither have the inherited cultural capital where education is valued at home and are resolute in their ambitions to be successful; both demonstrate a 'well-elaborated like to be self' (Harrison and Waller, 2018, p.918). Harrison and Waller (2018, p.918) draw on the literature to describe elaboration as the degree of detail a possible self is drawn in the imagination of a person, and of significance for my participants, argue that that 'young people with highly elaborated possible selves were more persistent and attained more highly than others. They were also more likely to see achievement of their like-to-be self as the result of hard work rather than luck'. In this way, the possible selves of middle-class Polly and working-class Carrie and Kitty, collide in their presentation and seen through this lens, both working-class participants – through determination and hard work – have the potential to succeed like Polly. In contrast, Wendy's narratives did not demonstrate the determination of Kitty and Carrie's and this lack of an elaborated possible self, combined with her deficit in terms of capitals may have been responsible for her decision to leave two consecutive HE courses.

Polly's aspiration to be a head teacher by the time she is thirty, as well as confirming her position as an embedded chooser, also demonstrates her understanding of the game (Bathmaker *et al.,* 2016; 2013) and addresses RQ3.ii. Bourdieu (1998, p.25) discusses how understanding the rules of the game is embedded for middle and upper-class families, enabling them to 'make better educational investments and earn maximum returns on their cultural capital': people like Polly have 'deeply internalised the regularities of the game [and] does what he (sic) must do at the moment it is necessary, without needing to ask explicitly what is to be done'. While Polly's parents have shared their high expectations with her, Polly is in no doubt about what needs to be done to play the game and succeed; this expectation has been embedded since she was a child. That she clearly understands its rules is consistent throughout Polly's narrative and is further apparent when juxtaposed with the narratives of the other participants whose ambitions at this point are no further developed than being a successful class teacher. It is reasonable to make comparisons with 'Sally' (Bathmaker *et al.,* 2016) who I discussed in chapter 2. Sally's language around her choices suggested that she believed herself to be downgrading her ambition of becoming a lawyer to becoming a teacher, due to the responsibilities of being a single parent. Both Sally and her parents see teaching as a lower status profession, and she is not content to remain as a class teacher once qualified. Polly's ambition can be seen through the lens of Sally, Bathmaker *et al*. (2016, p.110)

stating that ‘Sally’s middle-class perspective led her to aim if not to be a ‘hotshot lawyer’ at least to be a ‘hotshot teacher’’. Like Sally, Polly has definite expectations for her own future located in her reserves of cultural capital and demonstrates how ‘middle-class parents can pass on cultural and material advantages that privilege or enable their children to succeed within the education system’ (Archer *et al.,* 2003, p.17).

In the context of the discussion above, it might seem anomalous that middle-class Polly, steeped in ‘inherited’ cultural capital, made an active choice to train to be a primary school teacher and at this post-92 university. However, her narratives consistently reflect the careful consideration that went into this choice. Few Russell Group universities offer an undergraduate route into initial teacher education in primary education, so I acknowledge that choice is limited, but what is evident in Polly’s narrative is how she considered and chose this university having researched and rejected others. Polly has already referred to her parents’ funds of cultural capital in terms of them both being educated to at least degree level and in the wider interviews she references the academic and practical support that her parents provide. Polly is clearly able to draw on these ‘inherited’ capitals (Atkins and Duckworth, 2019) in a way that her working-class peers may not be able to (Bathmaker *et al.,* 2016) and in doing so is creating her own fund of cultural capital, potentially what Brown *et al*. (2011) refer to as ‘personal capital’. Polly is occupying a social space (Atkinson, 2015) that indicates high economic and cultural capital and simultaneously reaping the benefits of cultural transmission (Bourdieu, 1984) both in the context of home and her largely private education. She has made an informed decision about attending this university above other universities and her narrative demonstrates that she is clearly in possession of ‘hot knowledge’ in terms of good institutions to apply to (Bathmaker *et al.,* 2016; Davey, 2012; Ball *et al.,* 2002).Throughout the interviews, Polly had discussed robust advice given at her private school, as well as conversations with her well-informed family, giving further clear indication of how cultural capital is enacted. Polly stated how, while there is a ‘good campus vibe’ at this university, ‘the figures aren’t bad either’. She consistently demonstrated awareness of how the system ‘works’, discussing how most of her friends have gone to a ‘more middle-class university’ and concluded with the neo-liberal demonstration of her own agency that ‘I know I’ve got the right attitude, so I know I’ll do well wherever I go’. Bathmaker *et al.* (2013, p.275) discuss the game in the context of the impact of habitus on getting on at university, knowing the rules of the game and students utilising their ‘economic and cultural advantage’ to get them ahead in terms of future success. Polly clearly has a ‘feel for the game’ (Bourdieu, 1998, p.80), she ‘anticipates [she] is ahead of the game… she embodies the game’. Polly understands how to play the game because years of embedded cultural and economic capital have equipped her with an understanding of how society works, the knowledge of what one needs to succeed in the way that people from less advantaged backgrounds do not have access to. This is Polly’s habitus and the key to her

success; in the context of a primary school teaching degree at a post-92 university she knows she will succeed and has already stated her ambitions around headship.

In contrast to this, my working-class participants' upbringing does not equip them in terms of accessing an understanding of the game and this is reflected in the literature (Bathmaker *et.al.,* 2016; 2013). The working-class participants were very aware of this. Kitty states how she 'didn't grow up with people who had books and stuff' and Carrie's upbringing lacked the cultural input that she has, as a university student, unlocked access to, and this is illuminated by Bathmaker *et al*. (2013, p.741) who state their working-class participants were 'disadvantaged through not being ready for the game in the same way as their middle-class peers'. Emma had initially positioned herself as middle-class, however, after being at university for half a year and meeting new people while on placement her perspective started to shift. Emma discussed these people in terms of 'things like being able to do certain things and the way that they speak and react around people'. Emma is beginning to notice how cultural capital is enacted and potentially how people have an understanding of the game in terms of how they interact with people and this relates to RQ3.ii.

Emma's embryonic class awareness brings me to my final theory in this section, Othering. Emma is demonstrating a sense of working-class Otherness, echoing Kuhn (1995) as she discusses how she had met some people who she perceived to be of a 'higher social class to her. Emma references the way they speak and present themselves. These embodied indices of class are evidently contradictory to Emma's perceived habitus and demonstrate the powerful mechanisms of class at work in its ability to place and shame individuals and relates to RQ2.iv in that Emma is starting to notice a difference between herself and others on the course. Plummer (2000, p.99) discusses how one of her own participants misidentified her own class: 'what J identifies as evidence of her father's middle-class origins, others would perceive to be characteristics of the 'respectable' working class family' and I believe this to be true of Emma. From initially discussing her upbringing and middle-class status with confidence and certainty, this certainty has been challenged for Emma as she shifts towards feelings of Otherness.

Social class is produced in a complex dynamic between classes with each class being the other's Other (Reay (2005, p.923) argues that 'Class practices contain the very emotional dynamics that produce class relations as well as within class practices themselves' and this is evident from my narratives. My participants recognised difference between themselves and their peers and some were beginning to see that difference as situated in class, suggesting that class identity is formed through social interaction. My epistemological belief that we make sense of the world through social construction has been underpinned in the analysis of my narratives: my participants are starting to construct themselves through the differences that they perceive between themselves and others. This is evident in terms of the cultural capital

they bring to university and presented in the poetry grouped under this theme. Middle-class Polly is fascinated by her flatmates' telephone conversations with their families, and they are evidently equally fascinated by her 'They want to grill you about your life, and you want to grill them back'; both parties clearly seeing the other as Other, potentially in possession of *different* types of cultural capital (Wilkinson and Duckworth, 2019). Polly discussed her background very self-consciously throughout the interviews, with references here to how her home friends are significantly different to her university friends, and when with them she behaves in a different way 'It's just what I do when I'm back home'. Polly is feeling Other in this new context where she is encountering new social situations that are alien to her and situate her as a minority in terms of her own habitus. She was visibly uncomfortable when discussing the affluent area in which she grew up and insisted she 'never had a problem with people from a lower social class', problematising the point that she never mixed with people outside of her family's social circle before. In contrast, working-class Carrie stated that arriving at university and seeing the advantage apparent in some people's backgrounds was a 'bit of a culture shock'. This is evidence of both classes representing the other's Other and representing Reay's (2005) interpretation of Otherness as operating between classes rather than as working-class shame. I also acknowledge that of my middle-class participants, only Polly demonstrated secure funds of cultural capital inherited from both parents, and my findings might have been different had I secured a bigger sample.

However, this difference is palpable in Kitty's poem describing the difference between her own upbringing and that of some of her newly acquired middle-class friends whose family homes, she stated, 'blow my mind' and I believe this situates Kitty's narrative back into the place of working-class Otherness. Lawler (1999) discusses identifying with her participant's discussion of working-class upbringing. This reflected my feelings when interviewing Kitty whose awed discussion of the books, the garden and the talk of her middle-class friends' families echo my autoethnographic poem, Kitchen Suppers. Like Kitty, I had not experienced middle-class homes and families and, also like Kitty, that difference was visceral and instilled feelings of envy and longing alongside awe. Kitty and I both had a distinctly different habitus to that of our new friends at university, we were 'born into different circumstances [generating our] primary knowledge of [our] life and situation' (Atkins and Duckworth, 2019, p.35) and our formative experiences at university put those different circumstances into sharp focus. Even then, in my twenties and sensing my difference, I palpably felt the working-class 'shame' of that difference (Reay, 2007, 2005; Plummer, 2000) and despite my senior role in the world of education, a residual feeling of 'being fraudulent and dislocated' (Maguire, 2005, p.14) remains.

These theories of Otherness return in the narratives of my participants in my consideration of how economic capital informs their conceptualisation of their class identity.

6.4: Economic capital

Bourdieu (1997, p.54) discusses economic capital as at the 'root of all the other types of capital' and Skeggs (1997, p.81) stated that her participants 'were never in a position to disregard money', going on to acknowledge this ability to 'disregard money' as a 'major feature of the upper-middle classes'. This position was reflected by all my participants and as my interviews progressed it became apparent that their overarching perception was that of economic status as a key indicator of social class. This responds to RQ2.ii and is unpicked in the context of my theories surrounding Other, choice and symbolic violence in this section. These theories interact with each other during this section and because of this I have worked with this interaction rather than separating them into three distinct discussions.

Returning to the theory of Othering, my poems demonstrate how comparative economic factors were responsible for discomfort and perception of difference amongst my participants. Lucy and Kate – who both self-identify as working-class – are incredulous at the apparent economic advantage of others and this is a theme that is prevalent in the work of Bathmaker *et al.* (2016, p. 78) who describe how working-class students in their study 'had less support from both school and parents, and so were more used to taking the initiative for themselves'. Lucy and Kate discussed a peer's easy references to their families' economic capital; both have not encountered wealthy people in this way before and their narratives foreground differences in class and wealth in terms of how affluent people do not understand what relative hardship is like. Lucy's narrative clearly identified her Otherness in her reference to how she finds it 'difficult to listen' to her wealthy flatmate 'talk about how her life is'. 'Otherness operates to form social exclusion and subjective fragmentation' (Plummer 2000, p.48) and this is apparent in both Lucy and Kate's narratives. Lucy's admission that she finds listening to her wealthy peer talk about her family's economic capital difficult is also representation of symbolic violence at a personal level. Thapar-Björkert *et al.* (2016) discuss how symbolic violence acts as a mechanism to legitimise dominant discourses above others. Dominant discourses are classed and systemic and act as a powerful force in silencing the other; Lucy listens but does not speak out.

The sense of being Othered because of symbolic violence is imprinted from childhood. Plummer (2000, p.48) recounts McMahon's experience as a working-class child inadvertently humiliated by a teacher, 'This was her first lesson in humiliation – one of many to come – informing her she belonged to the 'wrong' class'', and my autoethnographic poem Spanish Sea is an early memory of that embedded shame of symbolic violence borne of a deficit of economic capital. It remembers the shame of being compelled to stand up in front of everyone in a primary school assembly; the shame imposed by the otherwise lovely headteacher clearly surprised by the number of children in his school whose families took holidays 'abroad' in the seventies. A curiosity for him represented a shame for me that has stayed with me for many

decades, and a distinct understanding of my Otherness. I can now identify this experience as an example of middle-class symbolic violence which 'removes the victim's agency and voice' (Thapar-Björkert e*t al.,* 2016, p.144) but in the primary school hall several decades ago it just represented shame. For me, and in such moments indicated by my participants, these incidences identified my Otherness and eventually led me to identify as working-class. Such moments as Lucy and Kate listening to their wealthy peers demonstrate how this deficit in terms of economic capital contributed to my participants' self-perception as working-class. In response to RQ2.i and 2.ii, both Lucy and Kate unequivocally identify as working-class and clearly believe the overarching signifier to be economic capital.

While the narratives of Kate and Lucy demonstrate clear discomfort and working-class Othering in comparison with their more affluent peers, middle-class Polly's narrative demonstrates a presentation of Other in the context of class being 'produced in a complex dynamic between classes with each class being the other's 'Other'' (Reay, 2005, p.923). In the context of this degree at this university where 'one class is a significant majority compared to the other' (Reay, 2005, p.915), Polly represents a minority of middle-class students where the tensions between classes are 'exacerbated'. Reay (2005) foregrounds individuals' reticence to fully engage with the impact class has on lives and Polly's narrative often indicates this. However, as the year progresses, Polly becomes uncomfortably aware of difference in terms of financial support between her parents and those of her peers, and Polly recognises herself as Other (Reay, 2005) in this new context. From her initial dismissal of the relevance and significance of class, Polly clearly re-evaluates this perspective as she considers and reflects on the nuances of class identity. Polly discussed how 'there are still some barriers up' and this centres on economic difference between her and her peers. I have demonstrated how Polly's habitus had imbued her with significant cultural capital, and in this discussion surrounding the barriers between herself and her peers that cultural capital is explicitly underpinned by economic capital: 'one capital can be transformed into another…economic capital can be converted into cultural capital by buying an elite education' (Reay *et al.,* 2005, p.20). Despite Polly's insistence that the students are all the same in terms of learning and there are things that you can very openly talk about 'until the cows come home' the difference is palpable. Polly appeared to acknowledge this in her description of what she perceives to be the 'barriers' and how they are created by financial inequality: peers 'find it difficult', they 'get uncomfortable', 'things get tense' and culminating in 'there are still some [barriers] that are still there…that you can't talk about'. In the context of these barriers Polly stated 'back to the question. Yes, I think social class does exist'. In the same way that Lucy and Kate were able to identify themselves as working-class through the lens of economic capital, Polly identifies as middle-class, addressing RQ2.i and 2.ii.

Polly's narratives were unique in their distinctiveness: Polly was the only securely middle-class participant as defined by my theoretical framework and her funds of cultural, economic and social capital were consistently evident. Yet as indicated above, it is economic capital that Polly's discussion and discomfort return to. In terms of theories surrounding choice. Polly is securely an 'embedded chooser' (Ball *et al.,* 2002, p.337), where 'finance is not an issue, choice is based on extensive and diverse sources of information [and is] part of a cultural script, a 'normal biography'. Yet, despite her evident self-confidence and competence when discussing other areas of her student life, Polly becomes a 'middle-class fish out of water' (Bathmaker *et al*., 2016) when navigating the landscape of contrasting funds of economic capital and this is further evidence of her as middle class Other. Had Polly attended what she referred to as a 'more middle-class university' this would arguably have been a far less significant issue for her. Initially Polly's discussion did not draw attention to comparative wealth, only that she classified herself as middle-class because of the affluence and professional success of her parents, which demonstrates that although looking through a different lens, economic capital is at the heart of her conceptualisation of class as much as it is for the working-class participants. I argue that as her awareness of her privilege grows, so does her discomfort and awareness of herself as an embedded chooser. In chapter 2 I discussed the significance of economic capital in terms of how it underpins and facilitates cultural capital and Polly's narratives indicate how the two have coalesced to underpin her privilege. Crossley (2012) suggests that while economic capital is often imbued with societal standing and power, and more so than cultural capital, they work together in terms of the field of power and advantage, and this can be identified in Polly's narrative where her distinct economic advantage – private school and professional parents who she can 'call… if I need money' for example – directly translates into her own ability to accrue her own funds of capital, or personal capital (Brown *et al.,* 2011). Polly does not have to work, had a premium private education, and holds significant ambition based on what she has seen her parents achieve. Economic capital has directly translated into cultural capital for her, 'privilege has transferred directly into merit' (Brooks, 2008, p.1357). 'Class is about more than economic difference alone' (hooks, 2000, p.72) and this is clearly the case for Polly. Bourdieu (1984) theorised that the closer an individual is to necessity, the nearer the concept of class and difference is, and it is evident in Polly's narrative that Polly, from her position as embedded chooser, is starting, and arguably for the first time and with some degree of discomfort, to recognise that necessity in others. Furthermore, and in response to research question 2.iv, Polly is perceiving difference between herself, and her peers and this difference is prompted by her growing understanding of the fundamental role played by economic capital. She has previously recognised how it has facilitated her own upbringing but in seeing the economic difference

between herself and her peers in the context of access to money, she is becoming able to see how her relative privilege has positioned her as middle-class Other (Reay, 2005).

While I have examined the theory of Otherness in the context of Polly's middle-classness, and in the context of this post-92 university, Plummer (2000, p.47) reinforces the wider argument of the representation of working-class people as Other, as 'ordinary people' and Other to the dominant middle-class discourses. This can be seen to play out in the context of the university environment where 'while [they] offer a degree of equalisation in terms of the acquisition of educational capital, middle-class cultural and economic capital still lend an advantage to middle-class students in terms of their academic achievements' (Bathmaker *et al.,* 2016, p.103). Carrie discusses how she was 'shocked at how people spend money' going on to reference other people's parents sending money and equipping her peers with top of the range technology. Carrie is Othered in this context where despite this being a post-92 university, where there is a comparatively higher proportion of working-class students, the middle-class students' advantage in terms of their inherited economic capital is enabling them to buy the appropriate technology to enhance their studies and potentially advantage them educationally. This is further evidence to support my response to RQ2.iv where Carrie is clearly demonstrating that she feels tangibly different to her more affluent peers.

Bathmaker *et al.* (2016. p.84) identify that 'working-class students were more likely to engage with paid employment to survive at university' and while this was not universally the case for my working-class participants, there were some who worked alongside studying. Wendy discussed how her peers did not 'get' that she had to work alongside her study and Emma (despite initially identifying as middle-class) discussed how her non-working peers are 'amazed' that she must work and hence has no free time to herself, while being equally 'amazed' by the people who had money given to them by their parents. Bathmaker *et al.* (2016. p.84) discuss how their working-class participants were more likely to value financial independence from parents, which is evident in my participants, with one of their participants citing '…I couldn't believe it. A lot of people just rely on their loans or their parents. That was shocking really'. Further evidence of my working-class participants as contingent choosers is thus reinforced through the lens of economic capital and reinforced in the literature: Reay *et al*. (2005, p.89) discuss a working-class participant who talked about the necessity to work while studying as 'not much of a choice really, it's either poverty or failure, cos I think having to work three days a week won't leave enough time to do the right amount of studying'.

Ball *et al.* (2002) describe contingent choosers as typically challenged financially and often making the choice to attend a local university as a money-saving strategy, and this is reflected in the narratives of Wendy, Kitty and Carrie. These participants travelled to university from their parental homes each day and were aware of the economic difference between them and more affluent peers, with Wendy crystallising this: 'There's certain things that other people

could afford to do that we just couldn't' and Lucy identifying with her sister in that they both see a difference at their respective universities between themselves and more affluent peers. For all these contingent choosers 'finance is a key concern and constraint' (Ball *et al.*, 2002, p.337) and part of this constraint is the financial challenge of meeting the costs of being at university. While embedded chooser Polly acknowledges that her parents can give her more money if necessary, and Eve, self-identifying as middle-class, refers to being 'called certain things [when] your family are rich', the overarching position presented by my working-class participants is that economic considerations are an inescapable factor of their student life.

I discussed necessity above and Bourdieu's theory that the closer one is to necessity, the more aware of economic concerns and constraints she will be. I argue that the proximity to necessity will also impact an individual in terms of choice. Polly is clearly financially comfortable - she has grown up in a position of secure 'concerted cultivation' (Lareau, 2003) where her family, imbued with the necessary capitals, has created a cultural and economic security for her. In contrast, the narratives of Carrie, Wendy, Kitty and Lucy demonstrate that they are closer to necessity (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu discusses how people who are not accustomed to financial security will find it more difficult to spend money than those for whom affluence is embedded, 'having a million does not in itself make one able to live like a millionaire' (Bourdieu, 1984, p.375) and this might go in some way to account for my participants' shocked responses at how some peers spend their money. These working-class participants have been brought up with thrift. Lucy, for example, states how it has 'been drilled into me / Ever since I was younger'. While not able to liberally spend in the way that Polly does, it might be suggested that Lucy would not be able even if she wanted to (Bourdieu, 1984). This sits alongside the theory of contingent choosers for whom economic capital is a central part and limitation of their lives (Reay *et al.,* 2005).

Lawler (2005, p.431) discusses representation of the working-classes by the middle-classes as having 'nothing to do with working-class people themselves but [about] the ways in which working-class people are 'Othered' and, hence, something about a normative and normalised middle-classness'. She goes on to discuss the 'constitution of the working-class existence' in terms of 'lack [and this] is now so widespread as to be ubiquitous' (Lawler, 2005, p.434). It is from this Othered perspective that working-class narratives of shame and carefully guarded notions of respectability emerge, and this is apparent in some of my working-class participants' presentations of themselves and their upbringing in terms of funds, or lack of funds, of economic capital. I referred in 6.2 to working-class 'fractions' (Reay *et al.,*2005, p.105) which demonstrates that the working classes are not a homogenous group, rather that there is distinct divergence which highlight 'intra-working-class differences'. A fraction of the working-class that resonates with my own upbringing and I identify in my participants' narratives, is the

concept of the 'respectable' working-class (Plummer (2000, p.99). My upbringing was punctuated with 'respectable'; we were a respectable family, we didn't *have much,* but we were respectable; I was not to leave the house until I looked respectable, and I must never bring shame on this respectable family. Being respectable indicated that we were 'better' than the *common* working-class people inhabiting the sink estate a mile away. In a family where money was tight and no one had, at that point, had an education, this perception of respectability was at the core of our family identity, particularly for my mum, for whom 'respectability is coded as an inherent feature of 'proper' femininity' (Lawler, 2005, p.435). At the core of our respectability was that we did not talk about money (or lack of it) *outside this house*. Both Lucy and Emma discuss how their families are financially stable but only just. Kitty, however, uses 'respectable' to describe her family and it is argued (Skeggs (1997, p.1) that 'respectability is one of the most ubiquitous signifiers of class [and is] usually the concern of those perceived not to have it'. Kitty is adamant that I do not see her family as poor and her insistence on 'respectability' is indicative of her class insecurity, perhaps a narrative heard over time from her parents. 'Respectability' has become 'one of the key mechanisms by which some groups [are] 'Othered' (Skeggs, 1997, p.1) and Kitty, perhaps subconsciously, recognises and responds to this.

Bathmaker *et al.* (2016, p.23) discuss that while class is 'not about economic capital in a straightforward way' it inevitably embraces both cultural and social capital to 'position individuals in a social space advantageously or disadvantageously to others'. Furthermore, they discuss Bourdieu's argument that the 'transmission and acquisition' of economic capital are more visible than cultural capital (Bathmaker *et al.,* 2016, p.28). The narratives analysed in this section demonstrate this impact of economic capital on my participants in terms of their conceptualisation of class and indicate how economic capital impacts and influences an individual's opportunities to accrue other capitals. In the next session I move to a discussion of the impact of social capital on my participants.

6.5 – Social capital

In this analysis of the impact of social capital on the lives of my participants I draw on theories of the game, possible selves, Othering and choice, while considering RQ2.iii and 3. I look at how my participants perceive themselves in terms of 'fitting in' at university, at the impact of their parents' social capital and the participants' subsequent understanding of the rules of the game.

Bourdieu (1998, p.98) discusses how for middle-class people the rules of the game are embedded and understood and this is evident in Polly's narrative surrounding fitting in at university and family members who were able to ensure that 'extensive support (social capital) is mobilised' (Ball *et al., 2*002, p.337). For Polly, there was certainty that she would fit in

socially. While deeper interrogation in the context of economic capital discussed in the previous section demonstrates tensions with her peers, Polly's general narrative around friendships is easy and uncomplicated: 'we all accept that we are different, and it doesn't matter'. Polly did not problematise relationships with peers when I asked her about fitting in, instead she theorised it in terms of it being 'about the learning'. In her narrative Polly used vocabulary like 'a professional' and 'muddled identity' demonstrating a sophisticated unpicking of her university experience; this is particularly significant as it was during her first interview. Additionally, she has a granular understanding of how the primary education degree works in terms of the time spent in university and on school placement. This is potentially because of her ability to engage with options prior to joining the course, combined with talking to people such as family members. Bathmaker *et al.* (2016, p.155) discuss how their middle-class participants understood the 'rules of the game' and how 'hot knowledge and family social capital were extensively used by middle-class families', and the language used by Polly reinforces this. While terminology such as 'pedagogy' and 'identity' is used by the teaching team from the outset of the degree, my professional experience tells me that it takes more than a month for the terms to embed with most of our undergraduate student teachers.

In contrast, my working-class participants' narratives demonstrate an absence of social capital and subsequent lack of understanding or access to the rules of the game. Reay *et al.* (2005) discuss the lack of a sense of entitlement, and this is corroborated by family who

> whilst supportive and willing to help, did not have access to privileged and valued social capital, as well as having less economic capital [thereby] creating an uneven playing field where middle-class students were much better positioned to appropriate the stakes of the game (Bathmaker *et al*., 2013, p.739).

Polly's access to the rules of the game is underpinned by her position as an embedded chooser. This brings me to the theory of choice through the lens of social capital. In discussing her extended family who are teachers, Polly stated 'honestly? It was the easiest way to get work experience'. Polly's network combines with her educational advantage and her involved parents to enable her to 'hypermobilise' her capitals 'which work together to enable success in HE and help sustain class position and privilege' (Bathmaker *et al*., 2016, p.30). Bathmaker *et al*. (2016) discuss hypermobilisation of capitals in terms of drawing on and developing these capitals. While Polly does not seek extra-curricular activities and internships as many of the participants interviewed by Bathmaker *et al*. (2016) do, I argue that the same social and cultural mechanisms in terms of choice are at work but in a shifted context. As an embedded chooser, Polly's progression to university was never a binary choice but more of a 'well-established and expected route beyond school, part of a normal biography' (Ball *et al.,* 2002, p.342). Polly has mobilised her hot knowledge to make a considered, well-researched decision, not just in terms of her choice of degree but also in terms of choosing this university

which her own ‘research’ has shown her occupies a prime position in the league tables for initial teacher education.

In response to RQ3.i and 3.ii, Polly demonstrated both an understanding of the rules of the game and evidence that her family’s funds of social capital impacted positively on her upbringing. RQ3.i asks how this impact compares between working class and middle-class participants and this can be responded to by Kitty’s narrative. As a contingent chooser (Ball *et al.,* 2002), Kitty can be identified as a ‘child as expert’ (Reay and Ball, 1998). She had investigated HE opportunities without practical assistance from her family and this is reflected by Bathmaker *et.al.* (2016, p.81) whose working-class students ‘described their parents as incredibly supportive. The disadvantages they faced were that their social capital did not match up to their aspirations as students who sought careers outside of the field occupied by their families’. While Kitty’s family have not stood in her way, they do not have the funds of capital to assist her. They lack valuable social capital in terms of connections and influencers, cultural capital in terms of the educational advantage and cultural knowledge to know what is ‘out there’, and economic capital which might have enabled her to widen her options in terms of domestic ‘choices’. Kitty’s statement ‘I never knew anyone that could help me, my family didn’t know any teachers or people like that’ underlines this point. ‘People like that’ occupy a different country in Kitty’s world and her language immediately positions her as Other in terms of the academic environment she is choosing to enter. Bathmaker *et al*. (2013, p.737) reflect Kitty’s position in their discussion around working-class families’ disadvantage around social connections and that ‘social capital most often employed was firmly embedded in family networks’.

To develop this theory, Kitty is positioned as Other in terms of the game and funds of social capital. However, it is apparent that working-class participants, such as Lucy, ‘fit in with certain people’. Earlier in this section I discussed how Polly focussed on fitting in in terms of the expectations of the course, while the working-class participants tended to foreground relationships. McPherson *et al.* (2001) theorised that when individuals are Othered in a situation they tend to group together. McPherson *et al.* (2001, p.415) engage with the concept of homophily as the phenomenon regulating individuals’ behaviours in its underpinning assumption that ‘contact between similar people occurs at a higher rate than among dissimilar people’. They discuss how homophily for broad friendship groups has a strong educational dimension and it is working class participants Kate and Lucy who by the end of the year are talking about ‘certain’ people and ‘people like me’. I argue that homophily might hence be a protective factor used by groups not imbued with social capital to – be it consciously or unconsciously - mitigate Othering and this is something I recollect in the context of my autoethnographic poem, The Only Slave. The experience I write about remains a tangible memory of striving for homophily but failing because I did not fit in with my peers. My school

was a recently converted grammar school; while in the 'top sets' for some subjects (hence being in the Latin class - I was good at English) I did not fit in with these girls and my sense of difference was palpable. It is crystalized for me in the memory of my worn and no longer white socks that would not stay up on their own. We had new socks at Easter; it was clear the other girls had new white socks when they ceased to be white and well-fitting. My homophily was found with my peers from similar backgrounds united in our underachievement in maths going quietly unnoticed. While we were together, we were not Other.

However, as a securely middle-class student in a post-92 university, Polly, too, is cast as Other (Reay, 2005). By the time she has reached university she has drawn on her funds of capital in terms of the choices she has made, the work experience provided by her network of contacts, and the advantage of her private education (Bathmaker *et al.,* 2016) and this is in direct contrast to my other participants. Polly talked about having a group of friends at this university who are clearly all very different to her, and that 'we all accept that we are different'. She went on to state though that 'it's clear' her middle-class friends from home 'wouldn't have friends like I have' and 'they don't mean to have a prejudice, but they do'. Polly evidently perceives that her home friends would see the working-class friends she now has as Other, and this is potentially underlined by the fact that the two groups of friends have never met. Despite her advantage, in the context of this post-92 university Polly is in a potentially new situation of acknowledging that she is different. This is reflected by Bathmaker *et al.* (2016) who talk about the experience of middle-class students in a post-92 context who find themselves immersed in social groups which were 'out of their comfort zone'. Bathmaker *et al.* (2016, p.92) highlight how 'typically middle-class young people negotiate educational space as a fish-in-water' and refer to their participant who '…as a fish-out-of-water she could no longer take the world for granted'. While it cannot be apparent from her narrative whether this prejudice is actual or projected, what is clear is Polly's own awareness and discomfort at this difference. This removes Polly from the comfortable position of being part of the dominant group. While her articulation of her upbringing, her 'home' friends and overarching habitus positions social capital as 'of a person's networks or connections which can be institutionalised as a "title of nobility"' (Bathmaker *et al.*, 2016, p.23), in this context, perhaps, her funds of social capital do not have the same impact, she is not part of the dominant group.

Skeggs (1997) discusses the working-classes being viewed by the dominant class as deficit and therefore Other, and this discourse is reproduced in participant accounts across the literature around class. Bathmaker *et al*. (2016, p.91), for example, reference Reay (2009) in their discussion of 'a 'shock *for* the elite when the middle-classes with high cultural capital were confronted with the unfamiliar world' of a post-92 university. While at no point in her narrative did Polly discuss this university in disparaging terms, her laboured justification for choosing it, and her reference to her friends at home who clearly would not have working-

class friends was tangible. Wendy, however, discussed the two friends that she made at the other university in the context of them being the only non-privately educated people she had met and how she was able to relate to them 'in a social, socio-economic sort of way'. While it might be said that homophily is at work for both Polly and Wendy, where 'birds of a feather flock together' (McPherson *et.al.,* 2001), my overarching conclusion is that it is the powerful mechanism of class operating to define who is Other and enabling class differences to continue to embed and divide. Bathmaker *et al*. (2016, p.75-76) unpick this difference, referring to 'codes of conduct' and 'unwritten rules', terms used by one of their working-class participants discussing the classed differences she felt at university.

While Polly felt the difference in terms of being 'a middle-class fish out of water' (Bathmaker, *et.al.,* 2016) at this post-92 university, Wendy, in her brief time at the Russell Group university, felt 'ill at ease and out of place [leading her] to take a critical view of privilege' (Bathmaker, *et.al.,* 2016, p.90). This latter point continued to be a theme in Wendy's wider narratives; it is unsurprising therefore that Wendy sought homophily with two people with whom she felt socially at ease. However, challenging the concept of homophily, working-class Carrie appears to be distancing herself from social groups and particularly any indication of homophily. Carrie might be imagining a possible self that contradicts her own habitus and is based upon her own self-knowledge as hardworking and motivated from evidence of previous academic achievements where she 'knows what is possible for [her] to achieve' (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p.955). As demonstrated, Carrie demonstrates a passionate allegiance to social justice and has self-identified as working-class. Here she states that she is no longer concerned with fitting in and that it 'doesn't matter' what her peers think of her. Carrie shared no information about wanting to fit in and in this narrative, she is explicitly distancing herself from her peers and is talking in terms of succeeding as a teacher with no reference to class. Skeggs (1997, p.74) discusses how for the women in her study being working-class was not a signifier of pride, rather they wanted to distance themselves from it and its associations of 'all that is dirty, dangerous and without value'. Rather than an insistence on individual agency being an active and conscious rejection of class, I perceive Carrie's focus on individual ambition and hard work was an attempt to transcend class and the blue-collar occupations of her parents. Carrie sees herself to be an ambassador for working-class children; she does not see her future, 'possible self' (Markus and Nurius, 1986) as working-class and might be choosing to step away (Atkinson, 2015). This contributes to my response to RQ2.iii where it can be theorised that in general my participants felt that they fitted in with students like themselves. Carrie's apparent aspiration appear to be the contradictory factor in the argument. Building on Markus' and Nurius' (1986, p.922) work theorising 'possible selves' as the relationship between an individual's aspirations and the political and practical possibility of realising them, Harrison and Waller (2018, p.922) refer to how possible selves are formed and,

in the context of HE, how children from 'disadvantaged backgrounds were motivated by their growing academic self-confidence'. This is what I believe to be Carrie's motivation and while not rejecting her classed self she can see her future 'possible self' as the combined result of aspiration and hard work. Ultimately Carrie understands that she must work hard to become a teacher and she is willing to put that hard work in.

Hoskins and Barker (2019, p.247) discuss a teacher reflecting on the possible futures of the working-class young people in her school and how she 'wished she could inject them with the swagger, the confidence of the privately educated students she encountered through extra-curricular activities'. In the context of the other participants in my study, Polly clearly demonstrates that swagger and confidence which is the product of embedded social capital not experienced by any of my other participants. This social capital has ensured that Polly is an embedded chooser with an inherited understanding of the rules of the game. Unlike Carrie, Polly does not have to imagine a possible self of the future because she has had a secure understanding of a future self from a young age: that swagger and confidence is embedded.

6.6 – Emotional capital

In chapters 2 and 3 I discussed the ways in which primary school teaching has been seen as women's work. Female researchers (such as Reay, 2017; Plummer, 2000 and Maguire, 1997) have foregrounded their classed experiences as relentlessly prescient and impacting powerfully on their constructions of themselves and their place in society. Choices in terms of profession are embedded in class and in gender and the analysis in this final section is framed by the theories of choice and symbolic violence. The section answers RQ1.i why choose primary school teaching? and 2.v – what are the participants' perceptions of the potentially gendered nature of primary school teaching? It also considers 3.i - how does upbringing in terms of emotional capital compare across the working and middle-class participants? I demonstrate how several of my participants felt that primary school teaching was a natural or a given step for them in terms of becoming a professional and their perception of this as 'choice'. The theories of symbolic violence and choice interact with each other in these narratives and for that reason I discuss them alongside each other throughout the section.

Scott (2012, p.531) discusses the concept of misrecognition in identifying symbolic violence and describes it as 'the linchpin in solidifying an amenable relationship between the dominant and the dominated, the haves and have-nots, the powerful and the power-deprived'. This illuminates Bourdieu's (2001, p.1) own description of the phenomenon being:

> a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted through the most part by the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition, recognition (more precisely, misrecognition), or even feeling.

For my participants, symbolic violence has played a part in how they conceptualise themselves and this has crossed class boundaries as Polly has always been 'good with young children' and Kate has been told by family and others that 'you like children / you want to be a primary school teacher'. Furthermore, these narratives reflect the literature I reviewed in chapter 3, focussing on young women's longstanding cultural and societal reasons for wanting to teach (for example, Plummer, 2000; Thompson, 2000); and as articulated by Maguire (2005, p.6):

> The gendered nature of being a teacher… is conflated with discourses of caring and discourses of mothering. For this reason, it is perhaps not difficult for women to imagine a future where they work with children. From there, it is an easy step to start imagining being a teacher.

I have foregrounded Polly and Kate's narratives because they cross class boundaries, with both working-class Kate and middle-class Polly citing the same experience and symbolic violence misrecognised as independent choice. Of significance is Polly's classed upbringing as while she clearly has significant reserves of inherited capital to draw on, her family is not established middle-class in terms of generations of university graduates, and her university choices were securely situated in the vocational and not financially lucrative area of primary school teaching. I earlier referred to Polly as a member of the strategic and ambitious middle-class (Davey, 2012) and this is reflected in her narrative around choice and doing well at this university. Of all my participants, Polly was reflexive in her discussion about her choices, and while symbolic violence in terms of the classed and gendered status of primary school teaching is apparent, Polly highlights this, indicating that there is effectively no choice but to enter a career where everyone has been telling her throughout her life how good she is with children: 'so what do you think you are going to do with that? There was no option / to say / you know what I'm going to be a firefighter'. This is a powerful example of symbolic violence in action, where a means of control – gendered career choices – is so embedded and legitimised that despite being able to see the mechanism, Polly is complicit; her horizons for action (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997) limit her to a gendered role despite her middle-class perception of choice. Hoskins and Barker (2019, p.247) discuss how their participants 'believe strongly in their own agency, but their decisions are closely related to family capitals and influences'; my narratives suggest that this is a potential factor for Polly.

As a result of symbolic violence, the idea of women working with children and being 'good with children' becomes natural and obvious and 'exercised over individuals through everyday social habits [and occurring] through the mundane processes and practices of everyday life' (Thapar-Björkert *et al.,* 2016, p.152). Symbolic violence thus legitimises these everyday assumptions and repackages them as choice. RQ1.i is responded to in this context, symbolic violence can be seen to impact my participants' perceived choices. As a result of symbolic violence these choices and decisions revolve around discourses of caring (Vogt, 2002).

Discourses of caring are foregrounded in the literature relating to the expectations for and of young women in the world of work (Huppatz, 2009; Zembylas, 2007; Maguire, 2005 Acker, 1995) and this is particularly so for working-class women because of the traditional and historical positioning of females at the centre of the home not workplace.

Discourses of caring subsequently become embedded cultural scripts (Acker, 1995) and these are also identifiable in my narratives; cultural scripts work with symbolic violence to limit the possibilities for young women. Acker (1995, p.23) discusses the prevalence of 'maternal imagery' in 'discussions of teachers and teaching and [how this] has deep historical roots'. She references cultural scripts that associate teaching with mothering and reinforce the profession as feminised and low status. Furthermore, Nias (1999) discusses the 'culture of care' in the context of young, working-class women's ability to visualise themselves as primary school teachers. This is identifiable in my narratives, with working-class Kitty assuming the caring role for younger siblings, cousins and neighbours, and middle-class Eve doing the same with cousins. Teacher as mother figure is a powerful discourse and as primary school teaching remains a very female dominated profession, it is one that my participants and their peers will have grown up with in terms of who taught *them* at primary school. This engages with RQ2.v which considers the participants' perceptions of the potentially gendered nature of primary school teaching. Emma comments on how there are few men in her cohort at this university while Carrie directly considers how teaching has traditionally been seen as a 'motherly role'. 'Emotional capital may be a dead letter in the masculine, working-class sphere, where physical superiority is more valued than emotional skills and caring' (Virkki, 2007, p.278) and this is reflected in Kitty's discussion of how her family – seemingly unequivocally – see teaching as a 'girl's job', her brother stating that 'men don't work with little kids'. Narratives of caring are deeply embedded in communities and reproduced in families, and while 'patterns are related to but not dictated by gender' (Baxter Magolda, 1992, p.22), my narratives reinforce the perception of primary school teaching as being women's work. Emma states how women appear to make teaching their choice 'as a career thing' which resonates with Braun's (2015) perspective that gendered employment assumptions become naturalised over time. None of my participants problematise this gender imbalance, which suggests that they have embraced 'the often-intangible elements of symbolic violence, which implicate victims as both damaged by and complicit' (Scott, 2012, p. 531).

In response to RQ1.1, it is also possible to identify vocational habitus (Colley, *et al.,* 2013) as embedded in the 'choices' of these participants to become primary school teachers. Cultural scripts in terms of narratives of caring have created in my participants a sense that they are the 'right person for the job' (Zembylas, 2007, p.452) and thus in possession of the appropriate funds of vocational capital. Lucy stated how she believes teaching for her is 'for a degree for my life' and Kitty declared that she 'can't imagine wanting to do anything else at all'. For these

young women, their futures are certain and defined. Vocational capital works in tandem with emotional capital to create, but also limit opportunities, defining them by class and gender. Having been told for many years that they are good with children, and having embraced this narrative, it is not difficult to identify how vocational habitus was forming for my participants while they were still children themselves. Vogt's (2002, p.252) discussion surrounding 'personal investment, commitment and relationship' in teaching is clearly reflected in the participants' responses. Furthermore, while the participants feel that *they* have chosen teaching, it is reasonable to consider the impact of years of opinions and reinforcements regarding the participants' skill in managing children by those around them; they have grown up knowing this, seeing women performing caring roles in society (Huppatz, 2009). Symbolic violence is a powerful agent in impacting these 'choices'. However, none of my participants related class to choices and expectations; the responses were more subtle, embodied, and embedded in their own experiences. Bourdieu (1998, p.102) discusses how symbolic violence relies on the 'transfiguration of relationships of domination and submission into affective relationships'; for my participants, these relationships and individuals' roles in them are not questioned. Furthermore, the participants from working-class backgrounds were the most emphatic in terms of choosing to be primary school teachers. This latter point is also further evidence of my working-class participants being contingent choosers (Ball *et al.,* 2002), in that in addition to the limitations placed on choice in terms of class, society is playing a powerful part to also limit choice in terms of gender.

RQ3 looks at the impact of parental attitudes and aspirations on participants' choices to become primary school teachers. Lucy's response is representative of several of my working-class participants: 'their main thing is that they want me to be happy in what I choose'. Reay and Ball's (1998, p.434) discussion of working-class children as 'experts' in the context of educational choice reflects Lucy's statement and is underlined in a quote from one of their participants, a working-class mother, who stated, 'he made a decision, we accept that and we're happy for him'. Like Lucy, Kitty was told by her family, 'you must do what you want as long as you're happy that's the most important thing', clearly indicating how the decision surrounding education is left to her as the expert. This theory is supported by Huppatz (2009, p.49) who describes how her research demonstrated that 'working-class mothers tended to prioritise their children's emotional wellbeing over their education' going on to state how 'this type of capital does not always lead to educational success'.

My participant Anna, who identifies as middle-class but whose background contradicts this, stated 'I don't think they understand deeply what it is I'm doing to be honest they are quite detached from the idea of going to higher education but I think they're happy and proud'. This further underpins the theory of child as expert and can be identified in Ball *et al*. (2002, p.337) who discuss families, particularly mothers, in terms of 'giving emotional support and high levels

of encouragement and expectation'. However, Ball *et al*. go on to state that this support tends to be 'generic' and 'weakly linked to "real" imagined futures' as opposed to the strongly framed support and expectations evident for middle-class families and discussed in terms of Polly's narrative above. My own story, woven into and underpinning this thesis, presents a different account in terms of what I was told that I was 'good at'. My brother and I were the youngest children in our wider (but small) family milieu and working with children was never a reference point; I came to teaching relatively late. However, as I describe, in my autoethnographic poem Our Own Glass Ceiling, there were other, different cultural scripts at work in our household and symbolic violence took the form of an office, not a school. In chapter 1 I referred to how my parents (my mum) wanted us to be happy but though well-meaning this happiness was bound by the limits of their (her) own aspirations and experience. This is a discourse consistently present in working-class narratives where there were traditionally low expectations with relation to young women and the world of work (Plummer, 2000). Symbolic violence for these young women, and present in my own story, operates as an insidious control mechanism within the family as well as the societal structure (Steedman,1987; 1986); their families want them to be happy. Hoskins and Barker (2019) discuss the impact of upbringing on children's choices of career and their findings are reflected in my participants: while none of my participants stated explicitly that their parents had actively encouraged or steered them towards teaching, all these discussions indicated a family pride in their daughters' choices.

However, in stating this I am not suggesting that the middle-class parents did not want happiness for their daughters; rather, wanting happiness has been found to be different across class groups and that happiness for middle-class families is potentially represented by success and the benefits accompanying that success. Middle-class Polly and Anna stated how their parents wanted their daughters to 'be sure' that they were making the right decisions in terms of their choice of degree and choices; both come from an informed perspective of knowing how the system works. It is possible that these middle-class parents' interest and investment in their daughters' futures is more considered than a straightforward desire for them to *just* be happy. Reay (2002, p.29) discusses how 'middle-class mothers push their children towards high academic performance' in a way that working-class families, because of their lack of access to sufficient funds of capital, and particularly cultural capital, are unable to do. Furthermore, Reay *et al.* (2003, p.63) state how for middle class families this is 'axiomatic and automatic [and has] played a part in forming expectations and the processes of choice making'. Both of Polly's parents have attended university themselves, as has Anna's mum. Their parents were anxious to ensure that Polly and Anna were 'sure' that they wanted to train to be a teacher, and at this university, demonstrating how, for Anna and Polly 'choice is part of a cultural script, a 'normal biography'' (Reay *et al*., 2005, p.112). Anna discusses how her family had suggested it might be more beneficial to 'do a degree in a subject then do

your PGCE afterwards', demonstrating the family's middle-class understanding of how the teacher education system works and their access to hot knowledge. This is further reinforced by Anna's statement that she thought the three-year degree would be more beneficial to her than undertaking a different degree, then engaging with the one-year postgraduate route afterwards, 'in terms of learning about the pedagogy'. However, while Anna demonstrates an understanding of the system, she is also limiting her choices in that she is halting other career options to focus on primary school teaching, a very vocational pathway. This potentially indicates that her hot knowledge is not as strong as it is for more established middle-class families and might be seen in the evidence that Anna's father – who because of his educational background and his profession (Anna had identified him as a working-class farmer) took the view most commonly seen by the working-class families in my research: 'He was more laid back and he thought that if I knew what I wanted to do then I would do that'. Polly is firmly embedded in middle-class cultural capital and her status as embedded chooser, but it is evident that while Anna's educated mum shares that ambition, her dad's aspirations are missing. As being partially endowed with appropriate hot knowledge and cultural capital to get to university but with a parent who has no understanding or experience of HE, Anna is closer to the position of a contingent chooser. Maguire (2001, p.320) identified such participants as 'hybrids' whose class identities and identifiers may not be fixed in the way that Polly's is.

In this chapter I have used the theories of symbolic violence, possible selves, the game, choice and Othering to analyse my data through the lens of my themes. I have demonstrated how cultural, economic, social and emotional capital interact with each other in the lives of my participants, with economic capital presenting as the principal factor in their conceptualisation of social class. Throughout, I have drawn my argument back to my research questions and in the next and final chapter I summarise this analysis to provide a definitive response to these questions. In this final chapter I also consider recommendations for both practice and future research and the inevitable limitations of a small-scale study.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and implications for future study

7.0 – Introduction

During chapter 6 I analysed my data in the context of my themes and overarching theories, answering my research questions as I wrote. I begin this chapter by collating my discussions to make definitive responses to each question (7.1). I then go on to discuss the limitations of this study (7.2), followed by the potential impact of the study for the university (7.3). I consider recommendations for future research (7.4), how this thesis makes a unique contribution to the body of research already in existence (7.5) and go on to suggest recommendations for future practice (7.6). I conclude the thesis as I started, using the autoethnographic lens to reflect on the impact of this journey for me, making sense of my classed and gendered position both in the context of my own experience and that of my participants as I navigate the classed and gendered boundaries that I cross in my personal and professional lives (7.7).

7.1 – Responses to the research questions

RQ1: What attracts the women in the study to primary school teaching and is there a class influence attached to this choice?

1.i Why choose primary school teacher training?

The theory of symbolic violence (Thapar-Björkert *et al*., 2016) is a significant factor in governing participants' choices in terms of the seemingly 'natural' assumption that women tend to be 'good with children' and can be seen through the lens of emotional capital to answer this question. This was often identified for and by them from a young age, demonstrating that they had internalised cultural scripts (Acker, 1995) and that these cultural scrips potentially limit their future selves. Furthermore, both middle and working-class participants engaged with these discourses, leading me to conclude that symbolic violence in this context impacts women across the classes rather than it being an exclusively working-class phenomenon.

1.ii Why choose this university rather than a Russell Group university / university located in a different city?

While choices in terms of studying Initial Teacher Education in primary education are limited due to its prevalence as a largely post-92 institution discipline, the decision to attend this university was an active choice amongst all participants. To respond to this question, most of my working-class participants were relatively local meaning that they had both geographical and family factors reinforcing their choice. Working-class participants tend to identify with the university using language such as 'comfortable' and 'feels right' which reflects the literature (for example, Bathmaker *et al.,* 2016; Reay, *et al.,* 2010) relating to the choices less-advantaged students make in choosing post-92 universities and looked at through the theory

of choice. My 'solidly middle-class' participant had used her reserves of cultural capital to research this university and knew about its high ranking in national league tables, and I have suggested, in line with Bathmaker *et al.* (2016) that this might be partially due to her knowing that she can excel at this institution. My data also demonstrate that this student had travelled furthest geographically to attend this university.

RQ2: What are the participants' perceptions of themselves in terms of social class and gendered choices in comparison to others on the course?

2.i *Do the participants conceptualise themselves in terms of social class?*

Initially most of my participants were unsure about conceptualising themselves in terms of class which made me question if class as a concept was relevant for young people in the twenty-first century. However, and particularly over the course of the year, differences began to manifest, and some participants theorised these differences in terms of class, having had the opportunity to make sense of themselves by seeing themselves alongside other, 'different sorts' of people. (Bathmaker *et al.,* 2016) and this is discussed in the context of the theory of Other. The most definite responses to my initial question were from middle-class Polly whose inherited cultural capital manifested through affluence and a private education was explicit, and working-class Kitty whose middle-class friends' houses and gardens 'blew [her] mind'. The participants whose habitus was less defined tended to be less resolute about their classed identity which correlates with the claim of Savage *et al.* (2015) that most people tend to position themselves in the middle of the social scale.

2.ii What do the participants perceive to be the signifiers of the social class with which they identify?

The overarching response to this question was that economic capital signified social class, and this was apparent from all participants across the class-range. In the initial interviews all the participants foregrounded money – or lack of it – in their conceptualisation of social class. This is reflected in the literature (for example, Crossley 2012) and is theorised in terms of symbolic violence, participants' choices particularly in the positioning of the working-class students as contingent choosers (Ball *et al.,* 2002). It was also seen in how each class was positioned as the other's Other (Reay, 2005) in the context of economic difference in undergraduate social relationships. Middle-class Polly, from a position of relative privilege, can identify cultural factors as signifying class, and this is something other participants arrived at over the course of the year, although economic capital remained at the centre of all the participants' conceptualisation of social class.

2.iii What are the participants' attitudes and feelings about 'fitting in' at university?

This question is addressed against the backdrop of literature about fitting in at university being dependent upon the type of university you attend and therefore the peers you meet (Bathmaker, *et al.,* 2016; Reay *et al.,* 2010), and through the lens of social capital. The working-class participants tended to discuss the concept of fitting in in terms of social relationships except for Carrie who I looked at through the possible selves theory (Harrison and Waller, 2018; Markus and Nurius, 1986) because of her focus on achieving rather than fitting in with her peers. While not actively turning her back on her working-class background (Skeggs, 1997), Carrie demonstrated clear and single-minded aspiration. Polly, meanwhile, demonstrates middle-class confidence and entitlement in her foregrounding of the academic aspects of the course rather than social relationships as being central for her.

2.iv Do they perceive difference between themselves and other students

In my discussion of my participants' conceptualisation of class I demonstrated how while not necessarily focussing on class, all could perceive some difference. I looked at this through the concept of Other and considered the notion of working-class shame (Reay, 2005) and the consideration that through their experience of symbolic violence and Othering, working-class students are potentially more likely to perceive difference. This is embedded in the concepts of cultural capital and habitus where students are starting to see palpable differences between themselves and others and feel Other in terms of their very different experiences prior to coming to university. In terms of social capital, participants tend to 'flock together' by finding similar people and this is explored through the concept of homophily (McPherson, 2001). As they start to form new identities based on the new people they are meeting they are developing their perceptions of class and gender (Maguire, 2005; Bochner, 2001).

Underpinning these conclusions is the overarching point that economic capital is at the centre of my participants' conceptualisation of class and all participants identified financial difference between themselves and their peers as being of significance.

2.v What are the participants' perceptions of the potentially gendered nature of primary school teaching?

The responses to this question are situated in the discussion of the impact of emotional capital (6.6), with symbolic violence (Thapar-Björkert *et al.,* 2016) being central to the assumption of primary school teaching as women's work. While none of the participants had considered how gendered the profession is, they had all been subject to the cultural scripts (Acker, 1995) discussed in response to 1.i above. Working-class Kitty stated how her family and particularly her brother believed primary school teaching to be 'a girl's job' and others discussed how they had not really considered gender before starting their degree, noticing how few men are on

the course. This is further evidence of symbolic violence presenting primary school teaching as a natural and obvious 'vocational habitus' (Colley *et al.,* 2003) for women.

RQ3: What is the influence of parental attitude and aspiration on the women in the study and were there aspects of their upbringing that impacted choices?

3.i How does 'upbringing' in terms of capitals (Savage et al., 2015; Bourdieu, 1990) compare in terms of the first and non-first generation university attenders in the study?

In response to this question, I have discussed how the theory of perceived choice has impacted the lives of my participants. In terms of social capital, I discuss how, for example, working-class Kitty is distinctly disadvantaged by her upbringing; through the theory of choice I discuss her as child as expert (Reay and Ball, 1998) and a contingent chooser (Ball, *et al.,* 2002). Kitty has not had the advantage of inherited capitals bestowed by parents who had already attended university themselves in the way that middle-class Polly clearly has. Similarly, in terms of cultural capital I referred to Skeggs' (1997, p.10) discussion of the 'affective aspects of inequality' and how middle-class Polly has the background in terms of support and education as well as self-confidence that my working-class participants do not come near to. I conclude that upbringing has an exponential impact of the lives of young people and the difference between upbringing in working-class and middle-class families are distinctly different.

3.ii What is the participants' understanding / awareness of capitals and the resulting 'rules of the game'?

I identified the game as one of my theories through which to analyse my data and in the context of cultural capital, social capital and emotional capital. I related it to the theory of choice, and it is apparent that the middle-class participants were imbued with the 'hot knowledge' associated with 'embedded choosers' (Ball *et al.*, 2002) in terms of support and advice around getting to university. The inherited cultural capital that brought Polly to HE was not experienced by working-class Kitty, for example, who can be identified as 'child as expert' (Reay and Ball, 1998) in that she did her own 'research' to get here. Other participants had partial 'hot knowledge' and I suggest that this makes them 'hybrids' as identified by Maguire (2001). I considered the theory of Othering in terms of, for example, how Emma's gradual understanding of how class works makes her feel different to the middle-class people she is comparing herself with.

7.2 - Limitations of the study

The overarching limitation of this study is its size. I am very aware that 9 participants over 2 years cannot be truly representative. However, I acknowledge this and suggest that the stories these participants have brought to my research has afforded me a 'flavour' of their experience and that my rigid adherence to my methodological, ethical processes and my thorough reviewing of the literature has prepared me well for future study.

I had, naively perhaps, assumed that I would be able to recruit more participants with a wider breadth of habitus following the initial positive responses (in both years). However, this experience has taught me that I might need to revise this process in future research, making participation potentially more attractive while staying within ethical boundaries.

I deliberately limited this study to gender and class, but the literature has demonstrated that the intersection of race is an additional powerful lens, and its inclusion might have added a further valuable dimension to my work.

The most significant limitation of the study and one that in retrospect I would certainly have done differently is to find a way to ensure member checking and feedback throughout this process. As a novice researcher I had – again somewhat naively – taken at word my participants' responses that they did not want to see the completed poetry and not pursued this. However, further reading following submission and discussions during my viva voce have made me see how crucial member-checking is. Moving forward I will ensure that poetry I have written from my future participants' data is shared in a subsequent meeting if participants were willing, otherwise by email or post: I would find a way. Like my gradual recognition of how autoethnography is essential to the authenticity of my work, it has become clear to me that being tenacious and judicious in finding a way for participants to read the poetry written from their own utterances is essential, not least in avoiding the reproduction of 'lousy poetry' (Faulkner, 2009).

7.3 - Potential impact for the university

Reay (1997, p.23) discusses the 'alienation of advantage' and the importance of working-class women navigating the territory of the middle-classes, remaining authentic and continuing to question academic culture and value while acknowledging the extent to which we are 'caught up in them'. In completing this research, I hope to be part of the university's 'voice' in terms of advocating for young working-class women such as Carrie – who sees herself as representing working-classes as a teacher. Reay (1997, p.24) discusses how 'inevitably, my rage has diluted as I see myself through my mother's eyes because then I can see just how privileged I have become'. This thesis is nothing if not personal and I keep this thought close as I advocate for young working-class women navigating the uncertain waters of HE and play my

part in making explicit the potential impact that symbolic violence has on the lives and choices of working-class women.

Furthermore, as I engaged progressively more deeply with my methodological approach, the potential for deeper cross-departmental working became clear to me. We often exist in 'silos' in the context of a university; this research has the potential to address this. It might begin some powerful conversations with other faculties around the potential of narrative inquiry and specifically poetic re-presentation, to reimagine future practice-based research projects. Bathmaker *et al.* (2016, p.739) state 'university … does not become a social leveller, but rather it becomes another site for the middle-classes to exploit their advantages'. I would like to contribute towards the reversal of this perception by using my own research and relatively unusual methodological approach to work towards greater social justice for young working-class women entering HE without access to privilege and valuable cultural and social capital, and with little understanding of the rules of the game.

7.4 - Recommendations for future research

On completion of this thesis, it has become apparent to me that there are areas which might be built upon and benefit from future research. My participants, particularly initially, did not see class as a concept. Maguire (2001, p.320) discusses participants with 'mixed' class backgrounds, hybrids, and suggested 'perhaps we have lost the language through which to talk about class'. I recommend that we find that new language and this methodological approach may support us to do that.

Braun's (2015) perspective also opened an interesting 'window' in her discussion of how parents who are teachers might want 'something 'better' for their children. I believe this to be a discussion to be had in terms of engaging with future research and one that has the potential to create rich poetic narratives from contrasting generations of participants.

Polly's story throughout provided robust contrast to those of my working-class and less secure middle-class participants; I believe a future study in this area would benefit from an equal balance of participants from each class to provide greater depth of analysis.

7.5 - Unique contribution to the body of research

Poetry is an exciting and potentially powerful way of considering class which, in terms of academic engagement, has historically been the preserve of sociology. Furthermore, and as indicated at the beginning of this thesis, embracing autoethnography as part of my methodological approach marked something of an epiphany for me in giving me license to add the missing stories in my 'vault' (Douglas and Carless, 2013, p.93). This thesis adds to the body of literature surrounding the classed and gendered experiences of novice primary school teachers from the perspective of this very different methodological approach, adding

knowledge about how working-class women choose the universities they do and the professions they join.

7.6 - Recommendations for future practice

During this research, several recommendations have become clear, both for the programme, and for the participation of young working-class women who lack the self-confidence demonstrated by Polly to perceive highly successful future selves. I would like to provide input for young women on the undergraduate teacher training programme to support them in terms of their future selves and potential. This might take the specific form of a seminar surrounding the impact social class has on our choices and how we are, often subconsciously, limited by these perceived choices. Using myself as an example I would discuss my own trajectory with students, pointing out how I became a lecturer but how I took some time to get to this position because of my embedded imposter syndrome. We talk about race, we talk about disability, and we talk about gender as part of the course, but we do not talk about social class in terms of the participants' own experiences. I would like to foreground this and make clear to the students the impact social class – and especially when combined with being female – can potentially have on a person's life and ambition. I intend to open conversations with the university's ITE leaders and the possibility of following this up through mentoring young working-class women in terms of their trajectory. There is also potential to do this with students who have now left us through our alumni networks.

We do not have difficulty recruiting young women from working-class backgrounds to the course; I am keen to harness these students and show them opportunities and potential beyond the role of class teacher. I am also keen to engage them in discussions about social justice and – responding to Carrie's narrative – the potential impact that they can have on the lives of disadvantaged children as a teacher and agent for change.

7.7 - Concluding thoughts: my own story revisited

Maguire (2005, p.5) discusses the 'dilemmas' presented to women such as me who originate from the working-classes yet have earned indisputable middle-class credentials as professionals in the field of education:

> What to make of the girl who is now a head teacher? What to make of the woman who 'battles' through the system to become an educationalist? How do they represent themselves? How do they place themselves – as women, as teachers, as working-class women who teach? Are they women who have crossed class boundaries or can they 'choose' to stay in their class of origin? Or do they cross backwards and forwards depending on the contexts in which they find themselves – cultural and material nomads?

As I draw to the close of this thesis, Maguire's question, one which has troubled me and been at the heart of my impetus to take this journey, remains unanswered. However, what I feel

nearer to now is an acceptance and security in the knowledge that this is not a unique situation. That the kinship I felt in that tent in the rain in 2011 on reading Hoggart for the first time is writ large in the discussion of class. I can identify how my gender has intersected with my class to replace Hoggart with the narratives of many female working-class theorists who have followed the same path into education and uncertainty as me. I began this thesis with a quote from Hanley (2016, p.x) stating that 'changing class is like emigrating from one side of the world to the other'. I have considered the ontological and epistemological impact of Hanley's statement and engaged with the question of whether 'dual nationality' is possible in the context of class. While the feeling of being Other stays with me and reminds me of my classed history, the journey I have travelled has demonstrated that I am not alone; what I have is the legacy of the women who came before and exponentially impacted my thinking and perception of class.

Listening to my participants has further reinforced this perspective and prompted me to consider what we can do to mitigate the perpetuation of primary school teaching as a classed and gendered profession. Maguire (1997, p.88) asks 'What cultural habitus has positioned and re-produced me?' I respond with this work; more than just an academic exercise, this thesis represents a significant building block in my own identity and a recognition and understanding of the impact of my habitus on who I am and, for my participants, who they are potentially 'growing up' to be. Maguire (1997, p.88) goes on to assert 'although my status is undoubtedly middle-class, part of my self-identity remains located in my past'. I embrace this perspective and acknowledge my position as a cultural and material nomad.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Whole cohort questionnaire

Research Questionnaire

Title and purpose of the study

Is teaching a classed and gendered profession? Exploring the narratives of female trainee teachers

My research looks at the experiences of young female students as they begin their teacher training. I am interested in the motivation for becoming a teacher. I am particularly interested in contrasting the experiences of students whose generation are the first in their family to attend university with those of students whose parents (or grandparents) went to university.

Today I am asking everyone in the cohort to complete this questionnaire in order to 'set the scene' in terms of the choices you have made to get to join us at UWE. <u>You are, however, not obliged to complete this questionnaire – participation is entirely voluntary</u>.

1	What gender do you identify with?
2	What year did you leave secondary school?
3	Did you complete 'A' levels or a different route (eg: HND)? (Please specify)
4	What is the postcode of your last place of residence prior to coming to university?
5	What was the name of the last secondary school you attended?
6	What are the occupations of your parents/ carers?
7	What is the education level of your parents / carers (ie: GCSE / 'A' level / degree / higher degree – MA or Doctorate)?
8	What made you decide to choose to train to be a teacher?
9	What guidance was given to you in your secondary school about choosing a university?

10	Why did you choose UWE?
11	What other universities did you consider / go to visit on open days
	Is there anything else that you would like to add concerning your choices and background that led you to your decision to train to be a primary school teacher at UWE?

Returning this questionnaire confirms consent for use of your initial data in my work, you are not asked to disclose your identity. Due to this anonymity, once submitted questionnaires cannot be withdrawn **If you are interested in taking part in my wider research - this will take the form of up to 3 one to one interviews over the course of your first year at university - please write your name and UWE email address below. Alternatively, if you would like time to consider participating, please take the participant information sheet where you will find my contact details for you to contact me later. <u>Please note that there is a ten day period in which to do this; please return to me by October 15th</u>**

Many thanks for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire.

Laura Manison Shore

Appendix 2: Questionnaire participant information sheet

Research Questionnaire – Participant Information Sheet

Study Title

Is teaching a classed and gendered profession?

Exploring the narratives of female trainee primary school teachers

Invitation paragraph

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. I am a Professional Doctorate Student at UWE alongside my role as Senior Lecturer in Primary and Early Years Education and Programme Leader for the PGCE Primary and Early Years.

I am asking the whole of the 2018 primary education cohort to complete this initial questionnaire in order to provide me with a sense of the choices you made to get here today. My larger study will just focus on the experiences of female trainees, however.

Purpose of the study

My research looks at the experiences of young female students as they begin their teacher training; I am interested in the motivation for becoming a teacher. I am particularly interested in contrasting the experiences of students whose generation are the first in their family to attend university with those of students whose parents (or grandparents) went to university.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you whether you take part in this questionnaire today. You are not be asked to provide your name or identify yourself in any way unless you are interested in taking place in my wider study. Please feel free to take this information sheet away with you.

What will happen to me if I take part, and what do I have to do?

Unless you wish to participate in my wider study, nothing will happen beyond me gathering the data drawn from your responses and presenting as part of the context to my study when writing my thesis. You do not have to do anything else. If you wish to consider being part of my wider research, there is a box at the bottom of the questionnaire for you to write your name so that I can contact you if appropriate.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

As this is a single, anonymous point of data collection, there will be no considered advantages, disadvantages, benefits nor risks attached to the completion of this questionnaire. In the event you are interested in taking part in my wider research, you will be given a detailed and carefully considered information sheet outlining any potential or perceived advantages, disadvantages, risks and benefits

What happens if something goes wrong?

If, following completion of this questionnaire, you are uncomfortable with the process please contact me in the first instance. However, in the event you feel unable to share concerns with me then please contact my Director of Studies, Dr Helen Bovill (Helen2.bovill@uwe.ac.uk) or my supervisor, Dr Catherine Rosenberg (Catherine.rosenberg@uwe.ac.uk). Alternatively, you can contact your Programme Leader, Karan Vickers-Hulse (karan.vickers-hulse@uwe.ac.uk).

Consent for use of data in the questionnaire

Returning this questionnaire confirms your consent to the data you provide being used, as outlined above. As this is an anonymous questionnaire, once completed data cannot be withdrawn.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

Following completion and writing up of my wider research I will present my findings to examiners as part of the final *viva voce* for my Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD). Following this I hope to reproduce aspects of the data in academic journals and present at conferences. The data you provide in the questionnaire today will be for the purposes of contextualising my work and will make no reference, at any point, to individual responses.

Who is organising and funding the research

The researcher, Laura Manison Shore, is organising and funding the majority of this research. A contribution towards it is being provided by the university

Contact for further information

Laura Manison Shore

Telephone: 0117 328 7351

Laura.manisonshore@uwe.ac.uk

Many thanks for your time and attention in reading this information sheet and I look forward to possibly working with you over the coming year

Laura Manison Shore September 2018

Appendix 3: Consent form

Consent Form for Research Project: Laura Manison Shore

Is teaching a classed and gendered profession? Exploring the narratives of female trainee teachers

Please tick the appropriate boxes	**Yes**	**No**
Taking Part		
I have read and understood the project information sheet dated 01/09/18	☐	☐
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	☐	☐
I agree to take part in the project. Taking part in the project will include being interviewed and audio recorded	☐	☐
I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any time within the stated period and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part.	☐	☐
Use of the information I provide for this project only		
I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will only be accessed by the researcher (Laura Manison Shore).	☐	☐
I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. Pseudonyms will replace actual names at all times.	☐	☐
I understand that my data (from interviews) might be shared with the researchers' supervisors where necessary; however, as stated above, no personal data (names, contact details) will be shared.	☐	☐
Use of the information I provide beyond this project		
I agree for the data I provide to be archived at the UK Data Archive.[2]	☐	☐
I understand that other authenticated researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	☐	☐
So we can use the information you provide legally		
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials related to this project to Laura Manison Shore	☐	☐

_____ _____ _____

Name of participant [printed] Signature Date

_____ _____ _____

Researcher [printed] Signature Date

Project contact details for further information:

Researcher: Laura Manison Shore
Laura.manisonshore@uwe.ac.uk
Director of Studies: Dr Helen Bovill

Helen2.bovill@uwe.ac.uk
Supervisor: Dr Catherine Rosenberg
Catherine.rosenberg@uwe..ac.uk

Appendix 4: Participant information sheet

Participation Information Sheet

Study Title

Is teaching a classed and gendered profession?

Exploring the narratives of female trainee teachers

Invitation paragraph

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. I am a Professional Doctorate Student at UWE alongside my role as Senior Lecturer in Primary and Early Years Education and Programme Leader for the PGCE Primary and Early Years.

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is happening and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that it not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

Purpose of the study

My research looks at the experiences of young female students as they begin their teacher training. I am interested in the motivation for becoming a teacher and in contrasting the experiences of students whose generation are the first in their family to attend university with those of students whose parents (or grandparents) went to university.

Why have I been chosen?

I am about to commence my research project and I am looking for approximately 10 participants from your group of ITE students. I am specifically interested in first year undergraduate teaching students as you transition from school into university.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you whether you take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Interviews will be transcribed within 6 weeks of them taking place. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw up to one month after each interview and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time or a decision not to take part will by no means, affect your studies and assessments. <u>This research is entirely independent of your university studies.</u>

In terms of the data shared with me (ie: the transcripts of the interviews we will be engaging in) there will be a final withdrawal date of August 2019 as after that point I will be writing up findings

What will happen to me if I take part, and what do I have to do?

If you agree to take part in this study, I will email you to make contact in the first instance. We will then meet up to three times over the next academic year. We will have a one to one recorded interview that will last approximately one hour; this interview will be recorded. I will arrange the interviews and communicate details to you; you need do nothing beyond meeting me at the arranged time.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

I have carefully considered potential disadvantages and risks and to this end will ensure that none of the interviews will take place at a 'high stakes' point in your year (such as placements or assignment submission dates). Your anonymity will be protected and any information shared with me as part of your narrative will not have any impact on your degree; the research is separate from your studies.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

While taking part in this research will not impact your course the wider benefits are that you are contributing to a body of research in the area of teacher education which has the potential to enhance the reputation and research vault of UWE

What happens if something goes wrong?

If at any point you are uncomfortable with the process please contact me in the first instance. However, in the event you feel unable to share concerns with me then please contact my Director of Studies, Dr Helen Bovill (helen2.bovill@uwe.ac.uk) or my supervisor, Dr Catherine Rosenberg (Catherine.rosenberg@uwe.ac.uk). Alternatively you might wish to contact your Programme Leader, Karan Vickers-Hulse (karan.vickers-hulse@uwe.ac.uk).

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you which leaves the university will have your name and address / email address removed from it in order to ensure that you cannot be recognised from it. Information will be kept on a password protected laptop and information that is in transit will be kept on an encrypted memory stick and deleted once transferred to its destination. My project supervisors will not have access to personal details such as names and contact addresses / numbers. My data storage arrangements comply in full with the 1988 UK Data Protection Act and UWE's Data Protection Policy 2018.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

Following completion of the research, I will present my findings to examiners as part of gaining the Professional Doctorate. Following this, I hope to reproduce aspects of the data in academic journals and present at conference. This study will protect your anonymity through use of pseudonyms and by omitting any non-essential details that might identify you.

Who is organising and funding the research

The researcher, Laura Manison Shore, is organising and funding the majority of the research. A contribution towards it is being provided by the university.

Contact for further information

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S block

Frenchay Campus

Coldharbour Lane

Bristol

BS16 1QY

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Laura.manisonshore@uwe.ac.uk

Many thanks for your time and attention in reading this information sheet and I look forward to possibly working with you

September 2018

Appendix 5: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Interview 1 - Semi structured
October 2018

Ascertain name of participant
Why did you want to become a primary school teacher? - As opposed to a different profession / university course - As opposed to a secondary teacher
Tell me about your home and your upbringing - Where are you from? - What are the occupations of your parents / carers? - Did your parents attend university – what 'level' of education do they possess? - Are you able to identify a particular social class that you come from - What is your reason for this choice?
Do you think your parents influenced your choices in terms of wanting to be a teacher? - How? / tell me about this
What made you choose this university for your teacher education? - Rather than different location - Rather than Russell Group (explain the term if required)
How do you 'see' yourself at the moment? Do you have a perception of the notion of professional identity? - Student? - Trainee teacher? - Other?

Interview 2 - Semi structured
May 2019

I envisage that the following questions will frame the discussion. However, I am aware that depending upon outcomes of Interview 1 and foregrounding listening to the stories of my participants these interviews may take a different direction

Ascertain name of participant
Tell me about how you 'see' yourself at the moment? Do you have a perception of the notion of professional identity - Student? - Trainee teacher? - Other?
I am interested in how you see yourself in terms of your peers on the course? Do you feel that you 'fit in'? - Why?
Do you feel that your own attitudes / values have shifted since starting the course? - Tell me about this
Do you feel that your perception of social class has changed? Do you feel in any way 'different' to when you started the course?